

Second Regional Review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in Latin America and the Caribbean

18 to 20 March 2025
ECLAC Headquarters in Santiago, Chile

Background Note for Session 4: Data, evidence-based policies and international cooperation

Leading entities: ECLAC and IOM

Supporting entity: UNFPA



Introduction¹

The fourth session of the Regional Review will offer space for discussion of progress made in the implementation of objectives 1, 3, 7, 17, 23 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM).

Migration dynamics in Latin America and the Caribbean are highly complex and diverse. Although the United States of America, Canada and European countries are traditional destinations, over a decade and a half, the number of migrants in Latin America and the Caribbean more than doubled, from 8.3 million in 2010 to 17.5 million in 2024. This increase was driven by intraregional movements of Venezuelans in South America². While most movements occur through regular channels, irregular migration has surged to unprecedented levels, with over one million crossings through the Darién since 2022. By the third quarter of 2024, the Darién recorded 286,210 entries, down from the same period in 2023, with Venezuelans accounting for the majority of the flows, followed by single-digit percentages of Ecuadorians, Haitians and nationalities from all over the

¹ This background note provides examples of progress and challenges and opportunities in, regional, sub-regional and intraregional collaboration towards the implementation of the GCM by Member States drawn from inputs from the Regional Network on Migration; voluntary GCM reports and pledges submitted to the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF); the IMRF Progress Declaration; the Report of the First Regional Review, consultations with stakeholders; and practices and information available on the Migration Network Hub.

² [UNDESA, International Migrant Stock, 2024.](#)

world³. At the U.S. Southwest border, over 1.3 million encounters were reported by the third quarter of 2024.

Lack of job opportunities, socioeconomic disparities, political instability, violence, and disasters drive these flows. Despite challenges, the region has responded with regularization programs and rights-based approaches to provide protection and migration pathways. Furthermore, the Caribbean has been characterized by being impacted by disasters and violence, driving displacement and also by emigration of educated populations on specialized professions⁴.

Efforts to improve disaggregated migration data and enhance evidence-based migration governance remain critical to addressing these dynamics effectively and ensuring targeted responses. Investing in robust data collection systems is essential for understanding the vulnerabilities of diverse migrant groups and supporting policies that meet their needs.

Strengthening access to clear, accurate, and accessible information about safe and regular migration pathways is essential to counter the increasing reliance on irregular routes. Public awareness campaigns and cross-border cooperation can empower migrants with the knowledge needed to make safer choices during their journeys.

Addressing vulnerabilities in migration, particularly in contexts of displacement caused by violence and disasters, remains a pressing challenge in the region. Coordinated efforts are necessary to provide targeted support to those at risk and ensure their access to humanitarian aid and protection mechanisms. Recommendations on saving lives from the Secretary General's GCM Report⁵ indicate that it is critical to adopt measures that separate humanitarian assistance from immigration enforcement, ensuring migrants in distress can access support without fear of legal repercussions. The First Forum on GCM Champion Countries (2023) highlighted that engaging local communities in addressing vulnerabilities can significantly improve access to protection services for migrants. Supporting structural initiatives at the community level ensures a more tailored and sustainable response to migrants' needs.

Innovative technologies and tools for migration data collection and analysis are essential to improve forecasting and planning for migration governance. The integration of big data and AI-driven platforms offers promising opportunities to enhance decision-making processes and streamline migration management.

Overview of progress, challenges and opportunities

Data and evidence

In recent years, significant regional milestones have been achieved in data gathering and evidence generation to support the GCM. Firstly, as part of the technical support activities for the Statistical Conference of the Americas (SCA-ECLAC), during 2020-2021 the Working Group on International Migration, in coordination with National Statistical Offices contributed to the [evaluation of data](#)

³ [SNM, Statistics, 2024](#).

⁴ [IOM, Migration Trends in the Americas, Quarterly report, 2024](#).

⁵ Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Report of the Secretary-General, 2024.

[SG Report_GCMpdf.pdf](#)

[production capacity on international migration of 10 countries in the region](#), based on the results of a questionnaire with 63 questions referring to eight major dimensions associated with the measurement of international migration. Three webinars were also organized to discuss these results, on: 1) [Statistical systems and information needs on international migration](#); 2) [Measuring international migration from administrative registries](#); and 3) [Selection of Relevant Indicators on International Migration](#).

Secondly, the activities of the SCA-ECLAC Group “Practical Guide for the Production of Harmonized Statistics on Forced Displacement and Migration Biennium: 2024-2025”, which was developed in collaboration with UNHCR and IOM under the coordination of INE Honduras and the participation of the national statistical offices of 11 countries (Brazil, Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Mexico, Paraguay, and Peru), are currently being implemented. This plan has been instrumental in coordinating efforts and resources to address the needs of displaced persons and refugees in the region. In addition, there have been interagency updates on data topics from regional conferences such as the South American Conference on Migrations (CSM) and the Regional Conference on Migration (CRM). These updates have facilitated the sharing of information and best practices among various stakeholders, enhancing the overall data landscape.

In terms of cooperation of member states in regional processes, the member states of the Central American Integration System (SICA) have advanced in the deployment of a migration statistics module in the regional statistical information system. Eight countries provided data on seven migration movements which are now being visualized by the statistics branch of SICA. IOM will continue to accompany this process in the upcoming years. There are also similar processes ongoing for South America and the Caribbean, but in earlier stages.

Interagency data compilation work has also been carried out within the framework of the United Nations Issue-Based Coalition on Human Mobility (IBC-HM). This work includes the production of analysis and infographics, which have been crucial in visualizing and understanding migration trends and patterns.

Training programs for government officials on migration data have also been conducted by organizations such as IOM, SELA, and CELADE – Population Division of the ECLAC. These programs include intensive demographic analysis courses, which have been essential in building the capacity of stakeholders to collect and analyze migration data. Furthermore, the ILO Regional Strategy on Labor Migration and Human Mobility in Latin America and the Caribbean 2023-2030 has been launched. This strategy aims to improve the capacity of countries in the region to collect statistics and data on labor migration and mobility, thereby supporting informed decision-making.

Lastly, IOM's Regional Forum on International Migration Data was held in 2022 and the DESA-IOM-OECD International Forum on Migration Statistics was carried out at ECLAC Headquarters in January 2023. These forums provide a platform for stakeholders to discuss and collaborate on migration data issues, ensuring continuous improvement and innovation in data practices. They have been followed by the UN World Data Forum, which was hosted in Medellín in 2024. These milestones collectively represent significant progress in the region's efforts to enhance data gathering and evidence generation for the achievement of the Global Compact on Migration.

Despite advances at the subregional level, significant challenges remain in the dissemination of migration data. These challenges stem from differences in terminology, concepts, data

disaggregation, and coordination mechanisms. These inconsistencies hinder the effective sharing and utilization of migration data across different regions. The IMRF 2022 Progress Declaration highlighted that enhancing data-sharing systems and improving interoperability between national and regional databases is essential for advancing evidence-based migration governance and fostering cross-border cooperation on migration management.

To enhance the collection and analysis of migration data, it is essential to emphasize the use of censuses, household surveys, and administrative records. These traditional sources can be complemented with data produced by international organizations, such as flow monitoring tools, which help to better understand migration profiles, needs, and reasons. Additionally, implementing virtual surveys and qualitative methodologies, such as focus groups, can provide valuable insights into migration trends and experiences.

Migrant vulnerabilities

Identifying migrant vulnerabilities requires specialized expertise and access to protection, which is resource intensive. This is particularly challenging in contexts where the number of migrants in irregular situations has increased. These migrants are often hidden and excluded from services, making it difficult to identify their vulnerabilities. There is a lack of coherence in the tools used to identify these vulnerabilities, as well as insufficient investment in specialized staff and services.

Furthermore, there has been a shift in public discourse regarding migrants' vulnerabilities. This shift has led to an increase in the exclusion of migrants from basic services, which in turn has resulted in a decrease in the identification of migrant vulnerabilities. As public sentiment becomes less supportive, the ability to recognize and address the needs of vulnerable migrants diminishes, exacerbating their plight.

Innovative sources of data, including social media, big data, internet connectivity, and mobile telephony, should be utilized. These sources offer real-time information and can capture the dynamic nature of migration. The Secretary-General's 2024 report⁶ emphasizes the importance of adopting cutting-edge technologies, such as AI and geospatial data, to improve real-time migration monitoring and planning. Promoting mechanisms of cooperation and coordination between countries is crucial for the effective sharing of migration data. This collaboration ensures that data is comprehensive and comparable across different regions.

Taking advantage of existing global and regional tools for the identification, referral, and protection of vulnerable migrants is vital. Standardizing responses across different contexts and ensuring continuity of care can significantly improve the support provided to migrants. It is also important to highlight that objective 7 of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) can and should be integrated with other objectives, including those focused on ethical recruitment, return, readmission, and reintegration (RRR), as well as trafficking and smuggling.

⁶ Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Report of the Secretary-General, 2024.
[SG Report_GCMpdf.pdf](#)

Following the recommendations on saving lives resulted from the Secretary General's Report on GCM implementation (2024)⁷, developing national systems for the systematic collection and centralization of data on missing migrants is crucial. This includes leveraging disaster victim identification responses to mass casualty events involving migrants.

Supporting existing good practices at the structural level is essential for increased sustainability. This includes initiatives that work directly with communities, as they are often best positioned to understand and address the specific needs of migrants. By building on these practices, we can create more resilient and effective systems for managing migration.

Information

Regarding objectives 3 and 17, the Latin American and Caribbean region has made remarkable strides in developing comprehensive information strategies and anti-discrimination initiatives. A notable achievement has been the creation of an extensive network of digital platforms and communication campaigns that provide crucial information to migrants in multiple languages. These initiatives represent a significant shift towards more accessible and inclusive information systems, with platforms like "Suramérica Abierta" and "Migrantinfo" offering comprehensive resources about rights, obligations, and migration procedures. The health sector has also joined these efforts through the "Salud y Migración en las Américas" platform, which has proven particularly valuable in ensuring migrants' access to health information and services.

However, the region faces increasing challenges in combating discrimination and xenophobia, particularly in countries receiving large migration flows. Economic pressures in host communities have intensified tensions and discrimination against migrant populations. This situation has been exacerbated by the proliferation of misinformation and negative narratives on social media platforms, where anti-immigrant sentiment can spread rapidly and influence public opinion. Of particular concern is the growing trend of politicizing migration issues for electoral purposes, which has contributed to a more hostile environment for migrants in several countries.

In response to these challenges, governments, international cooperation and civil society organizations have launched various innovative initiatives to promote social inclusion and combat discrimination. Campaigns such as "XenofobiaCero" and "Aquí cabemos todos" have employed evidence-based approaches to counter negative stereotypes and promote understanding between host communities and migrants. The "Entre-lazos" initiative has been particularly effective in highlighting the cultural and economic contributions of migrants to their host societies, while "Panas: Lo genial de la amistad" has focused on fostering positive interactions at the community level.

Despite these efforts, institutional capacity to combat xenophobia and protect migrants' rights remains limited in many countries. The lack of sustainable funding for anti-discrimination programs, combined with insufficient coordination between different levels of government, has hindered the effectiveness of these initiatives. Additionally, the absence of standardized approaches to measuring and monitoring discrimination has made it difficult to assess the impact of various interventions and adjust strategies accordingly. The IMRF 2022 Progress Declaration emphasized that to combat xenophobia and discrimination, governments and

⁷ Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration Report of the Secretary-General, 2024.
[SG Report GCMpdf.pdf](#)

stakeholders should intensify evidence-based public discourse strategies, working closely with media and civil society to counter misinformation and promote inclusive narratives that highlight migrants' contributions.

Looking forward, the region has significant opportunities to strengthen its approach to information provision, anti-discrimination efforts and cooperation. Digital technologies offer promising avenues for developing more sophisticated and targeted communication strategies that can reach diverse audiences effectively. The growing network of regional cooperation mechanisms provides a foundation for sharing best practices and coordinating responses to xenophobia across borders. Furthermore, the increasing engagement of civil society organizations and the private sector in these efforts suggests the potential for more comprehensive and sustainable approaches to promoting social inclusion. The 2024 SG report on GCM highlights the need for stronger integration of migration considerations into national development frameworks, ensuring coherence with sustainable development goals.

The success of future initiatives will depend largely on the ability to develop evidence-based strategies that address the root causes of discrimination while promoting positive narratives about migration. This includes strengthening institutional frameworks, improving coordination between different stakeholders, and ensuring that anti-discrimination efforts are integrated into broader social inclusion policies. The experience of successful programs in the region demonstrates that combining public education, community engagement, and targeted communication strategies can effectively promote more inclusive societies where migrants' rights and dignity are respected.

Guiding Questions

1. What are the biggest challenges for migration cycle (emigration, return, reunification, immigration, transit, circulation) data capturing systems to strengthen the generation of evidence-based regulations, programs and policies geared toward the elimination of discrimination against and enhance the visibility of migrants' contributions to both origin and host communities?
2. How can we leverage existing migration data and innovative technologies to promote evidence-based policies while avoiding overburdening migrant populations with repeated data collection?
3. What joint commitments or recommendations would you propose to enhance cooperation on financing, capacity-building, policy advice, and data-sharing, aligned with GCM objectives and guiding principles?
4. What key recommendations, promising practices, and lessons learned from national and regional collaboration to strengthen migration data should inform the 2026 IMRF in this thematic area?