

**Concept note**  
**GFMD Thematic Workshop --**  
**“Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration**  
**at the National Level”**

Co-convened by the Governments of the Philippines and Bahrain  
Palais des Nations - Geneva, Switzerland  
21-22 March 2019

## **Background**

A big majority of UN member states adopted the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the GCM in Marrakech on 10 December 2018, followed by the UN General Assembly’s formal endorsement of the GCM on 19 December 2018.<sup>1</sup> The International Conference that supported the formal endorsement of the GCM included participation from more than 150 States.

The GCM is the first intergovernmentally negotiated global governance framework outlining a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. The GCM is the outcome of an intensive and inclusive consultation and negotiation process spanning two years since 2016.<sup>2</sup> It provides a blueprint on how states can ensure effective migration governance, and cooperate more effectively with each other and with other stakeholders, for the decades to come, while acknowledging the space and flexibility states have to do so on the basis of their own migration realities and capacities, in accordance with international law.

Former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on International Migration (SRSG), Louise Arbour, held the view that “the formal endorsement of the Compact represents a resounding commitment to an international migration framework based on fact, not myth, and to an understanding that national migration policies are best implemented through cooperation, not in isolation.”<sup>3</sup>

For a large number of States that adopted and endorsed the GCM, including the Philippines, Bahrain and the current chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), Ecuador, the GCM presents an opportunity to uphold the human rights of migrants and recognize their positive contribution to sustainable development of their states of origin, transit, and destination.

Now that the GCM has been adopted, the task ahead is to ensure that its principles take root and the menu of its actionable commitments is implemented. It is a shared responsibility to ensure that more migrants will be taken out of harm’s way and their lives will be saved, abuse and exploitation addressed, and migrants’ increased productivity and overall positive contribution to the development of their home and destination countries promoted.

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<sup>1</sup> 152 UN member states, including Bahrain and the Philippines, on 19 December 2018, voted in favor to endorse the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

<sup>2</sup>While the negotiations on the GCM were purely intergovernmental, the accompanying consultation process involved a broad range of stakeholders, including among others, civil society, the private sector, trade unions, diaspora and migrant communities, national human rights institutions, local authorities, and youth networks.

<sup>3</sup>Statement of the UN Migration Network, 19 December 2018.

Key to the implementation of the GCM is international cooperation. Ms. Arbour in her closing remarks in Marrakech on 11 December 2018 put it, “looking to the future, we will be better equipped to rely on a spirit of solidarity, rather than on indifference or – worse – selfishness that could otherwise tear us apart.”

## Objectives

In a spirit of solidarity, this GFMD thematic workshop is co-convened by the Governments of the Philippines and Bahrain to support the objectives of the Ecuador GFMD 2019 Chairmanship. As the first thematic meeting, it will focus on the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) at the national level, particularly Objectives 5, 6, and 23, which respectively address the issues of regular pathways for migration; fair and ethical recruitment and decent work; and international cooperation and global partnerships. This workshop also seeks to support Ecuador’s overall thematic agenda and priorities, including contributing to the implementation of the GCM.

Concretely, the workshop aims to:

- Advance efforts to implement and operationalize the GCM;
- Provide inputs to GFMD member states for their consideration in the formulation of their respective national implementation plans on the GCM;
- Explore how the GFMD could support member states in developing national implementation plans and sharing lessons learned and good practices.
- Engage and promote an exchange with the UN system as it defines its future activities to assist States in implementing the commitments under the GCM, including through a multi-stakeholder approach’; and
- Provide inputs to the report of the UN Secretary General on international migration.

## Expected outputs and outcomes

An outcome document summarizing the discussions in this two day thematic meeting will be submitted to participating GFMD member states and observer organizations; to the International Organization for Migration in its capacity as the Coordinator and secretariat of the UN Migration Network; and to the UN Secretary General as an input to his regular reports on international migration. The report will also be an important component of the GFMD 2019 milestones.

## Format and participation<sup>4</sup>

In line with the recommendation of the GFMD Ten-Year review to explore new formats for more interactive GFMD meetings, the two-day GFMD thematic workshop will feature a combination of “Knowledge Café<sup>5</sup>” sessions and the traditional panel discussions. Day 1 will kick-start with a high level opening session in plenary, led by the GFMD 2019 Chair and the co-conveners Bahrain and Philippines. It will be followed by a scene-setting keynote of the IOM Director General (tbc).

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<sup>4</sup> Consistent with the GFMD’s character as a non-binding, informal and voluntary process, this thematic workshop will be held under the Chatham House Rule.

<sup>5</sup> In this workshop context, a Knowledge Café is a structured conversational process in which participants are divided into three groups (“café sessions”) to discuss each of the three focus topics for 1.5 hours. Each café session will be moderated by a “Host” who is a thematic expert, to be assisted by a facilitator and note-taker. Thereafter, they move to another room, where the host welcomes and informs them about the results of the previous discussion in the room. Finally, the results of all thematic discussions will be reflected on in a common plenary session group (opening of Day II), wherein strategies for further actions and opportunities for further cooperation of participants are identified.

Thereafter, representatives of OHCHR, UNDP, and ILO will host the “Framing sessions” to define the problem questions and main challenges for each of the three parallel “world café” thematic discussions, which will focus on: *a) Human Rights-based Approaches to GCM Implementation as a transversal issue; b) Creating Regular Pathways for Migration for Sustainable Development (GCM Objective 5); and c) Promoting Fair and Ethical Recruitment and Decent Work (GCM Objective 6)*. The thematic discussions will be facilitated and results will be captured in a succinct manner.

Day II will begin with the presentation of the outcomes of the parallel thematic discussions, followed by two plenary sessions to discuss the global and national dimensions of the GCM implementation, respectively. Both sessions will showcase multi-stakeholder perspectives on how to implement the GCM.

Participation is encouraged at an appropriate political level, and expert levels from relevant government departments and agencies, such as labor, foreign affairs, interior and development that are mandated to support GCM implementation. Consistent with the multi-stakeholder nature of the GFMD, the workshop would also welcome the participation of civil society, including trade unions, national human rights institutions and others, business and local authorities. It is foreseen to gather around 150 policymakers and practitioners from all concerned sectors.