

## INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION REVIEW FORUM

17-20 May 2022, United Nations Headquarters

### SUMMARIES OF THE PLENARY, ROUND TABLES AND POLICY DEBATE

#### I. Introduction.

In the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (Global Compact),<sup>1</sup> Member States decided that the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) - a quadrennial high-level meeting - will serve as the primary intergovernmental global platform to discuss and share progress on the implementation of all aspects of the Global Compact, including as it relates to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with the participation of all relevant stakeholders.

The inaugural IMRF took place from 17 to 20 May 2022, under the auspices of the General Assembly at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, as per the modalities outlined in General Assembly resolution 73/326 entitled “Format and organizational aspects of the international migration review forums.”

The IMRF was chaired by H.E. Mr. Abdulla Shahid, President of the seventy-sixth session of the United Nations General Assembly. The United Nations Network on Migration (the Network) was responsible for effective and coherent support in the implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact, including by supporting the organization of the IMRF.

States were represented at the highest possible political level throughout the IMRF, which included representatives of various ministries, sectors, local authorities, and stakeholders in their delegations. This was critical to reflect the whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach in the implementation of the Global Compact.

The inaugural IMRF consisted of four interactive multi-stakeholder round tables, a policy debate, and a plenary.

Furthermore, the President of the General Assembly organized and presided over a one-day informal interactive multistakeholder hearing on 16 May 2022. A representative of civil society presented a summary of the hearing during the opening segment of the plenary.

Between 16 and 20 May 2022, a total of 19 in-person side-events were held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on during the official IMRF meetings as well as 50 virtual side-events across all regions, organised by States, United Nations system and stakeholders. An overview of all side-events, including summaries and recordings, can be found [here](#).

All available statements can be found at [here](#) and recordings are available at the UN Web TV [here](#).

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<sup>1</sup> A/RES/73/195

## II. Round tables

The four round tables offered space for discussion covering all the objectives of the Global Compact to review the progress made in its implementation at all levels. With input from the Network, the Secretary-General prepared background notes for the round tables. Each round table was presided over by two co-chairs appointed by the President of the General Assembly and consisted of keynote addresses, a panel discussion, followed by an interactive debate.

During the round tables, governments and stakeholders shared examples of progress made in implementing the Global Compact, including on addressing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many speakers reflected on how the pandemic revealed gaps in migration governance, stressing the need to scale-up good practices utilising rights-based policies, and whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches. The importance of shared responsibility, manifested through cooperation and solidarity in finding solutions to challenges, was highlighted.

### Round Table One

#### Introduction

Round table one discussed the progress made in the implementation of objectives 2, 5, 6, 12 and 18 of the Global Compact<sup>2</sup>.

The round table was co-chaired and moderated by H.E. Mr. Tobias Lindner, Minister of State at the Federal Foreign Office, Germany, and H.E. Ambassador Neveen E Hussein, Deputy Assistant Foreign Minister for Migration, Refugees and Combatting Trafficking in Persons, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Egypt. The round table was organized with the support of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Keynote speeches were given by Ms. Pefi Kingi, Governance Advisor, South Pacific Islander Organization, and Mr. Achim Steiner, Administrator, United Nations Development Programme.

#### Panel discussion

Ms. Kathleen Newland, Co-Founder of the Migration Policy Institute, moderated interventions from the following panellists: Ms. Marta Youth, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, United States Department of State; Ms. Sarah Lou Arriola, Undersecretary at the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Philippines; Ms. Michelle Leighton Chief, Labour Migration Branch, International Labour Organization; Mr. Mamadou Diallo, Deputy Secretary-General, International Trade Union Confederation; and Mr. Roberto Suarez

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<sup>2</sup> Objective 2. Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin; Objective 5. Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration; Objective 6. Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work; Objective 12. Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment, and referral; Objective 18: Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications, and competences.

Santos, Secretary-General, International Organization of Employers. The panel was followed by an interactive discussion in which 28 representatives from States, UN System, and stakeholders delivered statements.

### Key points from the discussion are presented below:

**Adverse drivers and structural factors:** Unsafe, disorderly, and irregular migration often result from failures of sustainable development. Achieving the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development, especially poverty eradication, gender equality, decent work, and strengthened resilience and climate change mitigation and adaptation, disaster risk reduction and environmental restoration, is critical to addressing structural factors and ensuring migrants are not pushed into unsafe routes and hazardous pathways. Efforts were made to assist people to achieve sustainable development, through gender-responsive approaches including entrepreneurship, investment in education, and creating decent work. One key challenge is the limited evidence on how to address the adverse drivers and structural factors through targeted development approaches. In this respect, it was also mentioned that minimizing the adverse drivers should not be the departure point of migration policies, which should prioritise migrants' rights, allowing for regular pathways through labour migration and family reunification.

**On regular pathways:** Accessible, rights-based and gender-responsive pathways for migration are essential in preventing migrant smuggling and exploitation, saving migrant lives, and promoting inclusion and social cohesion. There are many examples of efforts to develop such pathways, including for labour migration, family reunification, education mobility and climate and disaster-related displacement. Specific pathways for migrant workers in agriculture and skilled migrant workers were reported on.

Ensuring that regular pathways are predictable, rights-based, and able to react to short- and long-term labour market skills and needs is a priority for both employers and migrant workers, and the role of social dialogue in enabling this outcome was emphasized.

Rights-based bilateral and regional labour migration agreements developed through dialogue between governments, employers' organizations, and trade unions are key and there are efforts already underway in this regard. Some countries have made strides in regularizing migrants in irregular situations, to promote their integration. These efforts should start in the design of pathway schemes and protect rights of migrants, including to allow for change of employer, and support access to justice, and portable social protection.

**Regular pathways related to disasters, climate change, and the environment:** Sea-level rise, saltwater intrusion, desertification, drought, and a number of other slow-onset disasters can drive migration. Migration and labour mobility provide potential adaptation benefits. Research showing progress on opening pathways for migrants affected by these factors was presented. Progress has been made in development of regional frameworks and guidelines to open safe, accessible migration routes, for climate-affected migrants. Some States have developed unilateral measures to support crisis-affected migrants.

Challenges include opening regular pathways for crisis-related mobility; strengthening the capacities of municipalities as first line responders; gathering and analysing data; and reconciling humanitarian and development needs. The need to coordinate between the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees was stressed, as was the need to bring together the work under the Global Compact for Migration, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

**Fair and ethical recruitment and decent work for migrant workers:** Participants reported on their work to establish more effective procedures to guarantee fair and ethical recruitment as a key means of ensuring well-functioning labour markets which encourage sustainable growth for businesses, promote migrant workers' contributions and protect their rights. They indicated that international labour standards and the General Principles and Operation Guidelines for Fair Recruitment were fundamental tools to guide reforms in support of this objective.

It was highlighted as essential to ensure decent work for all migrant workers, regardless of migration status, through increasing options for labour market mobility, wage protection, access to dispute resolution mechanisms, pathways to citizenship and strengthened labour inspection capacity destination.

Further action is needed to promote non-discrimination and protect migrants' fundamental rights. In this regard, it is also necessary to foster positive narratives that value the multi-faceted contributions of migrants to countries of origin, transit and destination.

Freedom of association and collective bargaining are essential, as is the implementation of international labour standards and tripartite social dialogue as part of a new social contract for labour migration governance. There is concern that temporary labour migration schemes are not currently designed to ensure decent work for migrant workers.

**Skill development and recognition:** This was recognized as a means for maximizing the benefits of migration for sustainable development and protecting migrant workers. Participants reported on the development of national, regional, and international qualification frameworks and practices, such as skills passports and cooperation, to help build and develop skills. Short-and long-term planning of skill needs was identified as critical to ensuring that skill frameworks responded to the changing nature of work. Challenges include the lack of attention paid to skill development for migrant workers, and the lack of social dialogue in developing skill recognition frameworks.

**On migration procedures:** There are several challenges related to the growing number and scale of mixed migration flows that make identification and referral of migrants difficult. To improve certainty and predictability of migration procedures, improved digitization and use of technology to support appropriate screening, assessment and referral is needed. Rights-based approaches to screening migrants are critical, while efforts to increase training for border staff and reduce discretionary decision-making were highlighted.

The right to family life, through enhanced family reunification mechanisms, was also emphasized. To accelerate further implementation of the Global Compact, States reiterated their commitment to international cooperation, whole-of-government, and whole-of-society approaches. Progress has been made in efforts towards more gender-responsive and child-sensitive interventions.

## Round Table Two

### Introduction

Round table two discussed objectives 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21 of the Global Compact<sup>3</sup>.

The round table was chaired by H.E. Ms. Shirin Amonzoda, Minister of Labour, Migration, and Employment of Population, Tajikistan, and H.E. Ms. Silvia Espíndola, Vice-Minister of Human Mobility, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Human Mobility, Ecuador. The round table was organized with the support of the International Organization of Migration (IOM) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

A key-note speech was given by Mr. Felipe Gonzalez Morales, Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants.

### Panel discussion

Ms. Carolina Gottardo, Executive Director, International Detention Coalition, moderated the intervention of the following panellists: H. E. Ms. Chou Bun Eng, Secretary of State and Permanent Deputy Chairperson of the National Committee for Counter Trafficking, Cambodia; Mr. Fabrice Brad Rulinda, Mayor, Entebbe Municipality, Uganda; Ms. Rania Ahmed, Deputy Regional Director – MENA, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Ms. Siobhan Mullally, Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons; and H.E. Ms. Ylva Johansson, Commissioner for Home Affairs, European Union. The panel was followed by an interactive discussion in which 25 representatives from States, UN System, and stakeholders delivered statements.

### Key points from the discussion are presented below:

**Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation:** Migrants often face challenges as their identity credentials are often lost or destroyed in transit. Adults, and particularly children born abroad, have difficulties in keeping or receiving civil status documents

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<sup>3</sup> Objective 4: Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation; Objective 8: Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants; Objective 9: Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants; Objective 10: Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration; Objective 11: Manage borders in an integrated, secure, and coordinated manner; Objective 13: Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives; Objective 21: Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration.

and birth registration certificates. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the situation. Consular services of countries of origin play a critical role to remedy these obstacles. Several good practices were mentioned including: mobile birth registration campaigns; measures to ensure that all children born overseas obtain legal identity through capacity building and trainings of government and consular officials; strengthened civil registration systems and access to legal identity documents for all migrants, regardless of status, in order to ensure access to basic services including health and education; issuing temporary documents immediately to migrants when entering the country, irrespective of their migration status; issuing temporary passports to help those stranded during the COVID-19 pandemic; and enhanced electronic processes to provide passport and travel documents. More needs to be done, however, on capacity building, knowledge transfer and exchange of information. Proof of legal identity is key to reduce vulnerabilities of migrants and ensure their access to basic services.

**Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants:** International cooperation and shared responsibility play a pivotal role in respect of this objective. Due to the inherent cross-border nature of international migration, States of origin, transit and destination should work together more effectively to save lives and prevent the disappearance of migrants along migration routes. Some ways to face these challenges involve the development of prevention mechanisms in countries of origin that provide information on the risks of the migration journey, as well as opportunities for safe and regular migration. The Inter-Agency Group on Protection of Refugees and Migrants Moving by Sea and the recent statement endorsed by some of its members on the concept of place of safety and the need for predictable disembarkation mechanisms for people rescued at sea was mentioned. The IFRC Humanitarian Services Points were also noted as an innovative practice of providing for assistance along migratory routes. These are safe, neutral, and welcoming spaces, fixed and/or mobile, situated along migratory routes where assistance is provided. However, humanitarian assistance can only mitigate, not prevent, vulnerable situations. States can contribute to reduce situations of vulnerability by ensuring that their laws, policies, and practices are in line with international law, by refraining from criminalizing humanitarian action, and improving search and rescue systems.

**Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants:** The smuggling of migrants is a crime that may affect the safety, security, and the integrity of migrants, especially those in vulnerable situations. The absence of pathways for regular migration is amongst the reasons that lead migrants to resort to smugglers. In line with the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air, no one should be subject to criminal sanctions for having been smuggled. This should be reflected in relevant national legislative and policy frameworks. Some migrants who are smuggled by criminal networks may end up becoming victims of aggravated forms of smuggling or trafficking. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the smuggling of migrants due to border closures, lack of job opportunities, and continued limited access to regular pathways for regular migration. International cooperation and sharing of information to investigate and prosecute smugglers is necessary. The smuggling of migrants is one of the most lucrative global criminal businesses, which must be countered with reinforced capacity to track financial flows to dismantle criminal networks.

**Prevent, combat, and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration:** Bilateral labour agreements, pre-departure orientation trainings, and model contracts are all useful tools to ensure safe migration and prevent trafficking in persons. Migrant workers' fundamental rights must be protected, especially in hard-to-reach locations such as in agriculture, fisheries, and extractive mining. Situations of trafficking arise in seasonal, temporary, and circular migration. This happens through debt arising from unfair recruitment processes, leading to debt bondage, confiscation of passports by employers and recruitment intermediaries, threats to workers of arrest and deportation, and use of physical violence. States must implement in practice the principle of non-punishment of victims of trafficking. Some States have put in place national strategies and action plans against trafficking in persons and set up national coordination mechanisms. Other measures have included revising legislation, implementing victim protection and assistance measures (e.g. hotlines and shelters), early detection mechanisms for trafficking in persons at borders, and public awareness raising initiatives. However, there is a need to strengthen coordination and information sharing to identify victims of trafficking, as well as to investigate and prosecute criminal networks. There are opportunities for cooperation between the United Nations Network on Migration, the Inter-Agency Coordination Group Against Trafficking in Persons, and others. It is also important for governments to work with the private sector and civil society. Cities play a critical role in combating trafficking in persons including through provision of information, creation of job opportunities for the youth and implementation of good governance.

**Manage borders in an integrated, secure, and coordinated manner:** Progress was reported on integrated border management procedures that include screening mechanisms to detect migrants in a vulnerable situation. Some States also reported on efforts to implement the Global Compact by building the capacity of border officials on human rights-based approaches to border management, using the Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders<sup>4</sup>. Others noted that challenges remain such as high numbers of irregular border crossings and ensuring that border processes fully take the needs of children and their rights into account. States reiterated that managing borders requires robust international cooperation and partnerships, especially during crisis and global pandemics with related border closures and travel restrictions. Regional consultative processes were mentioned as a positive example of cooperation. Information sharing and capacity development were mentioned as a good practice to dismantle transnational criminal networks, as well as the training of border guards in gender-responsiveness and child-sensitivity, and ensuring that border guards work together with child protection actors.

**Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives:** Some States noted that they do not detain migrants in an irregular situation but instead focus on their regularization, while others noted they only use detention of migrants as a last resort. It was noted that regularization reduces vulnerability and facilitates access to social and other services. Immigration detention of children is unnecessary and never in their best interest. Much progress has been made but more is yet to be done on moving away from the use of immigration detention,

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<sup>4</sup>[https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR\\_Recommended\\_Principles\\_Guidelines.pdf](https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/Migration/OHCHR_Recommended_Principles_Guidelines.pdf)

and ending the immigration detention of children, in particular. A human rights-based approach to migration governance, with the best interests of the child at the centre is critical. During the pandemic, many States released detained irregular migrants. Many good and promising practices on the implementation of human rights and community-based alternatives to detention exist and should be disseminated. Pledges on ending child detention were submitted by three countries.

**Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration:** Progress was primarily reported around procedures which increasingly include pre-departure support and skill development and addressing the need for sustainable reintegration and socio-economic support of returnees and local communities alike. Gender-responsive return and reintegration programmes are increasingly being implemented. Return and reintegration and expanding regular pathways were mentioned as being interlinked. Assisted voluntary return programmes were heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, many States managed to assist their nationals to return home, providing access to basic services and to vaccination. The provision of information at all stages is key for a successful and sustainable reintegration in local communities. Moreover, considering the social aspect of the reintegration process, in addition to the economic one, has also proven to be crucial for sustainable reintegration. Challenges that remain are insufficient data on returnees and indicators that measure successful reintegration. Experiences from countries of origin show that successful sustainable reintegration starts with counselling, pre-departure support and training. Sustainable readmission and reintegration only work if there is political ownership on behalf of the country of origin. It was recommended that return and reintegration should be part of national migration policies and development strategies. The United Nations Network on Migration's Position Paper, Mapping and Checklist for safe and dignified return and sustainable reintegration<sup>5</sup> provides a useful tool to assess return practices and policies, and guiding design, implementation, and monitoring of related processes and procedures.

## Round Table Three

### Introduction

Round table three discussed the progress made in the implementation of objectives 14, 15, 16, 19, 20 and 22 of the Global Compact<sup>6</sup>.

The round table was co-chaired by H.E. Ambassador Suriya Chindawongse, Permanent Representative of Thailand to the United Nations and H.E. Ambassador Ana Paula Zacarias, Permanent Representative of Portugal to the United Nations. The round table was organized with

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<sup>5</sup> <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/thematic-working-group-5-return-and-reintegration>

<sup>6</sup> Objective 14: consular protection, assistance and cooperation; Objective 15: providing access to basic services; Objective 16: empowering migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion; Objective 19: creating conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development; Objective 20: transferring remittances and fostering financial inclusion of migrants; and Objective 22: establishing mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits.

the support of the World Health Organization (WHO), United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and the Migration Youth and Children Platform.

A keynote speech was given by Ms. Emilia Saiz, Secretary General, UCLG, also a Member of the Political Advisory Board of the Universal Health Coverage Platform (UHC2030)<sup>7</sup>.

### Panel discussion

Mr. Murtaza Khan, Regional Managing Partner for the Middle East and Africa region, Fragomen, moderated the interventions of the following panellists: Ms. Marian Campbell Jarvis, Senior Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic and Program Policy Sector, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, Canada; Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barron, co-Chair of the UHC2030, Honorary President of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU); Ms. Stella Opoku-Owusu, Deputy Director at African Foundation for Development (AFFORD); Hon. Elizabeth Naa Kwatsoe Tawiah Sackey, Mayor of Accra/Chief Executive, Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Ghana; Dr. Santino Severoni, Director, Health and Migration Programme, WHO. The panel was followed by an interactive discussion in which 22 representatives from States, UN System, and stakeholders delivered statements.

### Key points from the discussion are presented below:

**Strengthen further consular services and support for better protection of migrants:** Many States highlighted their efforts to strengthen their consular services and support, including through policies and measures such as Protection Diplomacy, delivery of consular service to migrants in transit, and services at worksites for workers who are unable to leave their workplace. Bilateral and regional cooperation was pursued, but needs to be improved for efficacy and coverage. Digital technology has been utilized to provide better access to consular services and this was heightened during the pandemic. However, challenges remain including addressing the digital divide amongst migrants and providing timely consular information and direct support to migrants, especially during emergency situations.

**Ensure access to services and address barriers for equal access:** Progress has been made on equal and affordable access to social protection and basic services for all migrants, including health, education, justice, legal protection, and decent work, regardless of migration status. The principle of Universal Health Coverage and health as a human right was supported and the example of the COVID-19 pandemic was often used as evidence by all speakers. This can be done by fostering migrant-friendly service provision and information dissemination, promotion, and support of migrant volunteers within their communities, and by facilitating formal employment and equal access to health and continuity of care. Some speakers also emphasized the need for access to services without fear of repercussions or detention. However, there is still a need for legislative changes to ensure equal access to basic service and more international cooperation to address inequality amplified for migrants, for example, access to vaccines. Challenges also include the transitory nature of some of these measures implemented during the pandemic, as well as

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<sup>7</sup> <https://www.uhc2030.org/>

barriers (formal and informal) in access to essential services for undocumented migrants. Informality has been highlighted as a major aspect hindering universal and equitable access to services, and hence a phenomenon that needs to be acknowledged and addressed as a relevant policy area to strengthen migration governance.

**Step up on empowering and including migrants:** Progress was primarily reported around shifting the narrative about migrants' roles as agents of positive social change, as well as on leveraging the benefits of cultural interaction, community-based approaches, recognition of skills, and multistakeholder cooperation to harness the benefits of migration to reduce inequalities and accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals. The need for the human rights of all migrants to be upheld with a universal approach was stressed on a number of occasions, as well as the concept of “universal citizenship”. At the same time, there are concerns about growing inequalities, various forms of discrimination, racism, xenophobia and invisible barriers towards migrants such as language, access to information and others. Many highlighted the need for accessible financing and investments in the grassroots, in particular for diaspora involvement in sustainable development, and emphasized the need to include and recognize the contributions of migrants and diaspora, alongside calls for changes in rhetoric on migration and for better data and evidence to support social inclusion policies and measures. Also, targeted approaches to LGBTQIA+, women, children, and other population groups need to be put into action.

**Enhance the engagement of diaspora and migrant communities in migration governance and sustainable development efforts through integrated policies and multistakeholder engagement:** Progress was reported on programs of investment and promoting balanced, evidence-based narratives around the contribution by migrants and diaspora communities, including their contribution made during the pandemic. Suggestions included the creation of conducive environments to ensure diasporas are always enabled to contribute to sustainable development. Challenges include policy integration of various governments and departments at national and local level. Further investment in diasporas in countries of destination was emphasized as necessary, as well as further developed multistakeholder approaches involving for example the private sector. The importance of acknowledging the contribution of knowledge and skills transfer by diaspora as well as their cultural contribution to the richness of a country was stressed; as was the need for inclusive planning and cooperation to increase contributions by diaspora and migrant communities to achieving the 2030 Agenda.

**Further efforts needed on remittance transfer:** Progress was primarily reported around the implementation of initiatives and tools to facilitate transfers of remittances. The resilience and agency of migrants during the pandemic was also recognized. Challenges included continued lack of justice for wage theft, the insufficient recognition of the significance of remittances – social, economic, and cultural – in the development of some countries as well as of financial inclusion, hindering the recovery from the pandemic and sustainable development.

**Enhance cooperation at all levels on social security:** Participants reiterated that access to social protection was a right recognised in international labour standards. Some progress has been reported on bilateral and multilateral cooperation on the portability of social security entitlement

as well as unilateral measures, a need accentuated during the pandemic. As “social security does not migrate”, efforts are needed among all levels of government and with the support of relevant stakeholders. Coverage is not universal, and gaps in its implementation can leave migrants disproportionately uncovered by social protection, especially during a crisis. Need for legislative changes, cooperation between national and local level and cross-sectors, as well as further bilateral and multilateral arrangements, were highlighted.

**Advance a true whole of society approach and renewed multilateralism for breaking down inequities:** Migrants and all societal actors must be provided the space and a favourable environment to be able to meaningfully participate and contribute to the implementation of the commitments of the Global Compact. Further, investment is needed towards accessibility and financing for stakeholder implementation, regional and local initiatives. Advances on integration and cohesion need to be pursued as a basis for building more inclusive societies and a sustainable recovery and development.

## Round Table Four

### Introduction

IMRF Round table four discussed objectives 1, 3, 7, 17 and 23 of the Global Compact<sup>8</sup>.

The Round table was co-chaired by H.E. Mr. Vusal Huseynov, Chief of the State Migration Service of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and H.E. Mr. Omar Hilale, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations. The round table was organized with the support of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR).

A key-note speech was given by Mr. Liu Zhenmin, Under-Secretary-General, United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA).

### Panel discussion

The co-chairs moderated interventions from the following panellists: Mr. Craig Mokhiber, Director of the New York Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights; Ms. Marcela Cerrutti, Director, Centro de Estudios de Población (CENEP); Ms. Amina Bouayach, President, NHRI Morocco, GANHRI Secretary; Mr. Themba Lewis, Regional Manager Asia, Mixed Migration Centre; Ms. Catherine Tactaquin, Founder and Co-Convener of the Women in Migration Network (WIMN); H.E. Mr. Mohammad Shahriar Alam, MP, State Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, People’s Republic of Bangladesh. The panel was followed by an interactive

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<sup>8</sup> Objective 1: Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence -based policies; Objective 3 Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration; Objective 7: Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration; Objective 17 Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration; Objective 23: Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration.

discussion in which 26 representatives from States, UN System, and stakeholders delivered statements.

**Key points from the discussion are presented below:**

**Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies:** It was noted that there were many different types of migration data, with each requiring its own source. Participants suggested to enhance data collection and disaggregation efforts, including at the local level, as well as the role of regional migration observatories in analyzing, disseminating and harmonizing data, and building national capacities. States expressed support for the call in the Secretary-General's second biennial report<sup>9</sup> and the Progress Declaration to develop a limited set of indicators to monitor and measure progress on Global Compact implementation, based on existing frameworks such as the SDG indicator framework.

**Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration:** Many interventions highlighted that providing accurate, adequate, and timely information to migrants is key to their protection against the risks of exploitation and abuse, as well as ensuring the rights of migrants are respected. As a positive practice it was suggested that States ensure that digitalization and e-services are enhanced, and all migrants, regardless of status, have access to information in languages they understand, and without fear of immigration enforcement.

**Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration:** Migrants can face vulnerabilities due to the wide range of reasons for which they move, the conditions they face during their movement and upon arrival, as well as due to pervasive discrimination. To address vulnerabilities, many interventions suggested directly hearing from migrants to assess their protection needs and how migration policies affect them; to avoid overly restrictive or security-based approaches to international migration; to enact international cooperation based on a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach; and to expand safe and regular pathways, which encourage migrant inclusion and access to rights and services. Several interventions articulated the need to recognize that migrants are not necessarily inherently vulnerable but can rather be in situations of vulnerability due to discrimination, ill-treatment and policies that do not uphold their human rights. Additionally, the key role of data in addressing and reducing the vulnerability of migrants was highlighted.

**Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration:** Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and discrimination against migrants are among the central challenges that the Global Compact seeks to address. Many migrants continue to be vilified and scapegoated and are the object of pervasive disinformation. Participants suggested encouraging narratives on migration that are informed by evidence and promote solidarity and inclusion; to adopt policies which are based on evidence, recognize migrants' contributions, and promote their rights; to allow migrants to access justice and services without fear of legal repercussions; and for media and the private sector to use evidence-based

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<sup>9</sup> <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/resources/secretary-general-report>

narratives and information to avoid perpetuating hate speech and harmful narratives. A central theme in this area was the importance of accountability, with many interventions calling for increased attention to the language used to refer to migration.

**Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly, and regular Migration:** It was noted that international cooperation is truly cross-cutting for the achievement of all other objectives of the Global Compact. Participants highlighted that migration is closely connected to other global issues and that solutions require partnerships. In this context, efforts towards more human rights-based, gender-responsive and child-sensitive interventions, as well as the role of regional cooperation was emphasized. To accelerate further implementation of the Global Compact, States reiterated their commitment to international cooperation through whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches.

### III. Policy Debate

The policy debate focused on challenges in the implementation of the Global Compact, including links with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and contemporary and emerging issues related to migration. It further considered issues relating to the future of migration, and the opportunities and key challenges that governments and stakeholders need to address, including in the context of inequalities, the threat of pandemics, food scarcity and challenges presented by climate change. The co-chairs also presented technical summaries of the round tables' discussions.

Mr. António Vitorino, Director-General of the International Organization for Migration, as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, in his opening remarks, reflected upon lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. This included the need to address broader inequalities, long experienced by migrants, which were exacerbated during the pandemic, including access to services. He noted that at moments of uncertainty, migrants are often singled out as expendable, or as scapegoats for broader resentment. As the world continues to face overlapping crises which could disproportionately impact migrants, it is essential to reaffirm how essential migrants are to our economies and societies, and the need to shore up safe, predictable, and regular channels for their movement. Despite such crises, migrants have demonstrated resilience and solidarity in the face of global challenges. He urged the pursuit of equitable policies for migrants, respect for their human rights, the reduction of inequalities, and to combat negative stereotypes.

Mr. Vitorino moderated interventions from the following panellists: Professor Dr. Ronald Skeldon, University of Sussex; Ms. Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr, Mayor of Freetown; and Mr. Florencio Venté, Latin America Focal Point, Migration Youth & Children Platform. The panel was followed by an interactive discussion in which 24 representatives from States, UN System, and stakeholders delivered statements.

Closing remarks made by Ms. Catherine M Russell, Executive Director of UNICEF, reflected on what is at stake for children and young people and where attention needs to be focused to build on

progress and rethink where and how to invest, including viewing migration as a positive adaptation strategy, to mitigate the impacts of climate change.

**Key points from the discussion are presented below:**

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted that: (i) migrants play a vital role in delivering essential services; and (ii) the Global Compact remains an important and effective tool for governing migration in a safe, orderly, and regular way. While many migrants were marginalized and unable to access health services or other basic services, and subject to discrimination or faced pushbacks at international borders, there were also some promising practices during the pandemic including regularization of undocumented migrants, access to vaccines for all migrants regardless of their status, the development of alternatives to immigration detention, and the halting of deportations.

**Root causes or adverse drivers of migration are constantly changing.** The pandemic dramatically accelerated existing migration trends which have been part of broader economic and political changes. To simply focus on migration as the source of a problem is to lose sight of the factors that give rise to migration in the first place. Migration is an essential response to specific economic, political, and social conditions. Climate change, in particular, was referenced as a key driver of migration, yet mobility can also be used as a positive adaptation strategy to climate change.

It was emphasized that the **human rights of migrants must always be respected, protected, and fulfilled, and inequalities should be addressed and reduced.** Participants highlighted that to do so, States should prioritize actions to: ensure non-discriminatory access to services; save lives and protect migrants from disappearance and family separation; address laws and policies that contribute to migrants' vulnerabilities including the criminalization of humanitarian assistance; use the detention of migrants as a last resort and end child immigration detention; combat racism, xenophobia, and discrimination by taking into account intersectionalities such as race, sex, ethnicity, culture, migration status and religion.

**National and local partnerships are important in governing migration.** There is a need to design public policies around migration using an inclusive and bottom-up approach, together with local governments and stakeholders, including migrants and youth, creating spaces for collective deliberation to shape policies at the global, regional, and local levels that impact them. While States establish migration policies, cities often receive and provide services to migrants and communities, providing conditions for their social cohesion and contradicting growing populism seen at national levels. Similarly, civil society actors and youth – including migrants – bring critical knowledge, actions and initiatives that can help identify intersectional needs, and can help build on long-term investment for future generations.

**A strong commitment to multilateralism was emphasized.** Improved international cooperation, evidence-based approaches, and compliance with international law were called for, to help improve migration governance. Regional cooperation and dialogues were highlighted as important to help achieve this end.

## IV. Plenary

### Opening Segment

The opening segment of the plenary featured statements from the President of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, the Director General of the International Organization for Migration as the Coordinator of the Network, one representative of the migrant community, and the representative of civil society to present a summary of the hearing<sup>10</sup>.

In his opening remarks by the President of the General Assembly, H.E. Mr. Abdullah Shahid, recalled that the Global Compact for Safe Orderly and Regular Migration was the first multilateral framework to frame international cooperation on migration and thanked the United Nations Network on Migration for its coordination role in the United Nations system. The President highlighted the key role migrants played during the COVID-19 pandemic in many communities and noted that despite this, migrants were more exposed to vulnerabilities during the pandemic due to discrimination, xenophobia, and limited access to vaccines. The over 150 pledges made by States, United Nations entities, cities, and stakeholders to foster the implementation of the Global Compact were also highlighted as a concrete example of the commitment to support solutions that can substantially benefit the lives of migrants and host communities.

The United Nations Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. António Guterres noted in his remarks that migration, a phenomenon as old as human life, has often been misunderstood. He noted that, when unregulated, migration and trafficking continue to present costs to human life, and that, conversely, the expansion of regular pathways is needed to reach the Sustainable Development Goals and address labour market shortages. The Secretary-General called upon States to view migration as a solution to the challenges they face and not as a problem. He underscored the importance of the Global Compact as a worldwide response to a worldwide phenomenon which is at the heart of the mission of the United Nations.

The Director General of the International Organization for Migration, H.E. Mr. António Vitorino, in his capacity as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, highlighted what the absence of progress in implementation meant for the lives of migrants, including the over 15,000 migrants dead or missing since the adoption of the Global Compact and the widening inequalities faced by migrants in wages and working conditions. He called upon States to increase funding for the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (Migration MPTF) and recalled the importance of partnerships in achieving the objectives of the Global Compact.

Ms. Elana Wong, representative of the United Nations Major Group for Children and Youth (UNMGCY), migrant community representative, began her remarks by noting that the UNMGCY was created in response to objective 18 of the Global Compact and underscored that while migrants are widely present in migration discourse, there was a lack of available opportunities to engage

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<sup>10</sup> The summary report drafted by the civil society representative is available at [here](#).

with governments. She made a plea to States to include migrants in decision-making as an integral part of a whole-of-society approach.

Mr. Colin Rajah, Coordinator of the Civil Society Action Committee, and the civil society representative, began his remarks by noting the conditions of migrants have worsened since the adoption of the Global Compact in 2018. He underscored that while there have been pockets of incremental improvement and progress, good practices remained rare, sporadic, and ad hoc, mostly relating to specific circumstances and needs at national level and not universally applied. He further noted the need to enhance space for civic engagement at the United Nations, and the need to address the challenges civil society representatives face in engaging in the United Nations. He also underscored that migrant must be a fundamental part of the design, implementation, and review of the Global Compact. He further emphasized the importance of stakeholders self-organize their engagement to realize the whole-of-society aspect of the Global Compact.

Mr Rajah's summary also noted the calls made during the multistakeholder hearing held on 16 May 2022, prior to the IMRF, to increase the meaningful participation of migrants and noted that concrete examples of practices to achieve this were discussed. He recalled the mantra from the domestic worker's movement: "nothing about us, without us." Some of the key thematic priorities discussed in the Hearing included the need to eliminate racism and multiple forms of discrimination, promoting access to justice for migrant workers and others and shifting the focus away from criminalization frameworks and achieving human rights-based policies. Children need to access basic services, including health and education, without any fear of enforcement authorities and the best interests of the child should be at the heart of the progress declaration. Stakeholders also put emphasis on the development of indicators to objectively assess progress on implementation of the Global Compact.

## **General debate**

The general debate included statements by one Head of Government, 20 Ministers, 27 Vice Ministers, and other high-level representatives amongst the 113 statements delivered by States and 7 by observers respectively. Three group statements were delivered on behalf of: the Regional Conference on Migration, the South American Conference on Migration, and the 32 Champion Countries of the Global Compact.

Guiding principles – States reaffirmed the Global Compact and its guiding principles confirming the need for a reinvigorated multilateralism to address migration challenges (international cooperation). The relevance of the Global Compact as a common guidance framework on migration was reinforced through the COVID-19 pandemic, including as a tool to support response and recovery plans and to achieving commitments in the 2030 Agenda (sustainable development). Gender-responsive, child-sensitive, whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches were also highlighted. Some States emphasized their commitment to the whole-of-society and whole-of-government approaches by composing their official delegations with government officials, civil society organizations, local authorities, and parliamentarians. Many States developed their

national implementation plans in consultation with all relevant government bodies and relevant stakeholders (whole-of-government and whole-of-society).

Most implementation efforts are focused on ensuring that migration policies and plans adequately address specific considerations of gender equality and the best interests of the child (gender-responsive and child-sensitive). Two States offered their support to informally report on how these key guiding principles were reflected throughout the Forum discussions. Strong concerns continued to be raised regarding insufficient progress made on migrant children's rights, in particular the continued practice of child immigration detention. Some States called for the development of guidelines to implement the Global Compact with a people-centred approach and indicators to measure migrant participation in migration policies.

Achievements and progress – Many interventions referred to the regional reviews that took place in 2021 as a first important phase during which States and stakeholders gathered to take stock of implementation efforts. Since then, 48 States updated their national reviews or submitted new reviews before the Forum as a way to contribute to the global review process. For many States the adoption of the Global Compact was an opportunity to either align their existing national legislation on migration with its principles or to develop national implementation plans.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated existing vulnerabilities and stranded migrants in all regions. Many States implemented specific policy solutions to respond to the pandemic including ensuring access to health services (objective 15) for all migrants regardless of status, and within the principles of universal health coverage, facilitating access to documents for undocumented migrants in their countries as well as extending visas (objective 4) and expanding consular support to their nationals stranded abroad (objective 14). Some States enacted regularization programmes as a way to reduce vulnerabilities that are inherent to migrants with an irregular status; others worked to expand regular pathways including through bilateral labour migration agreements and implementing new categories of humanitarian permits, ensuring fair and ethical recruitment and decent work for migrant workers through ratifying international labour conventions (objectives 5 and 7). States also discussed skill development for migrant workers as a tool for enhanced protection (objective 18) and reported on efforts to ensure provision of portable social protection for migrant workers (objective 22).

Many States reinforced their national registration systems, national data and statistics systems and population census to include migration (objective 1). In some regions, States developed national diaspora strategies to involve them more actively in their development plans (objective 19) also as part of their reinforced consular outreach plans.

Beyond the effects of the pandemic on migration and migrants, countries focused other implementation efforts on reducing the incidence of irregular migration and improving their border monitoring systems to combat trafficking (objective 10) and prevent the smuggling of migrants (objective 9). Cross-regional cooperation as well as technical assistance was mentioned by many States as being central to their success in implementing the Global Compact to date (objective 23). States welcomed the capacity building support received by the United Nations Network on

Migration and the Migration MPTF at national and regional levels and called on all to maintain the fundraising efforts for the Fund.

Gaps and challenges - Some delegations called for further efforts to realize the commitments in the Compact. States underscored the need to eliminate all forms of discrimination and noted that while migrants made significant contributions to countries of origin, transit, and destination during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were more vulnerable during the pandemic due to xenophobia, limited access to vaccines, and preventative services. It was noted that many migrant workers, especially women migrant workers, continued to face unfair recruitment practices and decent work deficits, including wage theft. States noted that the politicization of migration in national policies was creating harmful narratives about migrants (objectives 16 and 17). Such policies result in the limitation of access to regular pathways (objective 5) pushing migrants to taking more precarious migration routes, increasing their vulnerability, and putting their lives at risk (objectives 8, 10 and 7).

Delegations raised concerns about the increasing risks that border controls at sea are posing to the safety of migrants in transit, including reported push backs (objective 8). Funding continues to be a main shortcoming to fulfil the commitments of the Global Compact. Additionally, States noted that there was a need to increase international cooperation and capacity building (objective 23). This includes the need to enhance the role of regional consultations, identify regional challenges and to include them in global migration governance considerations. States also highlighted existing gaps in promoting the role of migrant diasporas sustainable development (objective 19).

Key areas for future action and pledges – Several States committed to implement various elements of the Global Compact and the Progress Declaration. Of note was a strong recommitment by many to the guiding principle of human rights. Other strong calls were consistently made for international cooperation and multilateralism for the implementation of the Compact, in alignment with the existing international frameworks in which the Global Compact is rooted (objective 23). This cooperation includes partnerships with civil society, stakeholders, and international organizations, and work at local, national, regional, and global levels to bring commitments to life (guiding principles). Similarly, development assistance and capacity building were called for by several States (objective 2 and objective 23). Many Champion countries recommitted to enhancing further cooperation, and to sharing more promising practices that may serve as guides to others.

More targeted commitments were made across a range of areas, including developing gender-responsive and child-sensitive national implementation plans that employ a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach (guiding principles); guaranteeing basic services, including health and education services, to all migrants regardless of their status (objective 15); eliminating racism, xenophobia and intolerance, including through action plans and the dismantling of structural inequalities to promote greater social inclusion (objectives 16 and 17); addressing the adverse drivers of migration, particularly climate change (objective 2); saving lives, combatting trafficking in persons, and reducing vulnerabilities for migrants in precarious situations (objectives 8, 10 and 7); improving transparency, data collection, and disaggregation systems (objective 1); working towards ending immigration detention and ensuring that rights are upheld and needs met when

migrants are detained (guiding principles and objective 13); creating opportunities for and empowering youth (objectives 2, 15 and 16); enabling birth registration for migrants in order to combat statelessness and to promote the right to a legal identity (objective 4); and lowering the cost of remittances (objective 20). Some specified that they would regularize migrants currently under irregular status (objective 5). A number committed to working with the United Nations Network on Migration to realize these aims.

Likewise, throughout the IMRF, more than 150 pledges were announced to foster the implementation of the principles and objectives of the Global Compact. 27 States made more than 100 pledges in different areas such as financial, technical, legislative and policy commitments in terms of regularizations, data collection, and dissemination, ending child detention, supporting national implementation plans, and improving access to services, among others.

There were also innovative pledges reflecting the linkages between climate change and mobility including mainstreaming migration issues in climate action.

In addition, States announced further contributions to the Migration MPTF. Reflecting the integral role of cities and local communities in migration, mayors from different regions presented 70 local actions that make a tangible difference in the lives of migrants. The pledges received are displayed on the pledging initiative dashboard<sup>11</sup>.

## Closing segment

During the closing segment of the plenary, the Forum considered A/AC.293/2022/L.1 and A/AC.293/2022/L.2. At the end, the Forum adopted, without a vote, the Progress Declaration of the International Migration Review Forum, as contained in document [A/AC.293/2022/L.1](#). As part of the action, some delegations took the floor to explain their positions<sup>12</sup>.

Overall, most statements highlighted the spirit of cooperation and collaboration, and the commitment to move forward with implementing the Global Compact for Migration. Some interventions recalled the non-legally binding nature of the Global Compact and the Progress Declaration, others highlighted the Progress Declaration's call for a stronger link between the Global Compact and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Some States expressed disappointment that the Progress Declaration did not provide more ambitious language. Other States presented concerns or reservations about certain elements in the text.

During the closing segment, the President of the General Assembly commended the work of the co-facilitators, H.E. Ms. Rabab Fatima, Permanent Representative of People's Republic of Bangladesh, and H.E. Mr. Olivier Maes, Permanent Representative of Luxembourg to the United

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<sup>11</sup> <https://migrationnetwork.un.org/the-pledging-dashboard>

<sup>12</sup> [International Migration Review Forum 2022 - Plenary, General debate \(continued\) and closing segment | UN Web TV](#)

Nations, and their delegations, for leading an inclusive, open, and transparent process which included extensive consultations with Member States, relevant stakeholders, and UN entities.

The President of the General Assembly closed the meeting by welcoming the landmark adoption of the Progress Declaration as a clear indication, together with the successful four-day deliberations of the Forum, of the collective will of the international community to implement more effective migration governance policies going forward, while addressing challenges faced by migrants. Furthermore, he noted that the outcome of the Forum will be the guide to accelerate the implementation of the Global Compact and to strengthen cooperation on international migration as States and communities build on best-practices, including those that emerged in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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