



Summary
UN Network on Migration - Executive Committee Principals Meeting
Wednesday, 13 May, 14.00 – 14.50h
(virtual)

Participants:

António Vitorino, Director General, IOM, Network Coordinator

Michelle Bachelet, High Commissioner, OHCHR

Henrietta Fore, Executive Director, UNICEF

Filippo Grandi, High Commissioner, UNHCR

Guy Ryder, Director General, ILO,

Achim Steiner, Administrator, UNDP

Ghada Fathy Waly, Executive Director, UNODC

Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, UNDESA

Zsuzanna Jakab, Deputy Director-General, WHO

The Principals had before them the attached agenda.

The Coordinator provided an update:

- Progress on champions countries is ongoing, with formal confirmation from El Salvador and Portugal, and positive informal feedback from Ethiopia, Senegal and Serbia;
- The SG's report to take stock of GCM will be prepared by the EC in close consultation with Member States to provide a first draft in the next few weeks for SG to present to GA with the timing dependent on the evolution of pandemic;
- Continued close collaboration with the RECs and other stakeholders on the upcoming regional reviews of GCM implementation in last quarter of this year, including possibly through virtual means; and
- The work of the Migration MPTF has been positive so far approving a number of projects, with an additional focus needed by the Network on mobilizing resources for pipeline projects.

The Principals discussed the role of the Network as being ever more critical during the COVID-19 pandemic, with its ongoing work to bear in mind this new reality.

The Principals discussed the various impacts of the pandemic on migrants, including as being both undocumented yet essential workers in many countries; the growing numbers of migrants who have lost their jobs and are stranded at borders, unable to reach their

destinations; forced returns and ongoing deportations of migrants; their access to health services as both a right and public health imperative; and the long-term socio-economic impacts. They also highlighted some good examples of countries incorporating migrants into their response including through extension of residency permits ensuring access to services.

The Principals emphasized the importance of looking beyond the immediate impact of COVID-19 towards longer-term recovery measures and to find ways of supporting Member States to ensure migrants are included in such measures.

They noted that while COVID-19 is a global health pandemic, it is creating a crisis with impacts beyond health with long-term repercussions for all. Some highlighted the importance of supporting countries to ensure better coordination of their mobility and border policies. The importance of accelerating progress on ending child immigration detention in the context of COVID-19 was discussed and confirmed.

Many underscored the strength of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in these current circumstances. They suggested that the Network deliver a crisp narrative and business case for safe and productive mobility during COVID-19, including on how migrants continue to contribute to societies through their roles as essential workers.

The Principals expressed support for the important work of the Network with a continued call for time-sensitive, practical policy briefs and guidelines that the Network is undertaking. The importance of increasing the Network's collaboration through various approaches was raised, including with the Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT).

It was stressed that a whole-of-UN-system-approach requires effective coordination by agencies for work at national and regional level, by also ensuring Network support at country and regional levels including through engagement with civil society; the need for supporting resource mobilization efforts for the Migration MPTF; and consideration of including WHO as a member of the Network's Executive Committee.

The Principals endorsed the joint statement on forced returns but underlined that returns is a much more complex issue that would require further engagement with Member States and from the Principals in order to make progress and to have a common understanding within the Network. The topic will be discussed at the next Network EC Principals meeting.

At the closing, the Principals endorsed two items:

- to release the joint press statement “Forced Returns of Migrants Must be Suspended in Times of COVID-19”¹; and
- for the working level to draft a statement of support for the forthcoming SG's policy brief on COVID and People on the Move.

The next meeting of the Network EC Principals will be in the margins of the next CEB meeting, likely November 2020.

¹ https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/default/files/network_statement_forced_returns_-_13_may_2020.pdf