

# Human Mobility in the Context of Disasters, Climate Change and Environmental Degradation

## Ten insights from the GCM baseline mapping report

In a field as cross-cutting and complex as human mobility in the context of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation, analyzing policy development can be a daunting task. This is particularly true in the absence of baseline information against which progress can be measured. In December 2018, the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), provided the opportunity to tackle this challenge: for the first time, UN Member States made specific commitments to address the drivers that compel people to leave their countries of origin in disaster and climate change contexts, and to protect and assist those on the move.

More than three years later, in May 2022, UN Member States and other actors met to assess progress in the implementation of the GCM at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF). To this end, the GCM baseline mapping report offers important insights into the extent to which governments and other actors have so far moved the policy needle on addressing human mobility in disaster and climate change contexts.

Figures updated on 18/08/23 except Insight nb.4.

• Distribution of instruments by thematic area



Based on the findings of a global database covering 1,348 national instruments in 172 countries across five regions, and a detailed pilot analysis of instruments and practices in 51 countries, the report highlights policy development and gaps towards the implementation of relevant GCM commitments. It is part of a broader tool that also consists of an Analytical Framework with indicators, which can be used for future monitoring and review efforts.

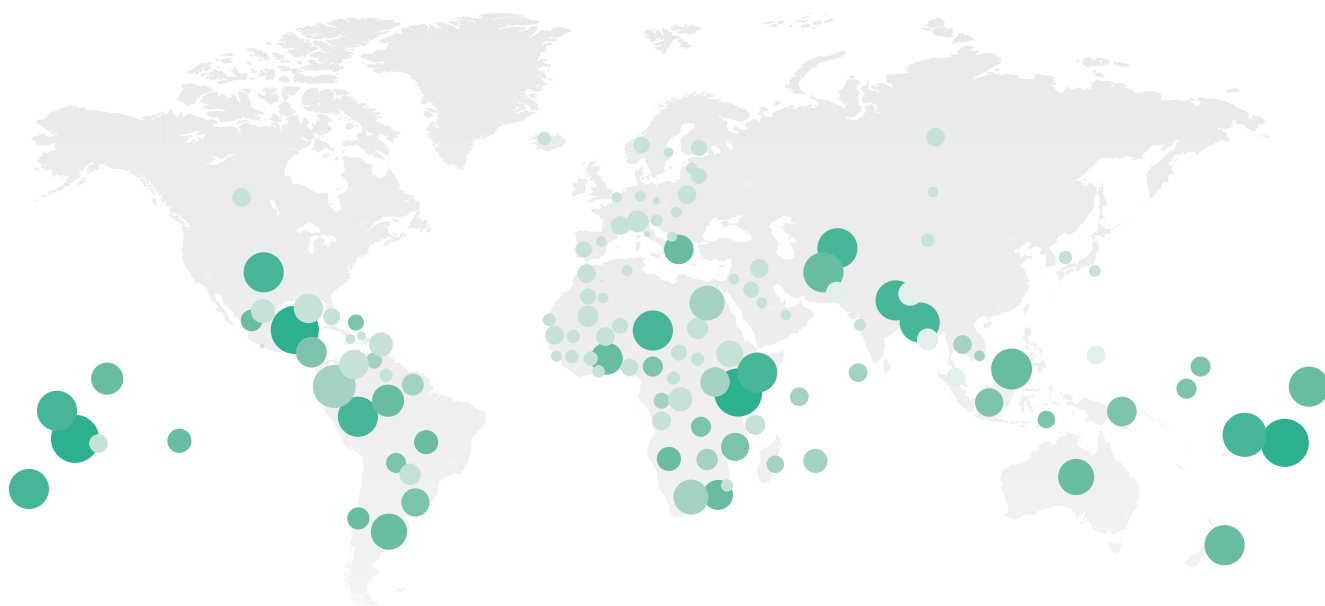
**1.348**

national  
instruments



**172**

countries



? Here are ten key insights derived from the GCM baseline mapping report, focusing on three broad questions:



What have we learned from the baseline mapping?



What do the findings reveal about GCM implementation?



What to do next?



## WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED FROM THE BASELINE MAPPING?

1

### Policy development can be identified, but it is uneven across countries and regions

In all regions, a number of policy instruments and practices related to addressing human mobility challenges in disaster and climate change contexts have been identified.

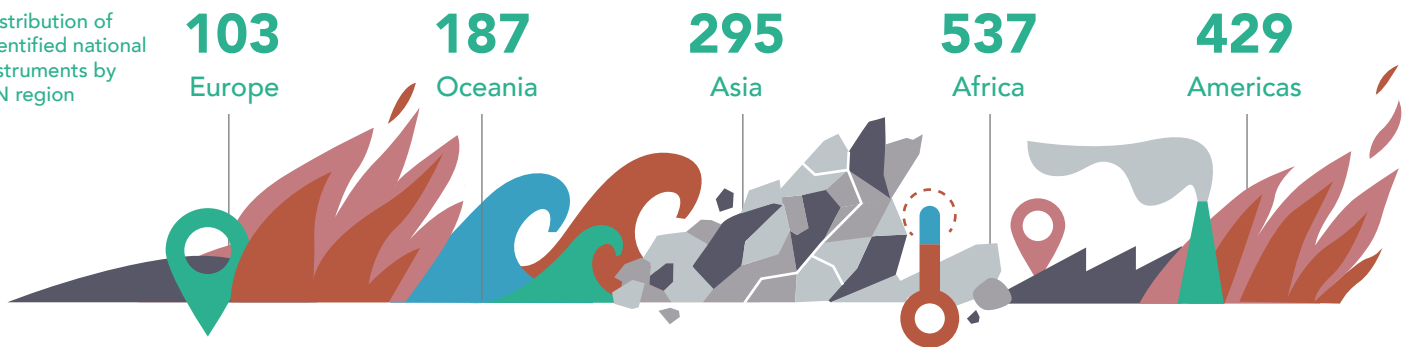
The highest number of instruments specifically dedicated to addressing human mobility challenges in the context of disasters, climate change and environmental degradation can be found in Asia and the Pacific.

The highest number of provisions (within instruments) specifically dedicated to the topic can be found in Latin America and the Caribbean.

1.348 

Of the 1.348 national instruments included in the global database, most are found in the Americas and Africa.

• Distribution of identified national instruments by UN region

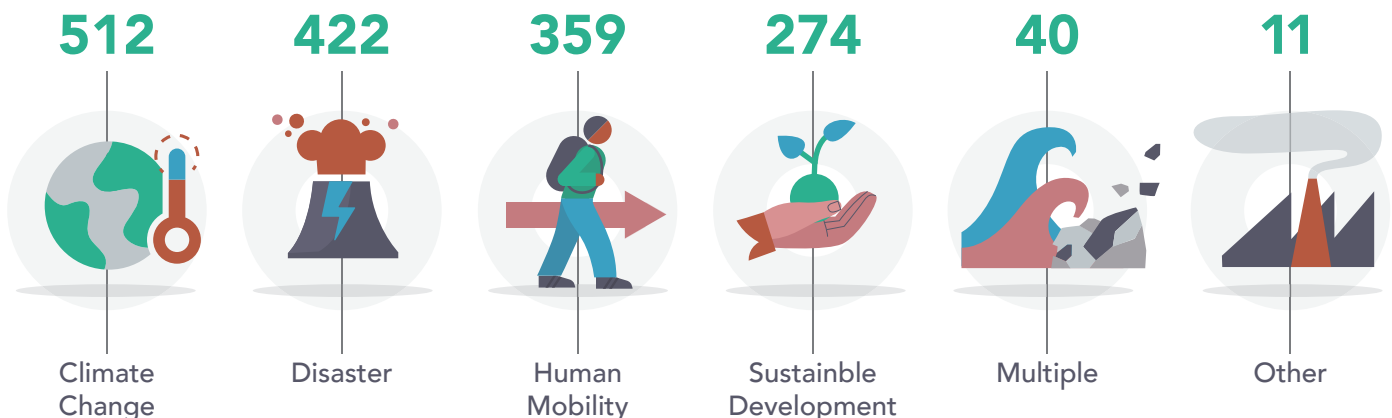


2

### Policy development has focused more on addressing drivers than on facilitating human mobility

Most of the relevant instruments are related to climate change governance and disaster management, indicating that policy development is primarily focused on reducing drivers and risks, rather than facilitating human mobility.

• Distribution of instruments by thematic area



## 3

## Regional priorities set the tone for policy development

Policy development typically reflects region-specific priorities and issues of concern. For example, while many of the instruments identified in African countries focus on issues around pastoralism and sustainable land management, the focus in Asia and the Pacific includes overseas employment, labour migration and planned relocation. These priority areas are likely to continue to inform national policy development in these regions.

### Region-specific priorities

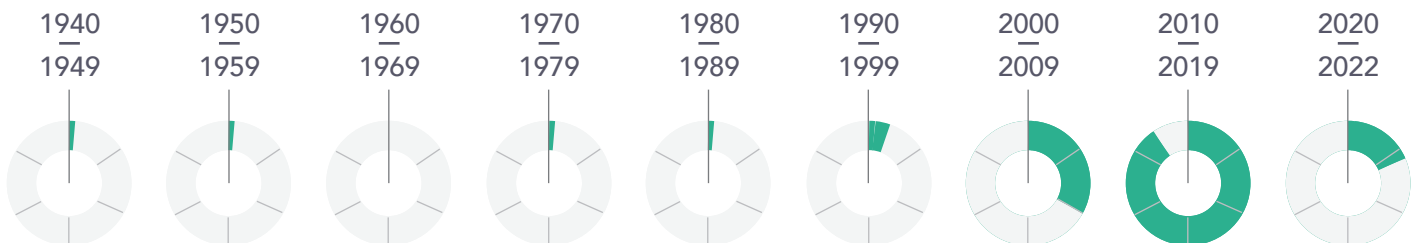


## 4

## The transition from policy development to implementation has (only just) begun

Most instruments with provisions of relevance to human mobility in disaster and climate change contexts were adopted after 2010, and particularly since 2015, in line with an increasing recognition of this topic in global policy discourse and the adoption of important international frameworks around those years. We are now facing a time when the implementation of commitments under these international frameworks requires more traction.

### Temporal distribution of identified instruments by decade



### Temporal distribution of identified instruments by year since 2000

Year of GCM adoption (2018)





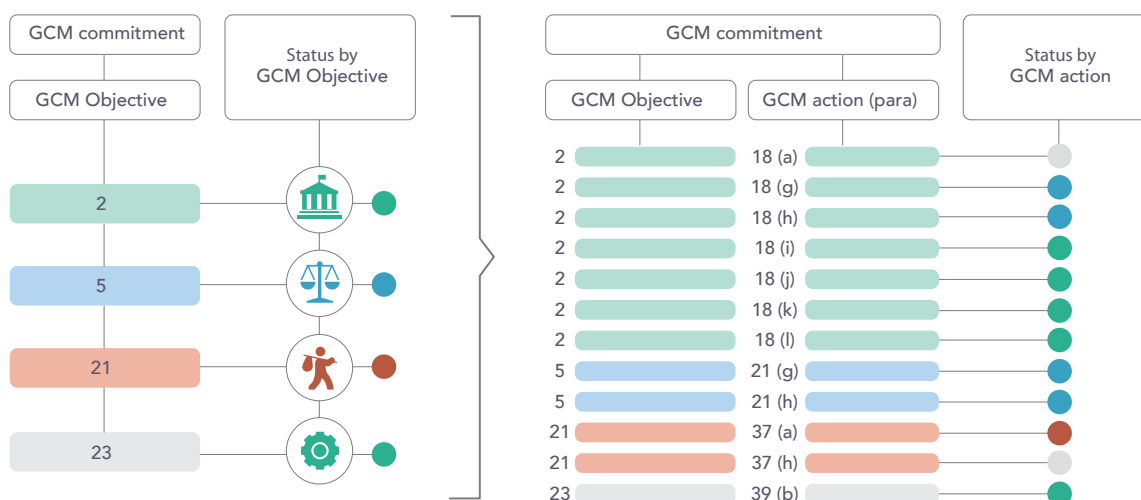
## WHAT DO THE FINDINGS REVEAL ABOUT GCM IMPLEMENTATION?

5

### More can be done to facilitate human mobility in disaster and climate change contexts

The detailed pilot analysis of instruments and practices in 21 countries has revealed a strong focus in policy and legislation on addressing environmental drivers (Objective 2). The main gaps on the other hand exist in the area of admission and stay, regular pathways (Objective 5) and return and sustainable reintegration of migrants (Objective 21) in disaster and climate change contexts. The baseline mapping provides various examples of relevant instruments and practices that can provide useful models for inspiration or replication in other countries to address this gap.

- Existence of instruments and provisions in relation to GCM actions and objectives in the 21 selected countries



6

### Common agreement on terminology would support GCM implementation

The definitions and use of human mobility terms in policy instruments are often unclear or inconsistent, limiting the predictability and consistency in their application. This issue is particularly common among climate change, disaster or sustainable development instruments, as human mobility instruments generally include clearer definitions or focus on specific types of human mobility. Many instruments are also predominantly focused on internal mobility rather than international migration.

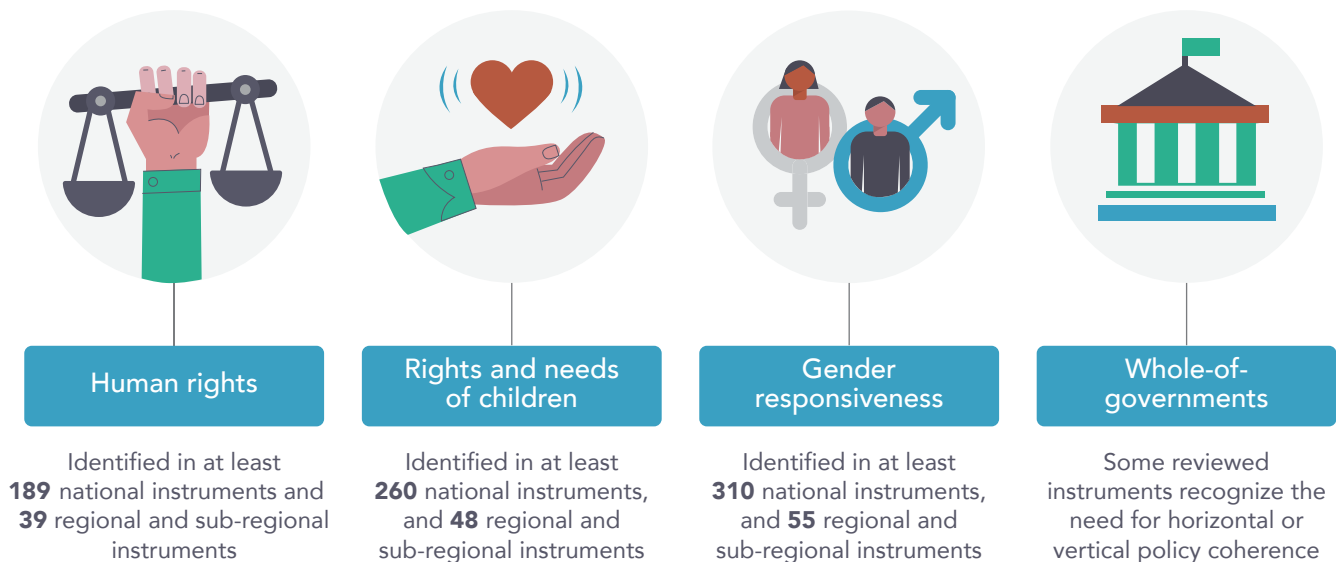
Provisions relating more concretely to international migration in disaster and climate change contexts would help to better address the needs and protect the rights of people compelled to leave their countries.



## There is still scope to recognize cross-cutting principles such as human rights and gender

Some instruments explicitly indicate GCM cross-cutting principles, such as human rights and gender responsiveness, as guiding approaches of the policy, but overall integration of these issues remains limited. Without their clear and direct integration, such dimensions may be overlooked during the implementation, in particular when it comes to planning and providing assistance and solutions for affected individuals.

### References to cross-cutting GCM guiding principles identified in policy instruments



## WHAT TO DO NEXT?

## Enhance availability and flexibility of pathways in areas and regions already facing the limits of adaptation

Addressing drivers and investing in people's resilience to disasters, climate change and environmental degradation is an important pillar of policy work under the GCM. However, in the context of global warming there are already areas and regions that are facing the limits of adaptation. It is therefore urgent to address existing policy gaps related to admission and stay, and to design long term and permanent solutions for people unable to adapt or return to their countries due to loss and damage associated with the slow-onset effects of climate change. This could be supported through GCM National Implementation Plans and GCM pledges that acknowledge and address these challenges.



## Invest in strong international and regional institutions and frameworks that can inform and guide national action

The growing number and variety of relevant policy and legal instruments is only as effective as their implementation. Regional institutions have a particular part to play in this process. Given their capacity and potential to bridge international and regional policy development and national action, they can support the translation of international and regional legal frameworks and policy instruments into national policies and legislation, and mobilize national and international commitment, funds and relevant expertise.

Regional and international cooperation and dialogues addressing human mobility in disaster and climate change contexts have increased and exist in most regions of the world. In order to access and build on this progress, a shift from dialogue to concrete action and support is needed.



## Support GCM implementation through stronger monitoring and reporting efforts

Comprehensive national-level policy reviews to identify strengths and gaps in policy development and implementation in relation to human mobility in disaster and climate change contexts are an important element to support further progress towards implementing GCM commitments. While it is primarily States that carry out voluntary monitoring and review under the GCM, for example in the context of the International Migration Review Forum, UN agencies, the research community and civil society play an important role in supporting such efforts and more generally in ensuring accountability for state-led action.

