



United Nations  
Economic Commission for Africa



## **Report on the Implementation of the Global Compact on Migration in Guinea Bissau**

### *I* Methodology

The Government of Guinea Bissau (GoGB) reviewed the implementation of the 23 objectives of the Global Compact for Migration under the lead of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Cooperation and Communities. The MFA did not create a specific mechanism to this purpose but had bilateral consultations with several ministries to gather information on the progress of the implementation of the different objectives of the GCM in Guinea Bissau. More specifically, the Secretary of State of Communities coordinated the exchange of information with the Ministry of Family, Women and Social Cohesion (namely the Institute of Women and Children), the Ministry of Economy, Plan and Regional Integration, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior (namely the Directorate General of Migration and Borders). It was established a communication channel with civil society organizations (namely,

the NGO Saude Sabe Tene) that are actively working on migration issues to know more about their results and concerns. The review illustrates the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches dimensions that have been considered during all initiatives implemented. Likewise, it has taken a human rights-based, gender responsive and child-sensitive approach into account, in accordance with the GCM's Guiding Principles, paragraph 15 (f), (g) and (h).

The proposed template for the report was sent to the partners with additional key questions on their activities/measures, according to their mandates. Inputs were gathered from the above institutions, and it was elaborated a draft of the report that was discussed in a tripartite meeting with the key government stakeholders on migration governance, i.e., the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Communities, the Ministry of Economy, Plan and Regional Integration and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The International Organization of Migration, as a member of the United Nations Country Team, supported the review process of the implementation of the GCM, by providing assistance to organize and compile the collection of information and in discussing the results and priorities for the future.

## II Policy and Enabling Environment

Following the endorsement of the GCM, the Government of Guinea Bissau reactivated the National Platform on Migration, headed by the Ministry of Economy, Plan and Regional Integration and the Ministry of Interior, to coordinate and follow up on the implementation of several measures and policies which aim to improve migration governance. This National Platform on Migration seeks to enhance horizontal coordination among ministries, being comprised of key government agencies, international organizations, and civil society organizations working on migration issues. The International Organization for Migration was invited to be a permanent member of the platform in 2021, as a consequence of the technical support given to the government of Guinea Bissau on the consultations to the Global Compact on Migration, namely in the development of the national action plan to implement the GCM in Guinea Bissau (2021-2026).

The Directorate General of Regional Integration (under the Ministry of Economy, Plan and Regional Integration) launched, in April 2021, the process of developing the national migration policy. Several consultations have been made under the framework of the National Platform on Migration, not only in Bissau but also in three other regions of the country (Bafatá, Gabu and São Domingos).

### III. Progress on the GCM objectives

The National Action Plan for Implementing the GCM in Guinea Bissau is in the process of being approved by the cabinet as of May 2021. It is based on a two-days national consultation that gathered inputs from central and local authorities as well as from non-governmental organizations. A technical group composed by the key ministries was set up to work in the elaboration of the action plan. The Action Plan has 27 measures organized in six domains: i) Policymaking based on evidence and interinstitutional cooperation; ii) Migration Management and Health Security; iii) Mobility and Movement of People; iv) Trafficking of Persons; v) Protection of Migrants and Communities; and vi) Human and Financial Capital of Migrants.

Moreover, Guinea Bissau has accepted to become a “GCM Champion country” to “share insights, lessons learned and promising practices to contribute to achieving the objectives of the GCM”.

These are the progresses achieved since the adherence of Guinea Bissau to the GCM, as per specific objectives:

### GCM Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies

- Guinea Bissau developed the National Migration Profile in 2019. It presents migration trends and migrant characteristics; the impact of migration on development; governance and policy frameworks; and international cooperation on migration. Data was collected from various statistical and administrative sources, academic research, and interviews with key governmental and non-state actors.
- The Report on Migration Governance Indicators in Guinea Bissau (2021) measures the degree to which national policies facilitate and promote responsible, safe and regular migration. A national consultation was held in 2019 with governmental and non-governmental actors to discuss the draft of the report and collect inputs. The report is as of May 2021 under review.
- A mapping of immigrant associations in Guinea Bissau was carried out by the GoGB, as well as the analysis of data on stocks of ECOWAS citizens residing in GB and areas of activity;
- Two diaspora mappings were conducted in Italy and Portugal in 2019 to inform policy making and adequate the actions of the GoGB to the needs and aspirations of these migrant communities abroad.
- Six decentralized training sessions on data collection and management on trafficking of persons were organized to enhance the institutional capacity of officials from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs (National Guard, the Directorate General of Migration and Borders and the Navy) and civil society organizations (the National Committee for the Abandonment of Harmful Practices, the

Vigilance Committees in the border communities, the Children's National Parliament, AMIC, SOS Talibé).

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

- A research study on Migration, Natural Resources and Gender nexus in Guinea Bissau is being carried out by IOM, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Territorial Administration and the Ministry of Economy, Plan and Regional Integration<sup>1</sup>. The objective of the study is to deepen the knowledge on the relationship between migration and the environmental degradation. A survey was applied by the National Statistics Institute to 1120 individuals (men and women) in the regions of Gabu, Oio and Tombali. The results and recommendations of the study will allow the GoGB to better contribute to the mitigation of environmental drivers of migration, but also to develop initiatives aiming at strengthening individuals, communities and territories' resilience in Guinea Bissau.
- The GoGB, with the assistance of IOM, has been working on youth employment. Between April 2018 and December 2020, 117 young individuals were supported to create small businesses and 434 (and more than 100 women) young individuals have received professional training in 11 areas of work.

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<sup>1</sup> Under the framework of the project “Nexo entre Migração e Recursos Naturais na Guiné-Bissau, com um foco específico no género”.

### GCM Objective 3: Provide adequate and timely information at all stages of migration

- The Directorate General of Communities (DGC) set up in 2020 an Office for Migration Advise to inform potential migrants about the regular channels of migration, the conditions in the countries of destination and the risks of irregular migration. The main objective is to influence the young people who wish to migrate to abandon the behaviors and practices that obstacle their integration in the destination countries. The DGC has also created an Office for Migrant Assistance who provides support in the return and reintegration. It issues the document that certificates that a person is an emigrant and facilitates the customs clearance and tax exemptions of their material to those who definitively return to the country. Indeed, the time spent to clear the customs has decreased due to a negotiation between the MFA and the Ministry of Economy, Plan and Regional Integration and the introduction of a new working procedure.
- National authorities, CSOs and community leaders have been trained on the risks of irregular migration.

### GCM Objective 4: Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation

- The Government organized in 2020 specific missions from diplomatic missions to issue passports to

nationals who were in an irregular situation in Italy, French Guiana and Russia. The diplomatic missions of Guinea Bissau continue to issue passports, through the collection of biometric data and the articulation with the INACEP to print the passports. The Government of GB recognizes the need to strengthen the administrative process that ensures that the nationals who born abroad have their birth registration also in the country of origin. In 2018, the free birth registration was enlarged to children up to 7 years old (before it was only up to 5 years old) in order to guarantee that all people have an identification document. Moreover, since 2019, the GoGB is requiring that students who are candidates of a scholarship to study abroad have a passport with a validity of at least 4 years at the time of emigrating. This was a measure introduced to avoid that students abroad were with passports with expired validity and, as a consequence, with no means to renew the inscription in the universities during the course of the studies.

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

- There are no new bilateral agreements to study abroad, apart from the ones that were already signed between the GoGB and Argelia, Brazil, China, Cuba, Egypt, France, Gambia, Morocco, Portugal, Russia, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey and Venezuela. Notwithstanding this, the agreement with Morocco was reinforced in 2021, increasing the number of scholarships from 50 to 100 each year.



### GCM Objective 6: Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work

- There are no measures in place to guarantee or regulate that the international recruitment process is fair and ethical. Notwithstanding this, the recruitment to the public administration was reviewed with a new code to guarantee a transparent and fair recruitment. Foreign nationals residing in GB can apply for jobs of a technical nature in the public administration.

### GCM Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration

- The GoGB supported, with the assistance of the national NGO AGLUCOMI and the international NGO AIDA the koranic schools, , with a campaign to prevent the dissemination of COVID-19 and the distribution of food and other goods among internal (so called) talibe children that moved from the regions to the capital.
- The GoGB with the assistance from IOM, distributed 10.000 masks to the security forces in the borders and to vulnerable migrants in Guinea Bissau to control the COVID-19 pandemic.

### GCM Objective 8: Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants

- In 2018, the GoGB received requests from families who did not know about their relatives abroad. The GoGB requested the support from the International Red Cross to disclose information about the whereabouts of those migrants. The Government is under the process of establishing a formal partnership with the International Red Cross in order to analyse if there are nationals from Guinea

Bissau among the 1100 deaths of the wreck in the Mediterranean in April 2015. There is an evidence from families of missing migrants in GB that supports the hypothesis that missing migrants from GB can be among the deaths of that accident.

#### GCM Objective 9: Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants

- With the assistance from IOM, the GoGB strengthened the capacity of the judicial police and security forces to detect, investigate and counter the crimes of migrant's smuggling and trafficking of persons.

#### GCM Objective 10: Prevent, combat, and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration

- The GoGB developed and is implementing the National Emergency Plan to Prevent and Counter Trafficking of Persons (2020-2021). The Institute of Women and Children (IWC), under the Ministry of Women, Family and Social Cohesion, is responsible for the coordination and implementation of the plan through the National Committee to Prevent and Fight Against Human Trafficking, an interministerial working group including relevant ministries, international organizations and civil society organizations. A national referral mechanism on trafficking of persons was defined in 2019 and

national authorities and CSOs trained to protect and deliver better services to (potential) victims of trafficking (in referral mechanisms, results-based management and monitoring of cases). Children VoT (more specifically the so called talibe children) have been continuously supported in the form of voluntary return, family tracing, health, education and reintegrated into their communities of origin, with the direct involvement of the IWC and the operational assistance of a national NGO (AMIC). 405 so called talibe children were returned and reintegrated in GB from 2018 until now. IWC also participated in the baseline study on knowledge, attitudes, practices and behaviors in relation to so called talibe children in Guinea Bissau, led by the international NGO Manitese with the support from the national NGO AMIC. In this framework, 200 individuals (100 men and 100 women) from the main regions of origin of the children were surveyed. The results were discussed in a meeting of the National Committee to Prevent and Fight Against Human Trafficking.

- The GoGB is developing its first national policy on the protection of children and a plan of action that includes the prevention and combat against trafficking in persons.
- Two meetings were organized with 32 koranic teachers and imams with the support from the Association from Koranic Teachers to discuss the phenomena of children being forced to beg. The GoGB is indirectly supporting the 964 talibe children under the responsibility of these koranic teachers.

**GCM Objective 11: Manage borders in an integrated, secure, and coordinated manner**

- The GoGB, with the support from IOM, had developed the following activities: capacity building of migration and health authorities in health surveillance under the International Health Regulations (IHR); construction and refurbishment of temporary isolation posts at the entry points (PdE) of Burumtuma (Gabu), Pirada (Gabu), Cuntabane (tombali), Bubaque International Airport (Bijagos), Fulmori (Gabu), and Djegue (Cacheu); delivery of 6197 materials and equipment for prevention and control of infection (water reservoirs, thermometers, leaching, soap, alcohol gel, gel dispensers, etc.); placement of physical distancing markers at Osvaldo Vieira International Airport; preparation of Standard Operating Procedures of Information, Notification, Isolation and Initial Management of cases of COVID-19 and other diseases with epidemic potential in the land and air points of entry of the country.
- The government is equipping the international airport and the Ministry of Internal Affairs will deploy fixed teams to the airport that are receiving training of specialization in the border control. More equipment to and training to detect falsified documents is in need.

#### GCM Objective 12: Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment, and referral

- The GoGB strengthened in 2019 the medical committee responsible to analyze the cases that need a medical evacuation under the framework of the bilateral agreement with Portugal. The members of the

medical committee were replaced to guarantee a more independent and transparent process.

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs promotes regular meetings with the ambassadors to accelerate visa issuances.

### GCM Objective 13: Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives

- There are no detention centers for migrants and the Directorate General of Migration and Borders does not detain foreigners in an irregular situation. Instead, the common practice is the imposition of a penalty and the referral to regularize their legal situation in the country.

### GCM Objective 14: Enhance consular protection, assistance, and cooperation through the migration cycle

- Set up of a new consulate in Portugal to address the needs of protection and assistance of Bissau Guineans living abroad.
- Guinea Bissau has also signed an agreement on cooperation on migration issues with Cabo Verde in 2021. The bilateral agreement between Guinea-Bissau and Cabo Verde includes: 1) strengthening cooperation and exchange of experience on consular services and management of emigrant communities 2) promoting the creation of legal frameworks to facilitate the integration and regularization of Guinean and Cape Verdean nationals with an irregular migratory status in respective countries, including through flexible requirements and special measures 4) ensuring, to the extent

possible, the provision of consular assistance and protection to nationals of both countries in territories where only one party has diplomatic or consular representation.

#### GCM Objective 15: Provide access to basic services for migrants

- Migrants have access to COVID vaccination but there are no measures to specifically reach this potential vulnerable group. The nationality of the people vaccinated is not collected and this hampers the analysis of identifying if migrants are being covered or not (and organize adequate measures to overcome potential inequalities in their access).

#### GCM Objective 16: Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion

- The GoGB, with the assistance of IOM, has been working on youth employment. Between April 2018 and December 2020, 117 young individuals were supported to create small businesses and 434 (and more than 100 women) young individuals have received professional training in 11 areas of work. Moreover, the GoGB supported 5 projects of diaspora associations to contribute to the professional training and entrepreneurship with young individuals as beneficiaries of the capacity building initiatives.

#### GCM Objective 17: Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration

- The GoGB, with the assistance of IOM, organized a training for twenty journalists on the thematic of migration, to ensure an adequate language and a broader knowledge on the dynamics of migration in the country to the media.
- The GoGB recognizes the need to raise awareness on migration and the difficulties to succeed abroad in an irregular situation in the communities of origin of the returnees. In many cases, migrants have debts to families and communities who made investment on their migration and the absence of results and the increase of poverty may create tension in the relationships between returnees and their communities of origin. In light of this, 30142 individuals were reached by awareness raising activities events to combat irregular migration and mitigate its risks and to discuss with the communities of returnees the need for a positive and non- conflictual reception and reintegration.

#### GCM Objective 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualification, and competences

- Diplomas granted with the support of scholarships are now printed in Guinea-Bissau and there is a pre departure language training for all who obtain scholarships to study abroad in a non-Portuguese speaking country.

#### GCM Objective 19: Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries

- With the aim of engaging members of the diaspora in the national development process, Guinea-Bissau encourages the return of Guinean nationals living abroad. Under Declaration No. 38/86 on the Code of Emigrants, any citizen abroad returning to Guinea-Bissau to stay can benefit from fiscal and customs exemptions of personal goods. As of May 2021, the government is reviewing the Code of Emigrants to guarantee an easier access to some benefits by the emigrants that will be discussed with diaspora communities abroad and taken to the approval of the Cabinet afterwards.
- The government is taking advantage and participating in the Platform <https://diasporagb.org/>, created by the NGO Instituto Marquês de Valle Flôr, to have a direct dialogue with the migrant associations mapped during this process in Europe and willing to contribute with their actions to the development of their country of origin. Diaspora consultation have been organized with the participation of the Secretary of State of Communities and diplomatic missions from GB abroad.
- In 2018, the GoGB signed a protocol with the NGO Saude Sabe Tene, based in Portugal, to support the organization of missions of Guinean doctors and nurses in the diaspora, as well as other health professionals from other countries mobilized by the diaspora, to reinforce the capacities of the main central hospital in Bissau. 11 missions were organized between 2018 and 2021 (as of May).
- The GoGB recognizes the participation of the diaspora in Guinea's Bissau development through the traditional remittances, the social contributions to communities of origin and the transfer of skills to key national institutions. Nonetheless, this contribution is yet to be explored and has often been



spontaneous, without any framework to enhance its effectiveness in the mid and long term. To overcome this, the GoGB will develop a diaspora engagement strategy in the coming months to guide diaspora initiatives where they are needed the most and where they could be more sustainable.

#### GCM Objective 20: Promote faster, safer, and cheaper transfer of remittances, and foster financial inclusion of migrants

- Although remittances represent the second largest source of foreign exchange and they corresponded to 9.5 per cent of GDP in 2020, there are no schemes to encourage or formalize these flows. Nonetheless, in response to a government request, a study on remittances, funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and carried out with the technical assistance of IOM, was finalized in 2020. Moreover, the GoGB organized meeting with commercial banks in the country to know more about their products and services to the diaspora and discuss ways to facilitate the transfer of formal remittances to Guinea Bissau.

#### GCM Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration

- The GoGB organized a mission to Libya in 2019 to facilitate the identification of stranded migrants and

to issue laissez passer to those without identification documents to accelerate the support of their return to Guinea Bissau.

- Moreover, the GoGB has been assisting the returnees in their reintegration in the country. 694 (680 men, 14 women) returning migrants were assisted with post-arrival reception assistance. Nearly half of these migrants received a financial support to start individual, collective and community projects.

#### GCM Objective 22: Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits

- The GoGB is negotiating a bilateral agreement with Cabo Verde to guarantee the equal treatment and portability of social security rights for nationals of both countries.

#### GCM Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly, and regular migration

- In 2018, GB adhered to the United Nations International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW). Moreover, Guinea Bissau is an active participant of the meetings under the framework of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa and the Global Forum on Migration and Development.

#### IV. Means of implementation

- The GoGB has been supported by the international community (UN agencies and international NGOs) to implement activities for a safe, regular and order migration. The state budget dedicated to these objectives shall be reinforced.

## V. Next steps

- The government recognizes that in a context of scarce data, all efforts to gather more data on migration and its impact, to analyze the situation, and to develop policy recommendations are welcome. The GoGB is willing to use the next Census (planned for 2023) to gather more information on migration. One priority of the GoGB is the expansion of regular pathways for migration and labor mobility schemes and opportunities at the regional and global level. In addition to approve in the short term the National Plan of Action to implement the GCM in Guinea Bissau and the Migration Governance Indicator report, and to guarantee durable migration management outcomes, the GoGB recognizes that more action is needed to:
  1. gather the lessons learned from public policies and project's implementation,
  2. measure progress against results-based indicators consistent with country needs and planning,

3. reinforce capacity building initiatives to government officials on migration governance, management and relation with the SDGs,
  4. decrease the high rotation of technical staff in the public administration,
  5. foster the dialogue with migrants for better-informed policies and enhanced service delivery and to
  6. learn from the experiences of other countries.
- The GCM should be disseminated and explained to stakeholders to enable them to understand and appreciate their roles and contributions towards achieving the objectives of the GCM in facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration in respect to protection and promotion of migrants' human rights.
  - The results of the review of the implementation of the GCM in Guinea Bissau will be disseminated in the National Migration Platform and a session on migration governance and management will be organized in the National Parliament.