Two years in, the UN Network on Migration has put in place strong foundations for the future. It has created nine core and thematic Working Groups to support GCM implementation, including with stakeholder partners, based on its inaugural workplan, and established the GCM Champions initiative. Four regional Networks and thirty-nine country Networks have been established. The Network is further supporting the ongoing regional reviews leading up to the 2022 global review (IMRF). The soft launch of the Migration Network Hub (the Connection Hub and Knowledge Platform) is also taking place this week. A number of joint statements, and many more pieces of policy guidance, have been issued.

This year has also witnessed, as in many quarters, an adjustment of priorities to take into account the impact of COVID-19 both on migrants and migration; and on our working methods. The pandemic – and recovery therefrom – will remain on the agenda in the coming period.

The Network’s Executive Committee has built up relationships with a range of stakeholders. Consideration needs to be given to how best to build on this – including at the regional and country levels, as well as fully mobilising the broad diversity of partners referenced in the GCM.

Furthermore, more needs to be done to engage members of the Network beyond the Executive Committee entities on a regular basis. Currently, only two members of the broader Network (UNFPA, UN-Habitat) co-chair Network Working Groups. One additional non-EC member (UN Women), is represented on the Steering Committee of the Migration MPTF. At the national level, four non-EC Network members (UNFPA, ITC, FAO and UN Women) have benefited from financing through the Migration MPTF and several others are actively engaging in country and regional level Network structures. In addition, WHO was invited to join the Executive Committee (ex officio) throughout 2020 and is now becoming a full member. However, engagement with the broader UN system needs to become more inclusive and systematic. With thirty-nine entities in the broader Network covering nearly all regions and countries, a stronger engagement at all levels would better reflect the purpose of the Network and provide a more robust whole-of-UN-system approach to Member States in their implementation of the GCM.

Building on the work to date, this session is an opportunity to discuss how the Network can advance its work. Issues which could be reflected on include:

- What have been the main successes and challenges of the Network in its first two years? What are the key areas which need strengthening?
- What are the lessons learned from achievements and challenges faced by the Network in 2020, including during the COVID-19 response? How effectively has the Network adjusted
to engaging partners in light of COVID-19? What more could be done in this regard? Are the listening sessions useful? Is the Newsletter? How can either be improved?

- At the country/regional levels, what more can be done to ensure partners are actively engaged? How are broader Network members and stakeholders being meaningfully engaged in the Network at country, regional and global levels? What more should be done?

- While there are some modest, emerging signs of the Network’s impact how can we strengthen our ability to track this vital aspect of our work, with a view to better understanding our impact and more positively impacting the lives of migrants and communities?

- How should the Global Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub be utilized to best contribute to Member States and stakeholder efforts to implement the GCM?

- How can the Network strengthen its substantive communications on key migration priorities? What issues should it be speaking to add strategic value to the voice of individual entities? How best should it mobilise partners in this regard? Would it be desirable to establish a dedicated communications group – comprising entities’ communications officers – to help guide and frame interventions?

- Members of the Executive Committee are jointly responsible for the Network attaining its objectives, including – inter alia – through the provision of technical and/or human resources. What more could the Executive Committee do to further realise this obligation?

- Investing in the Network requires a significant outlay in capacity. How might the Network – for example, through coordinated fundraising – contribute to defraying this burden?