



FAQs on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)

Prepared by the Permanent Representatives of Mexico and Switzerland to the United Nations, as co-facilitators of the GCM

On 13 July 2018, negotiations among Member States of the United Nations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) were concluded. It is up for formal adoption by Heads of States and Governments at an Intergovernmental Conference scheduled for 10-11 December in Marrakech (Morocco).

What the GCM is

The GCM is the first ever negotiated global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. It sets out a common understanding, shared responsibilities and unity of purpose regarding migration. The GCM outlines a cooperative framework for better managing migration on local, national, regional and global levels. It follows a people-centred approach, focusing on the needs and the rights of individuals, while at the same time considering the concerns of communities. The GCM compiles principles, rights and obligations from existing international law instruments regarding migration, identifies best practices in all areas of migration policy and establishes a space for dialogue on migration at the United Nations. The GCM will be considered a reference document for years to come.

What the GCM is not

The GCM is neither about refugees nor about internally displaced persons (IDPs). The GCM is not a treaty or a convention and has no legally binding power. Governments neither sign nor ratify. Rather, the GCM is a political commitment to cooperate at all levels of governance, based on the recognition that no country can address a phenomenon that is – by definition – transnational, on its own. States are free to choose how to pursue implementation in line with their priorities. The GCM does not impose any new obligations on States regarding who can enter their territory.

Why is the GCM needed?

Migration has always been there. Due to a variety of factors, migration is likely to increase. There are over 200 million international migrants in the world today. They represent 3.4% of the global population, but produce nearly 9% of global GDP (roughly \$6.7 trillion USD). Research suggests that migration movements will increase in the decades to come. This makes for a huge economic potential, along with possible political disturbances. Both call for rational, evidence-based, policies and greater international cooperation. Managing migration in a coordinated manner is one of the most important tests of international cooperation of our time. The GCM provides guidance on how to pass this test.

Why now?

No State can manage migration movements completely on its own. Recent large movements of people, have highlighted the need for international cooperation. In 2016 at the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants the Member States of the United Nations adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants which mandated two separate and parallel processes, one to elaborate a Global Compact on Refugees, led by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, and the other a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to be negotiated and agreed by Member States. The Permanent Representatives of Mexico and Switzerland led the negotiations as co-facilitators. They engaged Member States, local governments, the private sector, trade unions, civil society, parliamentarians, academia, and migrants themselves in broad-based substantive consultations during the year 2017. Between February and July 2018 intergovernmental negotiations took place among UN Member States in six rounds at UN Headquarters in New York, resulting in an agreed outcome document.

Why is the GCM an achievement?

- **Novel:** First intergovernmentally agreed global framework for cooperation on international migration after decades of global dialogue and incremental steps
- **Global:** Recognizes that migration is a global phenomenon and transnational in nature
- **Comprehensive:** Addresses the phenomenon in all its dimensions and takes into account the needs of migrants, communities and States
- **Cooperative:** Acknowledgment that no State can address the challenges and opportunities of migration alone and that concerted international cooperation is required to effectively respond to migration
- **Visionary:** Facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration by enhancing regular pathways, while reducing the negative impact and incidence of irregular migration
- **Realistic:** Accepts migration as a feature of humanity and promotes a constructive, evidence-based narrative on migration

What is "migration" in the GCM?

Migration is a multi-dimensional reality that is here to stay. The central tenet of the GCM is that migration is a reality to be managed with significant opportunities and not a crisis to be stopped. Data shows that most migration takes place in a safe, orderly and regular manner. Migrants move mainly within the same region, and most migration takes place between developing countries. Such migration is a net benefit for societies and harbours a huge economic and cultural potential. However, migration can put societies under stress and pose challenges. The GCM seeks to maximize the opportunities of safe, orderly and regular migration and to minimize the negative impact of irregular migration as an act of desperation. It emphasizes greater international cooperation for concerted action. It recognizes the need to mitigate the adverse drivers and structural factors that hinder people from building and maintaining sustainable livelihoods in their countries of origin. It intends to reduce the risks and vulnerabilities migrants face by respecting, protecting and fulfilling their human rights and providing them with care and assistance at all stages of migration. It seeks to address legitimate concerns of communities undergoing demographic, economic, social and environmental changes accentuated by migration movements. It strives to harness the positive potential of migration as economic engine and agent of development by enabling labour migration and full integration. It is determined to strengthen cooperation on migration management and dismantle transnational organized crime involved in smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons, all the while keeping the fundamental needs of the individual at the centre. Finally, it commits to producing better data on migration as a fundamental enabler of sound migration policy.

What are the commitments Member States agree to?

In the GCM, Member States commit to working together on all migration issues. They recognize that migration is multi-dimensional. The GCM establishes 10 guiding principles and defines 23 objectives covering all aspects of migration along the whole cycle of migration, including challenging and politically charged areas. Each objective is comprised of a general commitment and a catalogue of possible actions that States can draw from to develop their national and international responses. These actions are based on internationally recognized best practices and lessons learned that were collected in the consultation process ahead of the negotiations.

Guiding principles:

The ten guiding principles are cross-cutting and interdependent:

- **People-centred:** Individuals are placed at the core of the GCM
- **International cooperation:** Recognition of the transnational nature of migration and the need for concerted action
- **National sovereignty:** Reaffirmation of the right of every State to determine national migration policies
- **Rule of law and due process:** Recognition of their fundamentality to all aspects of migration governance
- **Sustainable development:** The GCM is rooted in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and leverages the potential of migration for the achievement of the SDGs

- Human Rights: International human rights law is the basis of the GCM
- Gender-responsive: The GCM mainstreams gender, promotes gender equality and empowers women and girls
- Child-sensitive: The GCM upholds the principle of the best interests of the child at all times
- Whole-of-government approach: The GCM promotes horizontal and vertical policy coherence across all sectors and levels of government
- Whole-of-society-approach: The GCM promotes broad multi-stakeholder partnerships

Objectives:

23 objectives are the core element of the cooperative framework:

- Collect and utilize accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies
- Minimize the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin
- Provide accurate and timely information at all stages of migration
- Ensure that all migrants have proof of legal identity and adequate documentation
- Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration
- Facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work
- Address and reduce vulnerabilities in migration
- Save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants
- Strengthen the transnational response to smuggling of migrants
- Prevent, combat and eradicate trafficking in persons in the context of international migration
- Manage borders in an integrated, secure and coordinated manner
- Strengthen certainty and predictability in migration procedures for appropriate screening, assessment and referral
- Use migration detention only as a measure of last resort and work towards alternatives
- Enhance consular protection, assistance and cooperation throughout the migration cycle
- Provide access to basic services for migrants
- Empower migrants and societies to realize full inclusion and social cohesion
- Eliminate all forms of discrimination and promote evidence-based public discourse to shape perceptions of migration
- Invest in skills development and facilitate mutual recognition of skills, qualifications and competences
- Create conditions for migrants and diasporas to fully contribute to sustainable development in all countries
- Promote faster, safer and cheaper transfer of remittances and foster financial inclusion of migrants
- Cooperate in facilitating safe and dignified return and readmission, as well as sustainable reintegration
- Establish mechanisms for the portability of social security entitlements and earned benefits
- Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly and regular migration

What is next?

On 10-11 December 2018, Heads of States or Governments will formally adopt the GCM at an Intergovernmental Conference taking place in Marrakech (Morocco). The Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakech will serve to galvanize ownership by States and all relevant stakeholders for the GCM and herald the implementation phase. On the one hand, the Intergovernmental Conference will consist of a plenary debate in which States will confirm their political commitment to the GCM. On the other hand, two dialogues will serve to pave the way for concrete avenues for implementation and partnerships at all levels and with all relevant stakeholders. For this purpose, States will ideally start devising national roadmaps for implementation and come to the Intergovernmental Conference with initial deliverables.

After formal adoption of the GCM, an International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) will be held every four years at the United Nations and serve to review accomplishments and identify future opportunities for implementation. Alternating with the global level, regional reviews will be organized at a four-year interval by relevant regional platforms and institutions beginning in 2020. The United Nations will realign its internal structures to assist countries in the implementation of the GCM by establishing a UN migration network, coordinated by the International Organization for Migration (IOM).