



# International Remittances Day

JUNE 16TH, 2021 • POLICY DIALOGUE

Launch of the UNDP-IOM Multi-Year Roadmap for Cooperation on Migration and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Moldova

**Background:** In April 2020, the UN Secretary-General launched the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19: Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need to support countries and societies in the face of COVID-19. Following the decision to strengthen UNDP-IOM collaboration across the board, with a specific focus on the socio-economic response and recovery from COVID-19 (as per the joint letter from IOM and UNDP Principals), the two organizations, in close corporation with the Government, are enhancing their collaboration to ensure that COVID-19 response plans and Cooperation Frameworks capture specific vulnerabilities of migrants and displaced populations in the wake of the pandemic. This while building on their agency and assets for societies and a green economy, acknowledging that they are part of the solutions to recover better and adapting to climate change.

By extending equal opportunities to Moldovan migrants and their families to access prevention, protection, and economic recovery measures, and by leveraging the contribution of diaspora and local communities in early socio-economic recovery, including opportunities to contribute to and benefit from a green transition, Moldova can successfully address and mitigate the immediate and medium-term adverse social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, and also address the negative drivers of migration and vulnerabilities of specific groups within the population. Therefore, a joint UNDP-IOM multi-year roadmap for cooperation on migration and development has been set up under the UNDP-IOM global cooperation initiative, to be deployed to roll out joint programming and fundraising, mobilizing further interest and funds from international partners.

**Rationale of Event:** The potential benefits of international dialogue are limited if not supplemented with national and local dialogue regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and the overall purpose of the event was to facilitate open policy dialogue among diverse stakeholders in the field, including: Moldovan government agencies, international organizations, academic/research institutions, international financial institutions, Moldovan migrant organizations and the private sector. The event was conducted as a participatory discussion to prioritize concrete actions that could further sustainable development of Moldova through Moldova's partnerships with Moldovans abroad, and the possible role the UNDP and IOM can play, guided by development partners and Government priorities.

**Objectives of the Policy Dialogue:** The Policy Dialogue facilitated an open policy dialogue among diverse stakeholders in the field including Moldovan government agencies, international organizations, academic/research institutions, international financial institutions, Moldovan migrant organizations, and the private sector, aiming to:

1. Discuss opportunities to enhance cooperation with development partners and national authorities in the area of migration, including reintegration, and sustainable development – including climate action – in Moldova,
2. Enhance national and international policy developments in the area of migration and development, and increase stakeholders' awareness of the momentum offered by an enhanced diaspora engagement and a strengthening of bonds with the home country, including their contributions and show of solidarity during COVID-19, as well as on
3. Elaborate a set of workstreams aimed at integrating migration into COVID-19 socio-economic recovery plans, Moldova's green transition and migration as an accelerator for achieving the SDGs.

**Expected outcome:** Enhanced cooperation and partnerships with national stakeholders and sustainable development partners, with the view to pursue the migration and sustainable development agenda of the country. Through implementation of the joint UNDP-IOM roadmap on migration and sustainable development, options were discussed

to further enhance transparency, capacity, and policy coherence on return and sustainable reintegration of migrants, community development, remittances and labor migration, as a step further in supporting the responses and green recovery efforts of Moldova.

**Format:** The main format of the event was a participatory discussion. With the support of Expert Facilitators, participants discussed opportunities to enhance cooperation with development partners and national authorities in the area of migration, including reintegration, and sustainable development – including climate action – in Moldova.

The conference languages were **Romanian** and **English** with simultaneous translations.

**Place and date:** online format, June 16th, 2021, 14.00-17.40 EEST.

**Participants:** the Policy Dialogue event brought together over 120 international and national participants, including representatives of:

1. the Government of Moldova (in charge of or closely involved in policy coordination and policy-making on migration and the mainstreaming process);
2. Moldovan Local Public Authorities;
3. Development partners supporting the migration and sustainable development nexus.
4. the United Nations Network on Migration;
5. the Global Program Management Unit of the Global SDC-funded Programme “Making Migration Work for Sustainable Development”;
6. the IOM Regional Office in Vienna;
7. the UNDP Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS;
8. the UNDP Crisis Bureau in New York;
9. UN Moldova Country Team;
10. UNDP Moldova and IOM Mission to Moldova;
11. the international and local expert/academic community;
12. the civil society and private sector;
13. diaspora and hometown associations.

# AGENDA

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<b>14:00–14:10</b>	<b>Inaugural session</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Mr. <b>Luca Renda</b>, Head of the Recovery Solutions and Human Mobility / Crisis Bureau, UNDP</li><li>■ Mr. <b>Jonathan Prentice</b>, Head of the Secretariat of the UN Network on Migration</li></ul>
<b>14:10–14:55</b>	<b>Launching of the UNDP-IOM Roadmap</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ms. <b>Dima Al-Khatib</b>, UNDP Moldova Resident Representative</li><li>■ Mr. <b>Lars-Johan Lönnback</b>, IOM Chief of Mission to Moldova</li></ul> <b>Presentation of the UNDP-IOM Multi-Year Roadmap for Cooperation on Migration and Sustainable Development in the Republic of Moldova</b> <p>Mr. <b>Daniel Naujoks</b>, Interim Director of the International Organization and UN Studies specialization, School of International and Public Affairs of the Columbia University (SIPA).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Mr. <b>Adrian Ermurachi</b>, Deputy Secretary General of the Government of Moldova</li><li>■ Ms. <b>Caroline Tissot</b>, Director of Cooperation, Swiss Cooperation Office in Moldova</li><li>■ Mr. <b>Gintautas Baranauskas</b>, Deputy Head of Operations Section / Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Moldova</li></ul> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Oxana Maciuca</b>, International Expert on Migration and Development</p>
<b>14:55–15:40</b>	<b>Panel I: Evidence, Root Causes and Diaspora Outreach</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Moderator: Mr. <b>David Khoudour</b>, Human Mobility Advisor within the Recovery Solution and Human Mobility Team, UNDP Crisis Bureau in New York</li></ul> <b>Speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Ms. <b>Kathleen Newland</b>, Senior Fellow and Co-Founder of the Migration Policy Institute</li><li>■ Ms. <b>Nadejda Zubco</b>, Director of Moldovan Diaspora Relations Bureau</li><li>■ Ms. <b>Aurelia Spataru</b>, Deputy General Director of the National Bureau of Statistics</li><li>■ Mr. <b>Ben Slay</b>, Senior Adviser, Istanbul Regional Hub for Europe and Central Asia, UNDP</li></ul>
<b>15:40–16:20</b>	<b>Panel II: Remittances and Diaspora Investments</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Moderator: Mr. <b>Vladislav Kaim</b>, UN Secretary General's Youth Advisor on Climate Change</li></ul> <b>Speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ Mr. <b>Manuel Orozco</b>, Director of the Center for Migration and Economic Stabilization at Creative Associates International</li><li>■ Ms. <b>Olesea Frunza</b>, Head of Start-up Financing Department, Organization for Small and Medium Enterprises Sector Development</li><li>■ Ms. <b>Victoria Jacot</b>, Senior Consultant, Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assessment Policies Department, Ministry of Agriculture, Regional Development and Environment</li><li>■ Ms. <b>Angela Moraru</b>, Head of Balance of Payments Compilation Section, Reporting and Statistics Department, National Bank of Moldova</li><li>■ Mr. <b>Andrei Darie</b>, Programme Specialist, UNDP Moldova</li></ul>

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<p><b>16:20–17:00</b></p>	<p><b>Panel III: Labour Mobility and Skills</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Moderator: Mr. <b>Vassiliy Yuzhanin</b>, Senior Labour &amp; Human Mobility Facilitation Specialist, IOM Headquarters Speakers:</li> <li>■ Ms. <b>Monica Alfaro Murcia</b>, Legal and Policy Officer, European Commission, Directorate-General Migration and Home Affairs</li> <li>■ Ms. <b>Anna Gherganova</b>, Head of the Employment Policy and Migration Management Department, Ministry of Health, Labour and Social Protection</li> <li>■ Mrs. <b>Marcelina Baleca</b>, Interim Head of the Lifelong Learning Service, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research</li> <li>■ H.E. Mr. <b>Steven Fisher</b>, British Ambassador to the Republic of Moldova</li> <li>■ Ms. <b>Irena Cerovic</b>, Head of Solutions Mapping, UNDP Serbia</li> </ul>
<p><b>17:00–17:10</b></p>	<p><b>Presentation and facilitated discussion of the results from the Panels</b></p> <p><b>Conclusions</b> (15 min)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Mr. <b>David Khoudour</b>, Human Mobility Advisor within the Recovery Solution and Human Mobility Team, UNDP Crisis Bureau in New York</li> <li>■ Mr. <b>Vladislav Kaim</b>, UN Secretary General’s Youth Advisor on Climate Change</li> <li>■ Mr. <b>Vassiliy Yuzhanin</b>, Senior Labour &amp; Human Mobility Facilitation Specialist, IOM Headquarters</li> </ul> <p><b>Questions and Answers</b> (15 min)</p> <p>Moderator: Ms. <b>Oxana Maciuca</b>, International Expert on Migration and Development</p>
<p><b>17:30–17:40</b></p>	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Ms. <b>Dima Al-Khatib</b>, UNDP Moldova Resident Representative</li> <li>■ Mr. <b>Lars-Johan Lönnback</b>, IOM Chief of Mission to Moldova</li> </ul>

## Panel I:

# Evidence, Root Causes and Diaspora Outreach

### Main points of discussion from Panel I:

- Diaspora engagement initiatives and priorities of Government of Moldova to make better use of the diaspora potential for socio-economic development of Moldova, including best practices since the Diaspora Relations Bureau's formation 8 years ago.
- The diaspora's expression of needs and opportunities at the national level versus local level
- The differences between the Moldovan diaspora in the Russian Federation and the diaspora in Western Europe in terms of their needs and expectations from the Government of Moldova.
- Data collection, exchange and use for evidence-based policy making, as well as current status, obstacles, existing bottlenecks and priority actions to enhance data exchange in Moldova, including on diaspora.
- Survey data that indicate what the main reasons for emigration are beyond the strictly economic.
- The main demands/inquiries to the National Bureau of Statistics from government departments.
- The expectations from different governments in the region on what role the diaspora should take in national development efforts, including particularly effective practices for diaspora outreach.
- The main "root causes" of emigration, historically, related to the level of activity of the diasporas in national development efforts.

### Conclusions from Panel I:

- The diaspora outreach strategy must be nimble and responsive to a dynamic context, including the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The diaspora outreach agencies need to constantly evolve and improve, based on results and feedback.
- The importance for policy to include solid statistical and administrative data, as well as qualitative observations about diaspora behaviors and their interactions with their countries and communities, including with governments at all levels.
- The factor that evidence on diaspora activities abroad is weak; innovative ways of strengthening it should be sought.
- The non-economic root causes of migration, including faith in the future of the country, civic peace, and trust in local and national governments.
- The nature of the data that are available from the NBS, including the impact on the households having a family member abroad, numbers which have increased.
- Data challenges and obstacles related to the diaspora, including the decrease in the proportion of the population willing to take part in government surveys, as well as the lack of international standards for measuring diaspora populations in countries of destination.
- Moldovan initiatives and best practices to make better use of the diaspora's potential to improve socio-economic conditions in Moldova, including PARE 1+1, and the program to bring Moldovan youth living abroad with their families to Moldova in the summer to learn about the culture and consolidate their language skills.
- Local public authorities are increasingly strengthening their relations with diasporas, as they are not seeing emigrants anymore as lost human capital, but rather as resources that can contribute to development. Countries like Albania, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova have positive experiences reaching out with diasporas and engaging them in local development initiatives.

## Panel II:

# Remittances and Diaspora Investments

### Main points of discussion from Panel II:

- Global remittance trends, specifically commitment over resilience, pointing to migrants remitting behaviour and the significance for developing countries, including how to leverage the flows during the slow economic recovery while the flows continue and continue to grow.
- Different strategies for deepening financial inclusion into account deposits, formalizing savings, and mobilizing them into credit to increase the competitive capacity of local businesses with a focus on the digital economy.
- The panelists' input on investing in modernizing the Saving and Credit Associations, to allow them to perform remittance payments as subagents and increase credit in the agriculture sector.
- How to advance investment and/or promote migrant philanthropy in environmental protection programs focused on water conservation, modern agriculture, and forestry as a climate change risk mitigation approach.
- Ways to capitalize on remittances for investment and business development by migrants and their families.
- The climate change – migration nexus in Moldova. The relevance of Integrating the Migration and Climate Change Perspective into the National Adaptation Plan-2 and Agriculture Sectoral Adaptation Plan on Climate Change.
- Fluctuations in remittance volume during the pandemic, the causes for this increase during COVID-19 and how this can be explained.

### Conclusions from Panel II:

- Diaspora remittances represent a source of extreme importance for the normal functioning of the Moldovan economy. As COVID-19 pandemic has shown, remittances have performed a crucial role of a countercyclical stabilizer that prevented the key indicators in the economy to fall even further.
- However, moving on to shaping a more long-term perspective for a potential contribution of remittances to national development, certain obstacles persist. First, most of the remittances coming into the country are in sums of 500 USD or less per transaction, which does not allow significant economies of scale in terms of savings or investments in starting businesses. Secondly, only 20% of the money received through remittances end up being deposited in official financial institutions, depriving consumers of new opportunities for savings and investments and businesses of new credit resources.
- Accordingly, the development of credible savings and credit associations with advancements in internet and mobile banking is of extreme importance in order to crowdsource the remaining 80%.
- The work of ensuring that the resources that the returning migrants bring with themselves are matched in their contribution with the government support, not only in financial terms but other forms too.
- The further development of the PARE 1+1 program (which has a proven track record), as well as other, more targeted programs (particularly those focused on women returnee entrepreneurs, as well those in the countryside) represents the most feasible way forward.
- Remittances can also start to be mobilized as a source of climate finance, particularly when it comes to adaptation – as one of the most vulnerable countries in Europe in this regard, Moldova can tap a new stream of financial resources and lead by example in how remittances can benefit local climate action.

## Panel III: Labour Mobility and Skills

### Main points of discussion from Panel III:

- The main aspects of the EU current vision on labour mobility and skills, particularly the EU Pact on migration and its stance on skills-based mobility, how it tackles the issue of cooperation and partnerships.
- The EU perspective on skills and mobility and their role as development enabler both for the EU and origin states.
- The latest changes in the migration management policy and institutional system to promote ethical recruitment and assure safety and wellbeing of Moldovan migrants.
- The tools and approaches the Ministry of Education use to ensure training and education relevance to labour market needs, including foreign labour markets.
- Given the growing importance of non-technical and soft skills, the solutions that the Ministry of Education see for them to be recognized and how employers and employees may benefit from such recognition, especially upon return.
- The relevance of existing skills validation mechanism for the return and sustainable reintegration of Moldovan labour migrants.
- The UK policy regarding skills-based mobility and how it envisages the UK's cooperation with the countries of destinations, including opportunities for skills development and labour mobility.
- The development cooperation priorities of the UK to ensure labour mobility optimization for Moldova.
- How to ensure that skills-based and labour market-oriented labour mobility contributes effectively to national development strategy?
- What tools and instruments are there to ensure needed policy coherence and implementation?

- What steps may UNDP and IOM take in the Republic of Moldova to maximize the benefits of labour mobility for the country.

### Conclusions from Panel III:

- The launch succeeded in collecting major amounts of information concerning cooperation on skills and mobility and linking these efforts to development. This broadly included attention to regional, national and bilateral partnerships on skills as well as various policy solutions.
- In particular, policies concerning migrants and asylum seekers taken up by the European Commission place a strong emphasis on labour mobility and labour migration. In fact, the EU has taken a particularly proactive position in focusing on skilled-based and labour market-oriented mobility. A special focus was given to talents, and the ways in which the talent of workers can be matched to labour market gaps.
- Conversations included skills-based mobility and insight into bilateral cooperation on development and labour mobility between countries of destination and countries of origin.
- As well, there are other policy aspects that relate to labour mobility, including issues of migration management (visa, work and residence permits, etc.) as well as return and reintegration. These additional aspects at times require reform and change which reflects the rapidly changing reality of labour mobility policy implementation.
- Education clearly relates to skills and functions as a cornerstone of effective labour mobility policies, and thus should be considered thoroughly in policy envisioning.
- National level reforms, which cover ethical recruitment, and the licensing of private recruitment agencies inspire a unification approach which ensures that paths forward are effective and sustainable.



- As well, national reforms may be incorporated into bilateral discussions with major destination regions, such as the EU and countries like the UK.
- National reforms which succeed in addressing the needs of migrant workers in terms of skill acquisition and trainings are vital. Initiatives which anticipate both the migrants' arrival in countries of destination and the reintegration upon return to countries of origin are vital.
- Attention was also given to informal education and skills acquisition, including platform for distance work.
- Finally, digital solutions for working with diaspora communities, data collection, and the needs and facilitation of labour mobility for migrant workers themselves were emphasized as a tool and framework which can be utilized in an increasingly digital world.