

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Adopted

In Marrakech, Morocco on 10 December, 164 countries adopted the historic Global Compact for Migration, which is essentially a blueprint for helping the 258 million migrants worldwide achieve a life of safety and dignity.

To help countries “breathe life” into the Global Compact, the Secretary-General also launched the UN Migration Network. Also on 10 December, Monday, at a special event to mark Human Rights Day, leaders and luminaries celebrated the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which has inspired millions of women and men to demand their rights, and contest the forces of oppression, exploitation, discrimination and injustice.

On September 19, 2016, the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. It envisioned the adoption of two new global compacts in 2018: a global compact on refugees and a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration (GCM). The General Assembly further directed that the two processes leading to the two global compacts are to be “separate, distinct and independent”. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was given the task of developing and proposing a new global compact on refugees in consultation with States and other stakeholders, based on the comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF) set out in the New York Declaration. The High Commissioner proposed a final text in his annual report to the UN General Assembly in 2018 and the compact will come before the General Assembly before the end of the year, in conjunction with the annual resolution of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. The global compact on refugees is expected to be endorsed by the General Assembly before the end of 2018.

The inter-governmental process for the GCM, on the other hand, was jointly serviced by the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General on International Migration (SRSG) and IOM. Although the process of developing the GCM was State-led, various stakeholders (i.e., civil society, scientific and knowledge-based institutions, parliaments, local authorities, the private sector and migrants themselves) had the opportunity to contribute their views, opinions, and expertise. The Permanent Representatives of Mexico and Switzerland to the United Nations in New York together facilitated the process. The GCM is meant to be consistent with target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in which Member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate orderly, safe and responsible migration. Its scope is defined in Annex II of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. More specifically to international migration data, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants calls upon States to ensure that migration data are:

“Disaggregated by sex and age and include information on regular and irregular flows, the economic impacts of migration and refugee movements, human trafficking, needs of refugees, migrants and host communities and other issues.”

In early 2017, UN Member States agreed on the process and timeline for a GCM. The elaboration of the Global Compact took place through three phases (i.e., consultation phase, stocktaking phase, and negotiation phase). Following-up on the intergovernmental negotiations, the final draft of the GCM was released on 11 July, 2018. The draft presents 23 broad objectives to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration, under which a range of actions

considered to be relevant policy instruments and best practices are proposed. The importance of data for well-informed policies is reiterated throughout the document, as is the necessity of the Global Migration Data Portal and other data depositories to maintaining and disseminating accurate and timely data in partnership. The aim of the Global Compact for Migration is to improve the cooperation and management of cross-border movements of people, the Global Compact also makes clear that it is legally non-binding, fully respecting the sovereignty of all States. The 4 key objectives of the Compact include: a) easing the pressure on host countries; b) enhancing refugee self-reliance; c) expanding access to third-country solutions; and d) supporting conditions in countries of origin for return in safety and dignity.

However, over 10 Nation-States have pulled out of the deal, which many of them helped negotiate. Nevertheless is important to understand that it is, indeed, the need of the hour to discuss migration, for the subject, is becoming a global tension by giving rise to illegal activities across borders like smuggling and terrorism. The Global Compact adopted on Monday, hence, is significant progress towards this direction.