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International Organization for Migration Background Guide 2022

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Dear Delegates,

Welcome to the 2022 National Model United Nations New York Conference (NMUN•NY)! We are pleased to introduce you to our committee, the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This year's staff are: Directors Miranda Coleman (Conference A) and Eric Lowe (Conference B), and Assistant Directors Markus Bianchi (Conference A) and Ashlee Ann Rolheiser (Conference B). Miranda has a Bachelor of Education and a Bachelor of Arts with an emphasis in History. She is an educator in Edmonton, Canada. Eric holds a Bachelors Degree in History, as well as a Masters Degree in Social Science and Globalization. Markus has a Bachelors Degree in Political Science and Sociology. Currently he is pursuing his Masters in Organization of Social Issues. Ashlee has a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and a Master's in International Affairs and Diplomacy. She is currently the Director of Operations for a grassroots nonprofit organization in Edmonton, Canada.

The topics under discussion for IOM are:

1. Migration and Racial Discrimination
2. Ensuring Access to Preventative Healthcare for Migrant Workers

Although the IOM has officially existed since 1951, it only officially joined the UN as a related organization in 2016, where it relies on its capacities and the expertise of other UN bodies, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to continue ensuring the safe and dignified migration of people. As human migration and refugee crises have continued to grow since the organization's founding, both in numbers and complexity, the IOM utilizes its institutional knowledge and norm-setting capacity to promote a whole-of-government approach to migration, and emphasize the link between migration and other key policy areas, such as development, health, environment, and climate change. With its global presence and its wealth of experience, the IOM plays an important leadership role in global migration norm-setting.

This Background Guide serves as an introduction to the topics for this committee. However, it is not intended to replace individual research. We encourage you to explore your Member State's policies in depth and use the Annotated Bibliography and Bibliography to further your knowledge on these topics. In preparation for the Conference, each delegation will submit a Position Paper by 11:59 p.m. (Eastern) on 1 March 2022 in accordance with the guidelines in the [Position Paper Guide](#) and the [NMUN•NY Position Papers](#) website.

Two resources, available to download from the [NMUN website](#), serve as essential instruments in preparing for the Conference and as a reference during committee sessions:

1. [NMUN Delegate Preparation Guide](#) - explains each step in the delegate process, from pre-Conference research to the committee debate and resolution drafting processes. Please take note of the information on plagiarism, and the prohibition on pre-written working papers and resolutions. Delegates should not start discussion on the topics with other members of their committee until the first committee session.
2. [NMUN Rules of Procedure](#) - include the long and short form of the rules, as well as an explanatory narrative and example script of the flow of procedure.

In addition, please review the mandatory [NMUN Conduct Expectations](#) on the NMUN website. They include the Conference dress code and other expectations of all attendees. We want to emphasize that any instances of sexual harassment or discrimination based on race, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, religion, age, or disability will not be tolerated. If you have any questions concerning your preparation for the committee or the Conference itself, please contact the Under-Secretaries-General for the Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs (HRHA) Department, Citlali Mora Catlet (Conference A) and Caitlin Hopper (Conference B), at usg.hrha@nmun.org.

We wish you all the best in your preparations and look forward to seeing you at the Conference!

Sincerely,

Conference A

Miranda Coleman, Director
Markus Bianchi, Assistant Director

Conference B

Eric Lowe, Director
Ashlee Ann Rolheiser, Assistant Director

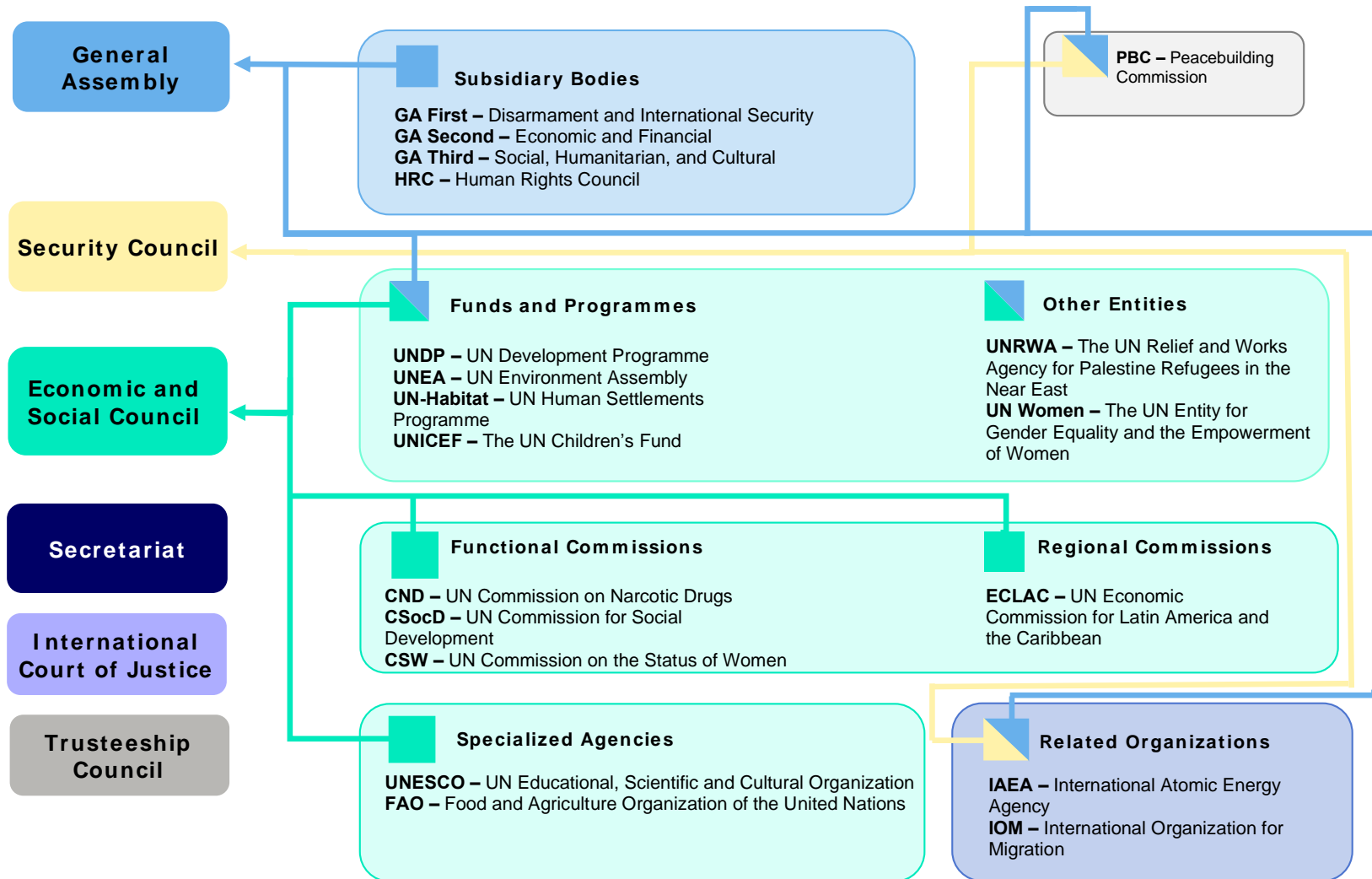


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United Nations System at NMUN•NY

This diagram illustrates the UN system simulated at NMUN•NY and demonstrates the reportage and relationships between entities. Examine the diagram alongside the Committee Overview to gain a clear picture of the committee's position, purpose, and powers within the UN system.



Committee Overview

Introduction

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was founded as the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe in 1951 to assist European governments in resettling the estimated 11 million people uprooted by the Second World War.¹ As human migration and refugee crises have continued to grow since the organization's founding, in both numbers and complexity, the committee's areas of operation have expanded, and its activities' scope has broadened.² In 1989, the body was renamed IOM to better reflect the expansion of its mandate and responsibilities as a result of growing migration, and in 2016 the organization formally joined the United Nations (UN).³ In 2019, the IOM became the Coordinator and Secretariat of the UN Migration Network, utilizing the capacities and expertise of other UN bodies, such as the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), to ensure the safe and dignified migration of people.⁴ As of 2020, the IOM has assisted migrants in 174 states and holds 590 offices globally.⁵ The organization engages in the protection of migrants' rights while encouraging social and economic development through migration, as well as advancing the understanding of migration issues through comprehensive data collection.⁶

The IOM Council requested in 2015 that the IOM Director-General approach the UN in order to deepen the cooperation between the IOM and the UN system.⁷ Then in 2016, the IOM formally joined the UN system.⁸ The IOM Member States acknowledge a shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants, and commit to support countries that rescue, receive, and host them.⁹ The IOM is a related organization of the UN, meaning the organization functions in the UN like a specialized agency but remains legally independent with its own rules, membership, organs, and financial resources.¹⁰ The UN recognizes the IOM as an independent, autonomous, and non-normative international organization in a cooperative and collaborative relationship with the UN.¹¹ The IOM recognizes the responsibilities of the UN under the *Charter of the United Nations* (1945) in the field of migration, and conducts its activities in accordance with the Charter.¹² The IOM is a full member of various inter-agency mechanisms within the UN system, such as the UN Development Group, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee, the UN High-level Committee on Programmes, and the Chief Executives Board for Coordination.¹³ This integration allows the IOM to contribute to decision-making in the UN, provide a leading role in the discussion of migration issues, and ensure that migration is prioritized in the international agenda.¹⁴

The IOM estimates that as of 2020, there were 281 million migrants globally, making up to 3.6% of the world's population.¹⁵ Of these migrants, 25.9 million are refugees, half of which are under 18, 41.3 million are internally displaced persons (IDPs), and 3.9 million are stateless persons.¹⁶ The IOM defines the term "migrant" as "any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of (1) the person's legal status; (2) whether the

¹ IOM, *IOM History*, 2021.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ IOM, *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*, 2017, p. 4.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016, p. 2.

¹⁰ IOM, *IOM History*, 2021.

¹¹ UN General Assembly, *Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration (A/70/976)*, 2016, p. 3.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹³ IOM, *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*, 2017, p. 4.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ IOM, *Abridged Annual Report 2020*, 2020.

¹⁶ IOM, *IOM Snapshot*, 2021.

movement is voluntary or involuntary; (3) what the causes for the movement are; or (4) what the length of the stay is.”¹⁷ The term migrant includes refugees, IDPs, students, migrant workers, and professionals moving between international postings.¹⁸ The term “refugee” is defined by the 1951 *Convention relating to the Status of Refugees* and its 1967 Protocol as any person who has crossed an international border “owing to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinions.”¹⁹ The IOM also assists IDPs, who are forced to leave their homes due to one of the above mentioned reasons without crossing a federal border, as well as people fleeing from natural disasters and climate change.²⁰

The 2015 adoption of the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, through the 2015 General Assembly resolution 70/1 on “Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” highlights the multifaceted challenges in maintaining the rights and dignities of migrants, for example in target 10.7 which calls for the “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people.”²¹ The challenges that migrants face are also reflected in other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets, such as target 3.8 (ensuring basic health) as migrants often struggle to have access to adequate healthcare, as well as target 16.2 (ending human trafficking) as migrants are disproportionately represented in trafficking data.²² Migration is also linked to target 4.1 (education services for migrants) and target 8.8 (protecting migrant workers’ rights).²³

Governance, Structure, and Membership

The IOM is made up of two organs: the Council and the Administration, which comprises a Director-General, a Deputy Director-General, and its staff.²⁴ Each Member State has one representative and one vote in the IOM Council, which meets annually to determine, examine, and review the policies, programs, and activities of the IOM.²⁵ The Council is also responsible for approving the budget, reviewing reports, and directing activities of all subsidiary bodies and the Director-General.²⁶ The IOM is made up of 174 Member States, who hold voting powers, eight states, and numerous international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) holding observer status, thus unable to vote on draft resolutions.²⁷ The administrative functions of the IOM are financed by fixed contributions from its Member States, while expenditures for IOM’s operations are funded through voluntary contributions by Member States and other entities, such as the private sector and charitable foundations.²⁸

The current Director-General, António Vitorino of Portugal, and the Deputy Director-Generals, Ugochi Florence Daniels of Nigeria and Amy E. Pope of the United States of America, are elected by a two-thirds majority vote of the Council for a five-year term and can be re-elected for one additional term.²⁹ The Director-General manages the administrative and executive functions of the IOM in accordance with the IOM Constitution and the decisions of the IOM Council.³⁰ The Director-General is assisted in this function by the Office of the Director-General, which is responsible for policy development and oversight of all activities of the organization.³¹

¹⁷ IOM, *Key Migration Terms*, 2021.

¹⁸ IOM, *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*, 2017, p. 4.

¹⁹ IOM, *Key Migration Terms*, 2021.

²⁰ IOM, *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*, 2017, p. 4.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 4.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

²⁴ IOM, *Constitution*, 2013, p. 10.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

²⁷ IOM, *Members and Observers*, 2021.

²⁸ IOM, *Constitution*, 2013, p. 16.

²⁹ IOM, *IOM Announces Appointment of New Deputy Directors General*, 2021.

³⁰ IOM, *Constitution*, 2013, p. 13.

³¹ IOM, *Organizational Structure*, 2021.

The IOM's intergovernmental structure is decentralized in order to deliver a diversity of projects that are locally focused and culturally conscious.³² The IOM has nine Regional Offices in Dakar, Senegal; Nairobi, Kenya; Cairo, Egypt; Pretoria, South Africa; San José, Costa Rica; Buenos Aires, Argentina; Bangkok, Thailand; Brussels, Belgium; and Vienna, Austria.³³ These regional offices formulate local strategies and actionable policies, while the two Special Liaison Offices, located in New York and Addis Ababa, coordinate with multilateral bodies such as the UN.³⁴ The IOM's two Administrative Centers provide administrative and information technology support.³⁵ The IOM has five Country Offices tasked with coordinating functions to ensure that migratory realities in certain areas are taken into account, as well as four additional Country Offices responsible for funding allocation and resource mobilization.³⁶ The IOM also manages the African Capacity Building Centre (ACBC), based in Tanzania, which provides technical assistance for African migrants and border management support.³⁷ Further, the IOM hosts the Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), based in Germany, which collects comprehensive data on global migration trends.³⁸

According to article 1(2) of its constitution, the IOM "shall cooperate closely with international organizations, governmental and non-governmental, concerned with migration, refugees and human resources."³⁹ The IOM encourages NGOs to participate in its Council and convenes annual consultations with, and briefings for, the over 60 NGOs who currently hold observer status.⁴⁰ The International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) is the primary forum for the IOM to discuss existing and evolving issues on migration with Member States, as well as international and non-governmental organizations, migrants, media, academics, and the private sector.⁴¹ The IDM is guided by an overarching annual theme chosen by the IOM.⁴² The theme for the May 2021 IDM forum was "Accelerating integrated action on sustainable development: migration, the environment and climate change."⁴³ The IOM also cooperates with NGOs to combat human trafficking, provide vocational training, and implement information campaigns.⁴⁴

Mandate, Function, and Powers

The integration of the IOM into the UN system has made it the leading global agency on migration that consults UN bodies.⁴⁵ The mandate of the IOM, according to article 1 of the IOM Constitution, can be broken down into three categories: making arrangements for the organized transfer of migrants, refugees, and displaced persons; providing migration services such as recruitment, selection, processing, language training, orientation activities, and medical examination; and offering a forum for Member States to exchange views on migration issues.⁴⁶ All these activities are to be undertaken at the request of and in agreement with the Member States involved.⁴⁷

The IOM participated in the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, during which the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (New York Declaration) (2016) was adopted through General Assembly resolution 71/1 as the first commitment at the global level to protect the safety, dignity, human

³² IOM, *Organizational Structure*, 2021.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ IOM, *Constitution*, 2013, p. 6.

⁴⁰ IOM, *Civil Society & NGOs*, 2021.

⁴¹ IOM, *International Dialogue on Migration*, 2021.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ IOM, *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*, 2017, p. 17.

⁴⁵ UN General Assembly, *Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration (A/70/976)*, 2016, p. 4.

⁴⁶ IOM, *Constitution*, 2013, p. 6.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

rights, and fundamental freedoms of all migrants and specifies a set of rights of migrants and obligations of states towards them.⁴⁸ Under the New York Declaration, the IOM was responsible for providing technical assistance and policy guidance for the negotiations leading to the successful adoption of the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (the Global Compact) at an 2018 intergovernmental conference on international migration.⁴⁹

The Migration Governance Framework which forms the basis of the IOM's mandate establishes three principles and three objectives, guiding the IOM's operations, and reflecting the functions and powers of the organization.⁵⁰ The first principle is to support Member States in reaching international standards and adhering to the rights of migrants.⁵¹ The IOM offices support their host governments by organizing consultations and information sessions with ministries and training officials on international standards, and by contributing to the drafting or alteration of migration laws.⁵² The second principle is to advance the understanding of migration by strengthening migration data gathering, analysis, and research.⁵³ The third principle is to create partnerships with all stakeholders to develop comprehensive and efficient solutions.⁵⁴ The objectives include advancing the socioeconomic well-being of migrants and societies by assisting with their social, economic, and cultural inclusion, as well as ending human trafficking, migrant exploitation, and abuse, effectively addressing the mobility dimensions of crisis.⁵⁵ These objectives support crisis prevention, emergency response, and post-crisis resettlement, and ensure that migration takes place in a safe, orderly, and dignified manner through carrying out health and identity assessments while organizing voluntary return.⁵⁶ To achieve its objectives and help migrants through its services, the IOM works in cooperation with the affected Member States by offering valuable advice, research, technical support, and operational assistance.⁵⁷ The IOM utilizes its institutional knowledge and norm-setting capacity to promote a whole-of-government approach to migration, meaning all government ministries play a significant role in migration.⁵⁸ This approach emphasizes the link between migration and other government policy areas, such as development, health, environment, and climate change.⁵⁹

Recent Sessions and Current Priorities

From 2016 to 2017, the IOM Council worked on establishing six informal thematic consultations and providing policy papers to facilitate negotiations among UN Member States to establish the Global Compact, including a series of workshops and forums with NGOs, academic stakeholders, and the private sector to support policy reform through the IDM.⁶⁰ In 2018, the Global Compact was adopted and since this point, the IOM has supported Member States in applying recommendations from the compact into state legislation and implementing related policy changes.⁶¹ As of 2019, more than 120 IOM offices have aided Member States by using 50 country or regional migration coordination mechanisms and the United Nations Network on Migration.⁶² In 2019, the IOM also launched its *Institutional Strategy on Migration and Sustainable Development* to establish migration policies that support achieving the SDGs.⁶³ The same year, the Deputy Secretaries-General of the IOM developed the *Internal Governance Framework* to reform and consolidate internal governance within the IOM, thus better serving migrants globally as an

⁴⁸ IOM, *Global Compact for Migration*, 2017.

⁴⁹ IOM, *Migration Governance Framework*, 2020.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ IOM, *International Dialogue on Migration*, 2021.

⁶¹ IOM, *Council Session 111: 2019 Annual Report*, 2020.

⁶² IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2021.

⁶³ Ibid.

organization.⁶⁴ The *Internal Governance Framework* increases the capacities of regional offices and strengthens the IOM's internal justice system, while expanding the budget for case management.⁶⁵ In 2019, the IOM also developed the United Nations Network on Migration Secretariat and the Fund Management Unit of the Start-up Fund for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.⁶⁶ These frameworks guide the work of the IOM in regard to capacity-building, providing policy advice, and developing specific programs, as well as linking the IOM's engagement to the SDGs.⁶⁷ In 2019, the 111th session of the IOM included the publishing of the 2020 report of the Director-General, and a summary report discussing gender-related challenges of migration, such as trafficking and gender-based violence.⁶⁸ The session also included discussions on realizing SDGs throughout the migratory process, enhancing the capacity of Member States and local governments to hold sound migration policies, and the work of the Global Compact.⁶⁹

On the ground, the IOM offices assist host governments in drafting national strategies for the implementation of the migration-related SDG targets, building capacity to report on the SDG target gaps, and meeting requests from host governments to implement projects geared towards achieving a particular SDG target.⁷⁰ The IOM also increases migrants' access to healthcare through its network of clinics, which provide services to vulnerable internally displaced persons and promote migrant health by building practitioners' capacity through education- and health-related migrant data.⁷¹ The IOM also supports policy developments to address climate migration and cross-border disaster displacement.⁷² Climate-displaced migrants are not covered by the 1951 *Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees*, which exacerbates the challenges that the global community faces in aiding highly vulnerable migrants.⁷³ The IOM provides humanitarian assistance to climate refugees, and helps with building capacity and robust policies that reflect the link between migration and climate change.⁷⁴ The IOM publishes data annually on the link between migration, the environment, and climate change to support and develop national action plans and regional strategy frameworks.⁷⁵ In late 2019, the IOM's regional offices published five-year regional strategies (2020–2024) to meet the priorities of *the IOM Strategic Vision 2019–2023*.⁷⁶ The Strategic Vision has three pillars: resilience, mobility, and governance. These pillars are based on data, which shows that migration and mobility will continue to increase as climate change, political instability, and insecurity continue to drive migration.⁷⁷

Conclusion

With the adoption of the New York Declaration, the IOM became the primary institution to provide technical assistance and policy guidance for the entire UN system on all dimensions relating to migration.⁷⁸ With its global presence and its wealth of experience, the IOM is well-positioned to handle the set of challenges ahead, such as climate change, managing migration in countries with lacking relevant infrastructure, and engaging all stakeholders into the process of implementing the Global Compact.⁷⁹ The work of the Global Compact also provides a unique opportunity to establish a framework for comprehensive international cooperation on migrants, which is necessary to fulfill the promises of the

⁶⁴ IOM, *Council Session 111: 2019 Annual Report*, 2020.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ IOM, *Report on the 106th Session of the Council (C/106/54/Rev.1)*, 2017, p. 20.

⁶⁸ IOM, *Council Session 111: 2019 Annual Report*, 2020.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ IOM, *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*, 2017, p. 6.

⁷¹ Ibid., p. 24.

⁷² IOM, *Report on the 107th Session of the Council (C/107/31)*, 2017.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ IOM, *Annual Report for 2016 (C/108/4)*, 2017, p. 12.

⁷⁶ IOM, *Strategic Vision*, 2019.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016, p. 23.

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 23.

2030 Agenda and achieve the SDGs.⁸⁰ Moving into 2022, the current priorities of the IOM include mitigating racial discrimination in migration and ensuring access to preventative healthcare for migrants, with particular emphasis on migrant workers, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸¹ Through the work of the IOM and Member States, these priorities can result in sound actionable policies that protect the rights and well-being of migrants globally.⁸²

Annotated Bibliography

International Organization for Migration. (2020). *Council Session 111: 2019 Annual Report*. Retrieved 24 July 2021 from: <https://governingbodies.iom.int/system/files/en/council/111/C-111-5-%20Annual%20Report%20for%202019.pdf>

This report is on the most recent session of the IOM Council. The document is organized along each of the three guiding principles and three objectives outlined in the Migration Governance Framework. In this resource, delegates can find a detailed account of the most recent application of the IOM's mandate under these principles, which define the global standard for migration legislation. This document is essential for delegates to understand the role of the IOM within the UN and how the body works with other UN entities, as well as NGOs and IGOs.

International Organization for Migration. (2020). *World Migration Report 2020*. Retrieved 24 July 2021 from: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf

This report details the most up-to-date data on global migration. Chapter 2 outlines global trends in migration while Chapter 3 specifically highlights regional data. Section II: Complex and Emerging Migration Issues includes seven chapters detailing the challenges migrants are facing, such as social inclusion, environmental changes, and health. Delegates will also find Chapter 10 an essential read as it looks specifically at mitigating challenges migrants face while in crisis, and Chapter 11 details how much global migration trends have changed since 2018.

International Organization for Migration. (2021). *About IOM*. Retrieved 24 July 2021 from: <http://www.iom.int/about-iom>

The website of the IOM is an excellent source for delegates to learn more about the mission, organization structure, and governing bodies, especially the Council, of the organization. This will allow them to better understand the mandate and the working procedure of the committee. The website also contains detailed information on the IOM's history, explanations of migration law and key migration terms, as well as examples for the IOM's practical work.

International Organization for Migration. (2021). *Strategic Vision*. Retrieved 8 August 2021 from: <https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/iom-strategic-vision.pdf>

The IOM considers the Strategic Vision a foundational document in the strategic planning process to meet the challenges facing migrants and Member States in the future. The document evaluates past challenges to analyze relevant and pertinent gaps and growing areas of concern, based on mobility projections in the next decade. Delegates will find the Director-General's statement on organizational changes and development over the next five years to be an essential read to understanding the developing priorities of the IOM.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventieth session. (2016). *Agreement concerning the Relationship between the United Nations and the International Organization for Migration (A/RES/70/296)*. Adopted

⁸⁰ IOM, *Global Compact for Migration*, 2021.

⁸¹ IOM, *Strategic Vision*, 2019.

⁸² Ibid.

without reference to a Main Committee (A/70/L.57) Retrieved 8 August 2021 from:

<http://undocs.org/A/RES/70/296>

This General Assembly resolution contains the agreement that established the formal relationship between the UN system and the IOM. It acknowledges the leading role the IOM plays in matters of international migration and aims to increase cooperation between the two organizations. The UN therein recognizes the IOM as an independent, autonomous, and non-normative international organization. This document will be a valuable source for delegates as it outlines the way the two organizations cooperate and the specific strengths of the IOM.

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1. Migration and Racial Discrimination

“Defeating racism, tribalism, intolerance and all forms of discrimination will liberate us all, victim and perpetrator alike.”⁸³

Introduction

Humans have been migrating for over 1.75 million years.⁸⁴ As humans are continuously on the move, human rights have proven to be the centerpiece of migration analysis.⁸⁵ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) states that currently more people have migrated and live in countries different than the one in which they were born than have stayed sedentary.⁸⁶ Every Member State is a state of origin, transit, or destination for migrants, or all three, which makes migration a truly universal issue.⁸⁷ The current levels of migration have surpassed the United Nations (UN) IOM projected numbers for 2050, with 230 million migrants currently living worldwide.⁸⁸ Migration includes both “push” and “pull” factors, where the decision to leave one’s home and the desire to migrate to a new country can be determined by economic, environmental, social, and/or political causes.⁸⁹ IOM defines a migrant as any person who has relocated and crossed an international border, regardless of legal status, voluntary or involuntary movement, causes for the movement, and length of the stay.⁹⁰ Under the IOM’s definition of a migrant, migration also involves other categories of human movement, including refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).⁹¹ A refugee is a person fleeing across international borders to avoid conflict, persecution, or violence.⁹² An IDP is an individual who has been forced to flee their home in avoidance of or as a result of armed conflict, violence, human rights violations, natural or human-made disasters, but have not crossed an internationally-recognized state border.⁹³

While migration is often discussed in the context of highlighting the socio-economic benefits of human movement, one of the most disruptive aspects of migration is racial discrimination.⁹⁴ Racial discrimination is defined in the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (ICERD) (1965) as “any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, color, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural or any other field of public life.”⁹⁵ Although humans have been on the move for centuries, the stressors inherent to situations of migration are determined by existing social patterns, which can result in racism, labor discrimination, and economic inequality against migrants.⁹⁶ These systemic contradictions in migration policies were first seen on a large-scale during the mass migration of white Europeans to North America starting in the mid-19th century, whereas people of color were generally restricted through policy and law from immigrating during these periods.⁹⁷ Although migration allows for increased diversity, many examples of migration policies reveal systemic racial discrimination and

⁸³ Ki-moon, *Speech by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon at the High-level Symposium on South Africa’s Contribution to the Fight Against Racism and Xenophobia on 22 September 2011 in Durban, South Africa*, 2011.

⁸⁴ Bae et al., *On the origin of modern humans: Asian perspectives*, 2017.

⁸⁵ ILO et al., *International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia*, 2001, p. 3.

⁸⁶ UN DGC, *Migration*, 2021.

⁸⁷ WCAR, *Working Far From Home – Migration and Discrimination*, 2001.

⁸⁸ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020, p. 2.

⁸⁹ Justice for Immigrants, *Root Causes of Migration*, 2017.

⁹⁰ UN DGC, *Migration*, 2021; IOM, *Key Migration Terms*, 2021.

⁹¹ World Vision, *Refugees, migrants and internally displaced people*, 2016.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

⁹⁵ UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (A/RES/2106(XX))*, 1965.

⁹⁶ O’Hearn & Ciccantell, *Migration, Racism and Labour Exploitation in the World-System*, 2022.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

xenophobia.⁹⁸ According to the IOM, migrants are often targeted as scapegoats for domestic issues such as unemployment, crime, drugs, and terrorism.⁹⁹ Regardless of the fundamental social and economic contributions that they may make to society, migrants are likely to face some form of racial discrimination, intolerance, xenophobia, or violent extremism, especially in locations with nationalist and populist priorities and values.¹⁰⁰ Although diplomacy in the twenty-first century invites solutions of peace, prosperity, and diversity, systemic policy issues continue to leave migrants vulnerable to racism and discrimination.¹⁰¹ The development impacts of migration are felt the most deeply at a local level; therefore, a whole-society approach can contribute to policy development which not only protect migrants from racism, but also promote the wellbeing of all through the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).¹⁰² Racial discrimination is a threat to all pillars of society and human rights, countering the commitment made by the SDGs to “leave no one behind.”¹⁰³

Managing global migration also highlights important issues of infrastructure and mobility.¹⁰⁴ Increases in intolerance, racial discrimination, and xenophobia are often provoked by wealth inequity, marginalization, and social exclusion.¹⁰⁵ Therefore, situations where migration causes a social stressor may result in racially-based confrontation, harassment, or violence regarding housing, education, health and healthcare, work, and social security.¹⁰⁶ As long as the existence of racism, especially for migrants, continues, the need for anti-racist and anti-discrimination legislation exists.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, the UN has recognized that equality and non-discrimination are the foundations of international human rights in migration policies.¹⁰⁸ IOM provides direct assistance and advice to both governments and migrants in an effort to create a comprehensive approach to humane migration practices, and ensuring alignment with international treaties establish that race, color, national origin, and migration should not be used to justify discrimination, exclusion, and societal disadvantage.¹⁰⁹

International and Regional Framework

Following a period of increasing global antisemitism during the World War II, the *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination* (ICERD) was adopted by the General Assembly on 21 December 1965, and was available for ratification on 4 January 1969.¹¹⁰ Although ICERD was a fundamental step forward for all people facing racial discrimination, the General Assembly excluded the basis of citizenship in the defining articles of racial discrimination.¹¹¹ Therefore, the General Assembly has received requests to include non-citizens under the protection of ICERD.¹¹² By excluding non-citizens from the protection of ICERD, distinctions of rights are limited in the scope of international human rights.¹¹³ However, this exemption “must not be interpreted to detract in any ways from the rights and freedoms” of non-citizens.¹¹⁴ Legally binding in nature, ICERD is one of the cornerstones of anti-racism

⁹⁸ WCAR, *Working Far From Home – Migration and Discrimination*, 2001.

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020, p. 186.

¹⁰¹ IOM, *International Migration, Racism, Discrimination and Xenophobia*, 2015.

¹⁰² IOM, *Migration and Sustainable Development*, 2021.

¹⁰³ IOM, *UN Network on Migration: Freedom from Racial Discrimination is a Right, Not a Privilege*, 2021.

¹⁰⁴ Omidvar, *The biggest issues facing migrants today – and what we can do to solve them*, 2016.

¹⁰⁵ Pizarro, Specific Groups and Individuals: Migrant Workers, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (E/CN.4/2005/85/Add.4), ECOSOC, 2005.

¹⁰⁶ UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

¹⁰⁷ Van Dijk, *Racism and Migration in Western Europe*, 1996.

¹⁰⁸ UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

¹⁰⁹ IOM, *Our Work*, 2021; UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

¹¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (A/RES/2106(XX))*, 1965.

¹¹¹ Open Society Justice Initiative, *Racial Discrimination and the Rights of Non-Citizens*, 2004.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

policy for migrants.¹¹⁵ To support migrants, ICERD outlines five definitions of discrimination, including race, color, descent, national, and ethnic origin.¹¹⁶

Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2015) is the current cross-UN development framework and it recognizes the importance of migration to sustainable development and the wellbeing of all.¹¹⁷ Out of the 17 SDGs, 11 address migration or mobility in their targets and indicators.¹¹⁸ SDG 10 (“reduced inequalities”) serves as a fundamental reference to migration through sustainable development, as target 10.7 highlights the importance of well-managed global migration policies.¹¹⁹ A threat to all foundations of society, racism through a migration lens disrupts the main goal of the SDGs to “leave no one behind.”¹²⁰ Through high-level dialogue at the General Assembly, the discussion of multidimensional policies and development to maximize benefits and minimize negative impacts focuses on policy issues and achieving internationally agreed-upon development goals.¹²¹ With much work to be done to ensure the advancement of migrant workers, Member States are responsible for all migrants within their jurisdiction, ensuring that they are able to fully utilize their economic, social, and cultural rights.¹²²

On 19 September 2016, the General Assembly gathered to create a response to largescale migration, as rates of migration have been steadily increasing.¹²³ With unanimous support, all Member States adopted General Assembly resolution 71/1 (2016), the *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants* (New York Declaration).¹²⁴ With this resolution, Member States made commitments to enhance and protect the lives of migrants, including support for migrants facing racial discrimination.¹²⁵ The New York Declaration outlined a global guarantee for Member States to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration.¹²⁶ Following the New York Declaration, *The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (GCM) was signed in 2018 and outlines commitments made by Member States to both condemn and counter all forms of racial discrimination.¹²⁷ The GCM emphasizes the importance of adopting anti-racist, anti-discriminatory policies, in alignment with the tenets of the ICERD, the SDGs, and the foundational *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1945).¹²⁸

Role of the International System

IOM works towards anti-racism through a multitude of campaigns which provide resources, and support to governments and migrants alike.¹²⁹ The central focuses of IOM are migration management, crisis response, international cooperation and partnerships, data and research, and upholding the GCM.¹³⁰ A current focus for IOM is collaborating with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) to ensure equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines for migrants.¹³¹ IOM highlights their

¹¹⁵ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *What is the UN doing to combat racism and racial discrimination?*, 2020.

¹¹⁶ International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, *ICERD and CERD: A Guide for Civil Society Actors*, 2011, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ UN DGC, *Migration*, 2021.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ IOM, *UN Network on Migration: Freedom from Racial Discrimination is a Right, Not a Privilege*, 2021.

¹²¹ OHCHR, *The International Convention on Migrant Workers and its Committee Fact Sheet No. 24 (Rev. 1)*, 2005, p. 15.

¹²² UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

¹²³ UNHCR, *The New York Declaration FAQs*, 2018, p. 2.

¹²⁴ Ibid., p. 2.

¹²⁵ UN General Assembly, *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*, 2016.

¹²⁶ UNHCR, *The New York Declaration FAQs*, 2018, p. 2.

¹²⁷ IOM, *UN Network on Migration: Freedom From Racial Discrimination is a Right, Not a Privilege*, 2021.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ IOM, *Countering Xenophobia*, 2021.

¹³⁰ IOM, *Our Work*, 2021.

¹³¹ IOM, *Ensuring Migrants’ Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines*, 2021.

role as a key player in global efforts to ensure that all migrants are protected as a vulnerable group.¹³² The UN has also included days of observance on the topic of racial discrimination, giving Member States and individuals reflection periods and prompts to consider how they can counter racial discrimination more effectively.¹³³

IOM actively promotes the work of ICERD, and supplements its work through collaborations with the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council (HRC).¹³⁴ The Special Procedures of HRC monitors and advances the topic of racism through their work with the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, who examines the legal, policy, and regulatory frameworks that prevent racial discrimination at the international, regional, and national levels.¹³⁵ The Special Procedures of HRC also collaborates frequently with the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent, which compiles information from governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and other institutions to propose solutions to racial discrimination.¹³⁶ Additionally, The Special Procedures of HRC works with the History of Special Procedures on Racial Discrimination from the Human Rights Special Procedures research guide, which are commissions and sub-commissions dedicated to themes of eradicating racial discrimination.¹³⁷ To monitor the implementation of ICERD, the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) was established in 1970 as the first treaty body in the UN.¹³⁸ CERD meets biannually to consider reports and to issue general recommendations to Member States.¹³⁹ CERD considers and reviews the legal, judicial, and administrative actions of Member States in order to appropriately identify if Member States have been meeting targets and fulfilling goals to counter racial discrimination.¹⁴⁰

The World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance (WCAR) is a series of international conferences that are focused on racial discrimination and with a goal of eradicating racist ideologies at both a micro and macro level.¹⁴¹ Since the initial Geneva conference in 1978 with a focus on apartheid policies and segregation, there have been three other conferences discussing unfair treatment and human rights violations through racial discrimination, xenophobia, and anti-Semitism.¹⁴² The General Assembly adopted resolution 52/111 (1997) on the Third Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination and the convening of a world conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia, and related intolerance to begin strategic discussions in preparation for the 2001 WCAR in Durban.¹⁴³ The UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) also contributes its expertise to Member States and the IOM by developing non-binding principles for safe, orderly and regular migration.¹⁴⁴

A multifaceted and detailed example of regional response to racial discrimination for migrants includes the European Race Equality Directive, which was ratified in 2003 and sets constraints on direct and indirect racial discrimination.¹⁴⁵ Direct racial discrimination can be due to a protected characteristic, or the perception or association of said characteristic.¹⁴⁶ Indirect discrimination occurs when a policy

¹³² IOM, *Ensuring Migrants' Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines*, 2021.

¹³³ UN Dag Hammarskjöld Library, *What is the UN doing to combat racism and racial discrimination?*, 2020.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ International Movement Against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism, *ICERD and CERD: A Guide for Civil Society Actors*, 2011, p. 12.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁰ OHCHR, *Fact Sheet No.12, The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*, 1991, p. 2.

¹⁴¹ WCAR, *The World Conference against racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance*, 2001.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ UNHCR, *The New York Declaration FAQs*, 2018, p. 6.

¹⁴⁵ Open Society Justice Initiative, *Racial Discrimination and the Rights of Non-Citizens*, 2004.

¹⁴⁶ Equality and Human Rights Commission, *What is direct and indirect discrimination?*, 2019.

disadvantages a certain group of people who share a common protected characteristic.¹⁴⁷ Exemplified by the Western European response to the EU migrant crisis, many Member States chose to accept and protect millions of migrants.¹⁴⁸ However, the EU received significant criticism from some of its Member States regarding its acceptance of migrants and further took those Member States to the European Court of Justice (ECJ).¹⁴⁹ The ECJ mostly participates as a facilitator of human rights and fundamental principles.¹⁵⁰ The ECJ found multiple EU Member States unlawful, because they were not upholding EU standards for relocation, resettlement, and refugee acceptance rates.¹⁵¹ Because the ECJ cannot impose on state sovereignty, it cannot compensate for lack of regional or global solidarity as demonstrated by Member States.¹⁵² Additionally, the ECJ cannot intervene with the political management, or lack thereof, which calls for a need for the development of global policies to protect migrants between Member States of origin, host Member States, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society organizations.¹⁵³

The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW) serves the global migrant community as a human rights pillar that fights for the respect, protection, and fulfilment of human rights for all.¹⁵⁴ The CMW monitors the appropriate implementation of the *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (1990) by its Member States.¹⁵⁵ Although Member States' sovereignty allows governments to determine conditions of territorial entry, the CMW states that nationality, origin, and immigration status are not applicable reasons for denial of entry, as they may set a precedent for racial discrimination.¹⁵⁶ Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the CMW opened its 32nd session remotely to discuss the effects of COVID-19 on migrants.¹⁵⁷ The 32nd session ended prematurely, but Member States were reminded of the need to protect of the rights of all migrant workers and their families.¹⁵⁸

Employment Rights and Equity for Migrants

Although there are endless “push” and “pull” factors that determine the root causes of migration, nearly two thirds of all migrants are labor migrants, including anyone who migrates for employment, regardless of the legality of their migration or employment.¹⁵⁹ Labor migration is not a recent concept, as a dramatic increase in industrialized labor demand in the 20th and 21st centuries have created urgency for people to relocate, with a desire to find new opportunities and a better livelihood.¹⁶⁰ While labor migration has become increasingly regulated by governments and international bodies, ongoing national and regional restrictions for migrants often lead to increased trafficking and safety concerns.¹⁶¹ Globally, 96% of children who are unhoused and find an income on the street are migrants, and an estimated 50% of them are girls between the ages of 8 and 14.¹⁶² High rates of unemployment for migrants, including youth, are often precipitated by employer prejudice against migrants, which impedes the upward mobility of migrants

¹⁴⁷ Equality and Human Rights Commission, *What is direct and indirect discrimination?*, 2019.

¹⁴⁸ European Parliament, *Asylum and migration in the EU: facts and figures*, 2021.

¹⁴⁹ Mischke, Brussels to sue Hungary, Poland and Czech Republic over asylum-seekers, *Politico*, 2017.

¹⁵⁰ Carlier et al., *From the 2015 European “Migration Crisis” to the 2018 Global Compact for Migration: A Political Transition Short on Legal Standards*, 2020, p. 51.

¹⁵¹ Visegrad Countries National Integration Evaluation Mechanism, *Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic “failed to fulfill their obligations under European Union law” – the ECJ ruled*.

¹⁵² Carlier et al., *From the 2015 European “Migration Crisis” to the 2018 Global Compact for Migration: A Political Transition Short on Legal Standards*, 2020, p. 40.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁴ UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

¹⁵⁵ OHCHR, *Committee on the rights of migrants workers suspends its thirty-second session*, 2021.

¹⁵⁶ UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

¹⁵⁷ OHCHR, *Committee on the rights of migrants workers suspends its thirty-second session*, 2021

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ UN DGC, *Migration*, 2021.

¹⁶⁰ WCAR, *Working Far From Home – Migration and Discrimination*, 2001.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² *Ibid.*

and effectively diminishes their livelihoods and the economic opportunities of their children.¹⁶³ Additionally, employed migrants often hold positions in low-status, low-reward, and hazardous jobs, which are also often under-regulated, leading to dirty, demeaning, and dangerous conditions.¹⁶⁴ Noting that many working migrants are undocumented, therefore unacknowledged, the economic value of their work is often unnoticed to policymakers.¹⁶⁵

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated labor inequality issues for migrants.¹⁶⁶ IOM affirms that racialized individuals, including migrants, have proven to be more likely to die from COVID-19, globally.¹⁶⁷ The higher mortality rate is due to a variety of factors, including systemic inequalities related to social determinants of health.¹⁶⁸ While these issues existed before COVID-19, these pre-existing inequalities have been exacerbated through a rise in cases of racial discrimination and hate crimes which impact the physical and mental health of migrants and often hinder them from accessing services for their wellbeing.¹⁶⁹ Measures to reduce racial discrimination against migrants are multifaceted, in order to promote social mixing through community-based models and encourage addressing prejudice through legal and policy responses.¹⁷⁰ The anxiety and fear generated by racial discrimination and the stigmatization of migrants can result in the alienation of migrants from society.¹⁷¹ Human rights abuses towards migrants have significantly risen since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.¹⁷² IOM suggests the adoption of legal and policy responses to prevent hate crimes against migrants and sanction those responsible, as well as to promote peaceful living through community-based approaches for social cohesion, are key to mitigating the human rights impact of COVID-19 on migrants.¹⁷³

Migrant Women and Girls

A gender perspective in regard to migration helps to guide the successful formulation of policies to address the needs of migrant women.¹⁷⁴ Globally, many policies and regulations actively discriminate against and create conditions for the systematic exploitation of women, positioning migrant women at the intersection of multiple converging and vulnerable identities.¹⁷⁵ The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) notes that intersectionality is a consequence of two or more discriminatory practices against an individual based on multiple aspects of their identity, for instance both race and gender.¹⁷⁶ The OHCHR Deputy High Commissioner, Kate Gilmore, reaffirmed how oppressive and obstructive intersectional discrimination is, as these behaviors and actions contribute to the denial of human rights for women and girls.¹⁷⁷ Not only do these layers of inequality directly oppose human rights, but they also counter the targets of SDG 10 (“reducing inequalities”).¹⁷⁸

¹⁶³ World Economic Forum, *Speech by High Commissioner for Human Rights and Secretary-General of the World Conference against Racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance Mary Robinson at the World Economic Forum in January 2001, in Davos, 2001.*

¹⁶⁴ Pearson & Sweetman, *Introduction: gender, development, and migrants in a global economy*, 2019, p. 4.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶⁶ IOM, *Countering Xenophobia and Stigma to Foster Social Cohesion in the COVID 19 Response and Recovery*, 2020, p. 1.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid.

¹⁷¹ Ibid.

¹⁷² Ibid.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ UN DESA, *Women and International Migration*, p. 27.

¹⁷⁵ Henderson, *The legal protection of women migrant domestic workers from the Philippines and Sri Lanka: an intersectional rights-based approach*, 2021, p. 65.

¹⁷⁶ OHCHR, *Gender discrimination, racial discrimination and women’s human rights*, 2017.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

Women and girls account for more than half of global refugees and IDPs, and this number continues to rise.¹⁷⁹ In 2018, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) determined that 50% of trafficking victims were women, and 20% were girls.¹⁸⁰ Regionally, between 300,000 and 600,000 women and girls are trafficked, smuggled, and forced to migrate involuntarily into the European Union (EU) every year.¹⁸¹ Although migrants often hope to find a better life after relocating, migrant women face disproportionate marginalization, and are disproportionately exposed to violence and abuse.¹⁸² Not only do migrant women often encounter challenging situations due to their gender, but they may also face further scrutiny based off of racial discrimination or their country of origin.¹⁸³ Migrant women are more likely to experience gender-based violence (GBV) prior to finding a new home, as common practices at borders include the exchange of sexual favors for permission to transit.¹⁸⁴ UNODC asserts that women and girls from low-income households are often targeted by traffickers because of their desperation for labor opportunities.¹⁸⁵ There is a direct link between anti-immigrant policies, the lack of equal opportunities and policies for women, and high levels of women as victims of trafficking.¹⁸⁶

Although many migrant women and girls face discrimination, hardship, and higher levels of GBV, some women and girls view migration and its aspects as beneficial.¹⁸⁷ In a case study presented by activist and sociologist Dr. Ermira Danaj, the author suggests that many Albanian women view migration as an opportunity for empowerment.¹⁸⁸ The women in this study migrated to Italy or Greece to find employment opportunities that they did not have in their home country. The women in the study all returned back to Albania with increased bargaining power for employment and aspiration to invest in their own families and home country.¹⁸⁹ These women proved to be successful in breaking from generational underdevelopment and poverty and were able to do so because of regional migration policy which allowing them to relocate and find employment, even if just temporarily.¹⁹⁰ Furthermore, this group of women learned valuable lessons in empowerment, development, and entrepreneurship, as many of them relocated from small towns to larger cities to start their own businesses and bring their professional skills elsewhere.¹⁹¹ This case study demonstrates how Albanian women are contributing to a change in dynamic through personal choices that had an impact on their economic and social situations.¹⁹² While many positive examples of migration for women exist globally, the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) affirms that that migration is directly related to the level of empowerment for women in the host country.¹⁹³ UN DESA suggests that when migrant women, such as the women highlighted in the case study, participate in society through empowering opportunities, they gain independence and autonomy, which directly leads to a change in the understanding of gender and economic empowerment within their own personal relationships.¹⁹⁴

While this case study highlights how these specific migrant women have overcome intersectional barriers and vulnerabilities, many migrant women do not have this experience.¹⁹⁵ According to the Inter-American

¹⁷⁹ WCAR, *Working Far From Home – Migration and Discrimination*, 2001.

¹⁸⁰ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons – 2020*, 2021.

¹⁸¹ WCAR, *Working Far From Home – Migration and Discrimination*, 2001.

¹⁸² Pizarro, Specific Groups and Individuals: Migrant Workers, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (E/CN.4/2005/85/Add.4), ECOSOC, 2005.

¹⁸³ WCAR, *Working Far From Home – Migration and Discrimination*, 2001.

¹⁸⁴ Pizarro, Specific Groups and Individuals: Migrant Workers, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants (E/CN.4/2005/85/Add.4), ECOSOC, 2005.

¹⁸⁵ UNODC, *Global Report on Trafficking in Persons – 2020*, 2021.

¹⁸⁶ WCAR, *At the Crossroads of Gender and Racial Discrimination*, 2001.

¹⁸⁷ Pearson & Sweetman, *Introduction: gender, development, and migrants in a global economy*, 2019, p. 7.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p. 7.

¹⁹² Ibid., p. 12.

¹⁹³ UN DESA, *Women and International Migration*, p. 28.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 29.

¹⁹⁵ IOM, *Intersecting discriminations: migrants facing racism*, 2016.

Commission on Human Rights, Afro-descendant women face higher levels discrimination through social, economic, geographical, gender barriers, and colorism.¹⁹⁶ While many migrant women overcome social and economic exclusionary practices, the fact women still face discrimination based on their skin color and gender is unacceptable under the auspices in international human rights frameworks.¹⁹⁷

Although migrant women and girls often face challenges and disparities, there are also clear portrayals of how migration can enhance their self-worth and positively empower them as agents of their own destiny.¹⁹⁸ Migration for women is often a test of how they can demonstrate their skills proficiently, how much money they can make, or how they can contribute to household welfare both in and outside of the home.¹⁹⁹ As societal norms around gender change and policy frameworks become more inclusive, women have more opportunities to experience migration in a positive way.²⁰⁰ While migration can challenge and transform gender inequality, it may also lead to new developments and liberation for women.²⁰¹

Conclusion

More people are migrating today than ever before, which has created urgency in upholding and developing further policies and protections for the human rights of migrants.²⁰² The international community has continually affirmed the importance of the ability of all migrants, especially labor migrants, women, and girls, to access opportunities and have their human rights protected.²⁰³ Reimagined and beneficial human mobility calls for enabled and empowered migrants to live better lives and build more inclusive and resilient societies.²⁰⁴ While COVID-19 challenged most of the world's existing infrastructure, migrants played a fundamental role at the forefront of the pandemic with their willingness to relocate and work in the frontlines of their home or host countries.²⁰⁵ Regardless of their country of origin, migrants often seek a future of safety, opportunity, health, and equity.²⁰⁶ Migration should be a choice, not a necessity, and the international community continues to affirm a strong commitment to dignified and accessible migration for all.²⁰⁷ While strong legislation and policy can be beneficial to the protection and advancement of migrants, a human rights-based approach can be used to eradicate racial discrimination towards migrants, and to allow them to prosper, regardless of within which borders they call home.²⁰⁸

Further Research

Moving forward with their research on this issue, delegates should consider the following questions: How can migrant workers be further protected by international policy? How can gender equality issues be better enshrined in international migrant policies? How would Member States and their citizens be positively impacted by non-citizens being included under the protection of ICERD? How can Member States ensure that they are providing effective policy to grant migrants with equity and opportunity in society, while prioritizing their safety and wellbeing in the reduction of racial discrimination?

¹⁹⁶ IOM, *Intersecting discriminations: migrants facing racism*, 2016.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Pearson & Sweetman, *Introduction: gender, development, and migrants in a global economy*, 2019, p. 7.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 7.

²⁰⁰ Ibid. p. 7.

²⁰¹ Danaj, *Albanian women's experiences of migration to Greece and Italy: a gender analysis*, 2019, p. 139.

²⁰² UN DGC, *Migration*, 2021.

²⁰³ UN DGC, *International Migrants Day 18 December, 2020*.

²⁰⁴ UN Secretariat, *Statement by Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on the International Migrants Day on 18 December 2020, 2020*.

²⁰⁵ UN DGC, *International Migrants Day 18 December, 2020*.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸ UN DGC, *Vulnerable Groups: Migrants*, 2021.

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Dag Hammarskjöld Library. (2021). *What is the UN doing to combat racism and racial discrimination?*. Retrieved 27 June 2021 from: <https://ask.un.org/faq/306811>

This resource is an excellent starting point for delegates to understand a long history of combatting anti-racism in the realm of migration, as there are decades of international work for the eradication of racial discrimination in this area. This website compiles updated information on what the UN and international community have done to combat racism. This comprehensive list includes conferences, observances, and ongoing works. Delegates will find this resource useful to understand the history of policymaking and discussion against racial oppression and discrimination.

International Organization for Migration. (2021). *Key Migration Terms*. Retrieved 26 June 2021 from: <https://www.iom.int/key-migration-terms>

The IOM created this website to define and outline migration terms. This website serves as a supplement to delegates' learning through expressing the context and definition of key terms of migration. In regard to the topic, useful definitions on this website includes: asylum seeker, borders, country of destination, country of origin, country of transit, displacement, immigrant, immigration, integration, internal migration, IDPs, labor migration, migrant, migration, non-discrimination, refugee, sovereignty, and xenophobia. Delegates will find this resource useful in their preliminary research to allow for further understanding of topics and key words.

Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2021). *Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*. Retrieved 26 June 2021 from:

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CERD/Pages/CERDIndex.aspx>

This website outlines the importance of CERD and its work with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. The interactive map allows delegates to understand the work of their Member State and provides detailed information on recent developments and upcoming events. Delegates will find this website resourceful by utilizing the tools on the page, including the World Map on Ratifications, reporting status by country, declarations and reservations, and the status of ratification by treaty and country.

United Nations, Department of Global Communications. (2021). *Migration*. Retrieved 3 August 2021 from: <https://www.un.org/en/global-issues/migration>

This description of migration from the United Nations website will provide delegates with important and relevant background information for the IOM. The website highlights recent data regarding migration, outlining the description of a migrant and migration. Further, this website relates the topic of migration to the 2030 Agenda. Delegates will find this website useful in their research of migration, global action, and for further resources to develop their understanding of migration.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-first session. (2016). *New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants (A/RES/71/1)*. Retrieved 14 October 2021 from:

https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/71/1

General Assembly resolution 71/1 (2016) outlines the commitments made by the UN to enhance global migration policies and protections. The Global Compact on Refugees and a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration both outline Member States' commitments for refugees and migrants to migrate safely and effectively. Delegates will find the New York Declaration useful in their understanding of UN treaties and resolutions which have been developed to enhance the lives of refugees worldwide.

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2. Ensuring Access to Preventative Healthcare for Migrant Workers

Introduction

Approximately 150 million of the currently estimated 272 million migrants are labor migrants.²⁰⁹ The *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (ICRMW) (1990) defines a migrant worker as “a person who will be, is, or was engaged in a paying activity in a state of which he or she is not a national, regardless whether they are legally allowed to work in their host country.”²¹⁰ In article 2 of the ICRMW, the definition is further divided into different types of migrant workers, like seafarers or specified-employment workers.²¹¹ The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is mandated to ensure orderly and humane migration, and thus, also advocates for the rights of migrant workers.²¹²

The ICRMW also establishes the right to healthcare services for migrant workers, such as preventative healthcare.²¹³ The act of migration can lead to health risks, such as injuries and greater exposure to viruses and illness, as migrant workers may travel under poor and under-regulated conditions with limited access to healthcare.²¹⁴ Often, migrants are fleeing from dangerous situations, such as war, political instability, and gender-based violence, making their health needs higher risk from circumstance.²¹⁵ All migrant groups also experience a different degree of vulnerability due to circumstances on the migration journey with women, children, and people from marginalized groups being especially vulnerable.²¹⁶

Preventative healthcare is part of universal health coverage (UHC), which means that all people and communities receive required healthcare without financial distress.²¹⁷ UHC is defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) as “a situation where all people who need healthcare services receive them without facing financial hardship.”²¹⁸ UHC includes all health services, from health promotion to palliative care, as well as preventative measures, treatment, and rehabilitation.²¹⁹ The World Bank notes that it would cost approximately \$60 per person a year for essential healthcare services globally.²²⁰ In 2015, the United Nations (UN) General Assembly adopted resolution 70/1 on “Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development”, which introduces Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 (“good health and wellbeing”), with target 3.8 to “achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all” by 2030.²²¹ In 2019, the UN High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage adopted the *Political Declaration of the High-level Meeting on Universal Health Coverage*, recognizing health as a precondition to fulfilling the 2030 Agenda and with UHC being the best route to achieving this.²²²

²⁰⁹ IOM, *Migration Health*, 2020.

²¹⁰ UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/158)*, 1990.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*

²¹² IOM, *About IOM*, 2021.

²¹³ UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/158)*, 1990.

²¹⁴ ILO, *Safety and Health for Migrant Workers*, 2020.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*

²¹⁶ IOM, *Universal Health Coverage: “Leave No Migrant Behind”*, 2019.

²¹⁷ WHO, *Universal Health Coverage (UHC)*, 2021.

²¹⁸ WHO & The World Bank, *Monitoring Progress towards Universal Health Coverage at Country and Global Levels: A Framework*, 2013.

²¹⁹ WHO, *Universal Health Coverage (UHC)*, 2021.

²²⁰ Management Sciences for Health, *Global Movement Emerges for Universal Health Coverage*, 2013.

²²¹ WHO, *Universal Health Coverage (UHC)*, 2021.

²²² *Ibid.*

International and Regional Framework

Access to healthcare and basic services such as housing are human rights, as established in article 25 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (UDHR) (1948), which ensures the right to adequate health, housing, and medical care.²²³ Apart from covering the physical aspects of health, article 25 also covers emotional well-being and the right to social services, key areas of access for migrant worker.²²⁴ Similarly, article 1 of the ICRMW states that the rights of all migrant workers and their families applies to the entire migration journey, from the preparations to leave to the final arrival in the host country.²²⁵ Articles 43 and 45 of the ICRMW further establish that it is the responsibility of each state to ensure that the rights of documented workers are protected, so as to receive the same quality of healthcare and social services as citizens and residents.²²⁶

In 2018, the General Assembly adopted the *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* through resolution 73/195, ensuring access to basic services for migrants, regardless of their legal status, with the aim of promoting migrants' basic human rights.²²⁷ In the Global Compact, Member States are committed to supporting international cooperation on the governance of international migration and to strengthening the contribution of migrants and migration towards sustainable development.²²⁸

The annual *World Migration Report* is the flagship publication of the IOM, published every two to three years starting in 2000, and provides strategic recommendations on migration in-line with scholars, experts, and researchers.²²⁹ The 2020 *World Migration Report* states that “many health risks arise during the different phases of migration which are brought into the host communities” and that migrants are not inherently vulnerable to poor health and chronic conditions, but that circumstances during a migration journey make migrant workers vulnerable to exacerbated poor health.²³⁰ Migrants together with healthcare providers, private as well as state-funded, often face difficulties with linguistic, cultural, and legal barriers when trying to provide or receive adequate healthcare.²³¹

Role of the International System

IOM's work on developing and implementing policies and programs benefits individuals, host and origin communities, migrant workers, and their families.²³² In order to support access to preventative healthcare for migrant workers, IOM grants access to healthcare services for migrant workers and their families through projects like Equi-Health, which gives migrants access to public healthcare.²³³ Equi-Health also conducts research on migrant health, occupational health of border officials, and public health, including screening practices and through migrant health data collection.²³⁴ Data collected by Equi-Health contributes to national legal and policy frameworks in 30 countries as guidelines that foster a harmonized EU approach on access to health services.²³⁵ IOM notes that the preventative healthcare of migrant workers is a whole-of-society issue, as if migrant workers are unable to access public healthcare, untreated illnesses can undermine general public health by transmitting undetected diseases and viruses.²³⁶

²²³ UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (A/RES/217 A (III)), 1948.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ UN General Assembly, *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families* (A/RES/45/158), 1990.

²²⁶ Ibid.

²²⁷ UN General Assembly, *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* (A/RES/73/195), 2018.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ IOM, *DIRECTOR GENERAL'S FOREWORD: World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

²³⁰ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

²³¹ Ibid.

²³² IOM, *The Health of Migrant Workers & and Left Behind Families*, 2018.

²³³ IOM, *EQUI-HEALTH*, 2020.

²³⁴ Ibid.

²³⁵ Ibid.

²³⁶ IOM, *The Health of Migrant Workers & and Left Behind Families*, 2018.

The UN Regional Task Force on Mobility and HIV Vulnerability Reduction in South East Asia changed its name in 2009 to the Joint UN Initiative on Migration and Health in Asia (JUNIMA), responding to the need for an effective regional coordination mechanism to provide access to healthcare for migrants in Asia.²³⁷ JUNIMA’s mandate is to promote policies, build partnerships, and grant access to healthcare support services like medical check-ups for migrants in Asia.²³⁸ JUNIMA is a regional, multi-sector coordination mechanism that works with state governments, civil society organizations, and regional associations like the Association of South East Asian Nations.²³⁹ JUNIMA also works with development partners such as the United States Agency for International Development and UN agencies including the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the WHO to collaborate on projects, including most recently a series of expert webinars on migration and health in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁴⁰

The first Global Consultation on Migrant Health was held in 2010 in Madrid, Spain as a result of the 2008 World Health Assembly (WHA) resolution on the *Health of Migrants*, which called on Member States to take action on migrant-sensitive health policies and practices.²⁴¹ The IOM, WHO, and governmental partners held the second Global Consultation on Migrant Health in 2017.²⁴² The goal was to offer Member States and other stakeholders a platform for multi-sectoral dialogue, and political commitment to promote the health of migrants, minimizing the varying approaches to migration management between states.²⁴³ The *Colombo Statement* (2017) was the main outcome document of the second Global Consultation on Migrant Health, which recognizes that migrants’ health must be managed cross-border and free of cost, being one of the first international documents recognizing a cross-border approach.²⁴⁴

IOM also engages closely with other stakeholders including Member States’ ministries of health, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and private sector entities such as employment agencies.²⁴⁵ In 2020, IOM managed 69 migration health assessment centers, 33 laboratories, and 121 mobile medical crisis teams.²⁴⁶ In 2020, IOM and its key partners such as WHO, ILO, the Joint UN Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, UN-Habitat, and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights invested \$233 million in 108 countries and trained 16,600 health workers throughout different UN programs.²⁴⁷ IOM also works with civil society partners and over 60 NGOs who hold Observer status with the organization by establishing workshops, seminars, and information dissemination campaigns specifically directed at increasing awareness of the human rights of migrants.²⁴⁸ Some consultations that IOM has hosted with CSOs include “Protecting and Positively Impacting Migrant Lives” (2015 September) and “Migrants and Development” (2013 September).²⁴⁹ IOM and NGOs also collaborate to conduct research and document human rights abuses against migrants, among other important issue.²⁵⁰ The data collection supported by CSOs is then published in the IOM’s World Migration Report and used to furnish the Migration Research Series and IOM Migration Profiles.²⁵¹

Regionally, a number of important forums have been working to create more effective frameworks, including countries from the African Regional Economic Community, which moved in June 2021 to

²³⁷ JUNIMA, *Health Barriers for Migrants*, 2020.

²³⁸ Ibid.

²³⁹ Ibid.

²⁴⁰ Ibid.

²⁴¹ IOM, *Second Global Consultation on Migrant Health, Resetting the Agenda*, 2017.

²⁴² Ibid.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ IOM, *Migration Health*, 2020.

²⁴⁶ Ibid.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ IOM, *Civil Society and NGOs*, 2021.

²⁴⁹ IOM, *IOM Partnership with Civil Society Organizations*, 2021.

²⁵⁰ IOM, *Civil Society and NGOs*, 2021.

²⁵¹ IOM, *Data and Research*, 2021.

formalize and consolidate official migration policies through the new Joint Labour Migration Program.²⁵² With representatives from the African Union Commission, Business Africa, IOM, ILO, Diaspora Africa Forum, and others, the group collectively committed to formal experience sharing and capacity building.²⁵³ Similarly, in September 2020, the EU launched the much-anticipated EU Pact on Migration and Asylum in collaboration with the IOM, championing comprehensive, rights-based approaches to migration and mobility policy.²⁵⁴ Regional coordination mechanisms such as these are of utmost importance to maximizing the impact and reach of ILO recommendations.²⁵⁵

Research Gaps in Migration and Health

The work of IOM requires reliable sources of data to best meet the needs of migrants.²⁵⁶ The Migration Policy Research Division (MPRD) is tasked by the IOM secretariat to collect and validate data, and verify reliable data.²⁵⁷ The MPRD, based at the IOM headquarters, has six major research objectives.²⁵⁸ These objectives are policy-orientated research, reviewing final reports, research and studies for publication, supporting governments to enhance their research capacities, studying IOM's migration activities to gather information about best practices for future activities, promoting strategic and technical partnerships, and initiating research.²⁵⁹ MPRD also collects the data for the *World Migration Report* and publishes it.²⁶⁰ MPRD currently offers many projects such as migration research seminars where researchers are invited to present their work at the IOM headquarters such as the Migrant Research @Lunchtime Seminars, to keep stakeholders informed of current developments on these topical issues.²⁶¹

With enough data, policymakers are better able to make decisions on constructive and lasting policies for the increasing numbers of individuals currently involved in global migration.²⁶² Reliable, validated data is crucial to understand how migration dynamics function and how they impact origin, transfer, and destination states, as well as migrants themselves.²⁶³ According to IOM, long-term analysis is important when measuring the impact of international programs and activities in order to evaluate how effective a program is or what aspects need to be improved.²⁶⁴ During the COVID-19 pandemic, many migrant workers were also targets of increased xenophobia, distrust, and stigmatization, which further exacerbated the challenges that people from marginalized groups face.²⁶⁵ A greater understanding of migratory trends through effective data could also help fight the stigmatization and discrimination of migrant workers and their families by targeted public awareness.²⁶⁶

IOM conducted a 2020 study that found that international publications typically only report on migration in high-income countries.²⁶⁷ Only 0.8% of the publications in the study reference low-income host countries, which according to the World Bank are nations that have a per capita gross national income of less than

²⁵² IOM, *African Regional Economic Communities move to formalize and consolidate closer cooperation on labour migration policies*, 2021.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ IOM, *IOM Welcomes Proposals for a New EU Pact on Migration and Asylum*, 2020.

²⁵⁵ Ibid.

²⁵⁶ IOM, *Migration Research*, 2021.

²⁵⁷ Ibid.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

²⁶⁰ Ibid.

²⁶¹ IOM, *Migration Research*, 2021; IOM, *Migration Research @Lunchtime Seminars*, 2021.

²⁶² CORDIS, *Minding the Gaps in International Migration Data*, 2021.

²⁶³ UNICEF, *A Call to Action: Protecting Children on the Move Starts With Better Data*, 2018.

²⁶⁴ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

²⁶⁵ UNICEF, *End Stigma and Discrimination Against Migrant Workers and Their Children During COVID-19 Pandemic*, 2020.

²⁶⁶ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

²⁶⁷ Ibid.

\$1.05.²⁶⁸ There is still little existing data for low- and middle-income states on migration trends and challenges, despite the majority of migration taking place in these countries, according to the *World Migration Report 2020*.²⁶⁹

Data is also lacking on migrants who are part of vulnerable groups, including women, children, and members of marginalized groups.²⁷⁰ Gaps in gender data and the lack of trend data make it difficult to monitor migratory progress for women and girls.²⁷¹ For instance, only 23% of the available data on women has been collected after 2010.²⁷² With little reliable data on migrant women and girls, it is challenging to meet the needs that women and girls face in the migratory process, or to develop gender-conscious migration health policies.²⁷³ Additionally, reliable data on the age of migrant workers is only available for 56% of displaced persons and migrants, hindering IOM and other stakeholders in determining what resources are needed to support migrant workers of different age groups.²⁷⁴ Many regional and research initiatives, like, are working on developing an improved understanding of migration and health, focusing on research to improve the health and well-being of both migrants and the communities hosting migrants.²⁷⁵ For instance, the European Union-funded HumMingBird project created by the European Commission in 2020 is a research project that aims to improve the understanding of changing migration flows and analyze patterns and motivations, as well as test new methods to forecast emerging and future trends in migration.²⁷⁶ Similarly, the Washington DC-based Migration Policy Institute is creating a “Building a Regional Migration System” project, which maps migration trends and policies across North America from Canada to Central America; and the Migrating out of Poverty Research Programme Consortium compiled ten years of migration research and policy analysis across Africa and Asia.²⁷⁷ Valuable CSO and thinktank research such as this can help the IOM get access to stronger, more accurate, and more diverse data.²⁷⁸

Typically data collection focuses on migrants leaving their home country and arriving at the host country, leaving much of the migration journey relatively undocumented for migrants who travel through many countries before arriving at their destination.²⁷⁹ To facilitate the collection of data, IOM, UNHCR, the UN Children’s Fund, Eurostat, and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development called for a new standard in data collection in the document *A Call to Action: Protecting Children on the Move Starts with Better Data* (2018).²⁸⁰ These standards include disaggregation of data by age, sex, and other factors, making better use of existing data and sharing it between Member States and institutions.²⁸¹ Much of the data collected by Member States’ borders remains within these countries and cannot be used for further research, so improving the coordination of data collection within Member States and across borders is a crucial step towards minimizing research gaps on migrant workers.²⁸²

²⁶⁸ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020; World Bank, *World Bank Country and Lending Groups*, 2021.

²⁶⁹ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

²⁷⁰ UN Women, *Making Women and Girls Visible*, 2018.

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Ibid.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ UNICEF, *A Call to Action: Protecting Children on the Move Starts With Better Data*, 2018.

²⁷⁵ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020; CORDIS, *Minding the Gaps in International Migration Data*, 2021.

²⁷⁶ CORDIS, *Minding the Gaps in International Migration Data*, 2021.

²⁷⁷ MPI, *Building a Regional Migration System*, 2021; Migrating Out of Poverty, Migrating Out of Poverty, *University of Sussex*, 2021.

²⁷⁸ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

²⁷⁹ UNICEF, *A Call to Action: Protecting Children on the Move Starts With Better Data*, 2018.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Ibid.

Migrant Workers and the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, IOM has been providing support measures as part of the global COVID-19 pandemic response.²⁸³ IOM is supporting the health of migrant workers by supplying migrants with personal protective equipment, providing technical assistance to host states' ministries, supporting SARS-CoV-2 screenings at points of entry, and including healthcare services between pre-departure and post-arrival establishing fitness to travel and mitigating public health risks related to mobility and migration.²⁸⁴

Starting at the beginning of the pandemic, Member States have taken recommended actions to mitigate the impacts of the COVID-19, including restrictions on international travel, in-country movement, and visa issuance.²⁸⁵ However these necessary actions have led to a suspension of IOM-led pre-migration healthcare support, like conducting medical checkups and routine vaccinations for migrants.²⁸⁶ While some of these initiatives have resumed, IOM is working with Member States to find ways it can continue to meet the healthcare needs of migrants in order to make migration as safe as possible.²⁸⁷

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights also stated that ensuring access to the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine is in the best interest of all people in order to eradicate the COVID-19 virus.²⁸⁸ With this in mind, IOM is assisting Member States with the distribution of vaccines and is considered a leader and arbiter of best practices in the field of vaccination.²⁸⁹ In 2019, IOM was active in 74 countries providing vaccinations against more than 20 diseases like cholera, diphtheria, meningitis, mumps, pertussis, pneumococcal infection, and polio to migrant workers and displaced persons.²⁹⁰ With this experience and the help of Member States, IOM is contributing to the worldwide SARS-CoV-2 vaccination campaign, making migration journeys safer for migrants and residents alike.²⁹¹

The first vaccination programs for SARS-CoV-2 started in December 2020.²⁹² Since then, WHO officially recognized 13 different SARS-CoV-2 vaccines which are sufficiently tested, authorized by national lawmakers, manufactured, and distributed.²⁹³ The UN system is working closely with international partners to facilitate this process so that vaccines can be distributed more quickly to end the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁹⁴ WHO explains that the impact of the vaccine on the pandemic depends on how many people get vaccinated, meaning that to end the pandemic all migrant workers must get access to the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine regardless of their migration status and on an equal basis with all other citizens of the host country.²⁹⁵ IOM is advocating for the right to vaccination for migrant workers globally.²⁹⁶ For migrants and their families, it is often more difficult to gain access to the SARS-CoV-2 vaccination than it is for citizens of the host country since migrant workers lack access to health information in a language they understand or face monetary, legal, and administrative barriers.²⁹⁷

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, many governmental institutions have been working more closely together, such as health, public services, and immigration authorities sharing data collection and

²⁸³ IOM, *Migrant Inclusion in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign*, 2021.

²⁸⁴ IOM, *Migration Health Assessments and Travel Health Assistance*, 2019.

²⁸⁵ IOM, *IOM Migration Health Assessment Programmes Response to COVID-19*, 2021.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.

²⁸⁸ OHCHR, *Migrants: Guidance on Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccine*, 2021.

²⁸⁹ IOM, *Ensuring Migrants' Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccines*, 2021.

²⁹⁰ Ibid.

²⁹¹ Ibid.

²⁹² IOM, *IOM Migration Health Assessment Programmes Response to COVID-19*, 2021.

²⁹³ Ibid.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ OHCHR, *Migrants: Guidance on Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccine*, 2021.

²⁹⁶ IOM, *Migrant Inclusion in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign*, 2021.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

information related to the COVID-19 pandemic.²⁹⁸ This cooperation can strengthen fears among migrants in irregular, clandestine, or illegal situations, who are worried that this data collection could result in arrest or deportation.²⁹⁹ These fears can also exacerbate the stigmatization of migrants and minorities.³⁰⁰ Being falsely considered the source of the pandemic strengthens discriminatory public discourses, which can lead to the exclusion of migrants, hindering efforts to protect migrants on a national level, and must be considered and managed in official pandemic response.³⁰¹

Conclusion

IOM is working to protect migrant workers and their families during the migration process, but many face challenges in accessing healthcare services and protecting themselves from the COVID-19 pandemic, especially women, children, and members of marginalized groups.³⁰² Migrant workers are also at a higher risk of being exposed to health risks, such as viruses and malnutrition during the migration process.³⁰³ The documentation status of migrants plays a significant role in their access to healthcare since undocumented workers are often unable to access healthcare without local authorities being present or notified.³⁰⁴ Xenophobia and discrimination also impact migrants' access to adequate healthcare.³⁰⁵ Migrants without access to medical services are more vulnerable to contracting viruses and spreading them to their host communities.³⁰⁶ If migration is well-managed and migrants' human rights are realized, migrant workers, their families, and their host state all benefit.³⁰⁷

Further Research

Migration is an increasingly global phenomenon with many challenges to overcome.³⁰⁸ As delegates begin their research, they should consider the following: How can IOM help close gaps in migration and healthcare research? Which standards are necessary to collect needed data? What are challenges arising in migration-related healthcare management? How can access to the SARS-CoV-2 vaccine be facilitated for migrant workers and their families? How can migration be safely managed during a pandemic? How can access to healthcare for migrant workers with uncertain legal situations be assured? How can xenophobia and prejudices resulting from crises such as a pandemic be effectively mitigated?

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This IOM information sheet explains why migrant workers are important to their host countries and how their health is directly linked to the health of the communities they live in. The sheet also includes some examples of existing projects, like the Joint United Nations Initiative on Migration and Health and the Second Global Consultation on Migrant Health, as an attempt to improve migrant workers access to healthcare. This document explains the impact that migrant workers have on their country of origin as well as on their host countries, and how these connects with public health concerns. Delegates will

²⁹⁸ IOM, *Migrant Inclusion in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign*, 2021.

²⁹⁹ OHCHR, *Migrants: Guidance on Equitable Access to COVID-19 Vaccine*, 2021.

³⁰⁰ IOM, *Migrant Inclusion in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign*, 2021.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ IOM, *The Health of Migrant Workers & and Left Behind Families*, 2018.

³⁰⁵ IOM, *Migrant Inclusion in COVID-19 Vaccination Campaign*, 2021.

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

³⁰⁷ IOM, *World Migration Report 2020*, 2020.

³⁰⁸ CORDIS, *Minding the Gaps in International Migration Data*, 2021.

find this resource to be a useful starting point to begin thinking about the connections between healthcare and migration.

International Organization for Migration. (2020). *World Migration Report 2020*. Retrieved 25 June 2021 from: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/wmr_2020.pdf

The World Migration Report is the flagship publication of IOM, and is released every two-three years, starting in 2000. The World Migration Report 2020 increases the available information on migration throughout the world. Notably, chapter 7 addresses the healthcare of migrant workers. This research presented includes key data and information on migration, including current migration flows and discusses the root causes for migration. For the 2020 report, available data, research, and analysis on migration were utilized to gain insights into some of the most important and pressing global migration issues. This report provides context on the continuously growing and improving body of data and information on this topic, and delegates will find the updated statistics included in this resource useful to their research.

United Nations, General Assembly, Forty-fifth session (1990). *International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (A/RES/45/58)*. Retrieved 25 June 2021 from:

https://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_45_158.pdf

This General Assembly resolution formed the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families and gives the core definition of what a migrant worker is, together with several secondary definitions for migrant workers. The Convention also establishes the rights of migrant workers, no matter their legal status, and promotes the protection of migrant workers and their families. This resource will be important to delegates because it is the first framework document to define what a migrant worker is, and what rights migrants hold.

United Nations, General Assembly, Seventy-third session. (2018). *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (A/RES/73/195)*. Adopted without reference to a Main Committee (A/73/L.66).

Retrieved 25 June 2021 from: <https://undocs.org/a/res/73/195>

The Global Compact is the first intergovernmentally negotiated agreement covering all dimensions of international migration. This resolution offers a summary of how international cooperation in the field of migration can be achieved on a global scale. This resource will provide delegates with a useful overview of the existing international achievements on migration, and the vision provided in one of the key framework documents on the topic.

World Health Organization. (2021). *Universal Health Coverage (UHC)*. Retrieved 5 August 2021 from:

[https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-\(uhc\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/universal-health-coverage-(uhc))

This document presents WHO's core definition of what preventative healthcare is and how it is part of UHC. It explains why UHC is so important, especially to vulnerable groups such as migrant workers, and provides insight into what Member States can do to work towards UHC and how this progress can be measured. Delegates can use this resource to gain a deeper understanding of how migrant workers are connected to healthcare and what work remains to be done.

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