



United Nations
Network on Migration
Working Better Together

ECCAS CONSULTATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION (GCM) IN PREPARATION FOR THE REGIONAL REVIEW OF THE GCM FOR AFRICA 2024

17- 18 September 2024

Online via Zoom

I. INTRODUCTION

On 9 December 2018 in Marrakech, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly. This Compact marks a major paradigm shift in global migration governance, in that it provides a common human rights-based framework for international migration in all its dimensions, and entails periodic monitoring and review at the national, regional and continental levels to assess progress in its implementation.

Thus, as part of the preparation for the regional review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for Africa 2024 to be held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 8 to 10 October 2024, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), as Co-Chairs of the United Nations Regional Migration Networks for West and Central Africa and for East and South Africa, in collaboration with the ECCAS Commission, organized from 17 to 18 September 2024 a Sub-Regional Consultation on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration for Central Africa. This meeting, which brought together representatives of ECCAS member states, ECCAS experts, civil society actors and actors of the United Nations system, aimed to inform the African regional review following exercises to assess the progress made in the implementation of the GCM, exchanges on challenges and good practices and discussions on the future implementation of the GCM.

II. Participants

The meeting was attended by representatives of ECCAS member states, civil society, international organizations, the private sector, academia and other stakeholders. More specifically:

ECCAS member states

- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Congo
- Gabon
- Equatorial Guinea
- Central African Republic (CAR)
- Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
- Rwanda
- Chad

ABSENT

- Angola
- Sao Tome & Principe

ECCAS Commission

- H.E. Kapinga-Yvette NGANDU, Commissioner in charge of the Department for the Promotion of Gender, Human and Social Development (DPGDHS)
- Mr. Mathieu Kinouani, Special Assistant to Her Excellency Madam Commissioner Kapinga-Yvette NGANDU
- Mr. Maxime Désiré Ekani, Migration Expert, DPDHS
- Mr. Maxime Ake, Youth, Employment and Sport Expert, DPGDHS

Members of the United Nations System

- United Nations Development Coordination Office
- United Nations Resident Coordinator Office
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- International Organization for Migration (IOM);
- United Nations Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)

- The United Nations children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR);
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- The International Labor Organization (ILO)
- The World Health Organization (WHO)
- The Secretariat of the United Nations Network on Migration (UNNM)

International Organizations

- International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)
- International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)

Academia

- Network of Legal Experts on Migration in West and Central Africa

Stakeholders

- African Union Youth Ambassador for Migration in Central Africa
- Fraternal Community of Gabon (COFRAGA)
- African Regional Organization of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC-Africa)
- Stakeholder Rapporteur for West and Central Africa
- Un Monde Avenir

III. Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was chaired by **H.E. Abdou Abarry, Special Representative and Head of UNOCA.**

H.E. Abdou ABARRY began his opening remarks by mentioning that the regional review of the Global Compact for Migration offers various United Nations entities as well as various stakeholders the opportunity to assess their progress in implementing the objectives and guiding principles of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. He went on to highlight the abundance of migratory flows recorded in Central Africa, reminding participants that migratory flows are as much a challenge as an opportunity.

The opening ceremony was also marked by the words of:

Mrs. Anna Eva RADICETTI, Deputy Director of IOM's Regional Office for West and Central Africa, on behalf of the United Nations Network on Migration for West and Central Africa and for East and Southern Africa, stressed that migration can act as a lever for development. She also stressed that civil society actors and other stakeholders have a key role to play in the review process of the Global Compact on Migration, even though the latter is a state-level process. Therefore, she encouraged participants to share their ideas during the discussions considering that every opinion counts to reach successful outcomes.

H.E. Mrs. Kapinga-Yvette NGANDU, Commissioner in charge of the Department of Gender Promotion, Human and Social Development (DPGDHS), after recalling the migration context in Central Africa where approximately 3.9 million international migrants resided in 2020 according to data from the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), called on participants to reflect deeply on how to address the issue of migration, where the loss of human life is a grim reality for young people seeking better living conditions.

The opening ceremony ended with the presentation of the agenda and the adoption of the agenda by **Mr. Maxime Désiré Ekani**, expert on migration issues at ECCAS.

IV. Summary of Discussions

Day 1

a) Presentations

This day began with the organization of two round tables, one on free movement and other ways to improve regular pathways and predictability of migration procedures in the ECCAS region, and a second one on Migratory movements and protection of migrants, including through integrated border management measures and the fight against xenophobia. The work conducted on this first day was also marked by presentations on the GCM from a regional, continental and global perspective followed by recommendations by:

- Mr. **Maxime Désiré Ekani**, Migration Expert, DPDHS
- Mrs. **Amy Muedin**, Deputy Head of the UN Migration Network Secretariat
- Mrs. **Kristina Mejo**, Senior Regional Liaison and Policy Advisor, Regional Office for West and Central Africa, IOM, on behalf of the UN Regional Migration Network for West and Central Africa
- Mrs. **Sumaya Adan**, Junior Policy Support Assistant, East and Southern Africa Regional Office, IOM, on behalf of the Co-Chairs of the Regional UN Migration Network for East and South Africa.
- Mr. **Lukmon Akintola**, Stakeholder Rapporteur for West and Central Africa and Knowledge Advisor at the Global Center for Climate Mobility, Nigeria.

This session was opened by Mr. **Maxime Désiré Ekani**, who was called to speak on the progress of the GCM process in the ECCAS region. He informed that migration in the ECCAS region is mostly the result of climate change, conflicts or job search. He also spoke of a sub-regional context characterized by difficulties in implementing the 1983 agreement on free movement, and how this weakens regular migration routes. Finally, he spoke of the progress being made with the support of partners of the United Nations system to advance the GCM agenda in the ECCAS region; Mrs. **Amy Muedin** in her presentation of the GCM from a global perspective informed that the review of the GCM will promote new commitments from states, highlight achievements and good practices, as well as anticipate capacity building needs; from Ms. **Kristina Mejo's** presentation showed that the current consultations are part of a follow-up process that began in January 2023, and that they all lead-up to the regional review of the GCM for Africa in October 2024; Ms. **Sumaya Adan** focused on the UN Migration Network for East and South Africa and its achievements. **Lukmon Akintola** presented the [recommendations from the stakeholder consultation in West and Central Africa for the regional review of the GCM](#) that took place in August 2024; The key points that emerged were that political and economic stability should be given priority, that existing migration frameworks should be implemented, and that regional integration should be promoted. Recommendations focused on protecting migrants' rights, investing in scientific research and data collection, and promoting partnerships between governments and non-state actors. He also stressed the importance of tackling climate-induced displacement, enhancing labor mobility and combating xenophobia. Overall, he argued for a comprehensive approach to migration

management that aligns with regional development objectives and international standards.

b) Round table 1: Free movement and other ways to improve regular pathways and predictability of migration procedures in the ECCAS region

This round table focused on the following objectives of the GCM: 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18. The round table was chaired by **Mr. Mathieu Kinouani**, with the following panelists: Mr. Maxime Ake, Employment and Youth Expert, ECCAS; General Michel Koumbila, Administrative Advisor, Migration Focal Point at the Ministry of the Interior and Security, Republic of Gabon; Mrs. Camille Mayel, Director of International Organizations and Special Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Congo; Mr. Abdou Karim Ouedraogo, Organizing Program Coordinator, ITUC Africa.

The main recommendations made by the panelists for the effectiveness of free movement and other ways to improve regular pathways and predictability of migration procedures in the ECCAS region were as follows:

- Create a regional platform of experts, supported by States, ECCAS and civil society, including the private sector, to exchange views on migration-related issues, which can be further developed in a Regional Migration Observatory.
- Set up a mechanism to collect age- and sex-disaggregated data on migration.
- Involve trade unions and civil society actors in the development of migration policies, particularly with regard to ethical and equitable recruitment.
- Invest in economic and social infrastructure at borders to facilitate the intermixing of populations.
- Set up monitoring mechanisms and periodic reviews, as well as partnerships with international institutions.
- Advocate for regional integration at border crossings to enforce international standards on free movement in each country.
- Encourage the ratification of the Protocol on Free Movement to bring about regular migration and emphasize the digital and the green economy.
- Increase inspections in companies to ensure the enforcement of international labor standards or national labor laws in favor of migrants.
- Conduct awareness campaigns on the positive aspects of migration with the purpose of demystifying it and changing the narrative about migrants.

- Encourage the ratification of the 2007 Protocol of Cooperation between ECCAS and ECOWAS on Mutual Legal Assistance on the Protection, Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants.
- With regard to climate change-related migration, set up a solidarity mechanism and a strategic reserve to come to the aid of affected populations.
- Develop climate change prevention and forecasting services.
- Integrate migrants in policy-making processes and set up a monitoring and evaluation system with an implementation plan.

c) Round table 2: migratory movements and the protection of migrants including through integrated border management measures and the fight against xenophobia

This round table focused on the following objectives of the GCM: 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 21 and 22. The round table was chaired by **Mr. Ilunga Mpinganayi Christian**, Senior Assistant to the Secretary-General and National Focal Point for Migration at the African Union Commission and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), Democratic Republic of Congo, with the following panelists: Mrs. Adele Rutsoke, Child Protection Officer, Regional Office for West and Central Africa, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); Mrs. Celine Croon, Regional Advisor on Internal Displacement and Migration for Africa, ICRC; Mr. Valery Bobuin, AU Youth Ambassador for Central Africa; Mr. Thomas Genie Ikomi, Fraternal Community of Gabon (COFRAGA).

The key recommendations made by the panelists at the end of the discussions were as follows:

- Establish a mechanism for access to essential services for migrant children (education, health and housing).
- Establish a migration legal framework that specifically takes children into account.
- Strengthen the system of protection of migrant children and avoid their detention for reasons relating to their status.
- Promote the registration of children in the Civil Registry and the granting of legal identity documents.
- Strengthen the data collection system with disaggregation by age and sex.
- Establish documentation systems for missing persons and ensure that their families have access to authorities without discrimination or stigmatization.
- Facilitate the exchange of data for cross-border searches for missing persons and ensure their standardization.

- Manage mortal remains with dignity while respecting the beliefs of the deceased, in order to allow immediate or later identification.
- Set up psychological, economic and administrative support for the families of missing persons.
- Establish a mechanism for issuing “certificates of absence” for missing persons.
- Involve humanitarians and civil society more in tracing missing persons and working with families, and the families themselves.
- Strengthen mechanisms to prevent and combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling.
- Collaborate with diplomatic missions to raise community awareness.

Day 2

This day included two round tables, one on regional and national cooperation to advance the GCM agenda, and a second one on the effective operationalization of the Migration Dialogue for Central African States (MIDCAS).

a) Round table 3: Regional and national cooperation to advance the GCM agenda

This round table focused on the following objectives of the GCM: 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23. The round table was chaired by **Mrs. Valencia Aldongar**, Director of Chadians Abroad and Migration, Republic of Chad with the following panelists: Mrs. Lea Mahfouz, Acting Head of the West and Central Africa Regional Data Hub, IOM; Mr. David Lelu, Legal Expert in the Field of Migration and member of the Network of Legal Experts on Migration (NoLEM); Mr. Philippe Nanga, Coordinator of Un Monde Avenir, Cameroon.

The key recommendations made by the panelists at the end of the discussions were as follows:

➤ In terms of data collection and research

- Systematically focus on collecting migration data;
- Use data collection tools that already exist in the region;
- Update the legislative framework of one of the existing institutions responsible for data collection in the region to counter the duplication of

institutions and the challenges linked to the availability of financial resources;

- Adopt legal and regulatory texts on data collection;
- Stimulate and support research in the field of migration at country and sub-regional level, through enhanced cooperation between member states' universities;
- Systematically integrate migration into censuses in the region;
- Depoliticize migration debates and data;

➤ **Partnership, cooperation and dialogue**

- Establish coordinated migration management and promote internal and external inter-state partnership;
- Promote intercultural exchanges between citizens;
- Strengthen multi-stakeholder dialogue spaces at national and sub-regional level around migration;
- Strengthen cooperation between states on labor migration;
- Set up a mechanism at the sub-regional level to take care of migrants in vulnerable situations;
- Have a sub-regional observatory on migration;
- Inform decision-makers in ECCAS member states about the benefits of migratory collaboration on development, in order to free them from the reluctance to commit to the implementation of the commitments of migratory collaboration and partnerships in the region.

➤ **On border management**

- Encourage states to continue the digitalization of border crossings with MIDAS systems;
- Equip border crossings with the effective tools needed to collect and transmit data on labor migration, refugees, climate change-related migration and transhumance.

b) Round table 4: the effective operationalization of the Migration Dialogue for Central African States (MIDCAS)

MIDCAS was established by ECCAS in 2012 and adopted by the Conference of Heads of State in 2015 as a framework for consultation among ECCAS member states on migration issues within the sub-region, as well as with other African Union Regional Economic Commissions (RECs). However, MIDCAS is slow to

enter its operationalization phase. This round table offered participants a space to discuss ways and means for an effective operationalization of MIDCAS and was chaired by **Mr. Maxime Ake**, Employment and Youth Expert, ECCAS with the following panelists: Mr. Mathieu Kinouani, Special Assistant to the Commissioner of the Department in charge of Gender Promotion, Human and Social Development, ECCAS; General Michel Koumbila, Administrative Advisor, Migration Focal Point at the Ministry of Interior and Security, Republic of Gabon; Ms. Paddy Siyanga Knudsen, Zambian Economist specializing in diaspora development and engagement; Ms. Kristina Galstyan, International Partnerships Division, IOM.

The key recommendations made by the panelists at the end of the discussions were as follows:

➤ **Implementation of the mechanism**

- Designate a MIDCAS focal point in each ECCAS member state;
- Organize and sustain coordination of member states' internal migration services, which will be MIDCAS's interface;
- Establish an inter-state platform (task force) on MIDCAS made up of member states and the UN Network on Migration;
- Build on existing dialogue mechanisms in the region;
- Install a dedicated and active MIDCAS secretariat;
- Make MIDCAS sustainable through relevant topics (health, climate change, protection) and a sustainable funding mechanism;
- Review the MIDCAS implementation documents and update them if necessary

➤ **Dialogue and appraisal**

- Encourage ownership of MIDCAS by ECCAS member states through an advocacy campaign;
- Replicate best practices from other Inter-State Coordination Mechanisms and contextualize them for MIDCAS, including ECOWAS
- Use MIDCAS to make migration governance efforts in ECCAS member states more visible, also at the level of global coordination platforms (such as the International Migration Review Forum in 2026);
- Improve the availability of information for migrants prior to their departure to avoid loss of lives;
- Mainstream migration into political consciousness as being beneficial to states;

➤ **Partnership**

- Establish a mechanism under the auspices of MIDCAS to engage civil society, diaspora and trade union actors to leverage technical capacity and research to conduct joint advocacy actions at continental and global levels in the development, implementation and review of the Global Compact;
- Use the current momentum around the African Global Compact Implementation plans to raise issues that affect the ECCAS region;
- Make cooperation between ECCAS member states, stakeholders and IOM more dynamic;
- Develop a communication and coordination tool with Europe regarding migratory flows in the region;
- Seize support from technical and financial partners in the region, including IOM.

➤ **Next stages**

- Organize an in-person MIDCAS relaunch workshop with the aim of establishing an action plan that provides for regular meetings and which will then be validated at the political level;
- Conduct training campaigns for capacity building for the benefit of actors involved in MIDCAS;
- Organize exchange visits and workshops that involve different stakeholders on migration management in the region.

V. [Additional recommendations](#)

This session was moderated by **Mr. Valery Bobuin**, AU Youth Ambassador for Central Africa, and aimed to identify additional recommendations that had not been addressed during the round tables.

➤ **Additional recommendations**

- Mapping NGOs / associations /civil society that act effectively on the issue of migration in the ECCAS region;
- Accelerate the introduction of the task force to revitalize MIDCAS, by analyzing what is preventing MIDCAS from being truly operational
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- Spark dialogue in a positive way and promote the positive aspects of migration in Central Africa, including the circulation of skills within and outside Central Africa;
- Involve the media, town halls and local authorities more in migration policy;
- As Africans, start valuing each other first; the more we understand our wealth, the more we open up to migrants and fight xenophobia;
- Encourage school curricula to focus on the history of Africa rather than that of the European Union;
- Facilitate the improvement of the infrastructure used for travel in the region.

VI. Presentation and validation of recommendations

Mr. Tharcisse Tumukunde, Advisor to the Directorate for the Promotion of Migrant Employment, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Development Cooperation, Burundi, presented to the participants the main recommendations from round tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 for their consideration. Participants reviewed each recommendation and made the necessary changes.

Following the intensive review of the recommendations, the amended recommendations were validated and adopted by unanimous consensus.

Concluding this session, Mrs. **Kristina Mejo** informed participants that these recommendations would be presented at the 2024 Africa Regional GCM Review, and that they are to be posted on the UN Network on Migration website.

VII. Closing

The closing was delivered by H.E. **Kapinga-Yvette Ngandu**, Commissioner in charge of the Department of Gender Promotion, Human and Social Development, ECCAS, where she expressed her gratitude to the members of the United Nations Network for their support, as well as to member states' experts, civil society actors and migrants' representatives for their active participation

She added that the content of the four themes discussed revealed, on the one hand, the importance and obligation to engage in concrete actions for the effective implementation of the Global Compact in Central Africa and, on the other hand,



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the necessity and urgency to reactivate MIDCAS. The excellent quality of the presentations and exchanges resulted in relevant recommendations that will allow the sub-region to approach the Continental Review planned in Addis Ababa with confidence. It was therefore with this feeling of satisfaction that the subregional consultation on the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration in the ECCAS region ended.