

African regional review of implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Rabat, 31 August and 1 September 2021

Background note

Thematic round table 3: Supporting the integration of migrants and their contribution to development

Objective 14: Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle.	Objective 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants.
Objective 16: Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion.	Objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries.
Objective 20: Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants.	Objective 22: Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits.

I. What are the opportunities and key challenges that will be considered by the thematic round table?

Thematic round table 3 will cover Global Compact objectives on the inclusion of migrants in development initiatives and their access to services in both origin and destination countries. The portability of migrants' earned benefits and social security entitlements, access by migrants to safer and reasonably-priced remittance transfer mechanisms, the right of migrants to consular protection, assistance and cooperation, and the involvement of diaspora communities in sustainable development initiatives will also be covered by the thematic round table.

Key African and global instruments underpinning the Global Compact objectives covered by thematic round table 3 include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, also known as the Banjul Charter. African countries and countries outside Africa that host migrants from African countries have an obligation to observe and enforce those and other human rights conventions, protocols and treaties. Furthermore, African consular missions in Africa and outside the continent have a responsibility to provide services to their nationals including appropriate protection measures and assistance during crises and emergencies.

One of the biggest challenges impeding the achievement of the objectives covered by thematic round table 3 is the inadequate provision of services by consulates in migrants' destination countries. Indeed, although African consulates should be able to provide life-saving support and protection, especially in emergencies or disasters, they are rarely prepared for that task and often have no contingency plans in place for the rescue, evacuation and repatriation of nationals who have been unable to regularize their visa status in their host countries.

Although most United Nations Member States are signatories to conventions, treaties and protocols that oblige them to protect the rights of migrants irrespective of their status,

migrants in destination countries are often excluded from the labour market and essential services, including health, education and housing. Many migrants must also deal with entrenched prejudice, face language, cultural and regulatory barriers, or are compelled to pay high fees to access the services they need.

Migrants' contribution to development in their countries of origin is still not fully acknowledged in most African countries. Migrants' contribution to development still comes, primarily, through remittance payments to their home countries. Even then, the high costs associated with sending remittances from one African country to another often undermines the significant positive impact of those remittances. In both the short and long term, cross-border travel is likely to increase in Africa, especially once regional integration and free movement protocols are fully implemented. There are, however, almost no mechanisms to enhance the portability of migrants' social security entitlements and earned benefits. It should also be emphasized that, in general, social security coverage remains low in African countries, even among non-migrant populations.

II. What steps must be taken to facilitate the achievement of the overall objective of thematic round table 3 in Africa?

- Increase the financial, human and technical resources allocated to consulates in order to enhance the services provided to nationals in transit, in destination countries and during their return to their countries of origin;
- Strengthen the capacity of the consulates of African countries to protect and provide services to their nationals while abroad and in emergency situations. Oblige the consulates of African countries to prepare contingency plans for the provision of emergency assistance to their nationals during crisis situations, in line with international good practices;
- Guarantee the provision of basic services to migrants irrespective of their immigration status through the adoption of statutory planning documents and the development of planning tools;
- Adopt best practices to leverage migrants' contribution to development so that their remittances have a tangible impact on local economic development, including through spatial planning, infrastructure, and community-level philanthropic initiatives;
- Revoke any foreign exchange regulations that make it costly to send and receive remittances in Africa;
- Roll out mobile transfer and payment platforms in all African countries and leverage their interoperability to radically reduce transfer times and costs.

III. Guiding questions

- How can African consulates in destination countries provide better services to their nationals, including protection and assistance in labour-related disputes?
- What are the international good practices developed by migrant-sending countries, such as the Philippines, that can be adopted to help migrants organize and engage with their consulates more effectively?
- What additional steps can be taken to provide protection for African migrant workers, especially migrants who fall victim to abuse and exploitation by employers and middlemen?
- How can data and information be used to strengthen protections for migrants within Africa and in other global regions?
- What are the good practices that have emerged during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that can be adopted to facilitate efforts by governments to provide basic services, including essential health care, to migrants while also protecting the health of host-country populations?
- How can local, regional and national governments encourage migrants and diaspora communities to engage with and support development initiatives in countries of origin and destination countries?
- What are the remaining barriers impeding rapid and reasonably-priced remittance flows and what can be done to address those barriers?
- How can African countries harmonize their regulatory environments in order to facilitate cross-border mobile payments without undermining strategic national monetary and fiscal policies?

IV. Additional resources

Key resources related to this thematic area include:

- African Development Bank, *African Economic Outlook 2020: Supplement – Amid Covid-19* (July 2020). Available at: afdb.org/en/documents/african-economic-outlook-2020-supplement.
- African Union Commission African Institute for Remittances. For further information, see: ksms.or.ke/african-institute-for-remittances/.
- Organization of African Unity, *African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights* (Banjul Charter) (June 1981). Available at: achpr.org/public/Document/file/English/banjul_charter.pdf.
- African Union Commission and International Organization for Migration, *Africa Migration Report: Challenging the Narrative* (2020). Available at: au.int/sites/default/files/documents/39408-doc-africa-migration-report.pdf.

- International Organization for Migration, *IOM Continental Strategy for Africa 2020–2024* (2020). Available at: publications.iom.int/books/iom-continental-strategy-africa-2020-2024.
- International Labour Organization, *General principles and operational guidelines for fair recruitment and definition of recruitment fees and related costs* (2019). Available at: www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---ed_protect/---protrav/---migrant/documents/publication/wcms_703485.pdf.
- International Labour Organization, *Convention concerning Migrations in Abusive Conditions and the Promotion of Equality of Opportunity and Treatment of Migrant Workers* (C143 Migrant Workers) (1975). Available at: www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C143.
- International Social Security Association, *10 Global challenges for social security: Developments and innovation* (2019). Available at: www1.issa.int/sites/default/files/documents/events/2-10-challenges-Global-2019-WEB-262394.pdf.
- Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Available at: www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Available at: www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/cescr.aspx.
- World Bank, Migration and Remittances Data. Available at: www.worldbank.org/en/topic/migrationremittancesdiasporaissues/brief/migration-remittances-data.
- International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2020* (2021). Available at: worldmigrationreport.iom.int/.
- International Organization for Migration *Missing Migrants Project* (Africa portal). Available at: missingmigrants.iom.int/region/Africa.
- International Organization for Migration, *COVID-19 Mobility Impacts: Human Mobility Impacts Due to COVID-19*. Available at: migration.iom.int/.
- Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa. For further information, see: www.afristat.org/.
- Pan-African Institute for Statistics. For further information, see: au.int/en/ea/statistics/statafric.
- United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), *Education Uprooted* (2017). Available at: www.unicef.org/reports/education-uprooted.