

**Additional information to the  
VOLUNTARY REVIEW OF PROGRESS  
ACHIEVED IN THE IMPLEMENTATION  
of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2020-2022)**

**Introduction**

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), adopted on 19 December 2018 by the UN General Assembly Resolution A/RES/73/195 at the 73<sup>rd</sup> session, based on the approval of states on 10-11 December 2018 at the Intergovernmental Conference in Morocco, serving as an international instrument forming an integrated and comprehensive vision of migration, provides basis for strengthening international cooperation on migration in all its dimensions to facilitate the contribution of migrants and migration to sustainable development.

The GCM, just like the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), is based on the commitment of the UN Member States to tackle global inequalities and to ensure that “no one in any country is left behind”.

The GCM, as a comprehensive instrument on migration governance, is of particular relevance for Turkmenistan.

**National mechanism**

Turkmenistan, being a member of UN humanitarian agencies, fully supported the UN General Assembly Resolution (73/195) on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration adopted on 19 December 2018 as a basis for the establishment of a comprehensive approach to international migration in all its dimensions.

Turkmenistan, under the leadership of the President of Turkmenistan Serdar Berdimuhamedow, is putting into practice a peaceful foreign policy based on the principles of positive neutrality, committed to the primacy of human rights, the ideals of peacefulness and enhancement of international cooperation, in accordance with the newly adopted Presidential Programme of the Country’s Development for 2022-2052, contributes to the global community’s efforts to protect people regardless of their migration status.

Within the framework of integrating the objectives of the GCM into national development programmes, Turkmenistan developed a methodology and applied an inclusive approach to engage all relevant stakeholders, based on the SDG principle “that no one will be left behind”, and thus in May 2020 created the National Coordination Mechanism which is an Interdepartmental Working Group on the Monitoring of the GCM, comprising representatives of key ministries and departments, as well as civil society organizations. The leading body of the working group is the State Migration Service of Turkmenistan.

**Reporting**

In order to implement paragraph 45 of the GCM, Turkmenistan initiated the process of formation in Turkmenistan of the United Nations Network on Migration (UN MN) with the participation of the IOM offices in Turkmenistan and with support from the IOM Regional office in Vienna and the IOM Central Asia Chief of Mission.

As part of the implementation of paragraph 53 of the GCM, the Interdepartmental Working Group, with the assistance of the UN Network on Migration in Turkmenistan, prepared voluntary reporting at the regional and international levels on the fulfilment of the objectives set out in the GCM, as well as develop a framework for future action in the format of an inventory of possible national and international responses based on internationally recognized best practices and lessons learned.

Owing to the above-mentioned coordinated state-wide efforts and the support provided by the IOM through the UN Network, in March 2020 Turkmenistan presented the first voluntary review of the GCM implementation to ESCAP, reporting on its progress in four thematic areas, to inform the international community about the state’s efforts in the fulfilment of GCM objectives.

## **Review objectives**

This voluntary review (hereinafter referred to as the review) was prepared to determine the current state of Turkmenistan in 2020-2022 on the way to fulfilment of the objectives of the GCM and the SDGs.

To assess the progress of the GCM implementation in Turkmenistan, the following main objectives of the review were identified:

- assess the effectiveness and sufficiency of the institutional mechanisms involved in the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration, as well as the existing redistribution of functions in the process of implementing the GCM;
- analyse the degree of integration of the GCM in national strategic and programme documents;
- assess the current state and progress in the implementation of the GCM and identify key successes and challenges in fulfilling the objectives of the GCM;
- contribute to raising public awareness about the GCM and strengthening partnerships between governmental authorities, civil society, academia, the private sector, as well as international organizations, in fulfilling the objectives of the GCM and in ensuring regulated and safe migration in Turkmenistan.

Taking into account the objectives of the review, a comprehensive assessment of the progress achieved in 2020-2022 in fulfilling certain GCM objectives was conducted. The review was based on such sources of information as governmental authorities and national experts, as well as the studies of international organizations and the experience of other states.

During the comprehensive assessment, it was revealed that most of the objectives of the GCM, to one degree or another, have already been incorporated into the national strategic and programme documents approved in Turkmenistan. The most successful objectives are: 2, 4, 6, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 23 and the approaches to the collection and analysis of data have improved as a result.

Nevertheless, there are gaps which require intensification of efforts of the state, civil society and international partnership.

Turkmenistan is committed to continuous improvement of legislation and implementation of international concepts practices, conducting high level international dialogue to enhance international cooperation in the legislative and other spheres.

## **Voluntary review methodology**

In the context of this comprehensive approach in conjunction with the SDGs, the Interdepartmental Working Group prepared this voluntary review of the implementation of the GCM, based on the recommendations of ESCAP, the UN General Assembly resolutions that approved the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Consideration was also made to the format and organizational aspects of the International Migration Review Forum, as well as national programmes and strategies, including the National Programme of Socio-Economic Cooperation adopted by the Halk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan for 2022-2052, the National Programme of Socio-Economic Development of Turkmenistan for 2011-2030, the Programme of the President of Turkmenistan for Socio-Economic Development of the Country for 2019-2025, the Concept for Development of the Migration Service System for 2017-2021 and its new concept and other national legal documents. The voluntary review is based on national plans and sectoral development programmes of the country, laws and other regulatory legal acts of Turkmenistan as well as reports submitted to international organizations, including those submitted in the framework of international obligations in the field of human rights.

In order to balance and integrate the GCM objectives into national plans, a comprehensive assessment of national programmes and strategies in relation to the GCM objectives was carried out along with the analysis of migration challenges. Following the initiation of the launch of the UN Network on Migration, joint IWG meetings with the IOM regional office were held to prepare a voluntary review using the ESCAP methodology, other states' experience and analysis of the links between the GCM and the SDGs.

## Procedure and fulfilment of the GCM objectives

In accordance with the GCM objectives, the regulation of migration procedures in Turkmenistan is primarily aimed at their simplification, ensuring simplicity and transparency and enjoyment by the migrants of the same fundamental rights and freedoms as the citizens of Turkmenistan. The empowerment of migrants and the provision of basic services to migrants impact their contribution to the sustainable development, thereby positively contributing to the development of Turkmenistan.

While ensuring the voluntary, orderly and regular nature of migration, Turkmenistan prioritizes the simplicity and predictability of migration procedures, thereby facilitating access to pathways for regular migration and minimizing the various adverse drivers' impact on migration, creates conditions that ensure decent work and fair recruitment, while recognizing the migrants' qualifications and investing in further skills development.

The accessibility of migration procedures in the country is achieved through the simplification of entry/departure procedures, transit, visa procedures, documenting and protection of migrants at all stages of migration. The simplification of migration procedures is ensured, *inter alia*, through the use of electronic technologies, including the online filing of applications for visas, work permits, registration, passports and other identification documents, as well as the feedback using electronic notification of migrants on the readiness of the procedures or documents. Special attention is paid to ensuring that the migrants are timely informed of their rights and obligations and new legislation related to the enhancement of availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration.

Implementing policies aimed at the elimination of all forms of inequality, Turkmenistan invests funds in national, regional and international programmes to improve social and economic well-being of the country's population, including vulnerable groups, which facilitates the minimization of various adverse drivers and factors impacting migration and migrants. This is also facilitated by Turkmenistan's investment in human capital development in the field of education, vocational training and skills development, entrepreneurship, productive employment creation, including in the private sector, to avoid brain drain.

The minimization of adverse drivers impacting migration is facilitated by the implementation by the country of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, for which progress is manifestly achieved through the adoption of a set of measures under the National Presidential Programme of Socio-Economic Development for 2019-2025, Framework Programme for Cooperation in the Field of Sustainable Development between the Government of Turkmenistan and the UN for 2021-2025, the Memorandum of Understanding and Cooperation in Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in Turkmenistan, as well as the plans made in accordance with the National Programme of Socio-Economic Cooperation adopted by the Halk Maslahaty of Turkmenistan for 2022-2052.

In accordance with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, Turkmenistan is implementing a set of state-wide measures aimed at reducing disaster risk, developing national emergency management mechanisms, raising awareness and improving preparedness of the population, in the context of natural and human-made emergencies.

Within the framework of disaster risk reduction, to strengthen the sustainability of the education sector, local communities and vulnerable populations through actions at the level of schools and local communities in the Aral Sea region of Turkmenistan, a set of measures is being implemented in accordance with the Agreement on Programme Cooperation for 2021-2025 between the UNICEF and the National Red Crescent Society of Turkmenistan.

As for actions in the field of climate, a high-level delegation of Turkmenistan took part in COP26 in Glasgow reaffirming its commitment to the Paris Agreement on climate change. Currently, the Government of Turkmenistan is working to finalize the nationally determined contributions and the Fourth National Communication on Climate Change.

Through these frameworks, Turkmenistan pledges that:

- **By 2025, Turkmenistan will ensure** the effective development and implementation of disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation and mitigation measures, which

will allow to use the resources more rationally, to enhance the sustainability and to transition to green economy.

- **Turkmenistan will continue to strengthen** its national regulatory legal framework for the facilitation of sustainable and green development, including the improvement of energy efficiency, use of renewable energy, reduction of global greenhouse gas emissions, waste management and disaster risk reduction. The strengthened national regulatory legal framework for the facilitation of sustainable and green (environmentally friendly) development includes, *inter alia*, the new Law on Renewable Energy, the development of the National Renewable Energy Strategy until 2030, the National Waste Management Strategy of Turkmenistan, the development of the child-sensitive Disaster Risk Reduction Strategy of Turkmenistan. The latter strategy will strengthen the regulatory framework of Turkmenistan in the field of DRR in order to reduce vulnerability and improve the resilience of children and youth against climate change and natural disasters.
- **It is expected that in 2022** the Government of Turkmenistan will adopt a new version of the National Plan of Action to Combat Desertification developed in accordance with the concept and recommendations of the FAO, as well as a number of legal acts to promote green standards and energy efficient technologies, such as sprinkler irrigation systems, construction norms and regulations related to the design and construction of anti-filtration screens made of polyethylene film for water reservoirs, energy audit regulations for housing and public buildings, as well as the rules governing the procedure of maintaining the state cadastre of renewable energy sources, etc.
- **As for the results of the Framework Programme for Sustainable Development**, the collection of data on the SDGs remained a priority task in 2021. The national medium-term review of SDGs initiated in Turkmenistan will allow to assess progress in the achievement of SDGs in the country and will serve as a basis for the preparation of the Second Voluntary National Review of Turkmenistan, which will be presented in 2023. In 2021, the Government created a national SDG database at the State Committee on Statistics, which will allow to further strengthen the national data collection, monitoring and reporting system. Extensive support was provided within the framework of preparation for the 2022 census, which, upon its completion and publication of results, will enable access to most of the SDG indicators. Within the framework of the roadmap of support in the implementation of the National Digital Health Strategy and the Law on Civil Registration and the Civil Registry (2019), there was conducted a review of the legislation regulating the issues of births and deaths registration.
- **One of the noteworthy achievements of 2021**, which became a further impetus to the promotion of voluntary, orderly and regular migration, was the approval of the National Human Rights Action Plan for 2021-2025, which increasingly reflects the recommendations of the Universal Periodic Review (2018) and SDGs, the approval of the procedure of statelessness identification in accordance with the new Law of Turkmenistan “On the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens in Turkmenistan” and as part of the National Digital Health Strategy adopted in 2019, the pilot implementation in 2021-2022 of the roadmap through the development of software for online registration of births and deaths, which could be extended and replicated for other types of state services. The development of the Unified State Registry of Civil Registration and Life Cycle Statistics System and the unique identification document for further digitalization of services and population data processing is another important activity area expected to be approved in 2022.
- **In order to improve the level of knowledge and skills** related to the procedure of identification of people in the context of mixed movements, including unaccompanied children, victims of human trafficking and others, and to facilitate thereby orderly and safe migration, Turkmenistan provides systemic training for government officials who, in the course of their work, deal with alleged victims of human trafficking, migrants in vulnerable situations and refugees. Systemic training includes educational programmes, seminars, webinars, workshops for government officials, including staff of prosecutorial

and judicial authorities, internal affairs authorities, border, migration and customs authorities, as well as teachers/professors, staff of health, education, social protection system authorities and other governmental authorities and public associations, engaging them in the gender-responsive and child-sensitive referral mechanism, to provide the necessary support and advice in the context of mixed movements.

- **Migrants and their families leaving Turkmenistan are provided with skills and training**—along with the automatic recognition of their skills to protect their labour rights at all skills levels, as well as to optimize the employability of migrants in the labour market and to ensure decent work. In addition, foreign citizens in Turkmenistan have the right to education in accordance with the procedure set forth by the law of Turkmenistan. The competent executive authority in the field of education promotes international cooperation in the area of education through the system of analysis and prediction of modern global processes in the field of youth education and upbringing and vocational training. For the purposes of vocational training, the educational institutions of Turkmenistan establish direct contacts with foreign institutions implementing various educational programmes. For the same purpose, foreign educational institutions (their branches) are working in the territory of Turkmenistan.
- **Enhanced inclusiveness of national education services:** As part of the efforts to improve the quality of educational services, Turkmenistan created a digital platform based on the National Concept of the Digital Education System Development. Special attention is paid to the early physical, social and mental development of children.
- **In terms of improvement of the national education system** and skills development, as well as enhancement of social integration and resilience within the framework of diversification of economy, Turkmenistan continued implementing a set of measures in cooperation with the UN aimed at the improvement of the national education system and skills development, as well as enhancement of social integration and resilience within the framework of diversification of economy through capacity-building, collection of scientific evidence and approaches to system strengthening.
- **As for achievements in the field of migration and statelessness** and provision of identification and travel documents, Turkmenistan is the leader in the Central Asia region in terms of accession to conventions on statelessness and has positive experience in biometric identification of refugees and stateless persons. In order to implement the UN Global Action Plan to End Statelessness 2014-2024, Turkmenistan is actively applying efforts to implement the relevant National Action Plan for 2019-2024, which resulted in over 28,000 stateless persons being granted citizenship of Turkmenistan. **Currently, active work in this area still continues in order to end statelessness by 2024.** This is also facilitated by the registration of birth of each child and by granting them the right to a name and the right to citizenship from the moment of birth.
- In terms of **border management** and improvement of efforts to combat transnational crime, a set of measures and strategies is being implemented in order to combat transnational crime, improve travel documents and identification of persons, supply the borders with modern equipment and improve registration systems.
- In terms of **countering the smuggling of migrants and human trafficking**, Turkmenistan is reviewing successful strategies, whereby equipment and information and communications technologies are being used to prevent and investigate the smuggling of migrants and to effectively respond to the spread of the criminal groups' activity in cyberspace; in accordance with the cybersecurity legislation, Turkmenistan is strengthening capacity through systemic training of law enforcement officers and officers of other competent authorities; population is being informed about the risks and dangers. In order to improve border management, the "Implementation of the Advance Passenger Information System in Central Asia for 2020-2021" project was launched.
- Turkmenistan continues to implement measures under the **National Action Plan against Human Trafficking for 2020-2022**, to provide mutual assistance in investigation of crimes

related to human trafficking, to build the capacity of forensic experts in Turkmenistan and to implement a management system in accordance with international standards. Turkmenistan has strengthened national capacity in the field of border control and container control to protect the supply chains from illegal goods and to facilitate legal trade that is gender-responsive and based on human rights. At the Farap awtoyollary customs post, new port control points were opened, increasing the total number of port control points to three.

- To ensure **health security at entry points**, such as sea-ports, airports and land crossings, Turkmenistan strengthened the capacity of medical, migration and customs personnel. In addition, with the extensive support of the WHO, Turkmenistan developed the strategy of the National Testing Laboratory for COVID-19 testing. Patient management and viral respiratory infections/COVID-19 treatment protocols were developed based on the new scientific evidence, scientific publications and updated WHO recommendations.
- Within the framework of **bilateral extradition treaties**, agreements on mutual assistance in civil, family and criminal matters, on mutual travel of citizens, etc., Turkmenistan facilitates the return of its citizens and admits them without undue delay, providing travel documents required for their return and creating favourable conditions to ensure personal security, economic empowerment and sustainable social integration. Return processes are carried out taking into account the best interests of the child, the right to family life and family unity.
- In order to uphold **the best interests of the child**, the child's upbringing and development is ensured according to their evolving capacities. Men and women, regardless of their citizenship and migration status, have equal rights and freedoms.
- **In order to ensure the rule of law**, the complaints of the migrants in the territory of Turkmenistan may be reviewed by the Ombudsman. The integration of migrants in the country is aimed at bridging the sociocultural divide, mutual respect, equality of rights and elimination of discrimination. Empowerment of migrants impacts the migrants' and diasporas' contribution to the sustainable development, thereby positively contributing to the development of Turkmenistan.
- Within the framework of the social protection programme which funds the SDGs, in December 2021 the Mejlis (the lower house of Parliament) adopted the new Law on Social Services, containing provisions on the development of social services at community level, which will have transformative impact on the life of vulnerable and isolated people. The staff of social services, including the new social workers, received training, and their positions were included in the budget of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. Four universities were prepared to accept applications for advanced social work training, which is expected to start in September 2022. The draft five-year national plan of social services development includes the mechanism of intersectoral state coordination at the national level and the institutional architecture of social services provision.
- The new model of inclusive services at community level was launched. It assessed the needs of vulnerable people, including persons with disabilities and chronic diseases, and, with support of social workers, provided direct assistance to people in need and vulnerable children and adults and their families through 12 new types of specialized services, including personal assistant's services first provided in Ashgabat, Türkmenabat and Mary to families with children, unaccompanied children, at-risk youth, women facing gender-based violence, adults and children with disabilities, single older persons and persons with chronic diseases, in order to address their specific needs and provide support to people to help them live independently in their communities.
- **It is expected that by 2025 the population of Turkmenistan, including migrants, will have access to better-quality and more inclusive health and social protection services.**
- In terms of improvement of state legislation, the use of international concepts practices must be noted, *inter alia*, through parliamentary diplomacy at the regional and international levels.

### **Next steps**

The assessment of progress achieved so far in the fulfilment of the GCM objectives has enabled to take a fresh look at the measures being implemented by Turkmenistan.

Taking into account the strong links between the SDGs and the GCM and acknowledging the high relevance of migration governance, Turkmenistan has identified the following next steps:

- improvement of the statistical capacity of the country in relation to the GCM with the national system of SDG indicators on collection and use of disaggregated data to track their future progress;
- achievement of positive progress at the country and global levels with the participation of the UN Network on Migration;
- -continuation of work in the field of human rights and dignity protection;
- -consolidation of international efforts.
- The first high-level International Migration Review Forum allowed the country to take the next steps and provide positive experience in uniting efforts to ensure safe and orderly migration and well-being of the global population.