**Follow-up on the Implementation of resolution A/RES/76/172 on the Protection of migrants**

1. **Introduction**

The Arab region is a prominent region of origin, transit and destination for migrants and forcibly displaced population. It hosts around 41.4 million migrants and refugees, constituting 15 per cent of all international migrants worldwide.

The human rights of migrants are increasingly being addressed by ESCWA member states, as evidenced through the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) review process. Indeed, the adoption of the GCM acted as a catalyst that accelerated Arab countries’ efforts to adopt policy and institutional reforms related to migration governance. It also served to highlight continuing structural barriers that increase migrants’ vulnerability as revealed during the COVID-19 pandemic. This input summarizes the key promising practices, challenges, and recommendations on the protection of migrant rights[[1]](#footnote-1).

1. **The implementation of resolution A/RES/76/172 on the Protection of migrants in the Arab region**
	1. **Promising practices**
		1. *Combatting human trafficking & smuggling of migrants (paras 5 c, 8, 9, 10, and 11 d)*

Some Arab countries adopted relevant laws, as in Mauritania and Morocco, and other countries, such as Iraq, established a central committee to combat human trafficking and align national policy with international standards. While some countries like Libya, developed programs to build the capacity of judicial bodies to address human trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

* + 1. *Supporting migrant workers’ rights (para 5 l)*

Arab States have taken positive steps to harmonize the working conditions of migrant workers with a protection- and rights-based approach. For example, Morocco passed the Law Establishing the Terms and Conditions of Labor and Employment of Female Migrant Workers Living in Morocco and passed Law No. 12-19, which defines labour and employment conditions for domestic workers and guarantees them more rights and equity. Other Arab countries, such as Qatar, Lebanon, Libya, and Bahrain, have also made reforms to enhance protection of migrant workers’ fundamental rights.

* + 1. *Addressing the COVID-19 pandemic (paras 6 d, e, and f)*

Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, many Arab countries adopted policies and programs, including regularizing the status of migrants and extending their visas, residency and work permits, as in the case of Jordan, Lebanon, Qatar and Algeria. Many countries also provided health services and vaccines to migrants, as in the case of Egypt and Kuwait. Some countries, such as Egypt, have made it easier to enroll migrant children in schools during the pandemic, even if they do not have valid residence permits. While other countries, such as Iraq, targeted the displaced and refugees and intensified its efforts to raise awareness and established local centers to provide them with health services.

* + 1. *Implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies (para 11b)*

Several Arab States have made strides in harmonizing the GCM with new or existing national mechanisms on the one hand and in advancing migration-related agenda-setting and policymaking on the other. Bahrain, Qatar, Egypt, Kuwait, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Libya have integrated migration issues with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Moreover, several Arab States have committed to establish a National Migration Strategy (NMS) built on inter-ministerial consultations and a thorough and updated assessment of their migration realities and challenges. In this pursuit, ESCWA is in the process of supporting Jordan, Somalia, and the Sudan to develop national migration strategies.

* + 1. *Strengthening data systems for evidence-based policy making (para 11 e)*

Finally, Arab States, for example Egypt, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Qatar and Tunisia, have emphasized the development of data-sharing systems and the collection of accurate and disaggregated data as a basis for evidence-based policies on the one hand, and for improving migrants’ livelihoods, access to protection and working conditions on the other.

* 1. **Challenges**
		1. Limited financial and human resources hinder the governments’ ability to implement measures to protect migrants’ rights.
		2. Weak capacity to collect, centralize and share migration data complicate efforts to develop well-governed migration policies that protect migrants’ rights.
		3. Limited research infrastructure on migration to support the development of evidence-based policymaking for migrant’ rights.
		4. Low levels of intra-regional coordination and collaboration limit opportunities to share best practices and data on migrants’ rights.
		5. Exogenous shocks, such as political instability, conflict, and the COVID-19 pandemic, complicate efforts to protect migrants’ rights*.*
	2. **Recommendations**
		1. Respect the human rights of all migrants by ensuring equality before the law through adopting necessary legislation and promoting migrants’ access to justice systems.
		2. Ensure that all migrants have the right to access to basic services, including health and education.
		3. Guarantee the rights of migrant children and women by mainstreaming a gender perspective across migration policies and ensuring they are child sensitive.
		4. Protect and empower migrant workers through adopting legislation and policies that are aligned with international labour and human rights standards.
		5. Combat human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and support victims of trafficking.
1. The information for this input was primarily taken from the GCM Regional Review Report, which is available [here](https://www.unescwa.org/sites/default/files/event/materials/Arab%20Regional%20Global%20Compact%20for%20Migration%20Review%20Report_EN.pdf). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)