



**United Nations  
Network on Migration**  
*Working Better Together*



## 100 Days to the International Migration Review Forum

Technical Meeting for Government Representatives and other Stakeholders

Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022  
09:00 – 12:00 CET

# SUMMARY



A pledge by the UNECE GCM Champion Countries  
Republic of Azerbaijan,  
the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg, and  
the Portuguese Republic

#MIGRATION2022

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## Introduction

In the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (GCM), Member States decided that the [International Migration Review Forum](#) (IMRF) will serve as the primary intergovernmental global platform to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all aspects of the GCM, including as it relates to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders. It was also agreed to review the GCM at regional level beginning in 2020 and alternating at the global level at a four-year interval beginning in 2022. The Regional Reviews leading to and informing the IMRF took place across all regions between late 2020 and early 2021 - with the [Regional Review for Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe](#) (UNECE) taking place in November 2020 and preceded by a multi-stakeholder meeting.

On 19 October 2021, the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Abdulla Shahid, announced that the **first IMRF would take place in May 2022. The dates were confirmed by the President of the General Assembly as being 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> May 2022** and preceded by the **multi-stakeholder hearing on 16<sup>th</sup> May** at United Nations headquarters in New York. A letter on 9 December 2021 from the President of the General Assembly to all Permanent Representatives and Permanent Observers to the United Nations in New York, soliciting participation “...at the *highest possible political level, including Heads of State and Government*”; reiterating, also, the whole-of-government approach and whole-of society approach in the composition of the respective delegations as per General Assembly resolution [A/RES/73/326](#) which provides the modalities for the IMRF.

### Purpose of this meeting

In response to the call by the President of the General Assembly, the Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, Mr. António Vitorino, and the Principals of the [Network's Executive Committee](#) to make a tangible commitment to advancing the implementation of the GCM through a [pledge](#), the governments of Azerbaijan Luxembourg and Portugal, in their capacity as GCM Champion countries, convened a virtual event for the [56 Member States](#) of the UNECE on 1 February 2022, involving stakeholders in inclusive IMRF preparations, this in turn responding to a process-oriented commitment called for by the [pledging initiative](#). This briefing was an opportunity for other Member States to consider their own pledges and commitments as we approach the Forum, as well as receive updates on the organizational aspects of the IMRF.

The dedicated briefing on the road to the [IMRF](#) was convened by the GCM Champion Countries Azerbaijan, Luxembourg and Portugal, just over 100 days prior to this first ever landmark global review forum. The event was organised with the support of the United Nations Network on Migration and key stakeholders.

## Summary of Opening Remarks

Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chief of the State Migration Service, H.E. Vusal Huseynov

H.E. Huseynov welcomed delegates on behalf of the three organizers, the GCM Champion Countries in the UNECE Region Azerbaijan, Luxembourg and Portugal. In highlighting the importance of the GCM and its first landmark review forum, the [International Migration Review Forum](#) (IMRF), H.E. Huseynov reminded participants that the debate on migration comes at a challenging time, especially in light of the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. H.E. Huseynov emphasized that [IOM estimates 281 million people to be on the move in 2020](#), a number that grew from previous years in spite of the enhanced restrictions. Further, H.E. Huseynov added that, notwithstanding the unexpected changes in circumstances in human mobility, the GCM proved to be a successful guiding instrument for States in harnessing the benefits of migration and preparing flexible and effective response mechanisms to the challenges faced by migrants. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Azerbaijan built its migration policy according to the principles and objectives laid out in the GCM, reducing administrative procedures to the possible extent, and promoting digitalization. For instance, among other notable endeavours, in line with Objective 5 of the GCM, the temporary stay of foreigners, including migrant workers, during the COVID-19 pandemic, was extended automatically without additional application procedures. Moreover, H.E. conveyed that no migrant was neither expelled from the country nor placed in detention centres during that period.

Additionally, H.E. Huseynov called participants' attention to the significance of taking concrete actions to support the GCM, and to make use of the capacity-building mechanisms offered by the UN Network on Migration, such as the [pledging initiative](#), which takes a long-view approach in encouraging Member States to make pledges which will improve conditions for migrants and their communities. Lastly, H.E. Huseynov reminded that pledges can be of a financial nature, or through the implementation of specific policies, programmes or partnerships, and will help ensure the long-term sustainability of the GCM.

In thanking all participants in advance for a fruitful discussion, H.E. Huseynov reiterated Azerbaijan's involvement in the event is part of their pledge in the lead-up to the IMRF, and urged everyone to also take concrete actions to further harness the potential of migration and ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration is capitalised on.

International Organisation for Employers (IOE), Head of Stakeholder Engagement,  
Ms. Stéphanie Winet

In thanking the event's organizers, Ms. Winet welcomed the delegates and participants and emphasized that the GCM calls for engagement with the private sector. Ms. Winet highlighted two global trends that contribute to raising employers' attention to the issue of skills mobility regulations. Firstly the increase in skills shortages means that employers cannot find the skills they need on the domestic market; citing the recent research carried by the [ManpowerGroup](#), Ms. Winet reported that global shortages have almost

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doubled in the last decade, and that hard and soft skills are more difficult to find than ever before, with 69% of employers reporting difficulty in filling vacancies, of either high-skilled and low-skilled profiles. The second trend Ms. Winet drew attention to is the growing anti-immigration sentiment, which in turn affects national immigration policies, which have become gradually more restrictive, hindering Employers' capability to face labour shortages. Ms. Winet outlined how solutions are offered within the GCM framework, specifically enhancing efforts on improving regular pathways (Objective 5), fair recruitment (Objective 6), and skills development and recognition (Objective 18).

In the GCM process and in the lead up to the IMRF, Ms. Winet, on behalf of the IOE, highlighted the positive economic impacts that migration, recruitment and skills policies have on businesses. Lastly, Ms. Winet informed participants of the IOE's pledge to publish a global employers' position on GCM implementation to guide governments in their national strategies in engaging the private sector in the lead to the IMRF.

### IOM Vienna Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Regional Director, Ms. Renate Held

Ms. Held welcomed all participants on behalf of IOM's Regional Offices in Vienna and Brussels, and the Regional United Nations on Migration, and reminded of the change of dates of the IMRF, to now be held in New York on the 17-20th May 2022, and preceded by the multi-stakeholder hearing on 16th May. Thanking the three UNECE GCM Champion Countries for the efforts in convening the event, Ms. Held pointed out the importance of the GCM's 360-degree objectives and its Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approaches, which ensures all parties learn from each other and can contribute to each other's discourses. For this, Ms. Held repeated the IMRF is a landmark opportunity to discuss achievements as well as challenges in the implementation of the GCM, and discuss priorities for the coming years.

### UNHCR Deputy Regional Director for the Europe Bureau and on behalf of the Co-chairs of the Regional UN Network on Migration for Europe and Central Asia, Dr. Angela Li Rosi

While extending her gratitude to the event's organizers and participants, Dr. Li Rosi illustrated how the effective implementation of the GCM, in addition to ensuring greater respect for migrants' rights, can alleviate pressure on asylum systems and increase the protection space for asylum-seekers and refugees.

Dr. Li Rosi continued by recommending that all migrants have access to COVID-19 vaccinations, testing and treatment, and that humane, safe, dignified alternatives to forced return must be explored to safeguard the health, safety, dignity and human rights of migrants and communities in places of origin, transit and destination.

## Updates on Planning for the IMRF

### UN Network on Migration Secretariat, Head, Mr. Jonathan Prentice

Mr. Jonathan Prentice expressed his gratitude to the governments of Azerbaijan, Luxembourg, and Portugal for convening the event as part of their pledge, and the opportunity it posed for bringing together Member States and key stakeholders in the UNECE Region. Reminding that the upcoming [International Migration of Review Forum](#) (17-20 May) will be the first one, Mr. Prentice defined it as a unique opportunity to set the tone and level of ambition for future forums to come.

Mr. Prentice informed that, upon request of the President of the General Assembly, [the Secretary-General Report](#) has been released and will be formally launched on the 16<sup>th</sup> of February during [Migration Week](#), in the General Assembly Hall. The report offers specific recommendations clustered in the following four areas: inclusion; pathways; saving lives and preventing tragedies; and capacity building. These should guide Member State and Stakeholder deliberations in the lead up to the IMRF and in the Progress Declaration. Additional information can be found in the [IMRF guidance note for Country and Regional Networks and UN Country Teams](#).

While informing that the [calendar](#) for [Migration Week](#) has been made available, Mr. Prentice outlined that this will be a largely virtual week from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of February, in which there will be platforms available for discussions around IMRF relevant issues.

In addition to the launch of the Secretary General report, there will be briefings on the capacity building mechanisms, namely the [Repository of Good Practices](#), the [Migration Network Hub](#) and the [Migration Multi-Partner Trust fund \(M-MPTF\)](#). Additionally, a presentation on a M-MPTF sub-regional joint programme addressing migration and climate change in Eastern Africa will be delivered.

Mr. Prentice clarified that a key component of the Migration Network Hub is the [Repository of Good Practices](#), a peer-reviewed repository of applied, relevant, recent and innovative practices in support of the implementation of the GCM, which allows Member States and other key-stakeholders to learn from each other. Framing the submission of practices as a collective responsibility, Mr. Prentice made a strong plea to all participants, namely Member States, UN entities and other stakeholders, to submit practices to the [repository](#).

Another component of the [Migration Network Hub](#) is the [virtual dialogue space](#), under which the UN Network has launched the [Dialogue Series](#), which reflect each of the four Roundtables at the IMRF. The first three Dialogue Series have already taken place, while the last one will be held on Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> of February (Registration: [here](#)). Mr. Prentice confirmed that, as mandated by the [IMRF modalities resolution](#), the UN Network will provide formal background notes, which reflect the inputs emerged during regional reviews, to support the discussion in each roundtable. Further discussions on thematic areas such as climate and migration as well as saving lives and preventing tragedies are also scheduled to take place.

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The final component of the capacity building mechanism, as Mr. Prentice explained, is the **Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (M-MPTF)**. With a multi-stakeholder governance structure and heavily grounded in the notion of cooperation, the M-MPTF was designed in full compliance with the GCM whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, 360-degree vision and 10 guiding principles. As of this date, the UN network has already funded 12 joint programs addressing a range of objectives covered by the GCM. Further 34 joint programs are in the pipeline. The steering committee of the Fund has set an ambitious yet credible target of 70 million dollar capitalization by the time of the IMRF, which was endorsed by the Secretary General. This target has already been fulfilled by 40%, however, to accomplish the remaining 60%, meaningful commitment to the Fund is crucial. Hence, Mr. Prentice impressed upon all participants to make contributions to the M-MPTF as soon as possible, underlining that even modest contributions are extremely welcome and valuable to broaden the regional space.

One day before International Migrant Day, on 17 December 2021, the **IMRF Pledging Initiative** was launched to accelerate GCM implementation through collective, concrete and actionable commitments from Member States, the UN system and other stakeholders. Pleased to witness a clear intention from Member States to submit more pledges, Mr. Prentice confirmed that there is no deadline to submit pledges, they can in fact be submitted on an ongoing basis. Pledges can come in the form of contributions the M-MPTF or human resource contributions. They can be process-oriented, for instance, having whole-of-society and whole-of-government national consultations in advance of the IMRF or ensuring that national delegations to the IMRF include stakeholders and local authorities. They can also be policy-oriented, building on the 10 guiding principles and 23 Objectives of the GCM. Mr. Prentice urged all Member States and other stakeholders to translate their commitment to even more meaningful action by submitting pledges to the Migration Network Hub, reassuring that the UN Network stands ready to offer its support in framing pledges through their Country Networks and Working groups.

Mr. Prentice declared that submitting **voluntary national reports**, based on whole-of-government and whole-of-society consultations, constitute a fundamental part of the collective engagement towards an effective IMRF, reminding all participants that a template to guide the submission has been made available by the UN Network. Even though no deadline has been set for submitting national reports, Mr. Prentice encouraged all participants to submit them as early as possible, and advisedly by end of February, to attain a greater chance of feeding into the broad discussion in advance of the IMRF and the resulting Progress Declaration. A report can either be an updated version of the one previously submitted during regional reviews or an entirely new one.

Mr. Prentice provided updates on **stakeholder engagement** in the lead up to the IMRF, mentioning that registration for special accreditation closed on the 26th of January 2022. Mr. Prentice clarified that next to the list of stakeholders who registered for special accreditation, there are two additional lists of previously accredited stakeholders, namely those accredited through ECOSOC and those accredited through GCM negotiations and the Marrakesh Conference. Stakeholders included in these lists subject to accreditation can register to the IMRF. The registration process will open in March 2022.

Mr. Prentice appealed to all stakeholders to meaningfully contribute to the IMRF through the various means of engagement previously mentioned, notably, the Dialogue Series, the Repository of Practices, the Pledging

Initiative and Migration Week, emphasizing that stakeholders' insights, pledges and practices are necessary in the IMRF and in the lead up to it.

Mr. Prentice informed that a meeting focussing on how best to select speakers and rapporteurs for the IMRF through an independent process will be hosted by the UN Network in early March 2022.

Finally, Mr. Prentice pointed out that the IMRF offers several entry points for stakeholders through the plenary session and the roundtables. More specifically, the plenary session will provide space for stakeholder interventions and roundtables will include adequate space for stakeholders which will be appointed by the President of the General Assembly. Indications of interest to cover these speaking roles will be part of the registration form, which will be available in March.

## Open discussion

**Moderator: Government of Luxembourg, Ambassador-at-large for Human Rights, Coordinator for International Migration Affairs, H.E. Anne Goedert**

H.E. Anne Goedert thanked all participants on behalf of the event's organizers, the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (GCM) Champion Countries, Azerbaijan, Luxembourg, and Portugal. H.E. reminded the event was organized as part of the three GCM Champion Countries' pledge on the road to the IMRF, and invited all participants to also submit a pledge as a tangible follow-up. H.E. stated Luxembourg is committed to the advancement of the GCM and looks forward to engaging with all participants at the IMRF.

**Q&A, responses by Mr. Jonathan Prentice, Head of the UN Network on Migration Secretariat:**

- Answering the question posed by Ms. Irene Bontino, representative of the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN, on whether the Repository of Good Practices builds on the GFMD platform for partnerships, Mr. Prentice said the GFMD was consulted in the design of the Repository, and that GFMD Member States are welcome to submit the practices already present on the GFMD platform to the Network's Repository of Good Practices to be peer-reviewed.
- On the question on whether the IMRF will be held virtually or in person, Mr. Prentice informed the participants that there is no certainty on the mechanics of the meeting, since much depends on the COVID19 pandemic-related developments. However, Mr. Prentice informed that as a UN General Assembly event, the IMRF should be held in person.
- When asked by Human Rights Watch Associate Director for Europe and Central Asia Division, Ms. Judith Sunderland, to provide more information on the Dialogue Series concerning the topics of Climate and migration, on Saving lives and Preventing tragedy, Mr. Prentice reminded that it is important to ensure the objectives which did not receive as much attention in the GCM regional review are elevated for the IMRF, in line with the 360-degree nature of the GCM. For this purpose, the IMRF Dialogue Series are crucial, and the concept notes and agendas for the remaining ones will be

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disseminated imminently, as well as information on the [Secretary-General's report](#), where these topics are highlighted throughout.

- Addressing Director of the European Network on Statelessness Mr. Chris Nash's query on how crosscutting issues will be addressed and integrated in the Forum's agenda (in particular statelessness), Mr. Prentice made a reference to the [IMRF Modalities Resolution](#), in which the agenda is set. However, the Head of the UN Network on Migration Secretariat pointed out that [Roundtable 2 of the IMRF](#) is the most relevant, in term of objectives tackled (in this instance Obj.4, legal identity). Moreover, Mr. Prentice highlighted it is crucial that Member States and Stakeholders inject crosscutting issues such as statelessness into discussions, be it at roundtables, plenary session or policy debate. Lastly, he added that pledges may play an important role in ensuring crosscutting issues are given the right importance, as well as [side events to the IMRF](#).
- Elaborating on the question posed by IOM's Senior Area Coordinator, Ms. Nargiz Karimova's, on behalf of their host government and stakeholders, Mr. Jonathan Prentice stated that the Progress Declaration, will be brief, evidence-based, action-oriented and it will include an evaluation of the overall progress made with respect of the implementation of all 23 GCM Objectives, and an identification of key challenges, opportunities and emerging issues, recommendations, and guidance to all partners on how to move forward.
- Mr. John Bingham, Geneva Representative of the NGO Committee on Migration, pointed that the Global Compact on Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees are complementary, and highlighted that a key alternative to Assisted Return for Migrants is the establishment of Regular Pathways on the front-end, but also regularization, and asked Ms. Stéphanie Winet, Head of Stakeholder Engagement of the International Organisation for Employers (IOE), to further elaborate on the alternative of regularization in the context of labour shortages. To the question, Ms. Stéphanie Winet, Head of Stakeholder Engagement of the International Organisation for Employers (IOE), pointed out the lack of a unified view on the side of employers, but gave three examples in which regularization was supported by employers: Morocco, Switzerland in Geneva, where Employers helped shape the discourse to address the matter of irregular workers, and to uplift formal economy, and Aruba in the Caribbean. In agreeing with Mr. John Bingham's point, Dr. Li Rosi, UNHCR Deputy Regional Director for the Europe Bureau, pointed out that States bound by the Refugee conventions have an obligation to refugees irrespective of their practices. Dr. Li Rosi added that socio-Economic rights are enshrined in the Refugee convention, and the guarantee of these rights are essential for refugees' official status.
- Ms. Irene Bontino from the Permanent Mission of Germany to the UN expressed her gratitude to the organizers of the event and informed of Germany's intentions to co-chair [Roundtable 1](#). Moreover, Ms. Bontino notified the participants of Germany's stakeholder consultations to take place on the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of February, which will serve as an important source of evidence to feed into the update of Germany's National Report submitted for the GCM Regional Review.

In concluding the Q&A Session, Mr. Prentice urged all participants to submit any questions to [unmignet@iom.int](mailto:unmignet@iom.int) for the UN Network on Migration Secretariat to reply. Thanking everyone for their continued engagement, Mr. Prentice reminded the participants of the Repository of Good Practices, and to think about which pledges Member States may make in the lead up to the IMRF.

## Summary of Concluding Remarks

Government of Portugal, High Commissioner for Migration, Ms. Sónia Pereira

Ms. Pereira started by greeting Portugal's fellow UNECE GCM Champion countries to have organized the event, Azerbaijan and Luxembourg, and thanked all Member States and stakeholders for their participation, followed by a summary of the points raised throughout the event. In expressing her gratitude to IOM and the UN Network on Migration for their support, Ms. Pereira recalled that the successful implementation of the GCM demands the participation and collaboration of all Member States and stakeholders, at local, national, regional, and international level. Ms. Pereira also emphasized the 360-degree vision of international migration, which may be harnessed through the GCM, the most comprehensive tool on migration. Ms. Pereira then went on to outline how Portugal, as a Champion Country, has constructed a National Plan fully embedded in the concepts and principles of the GCM, outlining a number of nationally and internationally implemented measures, such as the expansion of the number of offices specialized in supporting migrants in finding employment, the extension of the periods for the concession and renewal of residence permits, the creation of the new E-Visa Portal and the recent launch of a Welcome Guide for Migrants.

The High Commissioner also emphasized the importance of giving voice to local authorities and migrants and draw on their experiences and expertise, so when it comes to the IMRF, Member States are fully informed and prepared to take stock of the main challenges and outline the steps needed improve the implementation of the GCM.

Ms. Pereira concluded by outlining some of the concrete actions Member States, as well as stakeholders, may undertake over the 100 days preceding the IMRF, such as working on promoting a narrative to highlight the positive contribution of migrants to the post-pandemic economic recovery and acknowledging the link between migration and development, notably, by recognizing migration as a powerful tool to reduce poverty and contribute to the achievement of SDGs. Moreover, Ms. Pereira urged all participants to develop concrete commitments ahead of the IMRF, notably by submitting pledges, and encouraged full engagement of all, citing Member States' commitment to have Representation at the highest possible level.

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM),  
Director, Ms. Michele LeVoy

Ms. LeVoy thanked the three GCM Champion Countries for hosting the event. She then introduced PICUM: a network of organizations mainly based in Europe working with undocumented migrants to uphold their human rights and collaborating with key partners at the global level. As part of global civil society, Ms. LeVoy's concluding remarks are embedded in some of the collective thinking of the Civil Society Action Committee on Migration, the Global Coalition on Migration (GCM) and the Women in Migration Network (WIMN), of which PICUM is a member.

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Ms. LeVoy reiterated that the IMRF is a first, important opportunity to showcase a collective commitment to improve the international approach to migration, to discuss priorities for the coming years, and to combine efforts towards a better implementation of the GCM.

Incentivizing meaningful engagement towards the IMRF, Ms. LeVoy stressed the importance of including non-governmental stakeholders in national review reports, showcasing Germany as an example, which is already undergoing stakeholder consultations to update its previously submitted report. Echoing Mr. Prentice's remarks, she also reiterated the collective responsibility to submit good practices, engage with the pledging initiative, and contribute to the M-MPTF.

Building on a statement by the Civil Society Action Committee on Civil Society Engagement in the IMRF and the GCM entitled "[Global Civil Society priorities to the IMRF: 12 Key Ways for States to Get Back on Track](#)", Ms. LeVoy outlined the following recommendations:

- Civil Society participation in the IMRF should be inclusive:
  - Migrant, diaspora and indigenous group representatives should be assigned with key speaking roles and provided with adequate funding
  - Administrative obstacles such as entry visa requirements should be removed to facilitate in-person participation
  - The inequity of access to COVID-19 vaccinations should be recognized and tackled accordingly
  - Participation requirements for non-governmental stakeholders, such as special accreditation and previous accreditation through ECOSOC or GCM processes, should be lifted in view of greater inclusiveness.
- Civil Society participation in the IMRF should be self-organized and representative:
  - Migrant communities should be able to select their own rapporteurs and speaker representatives in an independent process, ensuring equal representation across the civil society sector
  - A regular and transparent dialogue with Civil Society should be encouraged at national, regional and global levels and insights from Civil Society should be integrated within voluntary national reports
  - State protection and promotion of migrant rights should be considered key indicators in measuring the progress on GCM implementation by each Member State, recognizing Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights defenders as fundamental actors in this process

With regards to Civil Society participation in the IMRF, Ms. LeVoy mentioned that due to legal restrictions in some global regions, civil society informal groups are unable to register as NGOs. This is concerning because despite performing key work, NGOs that are unable to register as such remain excluded from the IMRF as they cannot receive special accreditation, which depends on legal registration.

Ms. LeVoy mentioned that registered NGOs in the UNECE Region also face challenges in registering for the IMRF. More specifically, bringing forward the instances of Greece, Hungary, Cyprus, and Turkey, she indicated that recent governmental regulations have contributed to limit the contribution of civil society organizations through imposing administrative limitations or financial penalties on migration activities. "Targeted" by such regulations and without the approval of their respective governments, which is

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necessary to register for the IMRF, the possibilities of registered NGOs to participate in IMRF process are drastically reduced.

Reflecting on the impact of these regulations on civil society participation at the global level, and drawing on IOE's recommendations, Ms. LeVoy indicated that a governmental-led mechanism bringing together employers and other stakeholders, including civil society, is a promising practice that governments could implement and use as a pledge.

Ms. LeVoy concluded emphasizing that a multi-stakeholder approach is fundamental to achieve the following priorities: providing migrants with access to Covid-19 vaccines, creating tangible alternatives to detention, and enhancing legal pathways. Some of the most promising governmental practices on providing undocumented migrants with access to Covid-19 vaccines were built upon decades of experiences of civil society on issues of access to services; civil society organizations have played a key role in supporting the development of pilot-schemes on alternatives to detention and community engagement; and engagement of employers and the private sector is crucial as decent work supports regular pathways.

## Annex 1 - Biographies of speakers

### H.E. Vusal Huseynov, Chief of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan



H.E. Vusal Huseynov is the Chief of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan since April 2018. Prior to his present position, he was a Member of Parliament, worked as Senior Advisor for the Administration of the President and acted as Secretary for the Anti-Corruption Commission of Azerbaijan. During his time as a Member of Parliament, he held the position of Vice-chair of the Azerbaijani delegation to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. He was also elected as Deputy Chairman of the Legal Affairs and Human Rights committee of the European Council Parliamentary Assembly. He received a bachelor's and master's degree in Economics from Azerbaijan State University of Economics and studied Law at Baku State University. Mr. Huseynov also holds a Master's degree in Public Administration from Harvard University.

### Stéphanie Winet, Head of Stakeholders Engagement at the International Organisation of Employers (IOE)



Stéphanie Winet is currently the Head of Stakeholders Engagement for the International Organization of Employers (IOE). She joined the IOE in April 2016. The IOE is the largest network of the private sector in the world, with more than 150 business and employer organisation members. The IOE is the host and founding father of the Business Mechanism to the Global Forum on Migration and Development, which aims at ensuring the voice of business is brought on board in government migration debates in international fora. Prior to her role at the IOE, Stéphanie Winet was Political Adviser at the Permanent Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York. Stéphanie started her career in the private sector in Geneva. She worked for a number of companies, rising to the position of Deputy Public Relations Manager. Stéphanie Winet is Swiss and Italian national and holds a master's degree in International Affairs from the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva

### Renate Held, Regional Director for the IOM Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Liaison Office for UN Agencies and other International Organizations based in Vienna, Austria



Ms. Renate Held has assumed functions as IOM Regional Director for IOM's Regional Office covering South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia on 01 July 2020. She held the same function from 2011 to 2015. She was previously posted at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva as Director for Migration Management. Previous IOM functions included serving as Regional Representative for the Andean States in Lima, Peru, Regional Representative for the EU Member States and the Baltic States in Brussels, Belgium and as IOM Inspector General, responsible for oversight, project rapid assessment, audit, evaluation and investigation at the IOM Headquarters in Geneva. Ms. Held also carried out various functions in the IOM country office in Bonn, Germany and participated in IOM operations in Turkey, Northern Iraq, Tanzania, Mozambique and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

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### Dr Angela Li Rosi, Deputy Director for the UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe



Ms. Angela Li Rosi has been appointed Deputy Director of the Bureau for Europe of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as of 1 January 2017. Ms. Li Rosi comes to UNHCR's Headquarters from Sudan, where she was Deputy Representative for three years and worked on refugees, IDPs and migration issues. Ms. Li Rosi has served with UNHCR in a variety of different capacities and locations. She has worked as Head of Programme with UNHCR in DRC, the Russian Federation, and as Head of the UNHCR Liaison Office in Austria. She has also previously served in UNHCR's HQs in Geneva as Head of Policy in the Bureau for Europe and as Senior Policy Adviser in the Policy Development and Evaluation Service, part of UNHCR's Executive Office. An Italian national, Ms. Li Rosi graduated from the University of Rome "La Sapienza".

### Jonathan Prentice, Head of the UN Network on Migration Secretariat



Mr. Prentice has worked in varied positions at the United Nations, which he joined in 1994. These include postings in Baghdad, Dili, Geneva, Jakarta, New York, and Phnom Penh. In 2010-2016, he worked for International Crisis Group as director of policy and overseeing the London office. Particular areas of focus include conflict prevention, political analysis, human rights and protection. In 2017-2018, he was chief of office for the Secretary-General's special representative for international migration. Since January 2019, he has been responsible for setting up and heading the secretariat for the new United Nations Network on Migration.

### H.E. Anne Goedert, Ambassador-at-large for Human Rights, Coordinator for International Migration Issues, Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg



H.E. Goedert is the Coordinator for International Migration Issues at the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. With a master's degree in Human Rights and Democratization, she worked previously in Geneva as Deputy Representative at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg and was in charge of migration issues and relations with UNHCR and IOM as well as of human rights and relations with ILO. She was also Deputy Head of Mission at the Embassy of Luxembourg in Brussels. She has held several positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Luxembourg.

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Sónia Pereira, High Commissioner for Migration of Portugal (Alto Comissariado para as Migrações - "ACM")



Sónia Pereira is the High Commissioner for Migration of Portugal and President of the Board of Directors of the High Commission for Migration. With a degree in Economics, Master's in Migration Studies and a PhD in Geography, Ms. Pereira was responsible for coordinating the Government's Assistance Project for Refugee Resettlement at the Lisbon office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). As a researcher at the International Labour Organization, she has specialised in migration and migratory policies since 2002, focusing her research on human trafficking, labour migration, socioeconomic inclusion, and the artistic and political participation of migrants.

Michel LeVoy, Director of the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM)



Michele LeVoy is the director of PICUM, Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants, and leads the organization's work in advocating, monitoring and raising awareness of undocumented migrants' human rights towards European and global institutions. Michele serves on several boards at the global and EU levels, including the Civil Society Advisory Committee for the Global Forum on Migration and Development, Global Coalition on Migration, Women and Global Migration Working Group, and the Social Platform. She holds a bachelor's degree in French and Justice and Peace Studies from the University of St. Thomas and a master's degree in applied sciences (Housing and Development Program) from the Université Catholique de Louvain.

## Annex 2 - Full text of spoken interventions

Government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chief of the State Migration Service, H.E. Vusal Huseynov

Excellencies, Delegates, Distinguished Participants, it is an honour for the Republic of Azerbaijan to welcome you to this briefing organised in partnership with the government of Luxembourg and Portugal, with the support of the United Nations Network on Migration, to mark one hundred days to the International Migration Review Forum.

This briefing represents an essential occasion to ensure all parties are duly informed on the process the IMRF entails, and therefore guarantee that we support the GCM's a 360-degree approach as per its 23 objectives and 10 guiding principles. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration expresses our collective commitment to improving cooperation on international migration; and our approach to addressing the needs of migrants and communities is all-embracing: we are engaged at home, at bilateral and multilateral level, and side by side with key stakeholders. We are committed to promoting the successful implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM, and we urge all Countries to do the same, so that its first landmark International Migration Review Forum represents a moment of advancement for us all.

The Republic of Azerbaijan is pleased and proud to have recently become a GCM Champion Country. Azerbaijan has accumulated vast experience in migration management through the transition from being country of origin to country of transit and destination and we acknowledge that if managed properly migration can be a driving force for prosperity, innovation and sustainable development in our globalized world, and that these positive impacts can be optimized by further improving migration governance, for a better future.

According to IOM's World Migration Report 2022, Azerbaijan hosts over two hundred and fifty thousand foreign citizens and there are over one million Azerbaijani citizens living abroad<sup>1</sup>. Migration affects countries and the communities in a very different and sometimes unpredictable ways, and we appreciate that the GCM is the only comprehensive tool to improve our common response to this complex phenomenon. In order to make our common response a real success we have to combine our efforts towards better implementation of GCM principles and objectives which should have the guiding role in our collective actions. To do so we should have improved capacities that is able to deliver tangible actions to ensure result-oriented approach. Azerbaijan will continue its work in being a reliable partner and effective supporter of this process at all levels in its capacity as a Champion country.

The debate on migration comes at a challenging time as we gradually recover from the COVID-19 pandemic. IOM estimates 281 million<sup>2</sup> people to be on the move in 2020, a number that grew from previous years in spite of all the restrictions imposed by the pandemic. However, COVID-19 still continues to be a major challenge for the world which regrettably also hindered us meeting in person today. Taking into account on-going situation related with pandemic we consider that activities and policymaking in post-COVID-19 period should not completely exclude but rather include COVID-19 and we should share experience in this field and learn how to adapt our activities to new realities. Furthermore, despite

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unexpected changes and circumstances in human mobility with the current pandemic GCM proved to be credible and guiding instrument for states in preparing flexible and effective response mechanisms.

The commitment shown in the adoption of the GCM must be followed by tangible actions. Azerbaijan drafted a Migration Strategy of the Republic of Azerbaijan for the next 4 years and also incorporated and aligned key principles of GCM to this document. The Strategy, which also foresees promotion of GCM, developed by the State Migration Service with the support of IOM Azerbaijan, will be the most comprehensive policy document to date related with migration management.

During the pandemic Azerbaijan also carried out its activities in migration sphere in accordance with the main principles and objectives laid out in GCM. Since the start of the pandemic mitigating and minimizing impact of COVID-19 has been at the forefront of migration management policy in Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan built its migration policy on maximum convenience of migrants, reducing administrative procedures to the possible extent and promoting digitalization. For instance, in line with objective 5 of the GCM, during this period, temporary staying period of foreigners, including migrant workers in the country who did not want to go back to their countries due to various reasons was extended automatically until full opening of the borders without additional application procedure. No migrant, including irregular migrants was neither expelled from the territory of the country nor placed in detention centers. Moreover, a number of social assistance projects have been implemented for vulnerable groups. Azerbaijan has demonstrated a swift COVID-19 response by including migrants in national vaccination plans. In accordance with GCM Objectives 3 and 15 on ensuring accurate and timely information for migrants at all stages of the migration process and enabling them to access basic services, including in emergency situations, our national “Call Center” operated 24/7, and the “MigAz” mobile application was launched.

To further enhance the civil participation in migration management, “Open Door Days” citizen forums, awareness raising events, mobile services, as well as conferences at national level were organized across the country. The events were conducted with the participation of migrants and stateless persons, as well as local citizens, representatives of relevant state entities, public organizations, employers, and entrepreneurs aiming to eliminate all forms of discrimination and promoting evidence-based public discussion to form migration-related perceptions. Such occasions contribute to empowering societies and migrants for full inclusion and social cohesion, as specified in the GCM, objective 16.

Azerbaijan also demonstrated agile and effective approach in terms of enhancing international partnerships to better cope with the challenges caused by COVID-19 by initiating and championing several multilateral platforms where measures covering different areas, including migration were discussed in fight against pandemic. Meeting of the heads of migration agencies and entities within the Organization of Turkic States at the initiative of Azerbaijan held in May 2020 is a clear example for such kind of approach.

Azerbaijan, together with IOM, is collaborating for establishment of the Regional Training Centre on Migration which will act as a key migration knowledge management and capacity building hub in the region. The project is proving to be instrumental towards the enhancement of regional training capacities and cooperation on migration in the countries of Central Asia, Middle East, Eastern Partnership and beyond,

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and specifically contributes to GCM objective 23 - Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration – as well as a number of cross-cutting objectives.

As a Champion Country, it is imperative upon us also to promote the capacity building mechanisms offered by the UN Network on Migration: just recently the Network launched the pledging initiative which takes a long-view approach in encouraging Member States to make pledges which will improve conditions for migrants and their communities; these can be financial, or through the implementation of specific policies, programmes or partnerships, and will help ensure the long-term sustainability of the GCM. Our involvement here today is part of our pledge, promoting the Compact's Whole-of-Society approach through a multi-stakeholder partnership to address migration in all its dimensions. We hope that you will all consider what pledges you can commit to in this important year.

Although today's meeting is of preparatory nature which aims to provide information on road to IMRF, I think it is also an excellent opportunity to exchange ideas on actions to be taken results of which can already be discussed during the Forum in May. In this regard Azerbaijan stands ready and open to further elaborate on any suggestions related with joint actions together with UNECE member states.

To conclude, we hope that together we can -and should- take concrete actions to further harness the potential of migration and ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration is capitalised on as it has been an enriching reality of our history, and will continue to enrich our lives in the years to come.

### International Organisation for Employers (IOE), Head of Stakeholder Engagement, Ms. Stéphanie Winet

Let me first congratulate the Governments of Azerbaijan, Luxembourg and Portugal for taking the lead in organizing this briefing for the member states of the UNECE. We are grateful that other stakeholders are also invited.

I am pleased to be part of the conversation, as the International Organisation of Employers (IOE) and its members have been active in the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) negotiation and review processes.

IOE hosts the Business Advisory Group on Migration, which was created in 2016. At the time, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD - to which many of the UNECE governments are also part of) invited IOE to coordinate the voice of the private sector to the GFMD. Naturally, representatives of the Business Advisory Group on Migration, attended every one of the GCM negotiating sessions, and we were present in Marrakech to join in the celebration of its adoption.

We are pleased that the GCM calls for active engagement with the private sector in many of the objectives. While at IOE we see this as natural, we understand that the question "how to" engage with the private sector may be a difficult one for many governments.

And when it comes to the highly politicized topic of migration, one may even ask, but why would the private sector even care?

This question sounds provocative. So, let me assure you of the importance the business community places on the issue of safe and orderly migration. Work is changing, with automation and digitalization; but Human

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resources and skills remain key for employers to run their operations; and their access can be a concern and challenge for many employers.

The private sector is diverse with multinationals, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, employers' associations (in the lead at national level to negotiate labour reforms with Ministry of Labour), trade associations, industry organizations. The list is long. The reasons to engage with any of these groups may differ, and the "how to engage" question would also require different answers.

But all these actors (no matter size, industry, region, whether in country of destination or of origin) have the same interest: access to skills. If skills are not available locally, companies need to look abroad or to returning skills.

The whole process from identification, recruitment to employment of employees has a cost for companies. There is therefore a real business case for skills mobility to work smoothly.

Two global trends are contributing to raising the Employers' attention to the issue of skills mobility regulations:

Skills shortages are growing – employers cannot find the skills they need on the domestic market. Research by the ManpowerGroup shows that Global shortages have almost doubled in the last decade. Hard and soft skills are more difficult to find than ever before. Hiring optimism has returned to levels not seen since the start of the pandemic, yet that optimism is being tempered by the highest levels of global talent shortages in 15 years with 69% of employers reporting difficulty filling vacancies. European employers are reporting the most difficulty filling open roles with the biggest impacts being felt in France, Romania, and Italy.

Positions in operations/logistics and manufacturing/production are the most difficult to fill. IT comes at the fourth position after Sales. Employers are not struggling only to access high tech talent, as we may all imagine, but also lower skill profiles. A case study is the pharmaceutical industry. IOE conducted research in this industry which highlighted the difficulties the industry faces in the midst of the development, manufacturing, producing and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines. Shortage of skills in the manufacturing and logistics was hardly felt by employers, which had obviously impact on a global health challenge.

Anti-immigration trends - Before the pandemic, we have witnessed an increased tendency to restrict immigration policies, by closing border to foreign nationals and spreading negative rhetoric on migration. Employers across the world suffer from such restrictive measures. The pandemic did not obviously help, as the mobility just stopped, and business suffered from the lack of access to skills (among so many other issues to be dealt with).

With this in mind, IOE raised awareness on the GCM implementation to its members. The members of IOE are National Employers' Federations in more than 150 countries, including in most of the UNECE countries, as well as corporate companies. These federations are the organized voice of employers and the private sector in these countries.

During the negotiations of the GCM, we focused particularly on regular pathways (objective 5), fair recruitment (Objective 6), and skills development and recognition (Objective 18) — and we looked forward to being active and engaged participants, alongside our government, worker, and NGO colleagues, in their implementation.

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That was four years ago — sufficient time, one would have thought, for implementation efforts to take hold. However, as we all know only too well, a global pandemic has intervened, in many cases virtually ending labor and talent mobility. This has been a setback for the GCM. But in some ways, it has made it more important than ever.

One thing we have learned from the pandemic is the enduring nature of the need for mobility — the heightened demand for the physical presence of essential workers to fill gaps; and the heightened need to identify, develop and deploy talent.

In the GCM process, and now in the lead to the IMRF, we are looking at highlighting the economic impact that migration/recruitment/skills policies have on businesses. We link migration policies, with employment, job creation, fighting informality and regulating the recruitment industry in those parts of the world where smarter regulation is needed.

As part of the IMRF pledging, we have pledged to publish a global employers' position on GCM implementation to be published in May. Based on a global survey to private sector entities, we hope that this paper could provide some tools to governments in their national strategies in engaging the private sector.

We are observing that investing in the right skill at the right position reduces turn over, companies do not spend on unnecessary recruitment processes, this ensures skills transfer to local workforce, the productivity is thereby higher, which leads to company growth and job creation, with potential hires on the domestic labour market. This all responds to various GCM objectives.

Addressing these labour migration issues requires a whole of government approach and long-term planning, beginning with ensuring that employers' organisations are part of the conversation at national level as well. In each of these areas, business has experience, information, and resources to inform policy and assist in implementation. Implementing the best practices encompassed in each of these Objectives would benefit not just our companies and their employees, but our economies and our societies. Business stands ready to play its part in reaching this goal.

Finally, the reference to the GFMD Business Mechanism in objective 18 is a clear recognition that the creation of institutionalized mechanisms to bring the stakeholders to the table leads to concrete impacts on the ground. Not all countries have channels at national level to bring the voice of non-state stakeholder to the policy-making decision process. One of the pledges that governments could put forward is to create such mechanisms to bring employers and potentially other stakeholders to the table. This is food for thought as we start this meeting today.

Thank you.

**IOM Vienna Regional Office for South-Eastern Europe, Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Regional Director, Ms. Renate Held**

Excellencies, Delegates, Distinguished Participants, on behalf of IOM's Regional Offices in Vienna and Brussels, and the Regional United Nations on Migration, it is an honour to welcome you all here today at this important event in the lead up to the first International Migration Review Forum - which will be held in New York between 17 – 20 May 2022 and preceded by the multi-stakeholder hearing on 16<sup>th</sup> May -

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which is one week after the dates initially announced. (10<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup> May -& 9<sup>th</sup> May for multi-stakeholder hearing)

The new dates of the IMRF have been agreed by the PGA following a series of consultations to secure the participation of all relevant stakeholders, which was proving to be difficult due to the fluid and evolving COVID-19 situation. Member States have been notified by letter of the PGA -and the format of the forum remains unchanged

I am thankful to the governments of the Global Compact for Migration Champion Countries of Azerbaijan, Luxembourg and Portugal for inviting IOM in its capacity as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration to support this briefing - and I would also like to thank the esteemed presence of Member State representatives and key stakeholders from the UN Economic Commission for Europe region, the UN Network on Migration Secretariat and members of the regional UN Network on Migration in Europe and Central Asia.

On behalf of us all, I hope today will greatly help you all in your preparations of the IMRF. The build-up to, and conduct of the IMRF is an opportunity to bed down the GCM as the most comprehensive framework for international migration governance, and to help identify priorities for collective focus in the coming years. Today's meeting is intended to be a technical briefing for governments and stakeholders on the practical steps everyone concerned is encouraged to engage with to ensure good and thorough preparations and meaningful participation at the IMRF in May this year.

You will note that the agenda provides space for both governments and stakeholders to engage – offering the opportunity to exchange with each other in recognition of the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches that are guiding principles of the GCM necessary to implement the ambitious and forward reaching 360-degree objectives of the GCM.

There is much to learn from each other – governments, stakeholders and United Nations member organizations alike – on the premise that good policymaking and programming is open and inclusive, transparent, accessible and responsive to as wide a range of entities as possible.

From its original mandate to provide transportation and resettlement for the estimated 11 million people uprooted from World War Two, IOM's mandate has expanded globally, not least since joining the UN system in 2016 and the Organization's name changed several times reflecting this. However, our principles remain essentially the same – to uphold the dignity and well-being of migrants.

We all have a stake in the future of migration governance, and this region has particular global importance for many reasons: the geographical reach of the UNECE region includes all countries in Europe, countries in Central Asia, and also countries in North America (Canada and the United States of America), totalling 56 member States.

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This region includes some of the world's richest countries, as well as many countries with varying development characteristics. This diversity represents migration opportunities, but also challenges -and explains why it is home to the largest migration corridors in the world.

Migration dynamics in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe and Central Asia have historically been characterized by emigration, rather than immigration. Also, cognisant of the global demographic transition the world is facing, migration will continue to play a dominating role in our region in the years to come.

During the Regional Review in the UNECE region held in November 2020, several themes emerged as significant points for reflection and discussion. The various and interconnected drivers of migration within and to the region were acknowledged to include conflict, climate change, shifting demographic patterns and the pursuit of better economic opportunities. Member States expressed a collective ambition, amongst other things, to address migration drivers, improve asylum decision-making procedures, promote alternatives to detention, develop integrated border management strategies, uphold migrants' rights, include migrants in COVID-19 vaccination plans, and improve social cohesion through combatting discrimination and removing barriers impeding participation of migrant workers in the labour market. Therefore, the need for multilateral discussions on safe, orderly, and regular migration governance has never been stronger.

The IMRF is a landmark opportunity to discuss your achievements, and also challenges in the implementation of the GCM, and discuss priorities for the coming years. I thank you once again for your dedication and commitment to this very end. Without wishing to take too much of your time, I would like to welcome and handover the floor for the next session. I wish us all a fruitful event, with active engagement by the member States and Stakeholders here today -and look forward to a continued mutual cooperation on the GCM in the coming months. Thank you.

**UNHCR Deputy Regional Director for the Europe Bureau and on behalf of the Co-chairs of the Regional UN Network on Migration for Europe and Central Asia, Dr. Angela Li Rosi**

Allow me to start by expressing my appreciation and pleasure to contribute to opening this important event convened by the Governments of Azerbaijan, Luxembourg and Portugal, GCM Champion countries, 100 days prior to the International Migration Review Forum.

I am speaking today as the UNHCR co-chair of the regional UN Network on Migration for the UNECE region. The Regional Network was established in January 2020 and is embedded in the Regional Issue-Based Coalition on Large Movement of People, Displacement and Resilience, which we co-lead with IOM and UNDP. In this capacity, we are committed to support all relevant stakeholders in their engagement in the IMRF.

The effective implementation of the GCM, in addition to ensuring greater respect for migrants' rights, can alleviate pressure on asylum systems and increase the protection space for asylum-seekers and refugees.

In this regard, the IMRF presents a key opportunity to assess and identify ways to advance progress in implementing the GCM, including regarding specific gaps and Objectives which remain under-addressed to

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date (e.g. Objective 4 on proof of legal identity, Objective 8 on missing migrants and Objective 13 on Alternatives to Detention)

Today's event shall contribute to the success of the IMRF, and we sincerely hope as regional Network that it will help clarify any question you may have regarding the pledging initiative at the Forum and contribute to inform your respective pledges and voluntary contributions to report on the GCM implementation.

On this very point, the second report of the Secretary General on the GCM presented in February 2021 provides priority areas for consideration in the IMRF, as well as a number of recommendations.

- We particularly welcome the recommendations to ensure all migrants have access to COVID-19 vaccinations, testing and treatment and to include them in socioeconomic response and recovery plans. UNHCR is advocating for similar efforts with respect to asylum-seekers, refugees and stateless persons.
- Regarding the recommendations to facilitate safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration, it should be understood that these are not limited to voluntary return, in line with Objective 21. Forced returns should be suspended where the health, safety, dignity and human rights of migrants and communities of origin, transit and destination cannot be adequately safeguarded. This has been frequently recalled in Network discussions, as the return of persons not in need of international protection – in safety, dignity and in a sustainable manner – is critical to safeguard the integrity of asylum systems and to support humane and effective migration management and governance.
- We welcome the recommendations to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, which can also serve to reduce dangerous irregular movements and alleviate pressure on asylum systems.
- Equally important are the recommendations to strengthen efforts to save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants, including the recommendation to establish a clear, safe and predictable disembarkation mechanism for persons rescued at sea, a long-standing priority for UNHCR.

Allow me to conclude by reiterating UNHCR's strong support to ensure the IMRF is a success, both as a member of the Executive Committee of Global Network and as a cochair of the Regional Network for the UNECE region. I thank you for your attention and wish you a fruitful discussion.

**Moderator: Government of Luxembourg, Ambassador-at-large for Human Rights, Coordinator for International Migration Affairs, H.E. Anne Goedert**

Delegates, Excellencies, thank you all for taking part in this meeting at the invitation of Luxembourg and the other UNECE Global Compact for Migration Champion Countries, Azerbaijan, and Portugal. Luxembourg welcomes the many initiatives taken within and outside of the UNECE region to support the successful implementation of this GCM in which you know we strongly believe. Luxembourg is very pleased to have collaborated with IOM, other organisations, and the other GCM Champion Countries in the UNECE to organise this briefing as part of our pledge to the Global Compact for Migration. As a tangible follow up to today's event, we would welcome further pledges. We are very keen to play an active role in

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this process, and we believe that by pledging to organise this event alone we have been doing our part in strengthening international cooperation and knowledge building. I would like to thank everyone for joining today, and for ensuring this crucial debate can gain momentum in the preparations to the International Migration Review Forum. Luxembourg is looking forward to engaging further with you all during this landmark forum, and to collaborate with you to ensure the advancement of GCM. I think it now is the occasion to exchange among Member States, Governments and Stakeholders on progress, opportunities, on challenges in advancing the GCM, but also to exchange further information on indications of level of attendance.

### Government of Portugal, High Commissioner for Migration, Ms. Sónia Pereira

Excellencies, Dear colleagues, we have reached the end of today's event and it is my privilege to be entrusted with the task of providing some closing remarks. I would like to begin by greeting the representatives of Azerbaijan and Luxemburg, our fellow GCM Champion countries. It is an honour to endorse this initiative at their side. I would also like to thank all members states and stakeholders for their participation in today's event. Your insights and experiences made for a very fruitful discussion, one which will certainly lead us to a more meaningful IMRF.

Finally, I would like to thank the IOM, as the UN Migration Agency and coordinator of the UN Network on Migration for briefing Member States and Stakeholders on the relevant tools and resource available to them in the lead up to the IMRF.

As we prepare for the IMRF, let us recall that the Global Compact on Migration is the result of an important international negotiation, in which the need to address the issue of migration in a comprehensive and integrated approach was reiterated. And while the Global Compact has clear guidelines and concrete objectives, its successful implementation, one that works for the benefit of all, demands the participation and collaboration of all stakeholders, at local, national, regional, and international level.

Portugal supports the necessity of maintaining a 360-degree vision of international migration. Such an approach echoes the need for the 23 objectives of the GCM to be implemented together and in complementarity. We also point out the specific need to embrace whole-of-government, whole-of-society, child-sensitive, and gender-responsive approaches in order to implement the GCM, anchored in international human rights laws. Most importantly, it is crucial to include the participation of migrants, including migrant women, and bring to the fore their experiences and expertise on what is not working in migration governance. While the responsibility for the implementation of the GCM lies on our ability to work together, Member States play a fundamental role in leading this process.

The construction of a national plan makes it possible to ensure the commitment of the countries and the effective implementation of the objectives enshrined in the Global Compact, with due adaptation to the national realities. Portugal is a proud member of the group of GCM champion countries and is pleased to have been one of the first United Nations countries to develop a National Plan for the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration. The National Plan reinforces the recognition, by the Portuguese authorities, of the relevance of matters related to the promotion of legal channels for safe and orderly migration, closely linked to strong integration measures.

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The National Plan reflects the concepts and principles of the Global Pact on Migration, demonstrating:

- Horizontal coherence, through shared involvement, commitment and responsibility among all Ministries involved;
- Global government approach (whole-of-government);
- Vertical coherence, through the involvement of the Migration Council and its members, both in the preparation and implementation of the Plan; and
- Comprehensive and complete approach on migration, integrating all relevant dimensions of migration and identifying implementation measures for all the objectives of the Global Pact on Migration.

Portugal promotes a whole-of-government approach that combines tailored integration measures with providing easier access to public services and our welfare system.

I can highlight the progress made in some measures – for example:

- Reformulation of the Portuguese language courses, aiming to broaden the coverage, including more institutions that can access funding to implement these courses and also migrants still in regularization processes;
- Expand the number of offices specialized in supporting migrants in finding employment (from 11 to 19);
- Extension of the periods for the concession and renewal of residence permits;
- The creation of the new E-Visa Portal, which, for example, allows migrants to consult the status of their visa application electronically;
- New model of Residence Permit card including Social Security, National Health System and Fiscal Number (as the Portuguese Citizen Card). Easier and better procedures for welcoming and integrating Migrants are being developed, including the reduction and simplification of the number of visas and the implementation of the Balcão Único, a single electronic platform where citizens can upload documents and make requests without leaving home;
- In December of last year, the High Commission for Migration has launched a Welcome Guide for Migrants, a guidebook designed to help public, private, and civil society institutions and support migrants intending to live in Portugal. This document offers relevant information and a wide range of tools to help with the reception and integration of immigrants, the improvement of integration processes and the promotion of equality;
- Portugal has also recently signed labour mobility agreements with India, with Morocco and with the Community of Portuguese Speaking Countries, to facilitate legal and safe labour migration flows between these countries and Portugal;

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- Portugal is also engaged in negotiations with other countries, always safeguarding the principles set out under its commitments with the International Organisation for Migration and the United Nations Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Based on the experience of Portugal as a champion country, it is possible to highlight three essential axes for the implementation of the Global Pact:

- coordination, alignment of public policies and integrated vision;
- flexibility and adaptability to the national reality; and
- follow-up and monitoring.

As a proud member of the GCM Champion countries, Portugal takes this opportunity to express its satisfaction in seeing this group expanding. We hope and encourage more countries in all regions to join the GCM and to join the group of Champions.

Finally, as a champion country, Portugal is deeply committed to the success of the upcoming IMRF. This will be a great opportunity to bring together a diverse set of voices to share the progress made on advancing the GCM and shed light on how to overcome continued challenges. Looking ahead, we believe there are a few things we can all do over the next 100 days, that would help making the IMRF as meaningful as possible. First, as we approach the IMRF milestone, it is key that we work on a narrative that highlights the positive contribution of migrants to the post-pandemic economic recovery and acknowledges the link between migration and development, notably, by recognizing migration as a powerful tool to reduce poverty and contribute to the achievement of SDGs.

We should be able to do this without overlooking the specific risks and vulnerabilities experienced by migrants. To that end, we emphasize the importance of giving voice to local authorities and migrants and draw on their experiences and expertise, so when it comes to the IMRF, Member States are fully informed and prepared to take stock of the main challenges and outline the steps needed improve the implementation of the GCM. Secondly, we encourage Member States to develop concrete commitments ahead of the IMRF, notably by submitting pledges. We believe this would help build momentum for the IMRF and potentially increase the impact of the Progress Declaration. Finally, and most importantly, as it comes to the IMRF itself, we encourage the full engagement of all and hope for Representation at the highest possible level.

I am looking forward to deepening our discussions in the coming months. Thank you for your attention.

Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), Director, Ms. Michele LeVoy

Ms. LeVoy started by thanking the three GCM Champion Countries for hosting the event. She then introduced PICUM: a network of organizations, mainly based in Europe, working with undocumented migrants to uphold their human rights and collaborating with key partners at the global level. Accordingly, as part of global civil society, Ms. LeVoy's concluding remarks are embedded in some of the collective thinking of the Civil Society Action Committee on Migration, the Global Coalition on Migration (GCM) and the Women in Migration Network (WIMN), of which PICUM is a member.

To start with, Ms. LeVoy reiterated that the IMRF is a first, important opportunity to showcase a collective commitment to improve the international approach to migration, to discuss priorities for the coming years, and to combine efforts towards a better implementation of the GCM, the most comprehensive document on international migration at the global level. Therefore, she mentioned that momentum towards this Forum needs to be built and seized accordingly.

Incentivizing meaningful engagement towards the IMRF, Ms. LeVoy stressed the importance of including non-governmental stakeholders in national review reports, showcasing Germany as an example, which is already undergoing stakeholder consultations to update its previously submitted report.

Considering the abundance of interest that governments and other stakeholders demonstrated during previous Dialogue Series, Ms. LeVoy suggested extending their duration. She also reminded participants that the fourth and last of these virtual preparatory roundtables will take place on the 9th of February. Echoing Mr. Prentice's remarks, she reiterated the collective responsibility, equally calling on Members States and other stakeholders, to submit good practices, engage with the pledging initiative, and contribute to the M-MPTF. Ms. LeVoy also wished to re-emphasize key upcoming events, such as the release of the Secretary-General Report during Migration Week and the Webinar Series related to GCM Objectives and climate change.

Building upon a statement on Civil Society Engagement in the IMRF and the GCM entitled "Global Civil Society priorities to the IMRF: 12 Key Ways for States to Get Back on Track", which was released by the Civil Society Action Committee, Ms. LeVoy went on to outline the following recommendations:

- Civil Society participation in the IMRF should be inclusive:
  - Grassroot organizations, especially migrant, diaspora and indigenous group representatives should be assigned with key speaking roles during the IMRF and provided with adequate funding resources to participate
  - Administrative obstacles such as entry visa requirements should be removed to facilitate in-person participation
  - The inequity of access to COVID-19 vaccinations should be recognized and tackled accordingly
  - Participation requirements for non-governmental stakeholders, such as special accreditation and previous accreditation through ECOSOC or GCM processes should be lifted in view of greater inclusiveness.
- Civil Society participation in the IMRF should be self-organized and representative:

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- Civil Society and migrant communities should be able to select their own rapporteurs and speaker representatives in an independent process, ensuring an equal representation across the civil society sector
- A regular and transparent dialogue with Civil Society should be encouraged at national, regional and global levels and insights from Civil Society should be integrated within voluntary national reports; and
- Since the GCM is deeply rooted in the notion of human rights, State protection and promotion of migrant rights should be considered key indicators in measuring the progress of each Member State towards the implementation of the GCM, recognizing Civil Society Organizations and Human Rights defenders as fundamental actors in this process.

Extending the discussion on Civil Society participation in the IMRF, Ms. LeVoy mentioned that in some global regions such as the Middle East, due to legal restrictions, civil society informal groups are unable to register as NGOs and, in violation of ILO standards, migrant workers are not allowed to officially register their own unions. According to Ms. LeVoy, this is concerning since special accreditation to participate in the IMRF can only be granted to officially registered NGOs, meaning that despite performing relevant work, NGOs that are unable to register as such remain excluded from IMRF processes.

Referring to the UNECE Region, Ms. LeVoy mentioned that registered NGOs also face challenges in registering for the IMRF. More specifically recent governmental regulations in some Member States in the UNECE region have limited the contribution of civil society organizations through administrative limitations or financial penalties on migration activities; as a result the possibilities of non-accredited NGOs to participate in the Forum and in the lead up to it reduce.

Reflecting on the impact of these regulations on civil society participation at the global level, and drawing on IOE's recommendations, Ms. LeVoy indicated that a governmental-led mechanism bringing together employers and other stakeholders, including civil society, is a promising practice that governments could implement and use as a pledge.

Lastly, Ms. LeVoy highlighted three themes that emerged during the meeting, namely providing migrants with access to Covid-19 vaccines, creating actual alternatives to detention and enhancing legal pathways, to illustrate why a multi-stakeholder approach is fundamental to achieve these goals.

- Firstly, Ms. LeVoy presented a policy scorecard produced by the Lighthouse Reports to show that some of the most promising governmental practices on providing undocumented migrants with access to Covid-19 vaccines were built upon decades of experiences of civil society working in partnership with governmental entities on these issues.
- Secondly, Ms. LeVoy underlined the role of civil society in finding alternatives to detention, contributing to the shift from using detention as a first resort to providing viable and practical alternatives to detention, supporting the development of pilot-schemes which avoid the use of detention and alternatives such as community and non-custodial settings.
- Thirdly, Ms. LeVoy indicated that according to the ODHIR report, many countries in the OSCE Region have regularized migrants. More specifically, 5.5 to 6 million people were regularized in 24 European Member States from 1996 to 2008. Furthermore, 165,000 undocumented migrants from CIS countries were regularized in Kazakhstan through a regularization program in 2006.

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Echoing other stakeholders who took the floor in the meeting, Ms. LeVoy reiterated that regularization is profitable for employers and beneficial for the economy of countries. Consequently, she defined decent work as the key criteria for regular pathways and informed that the statement from the Action Committee also provides useful guidelines and suggestions on what governmental regularization programs should entail.

**END**