

Voluntary GCM Review*

Survey conducted to inform the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Bangkok, (10-12 March 2021)

The [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) (GCM) (General Assembly Resolution 73/195) calls for review of the progress of “implementing the Global Compact in the framework of the United Nations through a State-led approach and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders” (OP48), and “invites United Nations regional economic commissions ... to review the implementation of the Global Compact within the respective regions, beginning in 2020” (OP50)

This voluntary GCM review is issued to fulfil this mandate, by enabling member States to provide information on their progress towards the objectives of the Global Compact. The results will inform the preparation of the Asia-Pacific Regional Review of Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to be held at the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Bangkok from 10 to 12 March 2021, the preparation of the 2020 Asia-Pacific Migration Report and related background documentation.

The survey has been informed by the suggested outline prepared by the United Nations Network on Migration ([Proposed framework to assist Member States in the organization of regional reviews](#) – Annex II: Indicative outline for Member States) to review the status of implementation of the GCM at national, subregional, regional and cross-regional levels (General Assembly resolution 73/195, OP48 and OP50). It has been structured according to the four round tables to be organized for the Asia-Pacific Regional Review meeting which correspond to the four round tables of the International Migration Review Forum in 2022 (General Assembly resolution 73/326, OP21).

* Reissued for technical reasons on 17 August 2020.

Please identify the office responsible for coordinating the responses to this survey and include the contact information.

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Please return the completed survey to the ESCAP secretariat by **31 October 2020**, preferably by email (escap-sdd@un.org) with a copy to the Regional Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific (UNRNAP-regreviews@iom.int). Any queries can be forwarded to these same addresses.

Kindly indicate whether you would be willing to share your report at the IMRF/regional reviews site on the UN Network on Migration at <https://www.migrationnetwork.un.org/>. Please contact UNRNAP-regreviews@iom.int if you have a query or suggestion in this regard. =Yes =No

Instructions:

*Please provide answers to the following set of questions (about 500 words per question) as they relate to **clusters of objectives** of the Global Compact for Migration (General Assembly resolution 73/326, para 21).*

If needed, please provide the answers in a separate document and attach it to this survey.

*Please provide **references or links to relevant policy documents in a separate document**, attached to this survey.*

*If possible, please identify any **innovative policies or practices** related to any of the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration.*

*Also, information should be based on **statistical as well as qualitative data**.*

<p>1. Ensuring that migration is voluntary, orderly and regular</p>	<p>GCM Objectives: 2, 5, 6, 12, 18</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin 5. Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration 6. Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work 12. Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening assessment and referral 18. Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competencies
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Please highlight the migration levels and trends, including drivers (if possible), and migrant experiences relevant to this cluster of objectives. *The response could make reference to trends in migration; outcomes of migration; or migrant experiences.*

- Despite having a relatively small population in the South Pacific sub-region, Tonga is one of the countries having the greatest percentage of immigrants in relation to its whole population.
- According to World Migration Report 2000¹, Tonga was among the top four countries of emigration in 2019.
- Large-scale international migration from Tonga commenced in the 1960s, primarily to the cities of Auckland, Sydney, Brisbane, Honolulu, San Francisco, and Salt Lake City. International migration peaked in the 1980s when an average of 1,900 persons left the country every year. This number reduced to about 1,800 people annually between the national censuses of 1996 and 2006.²
- Today, the Government of Tonga does not currently have reliable demographic data regarding the diaspora, its size, or its profile. However, it is estimated that the Tongan diaspora is as large in number, if not bigger, than the population of Tongans residing in country³. The size of the Tongan diaspora is estimated to be 126,540, based on recent census data in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, where the majority of overseas Tongans reside. By comparison, the total population of Tonga is 100,651⁴.
- Remittances make a very large contribution to the Tongan economy, but the relationship is much broader than a financial one. It has important social and cultural dimensions. Members of the diaspora can also contribute to Tongan development through the transfer of skills, through return migration and through investment and trade activity.

¹ https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf

² Taufatofua, Pita. April 2011. "TCP/TON/3302: Migration, Remittances, and Development in Tonga". Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: Sub-Regional Office for the Pacific Islands.

³ Government of Tonga, Ministry of Finance and National Planning. 2015. "Tonga Strategic Development Framework-II 2015-2025". pp 37. <http://extwprlegs1.fao.org/docs/pdf/ton168846.pdf>

⁴ IOM. March 2019. "Migration and sustainable development in Tonga: An overview of the current landscape." International Organization for Migration.

- Labour mobility schemes (predominantly to New Zealand and Australia) are also a feature of the migration and employment landscape. The Government will continue to engage in dialogue with destination countries and with the Tongan community to ensure that these schemes operate in an optimal way and that the interests of Tongans are protected.
- The 2016 census data reveals a continued trend of internal migration—the movement of people from one village to another within the districts and island divisions of Tonga—from the outer islands to the main island of Tongatapu. During the year prior to the census, Tongatapu’s population increase attributable to internal migration is 0.2% (159 persons) of its population, compared to the 1.22% increase during the five-year period. Also, at the time of the census, 17% of the population of Tonga reported a birth place outside Tongatapu⁵. These net gains in Tongatapu’s population contrast with the net losses shown for the outer islands, particularly in Vava’u and Ha’apai. Overall, the outer islands of ‘Eua and Ongo Niua have experienced an increase in the number of individuals moving there from other divisions. In part, this is explained as there has been the relocation of individuals to these islands to take up positions, such as teachers and church pastors. Also, low out-migration from ‘Eua may be influenced by its relative proximity to Tongatapu and its convenient access to the main island via ferry. In the case of Ongo Niua, this outer island’s distance to the other divisions, especially Tongatapu, its high travel costs, and its limited access to transportation may be important factors that discourage out-migration. It is important to note that census data on internal migration show the source of in-migration and the destination of out-migration by division, district and village and, by definition, do not cover overseas migration⁶.

MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- a. Please highlight the concrete policy, legal, and programmatic actions taken by your government to advance these objectives in recent years (in particular since the adoption of the GCM on 10 December 2018).

Examples could include policy reforms undertaken, adoption of new laws, drafting of national-level implementation plans, entering into bilateral/regional agreements, signature/ratification of relevant conventions, engagement in dialogue processes.

The Government of Tonga (GoT) is committed to reducing the risk of displacement due to climate change and natural disasters and it continues to participate in all relevant regional and international fora and negotiations. Moreover, the GoT collaborates with regional and international agencies to promote the policy objectives for a Resilient Tonga by 2035.

⁵ <https://prdrse4all.spc.int/node/4/content/tonga-2016-census-population-and-housing-volume-1-basic-tables-and-administrative>

⁶ IOM. March 2019. "Migration and sustainable development in Tonga: An overview of the current landscape." International Organization for Migration.

Continued work towards these policy goals would benefit from greater consistency in the enforcement of plans across ministries and committees and from improved monitoring and evaluation. In addition, more resources are needed for dedicated climate resilience staff in the outer islands. At present, there is staff in Ha'apai and Vava'u who are funded through the UNDP Pacific Risk Resilience Programme and there is the possibility of getting additional funding to place staff in Niua. However, these positions have yet to be integrated into the GoT's planning and programming.

The GoT currently uses several frameworks, which integrate climate change measures into national policies and planning. However, these frameworks do not integrate climate-related human mobility or migration-related considerations in a systematic manner. The Department of Climate Change will soon revise its key climate change policy documents and it is committed to integrating displacement issues and migration management into forthcoming national planning and strategies.

The GoT supports a number of education and awareness-raising programs around climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction, and early warning. Many of these programs target vulnerable communities along the coastline and in lowland settlements, as well as farmers. Additional funding, however, is required to expand and improve community outreach and information campaigns on climate-related human mobility and displacement. To this end, a project proposal under the Green Climate Fund has been submitted to start a dialogue with vulnerable communities about relocation, as preliminary consultations have shown pushback from communities.

In addition, in this regard, it is also notable that Tonga's education system, though the support of targeted donor programs, is slowly moving towards integrating climate change into the national education curriculum. For example, these programs have focused on integrating climate change concepts into primary and secondary school syllabi, and on providing students in vulnerable communities with climate change information and resources. Despite these initial efforts, there is still considerable work to do in training teachers and in providing adequate resources in order to better integrate climate change concepts into Tonga's formal education curriculum and to teach about how climate change and environmental factors can lead to a range of migration-related outcomes.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (LABOUR)

Improving local and national employment opportunities for the youth is critical concern for the GoT, as un- and under-employment it is a major driver of migration for young people. Civil society organizations (CSOs), such as the Tonga Youth National Congress, engage youth in an array of activities including sports programs, vocational training, and small-scale entrepreneurial activities. However, despite these efforts, youth employment is a major challenge for Tonga's sustainable development, especially for youth in the outer islands.

- b. What are the main gaps identified and challenges faced in addressing these objectives?
These gaps and challenges may include challenges at national, regional and global levels; capacity challenges; data needs; financing and others.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (LABOUR)

- Internal rural to urban migration continues to occur and Government needs a two-pronged strategy to deal with the phenomenon. On the one hand, we need to ensure that areas outside Tongatapu get the infrastructure they need and that employment and investment activity is decentralized. On the other hand, we need to ensure that the spatial and infrastructure planning is geared to deal with the internal migration that is occurring. In the medium term we may also see displacements occurring from sudden onset events such as natural disasters and/or gradual onset events including climate change and sea level rise. These themes are strongly embedded in Tonga Strategic Development Framework II (TSDF II) as well as the Migration and Sustainable development Policy for Tonga.
- The Government does not currently assess the labour market to determine demand for migrant labour. Moreover, there is no data on the number of workers in the various provinces; this has led to labour shortages at peak season in outlying provinces. Similarly, there are no assessments on the effects of emigration on the domestic labour market. There are no programmes to manage labour immigration, such as adjusting visa awards according to labour market demands or considering migrants' skills when assessing visa applications.
- The Ministry of Trade and Economic Development collects some data on the labour market on an ad hoc basis unfortunately this data collection is limited and not published. The data is disaggregated by sex and consists of registration of unemployed persons, seasonal workers (emigrants) and work permit holders (immigrants).
- Access to education is not restricted and student visas are issued to international students. However, some institutions may charge higher fees to international students as it is not regulated according to our Education Act⁷. There are currently no schemes that specifically facilitate international students working following graduation. International students may work during their studies only if this activity is a compulsory element of their course.
- There are restrictions for immigrants accessing the labour market compared with nationals. In order to take up employment in Tonga, a work permit is necessary for foreign residents holding a residency permit, or foreign investors who hold a certificate under the Tonga Foreign Investment Act⁸.
- The National Labour Mobility Summit recommended the development of agent and employer guidelines to inform the seasonal worker programmes, including: improvement of selection procedure, pre-departure orientation, and licensing of labour recruitment agents. The summit also highlighted the need for the development of a programme for integration of returning workers. The Government is not currently promoting the creation of a formal remittances scheme.
- While Tonga legislation⁹ allows dual citizenship with the aim to attract nationals who have emigrated, there are no formal programmes for facilitating the return and reintegration of

⁷ https://tonga.tradeportal.org/media/EducationAct_2.pdf

⁸ https://ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2002/2002-0022/ForeignInvestmentAct_2.pdf

⁹ https://ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1915/1915-0006/NationalityAct_2.pdf

Tongan migrants to their home country. However, since COVID-19 the Government has been involved in repatriating stranded citizens.

MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- The Tonga Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy¹⁰ does not cover specific situations that migrants may face during crises because of their specific status in the country. There is no official process for making exceptions to the immigration procedures for immigrants whose country of origin is experiencing a crisis.
- Tonga established the Emergency Management Office under the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change, and Communication (MEIDEC).
- The Government of Tonga national development strategy captures climate change and disaster risk reductions but does not make specific provisions regarding internal displacement.
- Although Tonga has developed guidelines and standard operating procedures to facilitate evacuations, guidelines and standard operating procedures for temporary and permanent relocation are yet to be developed. Discussions has been initiated with IOM to assist on this matter and haven't received any confirmation yet due to funding.
- There is a need for enhanced provision of social services, such as education and health, in communities affected by disasters, and the areas of relocation. Communities, particularly those in remote areas away from the reach of transport and infrastructure, are at greatest risk of disaster displacement. These "last mile" communities have limited education and/or access to media, especially in local languages, which limits early warnings of disasters and affects preparedness. It was also noted that there is a general lack of understanding of climate change (slow-onset processes, climate variability etc) amongst communities.
- There are no appropriate micro and meso level climate risk insurance or disaster risk financing instruments that individuals, businesses, organizations, cooperatives, sub-national governments or others can access.

Please share some of the results of these actions, effective solutions, best practices and lessons learned by your Government in implementing these objectives.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (LABOUR)

- The Ministry of Trade and Economic Development together with the Ministry of Internal Affairs, hosted the National Labour Mobility High Level Meeting with over 60 participants comprising government officials, parliamentarians and Diplomats. This High-Level Meeting led to the developing a National Labour Mobility Policy which is still underway.

¹⁰ <https://www.preventionweb.net/english/professional/policies/v.php?id=48404>

MIGRATION AND CLIMATE CHANGE

- The Government has various unpublished evacuation/contingency plans regarding inhabited islands. The National Emergency Management Office, under the Government of Tonga, also published Evacuation Centre Guidelines and checklist which list minimum safety requirements for evacuation centres.
- Since March 2020 Tonga National Emergency Management Office has been collaborating with IOM in strengthening its disaster preparedness and response mechanism by building its technical skills and capacities in running Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) humanitarian assessments. This project is still on its early stage.
- In addition, with the support of IOM in May 2020 Government agency and humanitarian partners in working towards establishing a Displacement and Evacuation Centre Management Cluster.
- The Tonga Ministry of Education is also reported to have developed a special curriculum on climate change and natural disaster management that is implemented from primary school to secondary level¹¹.
- In terms of data and information on climate change, the NEMO conducts risk mapping for specific hazards. These risk maps are used by the Government and CSOs for community selection for disaster risk reduction programmes.

MIGRATION AND COVID-19

- In exercise of the powers conferred by Section 37 and 39 of the Emergency and Management Act¹² the repatriation restriction directions were issued that restricted movement within the country. People approved to be repatriated or travel to Tonga will do so under strict conditions imposed by NEMO and the Ministry of Health. All returning citizens and residents arriving from countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19 will spend 14 days in quarantine at a government-designated hotel or facility.

Questions (about 500 words per question 2a, 2b, 2c, 2d - please attach paper and documents, as needed):

¹¹ <http://www.edu.gov.to/divisions/quality-assurance/curriculum.html>

¹² https://ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/2007/2007-0014/EmergencyManagementAct_2.pdf

19. Protecting migrants through rights-based border governance measures

GCM Objectives: 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21

4. Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation

8. Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants

9. Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants

10. Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration

11. Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner

13. Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives

21. Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable

a. Please highlight migration levels and trends, including drivers (if possible), and migrant experiences relevant to this cluster of objectives.

The response could make reference to trends in migration; outcomes of migration; or migrant experiences.

MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

- The GoT has commissioned the drafting of an MSDP for Tonga in accordance with the principles of the GCM to promote safe, orderly, regular, and responsible migration in terms of policy and in practice. To this end, the MSDP represents the mainstreaming of migration into local and national development strategies so that more migration and development linkages are institutionalized. The humanitarian principles, which underlie the GCM and the MSDP, protect migrant rights and migrant safety throughout the migration process and also strengthen the capacity for states to create planned and well-managed migration policies in the future.
- Moreover, at present, labor mobility schemes in the Pacific disproportionately benefit men, who comprise 84% of participants¹³. For example, in the case of the SWP in Australia, in the program's first five years between 2012 and 2017, only 2,378 women participated in the program, accounting for 13.7% of workers. These women had an average age of 34.2 years and 23.6% had a university education, in comparison to male laborers who averaged 32.2 years old and of whom only 6.3% have a university degree¹⁴. Of all PICs, Tonga is one of the two countries that send the highest number of female workers to the SWP. Within the agricultural sector, Tongan women typically engage in the fruit packaging activities, while men work as fruit pickers. Nevertheless, Tongan women have not had equal employment opportunities in the SWP and their participation has remained low due to: (i) local selection

¹³ World Bank. 2017. "Pacific Possible: Long Term Economic Opportunities and Challenges for Pacific Island Countries". Pacific Possible Series. Washington DC: World Bank Group: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/168951503668157320/Pacific-Possible-long-term-economic-opportunities-and-challenges-for-Pacific-Island-Countries>.

¹⁴ Doyle, Jesse, and Stephen Howes. 2015. "Australia's Seasonal Worker Program: Demand-side Constraints and Suggested Reforms." Washington, DC: World Bank Group: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/21491>.

processes; (ii) gendered biases of Approved Employers in Australia as well as local contracting agents; and (iii) gendered perceptions on the role of women and their participation in economic opportunities¹⁵. Consequently, in order to address this gap, discussions are currently underway between participating governments to expand the labor mobility programs to include additional sectors and high-skill jobs, such as tourism, accommodation, and aged care, which could potentially attract more Tongan women.

MIGRATION & PROTECTION

- The Ministry of Customs and Revenue, as well as the Ministry of Police, prioritize security, both along Tonga’s maritime borders and within its social fabric, in their understanding of migration’s link to sustainable development. For both ministries, tackling crime, especially organized crime linked to smuggling, trafficking, and the flow of forged identity and travel documents, is a key consideration.
- In order to improve border security, improved coordination is needed between the Ministry of Customs and Revenue and the Ministry of Police, especially in terms of information sharing. Shared intelligence with international partners would also be beneficial. Moreover, improved technology and additional resources are needed, such as boats to travel to the outer islands where there is currently no Customs office.
- Issues linked to emigration out of Tonga are not considered a concern or otherwise a threat to national security.

b. Please highlight the concrete policy, legal, and programmatic actions taken by your government to advance these objectives in recent years (in particular since the adoption of the GCM on 10 December 2018).

Examples could include policy reforms undertaken, adoption of new laws, drafting of national-level implementation plans, entering into bilateral/regional agreements, signature/ratification of relevant conventions, engagement in dialogue processes.

- The recent approval by Cabinet of the Migration and Sustainable Development Policy developed by IOM on the request of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Government policy relating to the entry of Tongan dual nationals who are travelling on non-Tongan passports is currently under review (in the context of the review of the visa system) with the prospect of making entry formalities clearer and simpler.
- The Government has a high level of capacity to influence the inward migration of non-citizens as it sets the rules and conditions which govern the entry of non-citizens through

¹⁵ Chatter, Priya; Utz, Anuja; Sharma, Manohar; Doyle, Jesse Jon Gerome. 2018. “The Social Impact of Seasonal Migration: Lessons from Australia’s Seasonal Worker Programme for Pacific Islanders”. Washington DC: World Bank Group: <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/206071526448586179/The-social-impacts-of-seasonal-migration-lessons-from-Australia-s-seasonal-worker-program-for-Pacific-Islanders>.

the visa system. It does this primarily by means of legislation – the key pieces of legislation are the Immigration Act and associated Regulations. The highest proportion of non-citizen entrants come to Tonga for tourism or short term business purposes but some intend longer term stays for employment, investment, family reunion or other reasons. In relation to these longer term stays, a number of other pieces of legislation are relevant – the most important being legislation relating to the labour market and foreign investment (Foreign Investment Act 2002).

- The Employment Relations Bill 2020 has been passed in Parliament and on its way to the King for approval
- Tonga has ratified the following:
 - CERD - International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination - 16 Feb 1972 (a)
 - CRC – Convention on the Rights of the Child – 6 November 1995 (a)
- Tonga has signed on the following:
 - CRPD – Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities – 15 November 2007

c. What are the main gaps identified and challenges faced in addressing these objectives? *These gaps and challenges may include challenges at national, regional and global levels; capacity challenges; data needs; financing and others.*

MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

- Tonga also faces numerous challenges in managing its borders. In particular, given Tonga’s porous maritime border, an increase in drug seizures has posed significant security concerns. There is also further investigation needed into how this criminal activity is linked to organized crime rings of deportees residing in Tonga. In addition to drug trafficking, other security concerns include the trafficking of counterfeit goods, particularly medicines, as well as the smuggling of weapons and ammunitions. Popular imports reported through Customs include foodstuffs, construction goods, clothes, shoes, medicines, especially during emergencies and natural disasters.
- Tonga has no border management information system; as a consequence, there is limited data and evidence to inform policy development. The Department of Immigration does not publish data on migration regularly outside of the census.
- The Department of Immigration has a manual system for notifying residency permit holders regarding their permit expiration, and therefore it is unable to detect overstays automatically; a border management information system is required.
- The Department of Immigration’s website outlines various visa options, but does not offer much detail to aid understanding on different visa categories or how to apply. The visa

processing system for seasonal workers going to Australia and New Zealand is yet to be improved.

- Recent cases of breaches of border processes both at the air and sea borders have raised serious concerns about Tonga’s vulnerability to transnational criminal activities to which Tonga needs to continue to work towards effective responses.
- d. Please share some of the results of these actions, effective solutions, best practices and lessons learned by your Government in implementing these objectives.

MIGRATION & DEVELOPMENT

- Primary line functions, such as checking passports and issuing visas upon arrival was transferred from the Ministry of Police to the Immigration Department which is under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- In 2019 The GoV requested IOM’s support in developing an Integrated Border Management Strategy.
- Whilst there are no official inter-ministerial coordination mechanisms on migration, the Department of Immigration has in the past held meetings with counterparts from the Department of Customs and Inland Revenue, the Ministry of Trade and Economic Development and the Ministry of Police.
- It is noted that recent projects managed by PIDC and ACP EU Migration Action have focused on working with the Government of Tonga to modernize Tonga’s immigration legislation and improve the functionality and accessibility of the Tongan visa system. The proposed arrangements include a set of interim measures designed to improve functionality within the existing legislative framework as well as so called “future state” measures which anticipate significant amendments to immigration legislation.

MIGRATION & PROTECTION

- The Transnational Crime Unit (TCU) under the Ministry of Police has designated to focus mainly on transnational issues, including providing assistance to border agencies with specific focus on drug trafficking and smuggling, trafficking in human beings and smuggling of migrants, mutual assistance requests, money laundering and proceeds of crime, terrorism financing, cybercrime of any kind, illegal smuggling of flora/fauna and any other transnational issues of intelligence.
- TCU works in partnership with other national agencies such as Customs, Immigration Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Biosecurity, Tonga Airport Limited, Telecommunication and Radio Regulator, Financial Intelligent Unit and Prosecutions.
- There are no specific anti-TIP trainings provided by the Government of Tonga for police, and other law enforcement officials. However, there is a plan to lodge a request to IOM to

provide training on trafficking and smuggling of human beings for the Customs and Immigration Department officials.

- The Transnational Crime Unit has conducted a few awareness campaigns in the past, however to limited funding none have been conducted recently

Questions (about 500 words per questions (1a, 1b, 1c, 1d - *please attach paper and documents, as needed*):

<p>20. Supporting the integration of migrants and their contribution to development</p>	<p>GCM Objectives: 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22</p> <p>14 Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle 15 Provide access to basic services for migrants 16 Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion 19. Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries 20. Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants 22. Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Please highlight migration levels and trends, including drivers (if possible), and migrant experiences relevant to this cluster of objectives. <i>The response could make reference to trends in migration; outcomes of migration; or migrant experiences.</i> <p>MIGRATION AND COVID-19</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tonga like other Pacific island countries has faced immediate impacts of COVID-19. Lockdowns, travel bans and physical distancing measures in response to the crisis have disproportionately affected migrant workers, who have found themselves stranded unable to return to their place of work or their communities of origin. • Tongan community has a strong presence in Australia and the United States (Salt Lake City and San Francisco) but by and large Tonga’s largest diaspora community can be found in New Zealand. Moreover, there are more Tongans or people of Tongan descent living outside of Tonga than Tonga itself. These diaspora communities are responsible for the majority of remittance flows into Tonga¹⁶. • In terms of impacts on economic security of Pacific Diaspora, communities in Australia and New Zealand have continued to face economic hardship with many Pacific islanders out of work. Tonga migrants for instances who do not qualify for government financial support, in addition to the loss of remittance revenue has impact their household income¹⁷. • Tonga Development Bank has seen the Ave Pa’anga Pau (APP) service record initially very large increases in value sent before the lockdown restrictions were implemented in various countries and after the lockdown restrictions were relaxed. The highest growth was recorded by RSE workers in April 2020. The growth of RSE transfers has tapered off in May, but they continue to record growth in diaspora sent remittances. • The data highlights a significant fall during March over the most severe period of Australia’s COVID-19 lockdown for Tonga – one of remittance receiving countries with significant diaspora communities and PLM worker cohorts. This period saw many 	

¹⁶ IOM. 2020. “Rapid Assessment of the Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 on Labour Mobility in the Pacific Region”, pp. 18. International Organization for Migration.

¹⁷ IOM. 2020. “Rapid Assessment of the Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 on Labour Mobility in the Pacific Region”, pp. 24. International Organization for Migration.

MTO agents closed across the country. Since mid-April, the value of remittances sent to Tonga continued to rise once lockdown restrictions were relaxed in various countries. Values steadily rose during April 2020 as migrant workers and diaspora communities were able to access MTO services that were previously prohibited from operating.

- The data support research findings that diaspora communities are continuing to remit, and that Pacific migrants on extended visas are continuing to support their families. The data for the same period 2019 does not show such a considerable dip and rise in remittances. The figures also demonstrate that migrant workers and diaspora communities are sending more of their savings to assist families who have been impacted by the economic downturn caused by COVID-19¹⁸.

MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

- All immigrants, regardless of their legal status, can access government-funded national health services, including both emergency and non-emergency services.
- All (non-visitor) types of visa allow family members to be granted the same class and length of visa as the original applicant. The 2016 Revised Version of the Immigration Act defines a family member as a partner, dependent child or any other person who, in the opinion of the Principle Immigration Officer, can be treated as family¹⁹.

Please highlight the concrete policy, legal, and programmatic actions taken by your government to advance these objectives in recent years (in particular since the adoption of the GCM on 10 December 2018). *Examples could include policy reforms undertaken, adoption of new laws, drafting of national-level implementation plans, entering into bilateral/regional agreements, signature/ratification of relevant conventions, engagement in dialogue processes.*

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (REMITTANCES)

- Diaspora investment and financial contributions, such as collective remittances, represent a great source of development assistance to Tonga. The diaspora currently contributes towards development agendas and make financial contributions through informal mechanisms, such as alumni groups, churches, and community efforts. The GoT, however, has yet to tap into diaspora's potential for development or investment, either formally or informally. The GoT could benefit from developing a diaspora strategy, which formalizes its engagement with the diaspora to better channel diaspora efforts and financing into national development planning
- The high cost of remittance transfers lessens their development impact and places the financial burden in the hands of migrants. In Tonga, since November 2015, there has been a noticeable rise in the total overall cost of sending money home. Data from April 2017²⁰

¹⁸ IOM. 2020. "Rapid Assessment of the Socioeconomic Impacts of COVID-19 on Labour Mobility in the Pacific Region", pp. 27 & 28. International Organization for Migration.

¹⁹ https://ago.gov.to/cms/images/LEGISLATION/PRINCIPAL/1969/1969-0016/ImmigrationAct_2.pdf

²⁰ Send Money Pacific: <http://www.sendmoneypacific.org>.

indicate that the average cost to send USD \$200 from Australia to Tonga (MTO fee plus the exchange rate margin) is USD \$24.11 or 12.05% of the amount remitted. The fee from New Zealand is only slightly less, costing USD \$23.01 or 11.5%.³⁹ From the United States, the NZD \$330-440 in fees over the labor season²¹. All in all, the costs of sending money to Tonga remains stubbornly high compared to the global average of 7.37%. Moreover, these costs are well above the global target of 3%²² Lowering remittance transfer costs, making money transfer markets more transparent, and informing migrants of their transfer choices are all important development considerations. other main remittance corridor to Tonga, the total average cost of sending USD \$200 is USD \$19.53 or 9.76% in July 2017²³.

- a. What are the main gaps identified and challenges faced in addressing these objectives?
These gaps and challenges may include challenges at national, regional and global levels; capacity challenges; data needs; financing and others.

MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

- There is no provision in the [Immigration Act](#) for the issuance of permanent residency, and the Act states that residency permits may only be issued for a period of one to ten years. Permanent resident visas (up to 10 years) may be granted to those with Tongan descent, those who have resided in the country for the last 12 months, or those willing to invest large amounts in the country.
- The law does not provide for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government only provides protection to refugees and grants temporary refugee status and asylum on an ad hoc basis.
- Although all immigrants have access to public health services, a fee may apply to non-Tongans.
- Tonga is yet to ratify the ILO Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97).
- Tonga is yet to ratify the ILO Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention, 1975 (No. 143)

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (REMITTANCES)

²¹ Government of New Zealand, Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment. 2015. "Remittance Pilot Project: The Economic Benefits of the Recognised Seasonal Employer Work Policy and Its Role in Assisting Development in Samoa and Tonga": <http://www.employment.govt.nz/er/rse/rse-remittance-pilot-project.pdf>

²² Villacres, Daniela. 2017. "Strengthening Diaspora Engagement and Remittances in the Kingdom of Tonga". International Organization for Migration, ACP-EU Migration Action: Technical Assistance Intervention TA/039/2016.

²³ Send Money Pacific: <http://www.sendmoneypacific.org>

- A lot of money is brought back in cash at the end of the contract rather than being remitted. There is a lack of understanding of the security risks, and financial losses that may be incurred by workers who return and wait days for a great FX rate.
- Workers do not have much awareness of how to compare remittance products.
- Senders tend not to change their remittance service provider regularly. Western Union is popular in Tonga. Many Western Union offices provide workers with a card that has their details/ID on it, to address ID requirements. Sending methods are related to the education levels of the sender. Sometimes workers may go an entire season without sending money home because they do not know how to and do not seek advice.
- There is reluctance of sending money via an app based service (send side). This may be explained by the common fear of sending money online or purchasing online and the perceived fraud or scam risks that this entails. **Popular services:** Western Union (most popular service), ‘Ave Pa’anga Pau”, Bank account transfers and MoneyGram²⁴

Please share some of the results of these actions, effective solutions, best practices and lessons learned by your Government in implementing these objectives.

MIGRATION AND INTEGRATION

- Following the TC Harold the Government of Tonga initiated the Building Residential House Scheme. Under the Scheme, the Government facilitated leases and provision of land and building of houses so that displaced households throughout Tonga would have a permanent house.

MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT (REMITTANCES)

- In June 2020 Tonga joined the global calls to action on remittances during COVID-19. The goal of the call to action, [Remittances in Crisis – How to Keep Them Flowing](#), is, therefore, to remove the obstacles that migrants and their families face when sending and receiving money. Many families rely on remittances to finance basic needs such as housing, education, food and medical care²⁵.
- The National Reserve Bank of Tonga has initiated a digital transformation and developed features aimed at helping seasonal workers to send money home. At the end of 2019 Dicigel Tonga launched a mobile money wallet offering cheaper domestic remittances.

²⁴ IOM. 2020. “Pacific Remittance Report”. IOM Internal Document. Unpublished.

²⁵ <https://www.knomad.org/covid-19-remittances-call-to-action/>

Questions (about 500 words per question 4a, 4b, 4c, 4d - please attach paper and documents, as needed):

<p>21. Improving value-driven and evidence-based policymaking and public debate, and enhancing cooperation on migration</p>	<p>GCM Objectives: 1, 3, 7, 17, 23</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies; 3. Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration; 7. Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration; 17. Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration; 23. Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.
<p>Please highlight migration levels and trends, including drivers (if possible), and migrant experiences relevant to this cluster of objectives. <i>The response could make reference to trends in migration; outcomes of migration; or migrant experiences.</i></p> <p>MIGRATION POLICYMAKING - (LABOUR)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no specific legislation regulating the migration of Tongan citizens overseas. However, emigration legislation does exist in regard to the issuance of overseas travel documents. In addition, in 2007, the Nationality (Amendment) Act was passed revoking the ban on dual citizenship. • Labor mobility schemes for Tongan emigrants are facilitated by policy and through two bilateral agreements. The first agreement between Tonga and New Zealand is known as the Recognized Seasonal Employer scheme. The second agreement between Tonga and Australia is known as the Seasonal Worker Programme (SWP), and beginning in September 2018 has been expanded to include the new Pacific Labour Scheme²⁶. <p>MIGRATION POLICYMAKING - (TIP)</p> <p>MIGRATION POLICYMAKING - (CLIMATE CHANGE)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About April 2020, Tonga’s National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) in collaboration with IOM to establish a Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) to be able to conduct post cyclones humanitarian assessment. • Climate Change Division of MEIDECC revised JNAP 2 as part of their work to mainstream climate change into Tonga National Plan • Work is underway by IOM-Tonga in collaboration with Tonga National Plan Division of the Prime Minister’s Office to mainstream migration into Tonga National Plan. As part of this work, IOM-Tonga is working hand in hand with government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) to incorporate migration and climate change related issues into their corporate plan. 	

²⁶ Villacres, D., Fifita, S. 2019. “Migration & Sustainable Development in Tonga: An Overview of the Current Landscape”, pp.16. International Organization for Migration.

Please highlight the concrete policy, legal, and programmatic actions taken by your government to advance these objectives in recent years (in particular since the adoption of the GCM on 10 December 2018). *Examples could include policy reforms undertaken, adoption of new laws, drafting of national-level implementation plans, entering into bilateral/regional agreements, signature/ratification of relevant conventions, engagement in dialogue processes.*

MIGRATION POLICYMAKING - (LABOUR)

- The Ministry of Trade and Economic Development in collaboration with the Ministry of Internal Affairs to develop a Labour Mobility Policy. This policy will be submitted to Cabinet to be approved as a national one.

What are the main gaps identified and challenges faced in addressing these objectives? *These gaps and challenges may include challenges at national, regional and global levels; capacity challenges; data needs; financing and others.*

MIGRATION POLICYMAKING - (LABOUR)

- The Pacific Labour Scheme provide training for trainers and for workers. The worker manual that workers are provided with does not include any reference to remittances. The training manual has only one reference to sending money home, with no detail provided.
- The government does not currently provide financial education for the remittance receiving community in Tonga prior to the departure of seasonal workers.
- Tonga is yet to ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW), 1990²⁷.
- Tonga has not yet developed comprehensive and specific national legislation on migration. In addition, a defined migration strategy is still to be realised, although the new National Migration and Sustainable Development Policy has been approved by the Cabinet to be adopted.
- The formal engagement of civil society and the private sector in agenda-setting and implementation of migration policy could be strengthened.

Please share some of the results of these actions, effective solutions, best practices and lessons learned by your Government in implementing these objectives.

MIGRATION POLICYMAKING & INTEGRATION

- In line with national development priorities, Tonga is working towards equitable development across the country to ensure better access and social development.

Questions (about 500 words per question 3a, 3b, 3c, 3d - please attach paper and documents, as needed):

²⁷ <http://www.paclii.org/>

5. What steps has the Government taken to integrate the **vision and cross-cutting and interdependent guiding principles** of the Global Compact for Migration (see paras 8 to 15 of the Global Compact (see General Assembly resolution 73/195)) into its implementation? How was this accomplished? (please check against the principles that have been integrated)

Guiding principle	Principle has been integrated <input type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no Explanation (please provide explanation on additional paper and attach relevant documentation)
People-centred	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
International cooperation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
National sovereignty	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
Rule of law and due process	<input type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
Sustainable development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
Human rights	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
Gender-responsive	<input type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
Child-sensitive	<input type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
Whole-of-government approach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no
Whole-of-society approach	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> =yes <input type="checkbox"/> =no

Questions (about 500 words per question 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 - please attach paper and documents, as needed and relevant):

6. How is the Global Compact for Migration contributing to realizing the achievement of the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**? What has your Government done to integrate the implementation of the Global Compact objectives into SDG implementation?
7. From the Government's perspective, are there any objectives of the Global Compact for Migration that are of particular importance in the national context? Please name the **objectives that the Government has prioritized and explain why.**

As a participant to the IOM led Pacific Climate Change Migration and Human Security Programme (PCCM-HS), the Government of Tonga has participated in series of national consultations with experts from Government, civil society and faith-based organisations, academia, the private sector, youth representatives and other stakeholders, and is currently an active member of the Regional Policy Dialogues (RPD) with senior ministrel stakeholders from across on the region. During the course of this project the Government of Tonga has noted that Objectives 2, 5 and 18 of priority:

Objective 2: *Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin.*

- The Government of Tonga has a strong focus on internal displacement given the country's exposure to sudden-onset hazards. In terms of the Government's positioning on climate change-climate justice, human rights and the issue of loss and damage are important topics. The government of Tonga is looking to further integrate migration and displacement into these areas of its work.

- In February 2016, Tonga Government launched its National Climate Change Policy which focus towards building a Resilient Tonga by 2035

Objective 5: Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.

- In Tonga, data and evidence needs to support a clear connection between labour migration and climate change adaptation. Anecdotal evidence indicates that during the displacement from outer islands, families with RSE workers were able to use remittances to buy property in Tongatapu, the mainland, and permanently move away from the environmental risks caused by climate change.
- However, most of the labour migration from Tonga is driven by employment opportunities rather than climate change impacts. There are also sensitivities around viewing labour migration as climate change adaptation. Firstly, migrant workers continue to face difficult working conditions at times amounting to exploitation and abuse which calls for improved working conditions in order for labour migration to support adaptation. Secondly, recent statements highlighted that major emitters in the region potentially viewed labour migration as a means to reduce obligations of climate change action.
- The GoT is looking into option on how to link labour migration to climate change adaptation was to include clauses in the contracts of seasonal workers to create an enabling environment for them to spend remittances and other resources on climate change adaptation. Programmes could also be put in place to raise awareness of seasonal workers so that they can channel funding to communities to adapt to climate change.

Objective 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences.

- Migration to and from Tonga is also attributed to access to education. Tonga participates in international schemes with common qualification frameworks. The [Pacific Register of Qualifications and Standards \(PRQS\)](#) was developed with the expectation that if a course is included in the Register it will be recognized across the region.
8. From the Government's perspective, how and to what extent have **regional plans and strategies** incorporated the objectives of the Global Compact for Migration? What are the main achievements, gaps and challenges to existing regional approaches, strategies and implementation plans?
 9. What **methodology** was adopted for completing this voluntary GCM review; how was a whole-of-government approach applied through engaging the various relevant ministries and other sectors of government; what mechanisms were used to engage civil society and other relevant stakeholders for a whole-of-society approach?

Due to COVID-19 and Tropical Cyclone Harold which hit Tonga in April 2020, a Post- Disaster Needs Assessment was led by the Ministry of Finance in collaboration with NEMO, unfortunately, the result hasn't been distributed.

10. Given the outbreak of **COVID-19** which has affected all countries in the region, what challenges has the Government identified in implementation of the Global Compact for Migration as part of the COVID-19 response, and what has the Government done to address the specific situation of migrants and their families?

- Tonga like other countries around the world has experienced the impact of COVID -19. Tonga closed its borders to international travel and restricted movement to and from the country. Following the NEMO's 'Instrument of Directions to Government Agencies relating to COVID-19 the Emergency Management Act, individuals approved by NEMO are able to be repatriated or travel to Tonga under strict conditions imposed by NEMO and the Ministry of Health. All returning citizens and residents arriving from countries with confirmed cases of COVID-19 were quarantined for 14 days at a government-designated hotel or facility.
- More specifically, the GoT gave out a TOP60 million stimulus package to support the country's economy. This includes:
 - Financial support**
 - Ministry of Finance reimbursing employers a part of the wages they pay to their workers;
 - University Students overseas to receive TOP800 per semester for single student and TOP1400 for married student.
 - Support for overseas Tongans**
 - Tonga commenced repatriation of its nationals who had been stranded overseas (Australia, New Zealand, Fiji) on 13 July 2020. Up to date, 1251 Tongans had been repatriated. The last repatriation flight was on 10 December 2020. Those that have been repatriated included public civil servants, expatriates, and RSE workers both from New Zealand and Australia.
 - Negotiation is underway to repatriate stranded Tongans from India, Pakistan, and part of Europe including Tongan sea farers.
 - All passengers underwent pre-departure screening prior to boarding, physical distancing was strictly enforced on-board and in accordance with government protocols, all passengers went into managed isolation on arrival in Tongatapu.
- In response to the combined challenges brought about by TC Harold and COVID-19 the Government of Tonga has developed its response plan which articulates the human social and economic impacts of the compound disaster. The Plan outlines the Government of Tonga recovery strategy in terms of seeking durable solutions for the displaced, restore and strengthen essential social services including travel and repatriation flights for labour migrants, enhance lives and livelihoods and repairs the natural and built environment.

END

Annex.

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration - Objectives for safe, orderly and regular migration (GA resolution 73/195)

1.	Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies
2.	Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin
3.	Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration
4.	Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation
5.	Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration
6.	Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work
7.	Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration
8.	Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants
9.	Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants
10.	Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration
11.	Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner
12.	Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral
13.	Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives
14.	Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle
15.	Provide access to basic services for migrants
16.	Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion
17.	Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration
18.	Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences
19.	Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries
20.	Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants
21.	Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration
22.	Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits
23.	Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration