



## **Statement of Mr. Amr Nour, Director, Regional Commissions New York Office:**

### **Preparing the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration: regional dimensions**

I am grateful to be here today to represent the perspective of the regional commissions on the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, and to highlight their contributions to this process. I hope that this statement can draw attention to the critical role of the regional consultations in supporting this process of negotiating the global compact.

#### **I. Why it is important to take into account the regional dimensions**

While international migration is a global phenomenon, migration has strong intra-regional dimensions, with most movements limited to the same region. Factors such as shared histories, linguistic and cultural similarities, un-even development between neighbouring countries, preferential legal migration options and ease of travel often lead to migrants moving to countries near their own.

A few statistics from across the five regions covered by the regional commissions illustrate this trend:

- In Africa, 52 per cent of migrants from African countries migrated to other African countries, with most of this migration occurring between neighbouring countries. As a case in point, 70 per cent of West African migrants moved to other West African countries.
- In Asia and the Pacific, nearly 45 million migrants remain within the Asia-Pacific region, with several important encompassing important migration flows. For example, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore represent important destinations for migrants from other South-East Asian countries, while the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan constitute major countries of destination for migrants from Central Asia.
- In the Arab region, labour and forced migration trends combine to ensure that most migrants from Arab countries remain within the region, either immigrating to the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council as migrant workers, or being forced to move to neighbouring countries as a result of war. In this regard it is notable that most Syrian refugees have remained within their first country of asylum, including over 1 million refugees in Lebanon and 650,000 refugees in Jordan.
- Across Europe, including Eastern Europe, labour migration trends, facilitated by freedom of movement within their respective member States for citizens of both the European Union and the Eurasian Economic Union, mean that most European migrants remain within Europe.
- In Latin America and the Caribbean, almost two-thirds of migrants in the region come from other LAC countries, a trend which has been growing for several decades.

Reviewing these trends it is clear that the regions of the world have distinct priorities and specific concerns with regards to migration; and that their responses are likely to take different forms to take into account these specificities. For example, while displacement and migration linked to people responding to the threat of climate change are a common concern across regions, it is a priority concern for low-lying atoll States in the Pacific given their unique situation. It is also a priority concern for the Caribbean countries. Similarly, while gender and migration are linked across the world, the interplay of factors lead to very different outcomes for migration flows from region to region, and even from subregion to subregion.



It is also important to note that it is at regional and in many cases subregional level that the most advanced forms of cooperation with regards to ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration are already taking place. Informal regional dialogues such as the Colombo Process in Asia or the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration build confidence, networks and shared understandings on migration, facilitating practical cooperation. More formal processes such as the Mercosur Agreement on Free Movement and Residence and the Treaty on Eurasian Economic Union establish forms of free movement of migrants between the member States of their memberships, giving greater options for legal and safe migration as well as serving to bring member States of these organizations closer together. Ongoing efforts by regional organizations such as ASEAN and CARICOM to open up greater freedom of movement for specific classes of skilled migrants could also be mentioned in this regard.

Going forward therefore, it is essential that the Global Compact take into account these regional dimensions to ensure that it addresses the wide range of migration trends across the regions of the world; provides appropriate guidance to countries often facing very different situations; and gives impetus to ongoing forms of cooperation on migration which have the greatest chances of success.

## II. Initial plans for regional consultations in the context of preparing the global compact

The regional commissions will be responding to the call of member states to organize these regional discussions in the timeline provided for them by the General Assembly resolution and within their respective mandates.

### A. Support structures

In implementing these activities, the regional commissions will pay close attention to the call for cooperation within the United Nations system, organizing their activities through existing structures such as the regional coordination mechanism thematic working groups, as well as with regional entities. They will build on longstanding and collaborative relations with the International Organization for Migration – many of which predate IOM's formal entry into the United Nations system – to link dialogue and action on international migration.

In **Africa**, a Migration Steering Committee (MSC) comprised of ECA, African Union Commission (AUC), IOM, ILO and other relevant stakeholders will be formed to support the consultation process. The MSC will develop a detailed work plan for engagement with Member States and the organization of discussions to examine regional and thematic aspects of international migration. In the **Asia-Pacific** region, ESCAP will employ the Regional Coordination Mechanism Thematic Working Group on Sustainable Societies, which comprises the main actors on migration including ESCAP, IOM, ILO, UN Women, and others. ESCWA will similarly leverage its Regional Coordination Mechanism Working Group on International Migration in the **Arab Region**, co-chaired by ESCWA, the League of Arab States and IOM and comprising 16 UN entities and regional organizations with migration expertise. ECLAC will partner closely with IOM's Regional Office to support consultations in **LAC region** to seek the buy-in and elicit the inputs of its member states in the region. Consultations across regions will be open to civil society participation.



## B. Focus of the knowledge products

A number of knowledge products spearheaded by the regional commissions will feed into the regional consultations.

**ECA** will prepare one regional report incorporating sub-regional perspectives to capture the diversity of the region. The regional report will be completed by June 2017 that will address the following topics:

- ✓ Fostering regional mobility.
- ✓ Demographic dividend and migration.
- ✓ Skills, employment and migration.
- ✓ Leveraging human and financial resources of the diaspora for development.
- ✓ New directions and trends in African migration.
- ✓ Irregular migration.
- ✓ Gender perspective of migration in the region.

**ESCAP** will lead the preparation of background papers, focusing on four areas of inquiry:

- ✓ The need to address the drivers of migration, including through strengthened efforts in development, poverty eradication and conflict prevention and resolution.
- ✓ The facilitation of safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies; this may include the creation and expansion of safe, regular pathways for migration.
- ✓ Protection of labour rights and a safe environment for migrant workers and those in precarious employment, protection of women migrant workers in all sectors and promotion of labour mobility, including circular migration.
- ✓ Cooperation at the national, regional and international levels on all aspects of migration.

**ESCWA** will lead preparation of a thematic study on the policy implications of the global compact for countries of the region, focusing on national policy gaps that require alignment with international standards including policies related to labour migration, migrant rights and access to services, migration and development, expatriates engagement, irregular migration, human trafficking and migrant smuggling. In addition, the 2017 Situation Report on International Migration will be launched in the last quarter of 2017 and will constitute a key substantive input to the regional consultative process.

**ECLAC's** preparation of knowledge products will vary by subregion according to respective interests: the Mexico and Central American sub-region will likely focus on unaccompanied child migration to the U.S., smuggling of migrants and human trafficking, and remittances; the Caribbean sub-region study may focus on economic migrants, brain drain and climate change-related migration; and the South American sub-region study may focus on intra-regional migration, remittances and bilateral agreements on migration.

## C. Timing of various preparatory meetings



ECA will initially present its report at an expert retreat with the African Union in Johannesburg in June/July 2017. Then, it will organize a **two-day** regional conference (with Ministers, regional migration experts and civil society) in **Addis Ababa in September 2017** to validate the regional report and help develop a draft common African position on migration. A special meeting of the AU expert committee dealing with migration will be convened in Addis Ababa in October/November 2017 with a view to adopt the common African position, which will then be presented at the African Union Summit of Heads of State and Government in January 2018.

ESCAP will organize a **three-day** regional consultation in **August 2017 in Bangkok** to adopt an outcome document and final report to be transmitted as the Asia-Pacific input into the inter-governmental negotiations of the global compact.

In collaboration with the League of Arab States, ESCWA will organize a **two-day** regional consultation in **October or November 2017 in Cairo**.

In coordination with its partners in the region, ECLAC will organize a **two-day** regional consultation in **October 2017 in Santiago** to which experts from each sub-region will be invited.

The outcome documents and/or summary reports of all the regional consultations will be transmitted as inputs to the inter-governmental negotiations of the global compact. Regional analysis and perspectives will also be made available and feed into the global preparatory meetings as they evolve.

Let me also add that UNECE will also be supporting the process through ongoing planned activities within its 2017 programme and is exploring options to that end.

### **III. Concluding remarks**

I would like to take this opportunity to reiterate that the regional commissions are committed to providing the regional and subregional perspectives to ensure that the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration is truly global in its scope and supportive of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Going beyond 2018, the regional commissions will strengthen their work with all partners to support the implementation of the global compact, as part of their commitment to the 2030 Agenda and its unique commitment to migration.

Thank you for your attention.

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