



Technical meeting of GCM Champion Countries: Summary of discussions

On 26 February 2021, the United Nations Network on Migration (Network) invited GCM Champion countries to discuss how to take further develop this initiative in pursuit of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) objectives.

The Head of the Network Secretariat and the Representative of the Quaker United Nations Office moderated the discussion.

The meeting was attended by 101 participants from 17 Member States represented by capitals and Permanent Missions; UN Network entities at both Headquarters and country levels; and civil society members of the Network's working group on GCM National Implementation Plans. Over the course of the discussions, delegates representing the following countries took the floor: Cambodia, Canada, Ecuador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Mexico, Morocco, the Philippines, Portugal, and Thailand.

In his opening remarks, the Head of the Network Secretariat:

- Introduced the audience to four issues for their consideration: the test of the guidance material, the calendar of proposed activities in 2021, the communication plan and the Migration Network Hub;
- Invited Champions to reflect on the calendar of events (including the proposal to hold regular meetings every 2 months, as well as the opportunity to meet at regional/sub-regional level to discuss common matters);
- Provided an update on the GCM regional reviews, highlighting the prominent role played by Champion countries in the reviews held to date (Europe and Arab regions);
- Reaffirmed the global nature of the GCM thus the need to engage with the broadest possible audience (all Member States) and within countries (including stakeholders);
- Informed about the existing coordination mechanisms at regional (6) and national levels (45) and how they coincide with many Champion countries, stressing on their importance in supporting Member States and other stakeholders in implementing the GCM;
- Reflected on the need to strengthen communications and visibility; therefore, suggesting two initiatives: production of videos on Champions, and publication of monthly articles;
- Highlighted, in addition to the guidance material, the tools and products developed, or under development, by the Network working groups in other areas such as alternatives to detention, regular pathways, bilateral labour migration agreements, return and reintegration, and access to services.
- Presented current/prospective issues of focus in the Network, in preparation for and lead up to the International Migration Review Forum in 2022, including migrants' inclusion in COVID vaccination programmes, migration and development, and mobility and climate change.

Participants from the floor made interventions on this first session and:

- Welcomed the proposed calendar of events, calling for some flexibility and suggesting moving the meeting planned in June to avoid conflicts with the Human Rights Council;
- Expressed interest to engage more with other Champion countries, including with those who have gone through the Regional Reviews process and to work toward the IMRF;

- Called for the use of various opportunities to advocate for GCM implementation;
- Shared good practices related to institutional architecture, stressing the importance of engaging high-level authorities and the establishment of national bodies geared up towards the whole-of-government approach;
- Highlighted the progress achieved in their national implementation plans, including prioritization of GCM objectives and COVID-19 pandemic-related activities (protection and prevention among vulnerable migrants and communities and addressing the longer-term impact on vulnerable populations);
- Emphasized specific approaches related to GCM implementation through mainstreaming this framework in existing policies/initiatives;
- Considered the opportunity to develop a mapping of the initiatives undertaken by Champion countries with regards to GCM implementation.

The second part of the meeting related to the technical discussion on the draft guidance material *Implementing the GCM: Guidance for governments and all relevant stakeholders*, developed by IOM, OHCHR and UNDP and other members of the Network's core working group on GCM National Implementation Plans. IOM set the scene for this conversation through an introduction to the guidance material, noting its adaptable, flexible design; compatibility with other important initiatives (e.g. SDGs, COVID 19 recovery efforts) and briefly pointing to the main features of its contents.

In her moderation role, the representative of QUNO reminded the audience about the three guiding questions shared ahead of the meeting. She also invited Champions to engage in testing this tool in their national context. In response, Champions:

- Commended the guidance material recognizing it as comprehensive, flexible, practical, and useful;
- Committed to testing the material and revert with more detailed feedback, additional information, and case studies.
- Highlighted the need to have diverse examples (from various regions/countries, and contexts);
- Formulated specific comments to the core working group for the guidance material, including a call for the development of a standard template for best practices and various formats by which to better disseminate the guidance (summaries, visuals, infographics, etc.).

The co-leads of the working group (OHCHR and UNDP), in their concluding remarks, stressed the collective efforts of the whole membership in developing this guidance material and thanked Champion countries for their constructive feedback.

The final stage of the meeting involved a presentation of the [discussion space in the Migration Network Hub](#) (the Global Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub called for in the GCM), to serve as space for Champions to exchange views at national and global levels with the purpose of capacity building to increase knowledge and access to information. This meeting launched an online discussion space on the Migration Network Hub dedicated to the Champions, with the first discussion thread focusing on the above-mentioned guidance material.

This meeting was an opportunity to address how to access the discussion space, register, and post comments/feedback to enable full engagement. The guidance material is available in English, French and Spanish in the discussion space, and the discussion is open until 26 March. Champion countries can request access or nominate participants via unmignet@iom.int and ardiop@iom.int.

As a next step, the Network will liaise with Champion countries on engagement on specific matters, including on the regional reviews, promotion and follow-up on the discussion space, and activities to give more visibility to the GCM implementation, follow up and review.