

**NOTE FOR FILE:** *Webinar for the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia, on lessons learned, good practices, and Network resources to inform the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) implementation*

Thursday, 22 April 2021

14:00 - 17:00 (GMT+4) / 12:00-15:00 (CEST) KUDO platform

## **Objectives of the Event**

This event included a peer-to-peer discussion on the experiences during the various steps and stages of the GCM process. This webinar aimed to facilitate Georgia's active and meaningful participation in GCM processes including a possible participation at the IMRF in 2022. For this purpose, the material covered during the webinar included:

- Presentation by the Network Coordinator on the Migration Network Hub;
- Presentation by the Network Secretariat on lessons learned from the various GCM regional review processes;
- Presentation by a Member State on benefits resulting from GCM implementation at the national level – Government of Sweden;
- Presentation by a Member State on experience about participation in the GCM regional review process, including benefits and next steps - Government of Moldova;
- Presentation of the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund;
- Presentation of the Champion Countries Initiative and specific country experience - Government of Portugal.

## **Opening Remarks**

### **Ms. Sabine Machl, UN Resident Coordinator, Georgia (Co-chair of UN Network on Migration in Georgia)**

- *Welcomed* representatives of Government of Portugal, Sweden, Moldova and Georgia as well as Secretariat of UN Migration Network, IOM colleagues, UN country team and other guests.
- *Outlined* the readiness to provide the government of Georgia with effective, timely and coordinated support for implementing, following up and reviewing of GCM.
- *Emphasized* that migration is reflected as key cross-cutting issue in the Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF 2021-2025).
- *Noted* that the UN is committed make the Network operational and support the government and all partners in this process.
- *Outlined* that Georgia has been experiencing multiple challenges and opportunities – being the country of origin of thousands of migrants that are working and living abroad, many families relying on remittances, Georgia is also a country of transit, a country of hope and a safe haven for growing number of foreign nationals.
- *Outlined* that the COVID-19 pandemic and its after math both have exacerbated the existing inequalities and socio-economic dividing lines and brought an additional vulnerability.
- *Emphasized* the importance of collaboration in order to enable inclusive and sustainable recovery from the pandemic, which can bring new opportunities to all members of the society and ensures that no one is left behind.

- *Outlined* the importance of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) process and UN Network on Migration in terms of finding common solutions to address diverse, complex and shared migration challenges.
- *Thanked* the Government of Georgia for their proactive, advanced, and comprehensive approach in managing migration.

**Ms. Sanja Celebic Lukovac, Chief of Mission, IOM Georgia (Co-chair of UN Network on Migration in Georgia)**

- *Noted* that IOM Georgia has been working closely with the government of Georgia in terms of establishing advanced migration management model, policy, and institutional frameworks as well as new Migration strategy for 2021-2030.
- *Marked* that Georgian migration management model is already reflecting the whole of society and whole of the government approach which are the main features of GCM process.
- *Outlined* the task of UN Network on Migration to provide further support to the government and add value to the system which is already in place. *Noted* that the Network contributes to migration governance in Georgia by facilitating, supporting, and complementing the 2021-2030 Migration Strategy of Georgia.
- *Outlined* that operationalization of Migration Network in Georgia is considered a priority for the spring 2021. Series of events are planned for the Government of Georgia (GoG), UN Country Team (UNCT), and other stakeholders operating in the migration management space in Georgia, in order to promote, review and follow up on the GCM.
- *Noted* the hope that the lessons learned from the countries that already participated in regional review process would be informative for GoG.
- *Expressed* readiness to further provide technical support to the GoG as it considers an active role in the GCM process and within Migration Network, which is established to provide meaningful support to the implementation of Government policies and approaches.

**Mr. George Jashi, Executive Secretary of the State Commission on Migration Issues of Georgia**

- *Thanked* the UN Resident Coordinator office in Georgia and IOM mission in Georgia for the cooperation and assistance in developing migration governance in Georgia.
- *Acknowledged* GCM as an important platform for cooperation, exchanging information, experiences, and expertise about the contemporary migration related issues worldwide.
- *Noted* that since GCM is not legally binding, it provides the flexibility to adapt migration approaches to the local contexts.
- *Emphasized* that the majority of the GCM objectives can be easily identified in actions carried out in Georgia – EU approximation process and through its mechanism such as Association Agreement and its Agenda or long-term tasks under the Visa Liberalization Action Plan, or the recommendations given by the progress report of visa suspension mechanism.
- *Emphasized* that beyond the national dimension, carried action is in line with SDGs – esp. 10.7
- *Emphasized* the importance of receiving updates about GCM implementation and experiences of other countries with similar policy interests that match GoG's aspirations at the national level.
- *Expressed* desire to get more information about the reporting of the first cycle of regional review process in order to identify the nature and requirements of the reporting.

## **Presentation: The Migration Network Hub**

Dr. Susanne Melde, Senior Programme Coordinator, Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, IOM

- *Provided* detailed information about the objectives and functions of Migration Network Hub that is to create a virtual “meeting space” where governments, stakeholders and experts can access and share migration-related information and services. It aims to support UN Member States in the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM.
- Establishing Migration Network Hub was decided based on the findings that information is crucial for actors, but there is an overwhelming amount of unfiltered data, geographic imbalance in the information.
- Migration Network hub has two key features: Community of Practice and Global Knowledge Repository. Under the Community of Practice feature, several discussion forums were created with a possibility to interact with other stakeholders through knowledge and information sharing. Within the Community of Practice feature, Expert database is also available where users can access expertise (780 experts so far) and on-demand support.
- Under the Global knowledge Respiratory feature more than 500 resources, platforms, and portals on migration data and knowledge were created. Content can be submitted by any stakeholders (that will be peer-reviewed).
- Registered users can upload content using an online form via the website: <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/node/add/resource>
- Peer-reviewed content can be filtered by global, regional, national, and local levels by using one platform – to be kept updated in a decentralized approach
- Overview of already conducted events within GCM implementation, review and follow up can be accessed through the platform.
- Structure of Migration Network Hub and UN whole approach was discussed in detail.
- The hub can be accessed via the website: <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/hub>

## **GCM Regional Review: Overview, lessons learned and reporting timelines**

Ms. Azrah Karim Rajput, UN Migration Network Policy Officer

- *Discussed* regional review process and provided overview of the overall framework and identified some lessons learned.
- One of the key features of GCM is that member states are engaged in follow up and review process – this is important to keep the conversation going and to make sure that gaps and opportunities are brought to the global agenda.
- Regional review is the initial phase of global GCM review process where regional platforms, regional institutions, regional consultative processes are established in order to the progress that is made by member states at the regional level.
- UN Migration network proposed the design of the regional reviews as a continuous process with series of discussions, exchange of experiences and knowledge that are intended towards more comprehensive regional collaboration.
- The first 3 regions - Europe, Arab states and Asia-pacific have already started implementing regional review process. In other regions such as Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa regional review

discussions are under way and regional consultative processes as well. The information can be found on the Network website.

- One of the lessons learned withing regional review process is connected to COVID 19 pandemic and impact on migration. Within regional review process state members and stakeholders had a chance to discuss how the Global Compact offers the framework to the states to respond to the impact of the pandemic. Member states and stakeholders stressed that response to pandemic needs to take into account the needs of migrants. Another important aspect that was identified by the regional review process was a key role of municipalities in terms of addressing the migrants needs first during the Covid pandemic. During the pandemic, increased health, and socio-economic vulnerability of migrants, as well as increased discrimination and stigmatization were also observed.
- Governments made positive contribution towards addressing migrants needs, including supporting voluntary repatriation, extension of work permits, visas, etc.
- Regional review process identified the need of additional capacity building activities, issues such as lack of resources for the governments and lack of comprehensive and disaggregated data on migration.
- Member states found the initiatives offered by the Network much needed and called for continuation of support to address the existing gaps.
- The Network finalized its guidance about implementing GCM and its necessary steps that will be rolled out gradually at country network level.
- Currently there are 47 country Networks already established and more are continued to be established. Country Networks are primary entry points for the governments to get support and also for joint programming.
- Details and planned activities about the ongoing capacity building initiatives, including Champion Country initiative and International Migration Forum (IMRD) were presented.
- The International Migration Forum (IMRF) will be held in May of 2022 possibly. More detailed guidance will be shared with the governments after the summer when a new UN General Assembly President will be appointed.
- Country Networks will be a key in ensuring that the governments are informed.

### **Government Experiences in GCM Implementation and Review**

Mr. Kristof Tamas, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Justice, Sweden

- Sweden acknowledges the need for a comprehensive approach in migration that can address the complex challenges globally and maximize the benefits of migration.
- Sweden supports GCM process as it non-legally binding cooperative framework.
- GCM implementation in Sweden is coordinated by the Ministry of Justice which is responsible for national migration policy in Sweden.
- The whole of government approach is incorporated. There are some challenges with prioritizing objectives with various ministries that could go beyond GCM. However, it is ongoing process and the Ministry of Justice tries to contribute to GCM implementation process through facilitating active and comprehensive dialogue with relevant ministries, NGOs and other stakeholders.
- The whole of society approach is accomplished by the government of Sweden and Sweden considers that all 23 GCM objectives have been met by Sweden. Therefore, Sweden plans to focus on

cooperation and capacity building with third countries to contribute to GCM implementation. The cooperation to be implemented through Swedish state agencies (SIDA, Swedish Migration Agency, etc).

- Sweden sees GCM as a concretization of 2030 Agenda. Therefore, already established structures and methods (that was launched for 2030 agenda implementation) will also be used for GCM process.
- Sweden identifies 9 GCM objectives as a key optional priority, including using data and evidence-based policy, minimizing adverse drivers behind involuntary migration, reducing vulnerabilities in migration such as trafficking, improving inclusion and social cohesion, ensuring safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration, etc.
- Therefore, goal of the Ministry of Justice is to facilitate cooperation with relevant stakeholders to reflect GCM objectives in their work.
- Sweden contributes to successful implementation of GCM projects through various channels, such as allocated funds (\$10 millions) to strengthen IOM's internal capacity to coordinate UN Network on Migration in 2019 and 2020.
- Sweden also provided assistance to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). Through its state agencies such as SIDA and Swedish Migration agency, Sweden contributed to GCM objectives in third countries through working with partners and financing development of migration management in Turkey, Serbia, African Union, etc. Moreover, Sweden agencies are also working on issues such as increasing gender sensitivity, poverty reduction, IDPs, refugees, returnees and other vulnerable groups.
- Sweden is in the process of developing its general approach to GCM implementation and will continue meetings with other ministries and stakeholders. Sweden will be delighted to be involved in project-based cooperation under GCM process.

### **Government Experiences in GCM Implementation and Review**

Ms. Olga Poalelungi, Director of Bureau for Migration and Asylum of the Ministry of Interior, Moldova

- *Provided* information on the stages of the adoption of the GCM and the National Voluntary Report.
- *Provided* the Moldovan context in the nexus of migration.
- *Noted* that participation in working meetings organized by the UN to finalize the GCM.
- *Noted* that Moldova reached a national consensus on migration issues and the importance of GCM in an integrated approach to migration management.
- Governmental representatives in Moldova decided at the national level to participate in the adoption of the GCM.
- *Noted* that Implementation / Development of a Voluntary Report on the implementation of the GCM, Adoption of the Report in the National Commission for the Regulation of Migration Processes under the Government of the Republic of Moldova (September 2020) and its submission to the IOM and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- *Stressed* that this aspect of flexibility of GCM and approach is highly appreciated, and it gives Moldova opportunity to set up for national priorities.
- *Noted* that a toolbox for preparing the Voluntary report was developed. Moldova hopes the policies that are developed will be more efficient and noted a need for strengthening coordination.
- Moldova feels that General positive aspects were noted during the development of the Voluntary Report.

- *Remarkd* that Moldova's National Migration Strategy (2021-2030) is under development and plans (2 five-year plans) for its implementation, taking into account the comprehensive approach set out in the GCM, as well as the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum and new EU directives. There is need for IOM expert assistance in assessing the previous Strategy and recommendation.
- **Challenges faced:** As streamline data comes from different agencies - data was not complete all the time. Now Moldova is engaged in establishing a reliable data base when it comes to statistical and administrative data. Also, there was no proper consecutive alignment and coherence of different legal acts – one of the problems is that immigration population did not have enough info on their rights and on opportunities for integration. Noted that gaps in legal toolbox were identified and dealt with unreliable employers.
- IOM developed methodology which provided additional data to the National bureau of statistics.
- Currently the national statistics bureau has been coordinating a data collection process and this project was supported by SIDA.
- According to the 2019-2020 recommendations on achieving the objectives of GCM, Moldova worked on improving the legislation on visa regime on entrance of foreigners – labour migration, migration for purposes of education and on aspects of diaspora engagement.
- **Accomplishments:** GCM Voluntary National Review (VNR) completed; identified strategic guidelines for next year and plans to implement it; comprehensive approach to GCM developed; improved legal status of foreigners; Amendments to the Law on the Legal Status of Foreigners in the Republic of Moldova, the Law on Asylum, several legal acts concerning the integration of foreigners were adopted; Law on State borders amended; Developed state report on the implementation of the GCM.
- *Noted* IOM's involvement in the GCM process and its positive effect.
- *Expressed* high interest in cooperation with Georgia and learning about their experience and what issues they have detected.

### **Presentation: The Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (M-MPTF)**

Mr. Philippe Grandet, MPTF Manager

- First UN inter-agency pooled funding instrument focusing on migration.
- Called for by Member States through the adoption of the GCM (A/RES/73/195).
- Not designed to absorb all migration projects and activities of the UN system, but focuses its support on joint programmes.
- Key features: It is a partnership tool owned by the national governments which are leads in developing and submitting proposals engaging other UNCT members; Aligned with GCM 360-degree approach & guiding principles, People centered, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches emphasized throughout programme cycle, Gender Marker and innovative Human Rights Marker in place, Performance measured at Fund level through the Results Framework; Support to UN reform - Aligned with Funding compact, Key role for UN Resident Coordinators, Contribution to UN coherence; Strengthening linkages between GCM and SDG frameworks; Synergies with UN Network on Migration at country/regional/global levels.
- **Inclusive Governance and Transparency:** Current Steering Committee members: ILO, UN Women, WHO; UK, Germany, Thailand; Morocco, Philippines, Ecuador; Mayors Migration Council, Special Rapporteur on human rights of migrants, Mouvement Africain des Enfant et Jeunes Travailleurs.
- **Thematic Areas:** Cluster GCM's 23 objectives under 5 thematic areas; with each TA linking with relevant SDGs and targets; Ensures balanced support in line with GCM's 360-degree approach; Provides an umbrella of broad areas towards which donors can earmark their funding, if necessary.

- **Joint Programmes and GCM Principles:** Achieving its ambitious objective adopted in December 2019, the Fund has initiated six inaugural joint programmes at the end of 2020, in: North Macedonia; Tajikistan; Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia; the Philippines; Chile and Mexico; and South Africa. These joint programmes, spread across the five thematic areas of the Fund are strongly anchored in the GCM’s 360-degree principle, contributing to addressing challenges of a varied nature in varied contexts. Moreover, in line with the GCM whole-of-society and whole-of-government principles, a great variety of national actors have participated in the design of each of these programmes and will be closely associated in its implementation.
- **Proposal considerations:** Whole-of-society and people-centered approaches need strengthening (most demonstrated strong whole-of-government) e.g. involvement of migrants and affected communities. Multi-country and/or regional projects: Out of 90 submissions, only 9 were multi-country or regional e.g. migration cycle/corridors (sending-destination), borders; Innovation: Specific articulation needed e.g. multiplier effect, scaling/replicability potential, leveraging additional financing, “lessons learned”
- **Funding Status Demand and Supply:** While the initiation of six joint programmes is an achievement, they only begin to scratch the surface. One clear message from the first year of operations, is that there is strong and consistent demand for the Fund, and unfortunately currently, that demand far outweighs the supply. To date, the Fund has received 90 concept notes from over 64 different countries and regions. This demand demonstrates conclusively that the Fund answers a need on the ground. Thirty-three (33) of these concept notes have already been positively assessed, and constitute the pipeline of joint programmes, which illustrates what a multi-stakeholder implementation of the GCM means in a variety of contexts. To date the Fund has received generous contributions totaling over USD 17 million, from 11 Member States (Germany, the UK, Denmark, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Mexico, France, Thailand, Cyprus, Turkey). Unfortunately, the pandemic significantly impacted the Fund’s ability to mobilize additional resources, and this falls short of the original 2020 target of USD 25 million. While recognizing increased financial constraints, rebuilding the pre-COVID-19 momentum is critical for the Fund. It is hoped that the Fund can grow into the vision behind the collective call for its establishment back in 2018: a tool by which to enhance the more effective, principled governance of migration. Recent USD4m commitment from Germany.
- **Key documents:** Operations Manual; Pipeline of joint programmes; Investment Plan; June 2020 Progress report; SC Decisions. All these and many more can be found at <http://mptf.undp.org/factsheet/fund/MIG00>

### **Presentation: The Migration Champion Countries Initiatives**

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

- **Presented the migration context in Portugal:** Migrants are important contributors to Portugal’s social security system, in 2019 they were net contributors in 884,4 million euros.
  - A legal change in Portugal, in 2019, allowed foreigners who have entered the country irregularly and have fulfilled their obligations towards social security for more than 12 months to be presumed legal if they are working (or have a contract for service delivery);
  - The top five nationalities residents in Portugal, in 2019, were: Brazilian, Angolan, Ukrainian, Cape Verdean, Chinese; In the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the MIPEX (Migrant Integration Policy Index), Portugal ranked in MIPEX’s “Top Ten”, for its comprehensive integration policies.

- **GCM:** Portugal was the first UN country to develop a National Plan for the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration (approved by RCM No. 141/2019, of 20 August);
  - The Plan reinforces the recognition, by the Portuguese Government, of the relevance of matters related to the promotion of legal channels for safe and orderly migration, closely linked to strong integration measures, already recognized in other public policy instruments existing in Portugal: (Plans for Immigrant Integration I (2007-2010) and II (2011-2013), Strategic Plan for Migration (2015-2020) and IV Action Plan for the Prevention and Combat of Human Trafficking (2018-2021);
  - The National Plan follows the structure of 23 objectives of the GCM, in order to cover all the relevant dimensions of the migratory phenomenon; 97 measures in total;
  - The Plan is chaired by the member of the Government responsible for the area of the presidency and integrates several members of the Government: Foreign Affairs; Internal Administration; Labor, Solidarity and Social Security, among others, following the whole of government approach.
- **Progress made:** 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 regularisation processes; Immediate allocation of the social security number regardless of the migrants' legal status, allowing them access to social support and facilitating the regularization process; In 2020 Social Security issued 146 thousand new social security numbers through this mechanism and this year until February 26<sup>th</sup> thousand more. Expanded the offices specialized in supporting migrants in finding employment from 11 to 23 now throughout the country; Extended the periods for the concession and renewal of residence permits; Created the new E-Visa Portal, which, for example, allows migrants to consult the status of their visa application electronically.
- **COVID-19 aspect:** In a long-term perspective, Portugal sees regular and sustainable immigration as a very positive contribution to the culture, economy and demography. But because migration should be mutually beneficial, it should be accompanied by good public policies; In Portugal, a whole-of-government approach that combines tailored integration measures with providing easier access to public services and the welfare system is optimal. Regarding the COVID-19, the Portuguese authorities have taken several steps to safeguard migrants and refugees from being in a greater vulnerability situation:
  - Residence permits were extended until the 31 December 2021;
  - Immigrants and asylum seekers with pending applications for residence permits in the Portuguese Immigration and Borders Service (SEF) were considered in a regular situation, and with access to the same rights and supports as permanent residents, including health, social, employment, and housing rights;
  - A simplified procedure of applications for granting and renewal of residence permits was implemented in May 2020;
  - The exemption from user fees in cases of diagnosis and treatment of COVID-19, also applicable to all foreign citizens, irrespectively of their legal status.
- This Semester, Portugal is in charge of the Council of the European Union. Within the EU, the recently published Action Plan on Integration and Inclusion (2021-2027) recognizes the important contribution of migrants to the EU; It also aims at promoting integration and inclusion of people with a migrant background, as a two-way process; We assume integration should be relevant in the European migration



agenda. For that reason, Portugal strongly welcomes this Action Plan and is working trying to raise the awareness of our EU partners.

**Useful links:**

[UN Network on Migration Website](#)

[Migration Network Hub](#)

[Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund website](#)

[Intervention on behalf of European External Action Service and European Commission services](#)

*Annexes : Agenda, Concept Note, Participant List, Bios of Speakers*