



Environment and Climate Change in the Global Compact on Migration

Key messages:

- The Global Compact for Migration (GCM), adopted by 152 member states in December 2018 (including Kenya), is a non-binding cooperation framework that articulates a common set of commitments, on the basis of 23 objectives, for States to respond to the challenges and opportunities of contemporary international migration.
- The Global Compact on Migration represents a strategic and significant opportunity for the international community to progress in terms of overall international migration governance and management through inter-governmental dialogue, identification of existing migration policy, good practices and state commitments on migration.
- The GCM also offers an opportunity to anchor the environmental and climatic dimensions in the international migration governance agenda. It offers a space to fully acknowledge the importance of climatic and environmental drivers, the multi-causality of migration and the impacts of migration on the environment.
- The text articulates a comprehensive understanding of the challenges linked to the environment–migration nexus, including the necessity to prioritize adaptation efforts in countries of origin, and the need for states to cooperate to develop solutions in cases where adaptation or return of migrants are not possible.
- The GCM rests on relevant international frameworks on environment and climate change. With the adoption of the GCM Member States commit to promote the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the commitment to reach the furthest behind first, as well as the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030.
- The GCM also highlights the need to take into account recommendations stemming from state-led initiatives with a focus on mobility linked to disasters outside of the UN context: the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change, and its follow up, the Platform on Disaster Displacement, as well as the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative (MICIC).
- The GCM acknowledges the multi-causality of migration as environmental drivers interact with political, economic and demographic drivers. Through the objective 2 “minimizing the adverse drivers of migration” States commit to create conducive political, economic, social and environmental conditions for people to lead peaceful, productive and sustainable lives in their own country and to fulfil their personal aspirations, while ensuring that deteriorating environments do not compel them to seek a livelihood elsewhere through irregular migration.
- The GCM also clearly identifies slow onset environmental degradation, disasters, and climate change impacts as drivers of contemporary migration. Actionable commitments of the GCM outline the necessity to address climate change and environmental root causes of migration through comprehensive measures at the national level as well as investment in climate adaptation and mitigation.



- The GCM outlines the need for states to cooperate to identify, develop and strengthen solutions for people migrating in the context of slow-onset environmental degradation (in particular desertification, land degradation and sea level rise) and slow-onset disasters (drought).
- The GCM also recognizes the need for more investments in evidence, data, and research to address environmental migration challenges, by calling to strengthen joint analysis and sharing of information to better map, understand, predict and address migration movements, such as those that may result from sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, environmental degradation.
- The GCM acknowledges that disaster preparedness measures need to better anticipate forced migration movements linked to disasters and calls for states to develop adaptation and resilience strategies to sudden-onset and slow-onset disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation taking into account the potential implications for migration, while recognizing that adaptation in the country of origin is a priority.
- The GCM outlines the importance of working at the regional level to address environmental drivers of migration. Actionable commitments include to integrate migration and displacement considerations into preparedness strategies and promote cooperation with neighboring and other relevant countries, and to harmonize and develop approaches and mechanisms at the subregional and regional levels to address the vulnerabilities of persons affected by sudden-onset and slow-onset environmental drivers.
- The text also acknowledges that adaptation in situ or return of migrants might not be possible in some cases and that the strengthening of regular migration pathways needs to be part of migration management tools. Member States commit to cooperate to identify, develop and strengthen solutions for migrants compelled to leave owing to slow-onset disasters, the adverse effects of climate change, and environmental degradation, such as desertification, land degradation, drought, and sea level rise, including by devising planned relocation and visa options, in cases where adaptation in or return to their country of origin is not possible.
- Finally, through the objective 23 on international cooperation, the GCM calls to increase international and regional cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in geographical areas from which irregular migration systematically originates owing to consistent impacts of poverty, unemployment, climate change and disasters, inequality, among other structural factors, through appropriate cooperation frameworks, innovative partnerships and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders, while upholding national ownership and shared responsibility.

In the region, through the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF), the funding mechanism of the GCM, a regional joint programme convened by IOM has been put into place. This joint programme contributes to facilitating pathways for regular migration in the IGAD region and minimizing displacement risk in the context of climate change, environmental degradation, and disasters in line with the vision and guiding principles of the GCM. It is implemented through Four Pillars of action, which address data and knowledge; national and regional policy frameworks; disaster displacement and preparedness; and regular migration pathways.