

3RD EXTENDED MEETING OF THE
UNITED NATIONS COUNTRY NETWORK ON MIGRATION

CONCEPT NOTE

INTRODUCTION

Globally, migrants represent approximately 3 per cent of the world's population¹, but they produce more than 9 per cent of global GDP, some USD 3 trillion more than if they had stayed at home (IOM and McKinsey & Company 2018). Migration has always been directly linked with prosperity, innovation, and sustainable development in our globalized world. With new pressures such as economic inequalities, conflict and climate change, migrations pressures have been growing rapidly around the world. This requires international cooperation and improving migration governance to turn the challenge of migration flows into an opportunity for individuals, communities and economies of all countries.

Governments have determined to make an important contribution to enhanced cooperation on international migration in all its dimensions, and on 19 December 2018, the UN General Assembly adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), which rests on the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and amongst others the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The GCM is a non-legally binding, cooperative framework and the compact builds on the commitments agreed by Member States in the New York Declaration for Migrants adopted in 2016 (GCM, para. 7) and it reaffirms the sovereign right of States to determine their own national migration policy, as well as their prerogative to govern migration within their jurisdiction, in conformity with international law (GCM, para. 15).

¹https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/publications/pdf/popfacts/PopFacts_2017-5.pdf, accessed on April 8, 2021

Belarus as a country of origin, transit and destination for migrants recognizes the need for well-managed migration and has played an active role in the adoption of GCM and further its implementation and follow-up.

Following the GCM adoption, the UN Network on Migration² (UNMN) was established as a collaborative community of UN entities and partners coming together to ensure effective and coordinated system-wide support to Member States in implementation, follow up and review of the GCM.

At the national level the UN Country Network on Migration (UNCNM) was established in Belarus in 2020 with the purpose of ensuring effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to the Government of Belarus in the implementation, follow up and review of the GCM commitments.

The Network has gathered twice and discussed the overview of GCM objectives and its linkages to SDGs, the Country Network on Migration objectives and action plan, progress on the GCM implementation and reporting in Belarus; also implementation of the national migration priorities in the context of the sustainable development of Belarus and activities of public associations on migration issues and their work with migrants.

With the support of the UNCNM, Belarus has submitted two the Country Voluntary National Reviews/Reports on the GCM implementation. The first review was conducted in 2020 on the regional level (UNECE), while the second one was submitted in 2022 on the global level on the eve of the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) held in New York. Both reviews are publicly available at the website <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/>

Besides, the UNCNM is also active on awareness-raising activities and events. On International Migrants Day, 18 December 2020, the UNCNM representation organized an online event for students of the Belarusian State University to reach out to the youth through the art of cinema with a view to creating a positive narrative towards migrants. The students watched a documentary film about migration and had an opportunity to ask their questions on the topic to the UNCNM panel.

² <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/>

On International Migrants Day in 2022, UNCNM members (UNCT) actively participated in promoting the “*I am a Migrant*” campaign through sharing their videos and telling their stories of migration/movement, their challenges on the way as well as their contribution into the development of the host countries.

Now when Belarus hosts thousands of vulnerable migrants and refugees, the UNCNM is ready to further support the government of Belarus in implementation of the GCM, its review and follow-up for the benefit of migrants and the society. In particular, using the whole of society and whole of government approaches in advancing the evidence-based policy and development including all dimensions and aspects of migration, promoting regular pathways for migration including provision of alternatives to detention, regularization programs, access to healthcare and education. In practical terms, promoting the expansion of inclusive referral mechanisms particularly vulnerable groups such as migrant women, migrant families with children, elderly migrants, refugees, trafficking victims and etc.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The 3rd extended meeting of the UNCNM in Belarus will outline the nexus between migration and development, GCM and SDGs, provide an overview of the recent developments in the migration sphere in Belarus, and present best practices of migration data management to promote effective implementation, review and follow-up of the GCM. The expected outcomes of the meeting include:

- The Government of Belarus shares the findings of GCM VNR as well as the progress on implementation so far and next steps on implementation and review.
- Participants of the meeting are aware of the best practices on migration data as well as on MGI (Migration Governance Indicators) and discuss its potential implementation in Belarus to strengthen reporting;
- Irregular migration overview is presented and way forward discussed with participation of all partners and stakeholders.;
- UNCNM and stakeholders agree on next steps to support the implementation, follow-up and review of GCM as well as on related topics discussed;

- UNCNM serves as a platform for dialogue and discussion of migration and related matters, co-chaired by RC and IOM

DATE and VENUE

11 April 2023, Ballroom, Renaissance hotel (Dzerzhinsky Avenue 1E, Minsk).

PARTICIPANTS

Members of the UNCNM, government, civil society partners - up to 30 participants.