Measuring progress: GCM indicators

Regional GCM Talks on Indicators: Technical discussions
24 – 28 July
Summary Report

Background

The UN Network on Migration workstream on "Development of a proposed limited set of indicators to review progress related to the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)" organized five regional consultations. The workstream's workplan[1] had identified conducting consultations with Member States and a wide range of relevant stakeholders on the limited set of indicators as one of its three key deliverables for 2023. This document provides an overview and summary of the objectives, organization, and main outcomes and recommendations of the five consultations.

Objectives

The regional consultations had four main objectives:

1. Inform Member States and stakeholders about the approach and process of selecting the limited set of indicators included in the preliminary proposal (see note).
2. Facilitate technical discussions involving statistical and policy experts from government agencies and other stakeholders to ensure that the indicators included in the proposal adequately reflect the objectives and guiding principles of the GCM.
3. Enable participants to provide detailed feedback on the relevance and measurability of specific indicators included in the preliminary proposal.
4. Obtain insights on how regional contexts could be better reflected in the proposal on a limited set of indicators for monitoring the implementation of the GCM.

To guide the discussions, participants were invited to reflect on the following guiding questions:

- Is the proposed limited set of indicators for the GCM suitable in terms of its relevance, scope, coverage, balance and ability to compare progress over time and across different countries and regions?
- Does the preliminary proposal align well with global frameworks, such as the SDGs, while also reflecting regional migration dynamics?
- Are there any additional specific migration dimensions or sub-regional variations that should be considered in the proposal?

Organization and speakers

The five regional consultations were convened as follows:

- Regional consultation for Africa on 24 July 2023 (14:00 – 16:30 CET)
- Regional consultation for Arab States on 25 July 2023 (14:00 – 16:30 CET)

- Regional consultation for [Asia and the Pacific](#) on 26 July 2023 (10:00 am – 12:30 pm CET)
- Regional consultation for [Latin America and the Caribbean](#) on 27 July 2023 (15:00 – 17:30 CET)
- Regional consultation for [Europe and Northern America](#) on 28 July 2023 (14:00 – 16:30 CET)

The consultations took place virtually as part of the GCM Talks series. This platform was created by the United Nations Network on Migration to facilitate dialogue on how best to implement the GCM. The GCM Talks series is central to the Network's contribution to mandates emerging from the Progress Declaration of the first International Migration Review Forum.

The consultations all followed a similar format with an opening session featuring a keynote address by a regional expert, followed by panel discussions.

The five moderators for the opening sessions were:

- Mr. William Muhwava, Chief of Demography and Social Statistics, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- Ms. Amy Muedin, Deputy Head, United Nations Network on Migration secretariat
- Ms. Vanessa Steinmayer, Population Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- Ms. Pamela Villalobos, Senior Social Affairs Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- Ms. Oxana Maciuca, Regional Human Mobility Advisor, Istanbul Regional Hub, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

The sessions featured opening remarks from the secretariat on the United Nations Network on Migration, delivered by:

- Ms. Azrah Karim Rajput, Senior Regional Policy Officer
- Ms. Amy Muedin, Deputy Head
- Ms. Marcia Porras, Migration Policy Officer
- Ms. Katharine Barwise, Senior Programme Manager

The opening remarks were followed by a presentation on the process leading up to the preliminary proposal on a limited set of indicators, by the co-chairs of the workstream:

- Ms. Irene Schöfberger, Data and Research Officer, International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- Ms. Clare Menozzi, Population Affairs Office, Population Division, Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

Keynote addresses on the overarching theme *"A Regional Perspective: Challenges and Opportunities of Developing a Limited Set of Indicators for the GCM"* were delivered by:

- Mr. Diego Iturralde, Chief Director for Demography and Population Statistics, Statistics South Africa

- Ms. Karima Belhaj, Chief of the Population Policy Monitoring Department, High Commission for Planning of Morocco
- Ms. Keiko Osaki Tomita, President, Tokiwa University, Japan
- Ms. Marcela Cerrutti, National Council for Scientific and Technical Research, Center for Population Studies, Argentina
- Ms. Ellen Percy Kraly, Colgate University and International Union for the Scientific Study of Population (IUSSP)

The opening sessions were followed by interactive panel discussions examining the preliminary set of indicators for each GCM's objective clustered according to the groupings of the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) round tables. These panels were moderated by the following workstream members:

- Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Vice President, Global Research Forum on Diaspora and Transnationalism (GRFDT)
- Mr. Paul Tacon, Labour Migration Specialist, International Labour Organization (ILO)
- Mr. Mauro Martini, Senior Technical Specialist - Remittances, Migration and Development, United Nations International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD)
- Ms. Irem Arf, Migration Policy Advisor, International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC)

The closing remarks were delivered by:

- Ms. Marina Manke, Chief of IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC)
- Mr. Bela Hovy, Chief, Publications, Outreach and Support Unit, Population Division, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA)

Participants

The regional consultations brought together a diverse group of participants representing a wide range of countries and areas of expertise. In total, over 800 participants attended one or more of the five regional consultations. The number of participants for each of the consultations was as follows:

- 253 for the regional consultation for Africa
- 139 for the regional consultation for Arab States
- 117 for the regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific
- 197 for the regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean
- 114 for the regional consultation for Europe and Northern America

Participants included around 70 Member States, 2 observers to the United Nations including the European Union and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), as well as representatives of over 100 international and regional organizations, and other relevant stakeholders. Several government delegations included representatives from relevant ministries, national statistical offices, and Permanent Missions in Geneva and New York, in line with the whole-of-government principle of the GCM.

Table 1. Member States that participated in one or more of the five regional consultations, by region

Africa	Arab States	Asia and the Pacific	Europe and Northern America	Latin America and the Caribbean
• Chad • Côte D'Ivoire • Djibouti • Eswatini • Ethiopia • Ghana • Lesotho • Madagascar • Malawi • Morocco • Mozambique • Namibia • Niger • Nigeria • Sierra Leone • South Africa • United Republic of Tanzania • Zambia	• Bahrain • Egypt • Iraq • Jordan • Libya • Morocco • Qatar • Saudi Arabia	• Cambodia • India • Indonesia • Iran (Islamic Republic of) • Lao People's Democratic Republic • Myanmar • Nauru • Nepal • Pakistan • Philippines • Republic of Korea • Sri Lanka	• Albania • Austria • Canada • Cyprus • Estonia • Georgia • Germany • Greece • Ireland • Malta • Netherlands • Portugal • Russian Federation • Spain • United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland • United States of America	• Argentina • Brazil • Chile • Colombia • Costa Rica • Dominican Republic • Ecuador • El Salvador • Guatemala • Honduras • Mexico • Panama • Paraguay • Peru • Venezuela, Bolivarian Republic of

Note: Some Member States participated in more than one consultation. They are listed in the table only in reference to their own region.

Feedback and recommendations from the five regional consultations

The sections below provide a summary of the main observations, comments and recommendations from the five regional consultations.

1. From the regional consultation for Africa:

The discussion drew attention to the critical challenges and opportunities faced by Africa, including the role of conflicts and climate change as drivers of migration; the interface between sustainable livelihoods, water scarcity, gender roles, and migration; the importance of leveraging remittances for development; and the nexus between international migration and the rapid growth of urban centers. Ensuring that the public had a better understanding of migration trends in the region was also critical, given the predominance of intra-continental movements compared to those having as a destination Europe or Northern America.

Several participants welcomed the preliminary proposal for a limited set of indicators to monitor the implementation of the GCM. They acknowledged the thorough and transparent process of compiling the list of indicators, stressing the critical importance and inherent complexity of developing the proposal. Given the significance of migration for the region,

some participants called for increased involvement of experts and country representatives in the process of selecting the relevant indicators to be included. The importance of the engagement of representatives of civil society and other relevant stakeholders was also underscored to better reflect the multidimensional nature of migration.

Many of the indicators in the proposal were viewed as highly relevant to monitoring the implementation of the GCM from an African perspective. The indicators were also consistent with those developed through other processes, including the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics and the International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC), ensuring complementarity and reducing the burden on governments to collect additional data. The proposal's reliance on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) indicator framework-- an intergovernmentally endorsed framework with well-established indicators-- was welcomed, as was the effort to ensure that the proposal had little or no additional budgetary implications for Member States. The role of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) and other official statistics as the main sources of data for the indicators was highlighted.

Some participants called for greater coordination in data collection and monitoring, building on good practices, including through South-South capacity building and peer-based learning. Some participants called for establishing new, or improving existing, mechanisms and approaches to enhance the use of data. This might involve strengthening technical capacities to use data to inform policymaking, ensuring that the indicators were not just theoretical but also actionable. Disaggregation of indicators by age, sex, and disability status as well as at the sub-national level, where appropriate or feasible, was crucial for ensuring that they were relevant for monitoring the GCM's 23 objectives and were consistent with its guiding principles.

Given that conflict was an important driver of migration in the region, it was also important to ensure that such aspects were adequately reflected in the proposal. In this regard, attention was drawn to the synergies between the GCM and the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), with some calling for ensuring coherence between the two corresponding indicator frameworks.

2. From the regional consultation for the Arab States:

Participants drew attention to the multitude of migration-related challenges faced by the Arab States, stemming from conflicts, socioeconomic considerations and political instability. The safety of migrants was a major concern, with too many lives lost in perilous journeys across the Mediterranean Sea. The region was characterized by distinct migration landscapes, with both intra-regional and extra-regional migration flows. Some of the countries in the region were primarily destinations of international migrants, others primarily origins, while others still served as origin, transit, and destination. Countries also had a diverse array of political systems, migration policies, and economic circumstances. The *kafala* system,[1] prevalent in many countries of the region, created challenges in some cases related to legal identity and access to fundamental rights. These regional nuances reinforced the call for indicators that effectively captured the complex dynamics of migration specific to the Arab context.

Several participants applauded the approach employed by the workstream. The criteria used for comparing existing indicator frameworks, the two mapping exercises, and the initial survey among Member States and other stakeholders were integral components for ensuring that

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[1] A sponsorship system used to monitor migrant laborers in several countries of the Arab region.

the proposal was well-grounded and could inform policymaking at the national, regional and global levels.

The participants considered that the preliminary proposal for a limited set of indicators represented an important step in the GCM's implementation. It also provided an opportunity to improve the harmonization of data, concepts and definitions across countries and to harness the power of administrative data. However, given the GCM's scope, the complexity of the task was also recognized.

Several participants underscored the importance of involving statistical offices in developing the proposal and advocated for continued robust international cooperation. Others welcomed the inclusion of quantitative indicators for monitoring progress and called for a balanced approach that examined outcomes and outputs in addition to more short-term process measures, such as the existence of policies and laws. Recognizing the centrality of human rights-based and gender-sensitive approaches to the full and effective implementation of the GCM, they also highlighted that no one should be labelled as "unskilled" and called for ensuring that the proposal was grounded in non-discriminatory language and included relevant gender-specific indicators. Some participants also called for translating the discussion note and other relevant materials into other languages besides English to facilitate greater participation, including by migrants, and ensure that these voices and perspectives were adequately reflected.

3. From the regional consultation for Asia and the Pacific:

The discussion highlighted the Asia-Pacific region's dynamic migration landscape. As with other regions, a significant proportion of migration flows took place within the region, including along some of the world's largest migration corridors. Temporary labor migration stood out as a prevailing trend, with countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) attracting large numbers of migrants seeking employment. Irregular migration was also significant in the Asia-Pacific region, with migrants without a legal immigration status often excluded from the formal sector. Protecting the labor rights of migrants and capturing their diverse living arrangements emerged as key concerns. Diaspora engagement and remittances were other aspects that required attention, as well as other drives of migration in the region, including conflict, the adverse effects of climate changes and natural disasters.

Given the complexity of migration in the Asia-Pacific region, participants highlighted the challenge of developing a proposal on a limited set of indicators to assess progress in the implementation of the GCM. Several commended the workstream's comprehensive mapping of existing indicator frameworks, noting that many of those frameworks had been endorsed at an intergovernmental level. The fact that the proposal was drawing on existing indicator frameworks was positive since it limited the burden on Member States to collect new data and addressed concerns about substantial additional budgetary implications. The indicators referencing labor rights legislation, for instance, were part of the SDG indicator framework, and were aligned with internationally agreed processes.

While there were no substantial gaps in the preliminary proposal, participants emphasized the need to compile a limited but balanced set of indicators that reflected the complex nature of migration, considering political, economic, and environmental factors. The guiding principles of the GCM, including gender sensitivity and human rights-based approaches, were identified

as being fundamental for the selection of indicators, to ensure that the dignity and rights of migrants were protected while combating discrimination and labour violations.

The discussion emphasized the importance of data disaggregation, and particularly on the intersection by sex and by migratory status, to highlight the unique challenges faced by migrant women in the Asia-Pacific region. It was suggested that the guidance on data disaggregation by migratory status from the UN Expert Group on Migration Statistics could serve as a good starting point. The importance of coordination and collaboration among stakeholders to comprehensively gather and disseminate migration data was also noted.

4. From the regional consultation for Latin America and the Caribbean:

The discussion highlighted key migration trends in Latin America and the Caribbean, including the importance of intra-regional flows, and flows to Europe. It also drew attention to migrants' vulnerability along transit routes towards Northern America, and in particular the vulnerability of unaccompanied children. Despite strong normative frameworks and intergovernmental processes on migration, the challenges of irregular migration, migrant integration, and of xenophobia were noted as important.

Regarding the preliminary proposal on indicators, participants reiterated the importance of a limited set of indicators for assessing progress in the implementation of the GCM. Participants agreed that the proposal should provide a structured framework for monitoring relevant migration-related aspects, including the 23 objectives of the GCM and its 10 guiding principles. The proposal would also help improve the consistency and comparability of data to inform evidence-based migration policies. Participants underscored the importance of involving Member States in identifying the indicators to be included in the proposal, reflecting the diverse and complex realities of migration in the region and globally.

Participants welcomed the inclusion of quantitative measures on, among others, migrant stocks and flows, regularization processes, deaths and disappearances of migrants in transit, victims of human trafficking, and detentions associated with irregular border-crossing. The inclusion of qualitative indicators on migrants' access to services, welfare benefits and rights such as education, social security or health care was also seen as useful. Most of the indicators suggested aligned with existing indicator frameworks. For instance, eight of the core indicators in the proposal were part of the migration governance indicators (MGI) framework. Countries were encouraged to supplement the proposal with additional indicators, as needed, to foster a more in-depth monitoring of policy implementation at the national and local levels.

Regarding the feasibility of the proposal for the region, most of the indicators were already being collected by countries. Some participants highlighted the need for additional indicators related to the number and characteristics of migrants in transit, including unaccompanied children, and for monitoring the administrative and logistical responses provided to meet the needs of those groups. Some participants cautioned against rigid distinctions between regular and irregular migration and emphasized the need for gender-responsive and child-sensitive indicators, noting that disaggregation of existing indicators by age and sex was not always sufficient. The complexity of understanding climate change as a driver of migration was acknowledged.

The need for better integration of various migration data sources, particularly administrative data, was highlighted. Efforts by ECLAC and the Organization of American States (OAS) had contributed to strengthening migration data in the region. Despite progress, however, critical gaps remained in understanding basic migration processes. For this reason, participants emphasized the need to enhance cooperation and capacity-building at the national, regional and global levels, including the capacity to collect data, reiterating that these initiatives were essential to ensure that the data and indicators were relevant and used to inform policies.

5. From the regional consultation for Europe and Northern America:

In Europe, as in other regions, participants noted important connections between migration, demographics, economic growth, and social dynamics. Violations of human rights, conflicts, and environmental factors, including climate change were important drivers of migration. The nexus between migration and labour policies, economic integration, and environmental concerns was highlighted. It was suggested that the proposal should include indicators that reflected the impact of policy decisions, favouring qualitative aspects over binary responses, where feasible. Given the often politically charged debates on migration in Europe and Northern America, it would be important for indicators to help bridge existing divides between government, civil society and the general public. The significance of disseminating research and findings on the impacts of migration in countries of origin and destination, particularly through the simulation of various scenarios, was also stressed.

The discussion acknowledged the efforts, transparency and collaborative approach of the workstream in developing the indicator proposal on a limited set of indicators and aligning it with the GCM's objectives. The proposal would bolster the monitoring and evaluation of progress in implementing the GCM over time and provide consistent and comparable data for designing informed migration policies and programmes. Information about the GCM's implementation would serve as a powerful policy tool at various levels, including regional, national and local ones.

Participants underscored the importance of mainstreaming critical principles related to human rights and social justice within the indicator proposal, including gender-responsive indicators. Data disaggregated by age, sex, and migrant status, were vital for in-depth trend exploration and comparisons. Some participants also called for ensuring that the proposal was built on indicators for which data were already being collected, and that, whenever possible, focused on measuring outcomes. The alignment of the proposal for a limited set of indicators with the indicator framework developed by the Expert Group on Migration Statistics was also emphasized.

Likewise, participants stressed the need for stakeholder involvement to ensure that the indicators included in the proposal accurately captured the complexity of migration in all its dimensions. The inclusion of migrants' voices in selecting indicators was deemed to be crucial.

Overarching conclusions and next steps

The regional consultations provided a useful space for the workstream to share progress on the development of the preliminary proposal for a limited set of indicators and showcase the approach followed. The consultations also gave Member States and relevant stakeholders the

opportunity to express their views on the process and identify areas for further refinement in the preliminary proposal.

Overall, participants commended the efficient work of the workstream and expressed satisfaction with the progress made in developing the preliminary proposal on a limited set of indicators. The strong collaboration between the members of the workstream, the excellent support provided by the Network, and the workstream's commitment to being inclusive, efficient, and transparent were also commended.

Overall, participants reiterated the importance of ensuring that the proposal addressed the multidimensional reality of migration, and was relevant at the country, regional and global levels. Participants also highlighted the challenge of effectively utilizing indicators to inform policy decisions. The importance of ensuring balance across the 23 objectives of the GCM and its 10 guiding principles was highlighted, including the importance of gender-responsive and child-sensitive indicators in the proposal.

The significance of ensuring that the proposal was relevant, measurable, and allowed for comparisons over time and space was underscored during the consultations. For this, active engagement by Member States and other relevant stakeholders was deemed necessary. Several participants welcomed the opportunity to join the forthcoming global consultations and expressed interest in providing written feedback on the preliminary proposal through an online survey[2].

The co-leads of the workstream reiterated that the feedback received throughout the regional consultations, as well as through a survey to be conducted in August-September 2023, would be useful to refine the proposal. The revised proposal, reflecting those comments and feedback, would be shared in a revised discussion note, tentatively available by November 2023. The revised proposal would serve as a background document for the global discussions planned for the fourth quarter of 2023.

The summary of this GCM Talk was prepared by the co-leads of the workstream and the secretariat of the UN Network on Migration. It does not necessarily reflect the opinions of the Network members. As a summary, it is not a verbatim transcript. Watch the full recordings here.

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[2] The survey was open to Member States and other relevant stakeholders and available on the UN Network on Migration website from August to September 2023.