



League of Arab States
General Secretariat
Social Sector
Refugees, Expatriates
& Migration Affairs Dept.

**Extraordinary Meeting of the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration
and Refugee Affairs (ARCP)**

*In preparation for the consultations of “the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)”
and “the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)”*

**General Secretariat of the League of Arab States
Cairo, 25-26 July 2017**

**Contribution of the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs
(ARCP) to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration**

The Representatives of the Arab States participating in the Extraordinary Meeting of the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs - ARCP (List of participants enclosed), organized by the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States (Refugees, Expatriates & Migration Affairs Department), in its capacity as the secretariat of the ARCP, at its headquarters in Cairo, 25-26 July 2017¹:

- Being keen on strengthening the positive aspects of Arab migration and limiting its negative implications on the development process in the Arab states;
- Believing in the importance of cooperation on migration at the regional and international levels, in such a way that ensures it is effectively and humanely managed;
- Emphasizing the importance of competent Arabs in the diaspora, who are considered a national wealth that should be taken care of, supported, and given a privileged position within the strategic development options of the Arab states;
- Being aware of the increasing irregular migration incidences and migration flows in the Arab region taking place on land and maritime routes, especially the Mediterranean, despite the efforts undertaken to stop these flows;
- Being aware of the hazardousness of the insecure routes that migrants and refugees use to flee conflicts, which can lead them to fall prey to human smugglers, and subsequently result in grave violations of their rights and human dignity;
- Acknowledging the implications of conflicts on international migrants living and working in countries in crisis,

¹ The meeting was organized in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM); having the first day of the meeting dedicated to the Global Compact on Refugees, and the second day dedicated to the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, in the framework of the ARCP efforts to prepare for the ongoing consultations on the two Global Compacts to be adopted by 2018. This is in accordance to the final declaration of the ARCP Extraordinary Meeting which was held in preparation of the High Level Plenary Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, and in line with the outcomes of the previous ARCP regular meetings (April 2015, May 2016 and May 2017).

- Emphasizing that the issues of migration and asylum, and the conditions and rights of migrants and refugees, have many political and security implications at the regional and international levels, and are no longer limited to the effects they have on the economic, social, and humanitarian conditions;
- Emphasizing that the specificities of each region and every country of the world should be respected, which makes it imperative to consider them when drafting the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration, putting it in a flexible manner that respects this specificity. It is also important that the compact includes ways and methods to translate the principles and commitments into achievable goals;
- Affirming the positive role of the the Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs (ARCP) in unifying the Arab position towards international issues, and presenting it during international fora, as well as the importance of supporting ARCP and enhancing its role as an important existing mechanism;
- Having pursued the report of the special representative of the UN Secretary General for Migration, modalities for the intergovernmental negotiations of the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration -- which determined the six themes to be discussed in the informal thematic sessions on facilitating safe, orderly, and regular migration-- and the presentations made during the meeting, and ideas and proposals of the participants, and to interventions and discussions that took place during the meeting:

They recommend the importance of taking into account the following items in the development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration:

First: Human Rights For All Migrants, Social Inclusion, Cohesion, and Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination:

1. Affirm the principle of shared responsibility between countries of origin and destination, and develop balanced approaches and visions to protect the rights of migrants and their families and raise awareness of their rights and duties in the countries of destination. Ensuring that human rights and respecting the human dignity of migrants is essential to strengthen their contributions in both countries of origin and destination, in accordance with national laws and international commitments of each country.
2. Acknowledge the importance of respecting human rights principles for all persons who are forced to leave their countries to countries of destination or asylum, regardless of their legal status during their journey to the country of destination.
3. Pay special attention to the vulnerable and marginalized groups of migrants, namely women, children, the elderly, people with disabilities, and victims of human trafficking and violence against women, treat them as appropriate to their situation, grant them the needed protection and assistance pursuant to the national laws and regulations, develop programs to introduce them to their rights, and develop responses that are appropriate to their needs, in cooperation between states and relevant regional and international organizations.
4. Fight all types of racism, xenophobia, islamophobia and discrimination against religious beliefs, and protect migrants against racist practices through community awareness raising campaigns using traditional media and social media, and through promoting dialogue between migrants and host communities, and enabling migrants to share their personal experiences.

Second: Addressing Drivers of Migration:

1. Acknowledge that migration is the other face of development through the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which will largely impact migration, since poverty and unemployment are considered among the main drivers of migration. As such, developing the countries of origin and transit by improving the infrastructure and facilitating trade and investment will create new job opportunities. Having job opportunities and education available can limit the push factors of migration.
2. Call upon the international community to provide financial and technical support to establish small and mid-size projects in countries of origin, which help create job opportunities for the youth in their homeland.
3. Improve cooperation between humanitarian and development stakeholders, through joint analysis and planning, to move from emergency humanitarian assistance to longer term development responses.
4. Emphasize the importance of resolving conflicts which lead to an increase in the number of refugees and migrants.
5. Cooperate between states to solve crises and natural disasters and mitigate their impacts on migrants in countries in crisis.

Third: International Cooperation and Governance of Migration in All its Dimensions:

1. Emphasize the importance of relying on effective elements of migration governance, based on developing national mechanisms to coordinate between the different governmental parties and institutions working on migration issues at the national level, so as to ensure coordination between the ministries, as well as between central governments and local administrations, in order to develop coherent national policies and strategies that achieve complementarity and avoid duplication.
2. Promote cooperation between countries of origin and destination to achieve consistency between migration policies, through different methods including developing a system for labour markets in countries of destination, conducting regular studies on the needs of labour markets in these countries, determining the needed skills clearly, develop joint mechanisms to acknowledge the skills and qualifications of migrants of different levels, and announce the available job opportunities, which allow countries of origin to develop appropriate education and training policies.
3. The importance of developing and adopting a national approach that is based on accurate information coming from collecting data on migration, improving its quality and analyzing it. This can be done through working on building the national institutional capacities.
4. The necessity of incorporating migration in development policies at the national, regional, and international levels, in consistence with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the national development plans.
5. The importance of taking into consideration the gender disparities in all aspects of migration management to achieve equality for women, in consistence with the 5th goal of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and addressing this issue at the legal, political, and practical levels.
6. The importance of enhancing efforts of civil society organizations of expatriate communities to support migrants and help them integrate in the host communities through providing them

with the needed technical and language trainings, and giving them the needed information to know their rights and duties, and be familiar with the laws and regulations of the host countries and respect them.

7. Consensus and coordination between countries of origin and destination in the field of voluntary return of migrants, readmission and reintegration, as part of the bilateral agreements and arrangements, protecting their dignity and respecting human rights principles when dealing with them, pursuant to the international covenants and national laws; and enforce the international law on the return of the forcibly displaced due to the conflicts and occupation of land, as in the case of Palestine.
8. The importance of harmonizing reintegration programs with national development strategies and the needs of the local communities to which the migrants return, and developing efficient policies that enhance the contributions of migrants to the development process, including their reintegration in the labour market to benefit from their experience and skills.
9. The importance of flexibly drafting the principles and commitments of the global compact for safe, orderly, and regular migration in a way that takes into consideration the specificities of each region and country, and the interests of all relevant stakeholders, through the development of agreed rules and principles and breaking them into binding and non-binding elements.

Fourth: Contributions of Migrants and Diasporas to all Dimensions of Sustainable Development:

1. Acknowledge positive contributions of migrants in countries of origin and destination and encourage them, since migrant remittances, investments and transfer of skills and knowledge contribute to the development of countries of origin. Similarly, migrants play an important role in the development of countries of destination as well.
2. The importance of considering migration as being beneficial to both countries of origin and destination, since migration is a solution of the lack of absorption of local labour markets to the workforce in countries of origin, while at the same time providing a solution to the demographic imbalance in countries of destination. As such, it is imperative to emphasize the importance of:
 - a. Facilitating access to safe and legal movement opportunities, according to regulations that respect human rights principles and preserve human dignity, through simplifying entry and residence visa process for different purposes;
 - b. Taking migration into account in the national development plans in countries of origin and destination; working on developing programs to engage Arab expatriate competencies in the development process in the Arab world; and providing the needed frameworks and mechanisms for knowledge transfer through migrants;
3. Continue to strive to include migration in national development plans in the Arab countries, and engage Arab competencies and institutions abroad in the development process in the Arab world through transferring their expertise; developing partnerships and communication networks between them and with their counterparts in the Arab region; and helping them get better information on jobs and investment opportunities in the region, using the means of communication and modern technology to achieve this.
4. Take care of the Arab expatriate competencies residing abroad and encourage their utilization to support sustainable development efforts in countries of origin and destination, and

motivate them to support national development programs, and transfer knowledge and expertise they acquired as well as the modern technology to their countries of origin, and link them with the Arab scientific institutions and entities that are working in the same fields of expertise.

5. Emphasize the importance of providing incentives to attract the remittances of migrants in development through:
 - a. Calling upon countries of origin and destination to take the required measures to facilitate remittances by taking action to decrease remittance fees, and work on increasing their flows through official channels²;
 - b. Encouraging countries of destination to consider tax exemptions on the money transferred to countries of origin, and provide financial, technological, and administrative support;
 - c. Developing programs to attract migrants' remittances to the national economy of countries of origin, and raising awareness on how families of migrants spend the money;
 - d. Developing programs to encourage investments of migrants in their countries of origin,
 - e. Calling upon the countries of origin to consider diversification of the investment channels in the individual and community projects, provide incentives to maximize the use of remittances, and create appropriate conditions for maximizing the benefits of these remittances in advancing social and economic development efforts.
6. Emphasize the importance of remittances in promoting development, knowing that it is not the main source of development funding, and not an alternative for international development aid, since these remittances fluctuate and neither them nor their impact on fighting poverty can be measured.
7. Being aware of the importance of social cohesion in achieving development, we affirm that this cohesion can be achieved through encouraging policies that lead to the safeguarding of cultural diversity and integration and work on the engagement for all, in pursuance with the Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, since bridging the gap between the different cultures is essential and instant for peace, stability, and development.
8. Develop policies to utilize the Arab expatriate competencies as they are considered an intellectual property for countries of origin, through, inter alia, creating strong communication networks between migrants and their countries of origin, removing barriers to circular migration, and developing human capital in countries of origin.
9. Encourage the initiatives taken by countries and international and regional organizations to communicate with expatriate communities in order to strengthen the development efforts in countries of origin, as well as the individual initiatives that migrants take to benefit their countries of origin in different fields.

Fifth: Smuggling of Migrants, Trafficking in Persons and Contemporary Forms of Slavery:

1. Support combating irregular migration, migrant smuggling, and human trafficking, and the protection against organized crime networks, which range from migrant smuggling to human trafficking and terrorist activities, through raising awareness of its dangers and enacting the necessary laws and enforcing them.

² In implementation of Addis Ababa Action Agenda issued by the Third International Conference on Financing for Development (Resolution of the UNGA No. 313/69 issued during the 69th session on 27/7/2015).

2. Call upon the international community to provide the needed support to build the capacity of the personnel of the national law enforcement bodies and relevant institutions, and provide programmes and equipment to reinforce border control capacities in the field of human trafficking.
3. Expand the role of the educational and media institutions in raising awareness on the danger of migrant smuggling and human trafficking, their various dimensions and impacts.

Sixth: Irregular Migration and Regular Pathways:

1. Emphasize the importance of increasing legal migration pathways and providing opportunities for safe, orderly, and regular migration, which can reduce the push factors of irregular migration.
2. Provide pathways for regular migration and legal entry to the countries of destination through:
 - a. Provide information on the conditions of entry, residence, and work and other relevant information;
 - b. Increase scholarships and opportunities for technical and vocational trainings;
 - c. Increase the opportunities of circular, temporary, and seasonal migration;
 - d. Facilitate the procedures to get entry and residence visas for different reasons (education, scientific research, culture, training, ...etc.) pursuant to the national laws and regulations;
 - e. Facilitate family reunions.
3. Reduce labour recruitment fees and regulate the activities of the agencies recruiting abroad to ensure the conclusion of legal and documented employment contracts, and to provide suitable working conditions for migrants in pursuance with fair recruitment principles.
4. Establish unified service points to provide pre-employment training and qualification services, to acknowledge academic certificates and equivalencies, and to facilitate travel arrangements.
5. Emphasize the necessity of linking short term policies that determine means of combating irregular migration with long term development approaches that address the root causes of the flows of irregular migration by re-affirming the correlation between migration and development, especially since the security approach is not enough to address the root causes of the problem.