



#### Background

Chapter 5 of the World Public Sector Report 2018 focuses on how national public institutions and administration have used integrated approaches to policy-making and public service delivery to respond to the needs of migrants and refugees.

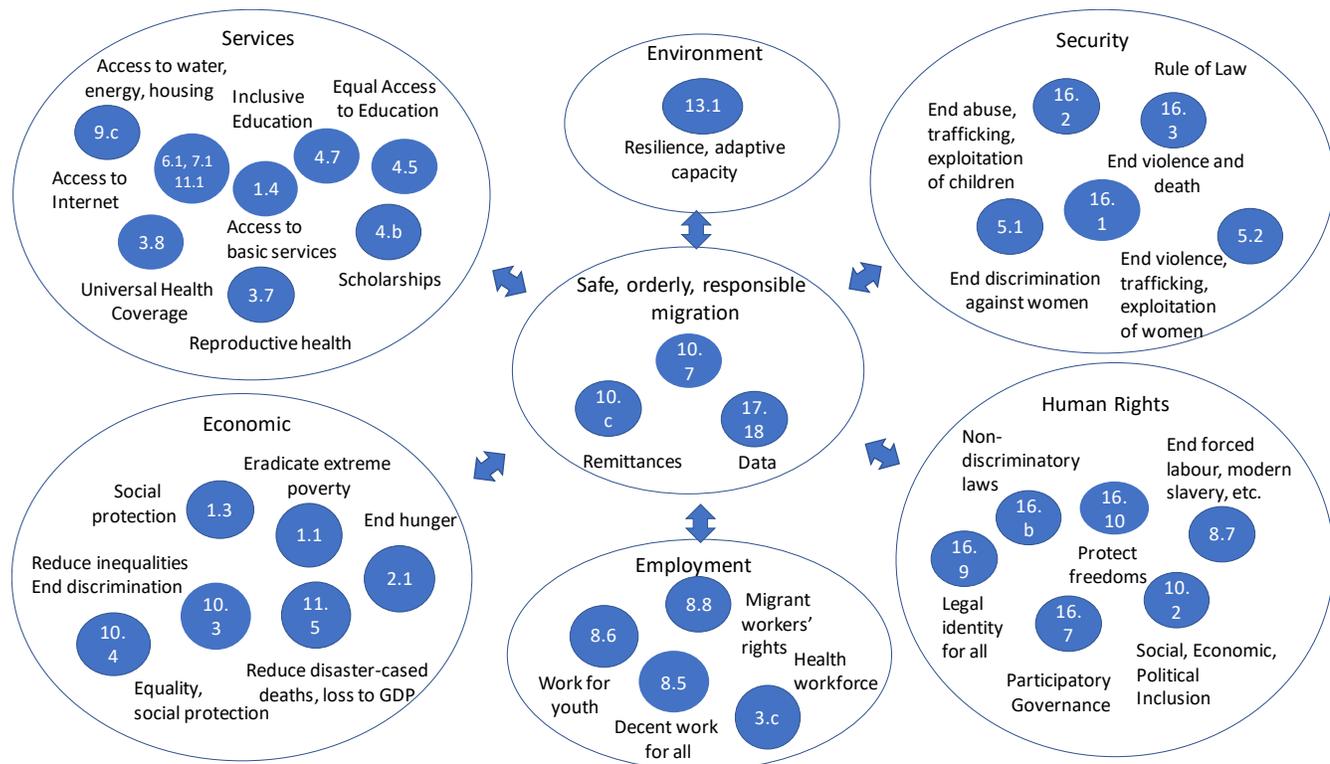
The number of international migrants worldwide is estimated to have reached 258 million in 2017, up from 173 million in 2000. The stock of international migrants comprises about 22.5 million refugees and about 2.8 million asylum seekers.

Migrations can be seen from a multiplicity of perspectives. A review of the development literature indicates that the linkages between migration and sustainable development can be classified into six broad categories: security, human rights, sectoral and economic perspectives including employment, and environmental perspectives. Politics play an important role in the way competing claims and interest are adjudicated, and hence on what types of policies are developed to meet the needs of migrants.

Integration across sectors and across levels of governments is especially relevant to migrations, given the fact that migration policies are taken at the national level, whereas delivery of services to migrants happens for a large part at the local level. The fact that the legal status of migrants has a critical impact on their ability to generate livelihoods and access various services also warrants integrated approaches, including between policies in relation to border control and other sectoral policies (e.g. in relation to employment).

For public institutions and public administration to adequately address these linkages, multi-disciplinary and multi-dimensional approaches are required. Policy-makers and policy communities across the world are interested in learning about different options of institutional and public management modalities, legal policy frameworks and administrative measures to better link international migration with policies and services for sustainable development.

**Figure 5.1: Linkages between international migration and sustainable development from a public administration perspective**



Source: Authors' elaboration.

#### National institutional arrangements in relation to migration

The report examines national institutions and policies on migration in a sample of 29 countries representing different regional, economic, social and political backgrounds, with

emphasis on labour, education and health policies as they apply to migrants.

Many countries include migration or asylum in their constitutions. Out of the 29 countries, 16 mention migration or

refugees in their national development plans or their sustainable development implementation action plans and strategies. Fourteen of the 17 countries which presented voluntary national reviews of progress on the SDGs at the UN high-level political forum on sustainable development in 2016 or 2017 made references to migration or refugees in their statements. These findings indicate the ubiquitous and increasing importance of migration and refugees in national policy agendas.

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### **Horizontal integration**

Analysis of national institutions dealing with migration issues shows a broad variety of institutional settings. A multi-agency approach was apparent in Brazil and the Philippines, and to a lesser extent in Italy and Mexico, with individual institutions in charge of migration accompanied by inter-ministerial advisory commissions. Australia, Canada, Denmark, Egypt, Greece, Morocco and the United Kingdom have stand-alone ministries on migration. Other countries have separate units in charge of migration and refugees within the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Home or Civil Affairs, the Ministry of Public Security or the Ministry of Justice. Still in other countries, it was more difficult to identify leading institutions on migration and refugees. The involvement of ministries or departments of security and border management in migration policy-making was found to be important across the board.

Data is a key cross-cutting enabler of policy integration. Digitalization and processes for exchanging information among administrations is an area where potential for enhanced efficiency exists. However, a balance needs to be struck between enhanced administrative efficiency and safeguarding the rights of migrants. In this regard, the creation of appropriate “firewalls” between various parts of the administrative system and in terms of data exchanges is regarded as an important policy option by experts in the field.

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### **Labour, education and health for migrants and refugees**

Migrants’ and refugees’ access to employment is often precarious. The array of labour rights accorded by States to regular and irregular migrants, refugees and asylum seekers varies widely across countries. Many countries grant access to employment to refugees but not to asylum-seekers. In addition, the existence of a legal basis for providing access to employment is no guarantee for its actual implementation.

Migrants’ and refugees’ access to education is often limited. Out of the 29 countries examined in the report, only a handful provide education in local languages upon entry into the country. The dominant trend is one where refugees have legal access to public education whereas asylum-seekers do not. Migrants in an irregular situation are often excluded from education unless they are minor.

In many countries, migrants’ and refugees’ access to healthcare is also limited. The main trend is to give access to emergency care for adults and children, while in certain countries children may also benefit from primary care. Thailand is an exception, as it provides comprehensive healthcare policies to all migrants, including those in an irregular situation, as well as refugees.

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### **Vertical integration**

The report finds that local governments, particularly cities, have played an increasing role in linking migration issues, public services and sustainable development. Integration of migration into development policy-making has followed at least three different patterns: creation of separate offices within municipalities, local-national contracts and ad hoc outreach activities. Many countries have followed all or some combination of these approaches. Networks of cities are increasingly becoming important players, as observed in other areas such as climate change.

In many countries, the local level has been at the forefront of innovation in terms of addressing migrants’ needs and creating an enabling environment that enhances the positive impacts of migrants for both migrant and host communities. At the same time, there is a broad range of variation in terms of how local governments within any given country are addressing migration. In that sense, more integration between national and local levels may not always benefit migrants themselves. By fostering local innovation, decentralization can be an important enabling factor for bottom-up integration of migration and development.

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### **Engagement of non-State actors**

In many countries, civil society plays an active role in national migration governance, albeit in diverse ways and capacities. At first glance, engagement of non-governmental actors seems to be stronger in open and transparent governance systems, particularly when coupled with effective decentralization and inclusive local governance. Local level engagement also tends to climb when national migration policies and institutions are either absent or inadequate.

Non-governmental actors are active in migration and development across the board, although their role could benefit from further integration on the ground, particularly with respect to the private sector. There seems to be a need for more systematic studies of lessons learned, challenges and triggers for success in terms of engagement modalities.

The chapter also considers public service delivery mechanisms for migrants and refugees in the area of housing. Engagement with local communities and migrants themselves appears as a key to successful service delivery. More generally, the report emphasizes the enabling role of the information and communication technology to promote migrants’ integration.

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### **Way forward**

Migration and refugee issues are likely to remain high on policy-makers’ agenda. Effective horizontal and vertical policy integration and engagement with non-governmental actors are all relevant to the efforts of public institutions and public administration to address them. In the end, countries’ own circumstances and aspirations will determine how migration will be integrated with sustainable development.

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### **More information**

The World Public Sector Report 2018, its executive summary and other materials are available at:

<https://publicadministration.un.org/en/Research/World-Public-Sector-Reports>