

## The Almaty Process

### *Operating Modalities*

#### 1. Background

This document sets out the operating modalities for a regional consultative process on migration to be called ‘the Almaty Process’ that brings together the Central Asian States: the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, the Republic of Tajikistan as well as States in the region with whom the Central Asian states share common migration concerns: the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, [Islamic Republic of Iran], [Islamic Republic of Pakistan], and the Republic of Turkey<sup>1</sup>.

The first Regional Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration was held in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 15-16 March 2011.<sup>2</sup> The **Almaty Declaration**, unanimously adopted at the conference, acknowledges the continued need to address the multiple challenges resulting from complex migration dynamics and mixed migratory movements in Central Asia and the wider region, in a cooperative and coordinated manner.

To translate the outcomes of the conference into practice, and to advance regional dialogue and practical cooperation on issues of common concern, the Declaration proposed the development of a Regional Cooperation Framework and Regional Action Plan to address mixed movements in Central Asia. To this end, a series of national consultative meetings have taken place, culminating in the decision to organize a ministerial conference to launch the *Almaty Process* as a platform for dialogue and cooperation on mixed migration and international protection issues in the region, with the support of IOM and UNHCR.

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<sup>1</sup> The States listed in brackets have indicated the need for further internal coordination before formalizing their participation in the Almaty Process, pursuant to the silence procedure, as soon as possible but no later than 31 August 2013.

<sup>2</sup> The Regional Conference on Refugee Protection and International Migration in Central Asia was co-organized by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM), in cooperation with the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia (UNRCCA). It was convened under the auspices of the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, with financial support provided by the European Union (EU), the Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration of the U.S. Department of State, IOM and UNHCR.

## 2. Objectives

The objectives of the *Almaty Process* will focus on the following main areas:

- 1) To promote sustained dialogue and exchange of information on migration issues and on refugee protection challenges<sup>3</sup>;
- 2) To facilitate the development of mechanisms to monitor migration trends in order to forecast and to address the issues of irregular migration at regional level;
- 3) To foster a common understanding among States and other stakeholders of the causes, dimensions, patterns, and consequences of cross-border displacement, as well as trends and impacts of migration in the region;
- 4) To promote coherent, comprehensive and differentiated policies at the national and regional level for persons on the move;
- 5) To develop project-based actions aimed at enhancing State capacity to devise new forms of international and regional cooperation, with the goal of managing migration, including labor migration, and refugee protection issues.

## 3. Operating Modalities

### *i. Membership*

The *Almaty Process* will comprise the Central Asian States (the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Republic of Tajikistan) and other States with whom the Central Asian States share common migration concerns (the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Azerbaijan, [the Islamic Republic of Iran], [the Islamic Republic of Pakistan], and the Republic of Turkey) as equal participants<sup>4</sup>.

Each Member State of the *Almaty Process* will designate a National Coordinator to act as the focal point for their country on all issues concerning the *Process*.

### *ii. Chairmanship*

The Chairmanship of the *Almaty Process* will be open to all participating States on a voluntary basis, in alphabetical order (English) following the first Chair to be elected during the 2013 Ministerial Conference. The term of office will be two years. The chairing government will designate a representative at appropriate level for all actions concerning its Chairmanship.

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<sup>3</sup> Preliminary topics include but are not limited to: Emergency preparedness and responses to mass mixed influx situations; refugee protection; border management; migrant smuggling; labor migration; migration and development; data collection and information-sharing; differentiated processes and procedures; gender and migration; migration and health; migration, environment and climate change.

<sup>4</sup> The States listed in brackets have indicated the need for further internal coordination before formalizing their participation in the *Almaty Process*, pursuant to the silence procedure, as soon as possible but no later than 31 August 2013.

The Terms of Reference of the Chairperson will be as follows:

- Chair the meetings held within the framework of the *Almaty Process*, host the Ministerial review and plan conferences;
- Act as focal point for follow-up on *Almaty Process*-related initiatives and their implementation throughout the period of the chairmanship;
- Organize, with assistance of the Support Unit, workshops, consultations and conferences on specific migration or asylum-related topics;
- Represent the *Almaty Process* at external events, acting on behalf of and in accordance with decisions of participating States;
- Promote the visibility of the *Almaty Process*;
- With the assistance of the Support Unit mobilize resources needed for the functioning of the *Almaty Process*.

### **iii. Support Unit**

The Support Unit ensures the functioning of the *Almaty Process*. The Support Unit functions will be performed by UNHCR and IOM through their current structures in Kazakhstan for two years, pending further decision on its composition.

The Support Unit (SU) acts upon the directives of the Chair and carries out the tasks outlined below:

- Functions as the institutional memory of the *Almaty Process*, maintains the archives and manages the *Almaty Process* web portal, both in Russian and English.
- Supports the Chairmanship in all organizational matters, including conferences/meetings/seminars, pertaining to its role;
- Assists the Chair in the collection, translation and distribution of materials prior to conferences/meetings/seminars and prepares compilations of related materials for publication as a follow-up to the meetings;
- Supports the Chair in ensuring effective information-sharing between participating States in order to promote synergies on the full-range of migration and refugee protection issues of concern to the *Almaty Process* countries;
- As required by the Chair, analyse information and conduct research on asylum and migration issues;
- Supports the Chair in monitoring media, developing regular joint information sheets and joint briefings and gathering information pertinent to the *Almaty Process*;
- Assist the Chair in drafting project proposals to mobilize resources for implementation of activities contained in the action plan;
- Supports the Chair in fostering links with related national and international programmes and Regional Consultative Processes on Migration.

**Funding:** As needed, IOM and UNHCR will assist with obtaining funding to support *Almaty Process* ministerial and senior officials' meetings, as well as for any recommended follow up actions. Pending further decision, *Almaty Process* member states will pay a voluntary fee for administrative costs related to the Support Unit.

**Location:** The Support Unit will be located in the city of Almaty in premises provided by the Government of Kazakhstan, pending further decision.

**iv. Observers**

States, International Organizations and Regional Organizations may participate as observers in all sessions of the *Almaty Process* upon consensus of Member States. Civil Society representatives may be invited on a case-by-case basis, upon consensus of Member States.

**v. Format and Hosting of Almaty Process Meetings**

- A Ministerial review and planning conference will be organized every two years.
- A Senior Officials meeting (SOM) will be organized annually to review the results of the previous year's work and agree upon a work plan for the next year. The SOM will draw from the outcomes of regular National Consultative Meetings, which in turn will draw from the preliminary *Almaty Process* topics, as detailed on page one of this document.
- National Coordinators are encouraged to hold Consultations at a minimum of once a year.

**vi. Decision-Making Process**

All decisions of the *Almaty Process* meetings will be taken on the basis of consensus.

**vii. Amendments to the Operating Modalities**

These operating modalities may be amended by *Almaty Process* Ministerial meetings.