

The Skills Dimension in Realizing Opportunities for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

High-level Event at the Regional Review of the
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for the UNECE region

Monday, 11 March 2024, 13:30-14:45
Palais des Nations, Conference Room XXIV, Building E
Geneva, Switzerland

Hosted by
the United Nations Network on Migration

Background

The [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\)](#) represents a landmark agreement acknowledging that well-governed migration serves as a major force for positive change. It fosters cultural exchange, enriches societies, stimulates growth and innovation, and saves lives. Member States recognized these benefits through the GCM which also serves as a crucial instrument for enhancing migration governance and strengthening the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.

In particular, Member States committed to “adapt options and pathways for regular migration in a manner that facilitates labour mobility and decent work reflecting demographic and labour market realities”¹ as well as to “promote demand-driven skills development to optimize the employability of migrants in formal labour markets in countries of destination and in countries of origin upon return, as well as to ensure decent work in labour migration”.² These commitments were re-emphasized in the [Progress Declaration](#) from the [2022 International Migration Review Forum \(IMRF\)](#).

The [Regional Reviews](#) constitute a pivotal opportunity to assess the progress made by Member States and partners in fulfilling these commitments and to help shape the outcomes of the upcoming IMRF scheduled for 2026.

In this context, the [Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration](#) will convene a High-level Event on Regular Pathways for each Regional Review to be built on at the IMRF. The aim is to explore potential measures both within and between regions, and to harness skills as a foundation for the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration that are mutually beneficial for all and that contribute to sustainable development.

¹ A/RES/73/195 (GCM Resolution), paragraph 21:

<https://undocs.org/Home/Mobile?FinalSymbol=A%2FRES%2F73%2F195&Language=E&DeviceType=Desktop&LangRequested=False>

² GCM Resolution, paragraph 34

Regional Context

The Member States of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) region represent major origin and destination countries of intra-regional and inter-regional migration. They reflect labour market and demographic trends, perceived opportunities available in the region to migrate as well as adverse drivers of migration such as decent work deficits, absence of social protection, and impacts of climate change among others. Other factors such as technological advancements, economic fluctuations and growing inequalities contribute to a complex migration landscape, one in which structural and emerging skills shortages and imbalances becomes more evident. Some countries are addressing such shortages through a combination of active education and employment policies and measures to facilitate labour migration.

However, the ability of people to access rights-based regular pathways for migration to countries of the region varies significantly, resulting in some migrants making use of irregular pathways, exposing them to significant risks of violations of human rights, decent work deficits, and even death. Others, meanwhile, are able to migrate regularly, but through pathways which deny them fundamental human and labour rights.

These governance failures do not only affect migrants, but also impact wider societies, contributing to inaccurate perceptions of migrants as a “threat”, limiting their potential contributions to development, and rewarding unscrupulous business practices. In particular, these governance failures limit the recognition and skills development of migrant workers, contributing to skills mismatches and underemployment, despite the strong demand for such skills in key sectors such as healthcare, care work, technology and digital services and emerging green sectors.

With a view to continue enhancing the safe, regular and orderly movement of people within, to and from the region, it is critical for Member States to collaborate and systematically implement and adopt rights-based pathways for migration which enable effective recognition and development of migrants’ skills.

Efforts are being made by Member States, social partners and other stakeholders to address these gaps. This event will therefore provide an opportunity to facilitate a more systematic approach to the nexus between migration, rights and skills, including through enhanced multi-stakeholder skills mobility initiatives that connect migrants to decent work opportunities.

The High-Level Event

The event will convene high-level representatives of UNECE Member States, regional organizations and stakeholders to showcase advancements in facilitating pathways for regular migration and address persistent challenges, with a focus on advancing skills development.

In particular, this event will aim to promote an exchange of good practices, collect valuable recommendations and insights, and provide recommendations on how to further enhance skills

development, matching, recognition and transfer, including the anticipation of skills in demand, to promote pathways for regular migration towards achieving sustainable development.

The event will pinpoint specific opportunities for leveraging good practices including international cooperation and joint action based on international human rights and labour standards to inform future policy and practice, including for the next IMRF. This will also include discussions on how the UN Network on Migration can bolster its support to Member States and other stakeholders in establishing, expanding and enhancing pathways for regular migration, by fostering stronger partnership and promoting innovative solutions including through the [GCM's capacity building mechanism](#), and by harnessing skills as a foundation for the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.

The guiding questions for this event are the following:

- What are the main components or steps in the development of rights-based, regular pathways for migration?
- What partnerships do governments need to set up in developing and enhancing regular pathways for migration?
- What are the main opportunities and challenges in developing rights-based regular pathways for migration or enhancing the flexibility and availability of existing pathways?
- What are the good practices in the UNECE region and how could these serve in building the capacity of other regions?
- In the current context of digitalization and green transition, what would be some of the skills that would need to be prioritized in the near future?
- In the context of enabling regular pathways, which measures are necessary for the identification of skills in demand and also anticipation of skills needed in the near future?
- In the context of implementing regular pathways, which challenges or obstacles related to skills (be it certification, recognition, etc.) are most prevalent and what could be good practices in addressing these?

Format

The event will be held in person and will be webcasted on the UN Web TV for remote viewing at: <http://webtv.un.org>. Participants are invited to indicate their interest to deliver an intervention to GCMReviewsUNECE@iom.int, until Thursday, 7 March. Refreshments will be served.

Agenda

Monday, 11 March 2024, 13:30 – 14:45	
13:30-13:40	Opening
	Introductory remarks by Ugochi Daniels, Deputy-Director General for Operations, IOM, on behalf of the Coordinator of the Network
13:40-14:40	Discussion
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • H.E. Jana Costachi, State Secretary of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Moldova • H.E. Pilar Mendez, Ambassador at Large for Migratory Issues at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, EU and Cooperation, Spain • Stefanie Scharf, Head of Division G20, Policy Issues of Displacement and Migration, Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development of Germany • Mercedes Garcia Perez, Head of Division for Migration and Human Security, Deputy Director for Global Agenda and Multilateral Relations, External Action Service, European Commission • Stephanie Winet, Head of Stakeholder Engagement, International Organization for Employers <p>Interventions from the floor</p> <p>Moderator: Ugochi Daniels, Deputy-Director General for Operations, IOM, on behalf of the Coordinator of the Network</p>
14:40-14:45	Closing
	Gladys Cisneros, Chief, Labour Migration Branch, ILO