

Summary of the Panel discussion on Migration and Sustainable Development

(24 April 2013, New York, NLB Conference Room 4)

1. The Panel Discussion on Migration and Sustainable Development was jointly organized by the Division for Sustainable Development and the Population Division of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. It was held on 24 A

remittances, combating racism and xenophobia against migrants and their families, and considering migration as one of the possible adaptation strategies in the context of addressing climate change, particularly in the most affected countries.

Migration and follow-up to Rio+20, post-2015 development agenda and SDGs

5. Migration is an important component of sustainable development. Migration has been absent from much of the discussion on internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The outcome document of the Rio+20 Conference has underlined the importance of integration of three dimensions of sustainable development. It emphasized the need for a systematic consideration of population trends and projections in national, rural and urban development strategies and policies through forward-looking planning. It called for addressing the challenges associated with demographic change, including migration, and protection of human rights of all migrants. The on-going discussion on the post-2015 UN development agenda and the SDGs provides an important opportunity to put migration “on the map”. Migration should be seriously considered in these on-going processes, even though it may be difficult to specify measurable targets and goals for migration stocks and flows.

Migration and science and technology development

6. There is a strong linkage between migration and science and technology development. Migration helps “brain circulation” which has two-way impacts. While migrants with skills help dissemination of knowledge and expertise in countries of destination, countries of destination also help migrants to gain better education and new ideas. Some of these migrants have become entrepreneurs after coming back to their home countries. The wide use of new communication tools, such as Skype and broad band internet, in the migrants’ community also contribute to the promotion and development of these new tools and technology. Cooperation should be enhanced in order to tackle the challenge of “brain drain” and to promote “brain circulation”.

Protection of refugees displaced by natural disasters

7. Climate change and natural disasters can be a driver of migration. Some studies suggest that more people have been displaced by natural disasters in recent years than previously. Most people who are displaced in response to extreme weather conditions remain within their country. Persons who flee across international borders in response to natural disasters are not covered by the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. The Nansen Initiative, launched in October 2012 by Norway

9. Some regions, such South Asia, have started regional consultative processes and cooperation on migration. It is important to learn how other regional and sub-regional groups are working on mobility.

10. Issues related to regional cooperation on migration would be: how the countries