

Key messages from the informal consultation on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and its regional reviews (Geneva, 11 December 2019)

On behalf of all who took part in yesterday's informal consultation, I would like to thank the United Nations Network on Migration for organizing this meeting, especially IOM in its capacity as Coordinator and Secretariat of the United Nations Network. Speaking for the regional economic commissions, I particularly thank the Network for inviting representatives of regional economic commissions to take part and present their respective regional coordination mechanisms on migration and plans for organizing regional reviews in 2020.

Please note: my regional economic commission colleagues provided valuable comments on this note, but I take sole responsibility for characterizing the key messages.

Some 45 persons, including members of the Executive Committee (EC), regional economic commissions, and regional United Nations entities attended the consultation. At its conclusion, participants felt that much valuable information had been shared regarding the experience and expertise of regional economic commissions and their regional partners in preparing reviews of global normative documents, and that it was time to organize the regional reviews on migration that are to be completed before the end of 2020. Key recommendations included ensuring coherence across regional review processes and securing funding for the regional review meetings, including preparatory meetings.

Representatives of the regional economic commissions summarized their expertise and experience in conducting over many years regional preparations and reviews on a broad range of global mandates, including on population ageing (Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing), gender equality and women's empowerment (Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action), population and development (Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development) and international migration (Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)). More recently, regional economic commissions have organized the annual forums on sustainable development, which are the chief platforms for follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda and feed into the high-level political forum.

Regional economic commissions build on their convening power and partner with other United Nations entities, harnessing their respective complementarities in planning, organizing, and implementing regional reviews. The reviews are conducted in a transparent and inclusive way. They include United Nations Member States, representatives of regional intergovernmental organizations, academia, the private sector, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders. Their outcomes feed into global reviews, provide input to the respective reports of the Secretary-General, and inform global debate by engaging the chairs and/or Executive Secretaries of the regional economic commissions in high-level panels. It was recognized that United Nations review processes at the global level depend on United Nations processes and constituencies at the regional level to give voice to diverse perspectives and stakeholders.

Representatives of four regional economic commissions and regional United Nations partners then presented overviews of their respective regional coordination mechanisms on migration. It was recognized that, in keeping with the GCM and the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) modalities resolution, these mechanisms should build on existing mechanisms and, to the extent possible, they should cohere with the working principles of the United Nations Network, including its governance structure, while taking into account regional specificities and United Nations partners' mandates, technical expertise, and capacity in the field of migration.

The mechanisms should embody the principles of the GCM, including by following a human rights-based, gender-responsive, child-sensitive, whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach. Coordination mechanisms at the country level should also build on existing structures, mirroring those at the regional and

global levels, as adjusted to country specificities, and with the engagement of United Nations entities and other potential partners. In general, it was important that United Nations coordination on migration avoid a “business as usual” model. There should be coherent action by the United Nations system supporting member States in implementing the GCM and reviewing its implementation at the country, regional, and global levels.

At the conclusion of the consultation, the United Nations Network on Migration Secretariat noted that it is encouraging that the global level structure of the United Nations Network is being replicated at the regional and country levels, as adjusted to regional or country specificities. However, it was also acknowledged that work remains to be done to ensure that Network replication in the field coheres with key elements of the Network as established by the Secretary-General, including, among other things, a core and extended membership with clear roles and responsibilities, and the active engagement of civil society and other stakeholders in dedicated working groups or task forces. Regional economic commissions should play a central role in the regional coordination mechanisms on migration, in particular by inclusion in the Executive Committee of the Network, where applicable, at the regional level.

With regard to regional reviews, four regional economic commissions and United Nations partners emphasized the critical importance of moving forward with planning and organizing the 2020 reviews with the support of coordination mechanisms in place at global, regional, subregional and national levels, as needed. In the regions served by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) and the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), progress had already been made on the regional reviews, but more work lied ahead for regional economic commissions.

The United Nation Network on Migration should seek to enhance coherence in implementing the regional reviews. In this regard, it was suggested by representatives of the Network Secretariat, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and other Executive Committee entities that a calendar with milestones should be developed and consolidated, addressing key building blocks of the reviews, including input, participation, format, funding, outcome, and a landing place at the IMRF.

Input:

It was suggested that Member States be invited to prepare “national voluntary reports” to assess the status of implementation of the GCM. These should be submitted to regional economic commissions and their partners in organizing regional reviews on GCM implementation. Voluntary reports would serve as a base for a comprehensive stocktaking exercise, synthesis reports, and key regional messages. Guiding questions and possibly a model outline (as opposed to lengthy questionnaires with heavily detailed guidebooks on the questions) should be developed by the United Nations Network in consultation with networks or other coordination mechanisms in place at regional level. Members of the Network active at the country-level would support Member States in preparing national voluntary reports, capacity-building for report preparation, and national consultations. In addition to national reports, synthesis reports, region- and topic-specific papers and reports would also inform the regional reviews.

Input preparation and consolidation should follow a 360-degree review of regional migration issues. Before being finalized, and as appropriate, they could be validated by Member States and other stakeholders.

Importantly, there was consensus that the United Nations Network should provide technical and substantive support to input preparation and possibly validation.

Given the close linkages between the GCM and the 2030 Agenda, it was suggested that the GCM review process could follow that of the 2030 Agenda in terms of formats, guidelines, workshops and websites, albeit in a much more limited form.

Participation:

Regional review meetings should be inclusive, engaging all Member States in the region, United Nations regional partners, other intergovernmental organizations, civil society and other stakeholders, including the private sector. Participation of civil society and other stakeholders was important, regardless of ECOSOC accreditation, if applicable, to allow the broadest and most inclusive constituency possible. Civil society should be encouraged to take part, in particular organizations engaged in GCM follow-up. Civil society forums, including youth consultations, could be held prior to the regional review meetings with support from the regional economic commissions, regional migration coordination mechanisms, and the Global United Nations Network. Like the GCM consultations, it would be important for civil society and other stakeholders to be able to provide submissions and have speaking and other participatory roles in the reviews and the IMRF themselves.

Format:

Organization of the regional review meetings should be structured and transparent, enabling Member States to present on all 23 GCM objectives, ensuring a 360-degree approach, and providing a space to present the main findings and identify regional level, opportunities, and challenges. This could be complemented by presentations by other region-specific intergovernmental organizations, United Nations entities, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders. Interactive panel discussions on cross-cutting and emerging issues should complement plenary presentations. The meetings could mirror the roundtables proposed for the IMRF, again taking into account region-specific issues.

Funding:

There was consensus that the United Nations Network and its regional partners must find ways to support regional economic commissions and their regional partners in carrying out the reviews. In particular, funding was urgently needed for support travel of participants to the regional review meetings, civil society meetings and preparatory meetings. Financial support was also needed to support preparation of regional review inputs.

Outcome and landing space:

There was consensus that regional reviews should produce specific outcomes, and that those could range from meeting reports with recommendations/key messages, to chair's summaries, or political declarations with concrete action plans. The outcomes, including meeting reports, would be posted on the UN Network and other websites, including the Connection Hub and Knowledge Platform of the United Nations Network, similar to the website developed for the high-level political forum. In addition, chairs of the regional review meetings and representatives of regional economic commissions, at the highest level, should be invited to present regional review outcomes at the IMRF.

Sabine Henning
ESCAP (on behalf of the regional economic commissions)
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