



International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
The UN Migration Agency

## **INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION**

### **Input to the UN Secretary General's Report on the Global compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is pleased to respond to the request of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) on International Migration for input to the UN Secretary General's report on the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM). The SRSG has asked for recommendations on the structure and elements of the GCM; actionable commitments that may be included; means of implementation and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation.

IOM underlines the state-led nature of the process to develop the GCM, and that its content, structure and format should be firmly rooted in the outcomes of the ongoing consultations.

This submission provides IOM's suggestions on questions one (structure and elements of the GCM, including its purpose, goals, challenges and opportunities) and three (means of implementation and framework for follow up and review of implementation), plus some general considerations concerning question two (actionable commitments). IOM will supplement this submission shortly with detailed suggestions on actionable commitments.

The following comments are based on the consultations that have taken place to date; discussions within the framework of IOM's International Dialogue on Migration and the IOM Council and its subsidiary bodies; other key inputs, such as the Report of the former SRSG on International Migration (A/71/728 - "Sutherland Report"), and IOM's extensive policy and operational experience in the field of migration. In addition to this initial input, IOM stands ready to support the preparation of the SG's report in the role mandated for it in Modalities Resolution A/RES/71/280 in providing technical and policy support to the entire GCM process, including in the preparation of the SG's report.

- [Structure and elements of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, including its purpose, goals, challenges and opportunities](#)

The GCM should provide Member States with a toolkit to help them better manage migration and work toward safe, orderly and regular migration. IOM suggests that the structure of the GCM be comprised of the following elements:

- Preamble;
- Common Understandings;
- Actionable Commitments; and
- Means of implementation and mechanisms for follow up and review of progress.

## Preamble

A visionary preamble should set out a shared ambition for the future of international cooperation on and governance of migration and, based on that, identify the compact's goals and a rationale for its structure and content.

The preamble should set forth key principles underpinning the compact, drawn from the commitments that Member States have already made, especially in the New York Declaration and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. These key principles could include:

- Human rights and people are at the centre of the compact;
- Grounding in existing international norms, principles and standards, including those related to the rights of migrants,<sup>1</sup> and a focus on practical implementation of the existing normative framework with respect to migrants is a priority;
- Migrants and migration make essential contributions to inclusive growth and sustainable development, and, therefore, adoption and implementation of the GCM will help achieve the SDGs, while efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda will facilitate realization of the commitments made in the GCM;
- Migration outcomes and impacts are not predetermined but depend on the policies that are put in place and migration governance depends on whole of government and whole of society approaches;
- States have the sovereign right to determine which non-nationals may enter and remain in their countries, while recognizing that these determinations must be consistent with the requirements of international law;
- All persons have the right to return to their own countries and governments must accept the return of their nationals;
- Racism, xenophobia, discrimination and intolerance toward migrants need to be systematically countered;
- All countries, whether of origin, transit or destination – and most are increasingly all three simultaneously – must share the responsibility to realize the positive potential of migration and minimize its negative impacts; and
- Broad-based multidisciplinary partnerships at the local, national, regional and global levels are essential to this end.

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<sup>1</sup> These include applicable norms contained in, inter alia, international human rights law, international refugee law, labour law, international humanitarian law, maritime law, law of the sea, transnational criminal law and general principles of international law applicable to States and their sovereignty and their existing review mechanisms, as well as principles and standards contained in international agreements and mechanisms such as the International Agenda for Migration Management, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its review mechanism, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, the MICIC Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster, and the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change and the Platform on Disaster Displacement.

## Common Understandings

This section should outline a common perspective on the inevitability and benefits of migration in today's inter-connected world, including key issues, opportunities and challenges. This could draw in large part on the introductory section of the New York Declaration, the chair's summary of the planned stocktaking meeting and the Sutherland Report, among other sources.

The GCM should clearly acknowledge that migration is both inevitable in our interconnected world and largely positive for migrants, their families, home and host societies. The GCM should envision a future in which migration takes place as a matter of genuine choice rather than desperate necessity, and in which States work together to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. This includes ensuring predictable, transparent, and timely procedures and channels for regular migration at all skills levels, and for many types of migration, e.g., for study, work, family unity and more, consistent with national priorities, and protecting the safety, dignity and human rights of all migrants. It also includes leveraging the many benefits migrants and migration bring to host and home countries and addressing the drivers and consequences of forced and irregular migration.

The GCM should be both forward-looking and practical, setting out a roadmap with an ambitious long-term vision, include midterm milestones, and a mechanism for follow up and review. It should provide a solid framework to foster more robust inter-state and multi-stakeholder cooperation on migration at local, national, regional and global levels, building on the achievements of existing initiatives, and reflect the links between migration and other policy areas.

This section could also reference the Global Compact on Refugees and specify the relevant populations in each compact, while noting that there will be areas of common applicability between the two compacts.

## Actionable Commitments

In line with the New York Declaration and the modalities resolution, actionable commitments should address the human rights, humanitarian, development, environment and other relevant dimensions of migration, including systems for managing migration at the national and sub-national levels. The commitments should be addressed as a coherent whole, while recognizing that some may be achievable more quickly than others. IOM proposes placing the actionable commitments in a structured framework aligned, to the extent possible, with the indicators to measure States' progress on the central reference to migration in the 2030 Agenda, target 10.7. Using a similar structure for the GCM commitments would facilitate synergies with the key migration-related SDG target.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The proposed structure is derived from the elements of the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF), which was endorsed by IOM's Member States in 2015 through Council Resolution 1310. It remains the only internationally agreed definition of SDG target 10.7 on implementing well managed migration policies. The MiGOF is composed of three principles and three objectives: Principle 1: Adherence to international standards and the fulfilment of migrants' rights; Principle 2: evidence and whole of government approaches to migration governance; Principle 3: Strong partnerships to support migration governance; Objective 1: Socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society; Objective 2: Effective responses to the mobility dimensions of crises; Objective 3: safe, orderly and dignified pathways of migration.

IOM suggests grouping the actionable commitments in the following thematic clusters:

1. Adherence to international standards and protection of migrants' human rights;
2. Inclusive, balanced and well-functioning national systems of migration management;
3. Socioeconomic well-being of migrants and society;
4. Mobility dimensions of crises; and
5. International cooperation on governance of migration.

These areas form the necessary foundation for safe, orderly, and regular migration – that is, well-governed migration. The commitments within these five clusters could work together in a balanced way to advance the well-being of migrants, their families, and the societies that they come from and join. Each commitment could be supported by specific, implementable interventions and programmes.

In line with the expressed wishes of Member States, the commitments included in the GCM should be implementable, action-oriented and have concrete outcomes. Therefore, they should be framed and structured in a way that clearly links Member States' commitments with specific actions.

For example, each commitment could include a non-exhaustive list of practical interventions that can realistically be implemented by governments and their partners. Such interventions could be identified based on a range of tools at the global and regional levels, many of which already exist. This would give governments a toolbox or “menu” of policy measures to implement depending on their national priorities and circumstances. It would make clear what action is needed, without locking governments into specific courses of action. The commitments and related implementable interventions should address local, national, regional and global levels of engagement. In addition, there may be a need to include commitments to hold a structured dialogue on specific issues of divergence where more time and reflection may be needed to reach consensus among Member States.

Given the sheer scale of migration and its implications for public policy, and significant variation in Member States' capacities on migration governance, Member States may consider adopting a phased approach and differentiated time-lines for the implementation of different commitments, by government and/or by commitment.

## Means of implementation and mechanisms for follow up and progress review

This section addresses measures, mechanisms and processes as well as resources needed to enable implementation of the GCM and to review its progress. These largely correspond to those found in recently-adopted multilateral frameworks.<sup>3</sup>

This section focuses on critical issues that, if tackled effectively, would create a positive enabling environment for GCM implementation and review of progress. This includes capacity-building, partnerships, dialogue and cooperation, interagency coordination, and financing. A fit-for-purpose institutional architecture to support all elements of the implementation and review mechanisms and processes is needed and should be recognized as an integral part of the GCM means of implementation.

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<sup>3</sup> Including the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the New Urban Agenda, amongst others.

## Core elements of the GCM follow-up

In IOM's view, the GCM follow-up should include the following key elements:

- **Regular review of progress** in implementing GCM commitments using bench-marking to identify achievements, barriers and priorities for action;
- **Capacity building** measures in line with the identified priorities; and
- **On-going broad-based dialogue** to continue forging consensus on outstanding issues and to address emerging challenges.

### 1. *Regular progress review*

It should be carried out using bench-marking instruments to help identify priorities for and monitor the impact of capacity building and other measures towards the delivery of the global compact commitments. The Migration Governance Indicators (MGI), commissioned by IOM and developed by the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), can be used as a basis to develop a global compact bench-marking instrument. MGI provides the first of its kind consolidated framework for evaluating country-specific migration governance structures, and is linked with the development of indicators to measure implementation of the migration-related SDGs. MGI can be used to set a baseline review of each country, as well as a regular follow-up review. It can help identify good practices and areas for improvement, and provide indications of the types of interventions that should be prioritized at the national and international level. IOM is currently working on further enhancing the MGI methodology. These efforts could be complemented by other existing mechanisms and indexes, for instance those developed by OECD, to develop a benchmarking and monitoring tool for the GCM. In addition, using national reports on implementation along with the MGI, IOM can work with governments to help assess their gaps and capacity development needs, as well as to synthesize reports for presentation at periodic meetings of the HLPF or other relevant forums.

A graduated approach to implementation will likely be needed, as the GCM will almost certainly include commitments that vary in their complexity to deliver, with some commitments achievable in a shorter time frame and others over a longer period.

Prioritization of actionable commitments might be agreed and realistic time-frames identified for the implementation of each. The time that will be required to set up the structures and systems needed to support and review implementation of the GCM and for mobilization of resources should be taken into account. The 2030 Agenda provides a useful overall time-perspective for full implementation of the GCM.

### 2. *Capacity Building*

The lessons of IOM's significant first-hand experience and insights on migration have shown that the lack of comprehensive migration policies and institutional coherence are among the key capacity gaps across the board. Overall, implementation of the global compact will require strengthened capacity on policy, legislation, institutions, and an array of technical areas. To achieve qualitative and sustainable improvement in migration governance, this support needs to be targeted and systematic.

Most countries have some capacity gaps and, due to the complex and dynamic nature of migration, all countries can benefit from continuous capacity review and development. Crisis situations often bring this point to the fore. Further, while in general developing countries require greater support, high income does not always result in high effectiveness of migration governance systems, and there are many

examples where middle- and lower-income countries have good practices to share. This highlights the importance of dialogue, experience sharing and exchange as a key means to support capacity development. Moreover, building the capacity of the many non-governmental actors in the migration field to effectively engage and contribute is of key importance, as is ensuring that there are mechanisms and capacities for coordination and partnerships at local, national, regional and global levels.

Many training and capacity building materials on a variety of migration governance topics have been developed by IOM and other UN agencies, including in the framework of the Global Migration Group, as well as by others. These tools are a valuable resource and should be used. There is also a need for a tool to support a comprehensive approach to migration governance. IOM is currently working on updating its comprehensive 2005 training manual *Essentials of Migration Management for Policy Makers and Practitioners* to reflect the latest developments and approaches to migration management and governance, including the 2030 Agenda. The updated manual, the *Essentials of Migration Management (emm2.0)*, can be aligned with the GCM and used to build capacity for its implementation in conjunction with other, more specific materials and partners. IOM has many other training tools which can be drawn upon in alignment with the GCM for capacity building on migration management.

Member States may wish to create a Centre of Expertise to pull together the available resources and to coordinate knowledge sharing and capacity-building.

### 3. *Broad-based dialogue*

Sustained dialogue bringing together States and a wide variety of non-governmental actors will be an essential part of GCM follow-up. Inclusive dialogue will be needed to continue moving towards consensus on issues for which it will not be possible to reach agreement by the time the compact is adopted, and to explore new and emerging issues. By facilitating experience-exchange and bringing together diverse stakeholders, it will also support capacity development and partnership-building.

#### Key characteristics of an effective GCM follow-up and progress review mechanism

- States should remain firmly at the heart of the GCM implementation, therefore GCM follow-up structures and processes need to be **state-led**.
- Delivery of the GCM commitments will require greater international support and multi-stakeholder cooperation than currently exists. Strengthened multidisciplinary partnerships at local, national, bilateral, regional and global levels are the backbone of policy coherence and enhanced migration governance and should underpin all aspects of the GCM. Mechanisms for GCM implementation should therefore be **inclusive** and provide adequate channels for engaging with civil society, the private sector, media, academia, migrants and other relevant stakeholders.
- A wide range of platforms already exist at different levels to support partnerships and cooperation on migration. In addition to reinforcing them, efforts should be made to streamline and build synergies among the platforms already in place. This calls for mechanisms that facilitate **broad-based, multidisciplinary partnerships and promote synergies** among them.
- The **follow-up and review** of the GCM **should be Geneva-based**, to build on the dedicated governmental expertise and work of the many migration-related UN and other entities on migration based there, such as IOM, ILO, OHCHR, UNHCR, the IFRC/ICRC, and important civil society entities.
- Strengthened capacity in policy, legislation, institutions, and a variety of technical areas in the migration sphere is essential for GCM implementation and should be recognized as a priority. The

GCM follow-up mechanism should be able to identify capacity-building needs, and deliver **targeted and systematic** capacity-building support to governments and non-governmental actors.

- Implementation of the GCM is linked with SDG implementation. Therefore, GCM follow-up mechanisms should build on existing systems and be **aligned with the 2030 Agenda** monitoring and implementation structures, as well as with other relevant international frameworks.
- The GCM will contribute to the fulfilment of the 2030 Agenda's pledge to leave no one behind by supporting the achievement of the SDGs for migrants. Relevant steps include ensuring equitable access of all migrants to justice and social protection, such as health care and education. In practice this would mean looking beyond aggregate outcomes and identifying specific needs of individuals, for example women, children and those in vulnerable or disadvantaged situations, irrespective of their migratory background, and through inclusive approaches. This calls for a mechanism that can support development and delivery of **equitable and contextualized** approaches.
- Much of the action for GCM implementation, as for the 2030 Agenda, needs to take place at the national level. At the same time, the regional dimension is particularly important in migration. The GCM follow-up mechanism, therefore, needs to be **multi-level** and take an **integrated approach** to support action at country, regional and global levels, while ensuring both vertical coordination and horizontal feedback and cross-fertilization.
- **Enhanced interagency coordination** for GCM implementation and review is needed not only to ensure that relevant expertise is available to States and other actors, but also to support synergies with other UN-coordinated capacity building, policy development and technical work. GCM follow-up mechanisms should facilitate **streamlined** inter-agency coordination at all levels to allow each relevant agency to bring its specific expertise on migration while enabling the UN system to speak with one voice. As such, it should link closely with national and regional UN-coordination structures, be **forward-looking** and take into account ongoing UN system reform.
- A **flexible and graduated** approach to implementation of GCM is needed, as it will likely include commitments that vary in their complexity to deliver, with some commitments achievable in a shorter time frame and others over a longer period. That is, on issues where it may not be possible to achieve full consensus by the time the compact is adopted, a commitment to engage in a time-limited process to work towards consensus should be established.
- Prioritization of actionable commitments might be agreed and time-frames identified for the implementation of each. The 2030 Agenda provides a useful overall time-perspective for the full implementation of the GCM.
- Plans for the GCM implementation and progress review should be **realistic**, including in terms of the time and resources required for it. This includes the need for predictable, multi-year financing, clear prioritization of actionable commitments and realistic time-frames identified for the implementation of each.

## Institutional architecture

A fit-for-purpose institutional architecture for GCM follow-up needs to provide a framework for and enable all elements and characteristics identified above, including priority-setting and progress review, capacity building and sustained broad-based dialogue.

These requirements could be met by a mechanism based on the IOM Council and its subsidiary International Dialogue on Migration (IDM); the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD); or another purpose-specific entity in Geneva.

The **IOM Council** has an appropriate structure for a GCM follow-up mechanism with its elected governing body. While its membership currently lacks approximately 26 Member States of the United Nations, this would not preclude any State from participation and reporting, as is the case with other existing bodies and reporting mechanisms, such as UNHCR's Executive Committee and the UN Human Rights Council. In line with the IOM Constitution, IOM convenes the International Dialogue on Migration, which is comprised of governments, partner intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, to discuss contemporary migration issues with a view to developing practical solutions. All UN, regional and non-governmental entities that are observers in the IOM Council are automatically included in the IDM, and there is no limitation on participation. This existing forum could serve as the basis for the GCM implementation and review mechanism. IOM also convenes the annual Global Meeting of Regional Consultative Processes (GRCP) and inter-regional fora on migration – bringing together RCPs and others from all regions. This is particularly useful for strengthening synergies among regional dialogues and sharing relevant practices across regions. The GRCP could serve as a link between the GCM follow-up mechanism and the Regional Consultative Processes on Migration and inter-regional dialogues.

The **GFMD** is an existing mechanism that has the benefit of having established a robust, inclusive and trust-based dialogue amongst Member States and with civil society and business partners. However, its informal consultative format may have to be amended to enable it to perform a review function and a robust secretariat would need to be provided. Another option for the GFMD is that it be the mechanism for multi-stakeholder dialogue and consensus building, feeding into the GCM implementation and review mechanism. In either case, structural changes to ensure greater inclusion of non-governmental actors would need to be considered.

Another important element of this mechanism should be **interagency coordination**. In developing this aspect, the experience of existing inter-agency coordination mechanisms on migration, notably the Global Migration Group, should be reviewed and the changes taking place in the context of UN reform should be taken into account. To be effective for GCM follow-up and to support synergies with the 2030 Agenda, inter-agency coordination would need to take place at regional and country levels in addition to the global level, and be closely linked with national and regional UN coordination structures.

In line with the Secretary General's proposed reforms to the UN development system, dedicated inter-agency working groups on migration at the national level, as part of the UN country teams where they exist, and at the regional level in the framework of the regional UN system, could become a prime mechanism for providing consolidated UN system support to mainstream migration into policy planning, and to realize the GCM commitments and migration-related SDGs. IOM is prepared to lead such national and regional level migration working groups and to engage all relevant UN partners at the country and regional levels. This work could build on the ongoing mainstreaming efforts led by IOM in collaboration with relevant UN partners in several countries.

To achieve alignment with the structures for monitoring implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the follow up and review mechanism of the GCM could be requested to deliver regular reports to the High-level Political Forum concerning progress on the migration-related SDG targets.

Links between the GCM and the Global Compact on Refugees, and their joint relevance to implementation of the New York Declaration, need to be acknowledged in establishing the GCM follow up and review mechanism. One option would be to request that annual updates on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees be delivered at the UNHCR Executive Committee and in the framework of the GCM follow-up mechanism, respectively. Similarly, the lead



agencies supporting the implementation of the two compacts could be requested to submit periodic joint reports to the UN Secretary General regarding implementation of the New York Declaration.

Regardless of whether the GCM follow-up mechanism will be based on the IOM Council or another body, there needs to be continuity and predictability as well as capacity to provide effective support to States and other stakeholders across the different levels. This enhanced framework of communication and collaboration can be achieved by ensuring that the mechanism has a multiyear programme of work based on the GCM commitments and the 2030 Agenda, and a clear leadership structure.

To facilitate this, the GCM follow-up mechanism could be supported by a Secretariat. IOM was brought into the UN system with the express purpose of strengthening cooperation and enhancing both IOM's and the UN's ability to fulfil their respective mandates in the interest of migrants and Member States, including by strengthening the support provided by the United Nations system to Member States in implementing the migration-related elements of the 2030 Agenda. IOM's broad migration mandate and extensive presence on the ground mean that IOM would be well-placed to provide such secretarial support in furtherance and consistent with the UN's reform effort.

### *Funding*

In line with the recommendations of the Sutherland report, fulfilling the migration-related commitments of the 2030 Agenda and the more specific GCM commitments would require enhanced donor support. Thus, it will be essential to mobilize domestic, external, public, and private **funding** to implement the GCM. Capacity building and experience sharing should be identified as key priorities of the overall financing framework for the GCM. Other funding priorities include enhanced migration data collection and analysis, support to specific processes launched by the GCM, broad-based multi-stakeholder dialogue and partnerships at various levels, and monitoring and review mechanisms. A global fund or facility for implementation of the GCM, as suggested in the Sutherland report, would help ensure that funding from different sources can be accommodated, and provide predictable, multi-year financing needed to achieve systemic changes.