



Conferencia Regional sobre Migración
Regional Conference on Migration

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL SECRETARIAT OF THE REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIGRATION¹

Report from the Meeting to Develop Guidelines for a Regional Stance on the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration

1. *Welcoming remarks, presentation of the meeting objectives and approval of the agenda.*
 - **Welcoming remarks by Vice-Minister Liduvina Magarín**

Vice-Minister Magarín delivered welcoming remarks. She stated the need for the Member Countries of the Regional Conference on Migration (RCM) to generate input for the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration (GCM). In addition, she mentioned that the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the World Bank (WB) would provide input for the contents and structure of the GCM. Furthermore, the agenda was submitted to the participants for approval.

Vice-Minister Magarín explained that at the Global Forum, the Presidents pro tempore of the RCM and the South American Conference on Migration (SACM) agreed on the need for the SACM and the RCM to develop a regional stance on migration and refuge matters within the framework of the development of both compacts, with the aim of improving the visibility of and better positioning the continent in the compacts.

Furthermore, Vice-Minister Magarín pointed out that the fact that Mexico is a co-facilitator of the development process of the GCM and that in addition, Mexico is a Member Country of the RCM, can help to keep the RCM Member Countries updated on the development process of the GCM.

Ms Magarín mentioned that the meeting of 29 March would focus on the GCM and that a meeting of the Troikas of the RCM and the SACM would be celebrated on 30 March to develop an agreed common stance based on the input from the Member Countries. The objective of the meeting is to work toward initiating a collective development process in the region, with input and materials, with the aim of making the region visible through a regional stance at the preparatory events for the GCM.

Finally, Vice-Minister Magarín thanked the delegates for their participation and also expressed thanks to IOM for the hospitality.

¹ This document presents a non-comprehensive summary of the topics discussed at the meeting, as understood and interpreted by the Technical Secretariat (TS) of the RCM. The contents of the document have not been approved by the meeting participants. Therefore, the contents do not necessarily accurately reflect the discussions or the agreements made during the event by individuals or organizations who are attributed a given opinion, judgment or position. The only objective of this document is to provide a general perspective of the discussions and agreements from the event, with the aim of keeping the RCM Member Countries informed about the event.



– Welcoming remarks by Margaret Pollack

On behalf of the United States, Margaret Pollack welcomed the meeting participants to Washington, DC. In addition, she welcomed Renata Dubini from UNHCR. Ms Pollack highlighted the importance given by the United States to working with each country represented at the meeting to promote appropriate migration management; regular migration for everyone; appropriate border management; a high level of security, preventing the entry of persons who cause harm or who do not have a valid reason for entering or transiting through our countries; and increased cooperation to address the drivers of migration.

In addition, the United States stated that migration works best if collaboration exists in regard to practices aimed at maximizing regular migration channels and punishing those who use irregular migration channels – for example, migrant smugglers.

Furthermore, the United States expressed that ways should be sought to protect the rights and dignity of migrants, particularly those in vulnerable situations, such as refugees and displaced persons, and that the RCM has done great work in this regard. Moreover, it was mentioned that this was the first global-level meeting of a regional consultative process on migration that is held to address the GCM.

2. Presentations by Guests and Member Countries

– Presentation of Renata Dubini: Update on the Status of the Development and Approval Process of the Global Compact on Refugees

This is an era of unprecedented human mobility. For example, at present an estimated 62.4 million refugees exist worldwide.

UNHCR stated that the objective of the New York Declaration is precisely to improve the predictability of the responses of States to migrants and refugees.

A strong regulatory framework exists in the Americas, as well as operational support in the implementation of remarkable actions to protect refugees. However, the predictability of the response could be improved. Therefore, today the goal is to develop a comprehensive and sustainable framework for humanitarian responses, based on development and with shared responsibility of States, especially in regard to specifically demonstrating how international cooperation should take place in addressing matters relating to migrants and refugees.

UNHCR highlighted the importance of establishing alliances with the private sector and financial institutions in matters of social responsibility.

In addition, UNHCR expressed that the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) has four central themes: reception, admission (support to meet the immediate needs of refugees), support for the host community, and lasting solutions. Furthermore, the GCR seeks to establish collaboration in regard to the causes which generate forced displacement. Therefore, renewed attention is sought to be given to efforts aimed at providing the necessary support to countries of origin and transit. In Africa, 4 countries have been selected as pilot countries for practical experiences which will serve as examples of how to implement the 4 central themes of the GCR. The goal is to submit a GCR based on practical experiences at the United Nations



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General Assembly in 2018. The experiences will enable identifying essential elements that are required to respond predictably and efficiently to the needs of victims, communities and countries.

UNHCR has approached several countries in the region and asked if they are interested in becoming pilot countries, to assess how the matter of refugees is addressed and establish an appropriate response to displacement in the region. Some countries have expressed their interest. It is considered important that the American continent provide specific input to these processes. A formal positive response has been received from Honduras to participate in the project, and conversations are under way with a number of RCM Member Countries – for example, Guatemala, Costa Rica, Mexico, the United States and Canada – as well as several South American countries.

Furthermore, UNHCR pointed out that, following up on one of the chapters of the Brazil Plan of Action – specifically the one on Solidarity with the Northern Triangle of Central America, which was adopted by the majority of RCM Member Countries – an initial follow-up meeting was held in Costa Rica. The meeting led to the San José Declaration, which addresses prevention aspects, the root causes of displacement, possibilities to improve the response to asylum seekers, and regional cooperation.

UNHCR proposed a roadmap to implement the San José Declaration through a round table with the different countries to follow up on the pilot plan. This could be used as input for the entire process. Countries of origin, transit and destination would participate in the round table, providing support with a focus on identifying lasting solutions. This would enable them to make a specific contribution to the comprehensive and regional response of the region to the GCR, with the primary focus on benefiting victims; secondly, helping the countries that face the causes of displacement; and thirdly, supporting the efforts of transit countries.

UNHCR reported that follow-up actions to last year's round table – which led to the San José Declaration – are currently under way. Significant progress has been made in the region in regard to efforts to strengthen national institutions in charge of providing assistance to refugees. Some countries have taken on leadership roles in strengthening their response, protection and asylum systems. UNHCR considers that in order to continue following up on this matter, it is appropriate to advance in the development of a regional comprehensive framework for the protection of and solutions for refugees. The plan would have 3 phases: advancing in addressing the challenges detailed in the San José Declaration, developing the national operational plan of the San José Declaration for the entire subregion, and developing a mechanism for sharing responsibility.

Furthermore, UNHCR reported that, as part of the consultation process on the GCR, discussions are currently under way with a number of countries. The actors to be consulted include different United Nations agencies, various financial and academic institutions, the private sector, civil society, affected populations and – at the centre – governments, ministries of foreign affairs, human rights offices, mayor's offices, national institutions and ombudsman's offices.

Thematic and regional discussions are being planned for 2017, as well as an assessment and finally, a formal consultation to jointly decide what should be submitted to the General Assembly in 2018 within the framework of the development of the GCR.



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Questions & Answers

Vice-Minister Magarín: *Have consultation actions with NGOs been planned within the framework of the GCR?*

Answer: No; only global actions are mentioned. However, consultations are being planned with different groups of society in the subregions in order to generate input for the design of a comprehensive plan.

– **Margaret Pollack: Presentation of the United States on the Global Compact on Migration**

The United States pointed out that in regard to the consultations being held for the Global Compact on Migration (GCM), countries of origin, transit and destination should work together towards the common goal of protecting the rights of migrants and furthering the development of the communities.

For the United States, the New York Declaration establishes a clear connection between the compacts and the 2030 Development Agenda, recognizing that international migration is critical to the development of countries of origin, transit and destination. Within the consultation processes concerning the GCM, a wide array of parties exist which are interested in working together to honour the commitments on the matter and advance in the search for and identification of practical, voluntary actions to address the challenges of migration and harness the benefits of regular and appropriately managed migration.

According to the United States, the following should be considered, for example: how to increase cooperation and advance toward investigating, combating and prosecuting migrant smugglers, since migrant smuggling is a crime which facilitates irregular and dangerous migration; how to coordinate improved assistance to migrants in vulnerable situations along irregular migration routes; and how to provide international protection to those who need it in the context of mixed migration flows.

During the consultations on the GCM, the following topics should be discussed: how all interested parties can work together to improve regular migration channels; guidelines to ensure respect for the human rights of migrants, actions to improve the treatment of migrants and promote their integration into their new communities. In addition, the security concerns shared by all countries should be addressed, with regard to how to keep all citizens safe.

These are a few of the topics that will be discussed in the next 8 months, including a preparatory meeting that will be held in Mexico. The United States has expressed a keen interest in participating in the meeting.

Within the RCM, common regional challenges and opportunities should be identified, advocating for their consideration in the GCM and the GCR. This could be achieved through a joint declaration that could be developed through an online consultation with the Member Countries and prepared by the Technical Secretariat (TS) of the RCM, with the objective of identifying where the collective interests lie. The RCM could take on a significant leadership role to identify real solutions to the challenges faced throughout the region.

– **Dilip Ratha: Update on the Support of the World Bank for the Development of the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration**



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Facts about Migration

Today, one billion people are migrants; that is, one in every seven persons in the world. Of these, 250 million are international migrants and the others are internal migrants. Migration from Bangladesh to India is the largest corridor of migrants worldwide.

Only 16 million migrants are refugees, and if Palestinians are added to this figure, it increases to 21 million. Only 6% of international migration is considered to be forced migration.

South-South migration accounts for 38% of all migration, while South-North migration accounts for 34%. Therefore, more people migrate from developing countries to other developing countries than from developing countries to developed countries.

This fact brings to the table a fundamental principle with regard to migration and development, which has to do with the fact that these two elements are inseparable. If a country experiences growth in some sectors, in some cities or communities, the persons who will make it possible for that growth to be sustained will have to move to those places; development cannot occur without migration. And if an economy declines, the same occurs and migration needs to take place.

International migration is not the norm in societies; it only occurs when a person is forced to or needs to migrate for economic or other reasons. Therefore, internal migration is much larger than international migration.

Close to 2.1 billion people will be part of the global workforce in 2050, and it is expected that only 1.1 billion people – based on the current employment rates in developing countries – will find jobs; 4 times more persons will join the workforce seeking employment than the number of available jobs, and thus, the pressure to migrate will increase.

The demographic divergence between developed and developing countries is another driver of migration. This is becoming increasingly visible in developing countries; in Nigeria, for example, there are 7 young people for each person over 65 years of age. Due to the demographic divergence between developing and developed countries, aging societies will need young migrants to take care of them, pay social security contributions and pay taxes; this shows the need for migration, simply because of offer and demand.

Another driver of migration is the existing significant income gap between developed and developing countries. In the developed countries, the average annual income is US\$43,000, while in developing countries the average annual income is US\$600. It would take 118 years to close this gap at the current growth rate.

Other drivers of migration are natural disasters, climate change, conflict and violence.

Benefits and Challenges of Migration

Benefits for Countries of Destination



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Increased income, increased education, reduced infant mortality, empowered women and improved access to health, education and other services.

Challenges for Countries of Destination

Migrants can be victims of trafficking in persons, abusive employers and recruiters, underutilization of skills, discrimination, racism, xenophobic attacks, exclusion, family left behind (children and/or parents).

The problems relating to the recruitment of workers in other countries – for example, in the Gulf countries – are very serious. Recruitment agencies often commit human rights violations and illegal acts, with migrants paying a fee to get a job, and not even half of the fee being reimbursed after they have worked for one year. This is contemporary slavery and can be observed in all cities around the world. This situation could be eliminated through the payment of adequate salaries and appropriate regulations. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that approximately 10 million migrants pay these fees each year. If only half of them would benefit from the elimination of the fees, this means that 5 million people would benefit; US\$4,000 (which is the fee they pay) multiplied by 5 million equals US\$20 million, which would be in the hands of very poor people.

Benefits of Migration for Countries of Origin

Reduced unemployment, reduced poverty, increased remittances; the total amount of remittances sent through official channels is 3 times higher than the amount of official development aid.

Excluding China, the remittances to developing countries are larger than the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). Thus, they are an essential source of income for many countries and for poor persons. However, the exorbitant costs of sending remittances are a significant problem: costs could be 8%, 12%, 20% or up to 90% of the total amount of each remittance, depending on the country, and therefore, official channels are avoided.

Migration also generates knowledge and skill transfer.

Challenges of Migration for Countries of Origin

Loss of human resources, brain drain, family left behind.

Benefits of Migration for Countries of Destination

Increases labour supply, increases income, increases innovation and entrepreneurship, alleviates aging problems, increases fiscal contributions, increases consumption and increases diversity.

Challenges of Migration for Countries of Destination



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In general, the economy and growth rates improve. However, there is greater job competition for native workers, the demand for social services could increase, and diversity could generate concerns in terms of national and cultural identity and the sovereignty of States.

Hard data should be generated to be disseminated in order to change the attitude toward migration.

Possible Thematic Elements of the Global Compact on Migration

In prioritizing possible thematic elements of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM), nine items are considered to be key elements by the World Bank: income and job creation in poor countries; national identity and integration of migrants in host countries; job competition for native workers in host countries; trafficking in persons, abusive employers and recruiters and skill recognition; migrants' rights, exclusion, discrimination, xenophobic attacks on migrants; mobilization of remittances and diaspora resources; family left behind; retaining critical skills in countries of origin; congestion and fiscal costs of social services.

This shows that the topics of the GCM are crosscutting themes of the 2030 Development Agenda.

Guidelines or a specific instrument should exist to address these topics for the GCM, such as the Geneva Convention on Refugees, for example. Furthermore, selected institutions should make mission statements and should be given a mandate to implement the guidelines resulting from the GCM.

Questions & Answers

Panama: *What are the recommendations for legalizing migration?*

Answer: Increasing legal migration and legalizing migration is the best way to manage migration. This should be done depending on demand and offer. If the market is not taken into account distortions emerge, such as coyotes, trafficking in persons, illegal migration and inappropriate recruitment practices. More channels for legal migration should be created and in addition, illegal recruiters should be prosecuted.

The question whether migration should increase or decrease is difficult to answer; multiple factors need to be considered to find an appropriate answer, including topics beyond demand and offer, such as national identity and national sovereignty, as well as job competition.

Regional Network for Civil Organizations on Migration (RNCOM)

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants **François Crépeau** was quoted by RNCOM, stating that in a recently published article, he made a series of specific recommendations on how to minimize abuse to migrants through identifying how to channel human mobility in a way which renders it more meaningful and more economically beneficial. In addition, it was mentioned that the great challenge is how to address these populations; while they are necessary, significant aversion exists against them.

Mexico: *When it was mentioned that consultations should be made with a number of institutions for the development of the GCM, should these be specific institutions, or only financial, or what type of institutions?*

Answer: Regarding institutions and giving them a mandate to implement the GCM, 2 or 3 institutions should be selected, with different roles. International financial institutions can help provide financing, with a focus



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on addressing the main drivers of migration, generating employment, mitigating climate change, and convening interested parties to develop solutions. In addition, hard data should be generated.

For other organizations, it is important to clarify their roles, ask them what they really want to do and what they are currently doing. Their budgets of past and coming years could be analysed to understand what exactly they do and if this is aligned with what they should do, which has not been done and is expected to be done in the negotiations around the GCM. In other words, the mission, budget and activities of each institution should be understood.

The most difficult part of the GCM is to agree on the central themes and address the most difficult issues, such as national identity, State sovereignty, etc. In addition, it is important to address the entire migration cycle. The origin and destination have been the main focus in the past years, and problems concerning the return of migrants have not been addressed.

Panama: *What are the benefits of migration for countries of destination and transit?*

Answer: With regard to this discussion, the World Bank conducted an assessment of the benefits of migration for countries of destination, transit and origin. For countries of transit and destination, the benefits are less and the costs are higher, since these countries know that the migrants will eventually leave and that they are often only in transit.

Due to the temporary nature of the stay of migrants, circular migration programmes do not work. In fact, the guest worker programmes are not very appropriate, neither for the employer nor the employee; for example, employers wish to invest in training workers who will stay, and many workers wish to live permanently in a given place.

Panama: *What are the benefits of South-South migration?*

The benefits and costs are very similar to those of North-South migration – persons who bring diversity, pay taxes, work hard; and there are costs as well. An important distinction for countries of origin is that when money is sent from a country in the North to a country in the South, the amount of money is often much larger than when money is sent from South to South.

Costa Rica: *Can the transfers of millions that migrants use, for example, to cover the costs of migrating, of travelling, and which are not remittances, be considered to be contributions? That is, could the money invested and received at each point along the migration route be considered a benefit for transit countries?*

Answer: Some of the money that is sent is spent in the country of destination and some is paid to migrant smugglers. Estimates should be made of these amounts and of the illegal activities developed around migration. How to address migrant smuggling, this is a very serious issue. The flows of resources sent to migrants in transit should be examined in more depth.

Another interesting aspect, for example, is that evidence exists which shows that when the number of border officers increases, the costs of migrant smugglers increase as well. In addition, when the number of border police officers increases, migrants tend to extend their stay in the country of destination. All this is related to economic pressures in countries of origin.



Sonia Plaza mentioned that regarding the reality of transit countries, this should be further examined, since new migration routes have emerged because others have been closed down; and irregular migration flows have increased since new channels for regular migration do not exist. One of the recommendations is to find out through which countries the flows pass, which countries they come from and what are the money transfers made by migrants during transit.

Another topic of interest are the benefits and their future and present impacts. In Africa, for example, the European Community wants to provide assistance to transit countries to stop north-bound migration.

In the South, it is important that host countries know how to harness migration, which should be complementary to development. The second aspect is to attract skilled labour. To this end, it is important to determine what are the barriers hindering this type of migration.

Panama: *What are the themes that should be addressed in the GCM? And should they be addressed at a regional level or at the global level? And should this work be carried out separately from the compact?*

Answer: A rigorous and comprehensive study on different existing conventions and institutions addressing migration does not exist.

The drivers of migration have been studied and an understanding exists of which policies work and which ones do not. The next step is to choose the thematic elements of the GCM and then decide which institution does what, and identify the mission of each institution, what they have done and what they will do.

Furthermore, information is not available on national identity, State sovereignty, transit countries and a study on the future or projections of migration as well as a study on the profile of future migrants. Additional resources should be provided to address these knowledge needs.

Sonia Plaza mentioned that in conducting a review, the implementation should be analysed because institutions often do not have the necessary resources to implement the agreements. Another important issue is how to connect the different thematic elements that are being addressed and how to establish links between the GCM and the GCR.

– **Ramón Ramírez: Presentation of Mexico on the Global Compact on Migration**

Mexico is a country of origin, transit and destination of migrants and considers migrants as actors of development. The country is committed to addressing the root causes that generate large movements of migrants, eradicating all forms of xenophobia, incorporating women into society and ensuring respect for the rights of migrant boys, girls and adolescents. Mexico will insist that the global compact reflect the following aspects:

1. A human rights approach to enable the protection of migrants regardless of their migration status.
2. An approach of shared responsibility between countries of origin, transit, destination and return of migrants.
3. Recognizing the contributions of migrants to communities.
4. Eradicating intolerance and racism and achieving the aspiration of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of leaving no one behind.



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5. A framework for migration management providing greater protection to migrants.
6. Increased international cooperation to strengthen the capacity of States to address migration.
7. Addressing climate change.

For Mexico, the global compact should be a practical document oriented toward the future. In addition, it should be linked to the goals of the 2030 Development Agenda and its vision of leaving no one behind. It shall be a non-binding document; however, it will establish commitments, principles and understandings between Member Countries which contribute to migration management with a human rights approach.

In this regard, a preparatory meeting on the global compact is scheduled to be held in Mexico this year. The representatives before the United Nations of the governments of Switzerland and Mexico have been appointed as co-facilitators to conduct a consultation process for the adoption of a resolution on the modes of development of the GCM. The resolution is expected to be approved by the end of March. The proposed resolution will incorporate all the concerns expressed by States and considers three phases in the development of the compact:

Phase I: Thematic consultations: Six thematic sessions will be held, in New York, Geneva and Vienna, with non-governmental actors, civil society, the private sector and governments. The results will be presented as input for the development of the GCM.

Phase II: Review and consolidation of the input resulting from the consultations.

A meeting is scheduled in Mexico towards the end of 2017 to make an inventory of all input resulting from the consultations on the compact, which will be used as the basis for the development of a first draft of the GCM.

Mexico cordially invites the countries to attend the meeting, which will be held in Mexico at the end of November.

Phase III: Negotiating and adopting the compact at the inter-governmental conference during the week of the high-level meeting of the General Assembly, to be held in September 2018.

Questions & Answers

Panama: *What will be the dynamics of the meeting in Mexico, and how can the countries and the RCM prepare for this effort?*

Answer: Mexico very much appreciates the input of the RCM as a regional forum. In addition, efforts are under way at a bilateral level to obtain input from each country.

The Fifth Committee of the United Nations has not yet finalized its resolution. Once the resolution has been finalized, more clarity will exist with regard to the methodology to be followed for the development of the GCM. The information that can be shared at present is that of the thematic elements that will be addressed during each phase and the types of input that will be sought.



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The United States: *How should the contributions to the GCM be made? Should declarations or background notes be submitted, or is something more elaborate required? Since each country is doing something different, how should a useful contribution by the RCM be formulated?*

Answer: It could be a declaration or key aspects or a paper. Clear guidelines are at present not available, until the negotiations of the Fifth Committee of the United Nations have concluded. However, the framework of the RCM should be harnessed to decide what type of input will be provided.

The great opportunity of this forum is that it includes countries of origin, transit, destination and return, and a wealth of experiences exists and it is worth holding discussions at a regional level to promote topics that would otherwise not be addressed. The experiences of each country should be considered in the agenda – of each government, in the public, private and social sector – and the input that they wish to be considered in the GCM.

Vice-Minister Magarín: *Has Mexico, as co-facilitator, considered a specific space for the RCM?*

Answer: Mexico considers the input of the RCM as a regional forum to be highly valuable and believes that the RCM should provide significant input to the process.

Costa Rica expressed its concern that the reality of the region of Mesoamerica could not be made visible in the GCM, as a region of countries that are experiencing a highly significant impact of migration, but sometimes, due to the situation of Europe the reality of the Mesoamerican region is overlooked, and this often affects, for example, the decisions concerning international cooperation, which is absolutely essential for the appropriate management of migration.

Honduras considered that it is important to have clear guidelines on how to present input as a region to ensure that the region is not overlooked. Regional migration is a reality which leads to many problems in the region, and therefore, clear guidelines on this matter are required to enable the region to provide input in order to be made visible in the GCM.

The United States mentioned that it is important to make the region visible, but for the right reasons. The United States proposed to develop a positive description of the challenges and achievements of the region, as a group of countries that share the realities of migration as countries of origin, transit and destination and that have cooperated in a constructive manner. The description of the region should not have a crisis perspective. This is especially important for the United States since, as a result of recent changes in the country, it would be more advisable for the United States to focus on the positive aspects of migration. It would be more feasible for the country to adhere to a document with a positive approach.

Panama mentioned that it is important to highlight the success of the region in managing difficult situations generated through the arrival of large migration flows, and how each country can contribute to the GCM. The experience concerning the management of migration crises should be particularly highlighted.

The RCM should go beyond an assessment and share best practices and its achievements in regard to shared responsibility, as agreed in Honduras, which is an essential principle in addressing migration. To Panama, it would be important to develop a common vision, as a region, which could be included in the compact.



RNCOM mentioned that civil society considers it to be necessary that the description about migration be fair and objective and recognize the areas where advances have been made, without denying the complexity of the reality of migration.

The Dominican Republic mentioned that since this is a global compact, it involves that every country – and America as a continent – play a role and have a space in the world, sharing best practices as well as ineffective practices. In addition, the issue is not only to highlight the benefits of migration because irregular and disorderly migration also causes problems in poor countries. Migration is a consequence of something, and the causes of migration should be addressed since, regardless of the benefits, migration can have negative impacts on countries of origin; for example, flight of human capital. If these persons would not leave their countries and if they had opportunities within their own countries, they would contribute to the development of their communities. It is important to view this as a problem which affects economies at a global level, and if the causes of migration are not addressed, no economy could withstand disorderly and irregular migration. Therefore, in addition to contributing to regular and orderly migration, contributions should be made to eliminate the main causes of migration.

Mexico stated that with regard to shared responsibility, this should be the approach, adhering to national regulations in each country at all times. The global description could be changed, recognizing that migration is not a problem but an opportunity. Mexico commits to conveying the information about the GCM more clearly once the negotiations of the Fifth Committee of the United Nations have been concluded.

3. *Plenary Session and Discussions between Member Countries and RNCOM* – **National Priorities Concerning Input for the Global Compact on Migration: Plenary Session**

Vice-Minister Magarín pointed out that it is important that the RCM work toward providing input for the GCM based on the common issues in the region. For example, working within the framework of the networks that already exist within the RCM .

The President pro tempore (PPT) has established the challenge of working to benefit migrant women, and it needs to be defined how to coordinate these efforts of the PPT with a regional vision concerning the GCM.

When speaking about shared responsibility, the capacities, resources and willingness of each country are analysed, and these realities are not necessarily examined for the region as a whole. The basis is the recognition that a regional migration policy does not exist in the region and that internal policy is subject to being updated, reviewed and adjusted to the new realities.

Given that both compacts to be developed will be instruments of such magnitude, it is obviously foreseeable that commitments will have to be made to implement both pacts at an internal level.

The PPT asked Mexico if an initial structure exists of the compact.

Answer: Mexico replied that in fact, there is one, and the thematic elements were reviewed that will be addressed during the first phase of the consultations.



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Vice-Minister Magarín mentioned that each one of the thematic elements of the consultations is extremely wide-ranging and invited each country to review the existing legislative and institutional framework to address the six themes to be discussed during the thematic consultations in the first phase of the GCM. In addition, she invited the countries to provide their input on these themes with the aim of making the region visible, and to take ownership of the contents subject to consultation during the initial development phase of the compact. Furthermore, Vice-Minister Magarín pointed out that obviously, one way to develop a regional stance on the GCM is through national stances.

Panama considered that it is appropriate to focus, at present, on the first consultation phase; specifically, on developing input for the thematic consultations. In this regard, it was mentioned that the technical aspects will be a challenge, since countries will have to assess various aspects of a highly technical nature at an institutional and internal level. Panama considered that the input that has already been developed throughout the existence of the RCM can be taken up again through work sessions to verify if the input is still valid to be submitted for the GCM. In addition, best practices exist in the region which could be contributed to the GCM, with a positive approach to migration and considering that migration should be closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.

Mexico mentioned that, in order to be prepared for the meeting of the RCM and the SACM to be held on March 30, topics to be addressed should rapidly be established, identifying the topics that will be presented by the RCM.

The United States considered that it is essential to first agree on the topics that are most common within the region of the RCM and for which it would be easier to agree on a joint initiative with the SACM. In addition, it was mentioned that the successful actions that have already been achieved within the RCM are important input that the RCM can provide to the GCM. For example, return is something that has been managed well; it is considered that the region has implemented best practices in this area.

In addition, the fact of having a forum as the RCM to discuss all matters relating to migration in the region is something which should be highlighted and which has helped respond better to migration. Furthermore, the actions to combat migrant smuggling should be highlighted as well.

Moreover, it was mentioned that it remains somewhat unclear what the input for the GCM should be: best practices, if they should be shared or only mentioned, if experiences within the framework of the RCM should only be listed or if they should be described in more detail. Regarding the proposal by Mexico to provide input, as the RCM, on climate change, there is no certainty about how much the United States could contribute at this political moment.

Panama pointed out that, given that the GCM is currently being developed, this situation is a challenge but also an opportunity to establish what the RCM wishes to contribute to the GCM. It is considered that already existing best practices in the region should be highlighted, as well as the challenges which are not apparent but which have an impact on the region. For example, the reality of countries of transit and destination of South-South migration flows should be highlighted. Thus, an impact could be made on the GCM with example of real-life situations that arise in the region as well as best practices, challenges and situations which are specific to the region and thus, advocate at a global level to achieve their inclusion into the GCM.



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In addition, regional definitions could be developed of the different types of migration, since each type of migration needs to be addressed differently; for example, return migration and the need to address reintegration matters in this context. This is fundamental to ensuring that return migration occurs in a responsible, safe and dignified manner. It was recommended to establish subgroups for the thematic consultations, since the topics to be addressed during the consultations are very wide-ranging.

Guatemala mentioned that with regard to national priorities, they are aware that the migration dynamics in Guatemala are multidimensional and multi-causal. Countries of transit and destination should address migration recognizing its multidimensionality and the differences in the profiles of migrants. The above requires States to strengthen and reformulate policy on protection of migrants.

With regard to the principles that should be observed in the GCM, it should reflect a human rights approach which enables protecting migrants regardless of their legal status and in accordance with the SDGs. It was considered necessary to recognize in the GCM that national-level efforts are insufficient to address the wide scope of the reality of migration, and that countries have shared responsibility and therefore, actions on the matter should be coordinated. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Technical Secretariat (TS) of the RCM propose a regional declaration to present a regional stance on the GCM.

RNCOM: In seeking how to reconcile the reality of the co-dependency between nations, national sovereignty and the need to seek more dignified ways to manage human mobility are in conflict. For RNCOM, there are 5 key issues in this process: to continue highlighting the importance of deliberately including the voices of organized communities of migrants and refugees; recognizing the advances and challenges concerning consular protection; reaffirming the right of persons who are forced to migrate to have access to humanitarian protection, as appropriate; the need for reintegration processes of deported populations to be conducted with a multidimensional approach; the need to recognize that migration management strategies based on punishing irregular migration flows are not only harmful but in addition, tend to be a waste of resources and do not achieve the established objectives. Therefore, more emphasis should be placed on creating new migration channels.

Mexico mentioned that for the meeting with the SACM, long-term solutions should be envisioned and not only immediate solutions, and that the meeting should be an opportunity to develop such solutions.

Costa Rica stated that the country is very open to the GCM and the proposed items. However, it expressed concern about how to approach each theme to be addressed during the consultations, since this has much to do with the internal situation in each country. Costa Rica has a migration policy that is oriented toward compliance with the principles of the GCM; significant efforts have been made to address massive movements of people that have occurred in the country.

Given that each country has different characteristics, capacities and policies, ways should be sought to ensure that the GCM can be implemented in accordance with the particular conditions in each country. For Costa Rica, integration and development is a topic which affects not only the operational aspect at a government level but also the resources and the national reality, and therefore, this poses a significant challenge for the country. Despite this, effective practices have been successfully implemented, to a great extent through bilateral agreements and rapprochements with other countries in the region. This way of addressing these challenges should be integrated into the GCM as an effective practice.



Vice-Minister Magarín mentioned that the Technical Secretariat of the RCM will prepare a document on best practices and another document systematizing all the efforts of the RCM concerning recognition of principles and understandings, to be used as input of the RCM Member Countries for the GCM.

Mexico shared with the other Member Countries a written proposal of contents for the GCM including 7 topics. The document could be discussed with the SACM and in addition, it could be used for an effort by the RCM to develop guidelines for the GCM.

– **Presentation by the RCM Technical Secretariat of a Proposed Roadmap for the Development of Regional Input for the GCM**

The RCM Technical Secretariat (TS) made a presentation on a proposed roadmap for the development of regional input for the GCM. In addition, the TS presented a list of pending actions in the process of developing the GCM.

It was requested to set dates and establish a methodology to enable the TS to know how to best support the development of the input that the RCM wishes to provide to the GCM.

The TS can prepare a document, based on the thematic elements established for the thematic consultations of the GCM, detailing the agreements reached in the past 20 years. In addition, a document on best practices related to the GCM could also be developed.

The preparatory process of the GCM was reviewed and the tentative dates for various inter-governmental meetings were mentioned. The purpose of the meetings is to collect input for the GCM. It was suggested that input should at least be provided for the regional consultations to be conducted in October and November within the framework of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), if it is not possible to generate input for the previous thematic sessions.

In addition, it was mentioned that two events have already been scheduled that are specifically linked to the regional consultative processes (RCPs) and that are related to the development of input for the GCM: the International Dialogue on Migration, organized by IOM in April in New York, and the Global RCP Meeting, to be held in Geneva in October. A stance by the presidents of the RCPs will be requested for this meeting. Therefore, it is important that the PPT attend the event with an agreed stance of the RCM.

– **Contents and dates of submission of input for the Global Compact on Migration**

The United States asked: What is the objective of the document prepared by Mexico? Due to the length and contents, the attorneys will have to review the document. Therefore, the question was when will it be used and what is its purpose.

Mexico replied that the idea is for the document to serve as a guide for the development of input by the RCM for the GCM. The core issue is to only include the proposed themes in the document; the development of each theme could be done at a later stage, to the extent that each delegation decides to do so, but these would be the main topics suggested by Mexico for the development of input by the RCM Member Countries. In addition, Mexico stated that original proposals were made by Mexico on some topics in the document,



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while the contents of the GCM have been maintained verbatim in other sections. Furthermore, it was mentioned that Mexico is open to making any necessary changes to the document.

Panama mentioned that the United Nations already have their work schedule, and if the RCM wishes to have an impact on the process, it should integrate into the groups at the technical level and that therefore, it is important to maintain the discussions of the RCM of the thematic elements that will be addressed during the thematic sessions.

The Dominican Republic suggested that the themes should be classified in accordance with the schedule of the thematic consultations to be able to address each theme. Thus, an agreed and unified stance by all Member Countries would have been reached by the time the thematic consultations are conducted.

The PPT proposed that the schedule submitted by the RCM Technical Secretariat (TS) be used and that the thematic input of the RCM could be developed based on that schedule. A meeting was proposed for the last week of April to discuss the first two topics to be addressed during the thematic consultations, according to the schedule submitted by the TS.

The United States expressed its concern that many meetings are held without any clarity about the purpose pursued by the RCM.

The PPT proposed that Mexico organize an activity to collect input, through work sessions, for the first three thematic sessions for consultation that will be held within the framework of Phase 1 of the development of the GCM: human rights, drivers of migration, international cooperation and governance.

Mexico accepted to carry out the activity proposed by the PPT. However, it was mentioned that this should wait until after the negotiations of the Fifth Committee of the United Nations have concluded. It is necessary to know what the technical agreements of the Committee will be, since perhaps the Committee establishes that input cannot be provided for each session but that it can be provided for the GCM in general. At present, the themes can be defined and general guidelines can be developed.

RNCOM mentioned that the aspects included in the document proposed by Mexico are more important than those detailed in the schedule. With regard to the procedure to be followed by the RCM, RNCOM believes that the challenge lies in how to reconcile the schedule with the specific dates included in the document proposed by Mexico.

The PPT expressed that following the request of Mexico, the work sessions to be conducted in Mexico – preferably in the last week of April – still need to be scheduled.

The United States mentioned that it would be useful to develop a vice-ministerial declaration of the RCM to be provided as input for the GCM; a very succinct declaration, including the guidelines of what the RCM expects to be reflected in the GCM.

Guatemala agreed with the document proposed by Mexico, including the 7 items. However, it was suggested to use the term “victims of crimes” in Item 1, Line 3, since migrants can be victims of various crimes. In addition, Guatemala suggested that access to justice be included, under human rights or in



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another section, and that mechanisms for access to justice be promoted in countries of transit, return and destination.

With regard to the proposal by the United States, Guatemala suggested that this should be an open political declaration which should be valid throughout the entire process and reflect the stance of the RCM regarding the GCM.

Mexico expressed its agreement with the proposal of developing a vice-ministerial declaration as input for the GCM and suggested that this document be a leading document and that the input for all the consultation sessions be developed based on this document.

Honduras also expressed its agreement with the document proposed by Mexico in terms of the proposed themes and noted that the topic of migrant smuggling and trafficking should be developed as an additional item. In addition, Honduras also agreed with the proposal of preparing a declaration.

It was agreed that the TS and the PPT will jointly prepare a draft declaration to be used as input from the RCM for the GCM.

Mexico suggested that the 7 items proposed by Mexico be included in the declaration.

The United States requested that the terms “slavery” or “modern slavery” not be used in the declaration.

It was agreed to convene an online meeting, to be held at the end of April (on April 24, tentatively) to review the input from each country in order to prepare the input of the RCM for the first three thematic consultations on the GCM, in accordance with the schedule submitted by the TS.

Agreements from the Meeting of Troikas of the RCM and the SACM

It was mentioned that the GCM would be the only topic to be addressed at the meeting of March 30.

The United States requested that the topic of extra-regional migrants coming from South America be addressed within the RCM. The United States considered that the topic of human rights is the area where the greatest similarities between both processes can be found. This could be the focus in advancing in the development of bi-regional input for the GCM.

The PPT reviewed the agenda for the meeting of March 31. In addition, the PPT asked for guidance from the countries to determine a position for that meeting. El Salvador mentioned that the week before they had met with the president of the CAM, and that one of the objectives of the first session was to share the experiences of the RCPs to give the Caribbean an idea of how they work.

During the presentations of the RCM and the SACM, agenda items were suggested. These are not significant topics and it is up to the PPT to decide on which topics it wishes to exchange experiences.

Furthermore, it was stated that the CAM will not prepare a report of the meeting, since this is a first meeting between the presidents of the RCPs of the continent. It was pointed out that this is a space for presidents of the RCPs to meet and get to know each other and share, and for the Caribbean to generate input based on these experiences.



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It was mentioned that all delegations of the RCM and the SACM will participate in the meeting.

The Dominican Republic mentioned that the country does not have a position concerning the regional consultative process that is being planned for the Caribbean. It was suggested that the topic of the GCM be addressed at the meeting. Another important topic to be addressed are extra-regional migrants in transit through the countries of the region of the RCM. It was proposed that the SACM be consulted about its actions to avoid this type of migration and promote rootedness, and about how to improve coordination and communication between the RCM and the SACM to address these migration flows.

The PPT pointed out that another important aspect to be discussed is the connection of the continent, through diplomatic and consular representations, with migration flows to Europe, and that the SACM could share experiences on coordination and protection mechanisms of the SACM Member Countries for migration from their countries to Europe.

Panama mentioned the importance of addressing the topic of extra-regional migration flows with the SACM, not only as countries of origin but also as transit countries. Panama suggested that the topic be developed from the perspective of transit countries, to increase collaboration and coordination and with an approach of shared responsibility.

The United States mentioned that the meeting with the SACM is an opportunity to express that the experiences concerning transit migration have not been positive in recent years, and to identify how to improve collaboration, since addressing the flows of extra-regional migrants coming from the South is a shared responsibility.

In addition, it would be important to share with the SACM the general concepts presented by Mexico, which will be further developed, and to ask the SACM what they expect from the joint work.

Mexico believes that it is important to learn about the agreements with the SACM and to identify on which topics there is no agreement in order to work on this basis.

Honduras requested that the topic of extra-regional and extra-continental migrants be addressed, since these types of migration flows have increased in the region.

Agreed agenda items for the meeting between the RCM and the SACM:

1. Contents and schedule of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM).
2. Migration flows towards the region of the RCM and migration flows towards Europe, migration of extra-regional and extra-continental migrants.
3. Report on the agreement of the RCM to develop a joint declaration on the GCM.
4. Agreements and non-agreements concerning the GCM (part of the summary that will be sent in the March 30 report)

Panama expressed that it would be good to share the best practices presented during the vice-ministerial meeting and address key issues such as extra-regional migration flows as well as the topics where the RCM has excelled with successful practices related to shared responsibility, and also the topics established in the



New York Declaration. Therefore, it was suggested that the best practices shared should be those related to the above-mentioned topics.

Guatemala made an observation concerning Item 5 of the proposal submitted by Mexico. The text refers to the management of orderly and safe migration flows “*and more efficient border management*”. It was requested to consider eliminating this part since Guatemala has a territorial claim with Belize.

Vice-Minister Magarín reminded the participants that a commitment had been made to convene a videoconference for **April 24** to initiate the discussion process. It was proposed that each country should provide input at the videoconference for the political declaration, which will be the leading document of the RCM for Phase I of the development of the GCM.

4. Agreements

- The Technical Secretariat (TS) of the RCM will prepare a background paper on the experiences of the RCM concerning the topics established in the GCM.
- The TS will prepare a document on best practices implemented by the RCM in the past 20 years, to be used as input for the development of the GCM.
- The proposal of Mexico will be shared with all countries for consideration and input. Subsequently, a new agreed draft will be developed, which will serve as the basis for the development of a political declaration of the RCM, to be submitted as input for the GCM.
- The TS will prepare a draft political declaration to be used as a leading document in regard to the GCM.
- An online meeting will be scheduled for **April 24** to initiate the discussion process to agree on a stance of the RCM on the first three topics to be addressed during the thematic consultations on the GCM. It was suggested that each RCM Member Country finalize its input before the online meeting in order to submit it on this occasion. Based on this, a regional stance can be established.