BACKGROUND NOTE

SESSION II: ENHANCING COLLABORATION WITH COUNTRY AND REGIONAL NETWORKS AND OTHER MIGRATION COORDINATION MECHANISMS

December 2020

Among the key priorities of the UN Network on Migration is to support regional and country-level engagement in order to provide coherent support by the UN system to Member States in the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), fully integrating the GCM’s guiding principles.

In recent months, a significant number of UN regional and country offices have either established new UN Networks on Migration or strengthened existing migration coordination platforms. In some regions and countries, new coordination mechanisms are under consideration or being developed. A current list of country and regional networks can be found here.

To support and guide this process, the Network produced a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document. This document stresses the importance of having well-coordinated structures to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to Member States, in line with the Network’s Terms of Reference, avoiding duplication as well as emphasising the importance of the meaningful engagement of civil society and other stakeholders at regional and country levels, consistent with the GCM commitment to a whole-of-society approach.

The Network will further strengthen its support to Member States, UNCTs and country-level Networks in the coming months with the implementation of the Migration MPTF funded joint programmes, the provision of support for the development of national GCM implementation plans, the delivery of capacity building activities to support the UN system with GCM implementation on engagement of stakeholders, knowledge management and information sharing, as well as pilot testing of relevant tools developed by the thematic Working Groups, thanks to support by the EU-UN Migration Capacity Building Programme. In all these areas, ensuring geographical balance in our activities and drawing on the support of GCM Champion countries will be crucial.

The Network support further extends to the follow-up and review of the GCM, including support to the recent Secretary-General’s report “From Promise to Action: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”, support to the UN RECs to host regional reviews of the GCM in 2020-2021, the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to be held during the first half of 2022, as well as the regional reviews for the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (which, in 2021, will discuss – inter alia – SDG 10).

The Network’s core workstream 2.1 focuses on bolstering the UN capacities at global, regional, national and local levels to support Member States in their implementation of the GCM, alongside core workstream 2.2 which focuses on support to Member States in developing national GCM implementation plans and other strategies to implement the GCM at the national level. A GCM implementation guide and related booklet have been developed to provide guidance to government and all relevant stakeholders on GCM implementation. Both workstreams are closely aligned with the UN development system reform process and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Thematic workstreams – on Data, Alternatives to Detention, Regular Pathways for Migrants in Vulnerable Situations, Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs), Return and Reintegration.
and Access to Services – support Member States in providing practical guidance and tools and strengthening their capacity in implementing specific GCM Objectives. Several tools and resources have or are being developed by these thematic Working Groups, including a mapping of gaps and positive practices, and related practical checklist, for ensuring returns are safe and dignified and reintegration can be sustainable; a mapping of positive practices and related guidance for expanding the flexibility and availability of regular pathways for migrants in vulnerable situations; policy guidance on alternatives to detention in the context of COVID-19 and the facilitation of peer learning between Member States on the implementation of alternatives to detention; policy guidance on access to services for migrants in the context of the pandemic; and rights-based guidance on bilateral labour migration agreements.

To facilitate further regional and country level engagement, the Network plans to organize regional and country Network webinars, bringing together the UN system and stakeholders, with the aim to build the capacity of these country Networks and start a dialogue between the country Networks across the different regions.

In moving forward with ensuring that the Network has impact in supporting Member States and other partners in GCM implementation, issues which could be reflected on include:

- How can the Network provide the proper support to country and regional Networks, to ensure they reflect the working principles of the Network and are best positioned to support Member States in GCM implementation, including in response to emerging migration issues?
- How best can the Network facilitate coherence and cooperation between the different country networks in the same region and across regions?
- How best to ensure the Network complements other coordination structures at the regional and country levels?
- How best to ensure that all stakeholders referenced in the GCM are meaningfully engaged in and consulted on the work of the Network at country and regional levels, and to ensure a broad and inclusive engagement of civil society and other stakeholders? How can we continuously expand the engagement of stakeholders and devise innovative activities for their meaningful participation? How can the Network ensure that it consistently consults with migrants and diaspora communities?