

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.

[The Last Swiss Holocaust Survivors: Keeping the memory alive](#)

24 January 2018 – After the Second World War, 90 per cent of the Holocaust survivors were between 16 and 45 years old. Today, the youngest survivors, who were born in the last phase of the war, are over age 70.

Some endured concentration and extermination camps, while others escaped by fleeing or hiding.

For the majority, returning to their homeland was not an option, so they emigrated to Israel or the United States.

It wasn't until the investigations of the Bergier Commission on dormant assets in the late 1990s that the public became aware of the Holocaust survivors living in Switzerland – most of whom travelled to the country only after the war.

The number of survivors is steadily decreasing.

Switzerland – which now presides over the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance that unites governments and experts to strengthen and promote Holocaust education and remembrance globally – sponsored the exhibition on survivors at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

Portraits of Holocaust Survivors tells the stories of individuals who are among the last survivors and how they carried on with their lives in Switzerland after the war. The exhibition is one of several events surrounding the annual commemoration of the [International Day](#) of

Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust (27 January).

VIDEO: Dr. Ruth Westheimer, a German-born Jew who fled to Switzerland during World War II, shares her story at the opening of the 'Last Swiss Holocaust Survivors' exhibit at United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The memories of the survivors

Anita Winter, President of the Gamaraal Foundation, which helps alleviate financial distress of Holocaust survivors, is the child of survivors. Seeing the difficulty with which the survivors spoke of their experiences, she felt deeply thankful to them for sharing their stories.

According to Ms. Winter, many told her personally that they felt it was their duty to speak on behalf of the six million who can no longer speak for themselves. For her, their resilience is amazing.



Portrait of Nina Weil. Photo: Gamaraal Foundation/Beat Mumenthaler

Born in 1932, Nina Weil lived in what is today Czech Republic. In until 1942 she was deported to Theresienstadt and later arrived at Auschwitz with her mother, who died at age 38 of exhaustion. Ms. Weil survived a "selection" by camp doctor Josef Mengele as well as a labour camp.

Ms. Weil shared her distress: "They tattooed me: 71978. I cried a lot. Not because of the pain, no, because of the number. Because I had lost the name, I was just a number. My mother said, 'Do not cry, nothing has happened. When we get home, you visit the dance school and get a big bracelet so no one sees the number.' I never went to dance school and never got the bracelet."

Ms. Winter recalls an unsettling story Ms. Weil shared with her about a trip to the hospital during which she had bloodwork done by a young technician.



Portrait of Eduard Kornfeld. Photo: Gamaraal Foundation/Beat Mumenthaler

Eduard Kornfeld survived both Auschwitz and Dachau camps. He grew up in Bratislava, Slovakia, and was arrested in 1944 while hiding with his brother in Hungary.

After the war, in which he lost his entire family, he arrived in Davos weighing only 27 kilos, or 60 pounds, weak and sick from exhaustion. There Swiss doctors saved his life.

Mr. Kornfeld said, "We were deported in a cattle car, the journey took three days. When the train suddenly stopped, I heard someone shouting outside in German, 'Get out!' I looked out of the carriage and saw SS officers beating

people they thought were moving too slowly. A mother wasn't moving quick enough because she was trying to take care of her child, so the SS officers took her infant and threw him in the same truck they put the old and sick. Those people were sent to be gassed immediately."

Ms. Winter remembered him telling her about his emaciated state when he first arrived in Switzerland.



Portrait of Klaus Appel. Photo: Gamaraal Foundation/Beat Mumenthaler

Klaus Appel was born in 1925 in Berlin. After his father, Paul, and his older brother, Willi-Wolf, were arrested and sent to Auschwitz, he and his sister came to England in one of the last Kindertransport humanitarian programmes. After the war, Klaus married a Swiss woman, moved to western Switzerland and worked as a watchmaker. He died in April 2017, 10 days before this exhibit was launched in Switzerland.

Mr. Appel explained, "We were at home when the doorbell rang. They had come to arrest my father. 'Are you Mr. Appel?' they asked him. 'Then come with us.' My father just calmly turned to me and said, 'You are going to school.' That was the last thing he ever said to me. I never saw him again."

Ms. Winter reminisced how Mr. Appel worked hard to share his experiences with young people visiting schools and universities.

AUDIO: President and Founder of the Gamaraal Foundation, Anita Winter, shares short stories about three of the survivors Nina Weil, Eduard Kornfeld and Klaus Appel.

This exhibition is part of a series of events at that will culminate on 31 January with a Holocaust Memorial Ceremony in the General Assembly Hall.

[With new leadership committed to reforms, Somalis must make 2018 'year of implementation' – UN envoy](#)

24 January 2018 – Grappling with turbulent politics, persisting terrorism and the risk of famine, Somalia must make 2018 a year of carrying out reforms, a senior United Nations official said Wednesday, urging more international financial and technical support for the Horn of Africa country that underwent a peaceful transition of power to a new President a year ago.

“Like many new governments, his has been through a [steep learning curve](#),” Michael Keating, the UN Secretary-General’s Special Representative for Somalia, told a Security Council briefing, referring to Somali President, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed ‘Farmajo.’

Mr. Keating said the Somali leader has crafted a commendable national agenda embracing financial reform, job creation, inclusive politics, conflict resolution and reform of the security sector.

In implementing this multi-pronged agenda, the Federal Government faces several major challenges, including the mobilization of adequate technical and financial capacity, ensuring coherent and coordinated approaches by both national and international actors, and managing the powerful constituencies that need to be on side, such as federal member states, parliamentarians, clan power brokers, the private sector and international partners.

“I strongly encourage Somali stakeholders to unite to tackle these priorities and to make 2018 a year of implementation,” Mr. Keating said.

On the political front, he said that, in December, tensions were sharply raised in Mogadishu by the violent arrest of a prominent opposition politician by the national intelligence and security agency and the raid on the house of a leading parliamentarian. The recent replacement of the Mayor has also created waves.

These incidents have highlighted basic problems that need to be addressed, such as inadequate rules and safeguards governing the conduct of politics, including impeachment procedures; blurred roles and lines of accountability of the many security actors; and the perpetuation of corrupt practices and of untraceable money in the political marketplace.

Turning to the humanitarian situation, he said that the risk of famine still looms after four consecutive failed rainy seasons, and the 2018 relief aid plan calls for \$1.6 billion.

“Chronic poverty and persistent humanitarian needs cast an ominous shadow over Somalia,” he warned, noting that an estimated 6.2 million people are in need of assistance.

Continued support will be needed to help Somalia break the cycle of recurrent crises that cause so much suffering and undermine the peacebuilding and state-building process

“Continued support will be needed to help Somalia break the cycle of recurrent crises that cause so much suffering and undermine the peacebuilding and state-building process,” he stressed.

Central to that process is gaining political agreement as to how power will be exercised, shared and accounted for. This requires progress in three key areas: review of the provisional federal constitution; preparation for elections in 2020-21; and conflict resolution and reconciliation, he said.

Regarding conflict resolution and reconciliation, the Federal Government plans to launch a national strategy in the coming months, recognising the multifaceted nature of the many disputes and grievances in the country.

A serious danger exists that long-standing disputes between Puntland and Somaliland, and in particular an armed stand-off in Sool, could erupt into violence in the coming days.

“With the support of international partners including many on this Council, I have urged the leaders of Puntland and Somaliland to declare a cessation of hostilities, withdraw their forces, restore the status quo ante, and open channels of communication,” he said.

Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat, despite or perhaps because it is on the back foot as a result of financial pressures, counter terrorism operations and air strikes, Mr. Keating said, noting that on 14 October, Mogadishu suffered the deadliest attack using improvised explosive devices, with an estimated 512 people killed, nearly all civilians.

Use of ‘sticks and carrots’ to defeat Al-Shabaab

“Defeating Al Shabaab requires both a military and political strategy, the use of both sticks and carrots, as well as sustained efforts to address deficits that lend extremists a degree of credibility,” he said.

These deficits include corruption, lack of education and job opportunities for young people, weak national justice and corrections capacity, and grievances arising from unresolved disputes.

The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) remains fundamental for security in the country, but this year will require dedicated effort by the Somali leadership, the African Union and international partners to build political acceptability and operational capability of the Somali security sector, which should enable AMISOM gradually to hand over responsibility to Somali security forces.

To that end, on 4 December, the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member States, agreed to develop a transition plan in the first quarter of this year, working closely with international partners, most importantly the African Union, troop and police contributing countries and major international investors in Somalia’s security, including the European Union.

“Premature drawdown of AMISOM forces will be a gift to Al Shabaab and risks undermining the gains that have been made, at great human and financial cost, over the last decade,” he said.

Somalia is making definite progress, but continued progress is dependent not only on the strong political will and skill of the federal government, but also cooperation and partnership with federal member states, parliament, clan elders, business and international partners.

“When all of these constituencies cooperate, huge strides can be made,” he said.

[World's most vulnerable countries on track to achieve universal Internet access by 2020 – UN report](#)

24 January 2018 – The world's least developed countries are narrowing 'digital divide,' and with millions of people now taking advantage of smart phones and other digital devices, keeping up this momentum can put their societies on the fast track to sustainable development, the United Nations said on Wednesday.

"It is vital that all stakeholders – governments, civil society, the private sector and UN system – continue to build momentum through collaboration and sharing of innovative solutions," highlighted Fekitamoeloa Katoa 'Utoikamanu, the top UN official for least developed and other vulnerable countries, [launching](#) a new report on universal and affordable Internet.

"[Least developed countries](#) with a strong government commitment, recognizing the importance of digital technologies for national development, and backed by enlightened policy and regulatory actions including steps to develop skills, can achieve universal and affordable access to the Internet," [added](#) Houlin Zhao, the Secretary-General of the UN International Telecommunication Union ([ITU](#)).

The report, *Achieving universal and affordable Internet in least developed countries*, also states that the progress augurs well for the implementation of the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development, as well as the [Istanbul Programme of Action](#), which charts a development course for least developed countries.

A key highlight of the progress is the launch of third generation (3G) mobile telephony and data services in all 47 countries in that category as well as over 60 per cent of the population there covered by a 3G network. Overall, four in five people in these countries have access to mobile-cellular network.

Information and communication technologies are transforming lives everywhere and offering limitless opportunities for sustainable development ITU chief Houlin Zhao

These improvements are already having a positive impact in areas including financial inclusion, poverty reduction and better health services.

Furthermore, the anticipation that these countries will achieve (on average) 97 per cent mobile broadband coverage, making Internet prices relatively

affordable by 2020 can translate into strong, home-grown innovation; new business opportunities; and more improvements health and education services, added Ms. 'Utoikamanu, the UN High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States.

While the picture is largely positive, there are some gaps which need to be overcome, find the report, including address issues related to limited capacity in information and communication technology (ICT) skills and wider socio-economic matters such as education levels and gender equality.

Corrective action, according to report, can include fostering competition, infrastructure, taxation policies, education and developing ICT sector plans.

The 47 least developed countries represent the most vulnerable segment of the international community. They comprise more than 880 million people – about 12 per cent of world population – but account for less than two per cent of world gross domestic product (GDP) and about one per cent of global trade in goods.

The report, which also measures progress in these countries against Sustainable Development Goal target 9.C on universal and affordable access to the Internet is a joint undertaking by the Office of the Office of the UN High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States ([OHRLLS](#)); and ITU.

[Service and Sacrifice: Chadian peacekeepers on a UN mission for peace in Mali](#)

24 January 2018 – As Tahir and his fellow Chadian peacekeepers set out on their daily patrol through the dusty streets of Kidal, in northern Mali, the question he faces is always the same – will he and his team return safely to the United Nations base?

“Many of my friends have died here in Mali. We lived together, ate together. Unfortunately, they lost their lives here,” said Chief Sergeant Mahamat Tahir Moussa Abdoulaye.

The UN peacekeeping mission in Mali, known by its French acronym [MINUSMA](#), has become one of the most dangerous peace operations in the Organization's history. Since 2013, 155 peacekeepers have lost their lives in the West African nation.

“Many of those who came here in this UN Mission are dead, others will have

the scars of their wounds for life,” Tahir said, referring to his fellow Chadians who have served with MINUSMA.

Established in 2013, MINUSMA supports the Malian peace agreement by helping to restore State authority, advance diplomacy, strengthen security and promote human rights.

In the true spirit of the United Nations Charter, Chad has stepped up to provide protection to people in conflict
USG for Peacekeeping Operations
Jean-Pierre Lacroix

According to the Secretary-General’s most recent report on Mali, over the course of 2017, the security situation there worsened and attacks against MINUSMA and Malian defence and security forces increased and intensified.

The Chadians, in particular, have paid a heavy price. As of the end of 2017, of the 57 fatalities suffered by Chadian military and police while serving with the UN, 47 have occurred in Mali since 2013.

“[UN peacekeeping](#) – and the millions we serve – rely on Member States of the UN to provide the personnel and resources to ensure that our operations can effectively protect civilians and support political processes in some of the world’s most dangerous and complex environments,” said Jean-Pierre Lacroix, Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. “Our Mission in Mali continues to work tirelessly to help bring peace to the country.”

“In the true spirit of the United Nations Charter, Chad has stepped up to provide protection to people in conflict,” he added. “We pay tribute to the Chadians who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of peace, and thank the people and Government of Chad for their continued partnership with the UN and their commitment to peace,” he added.

Given the increasingly challenging nature of today’s conflicts and the high number of recent peacekeeper casualties, the United Nations is actively engaged in seeking solutions that will reduce fatalities, improve the safety and security of our personnel and improve the overall performance of UN peacekeeping operations to protect the vulnerable and nurture a fragile peace.

Before being deployed with MINUSMA, Tahir had already fought against the Boko Haram terrorist group in Chad and Nigeria. “We are born warriors, we are born in war and we have always heard the sound of gunfire.”

But as he tells his contingent: “As peacekeepers, we are not here on a war mission, but on a mission for peace.”

As conflicts have evolved, so too has the role of peacekeeping operations; once required to monitor and observe ceasefires, today’s peacekeeping operations must perform a range of functions, including protection of civilians, promoting the rule of law, upholding human rights, supporting credible elections, building institutions of governance, supporting

disarmament efforts and minimising the risk of unexploded ordinance.



Chad is one of the 20 largest contributors of uniformed personnel to United Nations peacekeeping operations, with more than 1,400 troops and police deployed in three missions around the world: Mali, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. Pictured, a Chadian military peacekeeper on patrol in northern Mali. *UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti*



As part of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)), Chadians strive daily to save lives in one of the world's most dangerous peacekeeping operations. Forty-seven Chadians have been killed in Mali in recent years. *UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti*



The Chadian troops protect convoys in the most dangerous regions controlled by terrorist groups. Pictured, officers checking for explosives. "We cannot go for 200 kilometers, 300 kilometers without being blown up by a mine," said Colonel Abdelsalam Malick Yacoub, Commander of the Chadian Contingent in Kidal. *UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti*



Patrols last throughout the night, with troops on duty stopping only to eat, stretch their legs and pray. *UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti*



There are 1,379 military and 17 police from Chad serving in Mali under the UN flag. Their mandate is to support the Malian peace agreement by helping to restore State authority, advancing diplomacy, strengthening security, promoting human rights, and supporting national authorities in protecting cultural heritage. *UN Photo/Marco Dormino*



To accomplish their goals, Chadian troops work closely with the communities they help to protect. Above, Chadian contingent patrols the northern Mali town of Kidal. *UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti*



The Chadian peacekeeping presence also supports the joint task force comprised of the Group of Five Sahel countries – which also includes Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger – to combat terrorism and organized criminal activity, and promote stability and development in that region. Pictured, Chadian peacekeepers on foot patrol. *UN Photo/Sylvain Liechti*

Today, some 110,000 peacekeepers from more than 120 countries, serve in 15 peacekeeping operations around the world. Operating in highly volatile environments far away from their families, peacekeepers make sacrifices in the service of peace every day.

For Tahir and thousands like him, the reward is in the knowledge that men, women and children in these areas are safer as a result of their work.

This is the first in a series of stories by UN News as part of a campaign highlighting the [contributions and sacrifices](#) of the men and women who serve around the world in UN peace operations.