

United Nations Network on Migration
Coordinator's Opening Remarks
Africa Regional Review Conference
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
(approx. 3 min)

Excellencies, distinguished guests, colleagues,

As Coordinator of the UN Migration Network, it is my pleasure to join you today for the Africa Regional Review Conference of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

The Global Compact on Migration, or GCM, is a key guide to enhance the benefits of migration and to address its challenges through international cooperation. Grounded in international human rights law and aligned with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development the GCM is underpinned by its 10 guiding principles, the GCM addresses migration in all its dimensions through its 360 degree approach.

This review is the last of a series of regional discussions that feed into the first International Migration Review Forum, to be held during the first half of 2022. The United Nations Network on Migration has assisted Member States and stakeholders in preparing and organizing these regional discussions.

One key finding from the Regional Reviews to date is that not all GCM objectives have received the same level of attention by Member States. Areas that few Member States have reported on include the plight of missing migrants and saving lives; alternatives to detention; discrimination; predictability in migration procedures; consular protection; and portability of benefits.

Even though there may be many reasons for this, we have to make sure that, in implementing the GCM, the 360-degree approach is respected and promoted. I hope that this review will shine a spotlight on all 23 GCM objectives and how best to move towards their full implementation.

The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the vital role that migrants play in fostering healthy, prosperous, and inclusive societies. At the same time, the pandemic has revealed weaknesses in some of our existing policies and practices. It has also exposed the devastating consequences that can result when the human rights of migrants are not adequately respected and protected.

National lockdowns, border closures, and the restrictions on population movements more generally have highlighted the centrality of migration in today's world. In Africa, the disruption of remittance sending services in countries of destination, along with lockdown restrictions is estimated to lead to a 5.4 per cent decline in remittances this year alone – a decrease of \$ 1 billion. Furthermore, the inability of governments to register and renew documents has left many migrants in precarious situations in host countries, risking detention or deportation.

On the positive side, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in some governments in Africa extending basic services, including health to migrants.

The lessons we have learnt since the start of COVID-19 will guide us to recover better from the pandemic, to plan our future pandemic preparedness and, more generally, to bring us back on the path towards realizing the Sustainable Development Goals.

Now, allow me now to highlight four important achievements of the Network.

First, GCM Champion countries are leading the ways in implementing the Global Compact. Of the 23 Champion countries, nine are in Africa: Chad, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria and Senegal.

Second, the Network provides support to Member States through the 19 country and regional Networks we have established on the continent so far.

Third, I am pleased that programme implementation funded by the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund has started. Today, nine joint programmes currently underway.

True to the GCM's 360-degree approach, these programmes cover a wide range of thematic areas and are geographically diverse. Each of these nine programmes, furthermore, is aligned with the GCM guiding principles.

The Fund is currently supporting three joint programmes in Africa, for a total of approximately 7.5 million USD. The joint programmes focus on strengthening border management in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration in the context of climate change and environmental degradation in North-east Africa, and strengthening national and local responses to xenophobia and promoting social inclusion in South Africa.

With 32 additional joint programmes in the pipeline, of which 13 from Africa, the Fund is poised to do more. I would like to seize this opportunity to call for additional contributions – even modest ones – towards the \$70 million target set by the Steering Committee ahead of the first IMRF. Beyond the traditional donors, the list of current contributors includes countries such as Mexico, the Philippines and Thailand; with no donors currently from Africa, that is a gap we would hope to fill.

Fourth, we have established the Migration Network Hub as called for in the GCM. The Network Hub is a one-stop shop for accessing good practices and facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges in pursuit of GCM implementation. It further offers a virtual meeting space for government officials, stakeholders and UN colleagues to engage on key areas.

All these four efforts have reminded us of the significance of international cooperation – amongst countries, with stakeholders and throughout the UN system.

I look forward to our discussions and assure you of the steadfast support of IOM and the United Nations Network on Migration, in our collective efforts to implement the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.