

Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

10-12 March 2021, Bangkok

CONCEPT NOTE*

The [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (GCM) (General Assembly Resolution 73/195) calls for review of the progress of “... implementing the Global Compact in the framework of the United Nations through a State-led approach and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders ...” (paragraph 48), and invites “United Nations regional economic commissions ... to review the implementation of the Global Compact within the respective regions, beginning in 2020 ...” (paragraph 50).

This concept note has been prepared by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific¹, of which ESCAP is a member, to consult member States of ESCAP about the preparations and organization of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration to take place at ESCAP from 10 to 12 March 2021.² This concept note is guided by the United Nations Network on Migration note on the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact issued by the United Nations Network on Migration on their website for the attention of United Nations Member States in Geneva on 24 February 2020 and presented by the United Nations Network on Migration to United Nations Member States in Geneva on 4 March 2020.³

I. International migration in Asia and the Pacific

International migration is an important multidimensional reality of major relevance for sustainable development to countries of origin, transit and destination in Asia and the Pacific, which requires coherent and comprehensive responses. As of 2019, there were about 65 million immigrants to the region, 71 per cent of whom were from other countries within the region, and over 106 million emigrants from the region. Women make up 51 per cent of immigrants but only 46 per cent of emigrants (ESCAP, 2019).⁴ Regional migration movements include a large

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¹ The Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific is comprised of all UN agencies at the Asia and the Pacific regional level wishing to join the Regional Network (see TOR shared with Regional Directors on 3 April 2020).

² ESCAP is monitoring the COVID-19 situation. In collaboration with the Regional Network on Migration, ESCAP will decide later this year on the modalities of the meeting should the plans presented here, change.

³ <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/supporting-material-regional-reviews>.

⁴ ESCAP, 2019: ESCAP Population Data Sheet 2019.

percentage of people in search of better jobs and livelihoods, especially into low-skilled occupations. According to ILO estimates, there were about 33.5 million migrant workers in Asian and Pacific countries in 2017 (ILO, 2018).⁵ Labour migration includes both migration between countries in Asia and the Pacific and migration to the oil-producing countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. In 2019, migrant workers sent over \$327 billion in remittances to Asian and Pacific countries, over ten times the amount received as official development assistance in that year (World Bank, 2019).⁶

In addition to the search for decent work, migration in the region is driven by a range of political, social and environmental factors, facilitated by networks and increasing levels of connectivity. For example, climate-induced migration does not only affect low-lying areas, but communities across the region. Due to ageing populations, the size of the working age population is projected to decline further in many countries, increasing the demand for migrant workers. Thus, different drivers and facilitating factors underlie and guide migration flows in the region. Migrants also have diverse profiles including both men and women, mostly of working-age but also with important stocks of child and older migrants.

Through work, consumption, and taxes, migrants make significant contributions to sustainable development in developing countries of destination, and they build bridges between countries of origin and destination. Migration can also be empowering for migrants themselves, enabling them to learn new skills and broadening their horizons. Yet at the same time, many migrants in the region are faced with abuse, violence and exploitation throughout their migration experience which can have devastating impacts on individuals and community and also limit their ability to contribute to sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, opportunities to migrate are often limited, restrictive and expensive, particularly for poor, low-skilled or marginalized migrants and often disproportionately restrictive for women. Many migrants are therefore left with no options other than unsafe, undignified and precarious pathways, which often involve irregular means, or which create barriers to maintaining a regular status in their country of destination. Such migrants are vulnerable to abuse and exploitation, including while they are in transit, at borders and also in countries of destination. Migrants can fall prey to abuse by a range of actors such as human traffickers or unscrupulous employers who force them to work for low pay, with no social protection and in abusive working and living conditions. When they lack a legal status, migrants are often unable to access critical public services such as healthcare, education and housing. While many countries have undertaken efforts to protect and promote the rights of migrants, regional cooperation on migration is still inadequate despite the large scale of intra-regional migration. Xenophobic and anti-migrant discourse in the political sphere, the media and public debate has become commonplace in many countries and the effects of such divisive narratives represent a formidable obstacle to rights-based, inclusive and fair migration governance.

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the vulnerability of migrants to health risks, exacerbated by lack of access to healthcare systems and other social protection schemes in countries of destination, origin and transit. They are especially affected by the economic impacts of the pandemic and lockdowns enacted to fight it. Many migrants are stranded in countries of destination and transit having lost their jobs and businesses. They face serious abuse and xenophobic attitudes during this time of crisis.

⁵ ILO, 2019: ILO Global Estimates on International Migrant Workers – Results and Methodology. 2nd ed. International Labour Office, Geneva.

⁶ World Bank, 2019: World Bank staff calculations based on data from IMF Balance of Payment Statistics database and data releases from central banks, national statistical agencies, and World Bank country desks. See Migration and Development Brief 28, Appendix A for details. October 2019 update.

II. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

i. Overview

On 10 December 2018, more than 150 governments, represented by their Heads of State, Heads of Government or senior officials met in Marrakech, Morocco at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.⁷ On 19 December 2018, 152 United Nations Member States endorsed the Global Compact at the General Assembly (General Assembly resolution 73/195).⁸ The adoption and endorsement of the Global Compact marks the first time that Member States have committed, within the auspices of the United Nations, to a comprehensive, 360-degree vision of international migration, grounded on international law, that turns their international commitments, through its 23 objectives, into concrete action to enhance international cooperation on all aspects of international migration (see Annex for the list of objectives of the Global Compact).

The Global Compact recognizes that no State can address migration alone, that national migration policies are more likely to succeed through a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach to international cooperation grounded in respect for human rights and the rule of law. The Global Compact is firmly rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and it aims to leverage the potential of migration for the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals. It also acknowledges that each State experiences migration differently and affirms each State's sovereign prerogative to govern its own migration policies in respect of obligations under international law.

The Global Compact is based on a shared vision⁹ and the following cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles: (a) people-centred; (b) international cooperation; (c) national sovereignty; (d) rule of law and due process; (e) sustainable development; (f) human rights; (g) gender-responsive; (h) child-sensitive; (i) whole-of-government approach; and (j) whole-of-society approach.

ii. Implementation, follow-up and review

In the Global Compact, Member States committed to its implementation at the national, regional and global levels in cooperation and partnership with all relevant stakeholders.¹⁰ They also welcomed the establishment of the United Nations Network on Migration as a means of ensuring effective and coherent system-wide United Nations support for implementation as well as follow-up and review (General Assembly resolution 73/195, paragraphs 41, 44 and 45).

Recognizing that most international migration is regional in nature, the Global Compact invited regional economic commissions and other fora to review its implementation within their respective regions on a voluntary basis, beginning in 2020. Paragraph 50 of the Global Compact outlines the plans for the regional reviews as follows (General Assembly resolution 73/195):

⁷ According to the report of the Credentials Committee (A/CONF.231/5), 43 of the 53 ESCAP member States had attended the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration held in Marrakech, Morocco from 10 to 11 December 2018.

⁸ A total of 152 Member States voted in favour, 12 abstained and 5 voted against.

⁹ See paragraphs 8-15 of General Assembly resolution 73/195.

¹⁰ See paragraph 44 of General Assembly resolution 73/195: "We will implement the Global Compact in cooperation and partnership with migrants, civil society, migrant and diaspora organizations, faith-based organizations, local authorities and communities, the private sector, trade unions, parliamentarians, national human rights institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, academia, the media and other relevant stakeholders."

“Considering that most international migration takes place within regions, we invite relevant subregional, regional and cross-regional processes, platforms and organizations, including the United Nations regional economic commissions or regional consultative processes, to review the implementation of the Global Compact within the respective regions, beginning in 2020, alternating with discussions at the global level at a four-year interval, in order to effectively inform each edition of the International Migration Review Forum, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.”

This call was reiterated in General Assembly resolution 73/326 on the format and organizational aspects of the international migration review forums.¹¹ The resolution also requested the United Nations Network on Migration, to assist, upon request by Member States, in the preparation and organization of regional reviews of the implementation of the Global Compact.¹² The regional reviews will draw on local and national reviews and follow-up processes and will involve all relevant stakeholders.¹³ They will also contribute to the work of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), to be held every four years from 2022; the IMRF’s agreed intergovernmental Progress Declaration may be considered in the high-level political forum on sustainable development.¹⁴

III. Objectives

In response to the mandates from Member States to regional economic commissions regarding the follow-up and review of implementation of the Global Compact, ESCAP and the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific, of which ESCAP is a member, will hold an intergovernmental meeting to provide a platform for ESCAP member States to review on a voluntary basis the implementation of the Global Compact in Asia and the Pacific.

The meeting will provide an opportunity to ESCAP member States, as well as other relevant stakeholders to:

- a. take stock of the overall progress made with regard to the 360-degree implementation of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact in the Asia-Pacific region, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders;
- b. identify key challenges, opportunities, gaps and emerging issues, as well as promising practices and lessons learned related to the implementation of the Global Compact that might be relevant to other regions;
- c. discuss regional priorities and potential areas for regional cooperation on international migration in line with the vision and guiding principles of the Global Compact;
- d. compile resource requirements, capacity-building needs, policy advice, data gathering needs, technology and partnerships that are needed for the full implementation of the Global Compact at the national and regional levels; and,
- e. facilitate the formulation of key findings and recommendations to inform the 2022 IMRF.

¹¹ Paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 73/326: “Invites relevant subregional, regional and cross-regional processes, platforms and organizations, including the United Nations regional economic commissions and regional consultative processes on migration, to review the implementation of the Global Compact, within their respective regions, and to contribute to the work of the forums, with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders;”

¹² Paragraph 9 of General Assembly resolution 73/326.

¹³ Paragraph 48 of General Assembly resolution 73/195: “We will review the progress made at the local, national, regional and global levels in implementing the Global Compact in the framework of the United Nations through a State-led approach and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. For follow-up and review, we agree on intergovernmental measures that will assist us in fulfilling our objectives and commitments.”

¹⁴ Paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 73/195.

The review will adopt an inclusive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach and will review all aspects of the Global Compact, according to its vision and its cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles.¹⁵

Since the Global Compact is firmly rooted in the 2030 Agenda, the regional review will also discuss how the implementation of the objectives of the Global Compact will contribute to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals.

IV. Date and Venue

The Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will take place at the United Nations Conference Centre, Bangkok, Thailand from 10 to 12 March 2021.

V. Participation

The Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will convene representatives of ESCAP member and associated members; intergovernmental organizations; United Nations bodies, specialized agencies and funds; non-governmental organizations, civil society and other relevant stakeholders¹⁶ from the Asia and Pacific region.

VI. Format

The Regional Review will consist of (a) an intergovernmental meeting, to take stock, highlight achievements, challenges and opportunities, identify gaps, discuss regional priorities, and identify resource requirements in implementing the Global Compact; (b) regional analysis of voluntary GCM reviews and studies conducted by Governments on progress made and challenges encountered in implementation of the Global Compact, which will inform the documentation prepared for the regional review; (c) civil society and other stakeholder consultations with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders; and (d) invitations to regional processes, platforms and organizations to provide input to the regional review.

Voluntary GCM reviews will inform the regional review with member States and other relevant sub-regional, regional and cross-regional processes, platforms and organizations and stakeholders providing input to a set of guiding questions on the implementation of the Global Compact. A request to ESCAP member States to complete voluntary GCM reviews will go out in the first half of 2020, and a summary of responses will be drafted over the summer to inform the 2020 Asia-Pacific Migration Report. Member States are asked to please return the completed survey to the ESCAP secretariat **by 31 October 2020**, preferably by email (escap-sdd@un.org) with a copy to the Regional Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific (UNRNAP-regreviews@iom.int). Any queries can be forwarded to these same addresses. On the survey, member States are also kindly requested to indicate whether they would be willing to share the

¹⁵ See General Assembly resolution 73/195.

¹⁶ As per the Global Compact for Migration, this group will include migrants, civil society, migrant and diaspora organizations, faith-based organizations, local authorities and communities, the private sector, , trade unions, parliamentarians, national human rights institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, academia, the media and other relevant stakeholders (see General Assembly resolution 73/195, paragraph 44).

report at the IMRF/regional reviews site on the UN Network on Migration at <https://www.migrationnetwork.un.org/>.

Consultations with civil society and other stakeholders will be held to obtain input to the overall organization of the meeting and other inputs that will inform the documentation for the meeting.

The intergovernmental meeting will consist of a general debate, allowing member States and other relevant stakeholders from diverse backgrounds to take stock of implementation of the Global Compact, covering all 23 objectives, and interactive thematic roundtable sessions.

The thematic roundtables will offer a more focused discussion, organized along the lines of the four roundtables of the International Migration Review Forum.¹⁷

Roundtable	Objectives
One	2, 5, 6, 12 and 18
Two	4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 21
Three	14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22
Four	1, 3, 7, 17 and 23

In addition, the impact of COVID-19 on migrants, their families and communities in countries of origin, destination and transit will be addressed at the meeting.

Keynote speakers, panelists and moderators of the thematic roundtables will be invited with due regard to geographic, gender balance and with a view to the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach of the Global Compact. Adequate opportunity will be provided for the participation of civil society and other relevant stakeholders (as above), as well as other regional and subregional processes, platforms and organizations, including regional consultative processes and regional economic cooperation and integration processes. A short background note with guiding questions will be prepared in advance for each roundtable to guide the interactive debate.

The meeting will be informed by the 2020 Asia-Pacific Migration Report, prepared in collaboration with the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific, and a background note offering a 360-degree vision of international migration and addressing all 23 objectives of the Global Compact as they relate to Asia and the Pacific. The 2020 Asia-Pacific Migration Report and background note to the meeting will be based on the latest research and evidence and will have been informed by voluntary GCM reviews by ESCAP member States.

ESCAP member States and other participants will be encouraged to organize side events addressing Global Compact objectives.

VII. Expected outcome

The Regional Review Meeting is expected to consider adopting a report of the meeting, which could include an outcome document capturing the regional dimensions of the implementation of the Global Compact. The report of the meeting is to be transmitted to the United Nations

¹⁷ See paragraph 21.b. of General Assembly resolution 73/326 and the annex to this document.

Network on Migration, in preparation for the forums, and as an intergovernmental Asia-Pacific input to the International Migration Review Forum in 2022.¹⁸

Additional detailed information on the regional review meeting is being gathered on the voluntary GCM reviews, participation and side events, for distribution in due course. An information note, focusing on the logistics of the meeting will be prepared as well. In addition, ESCAP, with support from the Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific will brief the ESCAP Advisory Committee of Permanent Representatives and other Representatives Designated by Members of the Commission (ACPR) on the preparations for the meeting.

VIII. Related Documents

- [Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (A/RES/70/1)
- [New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants](#) (A/RES/71/1)
- [Report of the Asia-Pacific Regional Preparatory Meeting for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (E/ESCAP/GCM/PREP/6)
- [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (A/RES/73/195)
- [Format and organizational aspects of the international migration review forums](#) (A/RES/73/326)

¹⁸ See paragraph 49 of General Assembly resolution 73/195 and paragraph 13 of General Assembly resolution 73/326.

Annex 1.**Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration - Objectives for safe, orderly and regular migration (GA resolution 73/195)**

1.	Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies
2.	Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin
3.	Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration
4.	Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation
5.	Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration
6.	Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work
7.	Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration
8.	Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants
9.	Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants
10.	Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration
11.	Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner
12.	Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral
13.	Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives
14.	Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle
15.	Provide access to basic services for migrants
16.	Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion
17.	Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration
18.	Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences
19.	Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries
20.	Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants
21.	Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration
22.	Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits
23.	Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration