

**Regional Review of the Implementation of the Global Compact for Safe,
Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) for the UNECE region,**

Geneva, 11 March 2024

Opening Statement by Ms. Tatiana Molcean, UNECE Executive Secretary

Excellencies, distinguished co-chairs, dear colleagues,

I would like to welcome you most warmly to this second regional review of the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration in the UNECE region.

I am particularly pleased that for the first time UNECE has been mandated by our member States to jointly convene this review with IOM as the Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration.

The review discussions today are taking place at the start of our 'Sustainable Development Week', back to back with the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development on 13 and 14 March, which will consider how we can further accelerate SDG implementation. This set up responds to the call for stronger linkages between the GCM, the 2030 Agenda and their review forums in the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum.

In fact, the 2030 Agenda does explicitly refer to migration, and recognises the economic value of migrants: migrant workers are expressly considered in SDG 8 on economic growth and decent work; issues of trafficking are noted as part of SDG 16 on peaceful societies; SDG 10 calls for a reduction in the transaction costs of remittances. Finally, Target 10.7 calls for the facilitation of 'safe, regular and responsible migration' and the implementation of 'well managed migration policies'.

Beyond these explicit references, migration is relevant to many of the other Goals. If we are to achieve the SDGs, we need to consider the impact of migration at all levels and on all outcomes, beyond the migration-specific Targets. Migration is not just a development ‘problem’ to be solved (as is the focus of SDG 10.7), but a mechanism that can contribute to the achievement of many of the Goals. Finally, one of the key principles of the 2030 Agenda is ‘leaving no one behind’. Migrants often are a particularly vulnerable group who should also be considered under this principle.

Let me add a few words on UNECE’s own work in the area of migration, which is largely limited to migration statistics:

As in other areas of sustainable development, there is a strong need for better data on migration. This has been expressed, inter alia, by making the objective to improve the collection and use of data on international migration statistics the first objective of the Global Compact. UNECE supports member States in their work towards this objective. This entails production of guidance on how to address key measurement issues and providing tools and assistance for putting such guidance into practice. The national experts in charge of this area meet annually to exchange experience.

A few examples: Countries are working together to improve their systems of registering asylum seekers and refugees, and to streamline related definitions. The 2024 UNECE meeting of migration statistics experts is going to focus on this topic.

As another example, UNECE recently issued guidance on how to use surveys and administrative sources for measuring how immigrants fare in their host countries compared to the main population.

A recent future-oriented project investigated how to expand the range of data sources for migration, to include the so-called big data, that is data gathered from the use of mobile phones, credit cards and social networks.

With support from UNECE, the statistics community continues to seek novel ways to meet the data needs that our member countries face.

In a complex and uncertain world, the application of data for evidence-based policy and action is needed now more than ever.

I wish you fruitful and interesting discussions.