



General Secretariat
Social Affairs Sector
Refugees, Expatriates and Migration
Affairs Department

**Thirteenth Global Forum on Migration and Development 2020
Contribution of the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs (ARCP)
United Arab Emirates, January 2021**

In preparation for the Thirteenth Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), which will be held in the United Arab Emirates during the period from 18 to 26 January 2021 and will address "the Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development". The ARCP prepared for the Thirteenth Summit of the GFMD; by convening an online session via video conference on 11th November 2020.

Mr. Alex Zalami, Head of GFMD 2020 Taskforce, the United Arab Emirates, made an intervention at the opening of this Session, in which the Arab position towards the forum's themes was discussed. The Member States extended their sincere congratulations to the United Arab Emirates for its presidency of the current GFMD Summit, wishing every success in its proceedings. It was agreed that the Member States shall adopt this paper during their participation in the Thirteenth Summit of the GFMD (UAE, January 2021).

Regarding the Six thematic priorities to be discussed at the Forum, it was agreed that:

➤ **I. Governance of Labour Migration in the Context of Changing Employment Landscapes**

1. The importance of migration for both sending and receiving countries, where migration is a solution for domestic labour market that is not capable of absorbing the existing labour force in the sending countries, and also represents an opportunity for meeting some labour market shortages in the receiving countries.
2. Enhancing cooperation between the sending and receiving countries to achieve balance between migration policies, through several methods, including, inter alia, developing labour market regulations in receiving countries and publicizing new job opportunities, which will assist the sending countries in developing appropriate education and training policies.
3. The importance of developing and adopting evidence-based national approaches and policies by building capacities of national institutions to ensure access to accurate information based on collecting migration-related data, improving its quality and analysis.
4. Developing circular migration programmes within the framework of bilateral agreements between countries to ensure the protection of the interests of migrants, as well as the sending and receiving countries.
5. Facilitating regular mobility by simplifying procedures for admission and visa schemes for various purposes (education, scientific research, culture, training, etc.), in accordance with national laws and relevant international charters and treaties.
6. The importance of addressing the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in losing jobs for some, changing labour demand in the Arab world and working conditions, particularly the approach to work outside the workplace, in order to harmonize economic considerations and health

precautionary measures, taking into account the importance of ensuring respect for employment benefits during this crisis.

7. Reducing labour recruitment fees and organizing the workflow of recruitment offices abroad to ensure the conclusion of legal and documented employment contracts and the provision of appropriate working conditions for migrants in accordance with the principles of fair employment.
8. The importance of taking into consideration gender perspectives in all aspects of migration governance to achieve women equality in conformity with Goal (5) of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, and the guidelines of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and addressing this issue at legal, political and practical levels.
9. Establishing unified databases for all migrants, including labor migrants, according to the government approach stipulated in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, with the aim of: standardizing data resources for all official agencies that deal with migrants, analyzing these data to achieve the desired benefit in the development process and organizing the migration flows, developing evidence-based policies, and making decisions based on real indicators.
10. Calling upon the sending and receiving countries to undertake the necessary measures to facilitate migrants' remittances, by adopting measures that reduce the costs of these remittances and increase their flow through official channels using modern technologies.
11. Urging the receiving countries to consider tax exemptions on the funds transferred to the sending countries; and to provide financial, technological and administrative support, pursuant to the laws and conditions of each country.

➤ **II. Skilling Migrants for Employment**

1. Considering the possibility of establishing services for the governments of the sending countries to provide pre-employment training; to certify and standardize certificates and academic equivalencies; and to facilitate travel arrangements in conformity with national laws and international obligations of each country.
2. Conducting periodic studies on the needs of the labour market in these countries; clearly defining the required skills and developing joint mechanisms to recognize the skills and qualifications of all migrants.
3. The importance of strengthening the capabilities of Arab States to adapt to the technological changes that have affected the work environment in light of their impact on the required jobs during the coming period, and the need to qualify young people to perform these jobs

➤ **III. Leveraging New Technologies to Empower Migrants**

1. Strengthening the ability to develop Arab States and using new technologies to communicate with migrants is a priority in light the importance of this tool in protecting and empowering migrants and ensuring effective communication between migrants and the governments of sending and receiving countries in order to settle disputes and ensure that migrants enjoy their rights, as well as raising their awareness of international labour standards, and enabling them to obtain their visas, residency and work permit, and social security electronically.
2. Using technology, new techniques and electronic platforms to enhance communication between different government agencies of migration in conformity with whole of government approach, and to coordinate between governments to improve migration governance; whereas the recent period proved the effectiveness of these means and the possibility of communication and running remote meetings.

3. Optimizing the means of communication and modern technologies to develop partnerships and communication networks between skilled migrants and Arab institutions abroad and their counterparts in the Arab region.
4. Promoting the use of modern technologies to enable migrants' access to the procedures, their rights and duties once they depart from the sending countries to the receiving countries.
5. The importance of using electronic platforms to organize dialogue events with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, aiming to reach a comprehensive approach that: combats hate speech, corrects stereotypes and misconceptions about migrants, raises awareness about migration and ensures independent and inclusive coverage of migration issues that contribute to achieving peace, stability and development.

➤ **IV. Addressing Gaps in Migrant Protection**

1. Emphasizing the principle of shared responsibility between the sending and receiving countries; and developing balanced approaches and visions to protect the rights of migrants and their families and to raise their awareness of their rights and duties towards the receiving state.
2. The importance of taking the necessary measures to enhance the social and economic rights of migrant workers in accordance with national laws and international obligations of each country.
3. Emphasizing the importance of observance and promotion of human rights and respecting the human dignity of migrants when developing policies in order to achieve social cohesion and to enhance the contributions of migrants in both the sending and receiving countries, in accordance with national laws and international obligations of each country.
4. The need to respect human rights for all persons who leave their countries of origin to host countries for coercive reasons irrespective of their legal status.
5. Giving special attention to vulnerable and marginalized groups of migrants, including women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, victims of human trafficking and violence against women, in light of the unprecedented conditions resulting from the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic and its repercussions on migrants; and developing programmes to deal with these groups and to grant them the social, economic and psychological protection and assistance in accordance with national legislations and laws, developing programmes to define their rights, and developing appropriate responses to the needs of these groups, in coordination between various government agencies and institutions working on migration at the national level, in cooperation with relevant states and regional and international organizations.
6. Addressing all forms of racial discrimination, confronting the phenomenon of xenophobia, Islamophobia and religious beliefs, and protecting migrants from racist practices through community awareness campaigns using traditional and social media.
7. Calling upon the receiving countries to facilitate family gathering in conformity with national legislation, in order to promote the protection of migrants from various forms of violence, trafficking and exploitation and ensure their access to the necessary legal protection.
8. The need to provide protection for migrants and their rights, particularly in times of crisis.
9. Emphasizing the significant role of the international community in providing financial, technical and in-kind assistance to host countries according to their national capacities to bear hosting those people, particularly in terms of assisting host country governments through programmes achieving sustainable development for all segments of society, who are in most cases poor and marginalized groups.

10. The importance of promoting the efforts of civil society organizations towards expatriate communities to support migrants and help them integrate into host communities, by providing the necessary technical and language training and providing the necessary information to know their rights and duties, and to ensure their respect to the laws and regulations of the host countries.
11. The importance of exchanging experiences and knowledge of the role of recruitment companies and ensuring their compliance with international labour standards and enhancing the role of governments in monitoring these companies.
12. Promoting the conclusion of bilateral, regional or multilateral agreements on social security regarding the possibility of transferring entitlements to migrant workers at all skill levels, in accordance with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
13. Encouraging states to join international agreements related to the protection of migrant workers, including the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families, while working to amend national legislations to ensure providing the necessary protection for these workers.

➤ **V. Discussing Approaches to Address Irregular Migration**

1. Combating irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, and preventing organized crime networks that extend their activities from migrant smuggling and human trafficking to terrorist acts, by raising awareness of their dangers, enacting and activating the necessary laws, and calling upon all states to accede to relevant conventions.
2. Promoting the role of educational and media institutions in raising awareness of the danger of irregular migration, migrant smuggling and human trafficking, and their various impacts and consequences.
3. Opening new routes for regular migration and legal entry to receiving countries, in accordance with relevant international conventions and treaties, through:
 - A. Providing the necessary information on conditions for entry, residence, work, etc.;
 - B. Providing scholarships and opportunities for technical and professional training;
 - C. Creating new opportunities for circular, temporary and seasonal migration;
 - D. Facilitating the procedures of obtaining entry and residence visas for various purposes (education, scientific research, culture, training, etc.), according to national legislation and laws;
 - E. Facilitating family gathering according to national laws and legislation.
4. Affirming the need to combine short-term policies of combating irregular migration with long-term development approaches that address the root causes driving outflows of irregular migration by emphasizing the relation between migration and development, since the security perspective is not sufficient to address the root causes of this problem.

➤ **VI. Fostering Partnerships to Realize Migration-Related Goals in the Sustainable Development Agenda and Managing the Future of Human Mobility**

1. Emphasizing that migration is the other side of the coin of development, through the implementation of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will have a major impact on migration, as poverty and unemployment are among the most important causes of migration, and consequently the development of sending countries through improving infrastructure and facilitating trade and investment will create new job opportunities, Also enhancing employment and education opportunities will alleviate the drivers of migration.

2. Seeking to include migration within national development plans in the Arab States and at the local level, in conformity with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda.
3. Paying attention to the Arab competencies residing abroad and encourage their support to the sustainable development efforts in the sending and receiving countries, urging them to support national development programmes, and to share their knowledge, expertise and modern technology with their countries of origin, and fostering their relation with Arab scientific institutions and entities of their specialization.
4. Encouraging joint planning between humanitarian actors and those working in development to enhance long-term development assistance in support of the economy and national development plans.
5. Supporting partnership and cooperation between the public and private sectors in the field of migration and relevant issues, given the important role of the private sector. Since, the partnership between the government and the private sector, and the latter's adoption of the principle of social responsibility are among the most important principles that Arab States should be keen to encourage.
6. Encouraging governments to strengthen partnership with civil society organizations in view of their important role in various areas of migration.
7. Emphasizing the importance of social cohesion in achieving development, which can be accomplished by encouraging policies that preserve diversity, cultural inclusion and participation of all, in conformity with the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
8. Promoting the initiatives launched by states and international and regional organizations in the field of communication with expatriate communities in order to enhance development efforts in the sending countries, as well as individual initiatives of migrants that benefit their countries of origin in various fields, in conformity with national laws and regulations.
9. Emphasizing the importance of providing attractive incentives for migrants to use their remittances in development, through
 - A. Creating programmes to attract remittances of migrants to the national economies of sending countries; and seeking to increase migrant families awareness of expenditures.
 - B. Developing programmes to encourage investments by migrants in their countries of origin.
 - C. Calling upon sending countries to consider diversifying investment channels in individual and societal projects, providing incentives to maximize the benefit from remittances, and providing the appropriate conditions to achieve maximum benefit from these remittances in advancing social and economic development efforts.
10. Emphasizing the importance of remittances in advancing development, however, they are not the main source of financing for development and are not a substitute for international development aids due to their fluctuating/ nature and inability to measure it and assess their impact on combating poverty.
11. Valuing the partnership between the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States and international and regional organizations working in the field of migration, through signing memoranda of understanding; agreements of cooperation with these organizations, and implementing joint action plans.

➤ VII. Palestinian Refugees

The need for paying due attention and providing support for Palestinian refugees, including calling on the international community to continue providing the necessary support to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) to continue assuming its full mandate towards them in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, and to emphasize the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homeland according to Security Council Resolution No. 194, and calling upon the international community to pressure Israel (the occupying Power) to respect international law, including the Geneva Conventions and United Nations resolutions, and to halt its policies of aggression, siege, ethnic cleansing and racial discrimination aimed at continuing the displacement of Palestinians from their homeland, and emphasizing the States' commitment to legitimate international resolutions that preserve the Palestinians' right to establish their independent State on the borders of June 4, 1967, including East Jerusalem; which its recognition as the capital of Israel (the occupying Power) may facilitate the process of ethnic cleansing of the indigenous Palestinian population. Thus, the Palestinians are facing a new form of forced displacement in light of the Judaization policy carried out by the occupying Power towards the Holy City.