

International Organization for Migration (IOM)

International Partnerships Division (IPD)

**INFORMATION NOTE ON**  
**INTER-STATE CONSULTATION MECHANISMS ON MIGRATION AND**  
**REVERSING THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON SUSTAINABLE**  
**DEVELOPMENT**

*This note outlines the potential role of Inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs) in reversing the coronavirus pandemic's negative impact on sustainable development.*

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***2019-2020 Coronavirus Pandemic, its Impact on Migration and Sustainable Development***

2019-2020 coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) is new type of crisis affecting almost every country and every domain. Depending on how it evolves, it may irreversibly change not only human interactions and practices, but also governance, politics and the world order. The pandemic may lead to raise of xenophobia, unilateralism, isolation of nation States, and dismantling of political and economic unions. It jeopardizes one of the most valuable achievements of the modern times – international development efforts towards peace and prosperity for people and the planet and the progress on sustainable development. This pandemic is a test for the modern multilateralism, regionalism and international cooperation.

Migrants are an increasingly vulnerable group in this pandemic. Those migrants, who are stranded in countries caught in health crisis, fall through the cracks of government responses and may not always have access to health and other relevant services or even information on these. Migrant accommodation centers, camps and shelters may not be able to provide adequate prevention of the disease, testing, or treatment. Closing down of activities will affect migrant workers lacking access to social protection, paid sick leave or lost earnings support. Migrant workers continue playing an indispensable in health and care economy and thus they contribute to the fight against the pandemic. However, potential long-term scenarios of closed borders and restrictions on freedom of movement may affect migration and lead to a denial of positive contributions of migrants to sustainable development.

The States and all stakeholders should join efforts to comprehensively respond to the coronavirus pandemic, including addressing the needs and protection of migrants in countries caught in health crises, supporting efforts towards achieving universal health coverage, directing migrants' positive contributions to restoring economies and development.

### ***Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms (ISCMs), Migration Governance, Migration Health and Sustainable Development***

[Inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration](#) (ISCMs) are State-led, ongoing information-sharing and policy dialogues at the regional, interregional or global level for States with an interest in promoting cooperation in the field of migration. ISCMs comprise of (i) [regional consultative processes on migration](#) (RCPs), bringing together countries within a given region; (ii) [interregional forums on migration](#) (IRFs),

connecting countries in a dialogue across two or more regions or migration corridors (these include also the continental ISCMs); and (iii) [global processes on migration](#), facilitating dialogue across all regions. Over more than three decades, they have provided an informal, non-binding environment for States to develop a collaborative approach to migration management and governance.

These important actors in migration diplomacy have paved the way for the emergence of global initiatives addressing migration and mainstreaming migration into the development agenda. ISCMs have provided valid policy dialogue and exchange forums to support the implementation, follow-up and review of the global compact for migration as well as migration-related sustainable development goal (SDG) targets in the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). At present almost every ISCM addresses migration and development<sup>1</sup>.

Many ISCMs have played a role in wider recognition of the migrants' right to health within their regions both through targeted migrant health initiatives and as part of their contribution to attainment of SDGs and [SDG 3](#) (*Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages*) in particular<sup>2</sup>. Some ISCMs have addressed crisis preparedness within their regions.

## THE POSSIBLE RESPONSE BY INTER-STAT CONSULTATIVE MECHANISMS ON MIGRATION (ISCMs) TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Although ISCMs are advisory entities, they are essential in shaping approaches and finding solutions to emerging issues of concern to their member States (MSs). ISCMs can advise their MSs on migration aspects of the response to the pandemic.

Individual ISCMs can consider to:

- address at their 2020 meetings the migration aspects of the coronavirus pandemic and its actual and possible impact in their respective regions;
- formulate positions and recommendations on:
  - o incorporating migration aspects in the national and regional responses to the coronavirus pandemic and health crises in general;
  - o protecting migrants in crises situations and their inclusion in national and regional crises response plans;
  - o the development potential of migration in a crisis response and post-crisis transition (e.g. filling gap in labour force after demographic changes, migrant workers in healthcare services, etc.);
  - o the importance of international cooperation on reversing the coronavirus pandemic's negative impact on sustainable development.
- include migrant health and crises preparedness in their areas of thematic focus, if not already addressed by the given ISCM;

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<sup>1</sup> Migration and development is addressed by the following ISCMs: 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean; Abu Dhabi Dialogue; Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugee Affairs (ARCP); Budapest Process; Caribbean Migration Consultations (CMC); Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM); Colombo Process; Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development (FIBEMYD); Khartoum Process; Migration Dialogue for Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) Region (MID-IGAD); Migration Dialogue from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Member States (MIDCOM); Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa (MIDSA); Migration Dialogue for the Indian Ocean Commission Countries (MiDIOCC); Pacific Immigration Development Community (PIDC); Pan-African Forum on Migration (PAFOM); Prague Process; Rabat Process; Regional Conference on Migration (RCM); South American Conference on Migration (SACM); and Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD).

<sup>2</sup> 5+5 Dialogue on Migration in the Western Mediterranean; CMC; Colombo Process; MID-IGAD; MIDCOM; MIDSA; and RCM address migrant health.

- provide policy advice, raise awareness and guide their respective MSs to include migrants in their response to health crisis and on reversing the coronavirus pandemic's negative impact on sustainable development also through the potential of migration;
- offer forums for their Member States to regularly discuss and exchange on migration health, and crisis preparedness and response issues, where necessary, create networks or working groups of officials within their respective constituencies;
- build their MSs' capacities on:
  - o health aspects of migration;
  - o migration and development; and
  - o migration aspects of crises management and protecting migrants in crises situations.
- collect data and conduct analysis and research;
- build partnerships with other relevant actors (e.g. intergovernmental organizations and non-State actors) towards joint responses to the pandemic.

Collectively, ISCMs may forge joint positions on the migration aspects of the response to the coronavirus pandemic across the regions.

## Annex 1. Non-Comprehensive List of Useful Resources

### - *On ISCMs*

International Organization for Migration (IOM), IOM [website on ISCMs](#) (website)

IOM, "[Migration and the Sustainable Development Goals: the Role of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration and of Regional Economic Organizations. Summary Report of the 6<sup>th</sup> Global Meeting of ISCMs](#)" (2016)

### - *On sustainable development*

[2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) (2015)

### - *On migration crises preparedness*

Inter-Agency Standing Committee, "[Gender Handbook for Humanitarian Action](#)" (2018)

IOM, "[Migration Crisis Operational Framework](#) (MCOF)" (2012)

IOM, [IOM Global Crisis Response Platform](#) (webpage)

IOM, Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative (MICIC), Council of Europe, "[Migrants in Disaster Risk Reduction: Practices for Inclusion](#)" (2017)

Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative (MICIC), "[Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster](#)" (2016)

### - *On health aspects of migration*

IOM, "[Migration Health in Crisis Context: Primary Healthcare Services for Migrants in Crisis Situations](#)" (2014)

IOM, "[Health Response to Crisis Situation](#)" (webpage)

IOM, "[Migrant Health and Psychosocial Support in Crises](#)" (2014)

IOM, "[Mainstreaming the Health of Migrants in the Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[Migration Health in the Sustainable Development Goals](#)" (2018)

IOM, "[Migration Health in Crisis Context](#)" (2019)

IOM, "[The Health of Migrant Workers and Left-Behind Families](#)" (2018)

IOM, "[Health, Border and Mobility Management](#)" (2019)

IOM, "[Displacement and Health](#)" (2019)

IOM, "[Migration of Health Workers](#)" (2018)

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "[Health for Everyone? Social Inequalities in Health and Health Systems](#)," (2019)

### - *On coronavirus pandemic and migration*

IOM, "[Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan. Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[IOM Statement on COVID-19 and Mobility](#)" (2020)

IOM, [IOM Response to COVID 19](#) (website)

United Nations Network on Migration, Statement "[COVID-19 Does Not Discriminate; Nor Should Our Response](#)" (2020)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), [Statement by Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, on the COVID-19 crisis](#) (2020)

- ***On coronavirus pandemic and development***

IOM, "[COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #10: Economic Impacts on Migrants. Understanding the migration and mobility implications of COVID-19](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #11: Implications for Development](#)" (2020)

United Nations, "[Shared responsibility, global solidarity: Responding to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19](#)" (2020)

- ***On coronavirus pandemic and migrant rights***

IOM, "[COVID-19: How to include marginalized and vulnerable people in risk communication and community engagement](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #6: Stigmatization & discrimination](#)" (2020)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), "[Guidance on the Human Rights Dimensions of COVID-19: Migrants](#)" (2020)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), "[Protecting Children Deprived of Liberty During the Covid-19 Outbreak](#)" (2020)

World Health Organization (WHO), "[Interim guidance for refugee and migrant health in relation to COVID-19 in the WHO European Region](#)" (2020)

- ***On coronavirus pandemic and gender***

United Nations, UN Women, [Policy Brief: the Impact of COVID 19 on Women](#) (2020)

- ***On coronavirus pandemic and detention***

Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), and World Health Organization (WHO), "[Interim Guidance: Covid-19: Focus on Persons Deprived of Their Liberty](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #9: Immigration detention](#)" (2020)

United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action, "[Technical Note: COVID-19 and Children Deprived of their Liberty](#)" (2020)

- ***On coronavirus pandemic and border management***

IOM, "[COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #3. Travel restrictions and mobility. Understanding the migration and mobility implications of COVID-19](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #4: Consular and other assistance for stranded migrants and travellers](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[COVID-19 Analytical Snapshot #13: Irregularity, protection and smuggling](#)" (2020)

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), "[Key Legal Considerations on access to territory for persons in need of international protection in the context of the COVID-19 response](#)" (2020)

- ***On coronavirus pandemic and labour***

International Labour Organization (ILO), "[ILO Monitor 2nd Edition: COVID-19 and the world of work](#)" (2020)

ILO, "[Joint Statement on COVID-19 by International Organisation of Employers and International Trade Union Confederation](#)" (2020)

ILO, UNICEF and UN Women, "[Family-friendly policies and other good workplace practices in the context of COVID-19: Key steps employers can take](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[COVID-19: Guidance for employers and business to enhance migrant worker protection during the current health crisis](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[Tips for employers of domestic workers during the COVID-19 pandemic.](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[Tips for migrant workers whose job is affected by the COVID-19 pandemic](#)" (2020)

- ***On coronavirus pandemic and camp management***

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC), IOM, UNHCR and WHO, "[Interim Guidance on Scaling-up COVID-19 Outbreak in Readiness and Response Operations in Camps and Camp-like Settings](#)" (2020)

IOM, "[COVID Camp Management Operational Guidance. Frequently Asked Questions](#)" (2020)