



**Dialogue #1: Promoting action on the commitments of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**  
*Intergovernmental Conference, 10 December 2018*  
*Marrakech, Morocco*

1. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) is, in its own words, “a milestone, but not the end to our efforts.” We are at the beginning of what Secretary-General António Guterres has called an “era of implementation” in international cooperation on migration governance, in which Member States can focus on putting into practice the commitments outlined in the GCM.
2. The agreement of the GCM, following eighteen months of consultations and negotiations, is a major success for multilateral diplomacy. The meeting at the highest political level in Marrakech is itself a clear signal of our collective will to support safe, orderly and regular migration. But we must be conscious that we will ultimately be judged by whether we can make the GCM vision a reality and by the impact of our efforts on the lives of our citizens, communities and of course migrants themselves.
3. The UN conference in Marrakech is an opportunity for Member States not only to adopt the GCM but also to (i) kick-start practical efforts to implement the Compact; (ii) identify ways to support one another to fulfill the promises of the GCM at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels, in line with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and other normative and policy frameworks; and (iii) discuss what concrete achievements they can hope to reach, collectively and individually, in the four years prior to the first International Migration Review Forum in 2022.
4. The UN system is moving ahead with an overhaul of its approach to migration in support of Member States, including through the establishment of a UN Network on Migration to ensure effective and coherent system-wide support on this issue. The Marrakech conference is also a chance for Member States to engage with UN entities on how to maximize the Network’s impact.

***Defining priorities***

5. The GCM includes both short and long-term actions. Some elements, such as actions to save lives and prevent migrant deaths and injuries (Objective 8) or to strengthen measures to combat trafficking in persons are urgent and immediate tasks. Others, like achieving the full inclusion of migrants and social cohesion (Objective 16) or addressing adverse drivers of migration (Objective 2) will require attention over many years. We must pursue all these goals in parallel. Governments will prioritize different actions case by case. But we can work together to identify certain actions - at the national, regional and international levels - to show some immediate practical benefits of the GCM, including<sup>1</sup>:

- Deepening our shared knowledge base around migration so as to facilitate policy-making;
- Minimizing the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their countries;

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<sup>1</sup> The subheadings have been formulated by the conference secretariat for editorial purposes.

- Improving our mechanisms for migration management, to limit irregular migration;
  - Reviewing and strengthening legal and policy frameworks for regular migration;
  - Protecting the lives, security and human rights of all migrants, especially in vulnerable situations;
  - Securing labour and social protections for migrants; and
  - Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development in host communities and countries of origin.
6. The GCM objectives call for action at multiple levels, ranging from the global to the local. National and sub-national authorities will be key to supporting the achievement of some goals. Global cooperation, and improved policy coherence, can support national authorities achieve these goals. But many other objectives – such as those concerning returns and enhanced regular migration pathways – require bilateral, regional and other forms of multilateral cooperation. As the separate note for the dialogue on “partnerships and innovative initiatives” highlights, many objectives also require the engagement of non-governmental stakeholders including migrants themselves.
7. As the GCM recognizes, this multi-level cooperation will necessitate ongoing cooperation through existing UN, regional and other platforms and mechanisms. Nonetheless, the GCM establishes a new framework for cooperation. It allows us to see the connections between different levels of action on migration with new clarity and link global cooperation to specific policies more precisely than before. It also offers a structure to assess our progress and review our policies with a new degree of rigor.<sup>2</sup>

### ***Kick-starting GCM implementation***

8. *Deepening our shared knowledge of migration:* As the first GCM objective underlines, good migration policy must rest on a strong base of disaggregated data, research, and analysis. Member States have recognized the need for a stronger evidence base to guide policy making. As the GCM notes, migrants often lack access to information relevant to their situations and choices. New technologies are rapidly expanding our abilities to gather, analyze and disseminate relevant data to Member States and individuals. Opportunities to deepen our understanding of migration include:
- Strengthening national, regional and international dialogues on migration data collection, use and analysis, such as the International Forum on Migration Statistics;
  - Assisting Member States to integrate migration-related indicators in national censuses, household surveys and labour force surveys;<sup>3</sup>
  - Working through the UN Statistical Commission to fulfill the Secretary-General’s Six Point Action Plan for improving migration data at all levels;<sup>4</sup> and
  - Supporting the establishment of the capacity building mechanism called for in the GCM, using its “connection hub” and “knowledge platform” to share ideas, data, research and analysis, building on existing global and regional databases and depositories such as the IOM Global Migration Data Portal and the World Bank Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development.

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<sup>2</sup> These include the International Migration Review Forum, regional commissions and migration focused consultative processes, national implementation plans and the work of the UN Migration Network.

<sup>3</sup> The 2020 round of censuses is an important opportunity in this regard.

<sup>4</sup> See A/73/286 (1 August 2018), Chapter V.

10. *Minimizing the adverse drivers of migration:* We must recommit to ensuring that individuals choose to migrate freely, rather than out of desperation. People regularly migrate to access better economic, employment and educational opportunities for themselves and their families. But some migrate due to lack of access to fundamental human rights such as health, food or basic education, and due to discrimination, poverty or separation from family. They may move in response to crisis – both natural and human-made – and, increasingly, in response to environmental change. Opportunities for coordinated action to minimize adverse drivers include:

- Promoting productive employment and entrepreneurship opportunities in urban and rural areas of origin, especially for young women and men;
- Strengthening collaboration between humanitarian and development actors to develop long-term responses to negative economic and environmental trends that drive involuntary migration; and
- Improving early assistance to those displaced by natural disasters or the effects of climate change - including through measures identified by the Platform on Disaster Displacement - so that victims can either stay in their communities or move elsewhere safely.

11. *Improving migration management:* The GCM underlines that well-managed migration depends on Member States' ability to manage their borders humanely and effectively, ensure safe and dignified return and cooperative readmission policies and practices. It also emphasizes that, to be successful, these policies are best grounded in international human rights and humanitarian law. It acknowledges the limits of some options, including detention, and the need for innovative approaches to developing alternative mechanisms that address both legitimate concerns about security while upholding the rule of law and respecting individual rights. The GCM can act as a framework for both practical cooperation and exchanges of ideas in this area. Opportunities include:

- Promoting and harmonizing the use of new technologies by Member States to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration and ensure reliable and transparent documentation of migrants, while protecting their personal data;
- Establishing smarter and fairer visa regimes, such as bona fide travel arrangements and multi-entry visas accessible at reasonable costs, and encouraging smoother border-crossing arrangements for local communities;
- Strengthening capacities of border management officials in identification and detection of trafficking in persons and migrant smuggling; and
- Piloting innovative ideas and sharing best practices on alternatives to detention, especially for children, including by building on existing collaborative, multi-stakeholder platforms.

12. *Strengthening frameworks for regular migration:* The GCM emphasizes the need to “adapt options and pathways for regular migration” to reflect labour market realities, humanitarian needs, educational factors and family reunification. Evidence indicates that enforcement efforts alone do not stop irregular migration. Enhanced immigration enforcement should be coupled with needs-driven and adaptable regular migration, to reduce incentives for irregular migration. While each Member State has the right to decide and implement the rules concerning regular migration onto its territory, they can cooperate to

(i) create bilateral and regional arrangements concerning regular migration; and (ii) share best practices and legal precedents in this field. Opportunities include:

- Developing national, whole-of-government policy frameworks to align migration policies more closely with labour market needs, at all skills levels;
- Promoting the establishment and implementation of regional mobility agreements and both bilateral and multinational labour agreements and skills partnerships to facilitate regular migration; and
- Sharing good practices and robust criteria to facilitate rapid individual assessments of migrants' situations, including those of children, and family reunification.

13. *Protecting the lives, security and human rights of all migrants:* While focusing on positive aspects of migration, we cannot forget the risks and situations of vulnerability that many migrants face daily. These range from the threat of death, injury and sexual and gender-based violence in transit to falling into the trap of labour exploitation. Migrant children are especially vulnerable to abuse. These abuses undermine the rule of law and erode public confidence in migration. The GCM should be a spur for action to improve the protection of migrants. Opportunities include:

- Strengthening international cooperation on counter-trafficking and counter-smuggling, building on the evolving framework for combatting transnational crime;
- Working together on offering temporary, long-term or permanent options for entry and stay for migrants in vulnerable situations who would otherwise not qualify for international protection; and
- Strengthening national and subnational authorities' capacity to protect and assist children in vulnerable situations.

14. *Securing labour and social protections for migrants:* Migrants face many legal and other obstacles to fulfilling their potential and enjoying their rights. Migrant women face especially deeply-embedded obstacles to finding decent work. The private sector, migrant associations, trade unions and civil society can play a major role in unlocking this potential. But governments can also enhance the conditions for migrants through policies on documentation, reducing recruitment costs, improving labour rights and access to services, in addition to broader growth and development. Opportunities include:

- Supporting local authority-issued identification documents to migrants, regardless of migration status, to facilitate their access to basic services such as health care, justice and education;
- Expanding gender-based analysis into migration policies and programs to identify new opportunities to empower migrant women to use their skills and abilities, and promote gender equality;
- Promoting fair and ethical international recruitment through established guidelines and labour standards, and reducing excessive recruitment costs; and
- Facilitating the development, assessment and recognition of skills, qualifications and diplomas at all skills levels.

15. *Unlocking the potential of migration for inclusive development*: The GCM is based on the SDGs and highlights ways to strengthen the contribution migrants and migration make to development, both in their countries of origin and destination. Migrants make major economic contributions to growth in their host communities - through their skills, labour and consumption - and can return to their countries of origin with new ideas, skills, capital and knowledge. They remit money home, invest in their countries of origin and contribute to strengthened ties between home and host countries, including in trade and public life. States have the opportunity to promote migration as a *strategy* for development, through enhanced international cooperation to maximize economic and social benefits across borders and help countries of origin grow and innovate. Opportunities include:
- Deepening coordination between national regulators on reducing remittance costs to below 3%, as set out in the SDGs;
  - Linking implementation of the GCM to development strategies, including in UN Development Assistance Frameworks (in both ODA donor and recipient countries) to ensure a coherent, whole-of-government approach to aid and migration; and
  - Facilitating circular and seasonal migration through vocational training and reintegration assistance to future and former migrants, including young people, in their countries of origin, building up national capacities.

#### ***Strengthening and assessing cooperation***

16. The GCM is a product of an unprecedented international discussion of migration. It is important to maintain the GCM's recognition of migration as a universal phenomenon and shared global concern. The GCM provides a framework to put this into practice at all levels, including (i) ongoing consultations and review, including through the International Migration Review Forum, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, and regional and national processes and plans; and (ii) a capacity building mechanism at the UN to act as "connection hub" for solutions to migration-related challenges.
17. While these are promising institutional innovations, it is necessary for Member States and UN entities to ensure that they work in practice. This includes (i) exploring lessons from past inter-governmental forums (considering both migration and other themes) on how to make the International Migration Review Forum as productive as possible; (ii) identifying how the UN Network on Migration can liaise most effectively with regional, national and sub-national authorities, in parallel to working with the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and existing regional and national processes to advance the GCM; and (iii) identifying potential projects for the capacity-building mechanism to prioritize in its initial phase, and how to resource this multi-partner start-up activity.
18. It is important to recognize that Member States will make and implement the bulk of policies to fulfill the GCM, and that the GCM accordingly encourages the development of national implementation plans. These plans have the potential to be important tools for policy-makers.
19. One important question, especially looking forward to the 2022 International Migration Review Forum, is what (if any) assessment tools Member States should use to measure their progress towards the 23 objectives in the GCM. The Compact contains a very wide range of commitments, ranging from legal

matters to economic and social affairs, making standardized measurement difficult. The voluntary and non-binding nature of the GCM might also affect evaluation of its implementation, notwithstanding that the GCM is an expression of Member States' willingness to cooperate on and improve migration.

### *Questions for the Dialogue*

20. During this Dialogue, participants may wish to reflect on:

- What steps can we take to deepen our knowledge of migration to facilitate implementing the GCM?
- What more can we do to minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their countries?
- What more can we do to prevent and reduce threats to the lives, security and human rights of migrants?
- How can we remove obstacles to migrants achieving their full economic and social potential, and ensure and strengthen the benefits of migration to host communities?
- How do we develop policy frameworks to enhance migrants' and diasporas' contributions to sustainable development – in their host countries, homes countries and transit countries?
- How can we work together to address border management, including to facilitate safe and dignified returns and reintegration and work towards alternatives to detention?
- What are the best options for strengthening frameworks for regular migration, including sufficient options and pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration?
- How can we ensure that the specific needs and challenges of migrant women, men, girls and boys are addressed in a gender-responsive manner?

21. In institutional terms, participants may wish to comment on:

- How to maximize the impact of the new UN Network on Migration to assist governments and other stakeholders as envisaged in the GCM;
- How to make the UN capacity-building mechanism endorsed by the GCM an early success; and
- Options for assessing progress on the GCM in the years ahead.

*November 2018*