Secretary-General’s Report on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

Frequently Asked Questions

As of February 2022

1. What is this report?

- In this report, the Secretary-General, provides an overview of the state of implementation of the GCM, and offers some guidance for the deliberations of the first quadrennial International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to be held in the United Nations General Assembly, on 17-20 May 2022.
- The report was prepared with support from the United Nations Network on Migration and reflecting inputs from a large number of Member States and stakeholders, as well as the regional reviews which took place in 2020 and 2021.

2. What are the main findings identified by the Secretary-General?

- The report first and foremost acknowledges that the GCM, its vision and guiding principles, remain a robust framework for international cooperation on migration, able to withstand such global shocks as that presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, providing a framework and common lexicon, grounded in international law, by which to discuss issues of migration governance.
- The Secretary-General’s report unpacks the paradox of the COVID-19 pandemic on mobility, highlighting how the heightened awareness of the essential roles played by migrants in our communities sits alongside acute vulnerabilities faced by many, which have been exacerbated by the pandemic and response to it.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has eroded well-established channels of entry, bringing entire immigration systems to a standstill, even though demand for migrant workers remains strong, and adverse and complex drivers of migration persisted. As Governments recalibrate migration governance systems, they increasingly emphasized rights-based regular pathways and predictability in their approaches.
• The report highlights that where migrants were included in COVID-19 response and recovery plans, the greater the benefits were to societies in managing this public health crisis. Addressing inequities for migrants and their families also helped realize the vision and guiding principles of the GCM, including the commitments Member States have made under international human rights law and in the 2030 Agenda to leave no one behind.

3. What progress have Governments made in the implementation of the GCM?

• A number of Governments have revised policies and practices to better protect migrants, both in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and more generally.
• The report highlights areas of particular progress, including in solutions that facilitate the recognition and development of skills, qualifications and competencies; on evidence on the evolving characteristics of smuggling and the incidence of trafficking; on ending child immigration detention and investing in non-custodial, human rights-based alternatives, and; on the importance of effective consular protection and services for migrants, including those in irregular status.
• The report outlines as well how the pandemic reinforced the importance of migrant and diaspora contributions to sustainable development outcomes in countries of origin and destination, as migrants and diaspora communities used their competencies to address pandemic related challenges.

4. What are the gaps identified by the Secretary-General in the implementation of the GCM?

• Migrants continue to suffer along perilous routes, more than 14,000 recorded as dead or disappeared in the past three year alone. Since the adoption of the GCM, the commitment to saving lives and establishing coordinated international efforts on missing migrants has yet to be translated into meaningful action.
• The report identifies further gaps in GCM implementation, including as regards coverage and portability of social security benefits and other entitlements. These remain limited due to exclusion, barriers to eligibility, unimplemented frameworks and limited cross-border cooperation.
• Challenges to implementation include limited resources, technical and technological capacity; inadequate coordination within governments and with stakeholders; the complexity of irregular migration; and the need to simplify procedures and generate greater awareness of regular pathways, including pathways that address the implications of climate change for migration.
5. What are the main recommendations made by the Secretary-General?

The report provides recommendations linked to all 23 objectives of the GCM and corresponding to the Compact’s ten interconnected guiding principles, but elaborates a series of recommendations that fall under four priority areas:

*Promoting inclusive societies and including migrants in COVID-19 response and recovery*

Shifts towards greater inclusion of migrants observed in the context of the pandemic and beyond demonstrate that progress can be made. Those lessons must be heeded, and the opportunity must be seized to catalyse change and work towards the elimination of inequities for migrants.

Recommendations under this priority area include the need for all migrants to have access to essential health services and continuity of care. Further, governments should develop mechanisms to separate immigration enforcement activities from service provision. Equally important, and as the world responds to the COVID-19 pandemic, is the need to include migrants and returning migrants in development and socioeconomic response and recovery frameworks.

*Promoting safe and regular migration*

Providing migrants at different skill levels and in different situations of vulnerability with opportunities for entry and stay reduces the need to move, live or work in unsafe or irregular conditions. In response to the pandemic, governments have increasingly adopted flexible policies to prevent migrants from falling into irregular status. In preparing for new COVID-19 variants or future pandemics, the intensifying impacts of climate change, as well as the growing demands for migrant labour across skill levels, it is important to build on the lessons learned.

The Secretary-General calls for expanded and diversified pathways for regular migration by strengthening cooperation at the regional level, through State-led and other regional, subregional and cross-regional processes and platforms. To ensure that migration is safe, governments are urged to comply with the obligation of *non-refoulement* at borders and to stop forced returns in situations where the human rights of migrants cannot be safeguarded. To further promote safe and regular migration, urgent action is needed towards ensuring all migrants, regardless of status, have proof of legal identity.

*Preventing loss of life and other tragedies during migration*
The large number of dead and disappeared migrants presents a significant human rights and humanitarian challenge. Furthermore, such tragedies have profound consequences for families, whether psychosocial, economic, legal or administrative. More must be done to put a stop to such preventable tragedies.

To prevent the loss of life of migrants, the Secretary-General urges governments to develop clear, safe and predictable disembarkation mechanisms for those rescued, ensuring migrants are disembarked in a place of safety in accordance with obligations under international law. Important in this regard is the call to stop obstructing humanitarian efforts aimed at providing life-saving assistance. The report calls on governments to safeguard human rights along migratory routes and to assess the consequences of restrictive, deterrence-based migration-related laws, policies and practices and to revise those, as necessary, to mitigate potential negative consequences.

**Building capacity**

Governments are encouraged to meet the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund capitalization target of $70 million, and to integrate migration in sustainable development and other applicable frameworks, including by developing ambitious national plans to implement the Compact. Governments are further encouraged to develop benchmarks and mechanisms to measure progress on, and monitor the implementation of, the commitments in the GCM including taking into account existing mechanisms such as the SDG indicator framework and engaging the Migration Network Hub.

6. **What are the next steps?**

**The IMRF and Progress Declaration**

The IMRF is scheduled for 17-20 May 2022, preceded by a stakeholder consultation on 16 May. It presents the international community with a vital opportunity to reinforce the relevance and timeliness of the GCM, assess its impact to date and ensure that it is brought to bear in equipping societies for future challenges. The Secretary-General’s report underscores the need for multilateralism to provide concrete guidance in moving forward on his four areas of policy recommendations, in order to advance a world that truly fosters the rights, dignity and well-being of migrants and that is grounded in cooperation and international law.

The IMRF will result in a Progress Declaration – the product of inter-governmental negotiations, under the auspices of the President of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General’s report will inform the Progress Declaration. The Progress Declaration will be adopted during the closing segment of the IMRF.
**Pledging Initiative**

Through the identification of gaps in the implementation of the GCM and its recommendations, the report provides Members States and stakeholders with guidance for the pledging initiative. While each pledge that aims to advance the implementation of one or more GCM guiding principles, objectives, or actions is important, the gaps identified by the Secretary-General’s report and its recommendations might provide a useful starting point for their framing. Governments and stakeholders are encouraged to have specific regard to the Secretary-General’s recommendations when planning and developing their pledges.

7. How can the UN Network on Migration assist with implementation of the GCM?

Since 2019, the UN Network on Migration has been providing support to governments and stakeholders engaging with the implementation of the GCM, and will continue to do so based on the recommendations of the Secretary-General, including through the pledging initiative. You will find more information on the Network’s website, as well as the IMRF website. Support is available at global level by contacting the Network Secretariat at unmignet@iom.int and pledges@iom.int. Support is also available at regional and local level.

Guidance and tools developed by the Network to support GCM implementation can be found on the Migration Network Hub, including: GCM Implementation Guidance for Governments and Stakeholders, Training for UN Country Teams on integrating Migration into Common Country Analyses and Cooperation Frameworks, and other thematic guidance.

**Facts and figures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Number or Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The number of persons living outside their country of birth or citizenship reached</td>
<td><strong>281 million</strong> in 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International migrants represent</td>
<td><strong>3.6 per cent of the global population</strong> in 2020.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In 2019, there were more than</td>
<td><strong>169 million migrant workers</strong> in the world.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At the end of 2020, <strong>35.5 million children</strong>, or 1 in 66 children globally, under 18 years of age were living outside their country of birth.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During the 2015–2020 period, the <strong>net flow of migrants</strong> moving from less developed to more developed regions was estimated at <strong>2.8 million annually</strong>.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The pandemic may have reduced the global number of international migrants by around 2 million by mid-2020.

Between 1 January 2019 and 24 November 2021, more than 8,436 migrant deaths were recorded globally; a further 5,534 migrants went missing and are presumed dead.

In 2020, officially recorded remittances to low- and middle-income countries were $549 billion, only 1.7 per cent below the total for 2019.