

At Davos forum, UN agency launches report spotlighting benefits of investing in better migration data

24 January 2018 – Investing in value-based migration data that squarely focuses on impact can benefit the world to the tune of \$35 billion dollars, according to a new report launched Wednesday in Davos, Switzerland, by the United Nations migration agency.

A study by the International Organization for Migration's ([IOM](#)) Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), working with the McKinsey Centre for Government, found that better use of data will help turn human mobility into an asset worth tens of billions of dollars.

"Too often, data are seen as the abstract business of experts operating in backrooms," IOM Director General William Lacy Swing told the World Economic Forum's annual meeting in Davos, draws thousands of top business and global political leaders to discuss the most pressing issues facing the world.

"Yet [data are essential](#) to produce real-life results, such as protecting migrants in vulnerable situations, fill labour market shortages and improve integration, manage asylum procedures, ensure the humane return of migrants ordered to leave or increase remittance flows," he added.

The report, entitled *More than Numbers: How migration data can deliver real-life benefits* illuminates how investing in migration data can bring huge economic, social and humanitarian benefits.

Providing detailed calculations of benefits across a range of policy areas in both developed and developing countries, *More than Numbers* demonstrates clear examples of how better data can help manage migration more effectively.

The report also provides guidance to countries interested in realising these benefits and suggests ways in which they could develop their own strategies to improve data on migration.

For example, many European Union (EU) migrants have skills that do not match their jobs. The report calculates that using data to reduce over-qualification would increase their income by six billion Euro.

Better data can also save labour migrants \$6 billion in recruitment fees for jobs abroad, or increase the money that migrants send home by \$20 billion worldwide.

But it is not only about money.

Smart use of data can double the success rate of identifying human trafficking cases, speed up asylum applications or promote humane, voluntary returns.

“We are at a crucial moment,” said Mr. Swing.

UN Member States have started 2018 negotiations towards adopting a [Global Compact](#) for safe, orderly and regular migration. Consultations leading up to them have highlighted the importance of improving evidence on migration.

UN countries have also committed to several migration-related targets linked to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals ([SDGs](#)).

Without better data, it will be hard to assess progress towards these common targets.

“The time to invest in better migration data is now,” Mr. Swing underscored.

“Just looking at the examples we have illustrated in the report would see a boost in \$35 billion towards the opportunities and challenges that migration presents,” he concluded.