

**International Migration Review Forum**  
**Roundtable 3 – GCM objectives 14, 15, 15, 19, 20 and 22**

18<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 10:00-13:00, Trusteeship Council

**Opening remarks**

**Delivered by H.E. the Permanent Representative of Portugal to the UN,  
Ambassador Ana Paula Zacarias**

- Thank you, Ambassador Suriya for giving me the floor.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

- I am honored by the opportunity to co-chair this roundtable. After having presented my credentials to the UN Secretary-General just yesterday as the new Permanent Representative of Portugal to the UN, I could not think of a better way to initiate my mandate.
- As has been mentioned by my fellow co-chair, we are here today to assess the progress made in the implementation of six different objectives of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM).
- These objectives focus essentially on two different dimensions of migration:

- The first one is the inclusion and integration of migrants in their societies of destination;
  - The second dimension pertains to the links and relationship that migrants retain with their countries of origin.
- Let me say a couple of words on each of these six objectives.
  - First, **Objective 15 (Access to Services)**: the impact of COVID-19 is clear. The pandemic has demonstrated the essential role that migrants play as service providers. And the same time, it has shown us that it is common sense for all migrants to have access to health services – like my colleague said, the virus does not distinguish between nationals and migrants. We must build upon good practices and enhance migrants’ access to essential services, regardless of their migration status, not only to health, but also to other services, related to education, social protection, child protection or decent work. But when we talk about access, it is not just about formally enabling migrants to benefit from these services. It is also about eliminating often invisible barriers that may impair their access to these services. Language barriers, for instance.

- This takes me to **Objective 16 (Inclusion and Social Cohesion)**. Our efforts towards inclusion have to take into account the ones who face situations of vulnerability. Part of the answer is to empower migrants, by enabling their meaningful participation in discussions that affect them, and providing support at local level and coordination with civil society on the ground.
- Let me now speak to **Objective 22 (Social Protection)**. Unfortunately, when we migrate, our social security system does not migrate with us. This is why it is fundamental to expand the network of bilateral and multilateral agreements for the portability of social security entitlements. Portugal, for instance, has a network of 20 such social security agreements. But we need to pursue these efforts, and collectively address the wide gaps that remain regarding social security coverage, including in countries of origin.

Dear Colleagues,

- Let me now address **Objective 19 (Migrant and Diaspora Contributions)**: migrants and diasporas enrich both their countries of destination and their countries of origin. It is in our collective interest to find the right policies to engage diasporas, at home and abroad, in order to unlock their full potential.

- Even if today we are also a country of **imm**migration, Portugal is traditionally a country of **em**igration, with a diaspora that comprises over 5 million people. Through programmes of investment attraction and through special quotas in our higher education system, we have sought to encourage our diaspora's contribution to the development of their country of origin.
- This takes me to **Objective 20 (Remittances)**. While remittances are not the only contribution of migrants to their countries of origin (far from it), remittances often play an essential role for the income of families and communities. Portugal is well placed to know that, not so long ago, remittances were a lifeline for our economy in times of trouble.
- Contrary to all predictions, the volume of remittances globally showed great resilience during the pandemic, as it only slightly decreased during the last two years. This should reinforce our ambition to make the transfer of remittances faster, safer and cheaper.
- Finally, let me touch upon **Objective 14 (Consular Protection)**. Consular networks are the most visible institutional link between migrants and diasporas and their countries of origin. The pandemic tested their resilience, and as was the case in many other areas, showed the advantages and the challenges of the digitalization of services.

- Making our consular services more easily accessible to our migrants and diasporas is a challenge that we all face, and we can try to build on the lessons learned from the pandemic to best tackle it.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

- I hope that this brief overview of the six objectives we are addressing today was able to provide a snapshot of why the implementation of the Global Compact can also accelerate our delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals. And above all, I hope that these opening remarks will be conducive to a substantive, lively and participatory discussion in this Roundtable.
  
- I thank you.