



GCM Champions' Countries Initiative - GCM Talk **Building a balanced/evidence-based narrative around migration and migrants**

Concept Note

Context

Promoting an evidence-based and compassionate narrative regarding migration is becoming increasingly vital as it significantly shapes public perceptions towards migration issues. Educating and sensitizing the general public on migration is crucial to counteract the dissemination of misinformation and debunk myths that perpetuate harmful and inaccurate beliefs about migrants. These misconceptions have a detrimental impact on migration governance, particularly in respecting the human rights of migrants during the whole cycle of human mobility, underscoring the urgent need to propagate truthful and empathetic messages.

The International Organisation for Migration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees have consistently and rightly argued that narrative accounts of migration both guarantee and threaten the rights of the world's 281 million migrants. Negative narratives, which are unfortunately increasing, are amplified by hate speech and convey selective, biased, dangerous and dehumanising representations of migration. They insidiously infiltrate political movements and media around the world, forging public opinions that are suspicious, hostile and aggressive towards migration and migrants. Therefore, it is important to promote a balanced and evidence-based narrative highlighting the positive contributions of migrants to development.

It is the shared responsibility of governments as well as various key stakeholders to emphasize realistic and humane perspectives to uphold migrants' rights and acknowledge their invaluable contributions to sustainable development, while also acknowledging the obstacles they encounter. A different narrative must be forged and disseminated as an alternative, and it must permeate all social strata: media and social networks, political and cultural fora, schools and universities. The story of migration and migrants must be told differently. They must restore the human face of migrants, reconsidering them as unique individuals who have chosen, and often been forced, to leave their homes in search of a better future elsewhere. This concerted effort ensures not only the respect of migrants' rights but also fosters a more comprehensive understanding of the complex dynamics around migration.

The GCM and the construction of a positive discourse on migration

Adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2018, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is the first inter-governmentally negotiated agreement at global level, with a holistic and comprehensive approach towards international migration governance and international cooperation. In its Objective 17, it calls on States to eliminate all

forms of discrimination and promote an open and evidence-based public discourse on migration and migrants in partnership with all parts of society, that generates a more realistic, humane and constructive perception in this regard.

In the same perspective, the Champion Countries have always emphasised, notably on the occasion of the Ministerial Meeting held in Rabat in March 2022, the need to promote balanced narratives on migration, in order to confront the xenophobic, racist and intolerant trends that permeate international public opinion, distorting their visions and questioning their very humanity.

GCM Champions mobilised to improve the narrative on migration

Launched in 2020, the Champion countries community has grown in size and dynamism, playing a critical role in demonstrating support for the GCM – now standing at 34 Member States across the globe. The Champion countries work to raise awareness and strengthen understanding around complex migration dynamics, notably by exchanging and sharing insights, lessons learned, and promising practices aiming to accelerate actions to achieve the GCM objectives in a spirit of solidarity and trust.

The 34 GCM Champions are called upon today to spearhead the fight against stereotypes and negative narratives on migration and to serve as a model for the international community in shaping and disseminating a more balanced narrative, using a pacified vocabulary, and in adopting inclusive and rights-based migration policies where migrant does not rhyme with problem, nor migration with threat.

Themes such as the role of the media and social networks in deconstructing and reconstructing the narrative on migration, the importance of mobilising all public stakeholders to promote a positive narrative in order to prevent all forms of discrimination against migrants and diasporas, and to support activities carried out at local level to promote mutual respect, particularly during electoral campaigns, by emphasising the added value in social, economic and cultural terms of migration and migrants in host countries.

The role of collecting and disseminating statistical data in the emergence of a better understanding of the migration issue and migrant populations, as well as its importance for the development of public policies based on facts, far from shortcuts and negative stereotypes, are all spheres in which the mobilisation of Champion countries could make a difference.

Objectives/participants

This online event will mobilise a large number of participants: policymakers (preferably at capital level), religious and local leaders, academia, NGOs, Media, Social Networks, Students, Migrants/Refugees –it will aim to serve as an open platform for discussions around the challenges of deconstructing/reconstructing the narrative on migration and migrants and establishing robust mechanisms to counter xenophobia, racism, and all forms of discrimination.

It will provide an opportunity to identify a list of good practices likely to inspire public policies and stakeholders in the migration agenda, to determine priorities and identify courses of action to be taken without delay to meet this universal challenge.

Logistics:

The GCM Talk will take place, online, the 14th of February 2024 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm (CET). Interpretation will be available in French, English and Spanish.

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Agenda:

<u>Opening Remarks</u> 2:00 – 2:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ismail Chekkori, Director of Global Affairs –Morocco • Ms. Julissa Landaverde, Director of Analysis and Partnership of Human Mobility – El Salvador • Mr. Jonathan Prentice, Head of UN Migration Network Secretariat
<u>Theme: Promoting a positive narrative about migration and migrants in the media and on social networks</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What strategies can be implemented to highlight the diverse contributions of migrants to society through storytelling and positive portrayals in the media? - What role can community engagement and grassroots initiatives play in shaping a positive narrative about migration, and how can the media amplify these voices? - In what ways can social networks be harnessed to share uplifting stories of successful migrant integration, fostering empathy and understanding among diverse audiences? - Are there successful examples from different regions where media and social networks have effectively contributed to shaping a positive narrative about migration, and what lessons can be learned from these experiences? 	
Time	Panellists (5min)
2:20 – 2:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Samalí Dinarte, Communications Director, MFA El Salvador • Ms. Carolina Hernandez, Migration Unit Coordinator at the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights • Mr. Salaheddine Lemaizi, co-founder of the independent digital media ENASS and President of the Moroccan Network of Migration Journalists (RMJM). <p>Open floor</p>
<u>Theme: The discourse on migration in political debate and public policymaking</u>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How does the framing of migration issues in political discourse influence public perception, and what impact does this have on policymaking? - How do political debates on migration intersect with other policy areas such as economic development, national security, and social welfare, and how can policymakers integrate a holistic approach? - How can communication strategies be framed to enhance and convey benefits of migration, both economically and culturally, to counterbalance negative narratives and promote more informed public discourse? 	
Time	Panellists (5min)
2:50 – 3:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ivan Gaitan, Counsellor for Migration Affairs, Mayor of Bogotá, Colombia • Ms. Carolina Gottardo, International Detention Coalition (IDC): • Ms. Stella Opoku-Owusu, Executive Director at African Foundation for Development (AFFORD)

	Open floor
<u>Theme: Promoting positive migrant stories</u>	
<p>- What strategies can be employed to highlight the diverse achievements, talents, and contributions of migrants in various fields through storytelling and media coverage?</p> <p>- What role can cultural and arts initiatives play in promoting positive migrant stories, and how can creative expressions be leveraged to challenge stereotypes and foster empathy?</p> <p>- To what extent do educational programs and curricula incorporate positive migrant stories, and how can educators use storytelling to promote understanding and tolerance among students?</p> <p>- Are there successful models or case studies from different regions where initiatives focusing on positive migrant stories have had a significant impact on public perceptions and policies?</p>	
Time	Panellists (5min)
3:20 – 3:50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Stephanie Leung, Director, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada • Mr. Gerardo Pérez, Diaspora and Development Director, MFA El Salvador • Ms. Mirela Stoia, International Organisation of Employers. Co-lead Labour Migration Portfolio • Ms. Jenna Hennebry, Wilfred Laurier University and Gender+Migration Hub • Ms. Ayaat ElHabbal, Journalist and Producer <p>Open floor</p>
3:50 – 4:00	<p>Closing remarks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ismail Chekkori, Director of Global Affairs –Morocco • Ms. Julissa Landaverde, Director of Analysis and Partnership of Human Mobility – El Salvador

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