

Stakeholder Consultations for the Africa Regional Review of the Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Thematic Area 4: “Improving value-driven and evidence-based policymaking and public debate and enhancing cooperation on migration”

Tuesday 6 July 2021, 10-12 am (GMT) Online Session (Zoom)

Rapporteur: **Hakima Haithar**

Introduction

1. In line with the commitments outlined in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), including the guiding principle of a “whole-of-society approach” to GCM implementation, follow-up and review, and in preparation for the first African regional review of the implementation of the GCM in August 2021, The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), and the African Union Commission (AUC), in coordination with the United National Network on Migration(UNNM) jointly convened a multi-stakeholder consultation on the thematic area of **“Improving value-driven and evidence-based policymaking and public debate and enhancing cooperation on migration”** to ensure transparent, inclusive, diverse and meaningful stakeholder engagement and participation during the review process.
2. With the participation of the various stakeholders, the online meeting organised on the Tuesday 6 July 2021 from 10-12 GMT was an inclusive and multi-stakeholder consultation. A hundred participants, including diaspora organizations, academia, media, child- and youth-led organisations, civil society organisations, women’s organisations, national human rights institutions, trade unions etc. contributed to the discussion.
3. This stakeholder consultation focused on the GCM objective centred on data and evidence, particularly:
 - GCM Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies
 - GCM Objective 3: Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration
 - GCM Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration
 - GCM Objective 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration
 - GCM Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration
4. The purpose of the consultation was to bring stakeholders together to: a) take stock of progress made in the implementation of the thematic areas focused on data and evidence of the GCM that include objective 1, 3, 7, 17, 23; b) Identify key challenges, opportunities, gaps and emerging issues, discuss challenges and opportunities; c) Identify established and emerging good practices and lessons learnt; and d)Identify resource requirements and capacity building needs and e)formulate recommendations to inform the continental GCM review meeting which will take place on 31- 1 September 2021.

5. The consultation consisted of an opening plenary, followed by three presentation followed by Q&As on topics pre-identified.

Opening session

6. The consultation commenced with welcoming remarks from Mr Damien Jusselme, from IOM, West and Central Africa, Head of the data and research unit and Ms. Kristina Mejo, from IOM, Middle East and North Africa, Senior Regional Liaison & Policy Officer
7. **Mr Damien Jusselme**, from IOM, set the scene for the consultation and went through the agenda for the day.
8. **Ms Kristina Mejo**, from IOM, emphasized that data is a prominent part of the GCM for evidence-based policy and a well-informed public discourse of commitments over time. She listed the progress the continent has made in terms of data. In 2009, the African Charter on statistic was adopted. In 2010 the AU strategy for the harmonization of statistics in Africa was developed as part of the establishment of the AU institute for Statistics. In 2020, the international forum on Migration Statistics was hosted in Cairo and in 2021, the African migration data network promoting continental exchanges of good practices on migration data issues was launched. At national level, Kenya has standardized operation procedures on migration data and finalising an MOU for data sharing, exchange, and dissemination. Tunisia has the National Observatory for Migration. Although these centres are in place, data collection on the continent is still a challenge.
9. **Ms Sara Carl** from IOM, West and Central Africa, Regional Liaison & Policy Officer guided the participants on the review process of the GCM, she gave a background to the compact and highlighted what the discussion was contributing to. She reviewed the principles of the GCM as well as the 23 Objectives. She emphasised the consultation was an opportunity to discuss the progress of the GCM, as well as for dialogue, an exchange of experience, identifying common goals and deepening the international cooperation in order to achieve the objectives of the GCM. She further highlighted how the consultations connected, as each of the review meetings discussions will feed into the continental review and all the reviews from the various regional reviews will be discussed at the global level by members states at the IMRF in May 2022. Member states have also been encouraged to submit volunteer reports on progress on the GCM. Sixteen¹ countries from the continent have made their submissions. To ensure transparency, the reports are also available online on the UNMN website². The UNMN is also available to support member states and is now at the regional and country level. There are 22 Champion countries of which 8³ are from the continent.
10. Finally, **Mr. William Muhawava**, Economic Commission for Africa, Chief, Demographic and Social Statistics Section, African Centre for Statistics, introduced the topic of the day, looking at the five objectives related to data. He highlighted that migration data on the continent was increasingly becoming more available. There has been a concerted effort by governments to ensure census collect migration data. This data allows for measurement of levels of trends. Although not all countries will be able to collect this data in the 2020 round of census due to COVID. The hope is that at least 2/3rd of the countries collect this data. There is also a move to have migration surveys, similar to the global demographic and health surveys to ensure the collection of more in-dept information. There are also discussions to work closely with home affairs offices/internal affairs to utilise administrative data at ports of entry and exit to be

¹ Chad, Comoros, Egypt, Ethiopia, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Niger, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia.

² <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/country-regional-network/africa>

³ Chad, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and Senegal.

converted into statistics. With the current data available, levels of migration can be measured as well as differentials and trends. This data is adequate to formulate policies (who are the migrants, where they come from and what have been the changes over time). Governments are also looking into what the requirements are for migration statistics (data that can show the contribution of migrants in origin and destination countries) with the integration with economic departments. Generating evidence on the African labour markers to understand the future demand and supply of labour. Currently majority of migration on the continent is for economic and labour and the continent now has the capability of generating this evidence. With the current data set available the social, cultural and economic contributions of migrants can also be generated. The economic commission further supports member states to: collect migration statistics and encourages them to apply the standards set by the UNDESA/UNSD to ensure comparability of statistics at the continent and global level; the commission further encourages member states to include refugees documented migrants and non-nationals in their census data and other migration statistics. Investing in data collection and knowledge building on migration statistics and data. Transforming the way data collection is being done by using technology. Africa has the potential for innovative technology when collecting data as seen during the COVID period. The commission has done vaccine hesitant surveys and similar models can be utilised for collecting migrant related data. Big data collection is also a possibility through the use of mobile devices, digital census, as well as internet-based data such as satellite imagery. He ended by emphasizing that as Africa innovates and modernises the availability of data increases.

Topic 1 Data availability, disaggregation, and use (GCM Objectives 1 and 3)

11. **Ms. Caroline Ngonze**, from UNFPA, Chief, ad interim and Officer-In-Charge, UNFPA Representation Office to the AUC and ECA, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, shared on the ground experience from Sudan as to how data was being utilised for policy making. She discussed government priorities which was for comprehensive peace, stability, and the improvement of the economic situation as it was one of the root causes of migration. She further discussed the recent situation that the country was dealing regarding the large influx from Ethiopia. She highlighted the country being a prime transit route for migrants travelling towards the Middle East. She emphasised the progress that Sudan has made as per the various objectives and listed each one with the progress made. Under objective 1: *Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies*. Sudan has launched the Khartoum Regional Operation Centre (ROCK) for the collection of migration data which is a partnership between the EU and the AU. Under objective 3: *Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration*, Sudan's Supreme Council for Immigration and Foreign Presence was recently reconstituted under the chairmanship of the Minister of the Council of Ministers to ensure information sharing for all the stages of migration. Under Objective 7: *Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration*. Sudan now has a national committee to combat human trafficking that was established under the Human Trafficking Act 2012 and was amended in February 2021 to include additional areas related to human trafficking and the protection of victims. Under objective 17: *Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration*. Sudan has a national committee for combatting extremism to support activities on awareness raising, shaping perceptions, prevention and protection from extremism. And under objective 23: *Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration*. Sudan has a National Mechanism for the Implementation of the Global Charter for Immigration, the Order and Regulation, and in collaboration with IOM, organised a national workshop in February 2021 to implement the National Review on the Global Charter. The transitional government

has also committed itself to all international conventions and agreements approved by the country and to the GCM. UNFPA has been working closely with the government and has partnered with the ministry of women and other entities for health system strengthening especially during this period of influx from the Tigray region in Ethiopia. As of May 2021, approximately 70,319 Ethiopian refugees fled to Sudan. Regarding challenges, Ms Ngonze spoke of the discriminations, exploitation and abuse especially of migrant women and girls, during their journey and upon arriving in the Sudan. She mentioned, a lack of comparable data to be utilised to understand the gender disparities to support with policy development on access to sexual reproductive health care and for access to be provided. There is also a lack of migratory data to support the design of programs for the influx of migrants to Sudan. She finalised her presentations with a few **recommendations** for the review process for Sudan:

- a) Strengthen national capabilities on disaggregated data on migration through the Central Bureau of Statistics and other relevant institutions. This would support policy making and the design of relevant programs for migrants;
- b) The transitional government of Sudan to engage in comprehensive dialogue with CSOs, academia, political foundations, diaspora, legislatives, and other stakeholders to bridge the gap between evidence and policy; and lastly,

Contributions from the participants

12. Participants shared their experience on data from the region. In North Africa, Ms Rossi, IOM, mentioned the difficulty of governments to share data, as it is seen as a sensitive, delicate and a national security issue.

Topic 2 Diversity, inclusion, Vulnerability and social cohesion (GCM Objectives 7 and 17)

13. **Mr. Blamah Jallo**, the Regional Coordinator from Réseau Bilital Maroobé (Transhumance Association Network) (RBM), based in West and Central Africa, spoke of data collected on transhumance across borders in the Sahel region and the West African coastal countries. In partnership with IOM, they adopted tools to track the mobility of herds and herders, to inform public policies and to avoid conflicts. They worked with community leaders to identify entry/transit points for herders and established the Transhumance Tracking Tool, which divides into two main data collection methods. 1) Mapping of herders: a Mapping of herders' locations was especially important at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic where mobility restrictions in West and Central Africa generated situation of stranded herders and their cattle. This data collection tool informed partners and government of the situation of herders throughout West Africa. 2) Flow Monitoring: With a lack of quantitative data available in many countries on transhumance flows, RBM used a tool to collect data on transhumance and herders and took this information to decision makers. The data is also useful to manage herders'/farmers conflicts in the region. These two tools are just a start as RBM keeps on working on data to manage transhumance. The second stage of this tool is to transfer the tool to the community level and use it to further negotiations from the community level.

Below are the **recommendations** from Mr Jallo:

- a) Conceptualise the nexus between migration, trans humans and climate change;
- b) Have evidence-based programmatic approaches that highlight the link between migration and pastoral communities most affected by mobility in the context of climate change and insecurity;

- c) Dialogue is required at the UN level to submit findings as the concept of transhumance tracking tool is still new; and lastly
- d) Continued evidence gathering is required for migration and the effects of climate change on transhumance.

14. **Mr. Nyobe Lipot Paul Laurent**, the Executive Director of the African Business Leaders – Social Incubator for Entrepreneur Migrants, focused on objectives 7 and 17. He shared finding of a study conducted in 2019 as well as a project on migrants’ entrepreneurship. The study was of 962 migrants, the findings were that 75% were young people who were in vulnerable situations, 40 % were victims of trafficking and single women. The major reasons for migrating for the migrants was the economic situation in their countries of origin. On arrival in Tunisia, a country that does not have a policy for hosting migrants, in order to address the migrant situation, the institution partnered with IOM on an Incubator project for the economic integration of migrants. The project has two phases; i) Dialogue between host and migrant communities; and ii) Follow up and training programs for migrants. The project has currently worked with 30 migrants and reduced their vulnerabilities. They ensured their food security through a food bank before starting the program. Some of the migrant entrepreneurs have launched their activities. Their integration become easier once they launched their activities and their status changed from being that of an irregular migrant to a regular migrant. The project allows for the creation of an increased number of integrated migrants who are able to speak to the government on the migrants needs. Through their activities they are able to bring economic dynamism to the region and a positive narrative towards the migrants.

Below are the **recommendations** from Mr Laurent:

- a) Data is required to adapt projects to the needs on the ground.

Topic 3 Capacity Building (GCM Objectives 23)

15. **Ms Leila Ben Ali**, from STATAFRIC, African Union Commission (AUC), head of the Division of STATAFRICA and Director of the African Migratory Observatory, focused on GCM objective 23. She discussed the role of STATAFRIC, and the role of Statistics in the AUC. She mentioned building capacity for the production and use of statistics has been a recurring theme for the AU Initiatives. In 1990 the Addis Ababa Plan of Action for statistical development was evaluation as well as the National Statistical system of AU member states and the regional strategic framework for statistical capacity building was developed in 2006. The harmonization of Statistics, adopted in 2018, is currently being implemented by the Assembly of the Heads of States of the AUC. STATAFRIC is an outcome of objective 2: *to establish an effective coordination mechanism and to coordinate the production of quality statistics for Africa*. Since its inception STATAFRIC has highlighted the importance of organising capacity building activities including in the domain of immigration data and Statistics. In 2019, in close collaboration with IOM and Statistics Sweden, STATAFRIC organised the first African school on migration statistics. The event was held online and attended by stakeholders all over the continent. The link between global processes such as the GCM and migration data was recognised. A series of webinars was also conducted, covering various topics related to migration data organised on the last Thursday of each month and will continue till the end of 2021. There is now an African Migration Data Network⁴ that was launched in April this year, the network is a result of the various capacity building efforts by STATAFRIC. Lastly, Ms Ali

⁴ Consists of AU members, RECs and development partners

mentioned The African Migration Observatory centre that was set up by the AUC which ensures synergy of activities and builds the capacity of statisticians in migration and will boast the dialogue between the producer and user of the migration data which will ensure there is no duplication at national, regional and continental level. The mandate of the Observatory is for the overall improvement of migration governance in Africa and provide the continent with centralised, harmonised and timely migration data for research and policy formulation.

Below are the **recommendations** from Ms Ali:

- a) Important to coordinate capacity building activities at the national, regional and continental level so as not to duplicate efforts made;
- b) Good practices need to be share at the continental level to ensure the GCM objectives are met;
- c) STATAFRIC building capacity needs to be extended to the continent, the focus is currently on four Regional Economic Communities (REC);
- d) There is a need for a labour division in the current migration centres that have been created for data collection; and lastly,
- e) Encourage South- South cooperation to ensure learning takes place and an exchange on good practices

16. **Mr. Massinissa Benlakehal**, a Journalist, in Tunis spoke to a program designed by IOM on the capacity building for journalists. The training courses were offered in Arabic and English. Journalists were trained on terminologies, evidence-based data, the need for consistency and the important role journalists play when it came to reporting on migration. An ethical charter to be utilized by the journalists for media coverage was also created. The importance of training journalist on how to use data on migration was emphasized.

Below are the **recommendations** from Mr Benlakehal:

- a) Journalists should have the correct data when reporting and should undergo regular training on migration and migration data;
- b) Journalists should be less sensational when reporting on migration but more factual and recognise their role in creating stereotypes around migrants; and lastly,
- c) The need for a Global Network of journalists for migration coverage.

Concluding Remarks:

Ms. Lorenza Rossi, IOM, Middle East and North Africa, Regional Data and Research Coordination, gave the concluding remarks, she emphasised that infrastructure is also key for data collection, remote data collection has also been tested during the COVID-19 period and good examples of innovations shared by the speakers. She asked participants to share their contributions for those that were unable to connect to the session as the report will be used as a background document for the continental review to be held on the 31st September 2021. She mentioned another session on data for participants to join as a side event on the 26 August 2021 and closed by reminding participants of the improvement of the availability of statistics on migration for the continent and the capacity building efforts made by the AUC through STATAFRIC and the African Migration Observatory centre.

Ms. Hakima Haithar, an International Independent Consultant- with a focus on migration highlighted a few of the recommendations from the various speakers. She will be finalising the report of the meeting which will be shared with participants.