

Fifth Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs)

Chair's Summary

1. The Fifth Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) took place at the headquarters of the League of Arab States, Cairo, Egypt, on 21-22 October 2015 under the theme *Exploring Contemporary Migration Challenges: Reflecting on the Outcomes of the 2013 High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development and the Post-2015 Development Agenda*. The Meeting was organized jointly by the League of Arab States (LAS) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM).
2. The Arab Regional Consultative Process was formally launched at the Meeting. It aims at addressing pressing migration issues in this important region in the landscape of contemporary migration.
3. The Meeting was very timely given the critical situation in the Arab region, one of the regions most affected by the complex migration crises. The thematic focus of the Meeting was on the contribution of RCPs in implementing and reviewing the migration-related targets of the recently adopted 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the follow up to the outcomes of the 2013 UN High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD).
4. The Meeting brought together 86 delegates, including 35 from RCPs. Representatives of RCP Chairs and Secretariats,¹ inter-regional forums on migration, the Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) participated alongside experts from regional and intergovernmental organizations.²
5. In his introductory remarks, the Director General of IOM described the global migration landscape, in which RCPs and inter-state consultation mechanism on migration operate, their achievements in the past ten years, and prospects for future cooperation especially related to migration and development and managing diversity in migration.
6. The Assistant Secretary General of LAS, head of Social Sector Affairs, in his introductory remarks, addressed the relevance of convening the Global RCP Meeting in the Arab region in light of the current migratory trends in the region, including

¹ Abu Dhabi Dialogue, Almaty Process, Arab RCP, Bali Process, Budapest Process, Colombo Process, COMESA-RCP, IGAD RCP, IGC, Khartoum Process, MIDCAS, Puebla Process, Rabat Process, and SACM. MTM and Prague Process were unable to attend but delegated the representative of the Budapest Process Secretariat to deliver statements on their behalf. The Secretary General of SAARC also participated, and a statement was delivered on behalf of the emerging RCP in the Caribbean Region.

² Representatives from Center for Migration and Refugee Studies (CMRS) at the American University in Cairo, Georgetown University Center for International and Regional Studies, International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), International Labour Organization (ILO), IOM, LAS, MERCOSUR, Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESCWA) and Office of the High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR). Representatives of past, present and future chairing governments of the Global Forum on Migration Development (GFMD) and the representative of the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for International Migration and Development also participated in the Global RCP Meeting.

mixed migration flows to neighbouring regions with increasing numbers of refugees due to the instability in some countries of the region. He also stressed the importance of shedding the light on the main challenges in the field of migration and means of enhancing cooperation to address these challenges.

7. Session 1 recapitulated the highlights of RCP actions since the Fourth Global RCP Meeting. The Government of Peru shared the outcomes of the 2013 Global RCP Meeting. This meeting affirmed the important role of dialogue and cooperation between the States, and recommended regular exchange across regions, including the exchange of the various good practices that have been developed in some regions and could possibly be replicated in others. During the Fourth Global Meeting, the need to strengthen the section dedicated to RCPs on IOM's website was underscored to enable it to more fully achieve its goal of promoting exchange between States and dialogue forums across regions. The importance of the biennial global meetings in nurturing cross-regional exchange was highlighted, and RCPs supported the continuance of holding these meetings. The Fourth Global RCP Meeting made specific recommendations for consideration by the UN Secretary General and the UN General Assembly in the context of the 2013 High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (HLD). This concrete achievement of the RCPs has contributed to the inclusion of migration in the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

8. As the host of the Fifth Global RCP Meeting, LAS gave a statistical brief on international migration in the Arab region as a sending, receiving and transit region at the same time. LAS' efforts in the field of migration were reviewed during this presentation, and the newly established mechanisms to coordinate between Arab member states, as well as the cooperation with international organizations working in the region in the field of migration was emphasized. The importance of communication with Arab communities abroad and engaging Arab expatriates in the development process in the Arab region was also highlighted. The presentation shed light on LAS' role in conducting reports and studies on migration related issues, the capacity building programmes for its member states' officials, as well as its efforts in the field of data collection.

9. Representatives from the participating RCPs further highlighted key features of their work, and specific actions they have undertaken since the previous global meeting. The overview showed that RCPs have broadened their thematic discussions as well as expanded the scope of their work. RCPs are increasingly engaged on a practical level, implementing projects on labour migration, counter trafficking, mixed migration flows and other critical migration issues. The exchanges revealed the growing convergence of migration issues of concern to RCPs, as well as emphasized the continuous need for cooperation and sharing of experiences among RCPs.

10. Session 2 focused on the outcomes of the 2013 HLD, and looked ahead to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It was emphasized that in order to achieve the sustainable development goals and not leave migrants behind, numerous negative trends concerning migration need to be reversed. The main findings of the Study on the role of selected RCPs in implementing the new global migration and development agenda were presented.

11. Breakout Group 1 reviewed the actions and difficulties encountered by RCPs to ensure the protection of human rights of all migrants, eliminate migrant

exploitation, including human trafficking, and address the plight of stranded migrants.

12. Breakout Group 2 looked at RCPs' engagement to reduce the cost of labour migration, and shared best practices and lessons learned from activities and projects implemented by RCPs.

13. Breakout Group 3 reflected on the critical role of RCPs in the implementation and review of migration-related targets of the SDGs and explored mechanisms to ensure RCPs' continuous involvement in this process.

14. Breakout Group 4 discussed the important role of the Secretariats as backbones of the RCPs, and avenues for greater cooperation among the Secretariats. The breakout groups reported back to the plenary with key conclusions on their respective topics and recommendations vis-à-vis the role of RCPs in the given areas.

15. During Session 3 on Updates on GFMD Chairmanship, the GFMD representatives stressed the importance of enhancing dialogue between the regional inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration and global level dialogues on migration, particularly with the GFMD.

16. Session 4 examined questions of mixed migration flows and human rights, in variety of countries and regions. Common themes were the imperative of saving lives and protecting rights and the need for comprehensive approaches to irregular migration, including tackling root causes. Several useful examples of coordination among national actors and policy developments at regional level were highlighted.

17. Session 5 presented the government-led Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative, which aims to produce voluntary, non-binding principles and guidelines and identify effective practices to reduce vulnerability, save lives, and enhance protection and assistance for migrants caught in countries experiencing conflicts or natural disasters. The discussion focused on the role of RCPs in supporting both the development and the implementation of these guidelines.

18. Session 6 addressed the topic of forced migration, with examples of conflict-driven displacements in the Arab region, and impacts on Egypt specifically, and environmental migration in Bangladesh. Other RCPs shared related concerns from their regions and initiatives taken by RCPs.

19. In Session 7, speakers and participants presented initiatives and made proposals on strengthening public confidence in migration policy and consulting and communicating with civil society, recognizing the crucial role of these stakeholders in determining the success or migration policies.

20. In the breakout sessions and plenary discussions, participants brought to the fore several key points, as follows:

⇒ Migration was recognized by all as one of the most significant global issues of the twenty-first century;

⇒ The central importance of the human rights of migrants was a recurrent theme, and one that needs to remain a priority for RCPs;

⇒ Numerous discussions referred to the lack of adequate legal migration channels which allows human trafficking, migrant smuggling and associated criminal networks to flourish, with serious consequences for the lives and rights of migrants and States' ability to govern migration;

- ⇒ Negative perceptions of migrants and xenophobia were identified as important challenges to be addressed by the RCPs, noting that strategies to generate public confidence in migration policies are essential;
- ⇒ Unaccompanied minors constitute a growing concern that RCPs should pay greater attention to;
- ⇒ The lack of data on migration was repeatedly underlined as an obstacle for RCPs and national policymakers.

21. The Meeting recommended that RCPs and inter-state consultation mechanisms can play an active role to:

- a) Advance the adoption of migration-related indicators for the SDGs and support the implementation and monitoring of the migration-specific targets of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (e.g. by conducting baseline assessments for future monitoring of SDG achievement);
- b) Encourage greater coordination on migration among relevant national stakeholders; share experiences among national coordination mechanisms on migration; and encourage a wider range of national representatives participating in RCPs to foster whole of government and coherent and balanced migration policies;
- c) Continue to systematically include human rights issues on the agendas of RCPs; further clarify how to give practical effect to human rights standards as applied to migrants; and pay particular attention to those in vulnerable situations;
- d) Direct policy attention towards forced migration, mixed migration flows, saving lives and protecting migrants at sea and on land; the impact of climate change on migration, and practical measures to address the gaps in protection of migrants caught in countries in crisis;
- e) Contribute to regional and other consultations held as part of the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative, and otherwise contribute experiences and perspectives to the development of the non-binding MICIC principles, guidelines and effective practices, and promote their concrete use at the regional and national levels through the RCPs, including through relevant capacity building activities;
- f) Promote regular and safe migration channels and decriminalize irregular migration;
- g) Address research and data gaps on migration and on labour migration in particular; include consideration of labour migration on RCP agendas; advocate for national, bilateral, regional and transnational engagement on the integrity of labour recruitment;
- h) Consider different modalities that have been used by RCPs to engage a range of stakeholders, such as civil society, and find ways to tap into their knowledge and resources that may usefully contribute to the issues on the agendas of RCPs;
- i) Promote greater synergies between RCPs and global processes, in particular the GFMD, for example by encouraging greater mutual information sharing between the GFMD and RCPs, and consideration of greater coherence of participation in RCPs and the GFMD;
- j) Encourage regular exchanges of ideas, practices and lessons learned among RCP Secretariats and other entities supporting RCPs.

k) Ask IOM and UNHCR to compile best practices of RCPs' work in the field of mixed migration flows in order to facilitate exchange and cooperation among RCPs.

22. Participants acknowledged the role of **IOM** as the global leading agency on migration, and in particular its efforts to promote, facilitate and support regional and global debate and dialogue on migration, as well as the support it has provided to RCPs and other fora on migration dialogue and cooperation.

23. Participants expressed deep gratitude to the **League of Arab States** for generously hosting and chairing these deliberations.

Cairo, October 22, 2015