

**Coordinator's Remarks  
Briefing by the UN Network on Migration**

Monday, 19 October 2020  
10 – 12h (Geneva)  
Virtual

*As delivered*

Excellencies, distinguished guests, colleagues,

It is a pleasure to meet with you today.

I have the honour to be joined by the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Madame Bachelet. As a member of the Executive Committee, OHCHR is a key partner in our collective efforts to support implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

I will focus my remarks on the Network's efforts in fulfilling the tasks entrusted to the UN system on migration.

Next, I will ask Madame Bachelet to make some remarks.

I will then open the floor for questions and comments.

Following this, Network colleagues will provide you with updates on the Network's working groups. These working groups represent the spirit of partnership within the UN system and with stakeholders, blending together a broad range of migration expertise. Several working groups, to date, are led by

stakeholders, some of whom will present to you today. We maintain an open call to all stakeholders to serve as co-leads and/or members in our working groups, bringing their experience in developing guidance and tools to support GCM implementation.

We will then re-open the floor for your questions.

Excellencies,

When I last briefed you on 4 March, the world looked very different.

But then the COVID-19 pandemic struck.

The response to the virus has affected all countries, territories or areas, fundamentally impacting mobility and causing damage to the health and livelihoods of millions.

Meanwhile, I believe the Global Compact remains as significant as ever.

COVID-19 has both exacerbated existing vulnerabilities of migrants and opened up new spaces for innovative solutions to migration challenges.

Measures taken by Governments in response to the pandemic have been aligned with the Global Compact and its guiding principles. Examples include:

- ensuring access for all to health care, education and other essential services, irrespective of migration status;
- extending work and residency permits or regularising status, especially for essential workers;

- releasing migrants from immigration detention and moving towards non-custodial alternatives, and
- temporarily suspending forced returns.

In some quarters, the discourse on labour migration has shifted to include essential work to ensure it is decent and protected, including for seasonal workers.

It is critical to recognize and build on these and other good practices as they demonstrate the relevance of the Global Compact. We must seize the momentum that the pandemic has generated around some of the key tenets of the GCM's vision.

Likewise, it is vital to work towards reversing existing vulnerabilities of migrants which, in many instances, have been worsened as a result of COVID-19.

We see, for example, an alarming situation of stranded migrants, with many around the world having no way in which to safely return home.

We have noticed an increase of enforced returns of migrants, including without due care to health and safety standards.

In all regions, thousands of migrant children, many unaccompanied, are being returned to unsafe contexts without due process, protection screenings or consideration of their best interests.

In response to this, the Network revamped its approach to supporting the effective implementation of the GCM.

We embarked on a series of webinars and listening sessions with Member States and stakeholders, focused on Mobility in the Time of COVID-19.

We partnered with stakeholders from around the world who shed light on particular challenges (and emerging good practices) and the responses to them.

The Network prepared policy briefs with concrete guidance for Member States and issued UN-system wide statements – for example on forced returns, alternatives to detention, on access to services, as well as the heightened applicability of the GCM overall – highlighting both the concerns we have and some of the positive practices we witness.

WHO has joined the Network’s Executive Committee on an ad hoc basis, to help guide us during this crucial time.

But the response to COVID-19 is only one strand of our work.

- ⇒ We are less than one month away from the first regional reviews of the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration.
- ⇒ The Migration Multi- Partner Trust Fund is funding its first six joint programmes.
- ⇒ We assembled a robust group of Champion countries.
- ⇒ The Knowledge Platform and the Connection Hub have made much progress, and we plan a soft launch later in the year.

We have also seen the growth regional and country level Networks. So far, 31 Networks have been integrated into UN country teams and 6 regional migration coordination structures have been either created or strengthened, as a clear,

welcome demonstration of the move to more coordinated UN system support on migration.

Recent discussions with both the UN's Development Cooperation Office and Humanitarian Coordinator system reveal a growing appetite to integrate migration dynamics into UN planning processes across the board, particularly as regards CCAs and UNSDCF's.

Excellencies,

Many of you are aware that the Champion countries concept was proposed by the Network as one component of how we will work with Member States in the implementation, and follow-up and review of the Global Compact.

I am pleased that currently 14 countries<sup>1</sup> have officially confirmed their willingness to become Champions.

The Champions highlighted the following areas on which to focus:

- (i) promoting peer learning, including through sharing positive practices;
- (ii) utilising the practical tools and expertise of the Network's working groups;
- (iii) supporting national implementation plans for the Global Compact, or the integration of its objectives into other national planning processes – this is particularly important framing socio-economic COVID-19 recovery plans;

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<sup>1</sup> Bangladesh, Canada, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Ghana, Indonesia, Mexico, Morocco, Nepal, Philippines, Portugal, Senegal and Thailand

- (iv) enhancing their participation in regional reviews through a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach; and
- (v) promoting the visibility and relevance of the Global Compact.

Let me also take this opportunity to highlight that non-champion countries are not excluded from Network support. We will continue to encourage the creation of Network coordination structures at UN regional and country levels, as a major element of providing coherent system-wide support to Global Compact implementation, aligned with its guiding principles.

Excellencies,

The first intergovernmental regional fora to examine the implementation of the Global Compact will take place next month in Europe. Due to the impact of COVID-19, other regional reviews will take place during the first quarter of 2021.

The regional reviews offer a first opportunity for Member States, stakeholders and the UN system to come together, discuss and evaluate how to strengthen regional cooperation in support of the implementation of the GCM.

It will also be an opportunity to reflect on how the objectives, actions and guiding principles outlined in the Global Compact can guide regions in developing inclusive COVID-19 preparedness, prevention, response and recovery measures that protect human rights, enhance the positive, development effects of human mobility and allow migrants to play a key part in these efforts.

The regional reviews will contribute to a greater understanding of regional and sub-regional migration issues to, in the words of the Global Compact, ‘effectively inform each edition of the International Migration Review Forum’ that will take place for the first time in 2022 under the auspices of the General Assembly.

In March, I shared a Proposed Framework for the Global Compact Regional Reviews, emphasizing the need for consistency of approach, within and between regions, based on the vision and guiding principles of the Global Compact. Since then the Network, including the Regional Economic Commissions, has developed a sound framework for reviews which can capture the insights of all partners.

I am encouraged by your continued engagement in the Global Compact’s implementation, follow-up and review. Through our presence in the regions, we have started receiving your voluntary GCM reports that will serve as an input to the review process and will all be posted on the Network’s website and featured in the Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub.

Some key parts of the Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub are already live on the Network’s website, including an online discussion forum that we invite you all to contribute to, applications for the peer review roster in several languages, and a facility to upload content that you would like to be included.

The Network has placed emphasis on the whole-of-society guiding principle of the Global Compact, reflecting and respecting the vast array of stakeholders outlined as key partners for its implementation, follow-up and review. It also has the whole-of-government approach, including at local level.

While working to ensure that stakeholder engagement in all aspects of the regional reviews is truly meaningful, the strictures imposed by COVID-19 present both an opportunity and a challenge.

An opportunity, in that the virtual arena allows for much broader participation.

Yet, a challenge because access to online platforms which allow for this participation is not a given. Also, access alone does not translate into meaningful engagement unless we ensure that all our partners have the space they deserve.

Prior to the pandemic, the Steering Committee of the Migration MPTF agreed to channel required extra resources through a separate window dedicated to supporting the review process. I have recently written to Member States seeking their contributions to this funding window – with a modest investment, we can deliver truly participatory reviews.

Excellencies,

I am very pleased to report that the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (Migration MPTF) recently achieved an important milestone. On 6 October, the Steering Committee of the Fund selected the first six joint programmes to be supported.

The selection made is geographically diverse and strongly anchored in the 360-degree approach of the Global Compact as it includes at least one joint programme for each of the Fund's five thematic areas. The six joint programmes have integrated to a large degree all 10 key principles of the Global



Compact and embody its spirit of partnership as they directly involve 11 members of the Network, multiple governmental institutions in each country and countless other partners.

All six joint programmes also integrate the Covid-19 dimension in their design.

As part of the background documentation for this briefing, you will have received the joint programme pipeline document which offers a snapshot as to what the Fund could achieve if adequately resourced. This does not yet take into account the recent Steering Committee decision to finance six joint programmes and add 5 new concept notes to the pipeline.

This pipeline provides a remarkably compelling answer to the deceptively simple question: what does GCM implementation look like? I commend it to you.

The number of countries and regions that submitted concept notes – some 56 – and the size of the pipeline of joint programmes are testament to the strong interest for the Migration MPTF and the very high demand on it to help achieve implementation of the Global Compact. But this demand far outweighs Fund resources.

In late 2019 and early 2020, eight Member States contributed USD 12 million to the Migration MPTF and set it on track to meet its first-year funding target of USD25 million. Unfortunately, the pandemic significantly impacted the Fund's ability to mobilize additional resources and, despite the recent contributions of two Member States, the total commitment from donors currently stands at approximately USD 12.5 million. This amount has been fully programmed but

was hardly sufficient to support one in five of all promising projects identified by the Steering Committee.

While recognizing the increased financial constraints faced by all, rebuilding the pre-COVID-19 momentum is critical for the Fund. We can collectively build this Fund into a tool by which to enhance effective governance of migration, built on cooperation and for the benefit of all.

It is vital that this Fund be allowed to flourish. Its dividends will, I am certain, justify all investment in it and thus I repeat my appeal – to traditional donors and prospective ones – to contribute as generously as you can.

Excellencies,

Let me also take this moment to speak as the Director-General of IOM.

As you know, the Secretary-General gave this Coordinator role of the Network to IOM, and since then we have been working closer and better together with our UN counterparts to ensure effective and coherent system-wide support to the Member States in their implementation of the Global Compact.

I want to thank all involved for the very enhanced cooperation of all UN entities that have joined the Network.

The roles of IOM as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration and as the UN migration agency are mutually reinforcing.

IOM's expertise as a migration agency is bringing fruit to the work of the Network, which fully draws from the technical expertise and experience of all relevant UN entities, increasing collaborative and cooperative efforts on international migration.

I am proud to serve as Network Coordinator to bring the weight of the full UN system in a new way of working to support Member States' implementation of the Global Compact.

Excellencies,

Finally, in November we will release the first Secretary-General's report on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration. This will include a review of the activities of the UN system in this regard and the functioning of the institutional arrangements including of the Network.

The report draws heavily on inputs from Member States, intergovernmental organisations, members of the UN family and stakeholders. It paints a picture of the Global Compact truly taking root, while nonetheless noting the many (often worsening) challenges migrants continue to face. It recognises, too, the role of migrants themselves in determining their own futures and as integral, valuable members of society.

The launch of this report is likely to be on 1 December when the General Assembly will consider this item in its agenda. Details will follow in due course.

As the Network Coordinator I will continue to keep you apprised of this, as well as other developments.

I am now pleased to welcome Madame Bachelet in providing remarks.