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COMMISSION DE LA CEDEAO
COMMUNAUTÉ ECONOMIQUE DES ETATS DE L'AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST

**ECOWAS Consultations on the Implementation of the Global
Compact for Migration (GCM)
for the International Migration Review Forum 2022**

Abuja, Nigeria, Transcorp Hilton / Virtual

12th - 14th October 2021

FINAL REPORT

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is an effort, led by the UN Member States, to set out a range of principles, commitments and understanding among the UN Member States regarding the governance of migration in all its dimensions. It outlines a comprehensive international cooperation framework on migration and human mobility. It is grounded in the existing global normative framework and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. ECOWAS and its Member States were among the 164 Member States that adopted the GCM at the United Nations General Assembly on 19 December 2018.
2. Firmly embedded in the 2030 Agenda, the GCM, with its ten (10) guiding principles and twenty-three (23) objectives, offers a 360-degree approach and a cross-cutting vision to global migration governance. It further presents a global framework to strengthen the human rights of migrants and recognizes their positive contribution to sustainable development.
3. To ensure its effective implementation, Member States called for a voluntary follow-up and review process that includes the participation of all stakeholders, the migrants themselves, and the United Nations system. This is in recognition of migration's complex and multidimensional nature and the need to provide a whole-of-society approach in the review process. Therefore "A whole-of-government, whole-of-society and whole-of-UN system" became the central tenet of the GCM review process.
4. In this regard, the ECOWAS Commission, with the support of the African Union Commission, Member States of ECOWAS, the Regional UN Network on Migration for West and Central Africa and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) as Coordinator of the UN Network on migration, organised a formal consultation with ECOWAS Member States on the GCM implementation on 12th - 14th October 2021.
5. This formal review and consultation meeting was preceded by an online informal multi-stakeholder consultation held on 31st May 2021 with participation drawn from relevant stakeholders, including diaspora organisations, academia, media, child and youth-focused organisations and civil society organisations. This then sets the broad outline for the conducted of this Ministerial formal consultation on the GCM.
6. The Ministerial formal consultation and review process of October 12th - 14th 2021, was therefore, the first opportunity for the ECOWAS Member States and other relevant stakeholders to reflect collectively on initial results, review processes and explore ways to advance the implementation of the GCM. In addition, the review and consultation process offered ECOWAS Member States an opportunity for their voices to be featured in the outcome document on the planned global review in 2022. Furthermore, it provided a rare chance to detail sub-regional discussion on migration governance

following the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, it identified ways to adapt the GCM as a guiding framework for improving regional migration governance and process.

7. The overall objectives of the review meeting:
 - a) Provide a brief overview of the regional review process and the timeline towards the 2021 Regional Review Conference for Africa and the 2022 International Migration Review Forum;
 - b) Provide the ECOWAS Member States and stakeholders with an opportunity to take stock and review recent developments, progress made, and challenges on implementing the GCM in West Africa;
 - c) Provide a space for experience sharing, exchange on best practices and stocktaking by the ECOWAS Member States and stakeholders with regards to the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM;
 - d) Assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the implementation of the GCM and the governance of international migration;
 - e) Provide the ECOWAS Member States with an opportunity to optimize their engagement with and contribution to the upcoming Global Review.

II. ATTENDANCE

8. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Member States listed below:
 - Republic of Benin;
 - Burkina Faso;
 - Republic of Cabo Verde;
 - Republic of Côte d'Ivoire;
 - Republic of The Gambia;
 - The Republic of Ghana;
 - The Republic of Liberia;
 - Republic of Niger;
 - The Federal Republic of Nigeria;
 - The Republic of Sierra Leone;
 - The Republic of Senegal;
 - The Togolese Republic.



9. Representatives of the following organizations also attended the meeting:
- International Organization for Migration (IOM);
 - African Union Commission;
 - United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC);
 - European Union (EU);
 - Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC);
 - Freetown City Hall;
 - Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO);
 - United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA);
 - Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
 - United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA);
 - The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS);
 - United Nations Development Programme (UNDP);
 - United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF);
 - World Health Organization (WHO);
 - United Nations Volunteers (UNV);
 - The University of Ghana;
 - Mixed Migration Center;
 - The African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY);
 - Media Foundation for West Africa.
10. Ministerial participation included the Honourable Ambrose Dery, Minister of The Interior, Republic of Ghana, Minister of Labour and Social Security, Sierra Leone, Alpha Osman Timbo and Mme. Clarisse Merindol Ouoba, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs in charge of Regional Integration and Burkinabes Abroad.

III. OPENING SESSION:

11. The consultative session, held from 12th - 14th October 2021, began with opening remarks from Ms. Aissata Kane, Senior Regional Advisor for Sub-Saharan Africa,

International Organization for Migration (IOM), Mr Albert Siaw-Boateng, Director of Free Movement of Persons and Migration, who represented the ECOWAS Commission, Dr Fatima Waziri-Azi (representing Nigeria's Federal Minister for Humanitarian Affairs, Disaster Management and Social Development and ~~Representative of the Government of the Federal Republic of Nigeria~~ and Honorable Ambrose Dery, Minister of The Interior, Republic of Ghana.

12. The speakers stressed the importance of the consultation process on the GCM. They affirmed its usefulness as a credible global instrument and commitment to supporting safe, orderly, and regular migration. They further pointed out the benefit of the review process in ensuring that international policies are not just affirmed, but that commitments are demonstrated by evidence-based implementation outcomes.
13. Dr Fatima Waziri - Azi welcomed participants on behalf of the Government of Nigeria and the Honourable Minister, Sadiya Umar Farouq. She highlighted the importance of international partnership for the implementation and review of the GCM. She recalled that migration is at the center of national and regional development and has been and is a source of the exchange of values, origins and identity. She noted that the consultation is a platform to share experience, best practices and strengthen international cooperation and partnership.
14. The scene was set by Ms Sophie Nonnenmacher, Deputy Regional Director of the International Organization for Migration, Regional Office for West and Central Africa who outlined in detail the GCM vision and its ten (10) guiding principles and twenty-three (23) objectives. She further laid out the GCM implementation and governance framework, the role of the states and governments, with UN system-wide support through the UN Network on Migration at global, regional and national levels including the important role of local authorities and non-state actors. She noted that the GCM provides for voluntary review process at national, regional and continental and global levels with recommendations and implementation experiences and lessons-learned feeding into subsequent levels which will serve as input in the global review scheduled for 2022.
15. She then described the regional review process, the series of consultations within the African continent on the GCM and updates on GCM implementation in ECOWAS as well as the outline for the global review process. On regional review she pointed out the following key messages from the engagement; (a) that the Global Compact offers crucial opportunity in many areas, including progressing governance on all relevant levels, (b) that migration is vital for the development of the continent with the potential to transform it, strengthen the economies and societies, (c) strengthening international, regional, and bilateral cooperation on migration are important to finding solutions to

common challenges and drawing up and implementing bilateral and multilateral agreements are important tools to support the process, (d) Accurate migration data remains a challenge to the implementation of the GCM. However, on ECOWAS and the GCM, she outlined the following results; **(i)** that twelve (12) UN Networks on Migration have been established in Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone **(ii)** that National Voluntary GCM Review Reports have been received from the following countries, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, **(iii)** that the following four (4) ECOWAS member States - Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Nigeria and Senegal are among the twenty-one (21) countries that volunteered as members of the Global Champion Country initiative for the GCM.

16. She further emphasized that the 3-day formal consultation with ECOWAS is an exercise envisaged to prepare the region for its optimal participation at the International Migration Review Forum scheduled for mid-May 2022. That the review forum serves as the primary intergovernmental global platform to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all aspects of the Global Compact, including as it relates to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.
17. She urged ECOWAS Member States to utilise the opportunity presented by this consultation process to articulate clear sets of messages, commitments, achievements and lessons-learned on the implementation of the GCM ahead of the global review. Finally, she sketched the outline for the International Migration Review Forum as including **participation at the highest political level** at UN GA, **preceding multi-stakeholder consultation** in 9th May 2022, **four roundtables and policy debate** and **plenary sessions** and then the **declaration of outcomes and progress**.
18. Mr. Albert Siaw-Boateng, Director of Free Movement, ECOWAS Commission as well as Mr. Mamadou Goita, Rapporteur from the ECOWAS Multi-Stakeholder Consultations on the Regional Review in Africa, welcomed the opportunity for ECOWAS preparation as well as the necessity of ensuring that the voice of the region is heard during the global review. Both stressed the importance of the work being done by ECOWAS in partnership with IOM with regards to the GCM and the efforts to update key regional instruments on migration governance such as the ECOWAS Protocol on Free Movements of Persons and Services. Both speakers reaffirmed ECOWAs readiness in preparation of the global review process.
19. Mr. Kameldy Neldjingaye, Deputy Regional Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Regional Office for West and Central Africa, in his remarks,

stated that migration is essential for development while also making appropriate interventions on the need to involve CSO's and victims of crimes, including victims of trafficking in persons, in actualizing the objectives of the global compact on migration. He stressed the importance of protecting migrant children and their rights and observed that migrant children are prone to abuse and violation of rights, which have been compounded by the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. He set the tone for the round table discussions anchored on the GCM objectives of countering the smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons while protecting the human rights of migrants and providing access to justice to victims of crimes, in line with international laws and standards.

20. Mr. Andrea Ori, co-chair of the UN Regional UN Network on Migration for West and Central Africa and the regional representative of OHCHR, the UN Human Rights agency, recalled the importance to keep the human rights of migrants at the centre of the discussions – in line with the spirit of the GCM. All migrants are entitled to the full range of human rights guaranteed under the international instruments. Implementing the GCM means ensuring the full enjoyment of their rights before, during and after their migratory movements. Maintaining this migrant-centred approach ensures that the rights of migrants are at the heart of any attempt to define ‘safe, orderly and regular’ migration and that all migrants, including those in vulnerable situations can enjoy their basic rights.
21. The various speakers provided detailed background to the development of the GCM and overview of the state of the GCM review process and reiterated the principle of partnership in managing migration challenges as well as reaffirmed the commitment to the ideals of GCM shared vision that migration benefits all. They also outlined a broad overview of new and ongoing policy developments by ECOWAS, particularly the ECOWAS Regional Migration policy and the role of Member States in driving the implementation.

IV. ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS: PRESENTATIONS & DELIBERATIONS

Roundtable 1: Free movement and other ways to enhance regular pathways and predictability in migration procedures within the ECOWAS Region. This theme focused on reviewing the progress in implementing GCM objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18. The session was

Chaired by Honorable Ambrose Dery, Minister of The Interior, Republic of Ghana, with the following panelists:

-Mr Abdou Dan Elhadji, Ministère de l'Intérieur et de la Décentralisation, Point Focal de la Politique Nationale de la Migration, Niger.

-Dr. Anthony Luka Elumelu, Principal Programme Officer and Mr Ismaila Dangou, Programme Officer, Free Movement Directorate, ECOWAS Commission.

-Mr. Felipe González Morales, UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants.

22. Following the presentations and interventions, these key contributions were noted:

- i. Implementation of tariff reliefs on essential products, goods, and services should be applied uniformly by all Member States;
- ii. The need to implement the GCM with a shared vision that migration benefits all;
- iii. The recently completed Africa review reaffirms the commitment of the continent to the GCM;
- iv. Lessons learned should drive the implementation of the GCM and capitalize on these exchanges to shape human mobility'
- v. That the GCM reinforces a shared approach in harnessing opportunities in human migration;
- vi. That the strength of the GCM is in its affirmation of the principle of international partnership in managing migration challenges;
- vii. The GCM as a landmark multilateral commitment encourages a shift in focus to the social and economic benefits of migration;
- viii. The GCM offers opportunity for concerted international response in addressing structural difficulties driving migration;
- ix. That the GCM implementation requires a human rights-based approach that is gender-responsive and child-sensitive;
- x. The panelists expressed appreciation for the GCM champion countries in the ECOWAS region.



Roundtable 2: Migration movements and protecting migrants through integrated border management measures. This focused on the following GCM objectives; 4, 8,9,10,11,13 and 21. The roundtable was Chaired by Dr Amadou Diaw, Advisor Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Senegalese Abroad, with the following panelists:

- Ms. Goge Maimouna Gazibo, Liaison Magistrate and former Head of the Anti-TIP Agency (ANLTP), Niger.
- Prof. Joseph Teye, Centre for Migration Studies, University of Ghana.
- Mr. James Boyon, African Movement of Working Children and Youth.

23. Following the presentations and interventions, the following vital contributions were noted:

- xi. Member States recognized the constructive role, partnership, and leadership of the IOM with ECOWAS on the implementation of the GCM;
- xii. Members affirmed the importance of shared responsibility as well as accountability in the implementation of the GCM;
- xiii. They stressed the need for standardizing and adopting a common border management system and procedure within the region;
- xiv. They acknowledged that the introduction and adoption of ECOWAS biometric ID and Passports represents an essential tool in support of regional migration governance and the implementation of the GCM;
- xv. They stressed the imperative of aligning the implementation of ECOWAS Protocol on Free movement to respond to the specific provisions and objectives of the GCM;
- xvi. They highlighted the importance of managing irregular migration and combatting trafficking and crime through national policies and legislative framework in line with the objectives of the GCM;
- xvii. They proposed that assisting returnees in ensuring their reintegration upon return will stem the cycle of remigration;
- xviii. The harmonization of travel documents such as passports, ID cards, vehicle registration and drivers' license were stressed as critical to effective regional migration governance;



- xix. They emphasized the need to domesticate the GCM through national migration policies and action plans as well as evolving national social and economic development programs;
- xx. The challenges of birth certificates as a precondition for the issuance of ID cards and passports was noted as a significant constraint for rural border communities with regards to effective migration governance;
- xxi. The need to differentiate between forced and voluntary migration was highlighted within the context of addressing the drivers of migration in the region;
- xxii. It was suggested that addressing underlining social and economic vulnerabilities should be at the core of combatting human trafficking;
- xxiii. The panelists stressed the need to establish a sound governance framework to drive national migration policies of Member States without which policies would remain unimplemented;
- xxiv. They further proposed that the National migration Policy requires a sound mechanism to follow through on implementation with clearly defined agreed targets by Member States;
- xxv. The training of border personnel on standards and protocol, especially regarding migrant rights, is essential to reducing abuses of migrants and eliminating the culture of criminalization of the migration process;
- xxvi. Language barriers, especially at border communities, pose a critical challenge and Member States recognize the importance of addressing this inhibiting factor to the implementation of the GCM;
- xxvii. Border post should provide designated points for processing migrant children as an essential response to child protection and enforcement of child rights;
- xxviii. They finally requested that closed land borders be opened and covid-19 standardized guidelines introduced as an integral component of border management.

Roundtable 3: Inclusion, non-discrimination, prevention of stigmatization of migrants, and role of diaspora for development within the ECOWAS region. This focused on reviewing the progress in implementing GCM objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22. The session was Chaired by



Carlota OLIVEIRA SANCA, Chef of Cabinet, Guinea Bissau, with the following panel discussant(s):

- Ms. Gloria Mueogbunam, Head of Migration, National Commission for Refugees Migrants and Internally Displaced Person Offices, Nigeria.

24. Following the presentations and interventions, these contributions were noted:

- xxix. Member states stressed the critical importance of information and sensitization of national communities on the GCM and the vital economic role of migrants within national development processes and promoting positive attitudinal change among communities regarding migration and migrants;
- xxx. They suggested including migrants in evolving national social sector programs to eliminate discrimination and address vulnerabilities;
- xxxi. They emphasized the need to localize the GCM through national policies and practices;
- xxxii. The panelist proposed using national migration dialogue platforms to address critical technical aspects of the GCM;
- xxxiii. They suggested reviewing existing instruments such as labour laws and national diaspora policies as well as establishing Standard Operating procedures and guidelines in the areas of Return and Reintegration of migrants;
- xxxiv. They acknowledged the importance of developing pre-departure instruction guides/manuals for migrants ahead of travels to provide them with informed knowledge regarding migration requirements of the intended country of travels;
- xxxv. They stressed the inclusion of diaspora contribution in sustainable development plans to harness the critical assets among this category of migrants;
- xxxvi. They proposed training of foreign Affairs counsellors in diplomatic missions to assist vulnerable migrants;
- xxxvii. They highlighted the importance of establishing an office for the management of diaspora affairs in most foreign ministries and promoting diaspora investment summits;



- xxxviii. They suggested establishing migrant advisory centers at national and local levels;
- xxxix. They stressed the need to introduce migrant social protection guidelines and assistance, including psycho-social support as essential elements in migration governance.

Roundtable 4: Impacts of Migration in countries of origin, transit and destination, and the need for international cooperation within the ECOWAS region. This round table focused on reviewing the progress in implementing GCM objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23. Participants reflected on challenges, good practices, lessons learnt and discussed potential solutions to the obstacles hindering the achievement of those objectives. The Chair for this session was Mr. Charles Nwanelo, Deputy Director Humanitarian Affairs, Nigeria, with the following Panel discussants:

- Issiaka Konaté, Director General, Ministry of African Integration and Ivorians Abroad, Cote d'Ivoire.
- Mr. Musa Camara, Director Gambia Diaspora Directorate, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Gambians Abroad, Republic of The Gambia.
- Mr. Samson Bel-Aube Nougbohoue, Pan-African Institute for Statistics, African Union.
- Ms. Aurélia Donnard, West Africa Manager, Mixed Migration Centre West Africa.

25. Following the presentations and interventions, these key contributions were noted:

- xl. Member states are aligned to the 2030 SDG's goals alongside other medium- and long-term plans;
- xli. States are committed to optimizing diaspora activities as diaspora remittances have continued to contribute to the economy of Member States. They affirmed migrants' rights as an essential component in formulating national and regional migration policies. And further suggested that States ensure access for all migrants to all social services, including decent housing as well as provide all migrants access to legal documents and respecting their rights and making it possible to regularize all migrants without any discrimination;
- xlii. They highlighted the issue of legal protection for migrants and training of migrants on their rights to life and social services and decent work.



V. RECOMMENDATIONS & CONCLUSION

26. Following deliberations, the ECOWAS Member States made these specific recommendations for consideration on the way forward in the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration:

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS:

- I. Africa has a rich history of migration, and it is essential to focus efforts on talking to migrants instead of talking about them;
- II. There is a need to harmonize laws on free movement across Member States and increase cooperation with CSO's to promote awareness of free movement. In driving this goal, the press and media are critical partners that should not be overlooked;
- III. ECOWAS should consider setting up a national agency for employment for Member States that will respond to migrants' employment needs;
- IV. Every strategy deployed to ensure safe and orderly migration must be hinged on evidence-based facts and data provided by Member States;
- V. Strengthen collaboration between ECOWAS Member States and ECOWAS Commission in order to advance GCM objectives. This could be done using MIDWA as a platform to exchange regularly on good practices, challenges, opportunities focusing on recommendations on joint way forward;
- VI. Ensure a better understanding of ECOWAS Free Movement Protocol and other migration related policies by Member States and the population by supporting broader communication on regional initiatives and outreach at country level;
- VII. Ensure the implementation of the free movement protocol at all borders: air, sea and land through training of government officials and border operatives;
- VIII. Align national priorities with regional priorities through tripartite dialogue to be organized at national level bringing together Representatives of the ECOWAS Commission, IOM, and national authorities;
- IX. Develop and share with Member States toolkits for implementing awareness raising campaigns in order to prevent irregular migration and foster a better understanding on the free movement protocol and migration policies;



- X. Maintain a dialogue through MIDWA on working towards reopening borders in a safe manner in the context of COVID and measures to be put in place at points of entry;
- XI. Support the adoption of ECOWAS passports in Cabo Verde where it is not in place and work together in combatting fraudulent documents and identity fraud;
- XII. Carry out an assessment on how security issues impact the GCM implementation;
- XIII. Support the development of a network of policy experts and immigration lawyers that would provide support to ECOWAS member states in developing national policy and laws including on combatting smuggling and trafficking, prosecution of offenders and access to justice of victims;
- XIV. Carry out a review on best practices in the region for capturing data on missing migrants and death at sea and in deserts;
- XV. Explore the possibility of the creation of a Capacity Building Center for ECOWAS through MIDWA;
- XVI. Review MIDWA procedures for participation to ensure a whole-of-government approach and high-level discussions;
- XVII. Assist the ECOWAS Commission to increase its capacity to support member states in the implementation of the free movement protocol, through training and sharing of expertise at country level;

SPECIFIC OBSERVATIONS BY MEMBER STATES

- a) The need to provide special training for border agents on GCM governance and implementation;
- b) The urgent necessity to establish a joint complaint desk at the borders to facilitate migrants reports on disaffection and support response by relevant ECOWAS country border personnel;
- c) Organize annual ECOWAS member states meetings to monitor progress on the GCM implementation;



- d) Organize capacity building sessions for security and defense forces for a better implementation of the Free Movement Protocol within the context of the GCM principles and guidelines;
- e) Encourage Member States to elaborate National Migration Policy that draws inspiration from sub-regional migration policy framework;
- f) Fully operationalize MIDWA, and ensure the optimum functioning of the Working Group (During the last MIDWA in March, Senegal and Sierra Leone wanted to lead the MIDWA WG on climate change, for instance) to enhance the capacity of ECOWAS member states to address critical issues regarding the implementation of the GCM;
- g) Enhance migration data sharing within ECOWAS for effective migration governance;
- h) Strengthen the cooperation framework on the diaspora to facilitate their political, social, and economic contribution in the ECOWAS;
- i) Establish a platform of engagement with migrants for a better understanding of their perspectives on migration issues;
- j) Put in place standardized mechanisms for data collection and sharing within the ECOWAS to support effective border management and governance of migration process;
- k) Standardise migrant holding centers/hosting processes in response to social protection and migrants' rights;
- l) Organize regional meetings on remittances to understand better how to harness the latent assets of diaspora citizens;
- m) Conduct specialized training for officers involved in the enforcement of migration policies, especially at the borders;
- n) Prioritize the mental health of migrants as an integral element in border protocol and procedures;
- o) Strengthen cooperation and coordination between institutions and countries especially in the area of migration data sharing;



- p) Establish Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's) and manuals for border officials;
- q) Prioritize strengthening of global cooperation and partnerships on GCM implementation;
- r) Prioritize the remittances of migrant women.

VI. CLOSING:

- 27. The ECOWAS Director of Free Movement of Persons and Migration thanked the Ministers, Member States representatives, and stakeholders for their attendance and beneficial contributions. He also mentioned that the Member States could send in additional recommendations beyond the session.
- 28. Lastly, the Minister of Labour and Social Security, Sierra Leone, Alpha Osman Timbo, expressed his appreciation to the ECOWAS Commission, stakeholders and collaborating partners for the arrangements made to ensure the success of the sessions.

Done in Abuja/Virtually, on the 14th day of October 2021



Mr. Tei Konzi
Commissioner for Trade, Customs and Free Movement
ECOWAS Commission

Hon. Ambrose Dery
Minister of The Interior, Republic of Ghana