



# MEETING REPORT

## INFORMAL CROSS-REGIONAL DIALOGUE OF GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION (GCM) CHAMPIONS: PEER EXCHANGE, IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOW UP

Date 28-30 November 2023 – The Labadi Hotel, Accra, Ghana



**United Nations  
Network on Migration**  
*Working Better Together*



**Global Compact  
FOR Migration**

## Meeting Background and Opening Scene

The Informal Cross-Regional Dialogue of GCM Champions took place from November 28th to 30th in Accra, Ghana. This unique dialogue was organized to foster peer exchange, implementation strategies, and follow-up initiatives among nations championing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM).

The two- and half-day global dialogue, gathering representatives from 28 Champion Countries across four regions (Africa, Arab States, Latin America and Europe), aimed to accelerate the implementation of the GCM. The primary objectives included creating a shared understanding of the challenges and opportunities, fostering a unified approach among participating countries. The event sought to enhance migration research, data collection, and dissemination, aligning with GCM Objective 1 and commitments in the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) Progress Declaration. Furthermore, the dialogue aimed to ensure migrant protection through strengthened cross-regional collaboration, particularly in response to smuggling, trafficking, and preventing loss of life.

It furthermore endeavored to deepen insights into protecting the rights of migrants, with a focus on marginalized communities, fostering cross-regional collaboration. Additionally, the event facilitated the exchange of strategies for integrating the GCM into national planning, encouraging harmonized approaches among Champion Countries.

## Opening remarks

- Video message from Ms. **Amy Pope**, IOM Director General and UN Network Coordinator
- Remarks by Honorable **Ambrose Dery**, Minister of the Interior, Ghana
- Remarks by Mr. **Charles Abani**, UN Resident Coordinator's Office, Ghana
- Remarks by the Co-chairs of the Regional UN Network on Migration for West and Central Africa (WCA):
  - Mr. **Christopher Gascon**, Regional Director for WCA, IOM
  - Mr. **Robert Kotchani**, WARO Regional Representative, OHCHR



## Ghana National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) Launch

A presentation was made by Mr. Dominic Afriyie Agyemeng, Head of Migration Unit, Ministry of the Interior, Ghana for its launch at the onset of the meeting. The NCM will be a key step in the institutional set-up needed to strengthen the coordination and coherence of the government's work on migration. The NCM will lay the foundation for the establishment of a migration commission as provided for under Ghana's National Migration Policy.

### SESSION I: SETTING THE SCENE

#### Panel interventions:

- Mr. **Jose Roberto**, Permanent Mission of the Republic of El Salvador to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva
- Mr. **Sofiane Kadmiri**, Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva
- Ms. **Maureen Kiambuthi**, Government of Kenya
- Mrs. **Maria do Carmo Dos Santos**, Scalabrini Center for Migration Studies (CSEM)

The opening session aimed to set the stage for the two- and half-day event, bringing together representatives from 28 Champion Countries across four regions, along with various stakeholders. The primary objective was to provide a comprehensive overview to guide the discussions throughout the upcoming dialogue. Session, 1 was moderated by Ms. **Kristina Mejo**, IOM Senior Regional and Policy Liaison Advisor.

The representative of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of El Salvador to the UN, Mr. Jose Roberto presented the Champions Initiative, involving 28 Champion Countries, aimed at fostering solidarity at regional and global levels with a focus on human rights and comprehensive migration solutions. The initiative seeks to achieve the objectives outlined in the GCM and garner support to accelerate progress. Multilateral collaboration is emphasized as crucial to address migration-related issues and promote sustainable solutions. The representative of the Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco shared key findings from the Rabat Champions meeting, highlighting thematic recommendations such as data sharing, adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, and accelerating responses to climate change. The significance of engaging various migration stakeholders effectively, including civil society organizations, local governments, and the private sector, was underscored.

The representative of the Government of Kenya, shared insights from the Nairobi sub-regional dialogue, emphasizing the importance of a whole-government approach to GCM implementation. Topics such as climate change, drivers of migration, and existing frameworks like the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and the Paris Agreement were addressed. She stressed the need for improved migration data collection, analysis, and dissemination and highlighted discussions on diaspora and labor migration, focusing on skills transfer, remittances, and the migration-development nexus. The significance of regional reviews, involving all levels of government and society, was emphasized, along with calls to reinforce pledges to the MPTF, a unique pooled funding instrument dedicated to GCM implementation.

Mrs. Maria do Carmo dos Santos Gonçalves, from the Educational Association of São Carlos, Brazil, emphasized the importance of engaging all the society in migration discussions. The need for inclusive dialogues and enhanced collaboration and knowledge-sharing among diverse stakeholders were highlighted as key elements.

The session provided a robust foundation for the upcoming discussions putting the emphasis on the importance of collaborative platforms such as the Champion countries initiative, multilateral and cross regional partnerships, and inclusive dialogues involving various stakeholders to address migration issues effectively and promote sustainable solutions.



## SESSION II DATA COLLECTION: PROMOTING ACTIONABLE STEPS FOR ENHANCED CROSS-REGIONAL INFORMATION SHARING TO ACCELERATE GCM IMPLEMENTATION

### Panel interventions:

- Ms. **Claire Healy**, Observatory on Smuggling of Migrants, UNODC
- Ms. **Luisa Baptista de Freitas**, IOM Regional Data Hub Coordinator WCA
- Mr. **Alaeddine Dridi**, Regional Data Hub (RDH) MENA, IOM in coordination with the other RDHs (Europe, LAC, EHoA, SA)
- Ms. **Mirela Stoia**, Co-Lead Labour Migration Portfolio, International Organization for Employers (IOE)

### Member state interventions:

- Mr. **Mohamed Mgahari**, Director Regional Planning, High Commission for Planning, Morocco
- Mr. **Amadou Soly Niamey**, Concertation Framework on Migration (CCM), Ministry of Interior and Decentralization, Republic of Niger
- Mr. **Boulaye Keita**, Migration Technical Advisor, Ministry of Malians Abroad and African Integration, Mali

The aim of the session II was to discuss ways in which to improve migration research, data collection and dissemination, particularly in light of emerging cross-regional migration trends, to inform policy making in line with GCM Objective 1 and the commitments made in the IMRF Progress Declaration. Professor Magret Odusu, the facilitator/moderator, set the stage for the session by emphasizing the crucial role of data in effective GCM implementation. Recognizing the challenges in data collection, she underscored the importance of strengthening this aspect to inform migration policies

The UNODC representative presented findings from the UNODC Observatory, highlighting a complex mix of regular, irregular, and smuggled migrants in West Africa. Drivers of irregular migration included a desire to migrate, obstacles in the implementation of ECOWAS free movement protocols, and perceived cost-effectiveness compared to regular processes. Trends from the Mediterranean route indicated a shift towards the central route, with a significant increase in arrivals registered.

The IOM Regional Data Hubs representatives discussed migration flows in various regions, using the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) platform to provide disaggregated and accessible data. Key migration routes, remittances, and internal displacement were highlighted. Trends showed increased arrivals in Europe, notably through the central Mediterranean route and the Canary Islands, with policy changes affecting migrants. There was an emphasis on the need for enhanced data analysis and dissemination for evidence-based policies and interventions.

The IOE representative emphasized the need for effective migration frameworks that respond to labor market needs. Research findings indicated challenges faced by employers in filling positions, underscoring the importance of well-managed migration frameworks that facilitate fast hiring of skills and discourage informality. Collaboration with employers was stressed for informed decision-making and gaining support for migration policies.

Representatives from Morocco, Niger, and Mali highlighted various initiatives and challenges related to migration. Morocco discussed its active approach to data collection and proposed collaboration on joint studies and policy reviews. Niger outlined actions towards achieving GCM Objective 1, including the adoption of a national migration policy and challenges in data management. Mali emphasized efforts in establishing migration observatories and promoting cooperation in data collection and sharing at national and regional levels. The collaborative approach between international organizations, employers, and member states emerged as a key theme for promoting effective GCM implementation through enhanced cross-regional information sharing.

## SESSION III: ENSURING MIGRANT PROTECTION THROUGH CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION – STRENGTHENING RESPONSES TO MIGRANT SMUGGLING, COORDINATING EFFORTS TO COMBAT TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS, AND PREVENTING LOSS OF LIFE

The aim of the session was to discuss good practices in relation to providing assistance to migrants in distress and saving lives in line with the commitment made in the IMRF Progress Declaration. Mr. Seny Roger, Project Coordinator, UNODC served as facilitator and opened Session III, emphasizing the critical need for global collaboration, comprehensive data, and regional strategies to protect missing migrants effectively.

### Panel interventions:

- Prof. Dr. **Samuel Okyere**, School of Sociology, Politics and International Studies, University of Bristol
- Ms. **Lou Salome Sorlin**, Regional Migration Advisor, ICRC and Ms. Riham Abouelhassan, Missing Migrants Project on data for the GCM, IOM
- Ms. **Samantha Munodawafa**, UNODC and Ms. Rita Deliperi, IOM, Co-leads of the UNNM Workstream on ensuring migrant protection.

### Member state interventions:

- Ambassador **Catherine Udida**, Director Migration, National Commission for Refugees Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons, Nigeria
- Mr. **Abdoul Wahabou Sall**, Migration and Security Advisor, Prime Minister's Office, Senegal
- Ambassador **Amadou Francois Gaye**, Director General of the General Directorate of Support for Senegalese Abroad (DGASE), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Senegal
- Ms. **Valencia Aldongar**, Director of the Directorate of Chadians Abroad and Migration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Chad

Dr. Samuel Okyere highlighted collaboration as crucial for migrant protection, empowerment, inclusion, and combating smugglers to achieve the objectives of the GCM. Empowering migrants and inclusive decision-making were emphasized as key elements for comprehensive protection.

The discussion focused on prioritizing migrant protection through global collaboration, especially considering the increasing prominence of missing migrants post-2015. Comprehensive data compilation was stressed for informed policy decisions, despite challenges in obtaining accurate data on deadly sea routes.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) representative outlined regional initiatives in Africa to address missing migrants through prevention, search and identification, and support for families. Prevention measures include assessing migration policy impact, enhancing migration routes, and preventing family separation.

The United Nations Migration Network Workstream, co-led by IOM and UNODC, focuses on smuggling and trafficking, with priorities including defining key aspects of smuggling, facilitating multilateral collaboration, and promoting a rights-based approach. Another workstream aligns responses to migration with anti-trafficking initiatives.

Representatives from Nigeria, Chad, and Sierra Leone emphasized the importance of cross-regional collaboration, legal frameworks, and implementation of existing laws in addressing migration challenges. They also discussed specific initiatives aligned with GCM objectives, such as strengthening the regional referral system and implementing anti-trafficking laws.



## Knowledge Café Topic 1: Combating Smuggling and Trafficking in Person (TiP)

The Knowledge Café discussed efforts to combat smuggling and trafficking in persons (TiP), focusing on human-centric approaches to migration processes, especially for irregular migrants and trafficking victims. Concerns were raised about the lack of a human-centered approach approaches and protection mechanisms for victims, both in transit and destination countries. Challenges in cooperation among member states were highlighted, including outdated border systems hindering effective data sharing. Legal frameworks were deemed insufficient despite international protocol ratifications. Recommendations included capacity building, policy support, improved referral mechanisms, and a rights-based approach to migration. Community involvement, government-non-state actor collaboration, and regional cooperation were stressed. Engaging youth and integrating sustainability were deemed vital for ongoing progress in tackling TiP challenges.

## Knowledge Café Topic 2: Saving Lives and Humanitarian Assistance

The Knowledge Café on Saving Lives and Humanitarian Assistance in Session III discussed best practices and regional collaboration in migration assistance, aligning with commitments in the IMRF Progress Declaration. Notable practices included Guinea Bissau's use of satellite tracking for ship monitoring and the West Africa network for civil society on trafficking, ensuring rights protection along migration routes. The role of fishermen in rescue missions was emphasized, calling for adequate equipment and mental health support for rescued individuals. Government-funded search and rescue operations and localization initiatives were highlighted. Information dissemination's importance in saving lives was stressed, with Egypt establishing a national mechanism and the Safe Mobility Initiative in South America noted for positive impact. Challenges included false social media overshadowing official communication, underscoring the need for enhanced communication on regular migration pathways. Recommendations included strengthening consular services, safe pathway information sharing, sensitization of fishermen, addressing porous borders, and making regular pathways more accessible. Concerns were raised about criminal manipulation of migration information due to ineffective government information sharing.

Group discussions focused on future opportunities for effectively managing labor migration to ensure the protection and improved living conditions of migrant workers. Key points included involving youth and the diaspora to drive investment, trade, innovation, and social and cultural exchange. Advocating for the diaspora's right to vote where it's lacking was highlighted. Capacity building on GCM among government officials and society was deemed necessary. Strengthening visa and migration policies were emphasized to combat trafficking and irregular migration, alongside establishing more regular migration pathways. Integrating migrants into society through bilateral agreements and regularization processes for irregular migrants were seen as crucial, addressing documentation issues, facilitating formal employment, and securing social rights, including social security entitlements' portability.



## SESSION IV: FOSTERING CROSS-REGIONAL COLLABORATION FOR ADVANCING THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MIGRANTS, IN PARTICULAR THE APPLICATION OF ANTI-DISCRIMINATION DIMENSIONS AND IN MIGRATION AND DETENTION.

### Panel interventions:

- Mrs. **Clara Kasser-Tee**, Vice-President of the Network of Legal Experts on Migration for WCA
- Dr. **Malado Agne**, Research Professor in Law, Cheikh-Anta-Diop University (UCAD) University
- Mr. **Walter Kassamba**, AU-IOM Youth Ambassador

### Member state interventions:

- Ms. **Delphina Ocquaye**, Migration Program Manager in Accra, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), Embassy of Canada in Ghana
- Mr. **Asmamaw Girma**, Migration Secretariat, Ministry of Justice, Ethiopia
- Ms. **Mary Nartey**, Director of Human Rights, Commission on Human Rights and Administrative Justice, Ghana

The aim of the session was to discuss the multifaceted dimensions of the protection of the rights of migrants along migration routes, including in detention, as well as protection from discrimination, gaining deeper insights into the challenges faced by marginalized communities.

The representative of Canada highlighted the country's migration system, emphasizing legal pathways for work and permanent migration, family reunification, humanitarian responses, and integration programs. Canada values diversity and actively promotes inclusion. Canada is committed to anti-racism efforts, promoting diversity and inclusion, ensuring protection for everyone under the Canadian Human Rights Act further underscored with the Clerk of the Privy Council issuing a call in January 2021. The Department of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship is actively reviewing its organizational workplan to enhance institutional capacity, focusing on gender-based analysis and anti-racism efforts to ensure high-quality policies and practices.

The representative of Ethiopia discussed diverse migration flows as a country of origin, transit, and destination. The government has implemented institutional and practical measures to manage migration, involving three units: the National Council for Migration, the National Partners Coalition, and six thematic working groups addressing various aspects of migration. Ethiopia has identified ten priority areas in relation to the GCM and is actively working toward a National Action Plan for GCM implementation. The country has ratified international protocols to protect migrants and enacted the Overseas Employment Proclamation in 2020, which prohibits employment in countries without a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ethiopia. The country is in the process of establishing bilateral labor agreements and engaging in dialogues on migration protection with other nations.

The representative of Ghana emphasized the interconnected nature of migration issues, particularly concerning gender, women, children, and youth. She highlighted the need for comprehensive legal frameworks in Ghana to address issues related to detention and discrimination of migrants. It was highlighted that the Human Rights Act has been amended to grant the Human Rights Commission the authority to assess the conditions of migrants in detention centers. The Commission has actively engaged in discussions concerning the protection of migrants' rights and has established a dedicated migration desk to focus on migration-related issues, facilitating reporting on pertinent matters.

Mrs. Clara Kasser-Tee discussed the role of the Legal Experts on Migration for West and Central Africa Network, focusing on promoting the development of migration laws and policies. The network aims to address migration detention issues and develop alternatives. Notably, the network is actively engaged in developing a comparative analysis of migration practices and detention across the countries represented by the experts. The key outcomes from the March 2023 Migration Detention Discussion included a consensus on using detention only as a last resort, especially for migrant children. The discussion highlighted issues of cruel and inhumane conditions in detention facilities, exacerbated by a lack of reliable and disaggregated data on migration detention in the region. The recommendations focused on decriminalizing migration detentions, developing alternatives, and emphasizing the economic costs associated with detention. Additionally, there was a call for harmonizing and strengthening migration policies and data collection efforts in the region.

The representative of Senegal provided insights on the significant concerns about the trafficking of individuals in distress, particularly those being transported to Libya, highlighting the heightened vulnerability of women and children in these situations. Senegal is taking legal measures aligned with human rights principles, to address challenges such as trafficking and the protection of victims. Specifically, a national strategy on irregular migration as well as law established in 2005 showcases the country's proactive approach to addressing migration challenges and protecting victims.

The AU-IOM Youth Ambassador emphasized the challenges posed by discrimination in migration, particularly rooted in ethnicity, race, and gender. He advocated for systemic approaches to tackling migration challenges, including mainstreaming young people and strengthening laws and policies combating discrimination. He furthermore underscored the importance of a shift in the narrative of migration through mainstream and social media to strengthen migrant rights.

### Group discussion:

Discussions highlighted the need for strong legislative and policy frameworks as an imperative for safeguarding the rights of migrants and preventing discrimination. These frameworks cover various aspects of migration, including protections for labor migrants, measures against traffickers and smugglers, and provisions for refugees. Additionally, human rights frameworks that afford special protection to vulnerable groups such as women and children are crucial. The expansion of opportunities for regular migration pathways is emphasized, coupled with addressing the underlying push factors that prompt individuals to seek better prospects elsewhere. A key principle highlighted is the use of detention only as a last resort. Particularly noteworthy is the unequivocal stance against detaining children. The aspiration of young people to move, work, and settle is advocated as a means of fostering economic prosperity for the continent. The discussion emphasized the societal benefits of diverse communities, citing enhanced social cohesion and greater respect for human rights as outcomes.

## SESSION V: ACCELERATING NATIONAL GCM IMPLEMENTATION

The panel discussion featured insights from representatives of Kenya, Ghana, and El Salvador, shedding light on their experiences and strategies in integrating the GCM into their national planning with the support of the UN Network on Migration.

The representative of Kenya showcased its country's proactive approach to updating its National Implementation Plan (NIP) for the GCM. Through stakeholder consultations and a thorough migration needs assessment, Kenya addressed key areas such as data management, border control, and labor migration, with a focus on refugee inclusion. The involvement of non-state actors, including civil society organizations (CSOs), was crucial in formulating the NIP.

The representative of Ghana highlighted its integration of the GCM into existing migration policies, such as the National Migration Policy and the National Labour Migration Policy, with support from the UN Network on Migration. Ghana aims to translate pledges into actions by focusing on awareness-raising, fair recruitment, community engagement, and creating a CSO platform for the GCM.

The representative of Malawi discussed its integrated approach to migration management, including the enactment of trafficking and diaspora engagement policies, as well as plans to review refugee laws. The importance of coordination in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region and harmonization of migration standards were emphasized.

The representative of El Salvador highlighted its role as a champion since 2020 in addressing migration challenges through collaboration with other countries and multilateral institutions. Recommendations included multistakeholder engagement, continuous support for countries, and a step-by-step process for national implementation plans development.

### Member state interventions:

- Ms. **Maureen Kiambuthi**, Government of Kenya
- Mr. **Dominic Afriyie Agyemeng**, Head of Migration Unit, Ministry of the Interior, Ghana
- Dr. **Kennedy Atong Achakoma**, Trade Union Congress of Ghana
- Mr. **Eddy Ralph Kalonga**, Deputy Director, Department of Citizenship and Migration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Malawi
- Mr. **Jose Roberto**, Permanent Mission of the Republic of El Salvador to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva



The panel emphasized a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach, comprehensive planning, engagement, collaboration with local government, continuous support, and capacity building for successful GCM implementation. Strengthening coordination, comprehensive monitoring, and inclusivity were highlighted as crucial aspects. Engagement with diverse stakeholders, including civil society, academia, and trade unions, is essential for accountability and reporting. The panel emphasized the importance of promoting inclusivity, fostering multistakeholder dialogue, and leveraging the expertise and resources of the private sector and academia to improve data quality and accountability. Overall, the discussions underscored the importance of coordinated and inclusive approaches involving various stakeholders and continuous support for effective GCM implementation, reflecting the diverse experiences and strategies of Kenya, Ghana, Malawi, and El Salvador.

## Day 3: Group Discussions on Regional and Cross Regional and sub-regional progress in the implementation of the GCM

### Experts interventions:

- Ms. Azrah Karim Rajput, Senior Regional Policy Officer, UN Network on Migration Secretariat
- Ms. Mamusa Siyunyi, Social Affairs Officer, UNECA

The aim of the session was to discuss preparations for the upcoming GCM Regional Reviews and agree on key messages for each of the thematic clusters discussed over the previous two days that should inform the Regional GCM Reviews.



- **Engagement of various stakeholders:** There is a strong emphasis on involving stakeholders, notably civil society organizations, in finding solutions at the grassroots level, particularly focusing on community integration of migrants. Enhancing collaboration between government/police and CSOs is proposed to address existing gaps effectively.
- **Information Exchange and Data Sharing:** The exchange of information and data at the institutional level, facilitated by mechanisms like the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM), is essential for addressing migration and detention issues effectively.
- **Awareness-Raising Initiatives:** Awareness-raising initiatives targeting national and local governments and CSOs are crucial for informing stakeholders about the rights of migrants in detention and existing alternatives to detention (ATD).
- **Advocacy for comprehensive data collection:** Awareness-raising initiatives targeting national and local governments and CSOs are crucial for informing stakeholders about the rights of migrants in detention and existing alternatives to detention (ATD).
- **Promotion of social media campaigns:** There is a call for promoting a social media campaign to counter the negative narrative on migration and migrants and raise awareness about their positive impact on the socio-economic wellbeing of their communities of origin and destination.
- **Support from Champion Countries:** Suggestions for Champion countries to further support the Review Process include: sharing and promoting best practices on ATD; cross-exchanging expertise among champions; utilizing the UN Network on Migration for information sharing; exploring a champion pledge for the GCM and/or Global Compact on Refugees (GCR); and commissioning research on migration and detention in champion countries.

### Experts interventions:

- Honorable **Ambrose Dery**, Minister of Interior, Ghana
- Mr. **Robert Kotchani**, WARO Regional Representative, OHCHR, on behalf of the Co-Chairs of the UN Network on Migration for WCA
- Mr. **Jonathan Prentice**, Head of the UN Network on Migration Secretariat

The session aimed at revisiting the key take-aways and lessons learned from the Dialogue with the goal of summarizing the essential insights gathered throughout the discussions for the consolidation of a Joint Declaration and Report to input into the upcoming Regional GCM Reviews and ahead of the COP28

The informal cross-regional dialogue among experts and representatives from various countries yielded valuable insights and recommendations on key migration issues. These included: leveraging migration data for informed policies, considering the economic costs of migration; advocating against the detention of children, increasing awareness of human rights and the GCM among migrant populations; and engaging grassroots efforts to strengthen laws and change the migration narrative through media. Overall, the dialogue provided a comprehensive overview of migration challenges, legal frameworks, and best practices, emphasizing whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches, fair recruitment, balanced narrative on migration, and continuous support. A key recommendation document was formulated, reviewed, and adopted by all participants for future actions.



The event was organized thanks to the financial support of



Government of the Netherlands



Co-funded by the European Union



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