Regional Review Conference of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Arab Region

Concept Note

I. Background

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)[1] is a non-legally binding, cooperative framework based on international law that builds on a set of global outcomes and frameworks, including the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, the 2013 Declaration of the United Nations General Assembly High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development[2] and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In target 10.7 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Member States pledged to "facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies".[3]

The formal endorsement of the GCM by the United Nations General Assembly on 19 December 2018[4] represented a paradigm shift in the approach to migration governance.[5] Putting people at the heart of migration governance, the GCM is anchored in human rights and calls for the respect, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status. Its 10 guiding principles promote a gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach to migration governance and prioritize the well-being of migrants and the members of communities in countries of origin, transit and destination. They also reaffirm national sovereignty and recognize the respect for the rule of law and due process. Rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the GCM reaffirms the potential of migration for achieving sustainable development and simultaneously seeks to limit its possible negative impacts. The GCM recognizes that good migration governance can only be achieved through adopting whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches and building strong partnerships at the national, regional and global levels. The GCM, with its 23 objectives and their associated actionable commitments and suggested actions, provides a 360-degree approach to migration governance and offers a road map to help achieve safe, orderly and regular migration.

To ensure its effective implementation, Member States highlighted the importance that the GCM includes a call for voluntary follow-up and review. At the global level, the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), which will be held every four years beginning in 2022, will serve

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[1] A/RES/73/195.
[2] A/RES/68/4.
[3] A/RES/70/1.
[4] A/RES/73/195.
[5] A total of 152 Member States voted in favour for endorsing the GCM, including 19 Arab counties, of which five voted against and 12 abstained from a vote.

as the primary intergovernmental platform to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all the objectives of the GCM.

Following system-wide consultations, and the proposal by the Deputy Secretary-General and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, the UN Secretary-General established a UN Network on Migration, to ensure effective, coordinated system-wide support to the implementation, follow up and review of the GCM in response to the needs of Member States. In this regard, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is designated as the Coordinator and Secretariat of the Network and is requested to assist in the preparation and organization of regional reviews of the implementation of the Global Compact[6]. It is also noted that the Network will fully draw from the technical expertise and experience of relevant entities within the United Nations system. In addition, recognizing that most international migration takes place within regions, Member States invited relevant subregional, regional and cross-regional processes, including the United Nations regional economic commissions to review the implementation of the GCM at the regional level beginning in 2020, and every four years thereafter.[7] The outcome of regional reviews will inform the IMRF of major regional trends, challenges, successful practices, and emerging issues. General Assembly resolution 73/326 on the modalities and organizational aspects of the IMRF emphasized the importance of engaging with all relevant stakeholders to ensure a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach.

The Arab region participated actively during the consultation and negotiation phases that led up to the adoption of the GCM, with 20 Arab countries endorsing the GCM. To support Member States in this process, IOM, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and the League of Arab States, in collaboration with members of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region[8] organized the Regional Consultation on International Migration in the Arab Region in 2017. The partners also organized the Regional Conference on the Global Compact for Migration: Implementation and Policy Implications for the Arab Region in 2019, in addition to a capacity building workshop on aligning national policies with the GCM and relevant global frameworks. Building on the success of the Working Group, and in light of the continued need for enhanced collaboration on migration at the regional level, as well as the implications of the UN reform and the adoption of the GCM, the Issue Based Coalition on Migration in the Arab Region encompassing the Regional United Nations Network on Migration in the Arab Region[9], were established in 2020 as new coordination mechanisms in the Arab region, replacing the former Working Group.

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[6] A/RES/73/195, para. 45; A/RES/73/326, para. 9.

[7] A/RES/73/195, para. 50; A/RES/73/326, para. 10.

[8] The Working Group (WG) on International Migration in the Arab Region was established in 2013 to coordinate the work programmes on international migration of regional actors in the Arab region and to promote joint research on migration. The WG includes 19 partner organizations that aim to promote coordination mechanisms, the exchange of information on migration and the development of programmes, projects and activities related to international migration and development in the Arab region.

9 Co-conveners: ILO, IOM, LAS, UN ESCWA; Members: FAO, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNECA, UNEP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UNOPS, UNRWA, UN WOMEN, WFP and WHO

II. Regional Review Conference of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Arab Region

A. Context

IOM, ESCWA, and the League of Arab States, in collaboration with the members of the Regional United Nations Network on Migration in the Arab Region, and with the support of the Secretariat of the United Nations Network on Migration, are coordinating the GCM regional review process in the Arab region. The regional review process is composed of several components to ensure the widest and most effective engagement of all relevant stakeholders.

Beginning in March of 2020, Member States nominated migration focal points that were invited to lead the coordination and prepare the voluntary GCM review reports. To support Member States representatives with this task, a guiding template was prepared in line with the indicative outline developed by the Global United Nations Network on Migration. IOM, ESCWA and the League of Arab States, in collaboration with the members of the Regional United Nations Network on Migration in the Arab Region also organized two capacity building workshops in June and August of 2020. The voluntary GCM review reports will be synthesized in a Member States report consolidating the findings and will be presented in the regional review conference.

Given that the GCM follow-up and review is a state-led process, IOM, ESCWA, and the League of Arab States organized a consultation on the modalities of the regional review conference of the GCM in the Arab Region in October 2020. During the consultation, Member States discussed their preference regarding the timing and format of the regional review in light of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

In line with the GCM guiding principles and to ensure a whole-of-society approach to the regional reviews, ESCWA, IOM, and the United Nations Network on Migration organized two multi-stakeholder dialogue sessions in October and November 2020, bringing together representatives of civil society, migrant and diaspora organizations, local authorities and communities, the private sector and employers' organizations, trade unions, national human rights institutions, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and academia, among others. The dialogue sessions served to raise awareness on the GCM and the regional review process and provided an opportunity for stakeholders to propose means to ensure their optimal engagement in the review process. Leading up to the Regional Review Conference, additional informal dialogue sessions will be organized with specific stakeholder groups in early 2021, including the Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms/ Regional Consultative Processes and parliamentarians.

The regional review process will culminate in the organization of the Regional Review Conference.

B. Objectives

The Regional Review Conference will provide a platform for Member States and allrelevant stakeholders to review the implementation of the GCM to effectively inform each edition of the IMRF in line with the 360-degree approach. It will:
- Allow participants to undertake a first assessment of progress made in implementing the GCM within the Arab region;
- Highlight challenges and opportunities, identify gaps, discuss regional priorities, trends, approaches and identify the resources required in implementing the GCM;

- Provide a common platform for interactions between Member States and all relevant stakeholders and exchange lessons learned and good practices;
- Take stock of inputs from various other regional review processes, including those organized with regional consultative processes and other stakeholders.

C. Structure

The format and organization of the regional review conference will be aligned with that of the IMRF. Accordingly, the below draft structure is suggested:

DAY 1: Wednesday, 24 February 2021	
09:30-10:00	**Registration**

10:00-11:00	**Opening session**
	
	 (Order of speakers to be determined later according to protocol)
	
	    - Director General of the International Organization for Migration, Coordinator of UN Network on Migration
	    - Executive Secretary of the UN ESCWA
	    - Secretary General of the League of Arab States
	    - One representative from the government/champion country
	    - One representative from the migrant community
	
	 One representative from civil society/Rapporteur of the Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the Regional Review in the Arab Region

11:00-11:15	**Scene setting and regional synthesis of the voluntary GCM review reports by Member States** Member States have actively engaged in the national GCM reviews and several have submitted their voluntary GCM review reports. The inputs from these reports were synthesized in a regional report that highlights regional trends, key policy developments, challenges, and promising practices. Initial key findings from the synthesized report will be presented in this session.

11:15-12:15	**Plenary Session 1: Voluntary reporting by Member States**
	
	 This plenary session will provide Member States with the opportunity to reflect on the progress made since the adoption of the GCM in 2018. Member States are invited to present on their national experiences, highlighting the challenges faced, success stories, existing and emerging priorities, and lessons learned. Member States that have opted to prepare a voluntary GCM review report are encouraged to present the key findings from their review.
	
	    - Representative of Member State A (5 min)
	    - Representative of Member State B (5 min)
	    - Representative of Member State C (5 min)
	    - Representative of Member State D (5 min)
	    - Representative of Member State E (5 min)
	    - Representative of Member State F (5 min)
	    - General discussion (30 min)
	
	 Chair: Representative of Member State (TBD)

12:15-13:00	Break (45 mins)

13:00-14:00	**Plenary Session 2: Voluntary reporting by Member States (Cont'd)** This plenary session will provide Member States with the opportunity to reflect on the progress made since the adoption of the GCM in 2018. Member States are invited to present on their national experiences, highlighting the challenges faced, success stories, existing and emerging priorities, and lessons learned. Member States that have opted to prepare a voluntary GCM review report are encouraged to present the key findings and messages from their review. - Representative of Member State G (5min) - Representative of Member State H (5min) - Representative of Member State I (5min) - Representative of Member State J (5min) - Representative of Member State K (5min) - Representative of Member State L (5min) - General discussion (30 min) Chair: Representative of Member State (TBD)
14:00-14:10	Break (10 mins)
14:10-14:20	**Plenary Session 3: Multi-stakeholder inputs to the GCM regional review** **-** Rapporteur of the Multi-stakeholder Consultation on the Regional Review in the Arab Region
14:20-14:50	**Plenary Session 4: Cross-thematic issues in line with the GCM Guiding Principles** Member States have committed to achieving the GCM and agreed that the GCM is based on a set of cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles. This plenary session explores cross-thematic issues that will enable and accelerate the implementation of the GCM. Panel discussion: - UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (5 min) - Representative from the thematic pre-consultation on migrant women, children and youth (5 min) Moderator: - Interactive discussion from the floor (20 mins)
14:50-15:55	**Round Table 1:** Review of GCM objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18 The first roundtable will focus on reviewing the progress in implementing GCM objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18. Participants will reflect on challenges, good practices, lessons learnt and discuss potential solutions to the obstacles hindering the achievement of those objectives. Panel discussion: - Representative of Member States (5 min) - Representative of Trade Unions (5 min) - Representative of the private sector (5 min) Moderator: - Interactive discussion from the floor (50 mins)
15:55-16:00	**Summary of DAY 1**

DAY 2: Thursday, 25 February 2021	
10:00-10:05	**Recap of DAY 1**
10:05-11:20	**Round Table 2:** Review of GCM objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 21 The second roundtable will focus on reviewing the progress in implementing GCM objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13 and 21. Participants will reflect on challenges, good practices, lessons learnt and discuss potential solutions to the obstacles hindering the achievement of those objectives. Panel discussion: - Representative of Member States (5 min) - Representative of faith-based organizations (5 min) - Representative of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (5 min) Moderator: - Interactive discussion from the floor (60 mins)
11:20-11:30	Break (10 mins)
11:30-12:45	**Round Table 3**: Review of GCM objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22 The third roundtable will focus on reviewing the progress in implementing GCM objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22. Participants will reflect on challenges, good practices, lessons learnt and discuss potential solutions to the obstacles hindering the achievement of those objectives. Panel discussion: - Representative of Member State (5 min) - Representative of Local authority and communities (5 min) - Representative of civil society/migrant organization (5 min) Moderator: - Interactive discussion from the floor (60 mins)
12:45-13:30	Break (45 mins)
13:30-14:45	**Round Table 4**: Review of GCM objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23 The fourth roundtable will focus on reviewing the progress in implementing GCM objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23. Participants will reflect on challenges, good practices, lessons learnt and discuss potential solutions to the obstacles hindering the achievement of those objectives. Panel discussion: - Representative of Member State (5 min) - Representative of National Human Rights Institutions (5 min) - Representative of Media (5 min) Moderator: - Interactive discussion from the floor (60 mins)
14:45-14:55	Break (10 mins)
14:55-15:35	**Plenary Session 5: Means of Implementation and Capacity Building**

	Participants will discuss means to accelerate the implementation of the GCM and strengthen the capacity of all stakeholders.
	Panel discussion:
	- Representative of Member State (5 min)
	- Representative of the UN Network on Migration Secretariat on Capacity Building Mechanism (5 min)
	- Representative of Academia (5 min)
	Moderator:
	- Interactive discussion from the floor (25 mins)
15:35-15:45	**Presentation of Key Messages** (10 mins)
	This session will present the summary of key messages and recommendations that emanated from the two-day discussions. The messages will also feed into the outcome document, which will be submitted to the first IMRF held in 2022.
15:45-16:00	**Closing session**
	- Director General of the International Organization for Migration, Coordinator of UN Network on Migration
	- Executive Secretary of the UN ESCWA
	- Secretary General of the League of Arab States

D. Inputs

Member States reports and stakeholders written inputs to the regional review conference will be posted onto the United Nations Network on Migration website. It is foreseen that with input from the Regional United Nations Network on Migration, a background note will be prepared for each round table focused on a cluster of GCM objectives. The background notes will serve as input to the conference and will help guide the discussion during the round tables by presenting a brief overview of the situation in the region relating to the objectives under each round table, identify some of the key issues and challenges, and propose a number of guiding questions for discussion.

E. Outputs

The regional review process will result in two main outputs:
- A Member States report that synthesizes the findings of national voluntary GCM reports submitted by Member States;
- An outcome document, which highlights the key messages that emanated from the regional review and that were voiced by Member States and other stakeholders during the conference and during prior consultation processes.

The outputs of the regional review process may include other reports by stakeholders and will feed into the 2022 IMRF to ensure that the voice of the Arab region contributes to shaping the global dialogue on migration.

In addition, the Regional Review Conference could provide an opportunity to identify a regional road map for the GCM implementation with some key priorities and targets for the region.

F. Participants

In the spirit of the GCM and to ensure whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to the review, the Regional Review Conference will bring together representatives of governmental institutions, including ministers and high-level officials from relevant ministries and other government agencies including National Population Councils, the members of the UN Network on Migration and relevant subregional, regional and cross-regional processes, platforms and organizations, including the United Nations regional economic commissions or regional consultative processes, and all the relevant stakeholders including 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.

G. Date, venue, and languages

The regional review conference will be organized from 24 to 25 February 2021. It will be organized virtually via an online platform with simultaneous interpretation to Arabic, English, and French.

H. Documentation

- New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants A/RES/71/1;
- 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 5;
- Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development A/RES/70/1;
- Regional Consultation on International Migration in the Arab Region, 2017, outcome document;
- Regional Conference on the Global Compact for Migration: Implementation and Policy Implications for the Arab Region 2019, Report;
- Situation Report on International Migration 2019: The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Context of the Arab Region.