

Terms of Reference for the UN Network on Migration Lao People's Democratic Republic

Context

On 10-11 December 2018, recalling the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* to make an important contribution to enhanced cooperation on international migration in all its dimensions, UN Member States adopted the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (GCM). Subsequently, on 19 December 2018 the General Assembly (GA) endorsed the GCM in resolution 73/195.¹ The GCM intends to set out a range of principles, commitments and agreements among Member States regarding international migration in all its dimensions.

The GCM is the first inter-governmentally negotiated cooperation framework signed under the auspices of the UN. Grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the GCM's 23 objectives address the multi-faceted dimensions of migration, their implementation, follow-up, and review.² The 23 objectives are listed in Annex 1.

To this end, the UN Secretary-General established a *UN Network on Migration* at the global level to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to Member States. In carrying out its mandate, the Network will *prioritize the rights and wellbeing of migrants and their communities of destination, origin, and transit*. It will place emphasis on those issues where a common UN system approach would add value and from which results and impact can be readily gauged.

A Regional UN Network on Migration for Asia and the Pacific has also been established which, among other objectives, provides support, guidance and information to Resident Coordinators/UN Country Teams (RCs/UNCTs), including country UN Networks on Migration (country Network), in support of the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM at the national level.

In Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), migration has been increasingly mainstreamed into national development plans, most notably in the 9th National Socio-Economic Development Plan (NSEDP), for which selected UN agencies provide technical support and capacity building to the Lao government on a wide range of migration issues.³ Recognizing the strategic priority of addressing migration and related issues, the Lao government has emphasized that effective cooperation and joint efforts by the international community in addressing migration challenges will contribute to positive development outcomes and to the realization of the UN 2030 Development Agenda, in line with the work done under the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (UNSDCF) 2022-2026. Lao PDR also reaffirmed its commitment to the implementation of the GCM during the 2021 Asia Pacific Regional

¹ Full text available at: <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbdl416/files/docs/gcm.pdf>

² 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>

³ <https://www.iom.int/news/government-lao-peoples-democratic-republic-and-international-organization-migration-strengthen-cooperation>

Review⁴ and participated in the GCM regional voluntary review in March 2021, while national consultations and coordination meetings are yet to take place.⁵

The terms of reference (ToRs) of the UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR are specific to local context and priorities and is fully aligned with the ToRs of the global UN Network on Migration and the Regional Network for Asia and the Pacific.

Objective

The objectives of the UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR are to:

- Ensure effective, timely, coordinated whole-of-government and whole-of-society support to the Government of Lao PDR in the implementation, follow-up and review of the GCM, for the rights and wellbeing of all migrants and their communities of destination, origin, and transit;
- Act as a collective source of advocacy, ideas, tools, reliable data and information, analysis, and policy guidance on migration governance issues, including through the assistance mechanism under the UN Network on Migration to fulfill the commitments of Member States as outlined in the GCM;
- Provide leadership to mobilize coordinated and collaborative action on migration governance in accordance with the UN system, including by speaking with one voice as appropriate, in accordance with the UN Charter, international, regional, and national norms, the 9th and subsequent NSEDPs, and mandates and technical expertise of relevant UN entities;
- Facilitate access to the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund's (MMPTF) / Start-up Funds, Migration Network Hub and GCM's Capacity Building Mechanism as tools to strengthen government knowledge and capacity on policy guidance and migration issues, as established in the GCM.
- Promote close collaboration with the UN coordination mechanisms to actively engage in migration governance at national, regional and/or global level to discuss and address migration-related issues, exploring synergies, complement joint initiatives and avoid duplication.
- Advocate core and thematic priorities to the Government and assist in the capacity building, as stipulated in the GCM, the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) Progress Declaration, the GCM Regional Reviews, the Secretary-General's biennial report to the GA, the Network's work plan, and the Migration MPTF, as well as support the capacity-building and awareness-raising initiatives on the GCM objectives and their implementation to different stakeholders such as government officers, Network members and CSOs among others.
- Report to the Secretary-General as required on the implementation of the GCM, the activities of the UN system in Lao PDR in this regard, as well as the functioning of the institutional arrangements, and contribute to the Secretary-General's biennial reporting to the General Assembly, as called for in the GCM.

4 https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1416/files/docs/lao_pdr.pdf

5 <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/Lao-PDR-Country-Strategy.pdf>

Membership and Structure

To ensure a comprehensive build up, the membership comprise of Network members from the relevant UN Agencies working on migration and related issues.

Chair: UN Resident Coordinator (UNRC)

Secretariat and Coordinator: International Organization for Migration (IOM)

Members: The UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR will be comprised of all UN Agencies at the national level wishing to join. As of July 2024, the following agencies have expressed interest:

1. Resident Coordinator Office (RCO)
2. International Organization for Migration (IOM)
3. International Labour Organization (ILO)
4. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
5. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
6. United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
7. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
8. United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN HABITAT)
9. World Bank
10. World Health Organization (WHO)

Functions

UNRC, as the Network **Chair** will undertake the following functions in the context of the GCM related activities:

- Convening and chairing meetings to ensure the smooth functioning of the Network;
- Identifying and leading on migration issues with external stakeholders on joint advocacy, facilitating of upholding migrants' rights including the Government of Lao PDR;
- Maintaining the Network's effective functioning, including the capacity building mechanism; access to joint initiatives, and proactively identifying funding opportunities for Network operations;
- Coordinating with Network members to identify priorities and opportunities for action by the Network, focusing on the added value of coordinated work;
- Coordinating the preparation of the Network's annual work plan, based on the feedback received from Network members;
- Delivering joint statements and advocacy in the name of the Network for GCM implementation and other specific issues.

IOM, as the Network **Secretariat and Coordinator** will undertake the following functions in the context of the GCM related activities:

- Supporting the Chair in coordinating with Network members to identify priorities and opportunities on migration for action by the Network;
- Facilitating the Network's support to Lao PDR to follow-up and review the GCM;
- Supporting on reporting to the UN System, and briefing the Lao PDR government and other stakeholders on the activities of the Network;
- Supporting collaboration with respect to GCM implementation between all constituent parts of the Network and between the Network members and existing UN system coordination mechanism, as well as external partners;
- Liaise with the Secretariat of the UN Network on Migration in Geneva and Regional UN Network on Migration in Bangkok to inform on work carried out in the Lao PDR;
- Distributing minutes and records of conducted meetings and adopted decisions in a timely manner.

Working Groups

The Network may include Working Groups as needed. The participation of other partners in a Working Group can be established upon consultation between the interested agency and other relevant members of the Network. The Working Groups can be dissolved and replaced by new Working Groups based on changing needs and consensus.

The composition of Working Groups will be drawn from Network members and other partners, as relevant. Chairing or Co-Chairing will be open to all Working Group members.

The Working Groups will focus on specific issues and employ a results-oriented approach. The main objective is to deliver technical advice and recommendations to the Network as a whole, provide tools and guidelines, and facilitate collaborative action at the country and regional level. The Working Groups will operate in alignment with the workplan of the Network.

Working Groups will aim to employ an inclusive approach to the GCM's implementation by including civil society and other stakeholders in the process. In order to provide technical support to the Network, Working Groups should produce policy briefs, reports and action plans, as necessary.

Frequency of meeting

The Network will ordinarily meet **twice a year**, with additional ad-hoc meetings set up as required.

Working Principles

UN Migration Network in Lao PDR will be guided by the following principles:

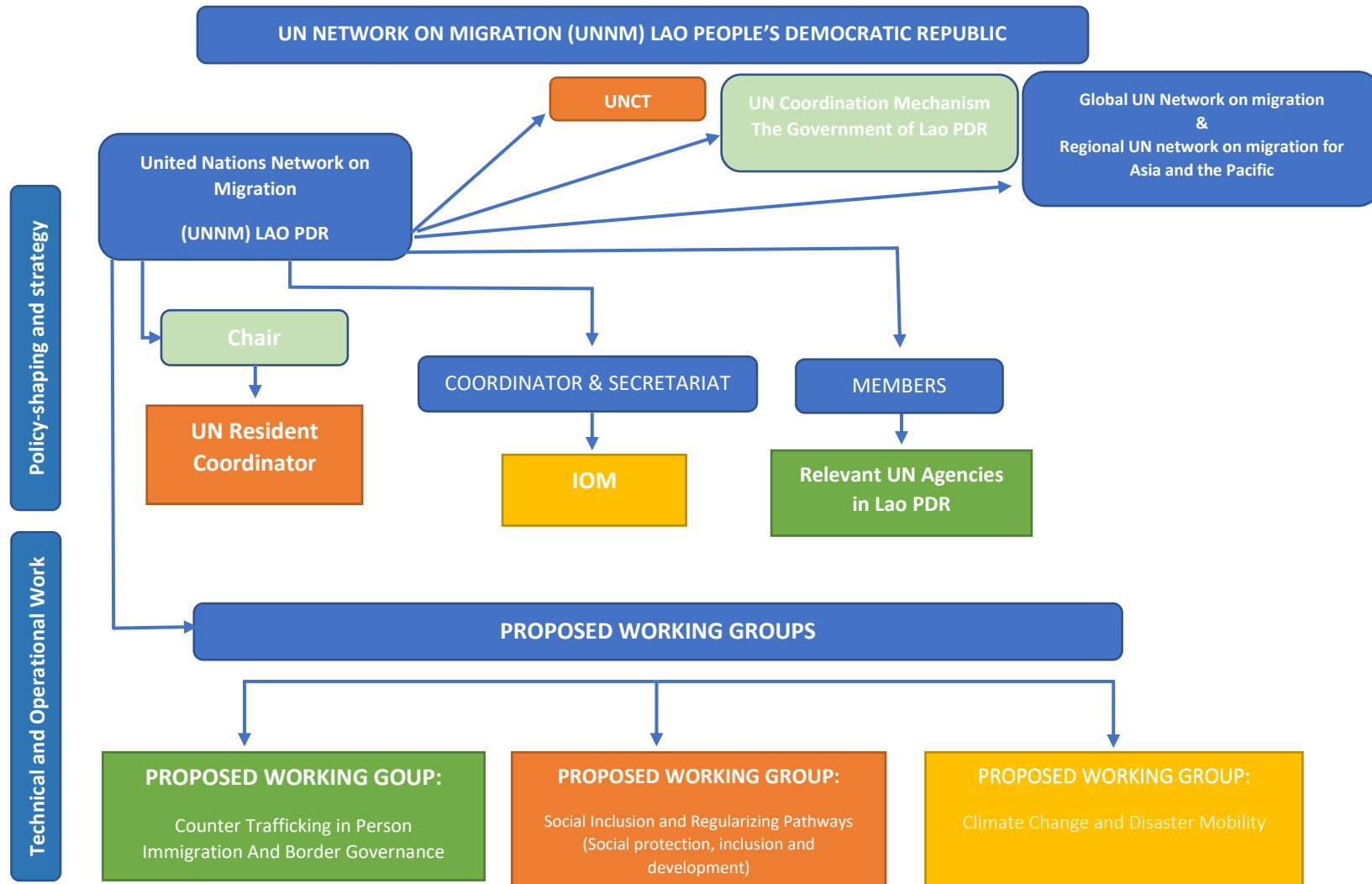
- **Accountability:** The UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR and its members have the responsibility to implement their decisions as agreed and will be accountable to the Resident Coordinator who, in turn, is accountable to the General Assembly, including through the annual progress reporting at the country level and biennial reporting requested by the GCM, and other follow-up mechanisms of the GCM;

- **Human rights-based, gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach:** The UN Migration Network in Lao PDR will strive to uphold and advocate the laws and principles to respect, protect, and fulfil the human rights of all migrants and their communities, especially those in vulnerable situations;
- **Coherence:** The UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR will draw from the mandates, technical expertise and experience of relevant entities within the UN system in supporting the implementation of the GCM, and promoting the overall coherence of the system's work on migration;
- **Unity of purpose:** All members of the UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR will be jointly committed to its success, placing emphasis on the added value of their coordinated work and of collaborating to achieve common goals;
- **Efficiency:** The UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR will be fully aligned with existing UN system coordination mechanisms and will adopt a streamlined and efficient approach in all its activities;
- **Inclusivity:** The UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR, in its own working methods and in engaging others, will operate in an inclusive, systematic, predictable and transparent manner;
- **Results-oriented:** The UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR will focus on supporting the progress of the State towards achieving implementation of the GCM;
- **Agility:** The UN Network on Migration in Lao PDR will regularly review, and where necessary, recalibrate its methods and the focus of its work to ensure its impact is maximized.

Annex 1 – GCM 23 Objectives

- 1. Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies*
- 2. Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin*
- 3. Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration*
- 4. Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation*
- 5. Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration*
- 6. Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work*
- 7. Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration*
- 8. Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants*
- 9. Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants*
- 10. Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration*
- 11. Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner*
- 12. Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral*
- 13. Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives*
- 14. Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle*
- 15. Provide access to basic services for migrants*
- 16. Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion*
- 17. Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration*
- 18. Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences*
- 19. Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries*
- 20. Promote faster, safer, and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants*
- 21. Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration*
- 22. Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits*
- 23. Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration*

Annex 2 – Organizational Chart⁶



⁶ The proposed working groups in this organizational chart are only indicative. The Working Groups will focus on specific issues and employ a results-oriented approach and they can be dissolved and replaced by new Working Groups based on changing needs and consensus.