



Side event to the Second United Nations Conference
on Landlocked Developing Countries (LLDCs)

ACHIEVING THE FUTURE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS: THE ROLE OF LABOUR MIGRATION

**Vienna International Center (VIC), M Building, Room MOE79
4 November 2014 (1:15 - 2:45 pm)
Vienna, Austria**

*Organized by:
Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)
United Nations*

CONCEPT NOTE

The ground-breaking Declaration of the 2013 High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, adopted by the General Assembly last year, acknowledged the important contribution of migration in realizing the Millennium Development Goals and recognized that human mobility is a key factor for sustainable development. The Declaration also highlighted the many challenges that remain in the governance of international migration and mobility.

Reflecting this consensus, the outcome document of the Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals¹ included several targets to leverage migration for development and to address migration challenges. In particular, the OWG called for facilitating safe, regular and orderly migration and mobility, for protecting the rights of migrant workers, for reducing the transaction costs of migrant remittances, and for training and retaining health workers in developing countries.

Migrant workers contribute to the development of host countries by complementing the skills of native-born workers, creating jobs, and filling labour market shortages. Remittance flows to developing countries sent home by migrant workers in 2013 amounted to \$404 billion. These private transfers improve the living conditions as well as the education and health status of millions of migrant families. However, migrant workers are often denied access to equal and fair wages, decent working conditions and

¹ Open Working Group (OWG) on Sustainable Development Goals - Outcome Document, available at <http://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/focussdgs.html>

social protection. Low-skilled migrant workers, such as domestic workers, are particularly at risk.

While there has been progress since the 2013 High-level Dialogue, there is still a need for practical measures to leverage migration for development and to reduce migration costs. For instance, recruitment costs for migrant workers remain high, with months, if not years, of wages lost to cover the costs of documents, transportation and recruitment service fees. Moreover, the costs of transferring remittances continue to exceed the levels implied by the G-20 target to reduce these fees by five percentage points over five years. Lack of progress in recognizing educational and professional qualifications continues to contribute to de-skilling or “brain waste” in countries of destination and when migrants return. Lack of portability of acquired rights adds further to the costs of migration and limits circular and return migration.

The side event seeks to share information about practical initiatives to reduce the economic and social costs of labour migration in order to reap more fully the potential benefits of labour migration for development.