



Ref: 2017/453

The Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates presents its compliments to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and has the honour to attach herewith a letter from Dr. Omar Alnuaimi, Assistant Undersecretary for Communication and International Relations at the Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation of the United Arab Emirates, to Her Excellency Louise Arbour, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, containing the UAE's inputs for the forthcoming report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on recommendations and commitments for adoption in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

In this regard, the UAE Mission would appreciate the assistance of the Office of the SRSG for International Migration in delivering the letter to its esteemed destination.

The Permanent Mission of the United Arab Emirates to the United Nations avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration the assurances of its highest consideration.

22 September 2017



**Office of the SRSG for International Migration
United Nations
New York**



H.E. Louise Arbour
SRSG for International Migration
UN Secretariat Building S-2729
New York N.Y. 10017

Reference: 222\2017
September 12 2017

Your Excellency,

RE: The Report of the SRSG for International Migration on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

I am pleased to present the UAE's inputs into your forthcoming report to the General Assembly of the United Nations on recommendations and commitments for adoption in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

This submission begins by providing context on the UAE's own experience with migration. Building on that, we make several key recommendations on: firstly, strengthening regional consultative processes; secondly, the role of the GFMD in follow up and review of the GCM and migration-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda; and finally, the framing of GCM principles and commitments.

I hope that you will find this submission to be of value when compiling your report to the General Assembly, and I look forward to reading it on completion.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Omar Alnuaimi
Assistant Undersecretary, Communication and International Relations
Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation
United Arab Emirates





INPUTS FROM THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES INTO THE SRSG FOR INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION'S REPORT, ON THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION, TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE UNITED NATIONS

September 2017

The United Arab Emirates is honoured to present our inputs into the SRSG for International Migration's report to the General Assembly on recommendations in advance of Phase III of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). The United Arab Emirates is committed to supporting the ongoing efforts of the SRSG for International Migration, the Co-Facilitators and all Member States in delivering the Global Compact for Migration, and is proud to be taking an active role throughout.

Our support for – and involvement in – the GCM is preceded by a long history of engagement in dialogue on the international governance of labour migration. As Permanent Secretary of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD), a regional consultative process (RCP) for Asian countries of temporary labour origin and destination, the UAE plays a key role in supporting regional efforts to foster cooperation and raise standards of international governance. In turn, the work of the ADD has been, to a great extent, inspired by the example set by the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), as a state-led consultative process.

This submission begins by providing context on the UAE's own experience with migration – in particular, temporary labour migration. Building on that, we make several key recommendations on: firstly, strengthening RCPs; secondly, the role of the GFMD in follow up and review of the GCM and migration-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda; and finally, the framing of GCM principles and commitments. Overall, the **value of the GCM**, from the UAE perspective, lies in providing guidance and assistance for states and their stakeholders in efforts to develop frameworks for expanding opportunities and protection for migrants.

1. The UAE Context

In the forty five years since its founding, the United Arab Emirates has grown to become one of the world's leading economies. Its extraordinary development has been undertaken by, and created opportunities for, temporary labour migrants, both skilled and unskilled, from around the world. As a consequence, it has, over that



period, peacefully undergone a demographic change on a scale with few parallels. Today, the UAE has the largest per-capita foreign-born population in the world, with around 90% of its residents born overseas. Despite having a population of only 9 million, the UAE is the world's fifth most popular migrant destination.

The benefits to the UAE of its openness to labour migration are self-evident in the development that has taken place. What is perhaps less well recognised are the benefits that have accrued to the migrants themselves, and their communities. The UAE is the sixth largest source of remittances in the world. According to World Bank figures (2014), UAE-based migrants remit approximately \$19.2 billion annually. Moreover, migrant workers often return home with enhanced social capital, including skills and knowledge, networks and entrepreneurial ideas.

The key enabler of the UAE's peaceful demographic shift has been a system of governance that balances openness to migrant labour with a recognition that the rights, culture and economic security of the host community need to be respected and protected, if domestic support for migration is to be maintained. However, the Government of the UAE recognises that, as with every governance system, these trade-offs can create distortions within the market that leave migrants vulnerable to abuses. One of the key factors for the viability of the system is therefore political commitment to continually introduce improvements, both in response to challenges and based on best practices identified in international and regional forums, including GFMD and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue.

The insights and suggestions that we offer below are therefore rooted in our experience of working cooperatively with other Member States to clamp down on abuses, while simultaneously ensuring that each Member State retains control over its sovereignty, is in a position to protect its citizens, and can foster a welcoming and hospitable environment for migrants.

2. The Role of Regional Consultative Processes

The UAE's view is that RCPs – working from a global set of norms – are the best vehicles for addressing the specificities of different migration corridors. We therefore believe that the GCM can make a substantial contribution by further strengthening these mechanisms, such as through encouragement of increased participation, operational guidelines, and new focus areas.

Although, as the SRS Third Thematic Inter Agency Brief makes clear, migration governance begins at the national level, the UAE would submit that the work of



harmonising conditions for migrant workers must begin and be realised principally at the regional level. As we note below, the UAE believes that the Global Compact for Migration can play a vital role in shaping the principles of good governance at a global level. Contextual differences – resulting from national and sub-national environments – are such that the experiences and needs of labour migrants across regions can vary significantly, necessitating very different approaches to the implementation of governance standards.

However, as the UAE in its role as Permanent Secretary of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue can attest, regional similarities allow for states to cooperate multilaterally to share best practices, develop mutually beneficial programmes and establish joint standards that often lead to meaningful improvements in governance. Regional Consultative Processes allow Member States to engage in cooperative dialogue that builds on and enhances bilateral action.

Based on the above, the UAE would therefore suggest that the following recommendations be included in the forthcoming report:

- The GCM should call on Member States to deepen and strengthen their participation in RCPs, providing operational guidelines and highlighting new focus areas, alongside finding innovative ways to give more centrality to the insights and initiatives of RCPs in the strengthening of global governance.
- For example, the GCM should highlight illustrative examples of programmes and best practices undertaken by RCPs, to encourage inter-regional knowledge sharing. The Chair of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue has recently submitted to the Co-Facilitators a report, *“Cooperating to Improve Temporary Labour Mobility Among Asian Countries of Origin and Destination: Inputs from the Abu Dhabi Dialogue to Inform the Development of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”*. This report details a number of programmes that are being undertaken by the Member States of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue. By including such concepts from RCPs, the GCM can equip Member States with actionable ideas for implementation.

3. Follow-up and review of the Global Compact for Migration - The Role of the Global Forum for Migration and Development

The GFMD has helped establish a high degree of trust between Member States, civil society, the private sector, and other stakeholders, leading to better outcomes for



migrants, as more diverse viewpoints are taken into account and a broader range of parties are spurred to action.

The UAE notes that the Sutherland Report raises “questions regarding the Forum’s continued purpose and added value”, as migration “becomes more firmly anchored in the UN” system. The UAE is of the view that the GFMD should retain its essential character as a voluntary, inter-governmental, non-binding and informal consultative process: changes to its fundamental make-up would risk undermining the trust that has been built over the years, and the loss of a space for the free exchange of ideas on good governance.

However, the UAE would support an expanded role for the GFMD, building on its unique characteristics, to include a wider mandate than it currently enjoys. We would, therefore, endorse the Sutherland report’s proposal that “the GFMD serve to support consensus-building on an ambitious global compact on migration and to advance the implementation of the migration-related commitments in the 2030 Agenda”. The UAE would, in addition, envisage a role for the GFMD in providing oversight over the implementation and evaluation of GCM commitments.

The UAE would therefore suggest that the following recommendation be included in the forthcoming report:

- Building on its role as a voluntary, inter-governmental, non-binding and informal consultative process, the extension of the GFMD’s mandate to include a role for follow-up and review of the commitments of the GCM, as well as the migration-related aspects of the 2030 Agenda. The GFMD would ideally become the point before the High-Level Political Forum where gaps and implementation of solutions on migration are identified and discussed in meaningful detail.

4. GCM Principles and Commitments

The GCM represents an historic opportunity for the international community to take action to improve governance standards for migrants in all categories. As we have outlined above, the UAE’s chief priority is expanding opportunities and protections for temporary labour migrants; and we believe that the model of temporary labour migration, when well governed, represents a valid and legitimate route for Member States to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration, including for all low skilled workers. The benefits include accelerated levels of economic growth in countries of destination; and raised standards of living and improved prospects for individuals in their countries of origin.



The GCM should acknowledge that there is no single prescriptive model of migration governance; instead, it should seek to **establish the broad principles of good governance**, and build consensus around the augmentation of frameworks in which those principles can be most successfully and effectively brought to fruition. In that way, we believe, the GCM can help to build an international system of governance that is dynamic, migrant- and outcome-oriented, and that encourages both States and non-state actors to work together in an environment of trust.

Building on the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, we would like to see the following principles at the heart of the GCM:

- **Protection:** ensuring the protection of migrants;
- **Opportunities:** empowering migrants to fulfil their goals and aspirations;
- **Equity:** affording migrants the opportunity to benefit equitably from the outcomes of migration.

These principles in fact closely align with the commitments outlined by the Sutherland Report. We can therefore endorse a similar type of structuring for commitments to be outlined by the GCM, not only for states, but for regional consultative processes.