



Migration stakeholders discuss strengthening cross regional collaboration between Africa and the Arab region to accelerate GCM implementation

Side-Event at the International Migration Review Forum (Virtual)
Thursday, 19 May 2022



Report/Summary of Discussions

The side event addresses the common priorities in Africa and Arab regions and discusses cross-regional collaboration to support Member States and stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The event focuses, in particular on Objective 16 of the GCM; on empowering migrants to realize full inclusion and social cohesion as one of the key common priority-GCM objectives across the two regions. Expected outcomes of the event is the commitment from each participating agency on how to strengthen cross-regional collaboration in their respective areas of work and what support can be offered to Member States and stakeholders to accelerate the GCM implementation ahead of the next Regional Review.



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On 19 May 2022, The International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) held a side event during the International Migration review Forum (IMRF) addressing cross-regional collaboration between the African and Arab regions on migration issues. The virtual event was held in coordination with the Governments of Kenya, Malawi and Morocco who shared remarks represented by senior government officials. The panelists for the session also included representatives of UN Agencies and other stakeholders.

The event focused mainly on proposing concrete ideas to enhance cross-regional collaboration between the African and Arab region. Moreover, discussions focused on GCM Objective I6, on empowering migrants to realize full inclusion and social cohesion as one of the key common priorities of the GCM objectives across the two regions. Stakeholders shared some of the good practices, from regional and national levels, in achieving this objective and identified gaps for further improvement. Panelists and discussants provided inputs on how to strengthen cross-regional collaboration in their respective areas of work and insights on what support can be offered to Member States and stakeholders to accelerate GCM implementation ahead of the next Regional Reviews.

The IMRF Side-event aimed to:

- ❖ Address the common priorities in Africa and Arab regions and discuss cross-regional collaboration to support Member States and stakeholders to accelerate the implementation of the GCM.
- ❖ Provide a platform for all migration stakeholders to interact, to share lessons learned and good practices, and to assess the outcomes of the various Regional Reviews.
- ❖ Facilitate the discussion of key outcomes and recommendations aimed at ensuring the regional contribution to the first International Migration Review Forum held in May 2022

Key recommendations:

Below are the key recommendations from the IMRF Side event which fall under the following GCM objectives:

GCM Objective I6: Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion

GCM Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.

- The need to share good practices on GCM implementation at national and regional levels as well as the inclusion of more champions countries.
- The need to enhance cooperation among relevant national and regional UNNMs in order to assist Member States with interregional dialogue and cooperation.
- The importance of making linkages with other GCM objectives (e.g. work around GCM I - data, GCM 5 - legal pathways and regularization remains key) as well as development objectives (e.g. continental – AfCFTA and thematic – gender, education, labor) and the SDGs.



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- The need to enhance dialogue with multiple stakeholders and to promote a human rights focus for more inclusive approaches for social cohesion.

Summary of Presentations and Interventions:

Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Development Economist and Migration Governance expert

Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, the Master of Ceremony began with setting the scene and introduced the objective of the meeting which was to propose concrete ideas to enhance cross-regional collaboration between the Africa and Arab region.

Ms. Siyanga-Knudsen highlighted that the keynote speeches received from the Republic of Malawi, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Kenya shed light on the various opportunities for peer learning across regions and as well as on the migration challenges faced. Ms. Siyanga emphasised that coordination among multisector actors remains vital starting from pre-IMRF to post IMRF processes notably on the aspect of data collection and the use of data for policymaking. Moreover, through the numerous examples of social cohesion were provided, it was clear that “social cohesion is the only way towards sustainable development” and that humanising migrants’ rights remains central. Ms. Siyanga explained that the role of civil society has been echoed particularly through the actions taken towards humanizing migrants and specifically migrant workers.

Key Messages from Government Representatives:

H.E Mr. Alexander Muteshi, Director General, Directorate of Immigration and Citizen Services, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government of Kenya

H.E Mr. Alexander Muteshi started by highlighting that a couple of years ago the discussion between the African and Arab regions had been an agenda item that often resulted in the need to address the multiple challenges resulting in complex migration dynamics in both regions. He stressed on the imperative need to ensure that the migration process is humanly and responsibly managed with that fact 1 out of every 7 people in the planet today are on the move, including around 280 million are migrants. Mr Muteshi confirmed that the human right violations and discrimination faced by migrants along migratory routes requires special and individualized assistance as they are not sufficiently addressed under the established international legal principles of non-refoulement and the international protection framework. Mr Muteshi reiterated that combating irregular migration challenges in the region requires better control and screening mechanisms, better border management and protection systems and more secure travel documents as well as expanded cooperation on capacity building of border officials. He highlighted that addressing irregular migration including human trafficking and migrant smuggling as well as capacity strengthening of Member States should be prioritized to ensure the protection of migrant rights. He finalized by stressing the need to include migration in regional cooperation processes as isolating the issues and challenges of migrants is no longer a reflection of today’s reality.

Mr. John Kabaghe, Acting Head of Planning and Research, The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malawi



Mr. John Kabaghe stated that at the national level, Malawi had been developing policies to engage labor migrants and the diaspora. Furthermore, Malawi was working on modernizing its current migration policies in close collaboration with organizations such as IOM. Challenges include coherent mechanism which would allow the country to approach migration in a holistic manner and to get more stakeholders engaged. At the regional level, the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) had had few engagements on the GCM with plans to create a roster of migration experts in the Southern African region in order to share good practices and experiences. A GCM review conference was hosted this April to ensure a regional approach to GCM implementation as most of migration flows are within the region. He noted that the virtual world was making it easier to break physical barriers and enhance communication at the regional and cross-regional level to talk about migration and GCM implementation. There was still a lot of work to be done, and Malawi pledged to continue building on the champion platform to talk to fellow champion countries and enhance the process of building migration networks.

H.E Mr. Ismail Chekkori, Director of Global Issues, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Residents Abroad, the Kingdom of Morocco

H.E Mr. Ismail Chekkori stated that Morocco believes that a coordinated, united and sustainable approach between both regions is essential to the implementation of the GCM. It's even more important to take into consideration the particular specifications of each region and to capture the cross-subregion dynamics. In fact, the member states of the African and Arab region are both host, transit and destination states. Thereby, they all have a strong community inside and outside their borders which is essential for the economic, cultural and scientific contribution both through remittances and the transfer of skills and experiences. Mr. Chekkori highlighted that since 2013, Morocco has established a national immigration and asylum strategy where the kingdom has developed two regularization campaigns for more than 50,000 people from Africa and the Kingdom has fulfilled its commitment during the pandemic by ensuring vaccination for all migrants regardless of their legal status. Finally, Mr. Chekkori stressed on the importance of sharing good practices in the implementation of the GCM since it is essential in fostering regional and international cooperation and the necessity to continue showcasing the importance of just, balanced and fair partnerships between countries of origin and destination taking into account the needs of all parties.

Key Messages from Panel Discussions

Moderated by **Dr. Ray Jureidini** Professor of Migration, Human Rights, and Ethics at Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics. Discussions were held in line with the following guiding questions:

- Can you please briefly elaborate your organization's role in the implementation of the GCM, and why, in your view, is cross-regional collaboration needed to further enhance GCM implementation?
- One of the key common priorities GCM objectives identified across the two regions is objective I6 on empowering migrants to realize full inclusion and social cohesion. Why do you think this objective is particularly important to your region?
- From stakeholders' perspectives, what are some of the good practices witnessed with regards to empowering migrants to realize full inclusion and social cohesion?



- How can the UN, and specifically, IOM as Coordinator of the Network, work better together to enhance Member States and Stakeholders cross-regional cooperation, ensuring the empowerment of migrants to realize full inclusion and social cohesion?

Dr. Ray Jureidini, Professor of Migration, Human Rights, and Ethics at Research Centre for Islamic Legislation and Ethics

Dr. Ray Jureidini highlighted that “It is very clear that interregional collaboration between the two regions is of great importance and what needs to be done is to operationalize and to concretize this collaboration in due course.” Dr Jureidini added that the concept of “social cohesion” remains a very evasive term as the meaning of social cohesion differs from one region to another as it doesn’t only mean remittances, but it also means the integration of citizens and non-citizens. In fact, “the idea of integration needs to be operationalized in a more realistic fashion.” Finally, Dr Jureidini added that the difficulty of speaking about regional coordination and multilateralism is a real challenge that needs to be addressed.

Ms. Wen Li, Director, Department of International Cooperation and Partnerships, IOM

In response to the question raised by Dr. Jureidini on whether cross-regional collaboration is needed to further enhance GCM implementation, **Ms Wen Li** started by highlighting the need “to enhance cooperation among relevant national and regional UNNMs in order to assist Member States with interregional dialogue and cooperation and to explore the possibility of implementing cross-regional programs as needed.” She added that “IOM is ready to support and facilitate synergy with our partners and to further strengthen interregional cooperation on migration.” Moreover, Ms Wen Li highlighted the importance of collaboration between stakeholders by stating that “IOM is close to many RCPs and can use this process to enhance collaboration between LAS, AUC and UNECA and ESCWA. IOM also stands ready to support AUC and the League of Arab in strengthening cross-regional dialogue and cooperation support states that belong to both regions to play a role of bridge in strengthening cross-regional dialogue and cooperation including working to ensure the recommendations of the second GCM regional reviews in both regions are mutually reinforcing. IOM can support champion countries/Networks States to take the lead in having cross-regional dialogue to discuss common priorities and challenges and promote good practices.” In addition to this, Ms Wen Li explained that IOM as Coordinator of the Network can work better together to enhance Member States and Stakeholders cross-regional cooperation, by explaining that “Over 30 UN Migration Networks have been established in the African and Arab regions; this will facilitate GCM implementation. Lastly, Ms Wen Li concluded by stating that “IOM promotes dialogues between Member States and cooperation among UN agencies, and with various stakeholders, including cities, civil society, private sector and migrants themselves.”

Ms. Edlam Yemeru, Director a.i., Gender, Poverty and Social Policy Division, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)

On behalf of ECA, **Ms Edlam Yemeru** highlighted that “ECA supports the regional monitoring and review of the GCM” and that’s why in collaboration with IOM, we highlighted the African Regional Review of the GCM which hereby highlights ECA’s role in the implementation of the GCM. Moreover, in response to the



importance of objective I6 on empowering migrants to realize full inclusion and social cohesion, Ms Yemeru explained that Attaining Objective I6 remains a challenge, but that social cohesion and empowerment is important for the African region. There are countries in the continent and beyond that have been promoting social cohesion of migrants, but a lot of work remains to be done. ECA is working to incorporate the labor mobility aspect into the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and is supporting the harmonization of labor migration statistics at national level.” Finally, Ms Yemeru explained that “Data sharing should be used as a foundation to enhance cross regional cooperation” and stressed on the importance of multilateralism between regions as “The full inclusion of migrants is the only way to maximize socio economic development on the African continent.”

Mr. Pierre Kremer – Regional Deputy Director, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, IFRC

Mr. Pierre Kremer highlighted that the IFRC has been “involved in the implementation of the global compact across the region.” Mr Kremer explained the IFRC has focused its contribution on assistance, protection and advocacy. Therefore, “Providing technical support to data collection and sharing capacity should be considered as a major priority.” Moreover, on the importance of the role of stakeholders, Mr. Kermer explained that “Regional entities such as the AU are natural conveners, and it is important to use these existing platforms” and highlighted that there is added value in the humanitarian services available across borders to reflect the effort towards social cohesion and the inclusion of migrants.

Ms. Sara Salman, Regional Advisor on Population Affairs, ESCWA

Ms. Sara Salman explained that “ESCWA, with its convening power, can provide the necessary space for dialogue to facilitate the implementation of the GCM and can support data sharing with the African region.” Moreover, Ms. Salman explained that cross-regional collaboration for migration is of essence because “No government or region can handle and address migration issues by itself” and “As such dialogue remains the only way to create awareness on migration.” Lastly, Ms. Salman highlighted that the “The 2021 SRIM report on International Migration that was co-authored by IOM, UNHCR and 14 other UN agencies will be published next month” which will offer updated data on migration patten, trends and policies.

Dr. Ibrahim Awad, Professor of Practice in Global Affairs and Director, Center for Migration and Refugee Studies, School of Global Affairs and Public Policy, American University in Cairo

Dr. Ibrahim Awad stated that “To govern migration, you need collaboration.” He added that for North Africa, this means intra-level collaboration and that in CRMS, there is a project on a network of scholars on mixed migration in North Africa recognizing that North Africa is very much a part of Africa. He continued that “Cooperation among centers of higher learning and research is vital in the integration of migrants in society.” As an academic institution, AUC collaborates with other academic institutions in the continent and the region. He added that GCM objectives are used as references in our migration governance advocacy to make migration safe, orderly and regular. “We should not envision this as realizing social inclusion but more as a progressive process of moving towards social inclusion.” Dr. Awad continued that at CRMS, the students help refugees with language, and there is a project for community interpretation to help migrants in their



relations with administration, courts, and with the society as a whole to help them understand their entitlements and rights. The *Center for Migration and Refugee Studies* has programs that focus on the inclusion and insertion of migrants into the labor markets.” Dr. Awad explained that this is the best means of ensuring that there is progressive integration in society at large through becoming part of societal processes

Ms. Sarah Badr, the Spokesperson for the World Youth Forum (WYF)

Ms. Sarah Badr stated that “In terms of good practices, highlighting the major role that civil society plays in enabling inclusion and social cohesion, and in particular, the role of youth engagement in civil action as agents of change through youth-led NGOs that raises awareness about migrants and their rights, and combats xenophobia.” She continued that “There are several examples, all youth-led, such as “Migrantsrights.org” an NGO in Qatar and Kuwait, that focuses on advancing the rights of migrant workers and changing attitudes towards them and “A Global Voice for Autism” an NGO in Jordan which supports migrant children with disabilities and autism to access educational opportunities. The “World Youth Forum WYF” in Egypt, a global platform of dialogue brought to light examples of young migrants’ contributions to their local societies promoting acceptance of migrants and other cultures.” Furthermore, she stressed the importance of the inclusion of youth perspectives throughout the GCM implementation as they are key players in the implementation process. She concluded that “Enhancing whole of government and whole of society approach is important to ensure proper collaboration and cooperation with CSOs which can be achieved through fostering partnerships and opening channels of dialogue between the different in-country stakeholders.”

Relevant documents

- UN General Assembly Resolution 73/195. Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195): [AR](#) / [FR](#) / [EN](#)
- IMRF Roadmap and Annexes: [AR](#) / [FR](#) / [EN](#)