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Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Report

Capacity-building Workshop on Migration Governance in the Arab Region Sheraton Hotel, Cairo, 5 December 2019

Summary

Under the framework of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, the Regional Capacity-building Workshop on Migration Governance in the Arab Region was organized by the three co-chairs, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the League of Arab States (LAS), and held at the Sheraton Hotel in Cairo on 5 December 2019. The Workshop was organized in collaboration with the members of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region.

The Workshop aimed to enhance the awareness of Arab Member States' representatives on the policy implications of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in the Arab States and on ways to engage in the implementation and review processes of the GCM. It also introduced the roles of the United Nations, including the United Nations Network on Migration, and civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the field of migration, and the means to support Member States in implementing the GCM.

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Introduction

1. Under the framework of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region, the Regional Capacity-building Workshop on Migration Governance in the Arab Region was organized by the working group's three Co-chairs, the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the League of Arab States (LAS), at the Sheraton Hotel in Cairo on 5 December 2019. The Workshop was organized in collaboration with the members of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region.
2. The Workshop built on the outcome of the discussions during the "Regional Conference on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: Implementation and Policy Implications for the Arab Region," held in Cairo on 3 and 4 December 2019. The Workshop aimed to enhance the participants' awareness of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) policy implications in the Arab States and the ways to engage in the implementation and review processes of the GCM.
3. The Workshop focused on building the participants' capacity to review policies and strategies from the perspective of the GCM, and to identify areas of reform required to ensure that the national systems are aligned with the GCM requirements and approaches. Attendees' awareness was also raised on the United Nations Network on Migration and its role in supporting countries.
4. Participants were introduced to the roles of the United Nations and civil society organizations (CSOs) that work in the field of migration and the means of supporting Member States in implementing the GCM. Through practical exercises, attendees identified practical steps to accelerate the GCM implementation, including funding mechanisms, data, and follow-up and review processes, in their countries.
5. The Workshop comprised of five sessions, including an opening session linking it to the Regional Conference on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. Session 1 focused on the GCM's holistic approach to migration; Sessions 2 and 3 on the principles of the GCM; and Session 4 on implementing the GCM.

I. Workshop sessions

A. Opening session

6. The Co-chairs of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region welcomed participants to the Capacity-building Workshop on Migration Governance in the Arab Region. They shared the main outcomes of the regional conference that preceded the workshop and provided an overview of the Workshop agenda.

B. Session 1: The GCM - from theory to practice

7. The first session of the Workshop focused on building the participants' capacity to review policies and strategies from a holistic lens, determine their alignment with the GCM and identify areas for reform. Ms. Karima El Korri, Chief of Population and Social Development Section, ESCWA, moderated the session.
8. Ms. Cecile Riallant, Head, Migration and Sustainable Development Unit, Labour Mobility and Human Development Division, IOM, launched the session with a presentation on the complex interlinkages between migration and development, and how they influence each other. She highlighted that every Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) contains entry points for migration, not only the frequently cited SDG target 10.7 (facilitate orderly, safe, and responsible migration and mobility of people). Similarly, sectoral policies resonate strongly with migration and the cooperation needed across all levels to achieve GCM objectives necessitates a whole-of-government approach. She proceeded by underscoring the importance of policy coherence to

ensure that investment in reaching GCM objectives also supports the achievement of the SDGs and vice versa, in a whole-of-system approach.

9. In the group exercise that followed, participants discussed in small groups the set of questions below:
- Using the lens of the Sustainable Development Goals, how does migration contribute to development in your country? Which GCM objectives do you think are a priority to capitalize on migration for development?
 - What are the relevant sectoral policies in your country that you think should be reviewed from a migration lens?
 - What capacities need further strengthening to be able to efficiently implement the GCM (for example, policy analysis, coordination mechanisms with different stakeholders)?
 - What are the current key funding resources (governmental and non-governmental) your country is using to implement the GCM?

10. In the group reporting, Member State representatives emphasized the contribution of migration to development through remittances, the transfer of experience and skills and investments by nationals living abroad, as well as through the labour and demand created by migrants and transit migrants. GCM objective 6 on ethical recruitment and objectives 18, 19 and 20 related to the mutual recognition of skills, diaspora, and the reduction of the price of remittances were mentioned among the priorities. The need to gather quality data before reviewing policies was highlighted. The most important policy areas for review were social policies related to education, health and social assistance. Capacity-building in the area of data and coordination among stakeholders was seen as crucial. The state budget, international and regional organizations, and bilateral cooperation were named as major sources of funding to implement the GCM.

11. In response to the issues raised by participants, information was provided on the support the United Nations system can provide to Member States in implementing the GCM and on the funds available. Ms. Berween Younes, Policy Officer at the United Nations Network on Migration Secretariat, introduced the elements of the capacity-building mechanism to help implement the GCM, including a connection hub to identify partners, share solutions and establish peer-to-peer connections and a global knowledge platform, which will become an online common data and knowledge source. Both elements are included in the global workplan of the United Nations Network on Migration.

12. Mr. Jonathan Prentice, Head of the United Nations Network on Migration Secretariat, provided an overview of the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), which is a pooled fund created by United Nations Member States and governed collectively by a 12-person steering committee (chaired by the Director General of IOM as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration; three members of United Nations system: International Labour Organization, World Health Organization and United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women); three Member States: Ecuador, Morocco, Philippines; three donors and three stakeholders). It is not meant to be a primary source of funding for migration-related issues, but complementary funding which aspires to be an engine for creation and the scale-up of innovative cooperative projects. The fund aims to stimulate cooperation and coherence by funding initiatives that bring the United Nations system together and that have a multi-stakeholder dimension in both the planning and implementation phase. The operationalization of the fund is currently being discussed and a pipeline of potential projects will be developed soon. Member States will be provided more detailed information in due course.

C. Sessions 2 and 3: Delivering on the principles of the GCM

13. Session 2 of the Workshop focused on the principles of the GCM and on how its human rights-based, gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach can be integrated in Member States' migration related policies. The session was moderated by Ms. Sara Salman, Population and Social Development Section, ESCWA. In her

opening remarks, she emphasized the human-centred nature of the GCM and its gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach.

14. In the group exercise that followed, small groups of participants discussed the set of questions below:

- Human rights are a guiding principle for the GCM. What are some of the main challenges that you face in ensuring the protection of human rights of all migrants?
- Objective 7 of the GCM calls for addressing and reducing vulnerabilities in migration. Have you adopted targeted programmes or policies to address the needs of specific migrant groups (women, children, vulnerable migrants, etc.)? What additional measures need to be introduced?
- The majority of international migrants settle in urban areas. Describe the role that local governments have taken on in responding to migration? How can this role be developed?

15. Participants identified conflict, security, discrimination, restrictive legislation, the accessibility of services and the balance between the interest of citizens and migrants as the main challenges for protecting the human rights of all migrants. Most countries have been providing shelter and humanitarian assistance to vulnerable migrants including women and children. Attendees highlighted the role of governments at the local level in registering migrants in databases and integrating them through work programmes and cultural and sports activities. It was agreed that integrating migrants was a prerequisite for reaping the benefits of migration for development. The role of CSOs on the local level was also emphasized.

16. Following the group reporting, a number of United Nations agencies highlighted some challenges related to migration and presented their efforts to support countries. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), represented by Mr. Ulrik Halsteen, conducts advocacy, policy guidance, monitoring and reporting and capacity-building on human rights, including specific activities connected to the human rights of migrants and migrant workers. Ms. Teona Aslanishvili from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) stressed the specific risks faced by migrant children, such as separation from their family or missing out on education as well as opportunities for improved living conditions. She highlighted the principle of non-discrimination and recommended not developing parallel systems of public services for migrants, but rather broadening the scope of existing national systems to cater for migrant children's needs. Ms. Jean D'Cunha from UN Women underlined the need to adapt tools such as the wage protection system and recruitment regulations for women's needs and to develop gender-sensitive standard operating procedures. Regarding the support to Member States, UN Women contributes to regional and global standard setting, knowledge generation and dissemination and helps countries to apply the lens of the Covenant on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) to policies and laws. Finally, Ms. Soha Farouk from the United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-Habitat) highlighted the effects of migration on cities which face challenges related to the registration and integration of migrants in local communities, urban planning and land and property rights. UN-Habitat provides support in these areas, including projects targeting participatory urban planning and urban profiling aiming to assess cities' capacities to respond to migration.

17. Participants in the third session continued to engage in practical exercises focused on delivering on the principles of the GCM. The session was moderated by Ms. Cecile Riallant from IOM. Participants worked in groups on answering the following questions:

- Objective 15 calls for States to provide access to basic services for all migrants. Has your country taken initiatives to ensure migrants' access to basic services such as health and education? What are some of the main challenges faced in this area?
- What are some of the main drivers for international migration from and to your country? Have you taken any measures to address adverse drivers of migration?

- Objectives 9 and 10 call for preventing smuggling of migrants and combatting trafficking in persons. Is this a priority in your country? What are some of the challenges you face in this area?

18. Some of the common challenges that were identified by participants included the lack of data that does not allow for effective planning and delivering of services, particularly given the complications posed by irregular migrants who often go unaccounted for. Regarding identifying drivers of migration, participants pointed out several adverse drivers of migration, including climate change (especially in North African countries), the limited access to basic services in rural areas, conflict and poverty. In response to these challenges, participants proposed to focus efforts on developing policies that integrate migrants in host communities and put in place policies that ensure equitable development and peace and security. Smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons was another challenge identified. Participants proposed solutions focusing on decriminalizing victims and improving border control. Furthermore, the need for a comprehensive approach to combat migrant smuggling was highlighted. Accordingly, States need to ratify various relevant treaties, develop national legislation in line with the treaties and implement measures to protect smuggled migrants.

19. Following the report back from the groups, United Nations agencies highlighted some of the issues and priorities and presented their efforts to support countries. To this end, Mr. Samer Abdeljaber presented the work of the World Food Programme (WFP) in Libya to illustrate the many challenges faced in catering for the needs of migrants, especially to migrants in situation of transit and irregularity. Ms. Aspasia Plakantonaki from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) pointed out several priorities and measures needed to fight migrant smuggling and human trafficking, which include allocating necessary resources, engaging in regional coordination particularly on regional law enforcement and regional justice mechanisms, and strengthening criminal justice system in the region. Ms. Dalia Abulfotuh from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) focused on the impact of rural-urban migration on international migration and highlighted that the benefits of migration are not always automatic for communities in rural areas. Mr. Ali Ardalan from the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasized the need for ensuring universal health coverage that includes migrants and argued that in the long term the universality of health protection is cost effective. He also highlighted the importance of mainstreaming migration in health policies, planning and data.

D. Session 4: Implementing the GCM

20. The fourth session discussed practical steps that enable Member States to implement and monitor the GCM. Participants explored possible immediate actions that can be taken to ensure proper monitoring of the GCM implementation, including needed data and available data sources, national review mechanisms, coordination mechanisms and means to engage with all relevant stakeholders. The session was moderated by Ms. Jill Helke, Director, International Cooperation and Partnerships, IOM. Attendees in small groups addressed the following set of questions:

- The GCM objective 1 highlights the need for accurate and disaggregated data for evidence-based policies. What kind of data do you use to determine the socioeconomic and demographic profile of the migrant population in your country (age, gender, locality, migration status etc.)?
- What are some immediate actions that you will take to ensure the proper monitoring of the GCM implementation?
- Who are the relevant stakeholders that you will engage with in implementing the GCM? What coordination mechanisms will you put in place? How do you engage civil society and private sector? If not yet, what are the challenges in achieving this?

21. The discussion focused on the difficulties in compiling and accessing migration data. Participants expressed the urgent need for countries to develop disaggregated migration data by gender, age, location, health, education and employment, among others, and to improve comparability and accessibility of these data.

They stressed the need to develop better migration-related indicators as well as the importance of engaging different stakeholders including the national statistics offices, universities, ministries of foreign affairs, service providers, and international, regional and national organizations to address the data gap, as well as harmonize the data to allow for better analysis. One of the solutions proposed highlighted the need to establish multi-stakeholder bodies to coordinate the implementation and monitoring of the GCM.

22. Following the group exercise, Mr. Mohamed Khachani, Professor at Mohammed V University at Agdal, Morocco, highlighted the role that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can play in achieving most of the objectives of the GCM and presented the findings of his research on engaging NGOs in migration governance. Mr. David Martineau, Migration Policy Officer, IOM, presented on the utility of the Migration Governance Indicators (MGI) and data collection frameworks, and how they can support Member States in measuring migration governance. He highlighted the need for agility in responding and monitoring sudden changes in migration patterns and flows.

E. Closing session: wrap up and way forward

23. The Capacity-building Workshop on Migration Governance in the Arab Region closed with statements by representatives of LAS, IOM and ESCWA. They thanked participants for their participation and stressed their commitment to continue to support Arab countries in achieving the objectives of the GCM and supporting its review process in the Arab region.

II. Participants

24. The Workshop was attended by about 45 participants including representatives from 13 Arab countries and Switzerland, governments officials, regional organizations, United Nations bodies, academia and regional and international experts.

III. Documents

25. Conference documents, including the agenda, presentations, and report are available at <https://www.unescwa.org/events/capacity-building-workshop-migration-governance-2019>.

Annex*

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