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30 September 2020 - Launching of the Global Task Force on Migration (Webinar)

3 February 2021 - 2nd Meeting: The Importance of Multi-Level Governance to Ensure Effective Local Responses to Migrations and Displacement (Webinar)

11 May 2021 - 3rd Meeting: Migrants’ & Refugees’ Access to Labour Markets: Towards Equality for Workers (Webinar)

22 September 2021 - UNHCR & GTFM Joint Event: Cities and their contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees (Webinar)

The First Annual Cycle in Numbers

3 Online Meetings
1 Face-to-face Meeting
1 Joint Meeting
42 Speakers
20 Countries
Background

The International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement (the Gaziantep Municipal Forum) took place on 26-27 November 2019 in Gaziantep, Turkey, and brought together over 400 participants from all regions of the globe, including 60 high-level speakers of which more than 35 were mayors. The forum was co-organized by seven partner organizations: UNDP, UNHCR, IOM, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA), the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT), and World Academy for Local Government and Democracy (WALD). The Forum took place in Turkey, currently home to the largest number of refugees in the world. The forum was hosted by Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality, which accommodates 500,000 Syrians under temporary protection.

One of the main outcomes of the Gaziantep Municipal Forum was the 2019 Gaziantep Declaration, reflecting, inter alia, best practices on the implementation of globally and regionally agreed principles on local solutions to migration and displacement. The declaration builds on the role adopted for cities and municipalities by the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration (GCM) in 2018. The declaration encourages representatives of local governments from around the world to work in close cooperation in order to reduce the burden on cities resulting from migration and displacement. The organizers of the Forum established a Global Task Force on Migration (GTFM) under the UCLG-MEWA Committee on Social Inclusion to follow up the commitments signed in the declaration and to translate its words into action.

The objective of the GTFM is to provide a platform for all signatories of the declaration and local governments to develop relationships, exchange experiences, and best practices, and facilitate technical debates initiated in Gaziantep through periodic online meetings at the technical level. In particular, the Steering Committee leads the GTFM to become a global centre of best practices and expertise on urban migration that will grow to support its members to influence and participate in global processes relevant to local governments, migration, and displacement (such as the Global Compacts on Refugees and on Migration, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, Mayors Mechanism, etc...).
Launching of the Global Task Force on Migration (Webinar)

Date: 30 September 2020

This first meeting of the GTFM was aimed at bringing the Steering Committee and Gaziantep Declaration signatories together, in addition to drawing the roadmap for the first annual cycle of events. The meeting was an opportunity to reconvene the participants of the Gaziantep Municipal Forum and review progress made on signatories’ commitments since the adoption of the 2019 Gaziantep Declaration. The meeting featured a discussion on the evolution of global migration and refugee processes and other efforts related to refugees and migrants, particularly since the organization of the first Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

The launching event of the Global Task Force on Migration (GTFM) took place on September 30, 2020, with approximately 50 participants from across the world.

Speakers

Gülcan KIŞ, Deputy Mayor, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality (Opening Remarks)

Bastien REVEL, Resilience Analyst, UNDP Turkey (Moderator)

Yasmin ALHAYEK, Project Officer, UCLG-MEWA (Moderator)

Sümeyye GEDIKOĞLU, Coordinator of the UMT Migration Research Center, Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT)
Claire Roberts LAMONT, Focal Point for Cities, UNHCR
Fatima FERNANDEZ, Policy Officer, UCLG World Secretariat
Maggie POWERS, Head of Programs and Advocacy, Mayors Migration Council
Colleen THOUEZ, Director of Welcoming and Inclusive Cities Division, Open Society Foundations (OSF)
Cyril CYRIAC, Head of Durban Office, UNHCR
Eric APELGEN, Council Member, Durban Municipality
Mohamad EL BABA, Council Member, Saida Municipality

Highlights

The meeting highlighted the importance of:

- Exchanging experiences and adhering to the 2019 Gaziantep Declaration.
- The roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee members, that range from participating in quarterly meetings to developing the GTFM’s work plan to provide technical support for creating tools, trainings, and guidance materials.
- Responses of Turkish municipalities such as Mersin Metropolitan Municipality (which assumes the political leadership of the Task Force, in their capacity as the President of the UCLG-MEWA Committee on Social Inclusion) to migration and international best practices on positive social inclusion of refugees.
- Positive impact on cities with city leaders fulfilling their pledges which were highlighted by the UNHCR, United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG), and Mayors Migration Council (MMC).
- MMC as a key mechanism to make sure that the voice of municipalities is raised in international fora, particularly in the Global Forum for Migration and Development (GFMD).
- The Global Compacts as key to responding to the impact of COVID-19 and building back better by ensuring that no one is left behind.
- Open Society Foundations' grants and its deliberate support to local governments in order to respond to the needs of migrants.
- Networking between mayors as a key to positioning them as leaders in international policy discussion on social inclusion.
- The support of UNHCR, UCLG, and other stakeholders of the Gaziantep Forum to municipalities on the ground as well as in the global sphere, notably through the Mayors Mechanism 2019 Call to Local Action on Migration aiming to collect, showcase, support, exchange, and leverage actions that local and regional authorities undertake in favor of an inclusive, human rights-based and migration-sensitive governance.
Multi-Level Governance is a key element to deal with humanitarian issues in general and migration in particular. The meeting was a good step taken towards examining the implemented work on migration solutions particularly at the local level within the framework of the Gaziantep Declaration. Economic stability and social cohesion are the key points for building a whole-of-society approach that is based on multi-level governance. Adopting a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach is what we need to achieve the SDGs. The meeting consisted of two sessions on Multi-Level Governance and Effective Data Sharing As a Key Role For Recovery and The Role of Small And Intermediary Cities As Catalysts For Stability".

The second event of the Global Task Force on Migration (GTFM) took place with approximately 120 participants from across the world. The theme of the meeting was set according to the results of the survey that was conducted in the first meeting.

Speakers

Stephanie LOOSE, Human Settlements Officer, UN-Habitat (Keynote Speech)
İbrahim DİZMAN, Resource Development and External Relations Officer, Sultanbeyli Municipality
Seda RASS-TURGUT, Head of Integration, Social Services and Civic Engagement Department, Osnabrück Municipality
Leila ADEL YOUSSEF, Senior Urban Specialist / Assistant Director of the International Project and Programs Unit Greater Irbid Municipality
Mohamed SAADIE, President, the Union of Dannieh Municipalities & UCLG-MEWA
Ljiljana TICA, Deputy Mayor, Sombor Municipality
Isabelle GALEOTE MARHUENDA, Technical Responsible for Migration and International Cooperation, Campillos Municipality

Highlights

The meeting highlighted the importance of

- The recognition of UCLG-MEWA, UN-Habitat, IOM, and UMT of the key role that multi-level governance and effective data-sharing can play to ensure an effective response to migration and displacement.
- Effective data-sharing as an integral part of municipalities’ work on migration and displacement.
- Effective data-sharing which enables local authorities to better coordinate with the private sector and interact with the targeted population to build effective partnerships, boosting the inclusion of migrants into the society.
- The unique position of the private sector and home-based businesses to provide job opportunities for women and young people, and data-sharing enabling the incorporation of these initiatives into municipal work.
- Multi-level governance as an important element of the effective response to migration and displacement, ensuring coordination between different levels of governments and including the private sector in this response.
- Intermediary cities as good examples of the impact that small and Intermediary Cities have on the response to migration and displacement at national and local levels.
- The role of small and intermediary cities as buffers to reduce the negative effects of the rapid changes in big cities.
- Small and intermediary cities in the economic integration and social cohesion since they carry great potential to generate development and achieve the SDGs.
After the second meeting, the Steering Committee of the GTFM discussed the theme of the third meeting based on the survey results collected from the GTFM network. The meeting was agreed to be held under the theme “Migrants’ & Refugees’ Access to Labour Markets: Towards Equality for Workers.” The meeting brought together different perspectives, with municipal representatives and academics jointly sharing their experiences and insights on how to develop more inclusive and better responses to labor market issues to create and adopt a whole-of-society approach for host-communities.

The third meeting was held with approximately 120 participants from a variety of organizations around the world.

Speakers

Heloise RAUDEL, Senior Technical Specialist on Crisis Migration, International Labour Organization (Keynote Speech)
Fulya MEMİŞOĞLU, Assoc. Prof., Yıldız Technical University
Goshtasb MOZAFFARI, Secretary General, Asian Mayors Forum
Sussane KLINK, Livelihood and Economic Inclusion Officer, UNHCR
Fuat ÖZHARAT, Foreign Affairs Department Coordinator, Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality
Rami SHARRACK, Deputy Executive Director, Syrian Economic Forum
Azza EL HAYEK, Co-Founder, Skillab
The meeting highlighted the importance of

- Creating decent and equal job opportunities for migrants and refugees as a key factor to having an inclusive society.
- Developing an inclusive framework and programs led by cities and municipalities that can promote inclusion, while supporting migrants and refugees.
- Municipalities potential to increase resources and capacity at the local level through partnerships they establish with national authorities, NGOs, and international actors.
- The comprehensive strategies which combine both supply and demand approaches to job matching and employment creation.
- Adopting strategies that focus on enabling migrants and refugees to access quality jobs that maintain rights and improve working conditions for all workers, and jobs that provide dignity and purpose are the ones that make a difference the most.
- Raising awareness on preventing forced labor and exploitation and promoting good practices especially in relation to sustainable development goal 8.7.
- The Forced labor problems which mainly exist in informal or unregulated parts of the labor market where migrants and refugees can be subject to violation of basic health and safety standards or getting paid below minimum wage.
- Supporting skills assessments, recognition & upskilling as soon as possible to enhance employment prospects and migrants’ and refugees' contributions to the local economy as well as to facilitate effective access to relevant social protection schemes, including social assistance, social insurance, and labor market support, as essential points in creating an effective response to the reality.
- Enabling tools and means to help migrants and refugees recognize and acknowledge their skills and experiences and integrate them into their new environment is vital.
Cities and their contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees

Date: 22 September 2021

The High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM) was held on 14 and 15 December 2021 in Geneva. The HLOM is part of the process of building a long-term framework for engagement of states and other actors in refugee situations, as set out in the Global Compact on Refugees. It was decided to organize a joint event of the GTFM and UNHCR under the theme of “Cities and Their Contribution to the Global Compact on Refugees” on 22 September 2021, in order to give cities around the world an opportunity to share their good practices and the challenges they face. The outputs of this meeting were discussed in the HLOM.

86 cities shared their good practices and contributions towards achieving the objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR). Also, the meeting was an opportunity for cities to share the challenges they faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting drew a framework for cities' future perceptions of the refugee crisis. Five breakout sessions were held under the themes:
- Inclusion and Social Cohesion
- Livelihoods
- Children and Documentation
- Services (Education and Health)
- Housing
Speakers

Gillian TRIGGS, Assistant High Commissioner of Protection, UNHCR (Welcoming Remarks)
Emilia SAIZ, Secretary-General, UCLG (Welcoming Remarks)
Yousef AL SHAWARBEH, Mayor, Greater Amman Municipality & Co-President, UCLG-MEWA (Special Remarks)
Fabio ANDO FILHO, Senior Advisor of Immigration Policies and Protection of Decent Work, City of Sao Paulo
Eric APELGREN, Head of Department International Governance Relation, eThekwini Municipality
Yunus KALDIRIM, Head of Social Services Department, Bursa Metropolitan Municipality
Forwad MAISOKWADZO, Inclusion Advisor to the Mayor, Bristol Municipality (England)
Halil İbrahim AKINCI, Head of the Social Support Services Directorate, Sultanbeyli Municipality
Sharmarke DUBOW, Councilor, City of Victoria
Samuel MABALA, Country Urban Advisor, Cities Alliance
Mohamad SAADIE, President, the Union of Dannieh Municipalities & UCLG-MEWA (Closing Remarks)

Highlights

The meeting highlighted the importance of

- The recommendations that came out from breakout rooms on Inclusion and Social Cohesion, Livelihoods, Children and Documentation, Services and Housing to be shared at the High-Level Officials Meeting (HLOM) on 14 and 15 December 2021 at the International Conference Center (CICG) in Geneva.
- Adopting social integration policies based on a culture that facilitates opportunities for familiarization between the host community and refugees.
- Providing means for refugees to participate in policy-making and decision-making in a way that local policies benefit both the hosting community and refugees.
• Working in strong partnership with civil society and strengthening the role of NGOs through increased funding in order to create more sustainable solutions for both refugees and host communities.
• Using technology and data in order to ensure access to essential services and protection for the most vulnerable group.
• Building community-level solidarity and addressing racist behaviors and systems, through building the capacities of the community and faith-based organizations, giving voice and representation to people of concern, and avoiding exclusion from access to services.
The Global Task Force on Migration (GTFM) concluded the first cycle of events lined up in its roadmap with the annual review meeting. Building on the exchanges and insights gained so far, the meeting provided a space for the GTFM Steering Committee, the Gaziantep Declaration signatories as well as local and international stakeholders and partners to discuss the key outcomes and lessons learned from the past events and dialogues, evaluate the progress of the GTFM on following up the commitments of the Gaziantep Declaration and also highlight possible challenges faced and the ways to overcome them in the future to achieve a more inclusive and responsive space for discussion and dialogue. The meeting was an opportunity to define the GTFM’s strategy and tools for the next cycle to better deliver on the commitments outlined in Gaziantep declaration, build its roadmap to bolster up the engagement of local and regional governments and city stakeholders at political and technical levels, and present and agree on the updated version of the Task Force’s Terms of Reference to capture the global and multi-stakeholder nature of the GTFM.

The meeting was held in a hybrid format on the sidelines of the UCLG-MEWA Executive Bureau and Council Meeting in Balıkesir (Turkey). This meeting combined panel discussions between local authorities and actors and international organizations to identify challenges and public policy measures to support refugees and actors working at the local level to assist them in the migration process. Moreover, the meeting was addressed to technical staff working in the areas of refugees at the municipal level.
Speakers

Louisa VINTON, Resident Representative, UNDP Turkey (Keynote Speech)
Cemal BAŞ, Head of Project and Financing Department, Union of Municipalities of Turkey (Moderator)
İbrahim KARATÜME, Head of Migration and Integration Services Department, Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality
Fatima FERNANDEZ, Policy Officer, UCLG World Secretariat
Kadriye Nur BAKIRCI, Foreign Relations and Project Expert/Budgeting, Mersin Metropolitan Municipality
Salvatore MARTELLO, Mayor, Municipality of Lampedusa
Mohamed SAADIE, President, the Union of Dannieh Municipalities & UCLG-MEWA (Closing Remarks)

Highlights

The meeting highlighted the importance of

- Sharing experiences and information among stakeholders working in the field of migration at the local and international levels.
- The key role of municipalities and the importance of municipalities' access to the necessary financial support in a sustainable manner in order to address the refugee crisis.
- The big role of the European Union as one of the most important donors in the field of refugees.
- Developing new ways of local government finance, especially in the post-Covid-19 era.
- Global Task Force on Migration - GTFM in order to keep the issue of migration and refugees at the center of the Global Agenda.
- Global Task Force on Migration - GTFM as a global network that brings together different stakeholders facilitating the development of more effective solutions in the field of migration.
- The Lampedusa Charter which aims to strengthen cooperation in the field of migration and develop a human rights-based approach.
• The Marrakesh Mayors Declaration, the Gaziantep Declaration, and the Lampedusa Charter as an instrument that puts local governments at the center of migration-related global discussions.

• The international community’s move to listen to the voice of cities more in matters related to migration, due to their wide capabilities to create urgent and more effective solutions.

• The key role of intersectionality in order to achieve migration and displacement governance.

• The role of cities in coordinating stakeholders in order to achieve an effective response to the human flow.

• The dialogue at the national and local levels in order to create more efficient and effective programs to attract greater financial resources in the field of migration.
The world is experiencing substantial immigration, emigration, and displacements due to wars, conflicts, and climate change. Border and migration management are the primary responsibilities of states. Forced to respond, local authorities have therefore often found themselves in a position of having to address some of the foremost global challenges and their consequences. The Global Task Force on Migration (GTFM) realizes the magnitude of the challenges and pressures that local governments bear in this regard, and therefore, in its first annual cycle, the GTFM has worked diligently to address the pressing issue of migration and displacement from the perspective of local governments. The work of the GTFM stems from the November 2019 Gaziantep International Municipal Forum and follows up on the commitments of the 2019 Gaziantep Declaration. The GTFM aims to become a global center of best practices and expertise in urban migration issues, enabling mayors and other municipal officials to learn from each other's experiences and raising their collective profile in the global arena. It has been a fruitful journey where multifaceted issue of migration and displacement has been covered within the framework of the Gaziantep Declaration from the perspective of local government.

The stocktaking event organized with UNHCR ahead of the High-Level Official Meeting (HLOM) of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) further reiterated the unique role of the GTFM in the field of migration and displacement. Indeed, the event confirmed the need to keep highlighting the critical contribution of local governments to implement global commitments related to migration and refugees. It also touched upon the limited opportunities and space that municipalities have to learn from each other's experiences and network in order to improve their respective responses while raising their voice and perspective on the global stage. The GTFM plays a pivotal role to respond to this challenge by being both a flexible structure able to adapt to such opportunities through dedicated ad-hoc events and by capitalizing on the expertise and unique outreach of its steering committee to facilitate strategic discussions between local governments feeding into global processes.

COVID-19 was one of the most important challenges faced during this first cycle, and it has laid bare the strategic role that local governments play in the field of migration. The pandemic has caused new challenges for local governments, not only in the field of migration but also in all fields of their work. Therefore, the GTFM tried to provide an environment where local governments can benefit from each other's experiences in this regard. The GTFM will continue its activities in the second cycle within the framework of the Gaziantep Declaration, aiming to increase its dissemination and monitor the implementation of its commitments.