



Input Paper

People in Motion – Developing Fair and Equitable Migration Policies

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The world is in motion and that is how it will remain in the coming years. The 21st century will be characterised by significant population shifts. Migration is increasing around the globe. Migration between countries of the Global South has already overtaken migration movements from south to north. Increasing numbers of people are setting off in search of new economic opportunities and life experiences. Almost every seventh person in the world is a migrant. 740 million people have left their place of origin for an alternative location within their own country, whilst 244 million people have crossed state borders as international migrants. According to the International Labour Organisation, many migrants are currently living a life of forced labour or slavery. Over the past few years, the number of people fleeing armed conflict, persecution and human rights violations has all but exploded, and, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) currently exceeds 65 million refugees. Others flee in the face of the negative impact of climate change, natural catastrophes and other environmental changes.

For many people, the decision to leave their homeland is not made freely, but rather represents a necessary response to worsening living conditions. Many factors are converging to make life in many parts of our planet increasingly unbearable or even impossible. Habitat loss around the world is forcing more and more people to choose a difficult path in search of security and prospects in live, whereby the difference between flight and migration is becoming increasingly blurred. This is why many experts talk in terms of "forced migration" or "survival migration" to emphasise the fact that the existing definition of a refugee in international law, which is limited to people at risk of political persecution, no longer corresponds to the reality of the situation. In certain cases, people can be on the move for years at a time, traversing several countries and regions in which they live their lives under completely different social, economic, political and legal conditions. The one thing that



migrants and refugees have in common is that they are fighting for their right to live, for which they risk extreme dangers. It is important to open up secure routes for flight and legal migration for these people, whilst simultaneously creating the conditions worldwide that would give everybody the free choice of staying put, relocating or returning home.

Promoting Democracy

The causes of flight and migration are often the result of bad policies sustained over many years in the service of corrupt and authoritarian elites. Support for processes of democratisation on a global scale is and remains essential for the maintenance of peace and the promotion of economic development. In many countries, democratisation is the only conceivable way to limit the potential for internal conflict, to diffuse economic and social inequalities and to construct efficient political structures.

- Therefore, the promotion of democracy must remain at the heart of international policy, especially in times when democracy movements around the world are facing pressure.
- As socialist, social-democratic and progressive parties, we stand for the combination of political and social participation. It is not just about promoting the equality of all citizens, but it is also about contributing to social justice.

Strengthening Conflict Prevention

The democratic stabilisation of states and the avoidance of violent conflict will continue to be one of the most effect measures for the reduction of the root causes of the cross-border search for refuge. One important focus, in this context, will have to be on fragile and failed states, because it is in these that a multitude of flight and migration drivers are concentrated. It will not be possible to rapidly "repair" these states. A long-term engagement will be unavoidable.

- We need to reinforce and contribute to the further development of crisis prevention mechanisms, particularly the prevention of civil crises. Conflict prevention is always better than conflict management.



- Development cooperation must make a contribution to securing peace and to the democratic reforms of the security sector, whilst simultaneously reinforcing the capacities of states, regional organisations and civic societies at the local level to seek peaceful solutions to conflict. Social processes of dealing with the past and trauma management in the wake of a given conflict as well as reconciliation initiatives also require support.
- Pursuant to UN Security Council Resolution 1325, we also wish to significantly reinforce the role of women as participants in peace negotiations, conflict resolution and reconstruction from a development and security policy perspective.

Fighting Poverty

Every year millions of people fall into poverty due to ill health, unemployment, crop failure, old age or the death of a family member. Some 700 million people are suffering from extreme poverty, usually in conjunction with undignified living conditions and poor access to education, healthy food and clean water as well as sanitary facilities. In many countries in the southern hemisphere, the social infrastructure is extremely limited and functions only partially. Around 80 per cent of the global population is currently living with no insurance against the fundamental risks of life. This frequently results in existential crises, which drive people into hopelessness and forces families to put pressure on individual members to emigrate in the hope that they will eventually send money home to secure the survival of the rest of the family.

- That is why we want to push forward with the introduction of basic social security protection and health care provision.
- The promotion of agrarian development and the fight against the seizure and concentration of land by major agricultural groups are also crucial for mitigating existential risks.
- We need a fair and just global trade system. Only with fair and transparent trade agreements can we improve people's living conditions and overcome hunger and poverty. However, the Global North is increasingly focusing on bilateral and plurilateral trade agreements rather than multilateral negotiations within the World Trade



Organisation, which places even more pressure on developing countries. Crucial for the economic development of these countries are ways to protect their emerging industrial and service sectors as well as securing food supplies by protecting the agrarian sector in rural areas.

- Environmental, human rights, and social standards, such as the International Labour Organisation's core labour standards, must become integral elements of all trade agreements. That is the only way to achieve good living and working conditions.

Fighting against poor working conditions

Labour migration is often the symptom of inequalities resulting from neo-liberal trade policies focused only on free trade and the unhindered flow of goods, whilst neglecting the social costs of migration. People who are forced to leave their families in order to secure their existence are often exploited and robbed of their human rights.

- We need strong trade unions which collaborate at an international level to stand up against transnational corporations in order to change these intolerable conditions and to create more stable social framework conditions for all, including migrants.
- We need to create jobs that are commensurate with human dignity, because decent work will make an essential contribution to the struggle against poverty. Labour markets in the Global South are characterised by a large percentage of informal jobs, which, for many migrants without official papers, offer the only means of earning money.
- 400 million people are considered "working poor", and in many countries workers' rights and trade union rights are being violated on a massive scale. Value creation chains controlled by transnational corporations are responsible for poverty wages as well as the precariousness of working conditions and forced labour.
- We are fighting for the implementation of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda and the institutionalisation and implementation of the core labour standards on site. Closely associated with this is the question of corporate responsibility for social and ecological standards.



Combating Inequalities

The dramatic increase in inequality both between and within countries, and the lack of prospects for many young people are some of the central challenges of our times. The gap between the winners and losers of globalisation is increasing steadily, and millions of people are attempting to find a better future beyond the borders of their country of origin. Growing inequality is now recognised as one of the main causes of conflicts. Even the "2014 Global Risks" report of the World Economic Forum in Davos, assumes that the pronounced income disparities will become one of the biggest risks in the coming decade and will cause "severe damage". Part of what we are experiencing is a "bottom-up globalisation" in the face of the dramatic increase of inequality in and between countries.

- This is why we support the development and implementation of fair taxation systems in developing economies, the prevention of tax evasion and the dismantling of tax avoidance strategies. To do so, the developing economies will require the support of the international community, especially the states of the northern hemisphere. Africa alone is currently losing at least 50 billion euro per year as a result of illegal tax evasion by transnational corporations. And this does not include losses resulting from unfair, but legal, tax avoidances strategies.
- There is also inequality in terms of mobility. Who is permitted to travel and work where is determined by visa regulations, income and the availability of transport and communications means. People living in the Global North have significantly better access to mobility than those in the Global South. Particularly in the case of war-torn states such as Syria, legal routes to other countries are being shut down every month resulting in the overburdening of humanitarian refugee work. This is why we need safe and legal migration routes, without which refugees and migrants will be driven into the arms of people trafficking networks.

Fighting Against Climate Change

All forecasts need to be treated with caution, but there are many indicators that climate change and the associated environmental changes will become the biggest driver of flight and migration in the coming years. Already climate change has become a climate catastrophe for some regions, a consequence of which are the dramatic migration



movements. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM), for example, estimates that the number of environmental refugees has doubled to 50 million over the past 15 years, and that this figure is likely to rise to 200 million by 2050. Their status is by no means clear, but persistent drought, the salinisation of soil and drinking water, floods etc., mean that they will never be able to return home.

We urgently need significant progress in all the following areas over the next few years:

- Implementation of an ambitious climate protection programme that distributes the burden fairly
- Adaptation issues with a view to the changes that have already taken place. For, when it comes to managing damage and losses due to climate change, the prevention principle must be respected, because migration and flight represent extreme responses to climate change after all other forms of adaptation have failed.
- Coping with the damages and losses due to climate change.

The treaty text recently negotiated in Paris presents a good basis for the implementation of these objectives.

More International Solidarity

The lack of international solidarity in the provision of humanitarian aid and safe haven for refugees is shameful. Many states are more concerned with how their populations might come to terms with the immigrants than with the acute suffering of the refugees.

- We will not tolerate any erosion of international law, especially with respect to refugee rights.
- We oppose right-wing and populist parties and movements, whose xenophobic agitation endangers the plurality and openness of societies.
- The promotion and protection of human rights, particularly those of the most vulnerable groups, is right at the top of our international agenda as are the prevention and suppression of xenophobia, racist speech and actions as well as other forms of intolerance.



Advocating a Reform of Global Refugee and Migration Policy

Despite the fact that enormous progress has been made over the last few decades, the global refugee and migration policy resembles a patchwork quilt. Major migration and flight movements of the kind we are witnessing today do not stop at state borders. No country in the world can bear the political, economic, social, humanitarian and human rights consequences by itself. A reform of global refugee and migration policy is unavoidable, and global approaches and solutions are more urgent than ever. For whilst the number of international migrants has been increasing steadily over the past few years, the numbers of refugees and internally displaced persons have all but exploded. The principle of shared responsibility and a burden distribution must be mandated at the international level, and the foundation laid for rights-based migration management.

- We need a global treaty pertaining to the sharing of responsibility during refugee crises as well as a global treaty for the regulation of safe and legal migration.
- We support the "Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative", the objective of which is the implementation of principles that will ensure the safety and dignity of refugees and migrants.

This would represent a major step in the direction of international responsibility sharing and solidarity.

Expanding and Consolidating the Humanitarian System

The poorly developed mechanisms for sharing responsibility result in extreme global disparities in the distribution of refugees. Around 86 per cent of all refugees are given refuge in developing countries, which in spite of their major achievements are completely overburdened by the ongoing refugee situation.

- The humanitarian organisations UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF and HABITAT require long-term and flexible funding. This is the only way to cushion the impact of the never ending and numerically increasing refugee situation and to ensure that refugees are provided with accommodation that is commensurate with their human dignity. Long-term, non-earmarked payments to the UN agencies would increase the humanitarian aid capacities and would result in a more efficient collaboration with development cooperation



agents, as competition for funding would be reduced and services and resources could be made available on a flexible basis. In addition, private financing and technical innovations (cash for work, cash card etc.) should be supported.

- Already today, almost half of all refugees are living in long-term situations with an average duration of twenty years, and permanent solutions (return, relocation, local integration) were only found for 2% of all refugees in 2015. The longer refugee situations persist, the more important it becomes to create spaces for personal growth and development and to give these people access to their rights. Refugees should be provided with economic prospects for the future by promoting their skills and potentials, which will also benefit their host communities. Rather than taking place in isolation, these measures should be coordinated and implemented with the long-term development cooperation with the partner country.

In Favour of a Global Refugee Intake Programme

In future we are going to need more temporary and permanent refugee hosting capacities worldwide.

- An asylum seeker distribution system based on principles of solidarity at the UN level, with fixed criteria and incentives and which take account of the refugees' personal preferences must be the long-term goal. In order to ensure an equitable distribution of the burden, metrics such as the economic capacity, population density, unemployment level, number of asylum seekers already accepted, and resettlement places could serve as reference points.
- In addition, failing to create long-term solutions for refugees as well as global and regional migration regimes, will certainly lead to an increase of irregular migration and result in more humanitarian disasters. More options for legal migration are required, especially in the countries of the Global North.

Enforcing and Expanding International Law and Conventions

Certain refugee situations are not covered under existing treaties and conventions on the protection of migrants and refugees. Protection schemes are required for internally



displaced persons in particular, but also for so-called climate refugees, who will never be able to return home unlike – at least theoretically – political asylum seekers.

- We welcome the Nansen Initiative, which is developing proposals for an international management of flight and migration in response to climate change and natural disasters.
- We support a rights-based approach to living and working conditions for migrants that are commensurate with human dignity. All states and international organisations ought to orientate themselves on this approach.
- In addition, we call on all states to sign and ratify the existing ILO conventions on the protection of migrants.

Migration and Development

When we consider the past, we see again and again that, far from being a problem, migration is an enriching aspect of all communities over the longer term. Today too, migration can promote the long-term development of the home countries, transit lands and destination countries. In some cases, it is migration that even makes development possible in the first place or which counteracts negative developments such as excess ageing or a lack of skilled labour in the host community. Migrants are often equipped with new knowledge and contribute to improve technological developments. For many years, the fastest growing migration forms have been time-limited and circular migration, and remittances from migrants to their home countries are playing an increasingly important role. Often, the migrants' families in their land of origin use these monies not only to raise themselves out of poverty, but to gain access to education and training and to improve health care. According to the World Bank, two thirds of the approximately 600 billion USD paid in remittances are transferred to developing countries – significantly more than the total development aid they receive. However, investments made with private funds should not replace the provision of public services by the state.

At the same time, however, migration can increase inequality and promote brain drain. Moreover, the familial and social results of migration are frequently overlooked when considering the subject. Workers, in particular, are often forced to travel long distances due



to prevailing economic conditions, and rarely see their friends and family. Precisely because migration is a complex phenomenon, it will be important in future to ensure that countries in the southern hemisphere are involved in the development of migration regimes and that it is not left up to the Global North to decide between "desirable" and "undesirable" migration.

Mobility, Migration and Agenda 2030

Progressive, social democratic and socialist forces throughout the world are taking a stand on behalf of people in difficult and precarious situations. This definitely includes migrants and refugees as it is clearly spelled out in the preamble to the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Migration is an integral component of this agenda and Objective 10.7 calls upon all countries to provide opportunities for the regulated, safe and responsible migration and mobility of people and to underpin this with a planned and well organised migration policy. Besides this explicit reference to migration in the SDGs, many of the 17 objectives and 169 targets address the causes of flight and migration. Overcoming poverty and implementing the right to health, justice, decent work, peace and the responsible management of resources are prerequisites for allowing people to freely choose where they want to live. A new, comprehensive and earnest policy of cooperation and transformation, as formulated in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, could result in successes over the coming decade which would enable many people to develop good prospects for the future also in their home countries.

This requires a wide range of interlocking approaches that would draw upon many areas of policy making. In the short term, acute migration and refugee movements will require enormous international efforts, which can, however, lend new impetus to reforms at the national, regional and global levels in the mid- to long-term. Both need be shaped for the future: the right to remain, by providing fair living conditions for all people, and preventing the habitat destruction, as well as the right to leave by creating safe routes for flight and migration. People have a right to save themselves from persecution and violence just as they have a right to mobility and free movement. Everyone needs to be able to exercise his or her right to mobility of their own volition and not under duress. What this means for our



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societies is that we need to develop rules for the cohabitation of increasingly mobile people with very different backgrounds.