



United Nations
Network on Migration

**United Nations Network on Migration
Informal Consultation on the role of ‘Champion Countries’
in the implementation of the GCM**

Virtual Meeting on Webex

Thursday, 03 September 2020

14.00 – 16.00

Opening Comments

António Vitorino, Coordinator, UN Network on Migration

Desired Outcome/Key messages:

Thank those in attendance for participating in this initiative.

Emphasise that champion countries represent an important initiative in pursuit of GCM implementation, follow-up and review. 2020 is a pivotal year in this regard.

Offer support to Member States in the successful implementation of the GCM, with due regard to its 360-degree vision and guiding principles, and by means of peer leadership and exchange.

Purpose of today’s discussion is to exchange views on how best this initiative can be taken forward with state ownership of the process supported by the Network.

Talking Points:

- During the last briefing to Member States on 4 March 2020, we focused on the Network’s efforts in supporting implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which covered the concept of champion countries.
- I intend to brief the larger UN membership on developments of the Network including the champions initiative later this fall.
- This is an initiative designed to establish a non-exclusive group of states to help demonstrate the value of the Compact as a framework for action on safe, orderly and regular migration.
- The idea is that whether by, for example, promoting regional reviews; preparing voluntary GCM reviews in consultation with all relevant stakeholders; advocating for inter-state cooperation through peer exchanges; or contributing to a greater understanding

on how to incorporate the Global Compact's guiding principles in all approaches to migration, we can collectively galvanize broad GCM implementation strengthening our best practices as we go.

- As of today, I am delighted that 12 Member States have formally indicated a willingness to become champions. It is my hope that others among you will also consider favourably joining us in this and, indeed, that this initiative should not be seen as exclusive but, rather, open to all. Together, I believe you would form a powerful voice – from all regions, representing the Compact's global nature and comprising all aspects of migration's narrative arc.
- Let me take this opportunity to highlight a few principles that could guide us in this endeavour:
 - Being a champion country is a purely voluntary undertaking, with its shape and remit to be defined in consultation with all of you. Champion countries are not subject to any evaluation or review by the Network, the process fully respects the voluntary nature of the GCM framework.
 - Non-champion countries are not excluded from Network support and it would be my hope that many others can be encouraged to join.
 - We anticipate that some of the champions will face accrued financial needs and the Migration Network agencies are working together to identify potential avenues for support. In this respect, I would like to particularly point out that the Migration MPTF values greatly the national commitment to implement the GCM and it is by design that the Steering Committee ensured a significant overlap between the champions and the countries that have been identified as priorities for the Migration MPTF.
- For the Network, we are determined to prioritise support to Member States at the national level. To that end, we are developing concrete technical tools to support champions and others with the implementation of the GCM. Support from champion countries to test these guidance materials is critical to finalising them and to delivering on the Network's commitment to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support for GCM implementation. We would be particularly interested in exploring with you how we could get your support to test the tools we have developed.
- Present in the meeting today are colleagues from the Network's Executive Committee agencies, in particular IOM, OHCHR and UNDP, who are leading on the development of guidance materials and tools to assist in this project. They will be on hand to engage with you as discussions unfold, along with other UN colleagues and partners that are working on specific thematic areas.
- For example, several of the Network's Working Groups – including on Alternatives to Detention, Access to Services, Expanding Migration Pathways, and Return and

Reintegration – are seeking to facilitate government peer-learning activities on the implementation of tools and resources, and the development and sharing of positive practice examples.

- No discussion these days, of course, is complete without recognizing the very different world into which we have entered this year due to COVID-19. This pandemic presents challenges for human mobility that are staggering in scale. But, I would suggest, that the dynamics we have seen unfold this year simply reinforce the need to draw more clearly on the GCM as a framework by which to guide us when it comes to migration governance.
- To that end, I am very pleased to draw to your attention the Network’s recently published guidance, on the GCM in this pandemic era. This brief aims to demonstrate how the GCM can guide Member States, the UN and other stakeholders in developing inclusive COVID-19 preparedness, prevention, response and recovery measures that protect human rights and enhance the positive development effects of human mobility.
- In addition, the Network has published a number of policy briefs in recent months across a range of issues covered by the GCM. And I am also pleased to highlight the forthcoming guidance note to UN Country Teams on leveraging the GCM for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19.
- While there are considerable areas for concern, it is also true that we have seen a broad range of measures implemented by governments in response to COVID-19 and beyond, which are aligned with the GCM. For instance, ensuring that access to health care and other essential services are available to all, irrespective of migration status; extending work and residency permits or regularising status; and releasing migrants from immigration detention and prioritising non-custodial alternatives.
- It is vital that we build on these positive developments, including by making these actions visible through the support and collaboration of our champion countries.
- In conclusion, it is important to bear in mind that demonstrating results will help generate momentum behind our efforts, as well as dispel at least some of the anxieties that still linger in some quarters around the GCM.
- I am looking forward to hearing from you on how you might specifically see your taking this initiative forward, as well as any expectations you might have and questions that might still be pending. It is vital, if we are to succeed in this, that you take ownership of this initiative, with our dedicated support.