Economic Commission for Africa Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Concept Note
September 2020

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) (General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/195) calls for review of the progress of “... implementing the Global Compact in the framework of the United Nations through a State-led approach and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders ...” (paragraph 48), and invites “United Nations regional economic commissions ... to review the implementation of the Global Compact within the respective regions, beginning in 2020 ... with the participation of all relevant stakeholders” (paragraph 50).

This concept note has been prepared by the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in close cooperation with IOM as the Coordinator of the Network, the relevant Regional United Nations Networks on Migration in Africa1 and the African Union Commission. The regional review for Africa will take place in March 2021 in Morocco. In addition to the GCM itself, this concept note is guided by the United Nations Network on Migration note on the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact issued to United Nations Member States in Geneva on 24 February 2020 and presented by the United Nations Network on Migration to United Nations Member States in Geneva on 4 March 2019.2

1. International Migration in Africa

Africa has of recent been perceived as a continent on the move, with people escaping poverty, environmental disaster, or violent conflict. Evidence suggests that though occurrence of this type of migration and their accompanying violation of human rights of migrants receive much media attention, they are not the dominant type of migration in Africa. While the stock of international migrants in Africa increased from 15 million in 2000 to 26.5 million in 2019 reflecting a 76 per cent increase, international migrants in Africa represented only 2 per cent of the total population of the continent in 2019. The latter makes the continent one of the least migratory, moreover most of the migrants (79 per cent) migrate only within the continent.

Africa is a young continent with a median age of 19.7 years. Between 1960 and 2010, Africa’s working-age population (15-64 years) grew more than four times and will continue to increase over the next 40 years.3 The region will continue to witness high population mobility as people move in search for better employment opportunities. The future world labour supply lies in Africa that will move to where opportunities exist.

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2 https://migrationnetwork.un.org/supporting-material-regional-reviews
3 UN Population Division (2019).
Notwithstanding the impact of COVID-19 on population mobility globally and in Africa, international migration has the potential to bring significant contribution to the economic growth and human development in Africa. The UN Committee on Migrant Workers (CMW) and the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants have warned “that the COVID-19 pandemic is having serious and disproportionate effects on migrants and their families”. Most of African migrants face acute protection needs while preparing their migration journey, in transit and in countries of destination. COVID-19 has further exacerbated the need for protection especially for those who work in the so-called 3D occupations which are essential services in the health, sanitation, domestic, transport, and other services sectors.

International migration, particularly labour migration, is an important enabler and beneficiary of regional integration and economic development in Africa by having a positive impact on economic growth, generating additional employment opportunities for native-born workers, and when employed in the formal economy, by having a positive effect on public finance. At the same time, the diaspora populations play significant roles in social development, poverty reduction and economic growth. Consequently, the leveraging of human and financial resources from the diaspora is attracting considerable policy interest in Africa.

2 The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

On 10 December 2018, more than 150 governments, represented by their Heads of State, Heads of Government or senior officials met in Marrakech, Morocco at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). On 19 December 2018, United Nations Member States endorsed the Global Compact at the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution 73/195). The adoption and endorsement of the Global Compact marks the first time that Member States have committed, within the auspices of the United Nations, to a comprehensive, 360-degree vision of international migration, grounded on international law, that turns their international commitments, through its 23 objectives, into concrete actions to enhance international cooperation on all aspects of international migration (see Annex for the list of objectives of the GCM).

The GCM recognizes that no State can address migration alone and that international, regional and bilateral cooperation is key; that national migration policies are more likely to succeed if developed and implemented through a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach and grounded in respect for human rights and the rule of law. The GCM is firmly rooted in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the core international human rights treaties, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and it aims to leverage the potential of migration for the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals. It also acknowledges that each State experiences migration differently and affirms each State’s sovereign prerogative to govern its own migration policies in respect of obligations under international law.

The GCM is based on a shared 360-degree vision and the following cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles: (a) people-centred; (b) international cooperation; (c) national sovereignty; (d) rule of law and due process; (e) sustainable development; (f) human

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5 3D refers to occupations classified as dirty, dangerous and demeaning.
7 See paragraphs 8-15 of General Assembly resolution 73/195
rights; (g) gender-responsive; (h) child-sensitive; (i) whole-of-government approach); and (j) whole-of-society approach.

3 Regional reviews of implementation of the Global Compact for Migration

In the GCM, Member States committed to its implementation at the national, regional and global levels in cooperation and partnership with all relevant stakeholders. They also welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Network on Migration as a means of ensuring effective and coherent system-wide United Nations support for implementation as well as follow-up and review (General Assembly resolution 73/195, paragraphs 41, 44 and 45).

At the regional level, regional UN Networks on Migration have been established to facilitate effective, timely and coordinated UN system-wide support to Member States in the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM. These include the regional UN Networks on Migration for West and Central Africa, Middle East and North Africa, and East and Southern Africa.

Recognizing that most international migration is regional in nature, the GCM invited regional economic commissions and other fora to review its implementation within their respective regions on a voluntary basis, beginning in 2020. Paragraph 50 of the Global Compact outlines the plans for the regional reviews as follows (General Assembly resolution 73/195):

“Considering that most international migration takes place within regions, we invite relevant subregional, regional and cross-regional processes, platforms and organizations, including the United Nations regional economic commissions or regional consultative processes, to review the implementation of the Global Compact within the respective regions, beginning in 2020, alternating with discussions at the global level at a four-year interval, in order to effectively inform each edition of the International Migration Review Forum, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.”

This call was reiterated in General Assembly resolution 73/326 on the format and organizational aspects of the international migration review forums. The resolution also requested the United Nations Network on Migration, to assist, upon request by Member States, in the preparation and organization of regional reviews of the implementation of the GCM. The regional reviews will draw on local and national reviews and follow-up processes and will involve all relevant stakeholders. The outcomes of the regional review will also contribute to the work of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), to be held every four years from 2022; the IMRF’s agreed intergovernmental Progress Declaration may be considered in

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8 See paragraph 44 of General Assembly resolution 73/195: “We will implement the Global Compact in cooperation and partnership with migrants, civil society, migrant and diaspora organizations, faith-based organizations, local authorities and communities, the private sector, trade unions, parliamentarians, National Human Rights Institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, academia, the media and other relevant stakeholders.”

9 Paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 73/326: “Invites relevant subregional, regional and cross-regional processes, platforms and organizations, including the United Nations regional economic commissions and regional consultative processes on migration, to review the implementation of the Global Compact, within their respective regions, and to contribute to the work of the forums, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders;”

10 Paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 73/326.

11 Paragraph 48 of General Assembly resolution 73/195: “We will review the progress made at the local, national, regional and global levels in implementing the Global Compact in the framework of the United Nations through a State-led approach and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. For follow-up and review, we agree on intergovernmental measures that will assist us in fulfilling our objectives and commitments.”
the high-level political forum on sustainable development.\footnote{Paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 73/195.}

4 Proposed GCM Regional Review in Africa

As most international migration takes place within regions, the GCM recognizes the importance of the regional dimension of international migration and the need for regional cooperation. The regional review of the GCM in Africa will consist of the following stages:

Stage 1: Preparation of reports

Three types of reports will be prepared:

(i) National voluntary reports to assess the status of implementation of the GCM and serve as a base for a comprehensive stocktaking exercise, synthesis reports, and key regional messages. It is expected that these reports will be prepared by Member States in accordance with the whole-of-government approach, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders in accordance with the whole-of-society approach of the GCM. The Regional UN Networks on Migration and National UN Networks on Migration, where they exist, will take lead in coordinating UN support to the process at national level.

(ii) Sub-regional reports to highlight key issues at the sub-regional levels. The process at this level will be led by the African Union Commission, which will liaise with the various sub-regional economic communities to prepare these reports, and with the support of the Regional UN Networks on Migration to the extent feasible.

(iii) Regional report that synthesizes the key messages from the national and the sub-regional reports, and undertakes any additional research as necessary, to cover some or all of the following areas: providing an overview of the state of international migration on the continent, identifying the gaps and challenges in the implementation of the GCM, reviewing the progress on the development of the GCM national implementation plans and integration of the GCM and its guiding principles into existing national plans and policies, highlighting promising examples, and identifying areas where countries and the sub-regions require further support to successfully implement the GCM. This report could be a key outcome of the regional review process as the African region’s input into the IMRF 2020.

(iv) Stakeholder engagement. Throughout the preparation of the three above levels or reports, civil society and other stakeholders should be meaningfully engaged, in respect of the GCM guiding principle on the whole-of-society. In addition, civil society and other stakeholders should be invited to make independent submissions to the regional review process, which will be hosted on the relevant regional review webpage maintained by the UN Network on Migration secretariat.

Stage 2: Consultations at various levels with a range of stakeholders, including civil society

The review will be organized in line with the guiding principles of the GCM that are people-centered, gender-responsive, child-sensitive; emphasize international cooperation, national sovereignty, rule of law and due process, sustainable development, human rights; and adopt whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach. Content specific analysis of the inputs will enable them to contribute to the review report.

For this, open and inclusive consultations during the preparations of the reports will be organized with the support of the Regional UN Networks on Migration and National UN
Networks on Migration, where they exist, to solicit inputs to background documents, the organization of work, the list of panellists and moderators, etc. by Member States and all relevant stakeholders, including civil society, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), academic, scientific and knowledge-based institutions, the private sector, migrant and youth groups, diaspora communities, parliamentarians, national human rights institutions, etc. Other possible forms of consultation with Members States and relevant stakeholders will be explored including possibly creating online platforms for submission of inputs to adapt to the context of COVID-19 that has resulted in the restriction of movement.

To ensure whole of government, IOM will use its network of national offices to solicit inputs in members States to ensure wide-ranging consultations across all tiers of government.

Stage 3: Regional review meeting

The Kingdom of Morocco has offered to host the regional review meeting. Given the disruption due to COVID-19, the form and dates of the meeting are to be confirmed, though likely to take place in March 2021.

The proposed format of the the regional review meeting is presented below and will be aligned to the four round tables of the IMRF shown in Table 1 below, keeping in mind the guiding principle of the GCM review to allow for a 360-degree review. To facilitate the contribution of the regional review to the IMRF, the organization of the review meeting will broadly follow the organization of the IMRF (A/RES/73/326, para 21 to 25).

Further, ECA, the UN Regional Networks on Migration and AUC will facilitate the regional report and its review, but the process will be driven by the Member States.

5 Objectives of the regional review meeting

In response to the invitation from Member States to regional economic commissions regarding the follow-up and review of implementation of the GCM, ECA, the UN Network on Migration (through its Regional Networks) and AUC, will hold an intergovernmental meeting to provide a platform for ECA member States to review on a voluntary basis the implementation of the GCM in Africa.

The meeting will provide an opportunity for African Member States, as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

a. take stock of the overall progress made with regard to the 360-degree implementation of the 23 objectives of the GCM in the ECA region, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders;

b. identify key challenges, opportunities, gaps and emerging issues, as well as promising practices and lessons learned related to the implementation of the GCM that might be relevant to other regions;

c. discuss regional priorities and potential areas for regional cooperation on international migration in line with the vision and guiding principles of the GCM;

d. compile relevant resources and identify Member State needs for the full and effective implementation of the GCM at the national and regional levels; and,

e. facilitate the formulation of key findings and recommendations to inform the 2022 IMRF.
The review will adopt an inclusive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and will review all aspects of the GCM, according to its 360-degree vision and its cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles.\textsuperscript{13}

Since the GCM is based on international human rights law and firmly rooted in the 2030 Agenda, the regional review will also discuss how the implementation of the objectives of the Global Compact will contribute to the effective respect, protection and fulfillment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of status, as well as the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals and their commitment to leave no one behind.

The Regional Review consists of (a) an intergovernmental meeting, to take stock, highlight achievements, challenges and opportunities, identify gaps, discuss regional priorities and identify resource requirements in implementation of the Global Compact; (b) regional synthesis of voluntary GCM reviews on migration and studies conducted by Governments on progress made and challenges encountered in implementation of the Global Compact, which will inform the documentation prepared for the regional review; (c) Member State consultations with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders; and (d) invitations to regional processes, platforms and organizations to provide input to the regional review.

Voluntary GCM reviews will inform the regional review with Member States, civil society and stakeholders, and other relevant sub-regional, regional and cross-regional processes, platforms and organizations and stakeholders providing input to a set of guiding questions on the implementation of the Global Compact. A request to ECA Member States and sub-regional offices to complete voluntary GCM reviews was sent out in June 2020, and a summary of responses will be drafted during the 4\textsuperscript{th} quarter of 2020 to inform the Africa Region Migration Report. Consultations with Member States, civil society and other relevant stakeholders will be held to obtain input to the overall organization of the meeting and inputs prepared.

6. Format of the Regional Review Meeting

The intergovernmental meeting will consist of a general plenary debate, allowing member States and other relevant stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to take stock of implementation of the Global Compact, covering all the 23 objectives, and interactive thematic roundtable sessions shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The thematic roundtables will offer a more focused discussion, organized along the lines of the four roundtables of the International Migration Review Forum.\textsuperscript{14}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roundtable</th>
<th>GCM Objectives</th>
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<tr>
<td>One: Drivers of migration, pre-departure decision making and increasing certainty and predictability of migration procedures</td>
<td>2, 5, 6, 12, and 18</td>
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<td>Two: Migration movements: the journey, arrival, return, and reintegration of migrants</td>
<td>4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, and 21</td>
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<td>Three: Inclusion of migrants and social cohesion</td>
<td>14, 15, 16, 19, 20, and 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Four: Impacts of migration in countries of origin, transit and destination, and the need for international cooperation</td>
<td>1, 3, 7, 17, and 23</td>
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7 Expected outcomes of the regional review meeting

\textsuperscript{13} See General Assembly resolution 73/195.
\textsuperscript{14} See paragraph 21.b. of General Assembly resolution 73/326 and the annex to this document
The Regional Review Meeting is expected to adopt a report of the meeting, which includes an outcome document capturing the regional dimensions of the implementation of the GCM. The report of the meeting is to be transmitted to the United Nations Network on Migration, in preparation for the forums, and as an intergovernmental African regional input to the International Migration Review Forum in 2022.\(^{15}\)

Additional detailed information on the regional review meeting is being gathered on the voluntary GCM reviews, participation, and side events, for distribution in due course. An information note, focusing on the logistics of the meeting will be prepared as well. In addition, ECA, AUC, UN Regional Networks on Migration and their executive committee and partners, especially members of the OIBC 7 that addresses issues of migration, are being consulted on the preparations for the GCM review meeting.

### 8 Timelines and division of responsibilities

ECA is cognisant of the fact that due to Covid-19 situation, the timelines presented below are not static and will be adjusted as need arises. The Regional Commission also remains open to the potential of conducting virtual meetings, including the regional review meeting. Below are some of the key milestones in the review process:

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<tr>
<td>Setting up the structure</td>
<td>AUC/ECA/Regional UN Networks for Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>1: Preparation of reports</td>
<td>National voluntary reports</td>
<td>Regional UN Networks on Migration and National UN Networks on Migration, where they exist</td>
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<td>Sub-regional reports</td>
<td>AUC with regional economic communities and the UN Regional Networks on Migration</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Regional report</td>
<td>ECA with support of the UN Regional Networks on Migration</td>
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<tr>
<td>2: Consultations</td>
<td>National/sub-regional consultations</td>
<td>AUC with the UN Regional Networks on Migration and National UN Networks on Migration, where they exist</td>
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<td>Civil society consultations</td>
<td>ECA and UN Regional Networks on Migration</td>
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<td>3: Regional review meeting</td>
<td>Govt. of Morocco, ECA, AU, and IOM</td>
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Note: In all the processes and all the stages of the review the global UN Network on Migration, through its secretariat, is a key partner and will be consulted.

\(^{15}\) See paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 73/195 and paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 73/326.