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A NEW APPROACH IN MIGRATION MANAGEMENT

"SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT ZONES" SUPPORT HOST COMMUNITIES AND MIGRANTS ALIKE

Against the backdrop of unprecedented refugee and migration movements, UN member states are currently working on two "Global Compacts" for refugees, on the one hand, and for "safe, orderly and regular migration", on the other hand, to be adopted later in 2018. It is clear that forced migration and migration take place mainly between more or less neighboring developing countries with limited absorption capacity, therefore both host communities and refugees and migrants must be supported at the same time. It is unclear how this should actually happen. We think: it is not enough "only" to implement recent decisions (e.g. the Valletta Action Plan of the EU-Africa "Migration Summit" or the G20 "Compact with Africa"). We urgently need a new approach for millions of people who have fled continued violence, natural disasters or extreme poverty to more or less neighboring cities and countries. They actually want to "arrive," but in fact they "land", often for years and decades, along with other disadvantaged groups, mainly in the slums of large cities and in informal settlements; a small part "lands" in refugee camps.

To free these people from their often hopeless situation, three "liberation steps" are necessary:

1. Migrants must first and foremost be seen as citizens and (at least potential) consumers and producers and not as "objects of care".
2. They need to be more closely linked with neighboring communities and cities so that they can contribute to their prosperity and vice versa.
3. There must be a viable institutional framework for steps one and two, a transparent model that can actually be implemented. We call this model "Special Development Zones" (SDZs).

We acknowledge that, despite chronic under-funding, UNHCR, UNDP and many other traditional actors in the humanitarian and development aid sectors do exceptional work, and we also acknowledge that, with regard to the a.m. steps, there is conceptual progress (examples are the cash-transfer-programs and policies effective in Uganda and Jordan).

We believe, however, that it is high time to go significantly further. Starting in Africa, especially along the migration routes and wherever possible, informal migrant settlements and refugee camps should be linked to neighboring communities and cities in

SDZs. The same applies to the slums of large cities where migrants and other disadvantaged groups live together. The model of SDZs, which we have developed with a group of experts and practitioners, builds on the widespread model of Special Economic Zones, it is created and functions basically in the same way; this also means that the initiative must come from the respective national governments or – e.g. in the context of fragile states - from interested local actors such as mayors. However, since the SDZs serve not only to attract investors, but also to include migrants and other disadvantaged groups, a number of other features have to be added. This includes first and foremost the access of all inhabitants to the labor market and social services. The result is the emergence of "islands of good governance". In the first phase of setting up an SDZ, financial support from private investors is required, as well as from traditional actors and donors, including effective guarantees for private training, trade and investment activities, e.g. through a special fund (see also the proposals of the German-African Business Association). No later than in the second phase, the traditional actors should be willing to retreat to enable innovative solutions, e.g. when it comes to developing new forms of e-governance and financial inclusion. We have received corresponding specific inquiries; we could imagine starting with a pilot project in Libya.

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