



**Comments prepared for the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development  
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**“Multistakeholder panel: From the HLPF to the IMRF”**

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*What progress has been made in achieving migration-related targets of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDGs 8.8 (ensuring labour rights and safe and secure working conditions for migrant workers), SDG 10.7 (facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration) and 10.c (reducing the transaction costs of remittances), what is the impact of migration and remittances across the other eight SDGs being reviewed by the 2021 HLPF and/or what is the impact of COVID-19 on migration and remittance flows?*

When we look at progress that has been made to the migration-related targets of the SDGs, one of the greatest examples of international ambition and commitment since 2015 has been the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration itself. Within only 3 years of the adoption of the SDGs, States developed a cooperative framework that takes its name directly from SDG 10.7. With its 23 objectives and 189 practical actions, the GCM is a menu of solutions that an overwhelming majority of States adopted to achieve in cooperation with each other and in partnership with other actors, including civil society.

It is important that we do not undervalue the significance of this progress. The GCM is a milestone in the field of migration as well as for implementing the full range of SDGs, including those under review this year. In the GCM, States commit to eliminating the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to migrate, including through poverty eradication, food security, health and sanitation, decent work and inclusive economic growth, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and of course good governance, access to justice, protection of human rights and the creation of inclusive societies. Migrants are also important contributors to positive development outcomes, and the Global Compact aims to leverage the potential of migration for the achievement of all the Sustainable Development Goals.

Of course, the COVID-19 pandemic brought most of the world to a stand-still in the last 18 months, as governments around the world introduced measures to “flatten the curve” of infections including travel restrictions, border closures, the suspension of labor migration and return of migrant workers, and the slowing of migration processing and assistance to asylum seekers, and this fundamentally changed global human mobility.

But the pandemic has also revealed that the Global Compact for Migration is more relevant and necessary than ever before. Issues of social inclusion, labor mobility, access to social protection systems, remittances and non-discrimination have shown us that we need a conversation about the future of our economies and societies so that care workers, agricultural workers, doctors and nurses, small business owners and all people on the move are recognized and valued for the contributions they make regardless of their country of origin or migratory status. There have been good practices implemented around the world to remove barriers and facilitate migrants’ access to regular status, remittance channels, social protection and basic services. Governments have shown that they can make major changes to migration governance systems when it benefitted them during COVID-19. Now they need to make permanent systematic, structural and institutional reforms that continue beyond the pandemic if we are to achieve the migration-related SDG targets.

*What role did or can the GCM play in preparing VNRs? How can future HLPFs take into account the results of the IMRF? How can VNRs contribute to assessing the status of implementation of the GCM? How can migration-related SDG indicators be leveraged for monitoring the implementation of the GCM? How can stakeholders, including civil society, academia and local governments, best contribute to the preparation of VNRs?*

Because the SDGs are the mother of the GCM, and in turn, the GCM was created to take forward the wide range of SDGs, it is impossible to achieve or evaluate progress of the SDGs without looking at what is achieved (or not) under the GCM. To leave migrants and migration behind in the review of progress at the intersection of the GCM and SDGs is to leave behind both a critical implementing framework, as well as a key human and economic constituency in achieving top development objectives and opportunities at global, regional and national levels.

On indicators, and how we measure progress: One of the challenges we face is that while SDG 10.7 has indicators that we can use, the Global Compact for Migration itself lacks baselines and indicators that would help us in measuring the progress of implementation of the GCM. We cannot call something a best practice without evidence, analysis and evaluation. The development of good benchmarks through a consultative process similar to the one undertaken for the 2030 Agenda is important, otherwise the reporting on the implementation of the GCM will continue to be broad and perfunctory, and will not be as valuable a contribution to the evaluation of progress towards the achievement of the SDGs.

Civil society best contributes to the preparation of VNRs by being and providing “live,” first-hand and unexaggerated evidence of concrete action and solutions to achieve the SDGs. Many of these are directly in line with the actions contained in the GCM, often funded with civil society’s own financial and human resources, and regularly accomplished—and assessed—in front-line partnership with States, local authorities, international organizations, migrants and refugees.

Already, the practice and product of Voluntary National Reports in the regional GCM reviews with States and stakeholders since last October has contributed directly to preparation of VNRs for the HLPF, and for other development processes, including national and regional development planning. In substance, process and politics, the GCM reviews have been reminders of strong convergence on both the GCM and SDGs, structured opportunities for exchange of practice, and builders of trust, capacity and cooperation on solutions within and among States, and notably with civil society, local authorities and the private sector. For the Europe-North America regional GCM review at the end of last year, civil society submitted 10 written reports or statements, many of which are interesting to compare with the VNRs from the same States.

As we move into the IMRF next year, global civil society has already begun to mobilize. We will continue to engage with Member States with an emphasis on solutions – we aren’t just advocates; we are partners in implementation at the frontlines, with migrants. We are prepared to continue providing substantive inputs to the review of the GCM, and we trust that as Member States prepare their Voluntary National Reports for the IMRF, they will take our contributions into account, and focus on gaps in national policies and emerging issues that we observe from the grassroots. We need support from Member States to ensure that civil society participation is open and inclusive, to ensure real and effective opportunities for robust engagement.

To close, this year’s and future HLPFs should recognize not just the complementarity but the synergy with the IMRF and other GCM review processes. The two streams are linked inextricably, and should remain so in order to ensure efficiencies and coherence.