

# **Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)**

## **Focused Input to the 2021 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF)**

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at the request of the GFMD Troika and Steering Group.*

## Foreword

As an intergovernmental body, the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) is glad to accept the invitation to provide input to the 2021 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). This report highlights GFMD's contribution to the 2030 Agenda in general, and to migration-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and targets in particular.

The GFMD was originally formed in September 2006 in response to a proposal by then-Secretary General of the United Nations, Kofi Annan, at the UN General Assembly High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD). Since then, the GFMD has played a unique role as a state-led but inclusive platform for identifying, discussing and strengthening the links between migration and development. With formal roles for participation by civil society, business, local administrations and international organisations, the GFMD allows for the discussion potentially sensitive political matters in a framework that fosters trust between stakeholders. These roles are reinforced through the three Mechanisms, which promote inter-institutional networks and collaborative programs for partnerships. In recent years, most notably over the 2020 Chairmanship of the United Arab Emirates, the GFMD has focused increasingly on the fostering of tangible and concrete partnerships as a way of leveraging the development outcomes of migration.

After the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the SDGs in 2015, the GFMD created an ad hoc Working Group on the 2030 Agenda, in order to allow for in-depth analyses of migration related SDGs and targets. Based on requests by the President of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), the group, in exchange with GFMD stakeholders, prepared two reports for the High-Level Political Forum in 2017 and 2018 that were submitted by co-chairs Germany and Morocco. In recognition of the importance of the GFMD's reporting to the HLPF, the ad hoc Working Group was recognised as a permanent Working Group of the GFMD over the course of the 2019 Ecuadorean Chairmanship, and renamed the Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration. A report was submitted again under the UAE Chairmanship in 2020, with this current report being once again prepared under the guidance of the Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration.

It is no coincidence that the current report begins with a reflection on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants. The pandemic has presented governments around the world with some of the greatest peace-time challenges that they have ever faced, while placing considerable economic, social and health-related strains on migrants, their families and their communities. The consequences for development have been significant and cut across the goals of the SDGs. Throughout the course of the last 12 months, the GFMD has played an active role in raising awareness among Member States about responding effectively and coherently to the pandemic. In March 2020, the GFMD community organised a series of webinars, subsequently coalescing around a GFMD Ad Hoc Working Group on the Impact of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development, which presented its report to the online Summit in January 2021. The work of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration has responded to the pandemic by organising its campaign against the rise of xenophobia against migrants due to the pandemic. Meanwhile, numerous partnerships identified through the 2020 GFMD Migration Labs focused on ameliorating the impact of the pandemic on migrant communities.

These and many other initiatives are accounted for in this report.

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## 1. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on migrants and their communities: policy responses and recovery solutions

The COVID-19 pandemic and the measures adopted to “flatten the curve” have particularly hit hard migrants, as well as their families and communities of origin, transit and destination. The negative consequences of this health, protection and socio-economic crises on migrants (UN, 2020a) will have long-lasting repercussions on the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Migrants indeed contribute significantly to the economies and societies of the countries where they come from, settle in, or return to. Yet, the increased barriers to human mobility, both across and within borders, the human rights violations and discriminations many of them, especially women, have faced, the income and jobs losses they have suffered in even higher proportions than native-born workers, or still their lack of access to health and care services, or still social protection systems, have translated into increased vulnerabilities, which in the long term will also have negative repercussions on their countries of origin, transit and destination.

Against this background, many countries around the world, with the support of humanitarian and development actors, have adopted policies to help face the immediate needs of the populations most affected by the negative consequences of COVID-19, including migrants and their communities. In many cases, the immediate policy response has been coupled with longer-term solutions aimed at helping economies and societies recover from the pandemic-induced crisis. The measures adopted by the countries to reduce the adverse effects of COVID-19 on migrants and their communities are also contributing to maintaining the SDGs as a key priority for policymakers, both at the local and regional levels. In this respect, the GFMD represents a key process to promote the inclusion of migrants into both the COVID-19 policy responses and recovery solutions and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### 1.1 SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere, and SDG 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

One direct impact of COVID-19 on the SDGs is in terms of poverty and hunger. The lockdowns and other physical distancing measures most countries have adopted to contain the pandemic have translated into an economic crisis, which in many countries, has also meant an increase in poverty. About 71 million people were thus pushed into extreme poverty in 2020 (UN, 2020b). In parallel, food insecurity has increased since the start of the crisis, particularly affecting small-scale food producers. The most vulnerable populations including migrants, are those primarily suffering from increased poverty and food insecurity:

- In countries of destination, many migrant workers have lost their sources of income, thus limiting their capacity of buying food for them and their children, paying their rent or accessing basic services.
- In countries of transit, stranded migrants have been particularly affected by the restrictions to international movements, the lack of economic opportunities and, as a result, the need for food, water and shelter, among others.
- In countries of origin, the drop in remittances induced by the COVID-19 crisis (World Bank, 2020b) has also contributed to increasing poverty and limiting access to services among recipient households and their communities.

The poverty trap in which the COVID-19 has pushed millions of people around the world is even stronger in the case of migrants who lack access to any form of social protection or/and incurred debt to pay recruiters, travel agents or even smugglers (Guadagno, 2020).

As a response to this situation, several countries have included migrants in social safety and protection schemes. Vulnerable groups in different countries, including migrants, have also benefitted from livelihood opportunities. Thus, in **Colombia**, vulnerable Venezuelans have been enrolled in government

assistance initiatives such as the "Solidarity Income Programme" and the "School-Feeding Programme", based on the delivery of food kits. In parallel, donor countries have adapted their cooperation programmes to include migrants in cash-based programmes for housing and food purposes. Likewise, **Spain** established a Minimal Vital Income Scheme accessible to nationals and those migrants and their families with at least one year of legal and uninterrupted residence. The city of **Bristol, United Kingdom**, temporarily allowed asylum seekers and migrant workers with no access to public funds status to access local public housing (GFMD, 2020a).

In the same vein, **Morocco** has implemented a multi-stakeholder, multi-level governance strategy to mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, including on migrants. A Special Fund for the Management of the Pandemic provides financial support to the beneficiaries of the National Security Fund who lost their jobs, as well as to businesses and SMEs. The city of **Rabat**, in cooperation with international organizations, has been providing assistance and access to basic services to nationals and migrant populations alike. In **Uruguay, Montevideo** has set up a fund to help migrants in difficulties find/keep a safe accommodation throughout the pandemic (GFMD, 2020e).

In countries of origin, diaspora associations have played a key role during the immediate response to the crisis by mobilizing not only financial resources, but also skills and knowledge, to help their countries of origin face the economic consequences of the crisis (GFMD, 2020d). Remittances, which in many countries kept increasing despite the crisis also enabled recipient household to fight poverty and hunger. **The Philippines** with one of the largest populations of migrant workers in the world, repatriated over 200,000 distressed and stranded Overseas Filipino Workers (OFW) and Overseas Filipinos (OFs) when the pandemic hit, and brought to life its approach of 'high-tech, low-touch'. Existing tech platforms and databases were used as well as social media to share information with migrants in need of support across the world. Social media messaging services have been used as a 24-hour help service for OFW to be able to send private messages and receive specific one-to-one advice within short notice.

## 1.2 SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

The COVID-19 pandemic is first and foremost a health crisis that could reverse several decades of improvements in healthcare. In this respect, COVID-19 has exacerbated pre-pandemic vulnerabilities that migrants face in terms of access to healthcare systems (IFRC, 2020). "Access to healthcare is usually related to the migration status, where migrants with an irregular situation are often uninsured and do not seek assistance for fear of being reported to the immigration authorities or deported. More generally, migrants may not be able to afford accessing healthcare or might rely on their employer to do so" (ILO, 2020a). In addition, the difficulty to gather information about migrants in some countries reduces the possibilities of including them in health policies or schemes. This directly affects governments' efforts in reducing the virus spread and its adverse consequences (WHO Europe, 2020)." Likewise, because migrants tend to be more isolated than the rest of the population, they may not have access to the necessary information to protect themselves from contagion (Liem *et al.*, 2020). Migrants from ethnic minorities, especially indigenous people, are even more vulnerable (openDemocracy, 2020).

In certain contexts, where migrant populations live in overcrowded conditions (for instance, refugee camps, immigration detention centres or temporary facilities for deported people), the lack of basic sanitary conditions and the lack of medical personnel prevent migrants from respecting public health measures, such as self-isolation, physical distancing and proper hygiene. This situation increases the risk that they contract COVID-19, but also that they spread it (Bukuluki *et al.*, 2020; Kluge *et al.*, 2020).

Because many vulnerable migrants live on a day-to-day basis, they often need to keep working in the informal sector to financially survive, which may expose them to contagion and punitive measure due to physical distancing measures. Migrant women, in particular healthcare professionals and domestic and care workers, face a higher likelihood of exposure to the virus (UNDP, 2020).

Against this background, many countries have decided to facilitate migrants' access to healthcare. Most **European Union** Member States and **OECD countries**, among others, guarantee access to COVID-19 testing and related treatment services, regardless of nationality or migration status (GFMD, 2020a). **Spain**, for instance, provided systematic health checks to seasonal foreign workers.

Other countries, such as **Chile**, **Cyprus** and **Indonesia**, have developed campaigns to provide and translate information on health guidelines, physical distancing measures, as well as the duties, rights and access to healthcare for migrants (GFMD, 2020e). **Mexico** has developed a series of protocols and guidance to guarantee the rights of people in mobility contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic, with a focus on the right to health. Temporary shelters and voluntary isolation centres were established for migrants living on the streets or in transit, regardless of status, to mitigate their exposure to the virus and ensure access to basic services due to lost work, evictions, or immigration status.

The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** designed a set of prevention practices including: (1) Ensuring the Safety and Health of the Workforce and Work Environment (e.g. UAE has made COVID-19 treatment services free and available and accessible across the country for all and has established dedicated information Centres for COVID-19 providing services in various languages); (2) Protecting Migrants in Work (UAE protects the health rights of migrant workers, irrespective of their nationality and migration status); and (3) Bilateral and Multilateral cooperation (UAE support the WHO Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan).

At the city level, **Montreal, Canada**, and its municipal transportation company, Société de transport de Montréal, converted six public buses into mobile COVID-19 testing clinics to ensure access to testing to immigrant communities in neighborhoods home to a large number of refugees and asylum seekers that are far from access to healthcare. The Municipality of **Lampedusa** and **Linosa** in **Italy** provided Quarantine Ships for the migrants arriving in Lampedusa during the pandemic and activated a COVID-19 area in the reception center to ensure access to testing and health services to migrants upon arrival. Likewise, **Milan, Italy**, partnered with a non-profit agency to provide COVID-19 health monitoring in shelters for homeless people and unaccompanied migrant youth. In addition, several countries, such as **Argentina** and **Peru**, have eased the process of recognition of skills for foreign health workers to broaden the stock of professionals with the relevant skills and help fight the health crisis induced by the pandemic (GFMD, 2020e; ILO, UNDP and UNU Merit, 2021). Municipalities across the province of **Buenos Aires**, Argentina, thus hired about 4,500 doctors, nurses and other health professionals, mostly from Venezuela.

In countries of origin, innovative ways of transnational engagement proved to be efficient to face the health crisis. In **Somalia**, for instance, health professionals from the diaspora have provided technical support to hospitals in their communities of origin (IOM, 2021). Likewise, resource mobilization from donor countries and diaspora associations to least developed countries have been a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic in migrants' countries of origin (GFMD, 2020d). Thus, the partnership between the governments of **Mali**, **France** and the **European Union**, together with the Malian diaspora, enabled the allocation of funds to support local initiatives in Mali, some of them related to the rehabilitation of health infrastructure in rural areas.

### 1.3 SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated gender inequalities, by leading women to face additional risks and challenges. Lockdowns have thus increased the risk of gender-based violence, while women have had to bear most of the additional household burdens induced by the pandemic (UN, 2020b). Women around the world have also been on the front lines of the fight against COVID-19, especially as health and social workers. Migrant women have particularly suffered from the negative consequences of the pandemic.

Around 42% of migrant workers are women (UN Women, 2020a). During the COVID-19 pandemic, many of them have been placed in more vulnerable situation, as a result of their over-representation in the informal economy, as undocumented and unprotected workers. They also have had to face the extra burden of unpaid care work and increased sexual and gender-based violence. Limited access to cultural and linguistic information as well raised risk of infection for female migrant front-line workers. In addition, female migrant workers can end up in situations where they are trapped in their workplaces, which exposes them to additional risks of abuse and gender-based violence; with restrictive access to social and protection services (ILO, UNDP and UNU Merit, 2021).

In this respect, domestic workers have faced higher risks in contracting the virus and have suffered from increased vulnerabilities (UN Women, 2020a). Due to lockdown restrictions and the exposition to abusive employers, female migrant domestic workers faced higher risk of gender-based violence. An additional risk lies in the increase in stress levels, resulting from the permanent presence of household members, which can translate into excessive work requests. Because of dependence on employers, female migrants have had little access to support networks, helplines and online support, or still health services, including reproductive health care (ESCWA, UNHCR and ILO, 2020). Around 8.5 million women migrant domestic workers faced income loss and higher risks of abuse and exploitation due to the pandemic, especially female migrant workers who have not been able to return home due to travel bans and border restrictions.

Despite the gender-specific impacts of COVID-19 on migrants, few countries have adopted measures to address the specific risks and vulnerabilities that migrant women have faced during the pandemic. Some initiatives, however, have helped, through hotlines, provide information and support to women, among them female migrants, victims of gender-based violence (UNHCR, 2020). Countries like **Burkina Faso**, **Mexico** and **Nigeria**, have also developed social media and radio information campaigns (GFMD, 2020e).

#### **1.4 SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

The COVID-19 pandemic and the policy responses to curb the spread of the virus have generated one of the worst economic recessions since the Great Depression, with a strong impact in terms of job and income losses, especially for those working in the informal economy (UN, 2020b). Against this backdrop, migrants have often been the first to lose their jobs and the last to recover them, while those still working are often not able to work from home, since physical distancing is not an option, increasing their risks of COVID-19 infection (Gelatt, 2020; UN Women, 2020a).

Migrant workers have played a crucial role as essential workers. They work in fundamental industries and sectors that are part of the COVID-19 response, such as healthcare, agriculture, agro-food processing, cleaning services, logistics and delivery<sup>1</sup>, but have also been especially affected by the pandemic. Unfortunately, many of them are working in precarious conditions, with low wages, and lack access to social protection coverage, being more vulnerable. In this respect, the COVID-10 crisis implies a deterioration in Target 8.8, which aims to: *“Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment”*.

For many migrant workers, losing a job may imply they fall into an irregular status, increasing their chances of being excluded or having limited access to social protection programmes, or temporarily COVID-relief support from host governments. For those migrants working in the informal sector, the risks of contracting the virus increase for not having access to personal protective equipment. They are also more exposed to exploitative working conditions, violence and abuse. Migrant women are especially vulnerable.

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<sup>1</sup> In OECD countries, around 30 percent of the workforce in the hardest-hit sectors is foreign born, which pushes migrants towards underemployment and unemployment. In the United States, they constitute 19 percent of the workers in frontline sectors, such as agriculture, manufacturing, healthcare, retail and wholesale (ILO, UNDP and UNU Merit, 2021).

In addition, migrants depending on income generation for micro, small and medium-enterprises (MSMEs) and those working on their own have experienced more difficulties, since lockdowns have increased challenges to set up new businesses and keep existing ones profitable. In regions such as South-East Asia (ILO, 2020b; World Bank, 2020), the crisis has also increased return migration, raising challenges for countries of origin to manage these flows and provide returnees with job opportunities, in contexts of already high levels of unemployment and informality.

In response to this context, a number of countries have adopted specific measures to reduce migrant workers' vulnerabilities and incorporate them into the socio-economic response to COVID-19. Some of them decided to relax their procedures related to the renewal or extension of residence permits to allow migrants to stay regularly (European Migration Network, 2020). As an example of this, **Bahrain, Kenya, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, South Africa, Thailand** and the **United Arab Emirates** decided to extend work visas for migrant workers and their families (ILO, 2020c). Similarly, the **Italian** government decided to relaunch the Decree-Law No. 34/2020, creating two separate pathways to regularize irregular migrant workers that lost their jobs in essential sectors, as a way to respond to labour shortages during the COVID-19 pandemic (European Commission, 2020). Likewise, **Spain** recognized the contribution of migrant workers during the pandemic by automatically extending expired permits to enable them to work in essential sectors of the economy, especially agriculture. Other countries, such as **Brazil**, allowed migrant workers, independently of their migratory status, to be eligible for an unemployment programme. Similar strategies were implemented in **Chile, New Zealand** and **Tunisia** (ILO, 2020c). In **Ireland, Italy** and **New Zealand**, support packages to address the impact of the pandemic were delivered to migrant workers (ILO, 2020a). Finally, in **Mexico**, services to respond to human trafficking and other forms of violence that affect migrants were declared essential to ensure they could continue running during the pandemic, including the possibility to file and resolve complaints.

In the context of return migration, **Mexico** also started to certify labour competencies, such as knowledge, abilities and skills, of Mexican returnees to facilitate their socio-economic reintegration. Some countries have also included their diasporas in the responses to COVID-19. **The Philippines** thus supported the livelihoods of more than 320,000 Filipino workers abroad by providing one-time cash assistance of US\$ 200 (ILO, 2020a; Patinio, 2020). In other cases, for instance in **Moldova**, diasporas themselves have provided support to communities of origin by investing in local development initiatives. In cooperation with the ILO, **Switzerland** has expanded the scope of the FAIRWAY programme to address labour market reintegration and enhance the employability of return migrants. Switzerland and ILO also started a cooperation aimed at improving the inclusion of migrant workers in the social protection systems of GCC countries of destination.

### 1.5 SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries

While the COVID-19 pandemic has hit most countries in the world, the economic recession has particularly affected those already left behind, especially vulnerable migrants, thus contributing to increasing inequalities (UN, 2020b). The more than 100,000 travel restrictions, including border closures, that have flourished since the start of the pandemic have seriously curbed the efforts to *“Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”* (Target 10.7). In addition, growing incidents of stigma, discrimination, xenophobia and racism have been registered against migrants around the world (GFMD, 2020a). Many migrants have ended up not only jobless, but also stranded in their countries of transit (as many as 2.7 million migrants are, according to IOM's estimates, stranded in transit countries and in need of various types of assistance) or destination, with expired visas and a lack of access to health care (ILO, UNDP and UNU Merit, 2021).

Likewise, increasing unemployment in countries of destination and the decline in remittance flows towards countries of origin have had negative effects on the way migrants support their families and communities of origin (World Bank, 2020c). The drop in remittances particularly affects those family



members who rely on this source of income to cover essentials, such as food, school fees, medical expenses, and housing (UN DESA, 2019; UN, 2020a). In this respect, the expected drop in remittances by 7 percent in 2020, and the projected decrease of 7.1 percent in 2021, will highly affect recipient households and their communities in low and middle-income countries (World Bank, 2020b). The many obstacles to international remittance flows also contribute to jeopardizing the achievement of Target 10.c: *“By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent”*.

The COVID-19 crisis has also made return and voluntary repatriation processes more complicated for refugees willing to return to their countries of origin and migrant workers who have chosen to leave their jobs or whose contracts have been terminated by their employers (ESCWA, UNHCR and ILO, 2020). Return to countries already affected by the socio-economic consequences of COVID-19 also imply that reintegration opportunities are limited.

Against this backdrop, diasporas have contributed significantly to help their communities of origin face the effects of the pandemic. This is the example of the **Gambian** diaspora that sent 578 million dollars in 2020 to support their communities of origin (GFMD, 2020b). International initiatives such as the *Call to Action: “Remittances in Crisis: How to Keep Them Flowing”*, launched by **Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom** in May 2020, have also contributed to leveraging remittances and other migration-related financial flows to assist local COVID-19 response and recovery interventions (GFMD 2020b).

Among countries of destination, **Australia, Bahrain, Italy, New Zealand** and **Spain** introduced measures to extend work and residence visas, temporary regularization, or in some cases, special bridging visas, e.g., where COVID-19 poses a reasonable barrier to the ability of an individual to depart the country even though their presence is otherwise unauthorized. The government of **Portugal** announced in late March 2020 that the status of all the migrants with open residency applications will be regularized, thereby ensuring their full access to essential services during the coronavirus outbreak (UN Women, 2020a). Likewise, **New York City, United States** launched a municipal programme in 2019 to expand universal health care so that regardless of insurance, ability to pay, or immigration status all residents can seek services without fear of discrimination. Having established this programme prior to COVID-19 was critical to the city’s ability to respond rapidly and inclusively when the pandemic hit (GFMD, 2020a).

In the same perspective, the government of **Colombia** developed a plan to facilitate the inclusion of migrants from Venezuela in the country’s COVID-19 response. The inclusive and comprehensive plan addresses the following six main points: 1) Responsible border management; 2) Access to health services (same as for Colombians); 3) Adaptation of cooperation programmes for refugees and other migrants (cash-based programmes for housing and food purposes, WASH assistance and health and shelter services were strengthened); 4) Attention to vulnerable Venezuelans (enrolment to governmental assistance initiatives such as "Solidarity Income Programme" and "School Feeding Programme"; delivery of food kits); 5) Focusing programmes on high-impact areas; and 6) Greater coordination and information (UNHCR, 2021).

Other good examples range from automatically extending migrant worker visas; ensuring equal access to health care and PPE; recruiting seasonal migrant workers to harvest crops to fill labour gaps; lifting travel restrictions for cross-border workers; waiving fees and fines for migrant workers wishing to return home; and extending social security benefits to migrants regardless of status (GFMD, 2020a).

In **Sweden**, irregular migrants have been identified as a priority group in the national COVID-19 Vaccination Plan (due to identified socio-economic factors, risks and their vulnerability), and will therefore access vaccinations before the general (young and healthy) public (Folkhälsomyndigheten<sup>2</sup>).

Regular migrants have been taken on board in the new public safety nets schemes created to combat the socio-economic effects of the pandemic in **Spain**. In June 2020, the government approved the new scheme of “Ingreso Mínimo Vital” (Minimal Income). Regular migrants and their families residing at least one

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<sup>2</sup> Rekommendationer om prioriteringsordning för vaccination mot covid-19 — Folkhälsomyndigheten ([folkhalsomyndigheten.se](https://www.folkhalsomyndigheten.se))

year before the entry into force of the Law on a permanent uninterrupted basis in Spain are entitled to access to this scheme to reduce the risks of added vulnerability of migrants and their families.

### 1.6 SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

The COVID-19 pandemic and related responses have had an unprecedented effect on justice institutions globally, with migrants, especially women migrants and those with irregular status, being negatively affected. In many countries, police, lawyers, prosecutors and courts have closed and/or reduced their operations, which has increased case backlogs as well as the length of judicial and administrative proceedings, while pretrial detainees eligible for early release have been subjected to prolonged migration detention (UNODC, 2020; UN Women et al., 2020).

Migration detention centers, as well as overcrowded shelters and informal settlements, are also high-risk locations for the spread of COVID-19. Furthermore, there is a heightened risk of sexual and gender-based violence under such living conditions, which might be further increased due to the tension generated by movement restrictions, quarantines, job loss, xenophobia and discrimination (OHCHR 2020a).

For irregular and women migrants in precarious situations, equal access to information and internet is key to ensure protection and access to (tele-)justice. Hence, COVID-19 has emphasized the need for new tech platforms designed to ensure access to justice for migrants, regardless of their status, enabling both remote and online use (GFMD, 2020b). Access to information must, however, include firewalls to separate migrants' right to access to information and justice from eventual immigration enforcement activities (OHCHR 2020b).

Some states, like **Morocco**, **Turkey** and the **United Kingdom**, have used information and communications technology (ICT), including video and telephone, to ensure remote access to court hearings (GFMD, 2020b). Others have postponed all non-urgent hearings<sup>3</sup>. Other states have used email for submission of protection orders and digitalized their judicial systems (UN Women et al., 2020). Overall, it is important to ensure that border authorities handle migrants, including returnees, in a safe and sanitary way, while supporting migrants in securing legal documentation and ensuring that they can access essential services, including judicial services and protection.

### 1.7 SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

As the world responds to the pandemic, some countries have made cuts in foreign aid to pay the costs of COVID-19 (Ratha, 2020; UN Women, 2020b; World Bank, 2020b), even though international cooperation, preferably carried out in a multidimensional manner and involving multi-stakeholder partnerships, is more important than ever to respond to the challenges of the pandemic. As states seek to ensure the rights of migrants, they also, concurrently, try to recover from the pandemic (GFMD, 2020c). In this respect, the **Global Cities Fund for Inclusive Pandemic Response** launched by the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) in July 2020 is a 1 million USD initiative that provides support for local policies and initiatives that directly address the COVID-19 recovery needs of refugees and other migrant communities in cities.

Another example is an initiative by the Governments of **Canada** and **Ecuador**, in collaboration with the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, which spearheaded the creation and launch of a new global social media

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<sup>3</sup> [www.remotecourts.org](http://www.remotecourts.org)

campaign, titled “**It Takes a Community**”. The campaign aims to promote a more balanced narrative on migration, including during COVID-19, by inviting states, cities, businesses, civil society and youth leaders to actively share inclusive stories showing how migrants have a positive impact in their communities. This campaign demonstrates the unique capacity of the GFMD to foster concrete, multi-stakeholder collaboration that can contribute to advancing the SDGs (see Textbox 1).

In the framework of a tripartite partnership associating the Ministry of the Malians Abroad, the Agence Française de Développement and the European Union (EU) delegation in **Mali**, a call for projects dedicated to the COVID-19 response, initiated by the Technical Unit of Co-development Mali in June 2020, allowed the financing of 10 operations in the areas of health, sanitation and food security, for a total budget of 460,000 EUR, as well as 20 equipment projects and emergency rehabilitation of health community infrastructures in rural area, for an amount of 230,000 EUR. This response, endowed with additional resources from complementary contributions from Malian diasporas established in Europe, was made possible by a reallocation of funds allocated to the project of Support to initiatives of the Malian diaspora for the development of the territories of origin (co-financing EU – Agence Française de Développement).

Another type of partnership, which is also a means of financing development, is through remittances, as they are already more than three times the total of official aid. In this respect, the Governments of **Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom** joined forces to launch a *Call to Action “Remittances in Crisis: How to Keep Them Flowing”*. The coalition now includes more than 30 Member States, different international organizations, including the World Bank (KNOMAD), IOM, UNCDF and UNDP, representatives from the private sector, such as the International Association of Money Transfer Networks and the International Chamber of Commerce, as well as several representatives from the civil society, including diaspora associations. The Call to Action raised awareness about the potentially devastating effects of declining remittances for migrants, their families and their countries as a consequence of the pandemic. It also encouraged the public and private sector to take mitigating measures, such as driving technological innovation, adjusting the regulatory environment and promoting financial awareness.<sup>4</sup>

Among civil society groups, **Alianza Americas** strengthened the capacities of its member organizations to respond to COVID-19 and to maintain their advocacy efforts regarding migration policies and economic relief, and access to health care.

While billions of dollars are spent yearly on managing border policies, evidence, first and foremost in the form of continuous irregular migration, shows that financial resources are often misallocated. Unfortunately, systematic evaluation of already implemented migration programmes is often missing (GFMD, 2020c), and the pandemic has shed additional light on the need for high-quality, timely and reliable data on migratory status. COVID-19 and related restrictions have made data collection even more difficult, especially in the largest cities with a high number of cases. While there is an increased demand for migration data, there is also, due to the pandemic, decreased capacity to collect and analyse such data (Migration Data Portal). This situation contributes to curbing the efforts to: *“enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts”* (Target 17.18).

Partnerships are also crucial within countries. One example of local and national partnerships is the National Coordination of State Offices for Attention to Migrants and El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, in **Mexico**. Through the Regional Programme on Migration (PRM), Mexico agreed to fully incorporate local governments in the compliance of the normative and international frameworks that refer to the attention,

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.knomad.org/covid-19-remittances-call-to-action/#actions>

protection and integration of people in migration contexts, particularly to ensuring a safe, regular and orderly migration.

## 2. Role and contributions of the GFMD to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda

### 2.1 The GFMD and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in 2015, the GFMD continues to help advance progress towards achieving the SDGs. Migration is a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda, relevant to all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with at least ten out of 17 goals containing targets and indicators that are directly relevant to migration or human mobility. By not including migrants, countries of origin, transit and destination may miss out on the positive contribution migrants can make to sustainable development.

Over the years, the GFMD has succeeded in bringing to the fore several key issues, which are relevant to realizing the migration-related SDGs, especially:

- the importance of policy and institutional coherence reflected in both the whole-of-government and the whole-of-society approach;
- mainstreaming migration into development planning;
- promoting global partnerships on labour and skills mobility;
- migration narratives that contribute to a more balanced representation of migration as an engine for development.

The GFMD process has provided a space for multi-year thematic discussions and informal dialogue, promoting the identification of solutions and forging action-oriented partnerships through, among others, its regional consultations in 2020, thematic Working Groups, Mechanisms, the Friends of the Forum, multi-stakeholder roundtables, Migration Labs, as well as the IOE-Seedstars Migration Challenge, and the Youth Leadership and Innovation Contest. The GFMD Working Group on Sustainable Development and International Migration, and the GFMD Platform for Partnerships (PfP) contribute to the exchange and cataloging of best practices on the implementation of the SDGs. The platform contains a rich repository of migration and development practices, which can be filtered by SDG target. The PfP features 1281 government policies and programmes ([M&D Policies and Practices](#)) that have been inspired by GFMD discussions and recommendations showcased by 188 governments, as well as 204 [Migration Profiles](#) and numerous [M&D Policy Tools](#).

### 2.2 GFMD 2020: ‘The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development’

The challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic have resulted in setbacks in sustainable development gains, which are disproportionately affecting migrants and other vulnerable populations (UN DESA, 2020). To leverage the full potential of migration in achieving the SDGs and respond to the socio-economic impact of COVID-19, international cooperation is key. The GFMD provides a valuable platform to promote international cooperation between Member States and other stakeholders, as shown in this year’s theme of the 2020 GFMD, which focused on ‘The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development’. The 2020 GFMD theme cuts across several of the SDGs under review at the 2021 HLPF, including SDG 1 no poverty, 3 on good health and well-being, 8 on decent work and economic growth, 10 on reduced inequalities, and 17 on partnerships.

The overarching theme was articulated around six sub-themes concerned with fostering partnerships to realize the migration-related objectives in the 2030 Agenda. Three of the sub-themes centred on building the capacities of migrants by a) leveraging new technologies to empower migrants, b) enhancing their skills to facilitate employment and c) exploring the ways in which the governance of labour migration will need to change, as the nature of employment is transformed in the future. The remaining sub-themes focused on addressing gaps in the protection of migrants, exploring the different approaches to addressing irregular migration and fostering partnerships to realize migration-related goals.

A core objective of this year's 2020 GFMD was to establish innovative multi-stakeholder partnerships among national governments, civil society, businesses and local governments. The COVID-19 crisis has brought a new sense of urgency to forging partnerships in addressing immediate challenges faced by migrants, host communities, and migrant families, which is exacerbating existing inequalities. The crisis has shown that the provision of essential services, including health care, is urgent to protect migrants and to minimize the risks of contagion, especially in densely populated cities and urban areas. It has also contributed to highlight the many positive implications of migration for society by making apparent the critical role of migrants as essential workers across key service sectors and industries at all skill levels. The widespread enforcement of mobility restrictions highlighted the extent to which societies depend on human mobility for food, health and basic needs, among others.

GFMD 2020 consultations devoted to partnerships took place among Member States, GFMD mechanisms (Civil Society, Business and Mayors) and other constituencies (youth groups) during GFMD regional consultations, Summit thematic roundtables, Migration Labs and Ad Hoc Working Groups. Consultations among GFMD stakeholders highlight consistently that management of migration and migration governance require a multi-dimensional approach involving different stakeholders, recognizing the importance of a whole-of-government approach to ensure horizontal and vertical policy coherence across all sectors and levels of government, and of a whole-of-society approach to promote multi-stakeholder partnerships capable to address migration in all its dimensions by including migrants, diasporas, local communities, civil society, academia, the private sector, parliamentarians, trade unions, national human rights Institutions, the media and other relevant stakeholders in migration governance (GFMD, 2020c). In the area of partnerships, the GFMD community stepped up its efforts in 2020 to actively promote balanced and evidence-based public discourse on migration by setting up an [Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration](#) and launching a global social media campaign and collaborative platform to share stories of migrant inclusion and social cohesion within communities, highlighting the many positive ways in which migration contributes to development (see Textbox 1).

### **Textbox 1 - Partnering to change the narrative around migration contributing to SDG 10: reduced inequalities**

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 has had widespread implications for efforts to reduce global inequalities in line with SDG 10. Among its numerous impacts was a rise in xenophobia and discrimination directed towards migrants and refugees.

In an effort to respond to this issue, the GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration, co-chaired by the Government of Canada, the Government of Ecuador and the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, spearheaded the creation and launch of a new global social media campaign, titled "[It Takes a Community](#)." This campaign aims to promote a more balanced narrative on migration by engaging diverse stakeholders in sharing inclusive stories that show how migrants are having a positive impact in their communities. It Takes a Community was soft-launched on December 18, 2020 and will be implemented throughout 2021.

By inviting states, cities, businesses, civil society and youth leaders to actively participate in shaping a more balanced public discourse on migration, this campaign demonstrates the unique capacity of the GFMD to foster concrete, multi-stakeholder collaboration that can contribute to advancing the SDGs. As countries increasingly look towards vaccination and economic recovery plans, efforts to counter discrimination and xenophobia will remain crucially important to ensure an inclusive recovery that leaves no one, including migrants, behind.

The GFMD 2020 Roundtable on Fostering Partnerships to Realize Migration Related Goals discussed the possibility of creating a **Concessional Financing Facility for Migration** with a governance structure to ensure equal and voluntary participation to support programmes and policy implementations in all six themes identified by the GFMD 2020: governance of labour migration, skilling migrants for employment, leveraging new technologies to empower migrants, addressing gaps in migrant protection, preventing irregular migration and fostering partnerships to realize migration-related goals. The facility, which has not been adopted yet and is under discussion at the time of writing, would support technical assistance, peer learning, improving data and evaluation of programmes, implementation of migration programmes, including those that support specific migration-related SDGs such as reducing recruitment and remittance costs, increasing the volume of remittances, and pandemic or disaster-response programmes (GFMD, 2020c).

To address the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic for migrants, migration and sustainable development, discussions of future partnerships need to build on the migration-related SDGs, in particular, SDG target 10.7, to promote safe and regular migration and specific targets such as reducing recruitment costs paid by migrant workers (indicator SDG 10.7.1), reducing remittance costs (indicator SDG 10.c.1) and increasing the volume of remittances (indicator SDG 17.3.2). Furthermore, many SDG targets can only be fully achieved if migration and migrants are considered. Some examples are SDG target 8.8 to protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers and women migrants; SDG target 16.9 to provide legal identity for all; SDG 3.8 to achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.

### **2.3 The role of the GFMD in the implementation and follow-up to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)**

Rooted in the 2030 Agenda, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) recognizes the link between migration and development and identifies an important role for the GFMD in advancing the international dialogue on migration and development (UN, 2018). Bearing in mind that not all Member States participating in the GFMD have adopted the GCM, the outcome document of the GCM specifically invites State-led fora at global and regional levels to:

- Provide platforms to exchange experiences on the implementation of the Global Compact; share good practices on policies and cooperation; promote innovative approaches; and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships around specific policy issues (UN, 2018, para. 47).
- Provide a space for annual informal exchange on the implementation of the Global Compact, and report the findings, best practices and innovative approaches to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) (UN, 2018, para. 51).

The GCM also references existing initiatives such as the GFMD Platform for Partnerships as a source of good practices on migration and development for the creation of the Knowledge Platform and Connection Hub (UN, 2018, para. 43 c, iii), now referred to as the Migration Network Hub, established to support the implementation of the GCM.

Against the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, the GFMD has offered a platform towards stronger international cooperation on migration and development, as called for in Objective 23 of the GCM and SDG 17. The GFMD created an ad hoc Working Group on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Migrants in response to the

outbreak of the pandemic, which is co-chaired by Member States and the Business and Mayors Mechanism respectively, and include national and local governments, civil society and the private sector, putting the ‘whole-of-government’ and ‘whole-of-society’ principles of the GCM into action.

The GFMD ad hoc Working Group on the Impacts of COVID-19 on Migrants, Migration and Development has prepared a Working Paper reflecting on the lessons learned from COVID-19 on prevention, response and recovery (GFMD, 2020a), which was presented at the GFMD Summit 2021. The Working Paper stresses that the COVID-19 pandemic has created obstacles to the implementation of several GCM objectives, including efforts to ensure that migration is voluntary, orderly and regular (Objective 2, 5, 6, 12, 18) and to protect migrants through rights-based border governance measures (Objective 4, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 21). Similarly, the Working Paper underscores how the decline in remittances has affected the integration of migrants and their contribution to development (Objective 14, 15, 16, 19, 20, 22).

Through the GFMD ad hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration, established at the beginning of 2020 upon initiative of Canada and co-chaired by Ecuador and the Mayors Mechanism, the GFMD contributes to GCM implementation by promoting a more balanced public discourse around migration to counter the many instances of xenophobia, racism and discrimination faced by migrants in relation to the origin or spreading of the pandemic and to the socio-economic crisis.

## **2.4 The GFMD and the Regional Review Process of the GCM**

The GFMD roundtables and Working Groups are contributing to the development of national action plans for the implementation of the GCM. Among the GFMD membership, several Member States are volunteering as GCM Champion Countries’ and participating in the first regional review process of the GCM, which began in Europe and North America in 2020 (UN, 2018, para. 50).

During the first regional reviews of the GCM several Member States have highlighted the GFMD as an important platform “to exchange experiences on the implementation of the GCM” (UN, 2018, para. 51). Notably, GFMD Member States and the GFMD Mechanisms and their constituencies, including youth, have made important contributions to the GCM regional reviews through their participation in the intergovernmental regional reviews and multi-stakeholder consultations, honoring the principle of a ‘whole-of-society approach’, as acknowledged in the GCM. One such example is the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, which submitted several city pledges to implement the GCM during the 2020 GCM regional review in Europe and North America.

The regional reviews will inform the forthcoming quadrennial International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) in 2022, as mandated by the GCM (UN, 2018, para. 48 (a)). Since the IMRF will meet only once every four years at global level, the GFMD can provide a platform for Member States and other stakeholders to continuously track GCM implementation and exchange findings, best practices and innovative approaches ahead of the IMRF.

## **2.5 How GFMD member states contribute to the achievement of the 2030 agenda**

While the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly curbed countries’ efforts towards the achievement of the SDGs by 2030, the GFMD process has also made clear that migration contributes significantly to sustainable development in their countries of origin, transit and destination. In this respect, some of the practices and partnerships gathered during the GFMD 2020 year-long process though the contributions of the GFMD constituencies illustrate how policies aimed at incorporating migrants into sectoral and development policies can help make the most of migration. While some listed practices may have been established before the pandemic, they proved essential to respond to it and will remain relevant for SDGs implementation. Other initiatives introduced during the pandemic may contribute in the short-term to

mitigate some of the adverse effects of the pandemic, but also have a longer-term impact if maintained or institutionalised.

Practices listed encompass bilateral, multilateral and global initiatives. Sources utilized to compile this section include contributions received by Member States for the GFMD Focus Input to the 2021 HLPF (see Annex 1); Background Papers for the GFMD Summit thematic roundtables; reports and activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Impact of Covid 19 on Migrants, Migration and Development; activities of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration. The practices included in this section are in no way exhaustive. The examples below connect the different migration-related initiatives to specific SDGs. Migration is a cross-cutting issue in the 2030 Agenda, relevant to all the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with at least ten out of 17 goals containing targets and indicators being directly relevant to migration or human mobility.

## **SDG 1 - End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

### **Target 1.3: Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.**

Below are some examples of social protection systems engaging national and local governments, as well as civil society and/or the private sector featured during the GFMD 2020 consultations:

- In **Italy**, the System for the Protection of Refugees and Unaccompanied Minors is a publicly funded network of local authorities and NGOs, which accommodates unaccompanied children and provides them access to the Italian social protection system, including legal support, legal guardianship, access to health, including psychological counselling, access to Italian language classes and to mainstream education programmes. In some contexts, opportunities for vocational training and job opportunities through partnerships with social cooperatives and the private sector.
- Through the **Eurocities Solidarity Cities Initiative**, the cities of Amersfoort, Amsterdam, Arnhem, Barcelona, Bruges, Ghent, Groningen, Leipzig, Nuremberg, Tilburg and Utrecht have offered social protection to over 5500 unaccompanied children from overcrowded camps.
- **Los Angeles, US** established a direct cash assistance programme for residents who fall below the poverty line, including undocumented immigrants and informal sector workers. Eligible families received no fee prepaid debit cards of \$700-\$1,500 based on their income and household size. The Mayor's office and the non-profit Mayor's Fund for Los Angeles raised \$25M from the private sector, philanthropies, and individuals for the programme to distribute directly to residents to meet their basic needs.

**Ecuador** has implemented social protection programmes, regularization and integration processes, as well as plans to attend the requests for refugee status to face the Venezuelan migration phenomenon. The "Comprehensive Plan for the Attention and Protection of the Venezuelan Population in Situation of Human Mobility 2020-2021"<sup>5</sup> constitutes the roadmap for actions of national institutions and the Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry in relation to Venezuelan migration. Four strategic lines are prioritized: socio-economic inclusion; care and protection; access to services; and coordination, international cooperation and multilateral management.

## **SDG 3 - Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

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<sup>5</sup> Plan Integral para la Atención y Protección de la Población Venezolana en Movilidad Humana 2020-2021



**Target 3.8 Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of making health services accessible to all and many Member States have decided to provide access to healthcare to all residents. For instance,

- **Spain** offers universal access to basic health services. Beyond the most favourable schemes enjoyed by EU nationals under the EU common legislation, all migrants staying in Spain, irrespectively of legal status, have access to the basic national health system. This measure has proved its utility during the pandemic, so neutralizing any narrative against it (after a temporary stop due to the deep effects of the economic crisis in the 2010s, the universal access to health for irregular migrants was resumed in June 2018).
- **Canada** has updated pre-departure medical services for resettled refugees including testing and isolation and provided coverage for telemedical and virtual health services for beneficiaries of the Interim Federal Health Programme providing temporary health coverage for refugee claimants and other specific categories of migrants. The Government also put in place actions to reduce gender-based violence and the Feminist International Assistance Policy.
- **New York City, USA**, had launched a municipal programme in 2019 to expand universal health care to all residents regardless of insurance, ability to pay, or immigration status. The fact that the programme was established prior to COVID-19 was critical to the city's ability to respond rapidly and inclusively when the pandemic hit.
- **Turkey** – The Turkish Red Crescent Community Centers have provided multiple services including financial assistance (SDG no 1,8) and psychological services (SDG no 3) to migrants and their host communities since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**SDG 8 – Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

**Target 8.3: Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.**

- **Canada's** [Economic Mobility Pathways Project \(EMPP\)](#) empowers regional partners and stakeholders, including local governments and the private sector, to help immigration address regional and local labour, economic and demographic challenges and create complementary pathways for the protection of refugees and durable solutions through labour mobility, family reunification, and education.
- **The UAE and India** have developed the [UAE-India Harmonized Framework for Skills Recognition and Certification](#) designed to address the mismatch between workers' skills and requirements of employers aims to improve skills mix in the UAE labour market and enhance the rate of mobility for certified workers, improving job security and reducing vulnerabilities. Employers in the UAE are incentivized to participate in the programme through reduced work permit fees.
- **Sierra Leone, Ghana, UK** - [The Supporting Entrepreneurs and Enterprise Development in Africa \(SEEDA\)](#), implemented by AFFORD, coordinated diaspora experts who volunteered their skills to contribute to job creation and business development in Ghana and Sierra Leone. The SEEDA project engaged 155 diaspora experts from United Kingdom to provide affordable, accessible business support to 800 micro, small and medium-scale entrepreneurs (MSMEs) in Ghana and Sierra Leone by transferring their skills to help grow MSMEs, create jobs and wealth that complemented the efforts of enterprises on the ground.
- **Italia Africa Business Week (IABW)**: An annual economic and commercial forum that aims to promote knowledge-sharing between the African and Italian economic, commercial, and financial

sectors and promotes building of partnerships and networks to accelerate economic growth on both continents.

- [The Migration Challenge Startup Competition](#): The [International Organisation of Employers](#) (IOE) and [the Business Advisory Group on Migration](#) in partnership with [Seedstars](#) launched this initiative aimed to reward solution-oriented, innovative start-ups in the field of human resources, fin-tech, civic-tech and ed-tech, whose products respond to the needs of the labour market and help improve migration management.
- Established under the Urban Agenda for the **European Union (EU)**, the [Urban Partnership for the Inclusion of Migrants and Refugees](#) brings together EU Member States, EU institutions, local authorities and civil society to contribute to develop integration policies related to different areas including education, the labour market and housing.
- **Mannheim, Germany** - The city runs seven business centres with different focuses (e.g. fashion, women and tech), with an emphasis on [immigrant entrepreneurship](#). In addition, the city has specific services for Bulgarian and Romanian immigrants including Technical and Vocational Education and German language training.

#### **8.5: By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.**

- The **Philippines** has set in place the ‘**Developing the Global Filipino Programme**’. Under this programme, a Memorandum of Cooperation between the Philippine Commission on Higher Education and the Philippine Embassy in Phnom Penh was executed to pilot an education training programme to equip, capacitate, and enhance the competencies of Filipino teachers in Cambodia to qualify them for better teaching career positions.
- **Sri Lanka** - [Skills Passport](#): A tripartite venture introduced by the Tertiary and Vocational Educational Commission (TVEC) of the Ministry of Skills Development, Employment and Labour Relations with the Employers' Federation of Ceylon (EFC) and the International Labour Organization (ILO) is designed to support the successful reintegration of workers returning to Sri Lanka.
- **Milan and Freetown** are currently developing a city-to-city partnership focused on mobility, local development and trade in fashion and textiles, through training, mentorship, entrepreneurship (including start-ups), female empowerment, and sustainability. Specifically, Freetown has suggested a circular mobility scheme for skills and capacity-building targeting women and youth. Other African and European cities are coming together to tackle challenges and innovate on access to housing, cultural industries, active participation of migrants, inclusive neighbourhoods. The Mayors Dialogue participating cities will also devote efforts to testing approaches for inclusive labour market policies.

#### **8.6: By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.**

- **Egypt** - The Federation of Egyptian Industries (FEI): FEI is collaborating with IOM on labour mobility and human development, including employability of youth to enhance the welfare of Egyptian society and migrants.
- **Spain** automatically granted in 2020 the right to work to young third-country national students or asylum seekers including non-accompanied ones living in Spain from age 18 to 21.
- **Nakawa (Kampala), Uganda** - Because of an enabling environment created by the Government of Uganda with the [Refugees Act of 2006](#), the Municipal District of Nakawa in Kampala has managed to provide training programs and start-up funds to create jobs for young migrants. As a part of these local programs, over 2,000 young people, including refugees, have been trained in sewing, shoemaking, and other trades.
- **Freetown, Sierra Leone** - [Mayor Yvonne Aki-Sawyerr partnered with the EU and IOM](#) to provide entrepreneurship training and job opportunities to youth to offer an alternatives to migration and simultaneously help the city reach its target of collecting 60% of solid waste by 2022. Together, they

conducted a 5-day training on sustainable waste treatment for 200 youths from Freetown in October 2019. The project provided young people with 15-months of business development support and distributed equipment, including 80 motorcycles. Through this global to local partnership, the Freetown City Council created jobs for 800 youth who are now self-sustainable thanks to their waste collection micro-enterprises.

- **Vienna, Austria** - The [STARTwien Das Jugend Youth College](#) operates in two locations in Vienna by nine partner networks offers around 200 places to young asylum seekers within the age group of 15-21. It is a fast-track skills training programme that is delivered within a span of nine months, around 20 hours per week of education and mentoring focusing on German and vocational subjects. The prospective candidates are selected and enrolled after their evaluation of language skills and basic competencies in mathematics, English and IT. The aim is to prepare the youngster to go to a school, to find a workplace or a further vocational training in Vienna post completion of the programme.

**Target 8.8 Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.**

- **Chile** has set in place the [AGEST Job fairs for Venezuelan refugees](#) through which, upon invitation of the state-operated training and employment agency (SENCE), the national federation of the private sector in Chile (AGEST) conducts job fairs and streamlines job application processes to reduce the risk of refugees joining informal markets and provide options to access the formal sector.
- **India** - [Norka-Roots training programme](#) for vulnerable women with '[Trivandrum Social Service Society](#) (TSSS) CSO, provides facilities and training for women from most vulnerable groups via grassroots CSO networks to foster employment in destination countries, and in particular in GCC countries. The [Skill Development Institute](#) (SDI) of the State of Kerala provides six months skill training programs with certification in Industrial Electrician (Oil & Gas), Fitter Fabrication, Industrial Welder (Oil & Gas) and Process Instrumentation, with the supported of [INKEL Ltd](#) (a Public-Private company of Kerala government) and National Council on Skill Development (NCDC). The CSOs in the state disseminate information about the skilling initiatives to prospective migrants. The [Short-term skilling centre in the provincial state of Andhra Pradesh](#) works with employers from countries of destination with certification provided by international agencies, including MoUs with [employers from Gulf countries](#).
- **Nepal** – '[Safer Migration](#)' (SaMI) [project \(Helvetas Nepal, funded by Switzerland\)](#) is a joint skill-upgrade initiative to ensure decent work in countries of destination. It provides skill training, including life skills and health, and certification for prospective migrant workers (9000 have benefitted from this programme between 2011 and 2018 of which 22% of women). Collaboration between CSOs, private institutions, the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) and Foreign employment board (FEB).
- **Montreal, Canada** - Recognizing the vital role of migrants and asylum seekers working during the COVID-19 pandemic, the City of Montreal advocated for the regularization of essential workers. As a result of large public advocacy, the Governments of Canada and Provincial Government of Quebec agreed to offer permanent residency to asylum-seekers working in essential healthcare fields across the country.
- **Turkey** – The Turkish government added the Law on Reducing the Effects of the New Coronavirus Epidemic on Economic and Social Life dated 16/4/2020 and No. 7244 (Provisional Article 10) to the Labour Law No. 4857, which imposes restrictions on employers concerning dismissal of workers, including migrant workers.

**Target 8.10: Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.**

- **Kenya** is one of the world leaders in the use of mobile money and the application of the technology to remittances has stimulated general growth and resilience during the pandemic. In Kenya and

many other Low and Middle- Income Countries (LMICs), it is now possible to open bank accounts through remote tech-enabled platforms.

- The **Philippines** renewed emphasis on tech platforms and services in the E-Government Master Plan (EGMP) and in a proposed new chapter the Philippines Development Plan (PDP 2017-22). The Overseas Filipino Bank has recently launched a digital-only platform improving financial inclusion of migrants and diaspora and facilitating app-based bank accounts, mobile wallets and digital remittance services, which can be linked to wages, remittances, social security benefits, pensions, and many more related and linked financial services.
- In **Uganda**, the National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2017-2022) led by the Central Bank and Ministry of Finance, has committed to collaborate with the Uganda Communication Commission to build digital infrastructure as a key factor in financial inclusion.

## **SDG 10 - Reduce Inequality within and between countries**

**Target 10.2: By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.**

- The **UAE** government created measures to protect employment and support the economy through a US\$70 billion stimulus package, supported and facilitated programmes designed to assist with employees' basic living needs, regardless of their nationality. The Government has automatically renewed visas for workers through December 31, 2020 and made arrangements to ensure that the various services relating to workers' legal status are available by phone and online. The UAE do not deport employees whose employment is disrupted by the pandemic.
- In some countries like **Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda**, corporations have taken the lead in facilitating affordable online access by providing access to social media platforms free of charge with their SIM cards (subscribers do not use their paid-for internet service or mobile phone data to access and use these platforms).

**Target 10.3: Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.**

- **Cyprus** provided services to asylum-seekers by increasing shifts and introducing interviews via tele-conference to ensure that operations of Reception Centres could continue without disruptions. Asylum-seekers who lost their jobs because of the pandemic received allowances.
- In **Spain**, third-country nationals benefit from all the measures that the government implemented during the pandemic to protect citizens, among others, the suspension of the minimum duration of work required to qualify for unemployment benefits. Furthermore, in 2020, the government issued instructions and recommendations for national services to prevent any refusal or withdrawal of residence permits due to economic difficulties of the applicant that are still valid. Apart from the automatic extension of the validity of residence permits and other authorizations due to public lockdown, several administrative measures were approved regarding the inclusion of more flexibility in the requirements for renewal of residence permits to fight involuntary irregularity. The government especially acknowledged the labour contribution of migrants during the pandemic. Migrant workers whose permit expired between the State of alarm in 2020 were automatically extended until the end of the year to enable them to work in primary needs sectors especially agriculture.

- The **Migrant Forum in Asia** launched the “Justice for Wage Theft Campaign” to put in place a transnational mechanism addressing grievances, claims and labour disputes of those repatriated workers who have lost their jobs.

**Target 10.7 Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.**

- **Belgium and Morocco** have launched a **Pilot project Addressing Labour market shortages through Innovative Mobility schemes**. Through this initiative, Enabel, the Belgian development agency, supports national and regional authorities for economics and migration in Belgium as well as employment and training institutions in Morocco to set in place a Skills Partnership to enhance Legal Migration Pathways between Morocco and Belgium. Such partnership aims at identifying labour market needs both in Morocco and in Belgium, creating a pool of talents in Morocco able to fill those gaps in both markets, and supporting the employment of talents in both countries.
- **Belgium and Tunisia** have implemented a skills mobility partnership: Paving the way for future labour migration. This initiative is a multidimensional cooperation framework between different stakeholders from both countries (e.g., immigration office, public employment services, employers’ associations) aimed at assessing labour market needs, streamlining procedures, selecting candidates...
- **Germany – ‘Kosovo Skills Partnership for Mobility’** a BMZ-funded Migration & Diaspora Programme (PMD) strengthens international cooperation and the standards of selected vocations in Kosovo. Through vocational training based on German standards carried out in Kosovo and Germany, young professionals have better employment possibilities in both countries and on return can support the “brain-gain” of Kosovo, making an enhanced use of migration pathways. **‘Partnerships for development-oriented labour migration’** (PAM) aims to implement development-oriented migration models for training and employment. Strong partnerships between state, private sector, and civil society actors are intended to create added value for the countries of origin of trainees and skilled workers. The structures in the vocational training sector in the partner countries are to be strengthened and the recognition of migrants' qualifications and skills promoted.
- **Mexico** has signed Bilateral Labour Migration Agreements (BLMAs) to facilitate labour migration governance and overcome skills shortages (e.g. Canada-Mexico BLMA). **Mexico-Canada Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (PTAT) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare** - a recruitment, selection and matching service for job seekers who have experience in agricultural activities, with vacancies offered by Canadian employers in the agricultural sector. It is carried out within the framework of the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of Canada regarding the PTAT Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme". This programme began in 1974 and is aimed at Mexican agricultural workers who travel for up to eight months to Canada in a regular, safe and orderly manner.
- The Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity: African and European cities taking action on human mobility is a city-led initiative established to deliver innovative, practical solutions for human mobility in **African and European cities**. It aims to improve the lives of all urban residents including migrants and help redress the power imbalances that persist between the two continents. 20 cities are participating in the Dialogue, pooling their efforts and resources to develop innovative partnerships to collaborate in key sectors including skills for green economies, housing, and other urban services and inclusive local governance.
- MeNTOR (Mediterranean Network for Training Orientation to Regular Migration) is a project that promotes legal migration paths through co-development cooperation projects. In its first phase (2017-2018), MeNTOR aimed to improve temporary and circular migration schemes for young people between **Italy, Morocco and Tunisia**.

**Target 10.c: By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.**

- **Switzerland** and the **United Kingdom** launched the aforementioned *Call to Action “Remittances in Crisis: How to Keep them Flowing”*. With the crisis putting the important lifeline of remittances in danger, a momentum has been created through the Call to Action on the critical importance of the SDGs.
- IFAD launched the **‘Remittance Community Task Force’** with public and private stakeholders to come up with immediate measures to address the impact of COVID on remittances. This task force contributed to the discussion within the Financing for Development Process recently launched by the Prime Ministers of Canada and of Jamaica.
- The governments of **Switzerland and Sweden**, in partnership with UNCDF, are supporting the *‘Building Inclusive Digital Economies for Migrants’* programme to bring digital financial services to un- or underserved migrants, to establish digital wage payment solutions, to innovate the remittances market by driving the development of digital transfer solutions and to develop remittance-linked finance products, such as .health insurance, school and education payment plans, savings, investments and loans; pension funds and social security schemes. By following a market development strategy, the efforts to leverage digital solutions in the remittances market are accompanied by policy and regulatory engagement as well as by financial literacy programmes.

### **3. Recommendations from the GFMD for inclusion in the 2021 HLPF Ministerial Declaration**

Migration can be an engine for economic growth and social development, thereby playing a key role in contributing to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and the restrictions imposed on migration and human mobility to combat its transmission have resulted in setbacks in development gains and to migrants' ability to make positive contributions towards sustainable development in their countries of origin, transit, and destination.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted also to what extent the functioning and well-being of our societies and economies are linked to migration. The 2020 consultations among the GFMD constituencies, which include national and local governments, civil society, youth and the private sector, showed that in order to mitigate the immediate effects of COVID-19 on development and re-accelerate the implementation of the SDGs in the Decade of Action, it is necessary to adopt policies that promote safe, orderly and regular migration, devising migrant inclusive responses to COVID-19, and acknowledging the important link between migration and development.

In this context, the GFMD membership proposes the following recommendations for inclusion in the HLPF 2021 Ministerial Declaration:

- i. **Adopt a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, and gender-responsive approach to foster policies, practices and partnerships that promote safe, orderly, and regular migration, while accelerating the achievement of the SDGs.**

Migration is cross-cutting throughout the 2030 Agenda. Policymakers and stakeholders across different levels of government and sectors of society should leverage the contribution migrants can make to achieve the SDGs. After the many restrictions to human mobility adopted in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important for countries around the world to reopen legal pathways as a means to promote safe, orderly and regular migration.

**ii. Ensure migrant-inclusive approaches in the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts and facilitate migrants' equitable access to information and basic services, including health services and vaccinations.**

As the pandemic disproportionately affects vulnerable populations, the lack of protection and the inadequate access to information, health services and other basic rights and services can make migrants, especially women, particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 and to its health and socio-economic impacts. COVID-19 preparedness, prevention and control measures should provide equitable access to health, care and social services, including access to COVID-19 vaccination, irrespective of the migratory status. Recovery plans should also be inclusive of migrants and their communities of origin, transit and destination.

**iii. Counter racism, xenophobia and discrimination by promoting a more balanced, evidence-based narrative focused on how economies and societies benefit from migration.**

Widespread misinformation on the spread of COVID-19 has generated an increase in xenophobic discourse, hate crimes and discriminatory practices in some communities to the detriment of migrants. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has also contributed to highlighting the positive role of migrants in society, generating more balanced narratives around migration, and countering xenophobic discourse. It is important to engage actively in public debates and share information and stories about the many positive contributions that migration and migrants play in society and to the economy, within the COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, but also in the achievement of the SDGs in countries of origin, transit, and destination. This can help generate a more balanced understanding of migration in its complexity in public discourse, countering xenophobia, racism, and discrimination, and supporting sound policy making.

**iv. Harness the contribution from diasporas and remittances to their countries of origin.**

Diasporas must be considered in the COVID-19 local recovery strategies recognizing their role as development actors. They can mobilize financial resources, but also transfer skills and knowledge to their countries of origin, increasing capacities to better respond to the pandemic. Diaspora engagement requires long-term strategies to formally incorporate them in the design and implementation of national and local development initiatives.

Remittances have a direct impact on the wellbeing of migrants' families and communities of origin and contribute to poverty reduction in developing countries. However, their full potential on sustainable development is restricted by high transfer costs, a large proportion of informal transfers that bypass the formal financial system, and especially by the fact that migrants and their families are underserved in terms of tailor-made finance products that cater to their needs, including for savings, credits, pensions and insurances. The COVID-19 pandemic and the ensuing economic crisis have exposed the deficiencies of the traditional remittances market and exacerbated the challenges of the conventional providers, while accentuating the potential of digital solutions to disrupt the largely analogue market. In a context of significant drop in remittances, policymakers and financial actors need to increase efforts to reduce transaction costs to less than 3% and promote the use of formal channels. It is also crucial to invest in financial education and design strategies to channel remittances towards productive investments that will contribute to improving COVID-19 response and recovery efforts, while promoting sustainable development.

**v. Promote migrants' socio-economic integration/reintegration and foster social cohesion.**

The COVID-19 pandemic has hit migrants hard, particularly where inclusion in their host communities is scarce. Migrants tend to be overly represented in the informal economy, do not benefit from social protection, and often suffer from discrimination. Migrant women are especially vulnerable, both as migrants and as women. It is therefore key to foster migrants' socio-economic integration in countries of destination,

as well as returnees' reintegration in countries of origin. This implies investing in skills building and development; facilitating the certification of skills and the recognition of foreign degrees; working with the private sector to provide decent work opportunities; promoting migrants' entrepreneurship as well as their financial inclusion. The specific risks and vulnerabilities faced by migrant women should also be addressed.

To "build forward better" and promote a migrant-inclusive sustainable development, countries require stronger and closer multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration across the board, as well as multi-level governance, based on commitment, flexibility, and rapid reaction. The achievement of the SDGs also requires the strengthening of partnerships at the global, regional, national, and local levels to enhance the development benefits of migration.



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## Annex

### Submissions sent by States Members following the GFMD Chair's call for contributions to the GFMD's Focused input to the 2021 High Level Political Forum.

- [Bangladesh](#)

#### **Migrants' contribution to Sustainable Development**

Migrants are the engines of economic growth, innovation and sustainable development. Migrants also significantly contribute to the recovery of many economies – in countries of origin and countries of destination - from global economic crises. Despite comprising only about 3.5% of the global population, migrants contribute about 9% of global GDP. In recent years, remittances to low- and middle-income countries, except for China, exceeded foreign direct investment (FDI) flows. Migrant workers immensely contribute to the socio-economic development of countries of origin as well as countries of destination, particularly to the countries' endeavor to the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030. In many countries, migrant workers represent a significantly larger share of the workforce making important contributions to societies and economies and serving on the front lines carrying out essential jobs. This has also been witnessed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### **Impacts of COVID-19 on migrants and international migration**

The COVID-19 pandemic has dramatically increased the vulnerability of migrants in every society. Millions of migrants, being first hit by the pandemic, have already lost their jobs without any guarantee of getting back and often having been forced to return. Many migrants being the frontline service providers in many countries are among the most susceptible to the pandemic. The pandemic has also escalated the spread of hate speech and xenophobia against migrants redoubling their vulnerability. The pandemic has, indeed, brought an uncertain future to millions of migrants from developing countries. Massive shut down of air communication has also seriously curtailed the flow of international migration.

#### **Recommendations**

Bangladesh suggests the following to be included in the recommendations part of the GFMD inputs to HLPF 2021:

- a. A 360-degree approach as stipulated in the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) needs to be mainstreamed in all migrants and migration related actions at national, regional and global levels.
- b. The significant links between migration and development is yet to be well-recognized and well-established in the international discourses. Migrants' particular contribution to the countries of destination as well as countries of origin in their efforts to achieving SDGs should be an integral part of global efforts to the attainment of SDGs. A holistic and development-oriented migration governance at the national, regional and global levels is, therefore, a necessity.
- c. A rights-based approach with focus on migrants' health, job and livelihood security is of paramount importance. It is, therefore, necessary that all COVID-19 related health and economic recovery plans and programmes at the national, regional and global levels must be inclusive of migrants, irrespective of their status.
- d. The COVID-19 may potentially transform the nature of future work. Migrants must not be excluded from decent and productive jobs in the post-pandemic time. In this direction, measures, including

the skilling and re-skilling programmes need to be bolstered. International cooperation for this purpose should be stepped up to this end.

- e. Countries of origin, in particular the developing countries, must be appropriately supported for sustainable reintegration of the returnee migrants in their economy by creating livelihood provisions.
- f. Migrants who have lost and may lose jobs must be guaranteed of reappointment once situation comes back to normalcy.
- g. Private sectors and businesses need to play an important role to protect the rights of labour migrants, irrespective of the migratory status.

- [Canada](#)

### **SDG 10: Reduced inequalities**

The emergence of COVID-19 in 2020 has had widespread implications for efforts to reduce global inequalities in line with SDG 10. Among its numerous impacts was a rise in xenophobia and discrimination directed towards migrants and refugees.

In an effort to respond to this issue, the GFMD Working Group on Public Narratives on Migration, co-chaired by the Government of Canada, the Government of Ecuador and the GFMD Mayors Mechanism, spearheaded the creation and launch of a new global social media campaign, titled "[It Takes a Community](#)." This campaign aims to promote a more balanced narrative on migration by engaging diverse stakeholders in sharing inclusive stories that show how migrants are having a positive impact in their communities. It Takes a Community was soft launched on December 18, 2020, and will be implemented throughout 2021.

By inviting states, cities, businesses, civil society and youth leaders to actively participate in shaping a more balanced public discourse on migration, this campaign demonstrates the unique capacity of the GFMD to foster concrete, multi-stakeholder collaboration that can contribute to advancing the SDGs. As countries increasingly look towards vaccination and economic recovery plans, efforts to counter discrimination and xenophobia will remain crucially important to ensure an inclusive recovery that leaves no one, including migrants, behind.

- [Ecuador](#)

It should be noted that in a particular way, Ecuador, in order to face off the Venezuelan migratory phenomenon, has implemented social protection programs, regularization and integration processes, as well plans to attend the requests for refugee status. Such is the case of "Plan Integral para la Atención y Protección de la Población Venezolana en Movilidad Humana 2020 – 2021", which constitutes the roadmap for the actions of national institutions and the Ecuadorian Foreign Ministry in relation to Venezuelan migration, where 4 strategic lines are prioritized: socioeconomic inclusion; care and protection; access to services; and coordination, international cooperation and multilateral management.

- [France](#)

The below specific actions were put in place in response to Covid-19 target notably the SDGs: 2.1, 3.3, 3.d, 6.2, 6.b, 8.3.

"Several projects of the Agence Française de développement (AFD) Migration pole have deployed actions towards a wide audience: young people (employability), private sector (entrepreneurship), local authorities (elected officials), diasporas in Europe, and displaced persons. Communication tools have been put in place, particularly on the web and social networks. These tools were quickly mobilized for COVID 19 outreach messages. Projects partners in **Tunisia, Morocco, Senegal, Mali, Central African Republic, Cameroon and**

**Nigeria** responded positively to this initiative and to set up specific actions linked to the health crisis. In all these territories, specific actions have been carried out:

- ✓ outreach actions associating the authorities and the diasporas were carried out as well as the distribution of gel, masks, etc.;
- ✓ private sector support actions (technical and financial support to businesses);
- ✓ preventive actions at the community level (messaging and risk communication) with migrant populations and host communities;
- ✓ outreach actions and strengthen local authorities and decentralized services in terms of risk prevention and operational response;
- ✓ financing of screening operations, cross-border epidemiological monitoring mechanisms, improvement of health and hygiene services at crossing points.

In the framework of a tripartite partnership associating the Ministry of the Abroad Malians, the Agence Française de développement and the European Union (EU) delegation in Mali, a call for projects dedicated to the Covid-19 response, initiated by the Technical Unit of Co-development **Mali** in June 2020, allowed the financing of 10 operations in fields of health, sanitation and food safety, for a total budget of 460,000 EUR, as well as 20 equipment projects and emergency rehabilitation of health community infrastructures in rural area, for an amount of 230,000 EUR.

This response, endowed with additional resources from complementary contributions from Malian diasporas established in Europe, was made possible by a reallocation of funds allocated to the project of Support to initiatives of the Malian diaspora for the development of the territories of origin (co-financing EU - Agence Française de développement).”

- [Spain](#)

### **Highlight of the main political measures taken by Spain at national level to counter the effects of the pandemic in migrants in 2021**

- Spain offers **universal access to basic health services**. Beyond the most favorable scheme enjoyed by EU nationals covered by EU common legislation, all migrants staying in Spain irrespectively of legal status have access to the basic national health system. This measure has proved its utility during the pandemic, so neutralizing any narrative against it (after a temporary stop due to the deep effects of the economic crisis in the 2010s the universal access to health for irregular migrants was resumed in June 2018).

- Regular migrants have been taken on board in the new public safety nets schemes created to combat the socio-economic effects of the pandemic. In June 2020 the government approved with overwhelming support in Parliament the new scheme of **“Ingreso Mínimo Vital” (Minimal Income)**. Regular migrants and their families residing at least one year before the entry into force of the Law on a permanent uninterrupted basis in Spain are entitled to access to this scheme in order to reduce the risks of added vulnerability of migrants and their families.

- Unemployment has increased due to pandemic affecting both nationals and foreigners alike. Foreign-borns’ unemployment rate increased higher compared to nationals’. Regular migrants have to meet the same conditions than national workers in order to have access to the national system of unemployment benefits. Third-country nationals benefit from all the measures that the government implemented during the pandemic to protect citizens, among others, the suspension of the minimum duration of work required to qualify for **unemployment benefits** (360 working days during the last 6 years).

- The government issued in 2020 instructions and recommendations for national services to prevent any refusal or withdrawal of **residence permits** due to economic difficulties of the applicant that are still valid.

Apart from the automatic extension of the validity of residence permits and other authorizations due to public lockdown, several administrative measures were approved regarding the inclusion of more flexibility in the requirements for renewal of residence permits in order to fight involuntary irregularity.

-The government especially **acknowledged the labor contribution of migrants** during the pandemic. Migrants workers whose permit expired between the State of alarm in 2020 were automatically extended until the end of the year to enable them to work in primary needs sectors especially agriculture. Third-country nationals aged 18-21 in a regular situation employed in the agriculture sector during the pandemic were given residence and work permits. These permits delivered in 2020 are valid for two years, renewable for two years and valid throughout the national territory, all economic sectors and regardless of the national employment gaps situation.

Spain automatically granted in 2020 the **right to work to young** third-country national students or asylum seekers including non-accompanied ones living in Spain from age 18 to 21.

Especially in the primary sector **work permits** of migrants expired in 2020 were automatically extended until end of the year and beyond. That applied equally to circular migration annual programs which began before or contemporarily to the outbreaks of the pandemic.

-As far as **return and reintegration of migrant workers** even during the State of Alarm in 2020 Spain maintained its borders open to facilitate the return of migrant workers to their homeland. That was not possible in some cases due to refusal of entry in origin countries adopted in the framework of total ban of entries and exits. Spain assured protection in these cases especially when affected schemes of circular migration.

- [Mexico](#)

Actions and good practices towards the achievement of SDGs: 3, 8, 10, 10, 13, 17

### **Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

Mexico has developed a series of protocols and documents to guarantee the rights of people in mobility contexts during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially related to the right to health. These instruments are the following:

- General guidelines for the mitigation and prevention of COVID-19 in enclosed public spaces. [https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/543986/Lineamiento\\_Espacio\\_Cerrado\\_27Mar\\_2020\\_1830.pdf.pdf](https://www.gob.mx/cms/uploads/attachment/file/543986/Lineamiento_Espacio_Cerrado_27Mar_2020_1830.pdf.pdf)
- Operational Plan for Attention to the migrant population in the context of COVID-19. [https://coronavirus.gob.mx/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Plan\\_Operativo\\_Atencion\\_Poblacion\\_Migrante\\_COVID-19.pdf](https://coronavirus.gob.mx/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Plan_Operativo_Atencion_Poblacion_Migrante_COVID-19.pdf)
- Action protocol for the prevention and care of suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the migratory stations and temporary stays of the National Institute of Migration (INM). <https://www.gob.mx/inm/documentos/81109>

### **Health care for migrants in the northern states of the country**

Likewise, as part of the cooperation actions between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SRE) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), during the month of September, 10,700 packages containing sanitary items to prevent possible infection by COVID-19 were delivered to Mexican migrants repatriated from the United States during their land entry through the country's northern border. The INM, which is part of the Ministry of the Interior, receives and assists Mexican nationals upon their arrival at the airports of Mexico City, Guadalajara and Villahermosa, as well as upon their arrival in the country.

The purpose is to strengthen the prevention, timely detection and proper management of this disease on Mexico's northern border due to the continuous passage of migrants and repatriated persons, as well as asylum seekers, residents in shelters and those who face barriers to access health care.

Through this project, which began in September 2020, packages have been delivered at the entry points of Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo and Reynosa (Tamaulipas); Libertad, Ojinaga and Puerto Palomas (Chihuahua); San Luis Río Colorado, Sonoyta, Sásabe, Nogales, Naco and Agua Prieta (Sonora); Ciudad Acuña and Piedras Negras (Coahuila) and Tijuana, Mexicali and Tecate (Baja California), in addition to the aforementioned airports.

### **Plan of Attention to Migrant Caravan with a humanitarian approach**

As of January 2019, the Government of Mexico launched the Migrant Caravan Attention Plan, in which all federal agencies participate, under the direction of the Ministry of Security and Citizen Protection and the Ministry of the Interior, especially the INM and under the coordination of the National Coordination of Civil Protection (CNPC).

The Plan, that has been implemented since the beginning of the new government, establishes inter-institutional actions to ensure a humanitarian approach to the arrival of migrants and to regulate their entry so that it is legal, orderly and safe. According to the Attention Plan, the process of receiving migrants consists of immediate medical attention, food, hydration and information at the moment of entry; registration and placement of bracelets that allow migrants to identify themselves, access the services offered, and initiate and conclude the management of their migratory regulation. In 2021, the necessary measures will be taken to provide medical care to the migrant population during their transit in the context of a pandemic.

The following activities are also carried out on a regular basis for the health care of migrants:

### **Intercultural health fairs for the migrant population of the Ministry of Health.**

The purpose of this programme is to bring health promotion and disease prevention services, as well as other sectors that allow a better development of migrants and their companions to carry out their activities, it is worth mentioning that this programme is implemented permanently. The success of the fair depends on the participation of different sectors, adequate spaces for its realization, installation of the necessary equipment and the active participation of migrants, as well as the availability of informative materials in different languages.

### **Migrants' Health Care Initiative Mexican Institute of Social Security**

Starting in June 2019, in accordance with relevant international policies and frameworks, the IMSS-BIENESTAR Programme designed a new strategy aimed at bringing health services, preventive medical care and assistance to migrants. This strategy was gradually deployed in the two-month period June-July 2019 in Baja California, Chiapas and Chihuahua.

### **Emergency Services of the Health Care Facilities of the Instituto de Seguridad y Servicios Sociales de los Trabajadores del Estado (Institute of Security and Social Services of State Workers)**

In accordance with the Regulations of the General Health Act on the Provision of Health Care Services, public, social and private establishments that provide medical care services for patients are obliged to provide immediate attention to any user in case of an emergency that occurs in their vicinity. An emergency is understood as any acute medical-surgical problem that endangers life, an organ or a function and requires immediate attention.



In this regard, one of the main objectives of the National Health System is to guarantee the provision of medical care services to the population that requires it, a situation that becomes more relevant in the context of a medical emergency, since under these circumstances, the person in need is in such a serious condition that immediate attention is required in order to limit the progression of the disease or physical damage that puts his life, an organ or function at risk.

As of June 2020, the main results achieved by the Institute with the migrant population are as follows:

### **Health care within the framework of the Migration Policy Advisory Council**

During the first ordinary session of the 2020 Migration Policy Advisory Council, the Ministry of Health, the INM and the Mexican Commission for Refugee Aid presented a series of actions to be taken to prevent infections caused by the SARSCOV-2 virus.

Due to the country's health and economic situation, a working group was created to provide assistance for Mexicans located in the United States, which has met on three occasions and has suggested actions for the promotion and economic development as well as the facilitation of remittances.

Finally, at the end of March of this year, the Working Group on Access to Health will meet to present the Comprehensive Health Care Plan for the Migrant Population. The Epidemiological Guidelines for the attention of COVID-19 will be presented, as well as the Protocol for the attention of suspected and confirmed cases in migrants and the inclusion of the migrant population in the vaccination strategy for the prevention of COVID-19 in Mexico.

### **Follow-up, liaison and coordination with civil society organizations within the framework of the Covid-19 health emergency.**

Following the meeting held on July 2, 2020, the Unit for Migration Policy, Registry and Identity of Persons (UPMRIP) at the Ministry of the Interior, responded to the concerns expressed by civil society organizations, highlighting the development of a framework protocol for the care of people in contexts of mobility in coordination with the IOM and the CNPC with the aim of providing guideline for each agency to develop an internal instrument to make visible and mainstream migration with a differentiated approach, to articulate responses. The possibility of working together with the Congress and Senate as well as civil society in legislative working groups was also mentioned.

## **Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all**

### **Internal Labor Mobility of Agricultural Workers of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.**

This action links selected job seekers who, at the employer's request, need to move to a state or municipality other than their place of residence to find temporary employment in the agricultural sector. This sub-programme began in 2002 and operates nationwide.

### **Mexico-Mexico-Canada Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme (PTAT) of the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare.**

PTAT is a recruitment, selection and matching service for job seekers who have experience in agricultural activities, with vacancies offered by Canadian employers in the agricultural sector. It is carried out within the framework of the "Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of Canada regarding the PTAT Mexican Seasonal Agricultural Workers Programme". This programme began in 1974 and is aimed at Mexican agricultural workers who travel for up to eight months to Canada in a regular, safe and orderly manner.

### **Job skills for repatriated migrants**

The INM, under the Ministry of the Interior, signed this March 2021, a coordination agreement with the National Council for Standardization and Certification of Labor Competencies (Conocer), which will facilitate the social and economic reintegration of Mexican nationals repatriated from the United States. Through this agreement, returning migrants will be offered the possibility of being evaluated in order to obtain a certificate of labor competencies.

INM personnel, at arrival points and through repatriation liaisons at local level, will offer this option by Conocer, as a state entity sectorized under the Ministry of Public Education, with a tripartite governing body and representatives of workers, employers and the government.

Through this agreement it will be possible to certify labor competencies, such as: knowledge, abilities, skills and individual attitudes to develop an activity in their working life.

#### **Goal 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries**

##### **Project entitled "Destajo, tarea, servicio o jornal para mujeres (locales y migrantes) en la agroindustria azucarera: mercado de trabajo frente la reconversión productiva" (CONACyT).**

This is a project of the Inmujeres (Women's National Institute)-Conacyt (National Council for Science and Technology) Sectoral Fund, whose target population is migrant women agricultural workers and national and international service workers employed in Mexico's sugar agroindustry. The execution period is one year in two phases (August 2018 - January 2019 and July 2019 - January 2020). The completion date was February 18, 2020.

##### **Port-City Relationship Programme of the Ministry of Communications and Transportation**

The objective of this programme is to generate a better relationship between the port community and the population living in the cities, while generating new employment opportunities. It is aimed at the population living in port cities. The port-city relationship programmes are permanent, but their objectives vary according to the port and its social needs.

#### **10.7. Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.**

The Migration Policy of Mexico is aimed at addressing this section of the Sustainable Development Goals through the development of programmes, actions and best practices carried out by the UPMRIP and the INM in coordination and collaboration with the Mexican government agencies involved.

In legislative matters, the feasible observations made by the academic community at the meeting held on January 8, 2020, at the Colegio de México, in order to consolidate the version presented to the Congress of the Union, were collected, analyzed and incorporated into the draft reform of the Migration Act.

An opinion was requested from the General Unit of Legal Affairs of the Ministry of the Interior on the draft Memorandum of Understanding between Mexico and the United States on the creation of the United States-Mexico Professional Internship Programme, and the SRE was informed of the status of the matter.

We are working on legal channels to develop regular channels for migration, such as the analysis of diplomatic notes of proposal and response to extend the validity of work visas for Mexicans in the United States, and to initiate the validity of migratory documents issued by exchange to Americans holding a temporary resident visa with a work permit within the framework of Article 32 of the Guidelines for migratory procedures and formalities.

In addition, work is being carried out on the amendments to Articles 42 and 50 of the Guidelines for Migratory Procedures and Procedures, which contain the processing forms for "change of status from visitor

for humanitarian reasons to permanent resident" and "regularization for humanitarian reasons", respectively.

Within the framework of liaison with civil society organizations to follow up on the recommendations of the Working Group on legislative harmonization on children and adolescents in the context of mobility, a virtual meeting was held with representatives of the Legislative Branch and international organizations to reflect on the challenges that are foreseen in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, in legislative matters.

### **Temporary Migratory Regularization Programme**

We are promoting the inclusion in the draft Temporary Migratory Regularization Programme of exemption from the payment of fees for migratory services in accordance with the principles of pro homine and transparency, which is under consideration by the INM.

Coordination was also established with the Statistics Department of the Center for Migration Studies of the UPMRIP to update the analysis on the projection of migrants in an irregular migratory situation in the country, which will serve as a basis for the eventual issuance of the programme.

### **Goal 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

#### **Integrated Coffee Strategy for the Mesoamerican, Caribbean and Andean Region of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development**

The objective of this strategy is to strengthen the economic, social, and environmental sustainability of the coffee value chain, with an emphasis on the primary production sector, in order to improve the socio-economic conditions of producing families. This strategy is aimed at producing families in the region and the implementation period covers the 2019-2025 period.

### **Goal 17: Revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

#### **Strategy for Strengthening Migration Governance at the Local Level**

The IOM, through the Regional Programme on Migration (PRM), in collaboration with the UPMRIP; the National Coordination of State Offices for Attention to Migrants and El Colegio de la Frontera Norte, agreed on a strategy to fully incorporate local governments in the compliance of the normative and international frameworks that refer to the attention, protection and integration of people in migration contexts, particularly to ensuring a safe, regular and orderly migration. The above, in response to the Comprehensive and Sustainable Strategy for the Protection and Integration of Persons in Contexts of International Mobility presented by the UPMRIP during 2019.

The Migration Governance Indicators, developed by the IOM, were adapted to the subnational level in order to identify challenges and areas of opportunity to improve migration governance at the local level.

This is a project implemented in the states of Chihuahua and Oaxaca, to be later replicated in other states, and the project consists of seven phases. The Strategy began in January 2020 and will conclude its first phase in October 2020, with a view to continuing during PRM's programmatic phase XI for fiscal year 2021.

#### **Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Regional Conference on Migration**

The Regional Conference on Migration is a multilateral regional comprising Central American and North American countries, which addresses international migration issues and shares, from different perspectives, common topics based on experiences involving situations of origin, transit, destination and return of migration, of which Mexico is a member country.

In 2021, Mexico will hold the Pro-Tempore Presidency of the Regional Conference on Migration. Under this responsibility, Mexico will promote an agenda committed to the defense of the human rights of migrants,

the strengthening of migration governance, the inclusion of vulnerable people and the promotion of gender discourse, in line with the Global Compact for a Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Through this mechanism, the following thematic areas will be addressed:

- Regional attention to extraordinary massive flows
- Structural factors of migration in places of origin
- Attention to vulnerable people and traditionally excluded communities
- Combating smuggling of migrants and human trafficking
- Regional labour linkage by promoting the recognition of acquired competencies and skills.
- Improving the technological infrastructure at international transit sites for the international mobility of people
- Therefore, Mexico adopts the slogan "For a regional framework of migration governance and human rights. For an inclusive migration".

## Turkey

**Highlight of the main measures taken by Turkey at national level to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on migrants and refugees in line with SDGs 1, 2, 3, 8, 10 and 17.**

During the pandemic, Turkey has continued to offer all the migrants and international protection applicants, access to basic services including education, healthcare, financial assistance regardless of their legal statuses, maintaining her, **"leaving no one behind"** approach. In this regard, Turkish government has ensured that;

-All the hygiene measures are taken by staff and residents in Temporary Accommodation Centers (TACs) and Removal Centers including distribution of masks, gloves, sanitary products.

- Pre-admission areas are established in order to conduct health check-ups on irregular migrants by medical experts before accepting them to the Removal Centers. If a need arises, the accepted irregular migrants are immediately referred to the hospitals for emergency treatment.

- Turkey offers consultation services related to questions and requests related to the outbreak. Such queries are referred to our Communication Centre for Foreigners (YİMER 157 emergency line) which offers migrants consultation service in 7 different languages.

- In addition to public hospitals, healthcare services for Syrians under temporary protection are provided in community health centers and primary care clinics. Our project titled "Improving the Health Status of the Syrian Population under Temporary Protection and Related Services Provided by Turkish Authorities" serves as a global example per SDG objective 3, aiming to stipulate the expansion of healthcare services in 29 provinces with large refugee populations.

- Turkish Red Crescent Community Centers have also continued to provide multiple services including financial assistance (SDG no 1,8) and psychological services (SDG no 3) for the migrants and host communities during this challenging period.

- With respect to SDG no 8; the Law on Reducing the Effects of the New Coronavirus Epidemic on Economic and Social Life dated 16/4/2020 and No. 7244 (Provisional Article 10) is added to the Labour Law No. 4857 and restrictions were imposed to employers for dismissal of workers including migrant workers.

According to the arrangement made; dismissal of workers has been restricted for 3 months, except for situations that do not comply with morality and good intentions and similar reasons. With the Presidential Decision dismissal restriction has been extended for another two months as of 17/3/2021.

- In order to ensure migrants' and refugees' access to education despite the pandemic, Turkey offers distance learning opportunities without any discrimination.
- Turkish authorities has distributed training sets to 75.504 disadvantaged students including Syrian refugees in order to support the students who continue their distance education.
- In cooperation with UNICEF, cash assistance was provided to schools to meet the basic hygiene and sanitary needs of schools, including the purchase of cleaning materials.
- 15.059 Education Information Network (EBA) support points were established to help students who do not have a computer and internet access during distance education and benefit from the education materials and curriculum available in the Education Information Network (EBA).
- In cooperation with UNICEF, we have launched Conditional Education Aid program for Syrians and other refugees in Turkey, which enables households to receive conditional cash payments in return for keeping their children in education system. This way, migrant and refugee families are encouraged to participate in education and cover their expenses. Such measures are part of our efforts to realize SDG no 10, reducing inequalities among public and 17, establishing strong partnerships.
- Turkey highly acknowledges contributions of migrants and refugees to labor force and economic development. During the pandemic, all the migrants and refugees who legally work in Turkey are given the opportunity to benefit from unemployment compensation. This way they are able to cover their basic needs during this period in line with SDGs no 1 and 2.

### **Recommendations:**

COVID-19 has brought along various multidimensional challenges obstructing our capacities to reach SDGs. We need **inclusive** and **stronger international action to cope with them**.

-International community should support refugees and major refugee hosting countries with short-term remedies, including **cash assistance** programs to ease the impact.

-**Education** is a key area in reducing the effects of pandemic on displaced communities and continuing our sustainable development efforts. Solid financial and technical support from international community is necessary to ensure that vulnerable groups with limited access to education can benefit from **distance learning opportunities** like their peers.

- The Global Compact on Migration is the first document that includes high level, comprehensive elements such as inclusiveness, equality, capacity-building measures and integration from 2030 Agenda. **Uninterrupted implementation of the Compact** is important in overcoming the challenges imposed by pandemic and realizing SDGs.

- Successful implementation of 2030 Agenda and its provisions within GCM require the establishment of a **monitoring and reviewing mechanism**. Therefore, advise all the stakeholders to support the activities of International Migration Review Forum, which aims to monitor the implementation of GCM and while supporting the implementation 2030 Agenda and smooth preparation of VNRs.

- **Anti-migrant discourses** are major challenges preventing migrants' integration to societies and access the basic services. Therefore, we urge States to develop effective and sound policies to counter xenophobia, hatred against Islam, racism, discrimination in cooperation with civil society.

- Irregular migratory flows disrupts the economic stability and welfare in countries of destination and origin. It reduces the productiveness in the country of origin and increases the financial burden in the host community, even more so during the pandemic. In this regard, we encourage States generate solid strategies to open up **more legal pathways for migrants**.

- Migrants and refugees cannot be excluded in from employment opportunities in this difficult period. Their exclusion will only enhance financial burden on countries and the vulnerabilities of migrants. Migrants should be included in relief programs and recovery processes without any prejudice.