



## **GFMD Summit 2021**

### **Dialogue on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) / the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)**

**26 January 2021, 16:00 - 19:00 (CET)**

**Welcome remarks - António Vitorino, Director General International Organization for Migration and Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration**

*CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*

Excellencies, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to open this dialogue on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the International Migration Review Forum on the occasion of the 13<sup>th</sup> summit of the Global Forum for Migration and Development. I would like to thank the Chair of the GFMD, H.E. Nasser bin Thani Juma Al Hamli, Minister of Human Resources and Emiratisation for offering this space in the tradition of former GFMD Chairs.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, governments have continued to advance their work on GCM implementation. This progress has been particularly important given the immediate impact the pandemic has had on migrants, as well as the longer-term socio-economic and development setbacks we are now experiencing.

Over the past year, a number of Member States -- also from among the GFMD membership -- have volunteered as 'GCM Champion Countries'. We have embarked upon a series of regional reviews of GCM implementation, beginning in Europe, just as the UN Secretary General launched his first biennial report on GCM implementation. Just last week, the Migration Network Hub organized its test launch, and will support states with knowledge and expertise on migration policy.

At the same time, the United Nations Network on Migration has worked continuously to support Member States, including through the establishment of over 40 regional and national coordination structures. The Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund, established in 2019, has disbursed funds for the first six joint programs to support GCM implementation.

Against this backdrop, we have welcomed the GFMD's continued offer of an informal platform to further strengthen international cooperation on migration. Referenced as an important forum in the GCM, I am pleased to see the GFMD – whether through its Ad-Hoc-Working Groups on Narratives and Covid-19, or its Civil Society, Business and Mayoral Mechanisms – contribute to the ongoing regional reviews of the GCM and multi-stakeholder consultations, honouring the 'whole-of-society' principle.

The GFMD has an important role to play in supporting the implementation and review process of the Global Compact for Migration. This summit has demonstrated the strength of the GFMD community. I look forward to seeing more opportunities for mutual support in the future, whether through the Platform for Partnerships, which could become a building block for the Global Compact's Migration Network Hub, or through the upcoming International Migration Review processes whose outcomes could – in turn – inform GFMD discussion.

Excellencies,

The terrible impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants has highlighted, more than ever, just how important the cooperative framework the GCM is for the governance of international migration, in all its dimensions. Governments around the world are implementing measures in response to COVID-19 which are aligned with the GCM, including ensuring access to health care and other essential services, irrespective of migration status; extending work and residency permits or regularising status; releasing migrants from immigration detention and prioritising non-custodial alternatives; or temporarily suspending forced returns.

This is particularly important as we address the challenges of the pandemic and reassess the future of mobility. Any effort to adapt migration policies to meet the needs of the post-COVID era and leverage the full potential of migration in achieving the SDGs will have to be based on one of the key guiding principles of the Global Compact itself: international cooperation.

Let me assure you that the UN Network on Migration will continue to prioritise the pandemic and its impacts on human mobility in 2021 as we prepare for the first International Migration Review Forum in early 2022 (IMRF).

This Forum will be an important milestone for the GCM. It will be where the Network, Member States and Stakeholders can collectively recommit to implementation at national, regional and global levels.

Feeding into the IMRF are the GCM regional reviews, the first of which – in Europe -- took place in November last year. With the remaining regional reviews taking place during the first half of this year, we have seen a number of written contributions from Member States and stakeholders reconfirming efforts to implement the GCM.

I am also proud to see a growing number of GCM Champion Countries – now totaling 15 and representing all regions – to lead some of these efforts, including at our event today. They offer a diverse, yet strong, set of examples with respect to national level implementation of the GCM,

while fostering international cooperation on migration. We welcome their – and all of your – efforts to improve migration for the benefit of all. And I am hopeful that in 2021 will see this commitment take on ever deeper roots.

Excellencies,

All three panels today give us space to discuss how we can work, together, to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration. At IOM, we are looking forward to hearing the GFMD community discuss their experiences of GCM implementation, and how the GFMD and the UN Network on Migration can jointly contribute to the first International Migration Review Forum in 2022. I thank all moderators and panelists for their contributions.

Finally, let me offer my assurances of continued support to the GFMD – both as Director General of IOM and the Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration. I wish you a productive discussion.