
**African Regional Consultative Meeting on the Global
Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**
Addis Ababa, 26 and 27 October 2017

Concept note

I. Background

1. The African Regional Consultative Meeting on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration will take place in Addis Ababa on 26 and 27 October 2017. It will be organized by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) in partnership with the African Union Commission and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

2. On 19 September 2016, the General Assembly, in its resolution 71/1, adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. In the Declaration, steps are set out towards the achievement, in 2018, of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. Modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and preparations for the 2018 conference were adopted on 6 April 2017 by the General Assembly in its resolution 71/280.

3. The global compact is expected to be guided by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development, and is informed by the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development adopted by the General Assembly in October 2013 in its resolution 68/4. The objective of the global compact is to respond to target 10.7 of the 2030 Agenda, in which member States committed to cooperate internationally to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people; its scope is defined in annex II of the New York Declaration. The global compact is expected to build on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 and its recommendations concerning measures to mitigate risks associated with disasters, as well as on the Paris Agreement of the Conference of Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. The global compact would assist member States to achieve these commitments.

4. As given in General Assembly resolution 71/1, the global compact will set out a range of principles, commitments and understandings among Member States regarding international migration in all its dimensions; make an important contribution to global governance and enhance coordination on international migration; present a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility; and deal with all aspects of international migration, including the humanitarian, developmental, human rights-related and other aspects of migration.

5. Moreover, the global compact on migration is expected to:

(a) Address all aspects of international migration, including humanitarian, developmental and human rights dimensions;

(b) Make an important contribution to global governance and enhance coordination on international migration;

(c) Present a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants and human mobility;

(d) Propose a range of actionable commitments, means of implementation and a framework for follow-up and review among member States regarding international migration in all its dimensions.

6. The global compact on migration is also expected to include targets and indicators, means of implementation, and mechanisms for performance review, monitoring and improvement, pertaining to practices on the following six thematic areas:

(a) Thematic area 1: Human rights of all migrants, social inclusion, cohesion and all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, gender discrimination and intolerance;

(b) Thematic area 2: Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crises, and gender and other inequalities, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution;

(c) Thematic area 3: International cooperation and governance of migration in all dimensions, including at borders, on transit, entry, return, readmission, integration and reintegration;

(d) Thematic area 4: Contributions of migrants and diaspora, including women and youth, to all dimensions of sustainable development, including remittances and portability of earned benefits;

(e) Thematic area 5: Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery: appropriate identification, protection and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims;

(f) Thematic area 6: Irregular migration and regular pathways, including decent work, labour mobility, recognition of skills and qualifications and other relevant measures.

7. Additional themes that are not addressed above or which are identified as being important for Africa will be added during the consultative process.

8. In Africa, the process towards forging a global compact will take full cognizance of the African Union strategic and policy frameworks for migration. These include the following: the 1991 Abuja Treaty establishing the African Economic Community; the Migration Policy Framework for Africa, adopted in Banjul in 2006; the Protocol on Free Movement of Persons, the Right of Residence and Establishment; the African Union Convention on Cross Border Cooperation (Niamey Convention), adopted in June 2014; the African Union Border Programme and Measures for its Consolidation, adopted in 2016; the Declaration on Migration, adopted in June 2015; and the Joint Labour Migration Programme, adopted in 2015.

9. The discourse on the global compact comes at an opportune time: the preponderance of migration occurs within Africa, and that must be taken into account in any discourse on African migration. Evidence shows that only a small proportion of Africans migrate to Europe (12 per cent) and other continents (6 per cent). The dominant migration flows are within Africa (82 per cent). This is contrary to the impression given by the international media, which is replete with stories of large numbers of migrants, mostly from the Middle East and Africa, crossing the Mediterranean Sea into Europe. Of those emigrating, more than 70 per cent in West Africa, 65 per cent in Southern Africa, 50 per cent in Central Africa, and 47 per cent in Eastern Africa

migrate within their respective subregion.¹ The exception is North Africa, from which 90 per cent of the emigrants go to destinations outside of Africa.

10. It is expected that, in Africa, the number of young people will continue to increase. In the rest of the world, by contrast, the proportion of the elderly population is expected to increase. Between 1960 and 2010, the working-age population (15–64 years) of Africa increased more than four times. That trend is expected to continue over the next 40 years. The numbers represented by the working-age population in Africa could play a significant role with regard to the movements globally where opportunities exist. This is critical in the discourse on both intra-Africa and international labour migration.

11. Africans travelling within Africa need visas to enter 55 per cent of African countries. Excessive border controls and immigration restrictions increase the costs and risks of migration. An individual's motivation to migrate can be and may often be compromised by such controls and restrictions. That factor creates opportunities for private — and non-State — entrepreneurs, including smugglers, to facilitate the movement of individuals across borders by illicit means, often with disastrous consequences.

12. Migration has the potential to contribute significantly to the economy and human development in Africa. The diaspora populations play significant roles in social development, poverty reduction and economic growth. Consequently, there is considerable interest on the part of policymakers in Africa to leverage human and financial resources stemming from the diaspora.

13. It is anticipated that the global compact on migration will serve as a tool to assist member States to address the structural drivers of migration in Africa and to enhance the inherent potential benefits of migration. In that respect, the African Regional Consultative Meeting provides a platform for member States to deal with the barriers that impede safe, orderly and regular migration in the continent, and to come up with ways to leverage and harness the benefits of migration.

14. The preparatory process leading to the expected adoption of the global compact is structured in three phases:

- Phase I (consultations): April to November 2017
- Phase II (stocktaking): November 2017 to January 2018
- Phase III (intergovernmental negotiations): February to July 2018

Consultation process in Africa on the global compact on migration

15. The mandate of the regional commissions in the intergovernmental process is enshrined in General Assembly resolution 71/280, on modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The General Assembly, *inter alia*, requested the regional commissions and invited their subregional offices, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, particularly the International

¹ Calculated from data provided in *World Population Prospects: The 2015 Revision — Methodology of the United Nations Population Estimates and Projections*, (Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, New York, 2015).

Organization for Migration, to organize discussions among Member States of the United Nations and other relevant stakeholders to examine regional and subregional aspects of international migration and to provide inputs, in accordance with their respective mandates, to the preparatory process of the global compact.

16. In line with the resolution, and with a particular focus on the role of ECA and its subregional offices, ECA is leading the process of consultations in Africa and working in collaboration with the African Union Commission and IOM. The consultations in Africa have been a participatory process involving direct engagement with officials and experts at national level to ensure that member States bring national perspectives and realities into the discussions and reports, and inform subsequent engagements in phase II and phase III. Multiple methods are being used to collect information on Africa's perspectives and priorities, and to be used for contributing inputs into the global compact process, including:

(a) Subregional consultations: ECA, the African Union Commission and IOM have jointly organized subregional consultations in each of the five ECA subregions, involving member States and stakeholders, with contributions from experts, with a view to enabling the process and implementing related activities;

(b) Research and expert inputs: Researchers and policy experts on migration issues in the five ECA subregions have contributed their expertise through an informal advisory group on migration. Their inputs helped to identify issues in existing programmatic and policy responses on African migration;

(c) Research experts, mainly from the academic sector, in the subregions were contracted to undertake research and gather information on international migration in Africa on the six thematic areas under discussion relevant to the compact;

(d) The consultative process has also leveraged information from some of the ongoing processes, for example, the High-level Panel on Migration² to broaden the scope and depth of information. Others include the evaluation process of the Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa and the Ten-year Plan of Action of the Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa, held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe in August 2017; and the Second Ordinary Session of the Specialized Technical Committee on Migration, Refugees and Displaced Persons, held in Kigali in October 2017. In particular, the Common African Position on Migration emerging from the Specialized Technical Committee is expected to enrich the discussions and reinforce consultations led by ECA.

17. Following the various levels of consultations previously mentioned, the African Regional Consultative Meeting will bring together stakeholders in Africa, including representatives of member States, and international and regional organizations; individuals from the academic sector and civil society organizations; and experts in migration.

² The High-level Panel on Migration was established at the Ninth Joint Annual Meetings of the African Union Specialized Technical Committee on Finance, Monetary Affairs, Economic Planning and Integration and the Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which took place in Addis Ababa on 4 and 5 April 2016, and at which the Conference of Ministers adopted resolution 940 (XLIX) on international migration in Africa. The overall objective of the High-level Panel is to affirm Africa's commitment to global objectives and values on migration, and harness migration for Africa's development in the context of international cooperation.

II. Objectives

18. The main objectives of the African Regional Consultative Meeting are:

(a) To provide a forum for Africa to identify and articulate key migration issues, challenges and priorities; identify actionable commitments and recommendations; means of implementations; and identify mechanisms at national, subregional and regional levels to ensure coherence and effective follow-up;

(b) To prepare African countries to articulate their own narratives on migration. The African Regional Consultative Meeting will offer member States the opportunity to articulate the African narrative and to make significant and far-reaching inputs to the processes leading to the adoption of the global compact.

III. Format of the meeting

19. The African Regional Consultative Meeting will comprise interactive:

(a) Plenary presentations and discussions;

(b) Round table discussions on the six thematic areas.

20. The presentations and discussions will focus on member State priorities with regard to ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration, in view of the preparation of the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration. Particular reference will be made to the six thematic areas.

IV. Expected outcomes and deliverables

21. It is anticipated that the report on the African Regional Consultative Meeting will highlight regional priorities, actionable commitments and recommendations related to the development of a global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

V. Participation

22. The African Regional Consultative Meeting is expected to bring together representatives of member States, international and regional organizations, experts, academia, and civil society organizations from the Africa region involved in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes related to international migration.

VI. Dates and venue

23. The African Regional Consultative Meeting will be held on 26 and 27 October 2017 at the United Nations Conference Centre, Addis Ababa.