

## Assessment of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration

### Summary of Assessment Survey Findings for the

As part of an assessment of inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs), a survey was conducted in 2019. Carried out by IOM among ISCMs, their Member States and relevant inter-governmental organizations, the survey aimed to assess ISCMs' continued relevance and contribution to migration governance at all levels (national, regional and international) and the synergies among ISCMs and with other actors. The findings of this survey were presented at the global gathering of ISCMs in 2019 and were used to develop recommendations to enhance ISCMs' engagement in migration governance.

46 States and 22 ISCMs and 3 inter-governmental organizations provided answers to the questionnaires. The results are to be found in the 2019 assessment report: *Advancing a common understanding of migration governance among regions*, which provides an overview on ISCMs' organization, engagements, their continued relevance and synergies with relevant actors in the area of migration management. In addition to the report, the information below is meant to outline each individual ISCM's thematic priorities, structure, impact and relevance.

Name of the Inter-state consultation mechanism (ISCM): **Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs (ARCP)**

#### 1. Evolution of programing and thematic focus

Since its establishment in 2015, the ARCP put increasing attention on activities related to migration and refugee affairs. This is reflected in the name of the process and can also be observed in its thematic focus, which includes: asylum; displacement and forced migration; migrants and refugees rights; migration and development; migration management; migration policies; brain drain; mixed migration; irregular migration; integration of migrants; remittances of migrants; capacity building of governments' officials in the field of migration; migration data provision and migration related targets of the SDGs. To keep its relevance in migration governance, the ARCP is planning to conduct an assessment to identify thematic areas that need to be enhanced. This assessment will address the following dimensions: migrants' rights; whole of government approach; partnerships; mobility dimensions of crises and safe, orderly and dignified migration.

The ARCP strategy is set out in the ARCP programming document, adopted at the second ARCP meeting in May 2016. At the same meeting, the 2016/2017 work plan was adopted as the implementable document for the objectives stated in its programming document. The 2018/2019 work plan was adopted at the fourth ARCP meeting in May 2018. The League of Arab States, LAS, (Refugees, Expatriates and Migration Affairs Department), in its capacity as the ARCP secretariat, implements the activities of the work plans in coordination with the Member States and supported by its partners through its different mechanisms (e.g. the former working group on international migration in the Arab Region (now the IBC on Migration in the Arab region). An annual review takes place during the ARCP ordinary meetings, where the Secretariat discusses with Member States the activities implemented and challenges faced during their implementation.

## **2. Contribution to migration governance at national, (inter)regional and global levels (with examples)**

**National level:** The ARCP provides a platform for Member States to exchange best practices and share experience. It contributes to awareness-raising and capacity-building on migration issues of government officials of its Member States.

**Regional level:** The ARCP works as a link between the national level and the global one; inputs and perspectives from the national level are considered and analyzed at the regional level and feed into the global processes. It also helps countries to translate global goals into policies, norms, standards, and guidelines that can be implemented at the national level.

The ARCP aims to maximize the benefits of migration and minimize its hazards in the Arab region, strengthen the position of Arab states in negotiating migration issues regionally and globally, develop more effective policies for utilizing migration in favor of Arab regional development, build bridges of dialogue and open new horizons for cooperation and partnership in the region between sending, transit and receiving countries. Cooperation with UN agencies, other regional and international entities is of great importance for the ARCP as well, to benefit from their expertise and keep them informed of its efforts in the field of migration and refugee affairs.

The ARCP plays an important role in raising awareness, improving knowledge base on global commitments (e.g. migration related SDGs, GCM, GCR... etc.), coordinating policies of the Arab Member States, providing policy guidance through enhancing regional dialogue, implementing training programs and sharing information, experiences and best practices.

**Global level:** The ARCP frequently contributes to global level policies on migration, notably by reflecting on the Arab Member States' vision to global migration governance. For instance, the ARCP adopted two documents including the key messages of the Arab region to be taken into consideration during the processes of developing the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and the Global Compact on Refugees. These two documents with the Arab position were put on the relevant UN websites as an Arab contribution to the processes of developing the two compacts. Furthermore, the ARCP contributed to the UN GA High Level Plenary Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, by issuing a declaration. In addition to the ARCP's annual preparation for the GFMD, as it dedicates special session during its annual meetings to discuss the themes of the GFMD and adopt a paper to be sent to the GFMD chair as an Arab contribution.

## **3. Salient ISCM structures**

The ARCP Operating Modalities are set out in its Terms of Reference (ToRs) adopted at the first ARCP meeting in April 2015. Since then, they were amended once to include refugee issues as a priority area. In May 2018, during the 4<sup>th</sup> ARCP meeting, the amended ToRs were endorsed by the Member States. The ISCM structures set out in these ToRs include a Chair and a Technical Secretariat (carries out administrative and technical matters, e.g. cooperation with relevant partners, facilitating communication, knowledge management...). Both these functions are performed by the LAS Refugees, Expatriates and Migration Affairs Department. The main source of funding for the ARCP are annual contributions by Member States to LAS. The budget for the ARCP is stable. Some of the ARCP activities are implemented with support from external donors. Such activities are usually based on a common interest between the financing organization and the ARCP Member States.

#### **4. Partnership models by the ISCM**

LAS has developed a well-established partnership network/ cooperation mechanisms which provides support to the ARCP as well. Among these mechanisms are, for example, the former Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region Now IBC on Migration in the Arab region which provided technical support on migration governance to the ARCP. The ARCP and Abu Dhabi Dialogue invite each other to attend meetings and events organized by them. Moreover, the ARCP is in standing cooperation with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (UNESCWA), IOM and UNHCR who provide technical support to ARCP, and participate in specific sessions in the ARCP regular meetings. Furthermore, the ARCP has had successful cooperation with **political and regional unions**, such as the European Union, when it issued a position paper towards the New European Neighbourhood Policy with regards to migration. It is also planning to enhance cooperation with other regional institutions, such as the African Union.

#### **5. Added value of Membership in the given ISCM for States and Organizations (with examples)**

The ARCP is the only specialized platform on migration and refugee issues covering the Arab Region with its 22 origin, transit and destination countries. It's getting full support from its Member States as well as partner organizations.

Member States benefit from their participation in the ARCP for various reasons. The ARCP provides a platform for discussion to Member States and other stakeholders. Through this platform, Member States can strengthen their cooperation and work towards a more profound understanding of migration issues in the Arab region. It also helps Member States to participate with a unified vision in the global fora, to be aware of current migration and refugee issues and to develop capacity-building programmes according to their priorities and needs. The ARCP also provides technical support and policy guidance through LAS different partnership mechanisms with other concerned international and regional organizations.

When surveyed, Egypt mentioned the ARCP, valuing its membership in the ARCP mainly for policy coordination.