

Summary Notes from Stakeholder Consultations on Sessions 1-4 for the Regional Review of the GCM for Africa Region 9th and 10th September 2024 Online

In preparation for the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration \(GCM\) Regional Reviews](#) the UN Network of Migration organized two thematic Multi-stakeholder Consultations for stakeholders in the Africa region to identify priority areas and to prepare key messages to be deliberated at the Regional Review Meeting from 8-10 October in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Each consultation was attended by over 65 participants from across stakeholder sectors and sub-regions, with speakers from civil society, stakeholders and Regional UN Network members for Africa.

On 9 September 2024, the first thematic Multi-stakeholder Consultation addressed the GCM objectives outlined in thematic roundtables 1 and 2 of the Intergovernmental Conference.

General comments:

- It is important for stakeholders to participate in the creation of frameworks and in the review as well as monitoring exercises related to the implementation of the GCM, e.g. the establishment of National GCM Implementation Plans. This was the case for instance in Kenya.

GCM Objectives covered in session 1:



Objective 2: Minimize Adverse Drivers

- Conflicts and climate change increasingly displace people. Lack of decent work opportunities and lack of social protection are also important factors pushing people to migrate in Africa.
- There is a need for: (i) investments in decent job creation, in the context of transition to greener economies; as well as for (ii) universal social protection and equality and non-discrimination in the labour market for all workers.
- A holistic approach is needed at the global level to ensure that countries of origin can provide decent work opportunities and social protection, so that migration is out of choice rather than a result of economic coercion.
- There are some concerns that selective migration policies focusing on high wage professionals undermine development goals in poorest countries, leading to brain drain.

Objective 5: Regular Pathways

- There is a lack of regular and rights-based pathways that ensure decent work standards.
- It is acknowledged that Africa has a high level of political commitment to addressing this issue, both at continental level and within the various RECs.

- Concerns were raised over existing regular pathways which are employer driven and fail to protect migrant workers' labour rights and ensure the right to family unity. Dependency on the employer for one's migration status often prevents workers from reporting labor exploitation and other abuses, as well as from joining a union and advocating for better conditions.
- Countries are called to sign and ratify the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons as well as to sign bilateral agreements for creating regular and rights-based pathways, while ensuring social protection.
- Illicit financial flows, debts and assets looting need should be curtailed to increase the chances of resource mobilisation for social protection financing.
- Rights-based pathways must also go hand in hand with regularization of the status of irregular migrants.
- It is crucial to ensure that migrant workers and civil society actors are involved when pathways are designed and implemented.
- It is critical for migrants to be able to fully exercise their right to freedom of association; to organize and collectively bargain.
- It is important for migrants to be able to exercise the option for family unity, permanent residency and eventual citizenship if they desire it.

Objective 6: Fair Recruitment and Decent Work

- Migrant workers often face unsafe working conditions, discrimination, lack of social protection, and exploitation in both formal and informal labour markets.
- It is acknowledged that there is a strong political commitment to protecting the rights of migrant workers, including through dialogue and cooperation to promote fair recruitment and setting standards for rights-based bilateral labour migration agreements with countries beyond the region.
- However, there is a need for stronger legal protections, improved working conditions, fair recruitment practices and social security for migrant workers.
- All African countries are called to ratify and effectively implement international labour standards. In particular, ILO Conventions 189 (domestic workers); 190 (violence and harassment in the world of work); as well as 181 (Private Employment Agencies) should be ratified and implemented.
 - Domestic work must be recognised as work in national labor laws in all countries.
 - It is critical for migrant workers to be able to access justice without fear of retaliation.
 - There are concerns regarding the recruitment fees that continue to be charged to migrant workers by recruitment agencies or intermediaries.
- Minimum wage laws should protect all migrant workers and equal pay for work of equal value must be ensured.
- Governments must address any legal gaps in sectors where women migrant workers are over-represented to ensure they are covered by labour laws.
- Trade unions are calling for a New Social Contract to create more inclusive societies and economies. This could be built around creation of climate-friendly jobs through Just Transition; rights for all workers regardless of their employment or migration status; minimum living wages for all workers; universal social protection; equality and inclusion.
- It is important to ensure and strengthen tripartite social dialogue, with employers' and workers' organizations, within the African Union, RECs, inter-regional dialogue processes and at national level.
- The African Union is called to take further steps to ensure the creation of an African Labour Migration coordination process similar to the Asia's Colombo Process.

Objective 12: Screening and Referral

- The work of the Migrant Worker Resource Centres (MRCs) in Africa has been acknowledged. This includes referrals to specialized services, but also information providing and counselling, as well as support to fair recruitment.

Objective 18: Skills Development and Recognition

- It is critical for women, youth and migrants to be able to access skills development opportunities.
- Although it is acknowledged that there were some efforts made in that matter, it was highlighted that there is a need for strengthening mechanisms for skill development and recognition.

GCM Objectives covered in session 2:



Objective 4: Legal Identity and documentation

- It was acknowledged that some efforts were made related to universal birth rights and access for legal identity for all, in particular through policy decisions and bilateral agreements.
- However, still too many children remain unregistered in Africa and levels vary across sub-regions – Eastern Africa having the largest number of unregistered children.
- The importance of eradicating statelessness, and in particular child statelessness, has been raised. In that regard, it is recalled that article 7 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, that has been ratified by almost all countries, addresses this issue.
- Capacity building of government officials and local authorities is needed to ensure that documentation processes are inclusive of migrants who do not speak the national language. By ensuring that migrants are supported throughout the documentation process, states can increase the likelihood of all migrants obtaining proof of legal identity, regardless of language barriers.
- It is important for migrants to have access to information and get administrative support related to the legal identity and documentation procedures.

Objective 8: Save Lives

- It was acknowledged that some of the riskiest migration routes are in Africa and that deaths and missing migrants should be prevented.
- At the previous Regional Review, it was agreed that working groups would be set up at the subregional level, to ensure that medical and forensic work is conducted in a coordinated and collaborative approach.

Objective 9: Counter Smuggling and Objective 10: Eradicate Trafficking

- Objective 9 and Objective 10 require transnational responses.
- It was acknowledged that efforts were made in Africa to strengthen information sharing, collaboration and develop bilateral and multilateral assistance, for instance through: (i) the Khartoum Declaration

on AU-Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants; as well as (ii) the Ouagadougou Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings.

- Countries are called to ratify and implement international and regional human rights instruments, particularly the Convention on migrant workers and the Palermo Protocol.
- Countries are called for strengthening regional coordination and collaboration; adopting coherent policies; as well as for using digital technologies and data collection to tackle these issues.

Objective 11: Manage Borders

- The importance of safeguarding human rights at borders and ensuring that border management practices are humane and rights-based was highlighted.
- It is critical that responses are rights focused and that migration systems at the national level are child sensitive.
- When it comes to unaccompanied or separated children crossing an international border, it is essential that child protection authorities are informed and adopt measures that are in the best interests of the child.

Objective 13: Alternatives to Detention

- Immigration detention should only ever be used as a last resort and after all possible alternatives have been considered.
- Countries are called to prioritize non-custodial alternatives to detention that are in line with international law. The development of policies on migrants' detention is needed in that regard, both at national and regional level.
- Countries in Africa are also called to end immigration detention of children in Africa. It is critical for countries to ensure that children are not detained, since detention is never in the best interest of the child.
- Countries are called to pursue case management mechanisms at the national and transnational level as well as to mainstream inclusion of migrants in national systems.
- It is important to ensure that Alternatives to Detention are included in National Implementation Plans of GCM.

Objective 21: Dignified Return and Reintegration

- It is important to address the drivers of mixed migration in the countries of origin.
- It is critical to promote gender responsive and child sensitive return and reintegration programs. These could include legal, social and financial support, guaranteeing that all returns in the context of such voluntary programs effectively take place on the basis of the migrants' free prior and informed consent.
- It is necessary that returns that involve children are carried out only after a determination of the best interest of the child.

On 10 September 2024, the first thematic Multi-stakeholder Consultation addressed the GCM objectives outlined in thematic roundtables 3 and 4 of the Intergovernmental Conference.

GCM Objectives covered in session 3:



General comments:

- All organization and stakeholders are invited to submit any reports or policy briefs on any GCM objectives, relevant for the regional reviews, on the Africa review website.
- Member states and regional economic communities should establish well-consulted and mutually agreed upon migration governance mechanisms across the continent to harness the full potential of migration for national and regional development;
- CSOs were called to undertake advocacy, strengthen collaboration and nurture social cohesion to improve migration governance, which can be accomplished through continued multi stakeholder approach at national, regional and international levels.
- Stakeholders are promoting a migration health agenda including but not limited to preparedness and response to epidemic, continuity of care, portability of health and social protection benefit and strengthening International Health Regulation (IHR) core capacity and most important inclusion of diaspora in every aspect of socio-cultural and economic activities.
- GCM provides the most robust opportunity to streamline irregular migration and create a comprehensive framework to address the push and pull factors inherent in migration.
- Reference was made to the existence of challenges with inadequate or insufficient funding, even for government agencies that should be actively engaged in GCM implementation.

On CSOs engagement:

- CSOs highlighted the need for regional collaboration, inclusive policies, and the active role of CSOs in tackling migration challenges and helping migrants make valuable contributions to both their home and host countries.
- Stakeholders pointed out the need to have a CSO Plan or Platform of engagement with government. They should be actively engaged in regional and national consultations organized by either government, the UN or regional bodies i.e Ecowas, IGAD, SADC, presenting evidence – based recommendations and advocating for migrant’s rights and policies aligned with the GCM objectives.
- CSOs are indispensable in the successful implementation of the GCM, for example in regions like Eastern and Horn of Africa there are existing networks which help in facilitating CSOs to be engaged in regional policy formulation or even validations.
- Through advocacy, service provision, networking, and grassroots mobilization, CSOs ensure that migration is managed in a way that respects human rights, promotes social cohesion, and leverages the potential of migration for sustainable development.
- The role of CSOs is especially critical in fostering a "whole of society" approach, where they contribute to facilitate all stakeholders, including migrants, governments, and communities, are actively engaged in the processes of GCM implementation.
- As joint coalitions or networks within the region, CSOs can create policy briefs and position papers that reflect the perspectives of migrants, refugees, survivors of trafficking, etc.

- This framework will not only strengthen international cooperation but also will enhance the capacity of African nations to mitigate the root causes of migration, such as poverty, conflict, and lack of economic opportunities, while also addressing the factors that attract migrants, such as labor demand and perceived better living conditions.

Objective 14: Consular Protection

- African consular missions within Africa and abroad have a responsibility to provide services to their nationals including appropriate protection measures and assistance during crises and emergencies.
 - One example in this regard is the SADC Member States in 2022 underscored the significant role consular offices played in the protection and assistance of migrants during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Member States need to strengthen their respective consulate offices to better manage migration in the spirit of the GCM so that all involved and concerned address the challenges and barriers that exacerbate the challenges of migrants in their quest to participate in investment, economic growth, and safety and wellbeing across the mobility continuum.
- Stakeholders emphasized the substantive contributions of CSOs in the effective provision of consular services: for example, in East Africa countries like Kenya and Uganda, consular services and agreements have been set up to protect migrants abroad, with CSOs often helping them connect with consular offices.
- Some of the challenges mentioned were the limited consular presence in certain regions; as well as the provision of adequate protection and assistance to migrants abroad.
- There was acknowledgment of the efforts are being made for Joint consular services among African countries within regional economic communities like ECOWAS, COMESA, IGAD, etc capacity-building programs for consular staff on the implementation of GCM etc.
- Stakeholders shared risks associated and intrinsic to the migration process. The example of Ghana was mentioned, where a rehabilitation center for migrants, but many are reluctant to register due to past instances where some were wrongly and forcibly repatriated.
- Member states are called to ensure the continuity of care on fragile settings.

Objective 15: Access to basic services

- Some key issues identified were: barriers to accessing healthcare, education, and housing due to legal, financial, and language challenges as well as difficulties in integrating migrants into host communities.
- The Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the Plan of Action 2018-2030 advocate for the inclusion of migrants into national health plans.
- Stakeholders mentioned the positive example of the adoption of inclusive service policies and regional health initiatives targeting migrant populations, as well as GCM champions such as Kenya developing NIP as part of the developments.
- Stakeholders highlighted the need for health services to be migrant sensitive and migration conscious.
- Progresses in health financing commitments outlined in the Abuja declaration are criticized to be slow, but there are some advances to mention:
 - The Africa Union Commission (AUC) for Health, Humanitarian Affairs and Social Development establishing the new thematic area on migration and health in 2020.
 - A good example to highlight: Egypt's measure where migrants are included in the "100 million Healthy Lives Initiative for the early detection and treatment of Hepatitis C" - which obtained recognition by the World Health Organization.

- Implementation of cross-border health programs in East Africa for example ensuring migrants have access to essential services.
- Member states should ensure that health services are accessible and responsive to the needs of migrant populations.
- A healthy population is productive and hence the Universal Health Coverage and the principles of ‘leave no one behind’ must be realized.
- Other social services can also be attained when migrants are treated as humans, as productive parts of society, as investors and as promoters of socio-cultural values and exchanges.

Objective 16: Inclusion and social cohesion

- The diaspora must be more visible and maintain a seat at the decision-making table because their perspectives are essential in shaping a right-based approach to migration policies.
- Good practices highlighted:
 - Cabo Verde ‘s “Promotion of the Social Integration of Immigrants” which funding initiative of migrants’ associations that leverage their access to income, education and health.
 - Kenya continuously maps and issues citizenship to stateless persons and descendant of migrants through implementation of the Citizenship and Immigration Act (2011).
 - The “Provision of essential services, protection and economic empowerment to support the inclusion and integration of migrant street children, youths, and adolescents in Addis Ababa”.
 - Increased anti-xenophobia campaigns and community engagement programs led by governments and CSOs.
 - There is an emerging promise community integration programs in different countries such as Kenya, Ghana and Rwanda mainly this is to foster social cohesion and reduce marginalization, for example Joint Programs in migration and mobility in Kenya – where survivor’s networks have been included as part of the programs.

Objective 19: Migrant and diaspora contributions

- The diaspora must be more visible and maintain a seat at the decision-making table, not only due to their financial and social contribution but also because their perspectives are essential in shaping a rights-based approach to migration policies;
- Stakeholders emphasized that migrants’ contribution to the continent’s socio-economic growth and development of countries of origin, transit, and destination should be fully acknowledge and promoted.
- There is evidence of an underutilization of diaspora potential; diaspora engagement strategies are not being sufficiently utilized.
- There are high remittance costs reducing the impact on development.
- Mobility can connect markets, cultures, and communities across African countries. Migrants and the diaspora have immense potential in advancing the African Continental Free Trade Agreement (AfCTFA) initiatives and regional economic integration.
- Enabling environment for migrants and the diaspora can definitely enhances social protection mechanisms and health insurances as well. This capacity can transcend to diaspora involvement in telemedicine and digital health as well as technological transfer.

- Member States and regional economic communities should establish well-consulted and mutually agreed migration governance mechanisms to harness the full potential of migration for national and regional development.
- Regularly reviewing and updating policies to address the evolving needs of migrant populations, allocate sufficient resources, and foster partnerships with relevant stakeholders to ensure effective and sustained policy implementation.
- Need for further implementation of diaspora mapping acts, to ensure that voting rights are not violated and as a way to enhance social protection mechanisms and insurances as well.
- Call to member states to allocate sufficient resources, foster partnerships and to enhance effective and sustained policy implementation.
- The creation of an international bank for the diaspora in the region was proposed but never materialized. There is a need to amplify, encourage, and support the multiplication of such initiatives.
- Promising practices:
 - Development of diaspora engagement strategies and exploration of diaspora bonds for investment i.e Kenya has a department on diaspora affairs at the ministry of affairs.
 - Establishment of diaspora investment platforms in Ethiopia and Kenya; remittance facilitation programs that lower transaction costs have been seen in Ghana for example etc

Objective 20: Remittances

- Africa is recognized as a leader in innovative money transfer applications.
- During COVID-19 pandemic, migrants contributed significantly to both their host countries and countries of origin.
 - In 2020 the African diaspora in the US contributed \$36 billion in taxes, while remittances to Africa amounted to \$78.4 billion, three times higher than foreign aid to the continent in that year
 - Egypt is among the countries with the lowest remittance cost as monitored by its Central Bank so that it does not exceed 3%.
 - the government of Cabo Verde through its banking institutions has introduced a Special Emigrant Account with subsidized interest rates
- Stakeholders requested policy, collaboration and action by Member States to improve remittance mechanisms between host and origin countries, to facilitate more efficient and affordable remittances. This can be achieved, for example, by promoting the use of mobile platforms.

Objective 22: Social protection

- Encouraging steps in the region, regarding the portability of social entitlements and earned benefits include:
 - The intercontinental arrangement made between Africa, the Middle East and Europe.
 - The social security conventions signed by Cabo Verde with multiple countries cover the portability of social security entitlements, including sickness and maternity benefits, old age pensions, and disability benefits.
 - ECOWAS (2021) stressed the need to introduce migrant social protection guidelines and assistance, including psycho-social support, as essential elements in migration governance.
 - Some IGAD Member States like Ethiopia provides essential services, protection and economic empowerment.

- Bilateral Labour Agreements (BLAs) and memorandums of understanding (MoUs) are encouraging mechanisms to advance social protection of migrants; however, discrepancies exist between the actual benefits of migrants and the entitlements in the agreement.
- The whole-of-route approach needs to be strengthened for comprehensive programming and response to migrants.
- Stakeholders mention the existing discrepancies between the actual benefit of migrants and the challenges associated with migration, stating that the central point is to support the integration of migrants and their contributions to development, through a rights based approach, accountability mechanism which have to be strengthened as a result of joint work of civil society organization, member states and stakeholders.

GCM Objectives covered in session 4:



General comments

- An African agenda has been clearly outlined, aiming to elevate migration issues, with a focus on local actors and community knowledge at the center. It's important to rethink how migration is perceived, including the benefits it brings, and to redefine the public's understanding of the role of migrants.
- Call to bring back development into the migration discourse.

Objective 1: Data

- Stakeholders expressed their commitment to enhance available data and cooperation among all stakeholders, to inform evidence-based policies and programmes that will, in turn, result in informed migration as well as the reduction of vulnerabilities and the benefit of all migrants and societies.
- Tangible examples of progress and achievements in the last decade, for example:
 - The establishment of institutions to improve migration data availability and quality, and for better intra-Africa cooperation in migration governance, including the African Union Institute for Statistics (StatAfric) or the African Migration Observatory (AMO)
 - Member states efforts to harmonize and improve the production and use of migration data and statistics, including through the production of regular regional migration statistics reports and the development of regional guidelines on the harmonization of migration statistics
 - The production of national Migration Profiles and the Migration Governance Indicators' assessments, with support from IOM, to inform policy making and advance towards comparable regional and global data
 - The Agreement Establishing the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is essential for regional integration and can be harnessed to enhance both the protection of migrants and the rich contributions they make to the societies they leave and enter.
- Lack or insufficient information through the migration journey may result into unsafe/risky routes and missing migrants – available data are certainly underestimations and more should be done to prevent and address the issue through better information, cooperation among Member States and with relevant stakeholders.
- Beyond merely counting migrants, there is a need for a robust system to truly understand who they are. For instance, during the Ukraine crisis, there was insufficient data on how many African nationals were present, highlighting the need for better information to respond effectively and provide support.
- Areas with potential for further development:
 - Capacity development and technical support on migration data for Member States, including by enhancing migration governance as a whole of government approach
 - Harmonization of migration concepts, definitions and data methods.
 - Exchange of good practices on migration data issues and migration governance on the continent and cross-regional.
 - Collecting data beyond censuses, disaggregated to provide a more granular understanding of migrants' needs and contexts.

- Strengthening programmatic partnerships, coordination and cooperation in the implementation of migration-data-related initiatives across Africa and to enhance and highlight the positive contributions of migration.
- Stakeholders emphasized the need for sound evidence to be able to do their advocacy work.
- Stakeholders noted the need to have the evidence and accurate data to guide their programming and societal development.

Objective 3: Provision of information

- Need to provide tailor made information to migrants, for example, assessing the specific needs of migrants women traveling alone, or migrant women with children.
- Host communities, social networks, should also be able to provide this information.
- Member states play a crucial role in providing information on migration, going beyond traditional consular services. Engagement should start before departure, at the country of origin, ensuring that migrants are informed about their rights. It's essential that these messages are delivered in languages and cultural references that resonate with the migrants to enhance understanding and support.

Objective 7: Reduce vulnerabilities

- The empowerment of local communities is key to respond to growing migrant needs. An example is the Africa-Europe Mayors' Dialogue, a platform for African and European mayors to change the dominant narrative of migration between Africa and Europe, while focusing on the opportunities and positive contribution of migrants to economies and societies in terms of contributions to economic, human, social and cultural capital.
- Members states were called to explicitly make their social protection systems inclusive, ensure that social programs and poverty reduction projects address the needs of migrants, and incorporate migrants into emergency measures during disasters or pandemics.
- Stakeholders pointed how climate-induced migration creates new vulnerabilities, and called for policies to account for those risks, as well as for the inclusion of environmental factors in migration policies to protect those displaced by climate-related events.
- Urge the development of migration policies that cater the specific needs of children and women.
- Called for the engagement of communities to counter discrimination and foster a culture of inclusivity and protection.

Objective 17: Eliminate discrimination

- Media campaigns and public initiatives to shift perceptions of migration away from fear and towards recognition of migrants' contributions to society.
- Stakeholders call to collaborate with media to promote understanding of migration and dismantle harmful stereotypes.
- CSO shared concerns about existing systemic discrimination embedded in the system at the moment to provide employee type visas.

Objective 23: International cooperation

- Acknowledgment of the diverse levels of negotiating power of African Member states.
- There is an opportunity in establishing robust monitoring of the GCM, not just by focusing on indicators but also by assessing whether Member States are genuinely prepared to engage in this process. This

includes their willingness to collaborate with civil society organizations (CSOs) during reviews and to endorse the outcomes when the time comes.

- The Plan of Action, approved in Accra, is instrumental in shaping the GCM monitoring framework. While the process is state-led, it is essential to keep doors open for non-state actors to participate and support these efforts. Their involvement can strengthen the overall process and ensure broader perspectives are considered.
- African Member States were key advocates for Objective 23 at the New York negotiations. It is essential to continue pushing for regional cooperation to ensure the effective implementation of this objective and strengthen collective efforts across the continent.