

Panel “The global compact on migration: Regional and human rights dimensions”

(Thursday 16 February 2017, 3 - 4.30 pm)

"The contribution of regional consultative processes on migration to the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration"

Talking Points for Jill Helke, Director for International Cooperation and Partnerships, IOM

1. About ISCMs. Background.

Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on migration (ISCM) (also called migration dialogues) are state-led, ongoing information-sharing and policy dialogues on the regional, inter-regional or global level for those States with an interest in promoting cooperation in the field of migration.

ISCMs consist of global processes on migration¹, inter-regional forums on migration² (bridging two or more regions) and regional consultative processes on migration³ (covering one region). The terms IRF and RCP are often used interchangeably to denote policy dialogue processes with regional focus.

The need for a discrete, informal environment for states to consider migration issues among themselves has led to emergence of policy dialogues on migration at the regional level. Initially these dialogues placed most of their focus on immediate concerns such as return and readmission, border management etc.

The first policy dialogue on migration was the Intergovernmental Consultations on migration Asylum and refugees and was established in 1985⁴ among 7 European countries⁵ as an informal, non-decision making forum for intergovernmental information exchange and

¹ **Global Processes on Migration** are government-led international policy dialogues on migration at the global level, usually facilitated by an intergovernmental organization, and focusing either on overall migration governance at the global level (e.g. International Dialogue on Migration), or specific themes (targeted migration consultations and discussions in global bodies that have specific responsibilities over certain elements of migration through international conventions and protocols), or interlinkages between migration and other areas, such as development (e.g. UN High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, the Global Forum on Migration and Development).

² **Inter-Regional Forums on Migration (IRFs)** are state-led, ongoing, information-sharing and policy dialogues on migration, usually connecting two or more regions, and may either be officially associated with formal inter-regional institutions, or be informal and non-binding.

³ **Regional Consultative Processes on migration (RCP)** are state-led, ongoing, regional information-sharing and policy dialogues dedicated to discussing specific migration issue(s) in a cooperative manner among States from an agreed (usually geographical) region, and may either be officially associated with formal regional institutions, or be informal and non-binding.

⁴ The Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC). The Participating States are Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom and United States of America.

⁵ IGC was founded by Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and UK.

policy discussion. Ever since then, number of such dialogues has grown along with the spectrum of migration issues addressed.

Currently there are 13 RCPs and 15 IRFs, covering all the regions of the world and addressing a wide array of migration issues.

The role of ISCMs in migration policy

The mechanisms have, for example,

- ⇒ encouraged communication and the creation of trusted networks among migration practitioners.
- ⇒ increased the international community's appreciation of migration issues and challenges.
- ⇒ acted as "laboratories" to pilot regional and inter-regional migration initiatives.
- ⇒ built capacities of their participating states on various aspects of migration.
- ⇒ Enabled the collation and exchange of valuable data on migration.
- ⇒ contributed to shaping policy on migration. At the international level, they have contributed to the emergence of convergent policy approaches concerning topics as varied as labour migration, integration, return or border management. At the national level they have encouraged migration-related ministries and agencies to coordinate their activities and to develop plans, policies and practices.

2. ISCMs' contribution to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)

The New York Declaration and the Modalities resolution on the GCM refer to "existing bilateral, regional and global cooperation and partnership mechanisms"⁶, in particular global processes and RCPs as valid existing mechanisms, which can contribute to the preparatory process and negotiations towards the Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM) and for facilitating migration in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development⁷. It further stipulates that regional consultations in support of the development of GCM can be done through the existing RCPs⁸.

a. Basis for ISCM involvement

Most ISCMs focus on migration policies and all are about cooperation and governance of migration, one of the central themes of the GCM.

The GCM will be grounded in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Many ISCMs focus on migration and development and many acknowledge the contributions of migrants and diasporas to all dimensions of sustainable development.

⁶ New York Declaration, Paragraph 54.

⁷ Ibidem.

⁸ Annex II to the New York Declaration, Paragraph 14.

Each mechanism addresses at least one of the 24 GCM elements listed in the Declaration and summarised in the 6 themes of the Modalities resolution (migrant rights, labour migration, assisted voluntary return and reintegration, combatting irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, addressing drivers of migration, climate change, natural disasters and man-made crises, etc.).

Several ISCMs (ADD, ARCP, Bali Process, Budapest Process, GFMD, IDM, IGC, RCM, SACM) have already started considering the extent and modalities of their engagement in the GCM preparation⁹; others (such as the Budapest Process, Pan-African Forum) have indicated an interest to focus on this process in their forthcoming events in the first half of 2017.

b. How can ISCMs contribute to the GCM preparation process?

They can:

- ⇒ formulate concrete recommendations, best practices, innovative solutions, common principles and approaches in addressing international migration in all its dimensions towards the formulation of a comprehensive international cooperation framework on migrants and human mobility.
- ⇒ compile their inputs on means of implementation and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation as GCM components.
- ⇒ link their work towards attainment of the SDGs with the preparatory process of the GCM and prepare analyses, studies, papers or other input to GCM development.
- ⇒ Do stocktaking, collate research, data and compile their existing best practices.

3. Global RCP Meeting

Since 2005, IOM has brought together the Chairs and secretariats of the main mechanisms at the so-called Global RCP meetings, usually every two years but more recently every year. We are organizing a Seventh Global RCP Meeting in October 2017 in Geneva under the broad theme of “The Contribution of the ISCMs to process of inter-governmental negotiations leading to the GCM” to collect, review and identify concrete recommendations and other substantive inputs for the GCM based on their experiences, best practices and stemming from the recommendation formulated at their meetings.¹⁰

The Meeting will bring together representatives of RCPs, IRFs and global processes on migration, as well as the representatives of regional economic organizations and the UN Regional Commissions.

We hope the conclusions of the Global RCP Meeting will prove useful to the stocktaking and negotiations.

⁹ References to the GCM and recommendations were made in ARCP Meeting, XXI RCM Declaration; SACM Declaration of Asuncion; Bali Process 11th Ad Hoc Group SOM.

¹⁰ The Sixth GRCP Meeting (held in Geneva on 13 October 2016) already pointed to the RCPs as an important platform to support regional consultations towards the establishment of the GCM, building on their ongoing efforts towards the migration-related SDG targets.