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## Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

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

Bangkok, 10–12 March 2021

Item 2 of the provisional agenda\*

**Review of progress and challenges with regard to implementing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Asia and the Pacific, including the implications of the coronavirus disease pandemic**

## International Migration, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Note by the secretariat

### *Summary*

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development. The 23 objectives of the Global Compact draw from and contribute to the goals of sustainable development, ensuring that migrants are able to contribute to and benefit from sustainable development. Implementing the goals of the 2030 Agenda will help to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration.

In the present document, interlinkages and synergies between the Global Compact, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda are analysed. The key role of the Global Compact in supporting sustainable development in the Asia-Pacific region and ensuring respect for the human and labour rights of migrants is highlighted. The document concludes with recommendations for strengthening synergies between the frameworks for the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals and enduring improvements to migration.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in the present document are presented for consideration by Asian and Pacific Governments, in partnership with all relevant stakeholders, in advancing the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact.

\* ESCAP/GCM/2021/L.1.

## I. Introduction

1. International migration in the Asia-Pacific region has grown significantly since 1990. Almost 107 million people from the region lived outside their country of birth in 2019, and over 65 million international migrants lived in the region.<sup>1</sup> Migration has grown owing to interlinked demographic, economic, environmental and other trends (see ESCAP/GCM/2021/1 for more details).

2. Migration affects countries of origin, destination and transit. It involves both migrants and non-migrants. While migration outcomes are often positive, owing to remittance flows, skills development and transfer, and increased international linkages, it often takes place in an unsafe, disorderly and irregular way, which limits its positive impacts and renders migrants vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.

3. Increasingly, international dialogues and frameworks recognize the role of migration in supporting sustainable development, the challenges and risks migrants face and the need to protect and promote their human and labour rights.

4. The present document provides background on international initiatives and frameworks on the nexus between migration and development, and identifies migration-related linkages between: the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development; the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its goals, targets, and indicators; and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and its objectives and several recommended actions. It also contains recommendations on ways to strengthen the synergies between the frameworks.

## II. Migration in internationally agreed development goals

5. For over a quarter of a century, global action on population and development, including international migration, has been guided by the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development, which was adopted in 1994. In its chapter X, the interlinkages between economic, political and cultural factors in driving international migration were recognized and migration's positive impacts through remittances, skills transfer, and cultural exchange and enrichment were acknowledged. The risk to countries of origin of losing human capital, and the risks to migrants of discrimination, racism and xenophobia, and overall disrespect for their human rights were also recognized. In the Programme of Action, it was recognized that States may wish to foster the inflow of remittances and their productive use for development, integrate migration into political and economic agendas, and increase international cooperation on migration with relevant stakeholders.

6. Subsequent United Nations conferences and summits in the social and economic fields affirmed the contribution of international migration and development. However, while migration was mentioned in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, it was not explicitly recognized in any Millennium Development Goals or targets. After years of debating whether to convene an intergovernmental conference on international migration, the General

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<sup>1</sup> *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020: Assessing Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration* (United Nations publication, 2020).

Assembly decided to hold the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, dedicated exclusively to migration, in September 2006. In his summary of the Dialogue, the President of the General Assembly recognized the almost universal interest by Member States in continuing a voluntary, State-led global dialogue on international migration and development, as proposed by the Secretary-General through the Global Forum on Migration and Development process (see A/61/515). Since 2007, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, operating outside the United Nations system, has fostered informal dialogue and cooperation between Governments, with a view to enhancing the benefits and minimizing the negative impacts of international migration for development.<sup>2</sup> The Global Forum on Migration and Development process allows Governments – in partnership with civil society, the private sector, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, to analyse and discuss sensitive issues, create consensus, pose innovative solutions, and share policy and practices.

7. At the second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which was held in 2013, a consensus emerged that “international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination, and ... that international migration is a cross-cutting phenomenon that should be addressed in a coherent, comprehensive and balanced manner, integrating development with due regard for social, economic and environmental dimensions and respecting human rights”.<sup>3</sup> Member States further called for migration to be incorporated in a post-2015 development agenda.

8. At the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, held in 2015, Member States adopted the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to encourage political commitment to address the challenges of financing sustainable development and enabling global partnership and solidarity. In the Agenda, Member States recognized the positive contributions of migrants to inclusive growth and sustainable development and the importance of migrant remittances, but noted that they cannot be equated with other international financial flows, such as foreign direct investment, official development assistance or other public sources of financing for development. They wanted to ensure that migrants and their families had access to adequate and affordable financial services in both countries of origin and destination. Moreover, they committed to working towards reducing migrant remittance transaction costs to less than 3 per cent of the amount transferred and capping remittance charges at 5 per cent, while maintaining adequate service coverage for those most in need. They further committed to supporting national authorities in addressing significant obstacles to remittance transfers across borders and to supporting non-bank remittance service providers in addressing obstacles to accessing payment system infrastructure. Cheaper, faster and safer transfer of remittances could be achieved by encouraging competitive and transparent market conditions, new technologies, financial literacy and inclusion, and improved data collection.<sup>4</sup>

9. Beyond remittances, Member States called for the inclusion of migrant and refugee children in education systems and the retention of health workers in developing countries. They also noted that international migration was a multidimensional reality that required international cooperation to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration, with full respect for human rights. They agreed

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<sup>2</sup> *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020*.

<sup>3</sup> General Assembly resolution 68/4.

<sup>4</sup> General Assembly resolution 69/313.

to “increase cooperation on access to and portability of earned benefits, enhance the recognition of foreign qualifications, education and skills, lower the costs of recruitment for migrants and combat unscrupulous recruiters, in accordance with national circumstances and legislation”.<sup>5</sup> In addition, they pledged to use national frameworks and effective social communication strategies to counter xenophobia, facilitate social integration, and protect migrants’ human rights and fundamental freedoms, regardless of migration status. They committed to increasing the availability and use of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by sex, age, geography, income, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

10. The 2030 Agenda was adopted as a comprehensive framework of 17 goals and 169 targets for people, planet and prosperity on 25 September 2015.<sup>6</sup> Building on earlier debates, migrants and migration were mentioned throughout the document, in particular in the targets outlined in table 1.

11. Beyond the targets and indicators, the inclusion of migrants is inherent in the universal character of the Agenda and its overarching aim to leave no one behind. Sustainable Development Goals and targets on eliminating extreme poverty, ending hunger, achieving universal health coverage and providing access to education, for example, must include migrants if the goals are to be achieved. The achievement of other goals also depends on migrant contributions. Thus, migrants are included both as beneficiaries of development and as contributors to the achievement of development goals.

Table 1  
**Sustainable Development Goals, targets and indicators that are directly related to migrants and migration**

<i>Targets</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
<b>Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages</b>	
3.c Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States	3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution
<b>Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all</b>	
4.b By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries	4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> General Assembly resolution 70/1.

<i>Targets</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
<b>Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls</b>	
5.2 Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation	<p>5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age</p> <p>5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence</p>
<b>Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all</b>	
8.5 By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value	<p>8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities</p> <p>8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities</p>
8.7 Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms	8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age
8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment	<p>8.8.1 Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status</p> <p>8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status</p>
<b>Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries</b>	
10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies	<p>10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in country of destination</p> <p>10.7.2 Number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people</p> <p>10.7.3 Number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination<sup>a</sup></p> <p>10.7.4 Proportion of the population who are refugees, by country of origin</p>

<i>Targets</i>	<i>Indicators</i>
10.c By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent	10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted
<b>Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels</b>	
16.2 End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children	16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation
16.9 By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration	16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age
<b>Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development</b>	
17.3 Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources	17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total gross domestic product
17.18 By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts	17.18.1 Statistical capacity indicator for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring

*Source:* United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, SDG Indicators database, available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/indicators/database/>; and “Tier classification for global SDG indicators”, available at <https://unstats.un.org/sdgs/iaeg-sdgs/tier-classification/>.

*Note:* See General Assembly resolutions 70/1 and 71/313, including the annual refinements to be made to the global indicator framework, as contained in E/CN.3/2018/2, annex II, E/CN.3/2019/2, annex II and E/CN.3/2020/2, annex II.

<sup>a</sup> Refinement of the indicator name approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators on 13 March and 2 April 2020. Final approval by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-second session, to be held in March 2021, is pending.

### III. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

12. In 2016, Heads of State and Government attended a high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly to discuss large movements of refugees and migrants. In adopting the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the 193 Member States recognized the need for a comprehensive approach to human mobility and enhanced cooperation at the global level. Annex II of the New York Declaration set in motion a process of intergovernmental consultations and negotiations towards the development of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. On 10 December 2018, Member States adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in

Marrakech, Morocco, and it was formally endorsed by the General Assembly on 19 December 2018. The Global Compact is a historic achievement, the first intergovernmentally adopted framework for addressing migration governance in a cooperative, holistic and comprehensive manner.

13. The Global Compact rests on the purposes and principles of the United Nations, including its Charter, international human rights law, international labour law, the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. It comprises 23 objectives and 10 cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles: people-centredness; international cooperation; national sovereignty; rule of law and due process; sustainable development; human rights; gender-responsiveness; child-sensitivity; whole-of-government approach; and whole-of-society approach.

14. The Global Compact “aims to leverage the potential of migration for the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the impact this achievement will have on migration in the future”.<sup>7</sup> In objectives 2, 19 and 23, Member States directly reference and commit to promoting full and effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including its goals, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The Global Compact requires enhanced bilateral, regional and multilateral cooperation for its implementation, and it was noted in the Global Compact that cooperation efforts would be aligned with both frameworks.

15. The following Sustainable Development Goals and related targets are directly linked to migration.<sup>8</sup>

#### A. Sustainable Development Goal 3

16. Sustainable Development Goal 3, target 3.c calls for increased health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in the least developed countries and small island developing States. It is relevant for many countries in the region. For example, the 35 doctors from Timor-Leste working in Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries equated to 30 per cent of the country’s doctors, with a magnified impact in particular specializations.<sup>9</sup>

17. The retention of health workers relates to objectives 2, 18 and 19 of the Global Compact, which are aimed at minimizing adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin, investing in skills development and facilitating mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences, and creating conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries. Objectives 2 and 19 reference the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and are aimed at mitigating brain drain and fostering brain gain in countries of origin, enabling migrants and diasporas to engage in knowledge and skills transfer. It is also noted that that full and effective implementation of the frameworks requires fostering and facilitating the positive effects of migration in order to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals.

<sup>7</sup> General Assembly resolution 73/195.

<sup>8</sup> A summary table is also available at [www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly](http://www.unescap.org/intergovernmental-meetings/asia-pacific-regional-review-implementation-global-compact-safe-orderly).

<sup>9</sup> Viroj Tangcharoensathien and others, “Managing in- and out-migration of health workforce in selected countries in South East Asia region”, *International Journal of Health Policy and Management*, vol. 7, No. 2 (February 2018).

18. Migration is also important in the context of the broader scope of Sustainable Development Goal 3, to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages. Migrants, especially migrants in irregular situations, are often at risk of poor health outcomes owing to poor living and working conditions exacerbated by difficulty in accessing health care. This has been particularly highlighted by the coronavirus disease pandemic, by which migrants have been disproportionately affected. Conversely, migrants that gain income and provide remittances may contribute to improved health outcomes in countries of origin. Global Compact objective 15 is focused on access to basic services for migrants, including facilitating affordable and non-discriminatory access to health care, reducing communication barriers and training health-care providers in culturally sensitive service delivery. It is further noted that cooperation between service providers and immigration authorities should not exacerbate vulnerabilities of irregular migrants by compromising safe access to basic services. In addition, objective 15 calls for service delivery in a gender- and disability-responsive as well as child-sensitive manner.

## **B. Sustainable Development Goal 4**

19. Sustainable Development Goal 4, target 4.b relates to migration for educational purposes. Higher education can yield better social and economic opportunities. Migrants developing technical and vocational skills can improve their employment prospects. Scholarships can increase migrant mobility, enabling higher education opportunities and knowledge and skills transfer, and benefiting countries of origin and destination alike.

20. A growing number of internationally mobile students moving to and from Asian and Pacific countries highlights the importance of migration for education. The number of students from the Asia-Pacific region studying abroad grew from 1.8 million to 2.4 million between 2013 and 2017, while the number of internationally mobile students in the Asia-Pacific region grew by 0.5 million to 1.5 million over the same period.<sup>10</sup>

21. That connects with Global Compact objective 5 and the commitment to expanding and diversifying the availability of pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration, including to optimize educational opportunities. Global Compact objective 18 also addresses skills development and the mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences. To realize that commitment, the transparency of certification processes and comparability of qualifications must be promoted, and barriers to quality education related to gender, residency or citizenship status should be reduced. Mutual recognition agreements, the use of technology and digitalization to evaluate skills and match demand with supply, and partnerships to strengthen training capacities, mobility and circulation are needed. Education-related indicators and data disaggregation should include migratory status, in line with Sustainable Development Goal target 17.18, to help determine whether school-age migrants are in school and whether other migrants receive training.

22. Global Compact objective 15 refers to inclusive and equitable quality education for migrant children and youth, as well as the facilitation of access to lifelong learning opportunities, in line with Sustainable Development Goal 4. Such commitments also align with the recognition in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the need for quality education for all, including migrant

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<sup>10</sup> *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020.*



children, and access for all to free, equitable, inclusive and quality early childhood, primary and secondary education.

### **C. Sustainable Development Goal 5**

23. Sustainable Development Goal 5 is focused on achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls. Target 5.1 aims to end all forms of discrimination against women and girls everywhere, while target 5.2 calls for elimination of all forms of violence against women and girls, including trafficking; it is supplemented by target 16.2, which addresses trafficking of children.

24. Migrant women and girls are among the least protected; many are in irregular or informal employment and lack social protections and, in transit, they are at risk of abuse, exploitation and violence at all stages of the migration process. Migrant domestic workers from the region, the majority of whom are women, are particularly vulnerable to exploitation owing to a lack of protection under labour law. Women and girls are identified in all forms of trafficking in the region, in particular with regard to trafficking for sexual exploitation.

25. Global Compact objective 7 specifically addresses reducing vulnerabilities in migration, including through gender-responsive migration policies. It calls on Member States to review existing labour laws and work conditions to address vulnerabilities and abuses of migrant workers, and to help regularize irregular workers. Objective 10 is focused on trafficking in persons in the context of international migration and encourages measures that address the particular vulnerabilities of women and girls, among others, regardless of status, who are at risk of becoming victims of trafficking or other forms of exploitation. It further relates to objective 17 and its call for migrants, especially migrant women, to have access to national and regional complaint and redress mechanisms to promote accountability for discriminatory acts and manifestations carried out against migrants and their families. Gender-responsiveness is furthermore considered a cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principle of the Global Compact, which promotes gender mainstreaming, gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls. It recognizes their independence, agency and leadership.

### **D. Sustainable Development Goal 8**

26. Sustainable Development Goal 8 and targets 8.5, 8.7 and 8.8 are focused on decent work and eradicating all forms of forced labour and exploitation. Target 8.8 explicitly references migrants.

27. Most recorded migration in the region is labour migration. Migrant worker outflows were as high as 1.5 million per year from the Philippines in 2017.<sup>11</sup> Most migrant workers in the region move for temporary work in low-status occupations. Migrant workers are at increased risk of poor working conditions. They may lack opportunities for decent work in line with their skills, or they may be restricted to lower-paying or lower-value occupations by their status or gender. Migrants and migrant children in irregular situations are at risk of forced labour, trafficking in persons, and exploitation and abuse.

28. Global Compact objective 5 recognizes the need for the enhanced availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, including but not only for decent work. That includes facilitating regional and cross-regional

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

rights-based and gender-responsive labour mobility schemes and optimizing skills matching in labour markets. Objective 6 is focused on the need for fair and ethical recruitment and the safeguarding of conditions that ensure decent work for all migrant workers to reduce the risk of precarious employment, exploitation, and forced labour and slavery. Objective 20 is related to promoting faster, safer and cheaper transfers of remittances and fostering the financial inclusion of migrants, which directly aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 8 and its related targets (see table 1).

## **E. Sustainable Development Goal 10**

29. Sustainable Development Goal 10 is the goal most closely linked to the Global Compact. Target 10.7 relates to the overarching aim of the Global Compact – improved migration governance. As such, each of the objectives of the Global Compact relates to target 10.7.

30. International migration governance is critical in shaping the migration experience. The vulnerable situations that migrants often face are not inherent to them but rather emerge out of policies that fail to fully protect, respect and fulfil the human and labour rights of migrants or take full account of their needs and expectations. Similarly, the ability of migrants to contribute depends on policies that create an enabling environment for their participation in sustainable development activities. Governance is also required at multiple levels, from local to national, bilateral, regional and global, involving multiple ministries and with key roles for stakeholders. International cooperation, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches are critical to achieving the target.

31. Measurement of target 10.7 is based on levels of recruitment costs and on an assessment of the progress of countries in six domains: migrant rights; whole-of-government policies; cooperation and partnerships; socioeconomic well-being; mobility dimensions of crises; and safe, orderly and regular migration. Member States are asked to assess their own performance across 30 subcategories, the results of which are analysed to develop an overall picture of safe, orderly and regular migration in each country, ranging from “requires further progress” to “fully meets”.<sup>12</sup>

32. Target 10.c reiterates the Addis Ababa Action Agenda’s call to reduce transaction costs of remittances. The target aligns with Global Compact objective 20, which is related to promoting faster, safer, and cheaper transfer of remittances and fostering the financial inclusion of migrants.

33. Other targets of Sustainable Development Goal 10 all substantially affect migrants and their achievement requires the inclusion of migrants. That includes target 10.2 on the social, economic and political inclusion of all and target 10.3 on equal opportunity and reducing inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies, and practices. Target 10.3 calls for the elimination of discriminatory laws, policies and practices, which may drive migration (objective 2) and frame the migration experience and shape perceptions of migration (objective 17).

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<sup>12</sup> For more information on the measurement of this indicator, see United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, International Organization for Migration and Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, “SDG indicator 10.7.2: number of countries with migration policies to facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people”, Policy Brief, No. 1, October 2019.

## F. Sustainable Development Goal 16

34. Sustainable Development Goal 16 calls for the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, the provision of access to justice for all and the building of effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. Target 16.9 is focused on the provision of “legal identity for all, including birth registration”, which directly speaks to Global Compact objective 4. Children of migrants are at higher risk of not having their birth officially registered. Lack of citizenship or documentation can affect all the rights of migrant children, including access to services, education or justice, thereby limiting protections and opportunities for integration, resulting in less inclusive societies. Similarly, undocumented or irregular migrants may experience fewer protections and increased risks, yet with limited access to justice and other services and resources. Irregularity also makes it more difficult for migrants to integrate into an inclusive society.

35. Global Compact objective 7 is aimed at addressing and reducing vulnerabilities in migration, in part through access to justice and effective remedies and legal assistance and representation. In addition, the aim of objective 16 is to “empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion”, which contributes to the aim of Sustainable Development Goal 16, to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development. It also relates to the commitment in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda to combat xenophobia and facilitate social integration.

## G. Sustainable Development Goal 17

36. Sustainable Development Goal 17 calls for the strengthening of the means of implementation and the revitalization of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development, which is closely linked to Global Compact objective 23, the aim of which is to strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration. Objective 23 specifically references increasing international and regional cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda.

37. Target 17.18 and an identical commitment in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda reference the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by migratory status, in addition to other characteristics. Such data are essential for ensuring that policies are evidence-based and effective. The direct reference to migration is important for most of the goals and targets in the 2030 Agenda, as well as objectives in the Global Compact, as inclusion of migratory status ensures that migrants are accounted for in sustainable development and prevents their being left behind. Data disaggregated by migratory status aligns with Global Compact objective 1 on the collection and utilization of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies.

38. Target 17.3 is aimed at mobilizing additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources, including remittances. Migrants from Asia and the Pacific have sent remittances, peaking in 2019 at almost \$330 billion.<sup>13</sup> Global Compact objectives 20 and 19, on the promotion of faster, safer, and cheaper transfer of remittances and conditions for migrants and diasporas to contribute to sustainable development, complement target 17.3. While the Addis Ababa Action Agenda echoes the importance of migrants’ contributions and remittances to assist in poverty reduction,

<sup>13</sup> *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020*.

inclusive growth and sustainable development, it also acknowledges that remittances should not replace aid and other international financial flows.

39. All other Sustainable Development Goal targets also relate to migration. For example, Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15 require the inclusion of migrants to advance sustainable development.

## **H. Sustainable Development Goal 1**

40. Sustainable Development Goal 1 aims to eradicate extreme poverty, which not only requires the inclusion of migrants as beneficiaries of programmes to end poverty but can also build upon the contributions of migrants to the economies of countries of origin and destination. Target 1.3 references social protection systems and measures for all, which is significant, as migrants often do not automatically earn social protection benefits, nor do they have access to portable protection coverage across borders. That relates directly to Global Compact objective 22, which focuses on mechanisms for the cross-border portability of social security entitlements through non-discriminatory national social protection systems and integrating provisions on the portability of entitlements and earned benefits into national social security frameworks. One of the aims of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda is also to increase cooperation on access to and portability of earned benefits.

41. Target 1.5 is aimed at reducing exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social, and environmental shocks and disasters. Such events may serve as push factors for migrants, especially when local forms of employment or safety are no longer available. Similarly, Global Compact objective 2 is aimed at minimizing the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel migration, including disasters, climate change and environmental degradation. Migration can serve as a means to poverty reduction for migrants and their families. Improving access to economic opportunities and reducing costs and risks through accessible regular channels can ensure that more migrants safely benefit from migration, provide remittances to their families and contribute to the economies of the countries of origin and destination. Objectives 19 and 20 also are also aimed at enabling migrants to contribute to sustainable development, including through remittances.

## **I. Sustainable Development Goal 2**

42. Sustainable Development Goal 2 focuses on ending hunger, achieving food security and improved nutrition, and promoting sustainable agriculture. While the goal does not directly identify migrants, they may be vulnerable to food insecurity, while also being unable to access assistance and basic services. Disaggregation of data to indicate the migratory status of food-insecure populations, as noted in Global Compact objective 1, can distinguish differences in access to food and nutrition between migrants and non-migrants. Food insecurity may also be a driver of migration. Objective 2 is aimed at minimizing adverse drivers and structural factors that compel migration by investing in food security, among other efforts. Finally, the concentration of migrant workers in agriculture means that migrants play an important role in supporting the goal.

**J. Sustainable Development Goal 6**

43. Sustainable Development Goal 6 calls for ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, ending open defecation, and addressing wastewater and water-use efficiency, which are important for migrant communities' access to water, sanitation and hygiene services. Migrant dormitories, housing or settlements must be considered for full achievement of the goal.

**K. Sustainable Development Goal 11**

44. Sustainable Development Goal 11 is aimed at increasing access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services, as well as focusing on transport systems, urbanization and links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas, with the goal of making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Access to safe, affordable, and adequate housing is challenging for some migrants, including irregular migrants, while urban areas attract many migrants. As such, migrants should be included in local sustainable development initiatives. Both goals align with Global Compact objective 15 in providing access to basic services for migrants.

**L. Sustainable Development Goal 7**

45. Sustainable Development Goal 7 addresses access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy, including renewable and clean energy and infrastructure, and energy efficiency. Migrants may have increased access to energy services by migrating to countries of destination, and their remittances, both financial and social, may result in increased energy services in their countries of origin. Migrants may also contribute to the construction of energy infrastructure. Furthermore, Sustainable Development Goals 6, 11 and 7 would also benefit from data disaggregation by migratory status, which aligns with objective 1.

**M. Sustainable Development Goal 9**

46. Sustainable Development Goal 9 addresses resilient infrastructure, inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and innovation, including technological capabilities of industrial sectors, information and communications technology and domestic technology development, research, and innovation. Migrants often contribute to the achievement of the goal. Migrants and diasporas engage in the development of technology and innovation in their countries of destination and transfer knowledge skills, and remittances to their countries of origin. That relates to Global Compact objective 19, which is focused on creating conditions for migrants and diasporas to contribute to sustainable development. Low-skilled migrants may aid the development of the physical infrastructure and industrial development. Overall, the advancement of infrastructure will assist migrants, including transborder infrastructure and increased connectivity.

**N. Sustainable Development Goals 12 to 15**

47. Sustainable Development Goals 12 to 15 focus on the environment and sustainable development. Goal 12 addresses sustainable consumption and production patterns, Goal 14 is focused on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development and Goal 15 commits to the protection, restoration and promotion of the sustainable use of ecosystems, the sustainable management of forests, combating

desertification, and halting and reversing land degradation and biodiversity loss. Those goals can be met by collecting accurate and disaggregated data (objective 1) on the place of migrants in such processes, minimizing adverse drivers and structural factors that compel migration (objective 2), advancing conditions for migrants and diasporas to contribute to sustainable development (objective 19) and strengthening international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration (objective 23).

## **O. Sustainable Development Goal 13**

48. Sustainable Development Goal 13 is focused on taking urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. Migration can be an adaptation strategy to climate change, as well as a response to climate threats. Evidence from the Pacific, in particular, shows that people are undertaking international migration in response to and as a means of building resilience to climate change.<sup>14</sup> Mechanisms for climate change-related planning and management should include migration and migrants. That may include efforts to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to migrate, as reflected in Global Compact objective 2, which focuses on disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation. Objective 5, which is focused on enhancing the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, recognizes that migrants may be compelled to leave their countries of origin owing to slow-onset disasters, the adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation, such as desertification, land degradation, drought and sea level rise. Creating regular pathways for migration by strengthening international cooperation and global partnerships (objective 23) will be useful in climate change-related measures.

49. Additional targets under the Sustainable Development Goals already mentioned also align with other objectives of the Global Compact. For example, progress on the universal targets of Sustainable Development Goals 3 and 4 relate to objective 15 of the Global Compact on providing access to basic services for migrants. Target 8.10, on strengthening the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all is related to Global Compact objective 20, which proposes greater financial inclusion, especially for women, among its suggested actions. Similarly, target 16.b, “Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development”, is related to objective 17 on the elimination of all forms of discrimination.

50. Progress towards achieving Sustainable Development Goal targets with specific relevance to migration is monitored through an agreed set of indicators, as outlined in table 2, aligning with their tier classification.<sup>15</sup> Monitoring of other goals and targets would benefit from disaggregation by migratory status.

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<sup>14</sup> Robert Oakes, Andrea Milan and Jillian Campbell, *Kiribati: Climate Change and Migration – Relationships between Household Vulnerability, Human Mobility and Climate Change*, report No. 20 (Bonn, United Nations University Institute for Environment and Human Security, 2016).

<sup>15</sup> Tier I: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, and data are regularly produced by countries for at least 50 per cent of countries and of the population in every region where the indicator is relevant.

Tier II: Indicator is conceptually clear, has an internationally established methodology and standards are available, but data are not regularly produced by countries.

Table 2  
**Sustainable Development Goal indicators directly related to migration  
and tier classification**

<i>Sustainable Development Goal indicators</i>	<i>Tier classification (I, II or III)</i>
3.c.1 Health worker density and distribution	I
4.b.1 Volume of official development assistance flows for scholarships by sector and type of study	I
5.2.1 Proportion of ever-partnered women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to physical, sexual or psychological violence by a current or former intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by form of violence and by age	II
5.2.2 Proportion of women and girls aged 15 years and older subjected to sexual violence by persons other than an intimate partner in the previous 12 months, by age and place of occurrence	II
8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of employees, by sex, age, occupation and persons with disabilities	II
8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities	I
8.7.1 Proportion and number of children aged 5–17 years engaged in child labour, by sex and age	II
8.8.1 Fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries per 100,000 workers, by sex and migrant status	II
8.8.2 Level of national compliance with labour rights (freedom of association and collective bargaining) based on International Labour Organization (ILO) textual sources and national legislation, by sex and migrant status	II
10.7.1 Recruitment cost borne by employee as a proportion of monthly income earned in country of destination	II
10.7.2 Number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people	II
10.7.3 Number of people who died or disappeared in the process of migration towards an international destination <sup>a</sup>	II
10.7.4 Proportion of the population who are refugees, by country of origin	II
10.c.1 Remittance costs as a proportion of the amount remitted	I
16.2.2 Number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population, by sex, age and form of exploitation	II
16.9.1 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority, by age	I
17.3.2 Volume of remittances (in United States dollars) as a proportion of total gross domestic product	I
17.18.1 Statistical capacity indicator for Sustainable Development Goal monitoring	II

*Source:* See table 1.

<sup>a</sup> Refinement of the indicator name approved by the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators on 13 March and 2 April 2020. Final approval by the Statistical Commission at its fifty-second session, to be held in March 2021, is pending.

#### IV. Follow-up and review of the migration-relevant Sustainable Development Goal indicators

51. The follow-up and review of progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, including those contained in the 2030 Agenda, take place at the high-level political forum on sustainable development. Table 3 shows the year in which countries in Asia and the Pacific have reported on sustainable development measures related to migration and migrants.

Table 3

##### Asian and Pacific countries with voluntary national reviews mentioning migration

Year	<i>Member countries of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific contributing to the voluntary national review process with reference to migrants or migration in their reporting</i>
<b>2016</b>	China, Georgia, Philippines, Republic of Korea and Turkey
<b>2017</b>	Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives and Thailand
<b>2018</b>	Armenia, Australia, Kiribati, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam
<b>2019</b>	Azerbaijan, Cambodia, Fiji, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Mongolia, Nauru, New Zealand, Palau, Philippines, Timor-Leste, Turkey and Turkmenistan
<b>2020</b>	Armenia, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Georgia, India, Kyrgyzstan, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Russian Federation, Samoa and Solomon Islands

*Source:* United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Voluntary National Reviews database. Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/vnrs/> (accessed on 9 October 2020).

52. At the regional level, member States at the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development in 2019 reviewed Sustainable Development Goal 10. They noted that inequality was a driver of migration and that migrants needed to be included in efforts to achieve equality, including through safe, orderly and regular migration and data disaggregation. The synthesis report of the high-level political forum on sustainable development held in 2019 noted that countries continued to face challenges associated with migration, most notably in relation to “accommodation, social integration and adaptation, discrimination and registration of migrants”.<sup>16</sup> Measures undertaken to mitigate those challenges included the “development of social integration policies, creation of effective monitoring and tracking systems for the situation of migrants and inclusion of migration issues into national development plans”, including in member States of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (Azerbaijan, Turkey and Turkmenistan).<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, *2019 Voluntary National Reviews Synthesis Report* (2019), p. 31.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



53. While reporting for the 2030 Agenda is under way, monitoring and reporting for the Global Compact can build upon data already present for the Sustainable Development Goals. The Global Compact expands upon the 2030 Agenda's migration-related targets and indicators, specifically target 10.7, and also includes migration measures not specified within the 2030 Agenda but that remain important in contributing to safe, orderly and regular migration. The follow-up and review of the Global Compact may include, for example, additional data on: documentation and legal identity (objective 4); fair and ethical recruitment mechanisms, policies or regulations on public and private agencies (objective 6); expanding data beyond recruitment costs (indicator 10.7.1); estimates of smuggled migrants (objective 9) and of human trafficking in the context of migration (targets 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2; objective 10); statistics on detention and alternatives to detention (objective 13), which is only referenced in the Sustainable Development Goals in relation to journalists, media, trade unionists and human rights advocates (indicator 16.10.1), not migrants explicitly; and the number of laws and programmes related to the reintegration of migrants (objective 21) and social security laws and bilateral, regional and multilateral social security agreements (objective 22), which can build upon and provide a deeper analysis on the number of countries with migration policies that facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people (indicator 10.7.2).

54. The Global Compact also has its own follow-up and review mechanism at the local, national, regional and global levels, including through regional reviews carried out through the United Nations regional commissions, alternating with global reviews carried out through the International Migration Review Forum every four years, which will result in an intergovernmentally agreed progress declaration that may be taken into consideration by the high-level political forum on sustainable development. The process is further supported by the establishment of the United Nations Network on Migration.<sup>18</sup> The Network aims, among other things, to “ensure effective, timely, coordinated United Nations system-wide support to Member States in their implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact, for the rights and well-being of all migrants and their communities of destination, origin, and transit”.<sup>19</sup> The Network operates at the global, regional and national levels, comprising United Nations agencies that have migration as part of their mandate, in alignment with the United Nations development system. The Regional United Nations Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific was established in 2019 and brings together the expertise and experience of United Nations entities to support member States in the implementation of the Global

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<sup>18</sup> For more information on the United Nations Network on Migration, see <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/> (accessed on 24 December 2020).

<sup>19</sup> United Nations Network on Migration, “Terms of reference for the United Nations Network on Migration”. Available at [https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/default/files/nw\\_-\\_tor.pdf](https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/default/files/nw_-_tor.pdf) (accessed on 22 December 2020).

Compact.<sup>20</sup> In the region, country-level networks have also been founded and are being established.<sup>21</sup>

## V. Sustainable Development Goals, objectives of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the coronavirus disease pandemic

55. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has had (and will continue to have) devastating impacts on all countries in Asia and the Pacific, with persons in vulnerable situations particularly affected. The pandemic and its socioeconomic fallout pose great risks to migrants in the region. They are more likely to be exposed to the virus, to lack access to health care and other essential services, to be stranded in countries without work or social protection and to face rising xenophobia. The pandemic's impacts on migrants are often compounded by the interlinkages with other statuses that confer vulnerability, including the conditions in which immigrants travel or the conditions they face in countries of origin, transit and destination. Successful pandemic responses that “build back better” must address the causes of such vulnerabilities and reimagine mobility so as to ensure migrants' rights and reduce their vulnerability to future crisis.

56. It is important to note that migrants and migration also play a key role in national, regional and global recovery from the pandemic. Their contributions as health workers and other essential workers, for example, help countries to address the immediate responses to the pandemic. While migrant remittances are expected to decline owing to the economic impacts of COVID-19, their relative importance, owing to the projected ever steeper decline in foreign direct investment, as a source of external financing for low- and middle-income countries, is expected to rise.<sup>22</sup> For those contributions to be realized, migrants must enjoy full human and labour rights, free from discrimination, exploitation and abuse.

57. Ending the pandemic and recovering from its negative impacts on sustainable development will, therefore, require a renewed focus on the objectives of the Global Compact and all Sustainable Development Goals. Not

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<sup>20</sup> The following United Nations entities in Asia and the Pacific are members of the Regional Network: Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, International Labour Organization, International Organization for Migration, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Development Programme, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), United Nations Environment Programme, secretariat of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat), United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Population Fund, World Bank and World Food Programme.

<sup>21</sup> Thus far, country networks exist in the following countries: Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Maldives, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Turkmenistan.

<sup>22</sup> Dilip Ratha and others, “COVID-19 crisis through a migration lens”, Migration and Development Brief, No. 32 (Washington, D.C., Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development and World Bank, 2020).

only will that help in the current pandemic, it will reduce the level of risk during future pandemics.

58. The following examples show how a focus on the Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Global Compact will help to address the situation of migrants and their families during and after the COVID-19 pandemic in a comprehensive and timely manner. For example, the Global Compact's call to collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies (objective 1) is linked to achieving all Sustainable Development Goals. Data and research are the basis for identifying the needs of migrants and their families in the pandemic and developing strategies and policies to counter the adverse impacts of COVID-19, while ensuring that international data collection standards and the right to privacy are upheld.

59. The right of all migrants to have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation (objective 4) has come to the fore during the pandemic, as borders closed and migrants and their families were stranded or trapped in countries of destination. The right is also reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, Goal 10 on reducing inequality within and among countries, Goal 16 on promoting peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development and Goal 17 on strengthening the means of implementation and revitalizing the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

60. Greater inclusion of migrants in social protection systems, in line with Global Compact objective 22 and Sustainable Development Goal target 1.3, would help to build resilience against the negative economic fallout of the pandemic on migrants. Taking action to facilitate migrants' ability to send low-cost remittances (objective 20 and Sustainable Development Goal target 10.c) would further prevent migrant families from falling into poverty and help countries to build back better.

61. The *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020* provides other examples of the strong linkages between the objectives of the Global Compact and the Sustainable Development Goals.<sup>23</sup> The recognition of those linkages has been elevated owing to COVID-19 and has made the call to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals as well as the objectives of the Global Compact more urgent than ever before.

## VI. Conclusions and recommendations

62. The Global Compact, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda and the 2030 Agenda are interlinked and synergistic. In addition to linkages where Global Compact objectives directly relate to Sustainable Development Goals and their respective targets and indicators, there are also areas in which migrants indirectly contribute to the achievement of all Sustainable Development Goals.

63. Going forward, to exploit the linkages and ensure that both safe, orderly and regular migration and sustainable development are achieved, the following recommendations are offered to Asian and Pacific Governments, in partnership

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<sup>23</sup> For a detailed overview of how the objectives of the Global Compact and related Sustainable Development Goals can address migrants affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, see *Asia-Pacific Migration Report 2020*.

with all relevant stakeholders, to advance the implementation of the Global Compact and the 2030 Agenda in the region:

(a) Recognize that human mobility is inextricably linked with sustainable development and that achieving all Sustainable Development Goals will benefit the achievement of all objectives of the Global Compact and vice versa;

(b) Ensure that a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach is followed when developing and formulating sustainable development policies, including their monitoring and evaluation in a timely and inclusive manner;

(c) Mainstream safe, orderly and regular migration into sustainable development strategies at all levels, including by incorporating migration into national development plans, national human resource development strategies and national labour migration policies, making sure that mainstreaming engages migrants as agents of development and ensuring that they benefit from development processes;

(d) Collect, analyse and disseminate accurate, reliable and comparable data, disaggregated by sex, age, migration status and other characteristics, on the nexus between migration and sustainable development, and build capacity among member States to improve migration data at local, national, regional and global levels;

(e) Systematically report on progress towards safe, orderly and regular migration and the situation of migrants vis-à-vis achievements of the 2030 Agenda, including through voluntary national reports presented at the high-level political forum on sustainable development and voluntary national Global Compact reviews;

(f) Use the migration-related Sustainable Development Goal indicators included in the present document to report on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact at the high-level political forum on sustainable development when discussing migration and for any follow-up and reviews of progress on the implementation of the Global Compact;

(g) Strengthen efforts to get back on track to achieve all Sustainable Development Goals and the objectives of the Global Compact by designing sustainable and inclusive strategies for recovery from COVID-19 to accelerate progress towards the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda and the Global Compact and to help reduce the risk of future shocks, and recognize that the COVID-19 pandemic requires a global response based on unity, solidarity and renewed multilateral cooperation, with the meaningful involvement of all relevant stakeholders;

(h) Continue to develop bilateral, subregional, regional and interregional dialogue, partnerships and cooperation to ensure policy coherence towards safe, orderly and regular migration and sustainable development.