

BACKGROUND NOTE

SESSION IV: IDENTIFYING EMERGING CHALLENGES AND PRIORITIES FOR THE NETWORK

December 2020

The focus of the Network is in the implementation of its [current workplan](#). In 2020 this has, of course, necessitated some re-orientation in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This has resulted in a series of discussions and concrete guidance focused on the relevance of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) as a framework for addressing mobility in the time of COVID-19, including on forced returns, alternatives to detention, and on access to services. The Network has also developed tools and guidance on a number of thematic issues; held briefings with Member States and focused “listening sessions” with stakeholders on GCM implementation; and organized a peer learning exchange on alternatives to immigration detention.

Moving forward, and as many Working Groups wrap up their key deliverables, we will need to consider future areas of work for the Network’s 2021 annual workplan. A pipeline of potential priorities is attached to the current workplan, but new issues might have emerged which could be considered in this discussion. In determining the Network’s approach to them, particular attention needs to be paid both to our value-added and ensuring that there is sufficient capacity (human and other resources) to apply to our work on them.

In addition, the Network has continued to build the platforms for stronger implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM. This includes the development of country and regional Networks, as well as supporting the GCM regional reviews and the launch of the Champions initiative, the last two of which are outlined below.

Building on GCM regional reviews

The regional reviews of the GCM present a first opportunity for a collective discussion on GCM implementation and to pave the way for the global review to be held in 2022. The reviews also offer a platform for Member States and stakeholders to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on the implementation of the GCM and international migration more broadly.

The first regional review took place in November 2020, bringing together Member States and stakeholder from the UNECE region. The regional reviews in Asia-Pacific, Africa, the Arab region, and Latin-America and the Caribbean are scheduled to take place in February and March 2021. A number of regions (e.g. Europe/Central Asia; Asia/Pacific; and MENA) are providing fora for stakeholder engagement prior to the formal reviews; others are being planned.

Member States and stakeholders are submitting their voluntary inputs to the regional review process, based on questionnaires for which the outline was prepared by the Network. The use of these questionnaires allows for a degree of consistency across the inputs received in the different regions. The submissions are being made available on the [website of the UN Network on Migration](#) and serve as a basis for the formal outcome reports of the GCM regional reviews. Those outcome reports will in turn inform the 2022 International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in the UN General Assembly.

The regional review processes provide the Network with an overview of the programmes, strategies and policies that Member States are developing or fine-tuning towards their commitments in the Global Compact. Such overview will allow the Network and others to identify emerging gaps and challenges, and to make an informed decision on those areas where additional efforts are needed to



build capacities. They will also facilitate the identification of emerging, or promising practices, and can be used to encourage peer-to-peer exchanges, contributing to the Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub (“Migration Network Hub”).

Building on the Champion Countries Initiative

As of November 2020, 15 Member States have expressed their intention to act as Champions: Africa (Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Morocco, Senegal); Asia/Pacific (Bangladesh, Indonesia, Nepal, Philippines, Thailand); Latin America and the Caribbean (Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico); Western Europe and Other Group (Canada, Portugal).

These countries can – in addition to their participation in the piloting of selected activities listed in the Network’s workplan, and playing a leadership role at the regional and international levels in support of GCM implementation, follow-up and review – offer the Network insights, feedback and proposals in identifying emerging challenges and priorities. It is hoped that this group will continue to expand.

Based on experiences to date, issues which could be reflected on include:

- What key issues should be prioritized by the Network in 2021 and in the run-up to the first IMRF in early 2022?
- How can the Network and GCM Champion countries collaborate better in support of the GCM?
- What key critical support can be provided by the Network to Member States and stakeholders for the regional reviews and subsequent follow-up?
- How to ensure structured integration of regional reviews input into the first IMRF in 2022?
- To maintain momentum behind the GCM’s follow-up and review, how best can we draw on the current review processes, and enhance the engagement of Member States and stakeholders in them (including their written submissions), to generate further discourse (not just regionally, but sub- and inter-regionally, as well as thematically)?
- Meaningful stakeholder engagement, alongside a whole-of-society approach, are integral to the GCM. To what extent are these being realised? Are there differences of concern as regards approaches between regions? What further steps can be taken to ensure meaningful engagement in the Network’s workplan, as well as both in the preparations for – and at – the regional reviews, and in the preparations for the IMRF?
- While recognising the essential 360-degree vision of the GCM, are there emerging thematic priorities that are specific to particular regions or cross-regional priorities? Can or should the Network assist in identifying them? Conversely, are there particular priorities which straddle regions? For example, should we identify a handful of priorities on which to place special emphasis moving forward – one obvious option would be the implications of COVID-19 (and recovery therefrom), but there will be others.