

# Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Arab region

Day 1 – 24 February 2021

## Roundtable 1

<p><b>GCM objective 2:</b> Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin</p>	<p><b>GCM objective 5:</b> Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration</p>	<p><b>GCM objective 6:</b> Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work</p>
<p><b>GCM objective 12:</b> Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral</p>	<p><b>GCM objective 18:</b> Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences</p>	

### 1. Brief overview on the Objectives clustered under the respective Roundtable

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) provides a 360-degree approach to migration governance and recognizes that a comprehensive approach and strong partnerships are needed to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. It intends to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities migrants face, at different stages of the migration journey, optimize the overall benefits of migration and ensure migrants’ human rights are respected, protected and fulfilled at all times. In countries of origin, the GCM aims to mitigate the adverse drivers and structural factors that hinder people from building and maintaining sustainable livelihoods . The GCM recognizes that societies are undergoing demographic, economic, social and environmental changes at different scales that may have implications for and result from migration. The GCM also calls for expanding and diversifying regular migration pathways, particularly with regards to labour migration. Improving laws and regulations to facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work, including protection of all migrant workers against all forms of exploitation and abuse, increasing the transparency and accessibility of migration procedures and introducing technology to simplify migration procedures are additional important elements promoted to protect migrants. Application of the GCM Guiding Principles,

such as human rights-based, gender-responsive and child-sensitive approaches is crucial. Furthermore, the GCM encourages countries to invest in skills development and mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences, in ways that take account of the specific and different situations and priorities of women, men and children to optimize the contributions of migrants to sustainable development at the local, national, regional and global levels.

## **2. Short Background on why and how the objectives are relevant to the Arab region with evidence base**

The Arab region is at the centre of various migratory routes, serving at the same time as the origin, the transit and the destination of large numbers of migrants. The adoption of a comprehensive approach to migration governance is hence of crucial importance to ensure migration is the result of informed choices rather than act of desperation, and that it generates a positive impact for migrants and their families, their communities of origin, transit and destination. Objective 2 is therefore of particular relevance as it recognizes the multifaceted nature of migration-decision making, and promotes eliminating the adverse drivers and structural factors including through poverty eradication, food security, health and sanitation, education, infrastructure, urban and rural development, inclusive economic growth, productive employment creation, decent work, gender equality and empowerment of women and girls, resilience and disaster risk reduction, climate change mitigation and adaptation, addressing the socioeconomic effects of all forms of violence, non-discrimination, the rule of law and good governance, access to justice and protection of human rights, as well as creating and maintaining peaceful and inclusive societies with effective, accountable and transparent institutions.. The Arab region is considered one of the world's most water-scarce and dry regions with 18 of 23 Arab countries falling below the renewable water resources annual threshold of 1,000m<sup>3</sup> per capita per year<sup>1</sup>. Insufficient access to water affects people's livelihoods particularly in agriculture dependent rural communities, forcing them to move to find other sources of livelihood. Other environmental hazards, such as desert encroachment and sea level elevation are also expected to produce large population movements in the near future. The GCM recognizes the mobility

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<sup>1</sup> Situation Report on International Migration 2019: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Context of the Arab Region

dimension of crisis and calls for the integration of displacement into disaster preparedness strategies and responses. Objective 5 promotes increased cooperation for the identification, development and reinforcement of sustainable solutions for migrants compelled to leave their countries of origin, notably by enhancing the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.. Through this, countries of the region will reduce the incidence of irregular migration which is still widespread and largely unaccounted in official statistics. It also calls for facilitating access to procedures for family reunification for migrants at all skills levels. In addition, increasing legal certainty and predictability of migration procedures as called for by Objective 12, will also help to protect migrants from exploitation and abuses. In the Arab region, with large flows of mixed movements, it is essential to ensure that relevant information on the rights and obligations under national laws and procedures is communicated and accessible, and that appropriate gender-responsive and child-sensitive referral mechanisms are in place .

Taking into consideration demographic and labour market realities, the GCM promotes, fair and ethical recruitment and decent work in Objective 6. This objective is of particular relevance to the Gulf Cooperation Council sub-region which has historically hosted large numbers of temporary contractual workers, which consists of three quarters of all migrants and refugees coming to the Arab region in 2020. Bilateral labour migration agreements as well as sub-regional and regional platforms of coordination, improvement of recruitment regulations, protection of human and labour rights, access to complaint and redress mechanisms, among others, are specific actions identified to this end. This is particularly important for women migrant workers, especially in domestic work and lower-skilled occupations who need enhanced protection in labour law and its robust implementation. These actions help to ensure human and labour rights violations are appropriately sanctioned, and equally that countries of origin and destination respond to their labour market needs and benefit from migrants' positive contributions to society. The creation of strong and effective partnerships is of particular importance for this objective, notably inter-state collaboration mechanisms but also the inclusion of relevant stakeholders such as the private sector, including employers, recruiters, subcontractors and suppliers,, migrant workers' organizations and trade unions. Objective 18 seeks to further enrich the positive effects of migration, as it aims to optimize the employability of migrant workers in

formal labour markets in countries of destination and in countries of origin upon return, as well as to ensure decent work in labour migration. Investments in human capital development and the promotion of entrepreneurship, education, skills development and mutual recognition of prior learning ensure that migrants are employed at the level of their skills, qualifications and competences in countries of destination and in countries of origin upon return. The implementation of these commitments assists migrants including women, children and youth for transition and evolve in a conducive environment for them to further enrich societies through their human, economic and social capacities.

### **3. Guiding questions**

All guiding questions should be assessed through the prism of the GCM's guiding principles, particularly through the whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach, whilst also being human rights-based, gender-responsive and child-sensitive.

- How have states interlinked the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the GCM with a focus on education, inclusive economic growth, climate resilience, infrastructure, urban and rural development, employment creation and decent work? (GCM objective 2)
- Have regular pathways for admission, including through bilateral, regional and multilateral labour mobility agreements, been effective in ensuring regular admissions and effective work visa/permit policies, social protection and skills portability and matching to better respond to business and labour market needs? (GCM Objective 5)
- Have enabling conditions (e.g., work visas/permits, fair recruitment, decent work, such as laws and programs benefiting women migrant workers and domestic workers social protection, skills portability, etc.) improved protections for migrant workers? (GCM Objective 5)
- What cross-regional strategies on migration have been applied, and what challenges have states encountered? What other efforts to enhance access to regular migration pathways have been implemented (e.g. for family reunification)? (GCM objectives 5, 6, 8 and 18)

- In facilitating a whole-of-society approach, how have stakeholders and in particular trade unions and workers' organizations, employers' organizations, the private sector and migrant associations been engaged?
  - How have the specific situations and issues of women migrant workers, including domestic workers, and those related to women migrant workers' children, been incorporated in development of policy strategies? (GCM objectives 5, 6, 8 and 18)
  - What concrete policy, legal, and programmatic actions have been taken to advance objective 12 to provide appropriate screening, assessment and referral? What are the challenges and shortcomings? (GCM objective 12)
4. How has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the implementation of GCM objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18 with particular reference to low skilled men and women migrant workers especially those in irregular situations and domestic workers

## Resources

[Video](#): The Global Compact for Migration in a Nutshell

[UN Secretary-General Policy Brief](#): COVID-19 and People on the Move

[UN Network on Migration Statement](#): COVID-19 Does Not Discriminate; Nor Should Our Response

[ILO Common interests, shared goals](#): Promoting decent work from Asia and Africa to the Middle East Background Paper to the Interregional Consultation on Labour Migration and Mobility from Asia and Africa to the Middle East

[ILO Labour mobility between Asia and the Arab States](#): Sharing of Experiences and Progress under the Bali Declaration with specific focus on women migrant workers

ILO Protecting migrant workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, [Policy Brief](#), April 2020

[IOM International Migration Law N°32](#) - Glossary on Migration (Arabic)

[IOM Key Migration terms Arabic](#)

[IOM UNESCWA Situation Report on International Migration in the Arab Region 2019](#)

[Policy Brief](#): The Impact of COVID-19 on the Arab Region An Opportunity to Build Back Better

[UN Women](#) The impact of Covid 19 on Violence against Women and Girls in the Arab Region through the Lens of Women's Civil Society Organizations

[UNESCWA COVID-19 Economic Cost to the Arab Region](#)

[UNICEF Working paper](#): Family unity in the context of migration:

[WFP-IOM's joint publication](#) 'Populations at Risk: Implications of COVID-19 for Hunger, Migration and Displacement'