

Statement Delivered at the

**High-Level Panel on Migration and Structural Transformation in
Africa**

25 September 2018

12:00 - 14:00, Conference Room IV, UN Headquarters

New York, United States of America



Remarks of DIALLO Thierno Samba, Mercy Corps' Country Director for Mali

High-Level Panel on Migration and Structural Transformation in Africa,

25 September 2018 from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m., in Conference Room 4, at UN-HQ

- I greatly appreciate the presentations and commitments of all the panelists and I wholeheartedly support unleashing the power of migrants to help positively transform Africa
- My name is Thierno Samba Diallo and I am Mercy Corps' Country Director for Mali.
- I have worked throughout Africa in development and peacebuilding for 20 years and as a Guinean citizen, I truly recognize the importance and benefits of migration.
- While I appreciate the focus this event has on migration and economic development, I most importantly appreciated the consensus on the importance of data, evidence and share new research that addresses why people migrate, push factors of migration, so we can most appropriately understand and respond.
- Mercy Corps, a leading global humanitarian and development organization, in collaboration with Samuel Hall and the support of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO), undertook a mixed methods study, leveraging over 12,000 surveys and dozens of focus groups and key informant interviews with youth in Afghanistan and Somalia and migrants in Italy and Greece.
- While our findings look beyond the African continent, they are important for this discussion and I appreciate the chance to share. We found that:
 - Migration decision making is a complex process. Decisions are influenced by many factors (rather than a sole factor) and the relationship between economic factors such as employment and wealth/assets and migration is often dynamic—in some cases linked to greater migration, in some cases linked to lesser migration.
 - Economic development programs such as vocational training and secondary education have mixed or no impact on migration decisions. Based on evaluations of two economic interventions we conducted in Afghanistan and Somalia, only improving socio-economic well-being through such programs may not influence migration decisions.
 - The main factors that influence migration are related to perceived insecurity, exclusion and lack of optimism. For example, in both Somalia and Afghanistan, youth who felt insecure and had concerns about future security in their communities were more likely to seek to migrate. This is very common to the situation in the Sahel region of West Africa

- We would urge member states and donors not to tie development aid to migration reduction. Though economic development programs may not influence migration decisions, leading to less migration to Europe, they generate a host of positive outcomes and are therefore valuable in their own right. Moreover, the aim of development aid should not be to limit people's agency but to help them build better lives wherever they choose to live
- Most importantly, we also urge governments to prioritize inclusive security for all its citizens to address a major driver of migration.
- Mercy Corps committed to work with UNCTAD and other stakeholders to make the Global Compact for Migration a success, including through contextual research and sharing data to better inform decision making on migration for structural transformation in Africa.
- For more information about this research, please see our [Migration Research Brief](#) and visit www.mercycorps.org

Thank you.

Contact:

DIALLO Thierno Samba
Mercy Corps Country Director for Mali
Email: tdiallo@mercycorps.org