

Towards a Joint Work Programme on Migration and Cities

‘Urban Migration and Mobility – Shaping Socio-Economic Futures’

Discussion paper [First Draft]

A. Strategic Context:

A.1 Migration, Urbanisation and Economic Growth

1. Urbanisation and migration are historic trends that affect population growth, decline, and the geographic distribution of population worldwide. The two phenomena are closely interconnected. Cities are generally centres of economic, social and political transformation, and act as magnets for migrants seeking to enhance their livelihoods.¹

2. Despite recent perceptions and narratives, migration is not a current European crisis but rather part of a long term global urbanisation phenomenon - rural-urban and urban-urban - that swept Europe and Latin America in the last century and is in full swing in Asia and Africa. **The interplay between mobility of people, urbanisation and economic growth** poses both challenges and opportunities which are yet to be fully comprehended, analysed and addressed.

3. **Urban populations** grew by 38 per cent between 2000 and 2015, such that over 50 per cent of the world’s population currently lives in cities². Although the urbanization process is largely complete in developed countries, it remains a significant trend in many developing countries. A combination of natural population growth and migration will mean that up to 70 per cent of the global population will be urban dwellers by 2050. In Africa alone, an additional 187 million citizens will live in cities over the next decade, with a projected urban population growth of 63 per cent between 2015 and 2030.³ Most of global population growth over the next few decades will take place in urban areas in developing countries.

4. Migration is a key component of urbanization, which, in turn, is correlated with economic growth. In Africa alone, the 30 largest cities on the continent are expected to contribute up to 40 per cent of its **GDP growth** until 2025.⁴ Within the next 10 years, 600 cities, ~20 per cent of the world’s cities, will account for ~65 per cent of global GDP growth. Managing urbanisation effectively is essential to maximise the economic potential of cities and their contribution to national economic growth.

5. The world is in a phase of unprecedented **human mobility** favoured by the globalisation processes and expanding transport systems and accessibility. These movements and flows have a strong urban focus as migrants, both internal and international, tend to gravitate towards cities which offer better access to essential services, and economic opportunity. Globally it is estimated that three million people move to cities every week.⁵ As of 2015, ~244 million people (3.3 per cent of the global population) lived in a country not of their birth. This figure has more than doubled in the past 50 years as migration grew by 2.4 per cent annually between 2000 and 2015, outpacing overall population growth.⁶

6. Given that migrants overwhelmingly end up in cities, they not only contribute to a city’s population growth but also to its economic growth. Migrants play a substantial role in economies and societies worldwide contributing roughly USD 6.7 trillion (9.4%) to global GDP in 2015.⁷ Migrants demonstrate positive **economic contributions** regardless of skill level, whether through innovation or entrepreneurship or by freeing up nationals for higher-value work. Migrants, especially migrant women, have higher labour force participation rates (72.7 per cent) than non-migrants (63.9 per cent).⁸ Indeed, it is estimated that successful integration has the potential to contribute an additional USD 1 trillion in output worldwide, by raising productivity and reducing the wage gap.

¹ UNDESA, UN International report highlights (2015)

² UNDESA, World Urbanisation Prospect (2014)

³ UNDESA, World Population Ageing (2015)

⁴ Only three cities of more than 10 million inhabitant in Africa: Lagos, Cairo and Kinshasa

⁵ UN-Habitat, State of the World’s Cities Report 2008/9: Harmonious Cities. Nairobi (2009)

⁶ UNDESA, UN International report highlights (2015)

⁷ McKinsey Global Institute, People on the move: Global Migration’s impacts and opportunity (2016)

⁸ ILO. ILO global estimates on migrant workers – Results and methodology (2015)

7. Moreover, as the connections between migration movements and cities become more evident, the different forms of exclusion to which migrant men, women and children are subjected to in urban areas become more apparent. People's experience, opportunities and challenges as both urbanites and migrants are heavily dictated by their gender, religion, social, economic and political status. It is thus essential for cities to ensure complete integration from a sociocultural, economic, civic and gender perspective, encompassing both economic migrants as well as refugees, to achieve net positive economic and societal outcomes.⁹

A2. Migration Patterns

8. Despite international migration being on the rise, some 85% of the approximately one billion migrants worldwide are **internal migrants** who never cross a national boundary.¹⁰ Women and girls are more likely to migrate to urban areas as care and/or domestic workers.¹¹ This number is substantially above the figure of 244 million international migrants. These less visible but transformative migration movements have been observed in different countries including Nigeria, China, Brazil and India, where the greatest internal movement of people in history is happening as part of the urbanisation process.¹²

9. Relative to internal migration the scale of **trans-national (Mexico/USA) and transcontinental (Africa/Europe) migration** is relatively small, in addition, it is also highly concentrated. About 50 per cent of international migrants resides in the cities of only ten highly urbanised and high-income countries.¹³ The geography of migration flows is however changing, with a larger range of cities around the world becoming destinations for migrants attracted to countries experiencing higher economic growth.¹⁴ However, spatialised data on migration is generally very poor: while there is a general improvement on data on international migration, especially due to massive European investment in population registries and similar, there are only a few migration systems that analyse how people move. These are often linked to demographic surveillance sites or focused studies.

10. The rationale decision-making theory of **migration drivers** is well understood especially in its economic terms. Urban settings are more attractive based on rational choices of perceived employment opportunities and expected income.¹⁵ The choice can be reinforced by external stressors such as volatile commodity prices, financial and economic instability. However, the decision to move is also often deeply embedded in family and community structures. Decisions made to move and after moving are therefore more than simply rational economic ones but also highly linked to a multiplicity of household choices.

11. Looking at the demographics of Africa (and to a lesser extent Asia), there is high and growing pressure to move. These regions witness a combination of a very young population and enormous spatial inequality. As the potential labour force grows and opportunities for work, however precarious, become increasingly available in urban areas, the pressure to move to city will continue to grow. Increased wealth in sending areas or secondary cities will likely stimulate movements.

12. Less clear are the migration movements as well as their gendered outcomes induced by catastrophe either by wars or environmental shock and degradation. While it is impossible to gather uncontested data, it is estimated that over ten million refugees and at least twice as many internally displaced persons (IDPs) found refuge in urban areas¹⁶. Such migration patterns are different as often the entire region is engulfed forcing most to migrate even those who would remain settled. The normal decision-making process is disrupted, with people being forced to skip more incremental decisions into the dramatic move across boundaries. Strict border control policies can lead to urban "transit hubs" where refugees become stranded on their way to intended destinations.

9 McKinsey Independent Assessment of the Organisational Performance and Health of the Cities Alliance (2017)

10 UNDP, Human Development Report (2009).

11 Kanthoul L., Women on the Move: a look at Migration, Women and Cities, The UN Migration Agency (2015). Available at <http://weblog.iom.int/women-move-look-migration-women-and-cities>

12 UNDP, Cross-National Comparison of Internal Migration (2009)

13 Australia, Canada, United States, France, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UNDESA, UN International report highlights, 2013).

14 Including East Asia, Brazil, southern Africa and western India.

15 E.g. Todaro and Smit, Economic Development (2009)

16 UNHCR website, 2017

A3. Some of the Critical Issues

13. **Transition Spaces.** Migration patterns are diverse and tend to be multi-stage processes. In some instances, this is because people regularly (or irregularly) oscillate to and from cities, often without a clear final destination. In the developing world, Small and medium sized-cities are often the first point of arrival for people migrating from rural areas. The initial flow from rural areas to small and medium sized-cities is often circulatory and temporary in its first stages.¹⁷ In fact, in many contexts, households still rely on the rural economy and benefit from closer access to social services.

14. Small and medium sized-cities are often more spaces of flows than destinations as they are unable to provide sufficient work and their densities are too low to generate real economies. Migrants' expected benefits and returns in terms of salaries and employment opportunities are in stark contrast with the reality of many of these contexts. Most secondary cities are poorly connected by roads and telecommunications; supply chains and logistic systems are weak and inefficient - as are local land, labour and capital markets. Local governments are generally under-resourced, often lacking the capital and expertise to deliver adequate services. The weak governance, poor human capital and lack of services are major constraints to job creation and sustainable development especially in Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁸

15. As the economic potential of many secondary cities may be wasted resulting in further rural and urban impoverishment, onwards migration takes place with people moving to larger cities - regional capitals or primary cities - which seem to offer greater horizons. In turn, the lack of diverse opportunities in these new places, entices for some a further transnational movement to even larger cities which may lead to trans-continental migration. Worth to note that migration routes (rural-rural, rural-urban, urban-urban, urban-international) are highly dependent on connections and support networks having been previously established to facilitate the flow of people. When these structures are not available, women, who make up the bulk of the world's illiterate and unskilled, may face serious challenges in accessing reliable information on legal and safe migration.

16. **Brain Drain.** While migration has many advantages for the host city it has many negative impacts on the "sending city" including the promotion of a "brain drain" that further undermines development prospects. Some countries are experiencing population decline due to emigration, for example, Latvia's population declined by 14% last year due to people choosing to live and work elsewhere.¹⁹ The global migration of over 75,000²⁰ doctors to the UK and 5,000 doctors from sub-Saharan Africa to the USA has had a significantly negative effect on the doctor-to-population ratio of sending regions.²¹ Skilled migration is all gain for the new host but the emigration of highly skilled workers ("brain drain") can also undermine development efforts of cities in the countries of origin particularly in crucial sectors such as health and education. For decades, cities in the USA and Europe have benefitted from the migration of professionals, constituting a major cost to the sending country both in terms of the brain drain and the human resource investment. This amounts to a massive wealth transfer from poor to rich countries. It has also been shown that there is a gendered aspect to the brain drain. Even considering the fact that women still face unequal access to tertiary education in many less developed countries, women are over-represented in the brain drain. Moreover, emigration of highly skilled women is higher, the poorer is their country of origin.²²

17. **Remittances.** Remittances by migrants are a hidden force in international development and a vital economic lifeline provided by the 250 million international migrants worldwide who send money to struggling families and communities back home. The World Bank estimates that, in 2016, 511€bn was sent in remittances, 375€bn of which was received in the developing world. This is three times the amount of international aid, and is significantly better targeted. Research suggests that women tend to remit a higher proportion of their income, more regularly and for longer periods of time even though they generally earn less than men²³. Indeed, women represent between 63 to 70 per cent of remittance recipients – which may play a crucial role on transforming gendered relations in

17 See F. Proctor 2017

18 Cities Alliance, Future Cities Africa, Feasibility Study (2016). The recent study into the city economy of 21 African secondary cities clearly demonstrated the lack of economic opportunities available with some 90% of youth only finding work in the informal economy. In Northern Africa and the Arab States female youth unemployment rate is almost double that of young men.

19 OECD 2016, OECD Reviews of Labour Market and Social Policies: Latvia (2016)

20 Garcia-Perez A. Physician's migration in Europe: an overview of the current situation (2007) available in: <https://bmchealthservres.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/1472-6963-7-201>

21 Hagopian et al. The migration of physicians from sub-Saharan Africa to the United States of America" measures of the African brain drain (2004) available in: www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC544595/

22 Dumont J-C., Women on the move: The neglected gender dimension of the Brain Drain, OECD (2007)

23 IOM, Gender, Migration and Remittances (2010) Available at: <https://www.iom.int/sites/default/files/about-iom/Gender-migration-remittances-infosheet.pdf>

recipient households.²⁴ Even though there are a number of barriers to the impact of remittances including high transaction costs (averaging 8% globally) and low level of understanding by senders and receivers as to how the money can best be invested and used,²⁵ these remittances improve standards of living in countless ways and help to make vulnerable communities more resilient to shocks, like economic downturns and natural and man-induced disasters. Besides financial remittances, the contributions of migrants to their places of origin include social remittances such as transfer of know-how, skills, values etc. Such social remittances may have longer-term and systemic impacts affecting significantly cultural and political norms, practices and identities.

18. Worth to note that, in the context of cities, poor migrants need often to make sacrifices to enable remittances to be saved. Typically, a migrant will need to cut costs where it is most possible. As a result, many migrants choose to live in informal settlements or in overcrowded rented accommodation as a means of saving for remittances. The higher the costs of urban living the less the ability to save for remittances. This aspect, often underestimated, has significant implications on housing strategies, urban investments and feeds into the importance of city reception areas.

19. *Sending Cities* can benefit from remittances in several different ways. First, directly through the transfer of financial and social remittances received from their citizens abroad; second from the creation of knowledge-and-know-how transfer circuits through which, for instance, new technology can be acquired and from the eventual return of the highly skilled migrants themselves as potential industry leaders and investors. The important precondition for these development gains is the setting up of effective policies and an enabling environment covering all aspects of the migration cycle. Diasporas accumulate human and financial capital during the process of migration that can contribute to the development of their local home communities as well as to national economic and social development.

20. *Arrival cities*. Ultimately migrants end up in cities. Their experience in the arrival city depends largely on who the migrants are, how they arrived and the capacity of the city in managing the inflow. There is no single-story line and uneven demographic changes are a key factor. While in Africa there is a youth bulge with some countries having a birth-rate in excess of 6 children per woman (Niger, Somalia, Mali, Chad, Angola, DR Congo), in developed countries, 17 per cent of large cities are likely to experience population decline by 2025.²⁶ In addition, in developed countries, the age structure of these urban populations is changing: people over 60 years of age comprise the fastest-growing segment, with growth of ~3.7% per year. In 2016, in thirteen EU countries, more people died than were born, and it is in virtue of migration (including refugees) intakes that the population has not fallen as in the case of Germany, Finland and Poland. It is estimated, that without migration, Germany would face population decline of 18 per cent and Italy 16 per cent by 2050 with major consequences to social security and the economy.²⁷

21. Geographically large countries such as Canada, Australia and the USA have always required migrants to populate cities and build up densities in support of the economy. Where transnational/continental migrants arrive in a city with skilled and other labour shortages in the context of economic growth positive synergies exist at city level. In many Asian countries (Bangladesh, Pakistan) the contract labour migration of unskilled men to the Arab Gulf states and to the emerging economies of Asia has been especially prominent. These are formal contracts in which workers are authorized by receiving countries to work for legally specified periods. These migrants typically work within tight legal frameworks linking residence to work and have few citizenship rights in the host countries.

22. The real issue for cities emerges with the inflow of unskilled migrant workers looking to fill gaps in the labour market in low income and/or stagnant economies. As mentioned above, in many low- and middle-income countries, cities are already battling with existing backlogs caused by the needs of natural growth and in addition must cater to the needs of migrants further complicating the tasks of urban planning, service delivery and poverty reduction. In this context, migrants tend to move into the cheapest existing built environments where previous migrants have already established a bridgehead. In positive cases, over time as jobs are found, housing is incrementally improved and the more successful move out to new areas creating space for new arrivals. However, in other circumstances, migrants become perceived by other communities to place additional pressure on the infrastructure and environment and add to existing competition in employment and housing.

24 Global Migration Group, Impact of remittances on gender roles and opportunities for children in recipient countries (2011). Available at: http://www.globalmigrationgroup.org/system/files/uploads/UNCT_Corner/theme5/remittances/impact_of_remittances_on_gender_roles_and_opportunities_for_children_in_recipient_countries.pdf

25 IOM, Financial remittances – a tool for development? (2014)

26 McKinsey Global Institute, Urban World: Meeting Demographic Challenges, 2016

27 Eurostat, Population and population change statistics (2017)

23. Recent studies indicate that migrants are disproportionately represented among the urban poor in the informal settlements.²⁸ For example, in Accra, Ghana, 92 per cent of migrant households live in one slum, Old Fadama, without access to basic municipal and environmental health services.²⁹ Despite the hardships of living in settlements such as Kibera in Nairobi, migrants are attracted to the economies created through density that enable opportunities in the informal economy. Typically, due to the failure of public authorities to anticipate, plan and provide for urban growth, such settlements are often built on the most environmentally sensitive land including river banks, estuaries, mangroves, beach fronts and hill sides so when disasters strike, they are among the worst affected.

24. Typically, migrants may initially take up residence with family and friends, resulting in overcrowding with negative consequences for the health and welfare of all. Social networks are located in cities and newly arriving migrants can make use of these for survival and economic opportunities but these networks can also be either unsafe or excluding in what regards women's right and access to opportunities in cities, depending on cultural differences and gender roles that women are expected to play. To be noted that international migrants (sometimes including refugees) are often not more vulnerable than domestic migrants.

B. Rationale for Engagement

25. Migration was identified as an emerging theme in the Cities Alliance Medium Term Strategy 2014-2017 and is now proposed as one of four thematic focus areas in the draft 2018-2021 Strategic Plan. This attention to migration focuses on the positive links between human mobility and development, and the need for Cities Alliance members to better understand the nature and impact of migration on cities. The four themes of the Cities Alliance Strategic Plan - Migration, Gender, Economic Growth and Resilience – are also highly interconnected in contemporary cities.

26. ***Building on Past Success.*** The issue of migration is strongly interlinked to areas where Cities Alliance has strong expertise and recognised record of accomplishment. Over the last two decades the Cities Alliance has engaged with local economic development, municipal finance, vocational training and, at the national level, fiscal systems and policies; it has investigated the interconnectivity between rural and urban geographies and between systems of cities; it has supported cities in their planning and policy making with an emphasis on inclusive processes; it has supported urban communities advocating for their rights, supporting their organisation and mediating conflicts. Cities Alliance can also leverage the on-the-ground experience and results from the 2015 Catalytic Fund call on 'Migration and the Inclusive City' which invested in 11 innovative city level projects to foster spatial, social and economic inclusion by extending to migrants the rights to the city: access to land, services, opportunity, as well as to an urban citizenship.

27. ***A Joint Work Programme as the initial vehicle.*** To begin operationalising its work on the subject, the Cities Alliance will convene a Joint Work Programme (JWP) on Migration and Cities. Joint Work Programmes are Cities Alliance Members' working groups for carrying out analytic and strategic activities addressing major global policy challenges affecting cities and sustainable development. JWPs are multi-year activities facilitated by the Cities Alliance Secretariat. The JWPs act as knowledge hubs to share information and experience, a think tank able to support diagnostics, evidence-based policy recommendations, and vehicles for advocacy.

28. The JWP on Migration and Cities is expected to inspire new and reinvigorated global thinking on the role and potential of cities in managing and seizing the opportunities and contributions arising from migration, and how that will interact with, and impact, urban programming over the long-term. The JWP will play a harmonising role amongst members, focused on city responses to migration. It will also seek to strengthen the link between development and humanitarian interventions on migration.

29. ***The International Agreements Context.*** The creation of the new JWP on Migration and Cities comes also at a critical juncture, as the issue becomes increasingly visible in global policy-making. In this context, the JWP activities should complement members' ongoing work on the definition and implementation of the relevant international agreements.

28 Hoang et al. Urban Poverty in Vietnam: A view from Complementary Assessments, International Institute for Environment and Development Working paper available in: pubs.iied.org/pdfs/10633IIED.pdf

29 Anthony Mackson Tsogbe, The effect of savings on the wellbeing of migrants in Old-Fadama, Accra, University of Ghana available in: <http://ugspace.ug.edu.gh>

30. Urbanisation and migration prominently figure in the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, including goal 11 on sustainable cities. At least 10 of the 169 targets include explicit references to sustainable development issues pertaining to international migration, migrants and mobility. Target 10.7 calls specifically on countries to “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. Beyond these explicit references, migration is a key transversal factor for achieving all SDGs. Target 10.2 of the 2030 Agenda highlights attributes that have considerable influence on the risk of exclusion when it emphasizes that all should be included “irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status”. As such, social inclusion is presented as the process of improving the terms of participation in society for people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, and economic and migration status.

31. In July 2015, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA) included different means to implement migration-linked sustainable development goals and targets. It calls on Member States to make sure that migration is governed with respect for human rights, fighting xenophobia and facilitating migrant integration through education and social communication strategies. The Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) includes 2 chapters - IX and X - focusing respectively on internal and international migration. They address the challenges and opportunities of human mobility and promote the role of the governments to formulate policies based on respect for human rights.

32. In September 2016, the New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. The Member States committed themselves to develop a Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration to be presented for adoption at an intergovernmental conference on international migration in 2018. It is expected to provide a single framework on common principles and commitments amongst Member States on all aspects of international migration: humanitarian, development and human right related dimensions. One month later, the New Urban Agenda was adopted at the Habitat III conference. It recognizes urbanization as one of the century’s most transformative trends, creating sustainability challenges on housing, infrastructure, basic services, health, education, decent jobs, safety and natural resources. It further acknowledges the challenges and opportunities relating to migration to and migrants in cities as well as the critical role of cities in establishing frameworks that enable the positive contribution of migrants to cities and strengthened urban-rural linkages. Emphasizing the interlinkages between migration and urbanization, the Commission on Population and Development decided that the thematic focus of its fifty-first session to be held in New York in April 2018 will be on “Sustainable cities, human mobility and international Migration”.³⁰

C. Programme Fundamentals: Approach and Thematic Lenses

33. **A Phased Approach.** Recognising the strategic importance of cities in migration, it is proposed that the JWP in its first phase will articulate its activities along selected thematic areas. Given that mainstreaming gender is a central pillar of the Cities Alliance development approach, these thematic areas will have a strong gender focus.

34. As there is scattered evidence and poorly understood aspects of the interface between cities and migration, it is recommended that the first phase of the JWP will focus primarily on normative, analytical and advocacy type of commitment. Possible thematic areas for the JWP are the following:

Thematic Lens 1. Integration and Social Cohesion

35. Migration brings people of different cultural backgrounds together, it touches upon the very essence of a city: the notion of cities as a melting pot, whose characteristics are determined by their ability to integrate and empower people of different backgrounds. While migration is generally addressed through national policies, the lived reality of integration is local and largely managed at the city level. Migration to cities brings both challenges and opportunities, where migrant aspirations for social and economic mobility can either be realised or destroyed through existing forms of exclusion and deprivation. The difference depends on a city’s gendered and policy response to migration and its ability to plan and develop practical solutions that consider how migration transforms, expands and diversifies a city and its inhabitants. These solutions and policy approaches often need to be found in very difficult circumstances.

³⁰ United Nations expert group meeting on sustainable cities, human mobility and international migration, Concept Note, 7-8 September 2017

36. The majority of cities do not consciously plan for and understand what it means to integrate men and women, girls and boys and communities from different cultural, economic, political and religious backgrounds. Outdated policy frameworks and weak local administrations frequently result in tensions between new migrants and the existing, settled population over access to services, social and economic opportunities, and cultural differences. This tension can be acute for both cross-border and national migrants.³¹ The growth of anti-migrant political parties and their traction within parts of society raises the question as to how best to deal with integration. Ignoring this global development, on the other hand, can cause social tensions and worsen poverty and inequalities.

37. Urban migration governance requires a multi-stakeholder approach and governance structure so that diverse interests may be accommodated and cooperative action taken. It includes formal institutions as well as informal arrangements and the resources of residents including migrants. Partnerships with other cities and local governments, national government, civil society, migrant associations and the cities’ own diasporas are necessary to reap the benefits of the human resources of each city. The challenge is how to manage diversity in spaces where governments are weak and non-state actors (parties; gangs; developers; etc.) are often the real power brokers and how to build solidarities across various groups who have different backgrounds and trajectories - thinking through what an urban community even looks like in spaces where almost everyone is from elsewhere and has an agenda of onward movement.

38. Globally the often-vexed issue of social cohesion is being tackled by different cities and local communities in varied and creative ways. The city of Durban, South Africa for example is using storytelling and community theatre to engage communities, local government and migrants in a dialogue on inclusion in that city. In Jamaica initiatives target the integration of involuntarily returned migrants into local economic development programmes. In Bangladesh, programmes run by NGOs aim to improve access of migrant domestic workers to economic opportunities and social protection through the establishment of social enterprises. While in Bologna, Italy an initiative aims to change the narrative on migrants through an extensive communications campaign and by bringing together different stakeholders from civil society, local authorities and private sector to engage migrants and locals in welcoming initiatives.³²

Thematic Lens 2. The Potential Role of Secondary Cities

39. As mentioned above, in the current demographic transformations, the fact that most population growth is taking place in secondary cities - where backlogs and needs are greatest, and resources are weakest - is a vital developmental fact that has been poorly understood by national governments and development partners alike. Secondary cities have outdated and over-stretched infrastructure, unreliable transfers from the national fiscus, weak institutional capacity, incomplete and outdated data, restricted authority to generate revenue and wholly inadequate administrative capacity. The result of these constraints is evident in most developing countries where the bulk of urban growth is often informal, unplanned and incremental. It is not surprising that migrants arriving in these cities either do not settle or contribute to the problem of urban degradation and inefficient and costly city growth.

40. Nonetheless, it is possible to imagine a different economic trajectory for secondary cities with positive repercussions on the livelihoods of arriving migrants and their integration in value-chains. In fact, if capacitated, secondary cities have significant potential to transform and drive rural and regional development. In the geography of a national system of cities, they are key elements as they provide the interface between rural areas and metropolitan areas and potentially provide for the logistics, services and supply chain hubs to support national economic growth. This is particularly true in Africa, which still has a very significant rural population base.

41. If the governance and economies of secondary cities were to be transformed to enable the attraction of investment and the generation of decent gender-responsive employment opportunities, this would have direct impact on migrants’ livelihood while economically benefit from their integration.³³ Instead of being spaces of ongoing flows secondary cities could become welcomed places and destinations of migrants’ choice.

42. In this scenario, the first challenge is how to transform the governance, functions, land markets and labour structure of secondary cities and towns in Africa to better manage urbanisation and migration movements securing

³¹ In South Africa perceived “stealing of jobs” by foreign migrants has led to violent xenophobic responses. In Accra the constant harassment and demolition of Old Fadama can be traced to a combination of religious and regional prejudices.

³² Examples of Cities Alliance Catalytic Fund initiatives

³³ WBGU, Humanity on the move: Unlocking the transformative power of cities, Berlin: WBGU: German Advisory Council on Global Change (2016_)

greater access to services, housing and finance. This cannot be separated from a previous policy understanding of what works as the de facto obstacles and barriers for people getting a foothold in cities or, at least, to access to the resources they need.

43. The second challenge is how to help secondary cities to manage, anticipate and plan for human mobility. Most of the cities do not have the authority to develop and implement policy frameworks for the arrival and inclusion of migrants. In addition, the role of secondary cities needs to be analysed and understood within multi-jurisdictional or spatialised planning processes: such a policy lens allows to appreciate the rural-urban continuum affecting people mobility and understands the dependency of urban areas on their “rural hinterland” for economic development.

Thematic Lens 3. Better Linking Places of Origin and Destination

44. In the space between origin and destination three broad areas of interest can be identified. Firstly, migrants tend to form country and home town associations.³⁴ Hometown Associations (HTA), are organizations that allow immigrants from the same city or region to maintain ties with and materially support their places of origin. HTAs have become structured vehicles through which remittances - instead of being used for private needs - are pooled into collective transfers for social purposes. Due to the voluntary nature of groups and the working-class profiles of their members, the amount of time devoted to HTA activities is often limited and thus they tend to be organisationally weak. For any HTA, the primary activity is fundraising for ongoing programming or special needs, such as a natural disaster in the home country. Most HTA projects are infrastructure in nature covering basic service provision or parks, schools and clinics, a good part of which are developed in urban areas. Groups are often able to secure corporate sponsorship for their activities, including sponsorship by immigrant businesses. Both nongovernmental (NGOs) and international organizations have already formed innovative partnerships with HTAs to fund economic development projects in various African cities.

45. Secondly, as discussed, migrants tend to remit money back to families left behind. For example, according to the World Bank remittances to Liberia in 2011 were estimated at 300.08€m, the equivalent of 31% of its GDP and more than half the amount it received in aid that year. An important portion of these remittances are sent to urban areas. Given the low levels of household livelihood security, the money tends to be spent on immediate, basic needs – food for the family, children's school fees – rather than invested or saved. Moreover, relying on monthly remittances is risky as it is likely that remittances will decline over time as new generations are born in the host country with weakened links to the mother land. The question emerges if there are better ways to structure remittances flow in cities such that they help build household livelihoods as well as empowering the recipient individuals and households.

46. In converse to the long-term decline in household remittances, the third trend is that the children of migrants are increasingly gaining access to new ideas, skills and technologies. This is precisely the opposite of the brain drain that is left behind and a key motivator for migration in the first place. Again, the question emerges if it were possible to link and transfer these new economy skills sets back to the motherland in such a way that developing cities gain access to the innovation they need to actively participate in the changing global economy.

³⁴ Orozco M. et al., Migrant Hometown Associations and Opportunities for Development: A Global Perspective, Migration Policy Institute (2007)