

Joint statement on behalf of a number of UN agencies at the side-event during the negotiations of the modalities of the IMRF Cities in the follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Migration

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) emphasizes the potential positive benefits of migration and the key role of local authorities in enhancing those benefits. The GCM also calls upon states to apply a whole-of-government approach at all levels of governance, and by adopting the GCM, UN Member States have therefore committed to supporting, empowering and listening to local authorities, who find themselves at the forefront of providing for the needs and aspirations of migrants in their towns and cities.

Local authorities already achieve many aspects of the GCM and have extensive expertise in dealing with and integrating migrants. It is often in the city that the human capital of migrants is most rewarded, but at the same time large-scale and unplanned movement of migrants into cities as a result of crises, climate change, lack of decent work and inequalities can trigger tension when host populations, for example, feel they have to compete with newly arrived migrants for services, employment and housing. With the right policies in place based on international standards, urban migration can be a positive experience whereby migrants introduce fresh ideas, resources and perspectives that improve local economic, social and cultural dynamics and help turn cities into vibrant, diverse, dynamic and prosperous hubs of opportunity and innovation.

We therefore need to continue empowering local authorities to harness the opportunities migration can bring, to manage its challenges and to identify practical means to learn from and exchange ideas with local authorities in GCM implementation, follow-up and review. Migrants and their relationship to cities have been the focus of an increasingly large number of activities in the international community over the last couple of years now, and local authorities have become more and more active in the global arena. This gives us several opportunities to build upon existing forms of collaboration for the future.

For example, the GCM called for the establishment of a Capacity Building Mechanism as a major source of ideas, tools, resources, data and information, analysis and policy guidance, including for subnational authorities. The Capacity Building Mechanism, that is currently being established by the UN Network on Migration, will draw from the experiences and expertise that is available at sub-national levels, making it an ideal opportunity to engage in a practical way with local authorities.

In the policy context, several multilateral fora have provided important platforms for collaboration. For example, the Third Global Mayoral Forum on migration and development took place in the Philippines in 2016. In the same year, the Fifth World Summit of Local and Regional Leaders was organized in Bogota. This Summit brought together local authorities and other actors to support global sustainable urbanisation efforts. The theme of migration and development has been integrated into the Mayors Mechanism, and is now part of the state-led Global Forum on Migration and Development, alongside similar mechanisms for civil society and the private sector.

Cooperation with the United Nations system has also grown significantly. The different agencies that make up the UN Network on Migration have been working closely with local authorities in the framework of those international processes. The UN Network on Migration is committed to providing technical advice and to facilitating action at regional, country and local levels. We stand ready to assist all levels of government in implementing the GCM in alignment with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and encourage UN Member States to continue to empower and engage with local authorities in their efforts to implement and review the GCM.