NEW YORK / GENEVA (24 October 2014) – Development targets that pay no attention to which groups are being left behind can be met without having any real impact on ensuring a more equal and just world, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Francois Crépeau, told today the UN General Assembly.

In his latest annual report, Mr. Crépeau called on Governments worldwide to fully include the human rights of migrants in the post-2015 UN development agenda. “The focus should not be on simply reducing the cost and increasing the flow of remittances, but rather on the human cost of migration,” he said.

“We all know and applaud that migrants are drivers and enablers of development. Migrants contributed to efforts to attain the Millennium Development Goals by, among other things, boosting household income, resulting in improved health and greater school enrolment,” he said. “Governments must therefore also recognise and applaud migrants as human beings.”

“If the human rights of migrants, regardless of their status, are effectively promoted, respected and protected within well governed migration processes, such development outcomes can be greatly enhanced,” the independent expert highlighted.

However, the Special Rapporteur warned, migrants’ contribution to development frequently comes at a human cost, especially for those in an irregular situation who are often constrained by circumstances to perform tasks at whatever financial, physical or even psychological cost.

Mr. Crépeau’s report also discusses how States are, in turn, ineffective when it comes to monitoring and sanctioning businesses that exploit migrants for their cheap labour, often in dirty, difficult and dangerous working conditions.

In many countries, the most marginalized and exploited migrants are those who are in an irregular situation, have a precarious labour contract, are low-skilled, are children or adolescents, are women, in particular in domestic work, or are working in the construction, hospitality, extraction, fishing and agricultural sectors.

“Such migrants experience multiple forms of discrimination, on the basis of nationality, legal status, sector of work, sex, age and ethnic, linguistic or religious identity,” he said.

The independent expert expressed concern that the post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals (Post 2015 SDGs) have been viewed by some as an economic growth agenda, not explicitly aligned with human rights which, in his view, are essential for sustainable development.

“The post 2015 Sustainable Development Goals are an opportunity for governments to show their commitment to human rights—that they are indeed indivisible and universal-applicable to
all regardless of one’s immigration status,” he stressed.

(*) Check the full report to the UN General Assembly: http://daccess-ods.un.org/TMP/1659530.40122986.html

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François Crépeau (Canada) was appointed Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants in 2011 by the UN Human Rights Council. Mr. Crépeau is also Full Professor at the Faculty of Law of McGill University, in Montréal, where he holds the Hans and Tamar Oppenheimer Chair in Public International Law. Learn more, visit: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/SRMigrants/Pages/SRMigrantsIndex.aspx

The UN human rights experts are part of what is known as the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council. Special Procedures, the largest body of independent experts in the UN Human Rights, is the general name of the independent fact-finding and monitoring mechanisms of the Human Rights Council that address either specific country situations or thematic issues in all parts of the world.

Read the International Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families: http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CMW.aspx

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