

NATIONAL WORKSHOP:

**A NIGERIAN PERSPECTIVE
ON EXPANDED
REGULAR MIGRATION
PATHWAYS**

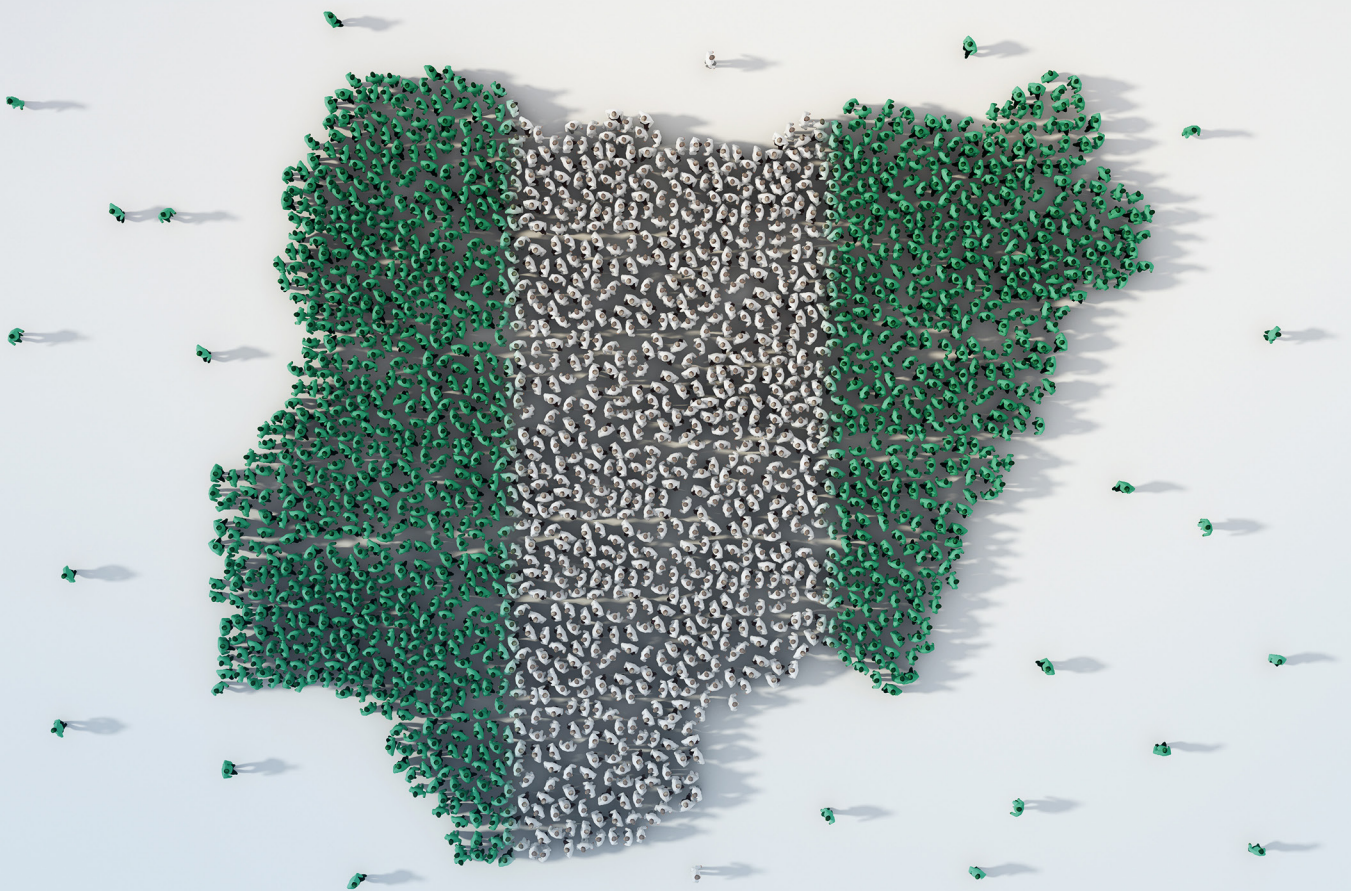


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1. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Ms. Paola Pace
Deputy Chief of Mission
IOM Nigeria

2. REPORT

Executive Summary

In the five years since the formal endorsement of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), whose Objective 5 calls on States to enhance the availability and flexibility of pathways for regular migration, discussion of regular pathways has increased. Questions remain, however, about how to ensure that existing and new pathways are accessible, fair, and effectively implemented, serving the interests of States and migrants alike. As the linchpin organization in supporting Member States to meet their GCM commitments, IOM is uniquely positioned to lead and further these important discussions¹. From December 13-15, 2023, a group of 60 Nigerian government officials, IOM, UNHCR, and OHCHR staff members, private sector and civil society representatives, outside experts and migrants convened online and in Abuja to approach the topic through the perspective of Africa's most populous country, in recognition of Nigeria's status as a migration country of origin, transit and destination, and in acknowledgement of its leadership regionally and globally. The workshop was divided into four sections, representing four pillars of regular pathways: protection-related pathways; labour mobility (specifically skills mobility partnerships); climate change-related pathways; and family reunification. While acknowledging the importance of regular pathways tied to education, these avenues were not directly included in this workshop due to time constraints. A fifth section of the workshop focused on regular pathways in the Nigerian and continent of Africa context. Throughout the workshop, migrant voices and perspectives were included in the discussion through presentations they gave describing the challenges they faced in the migration process.

Over the course of the workshop several key ideas emerged. Each is discussed in more detail in this workshop report, which summarizes the inputs from experts and distills the discussion into takeaways, to be used as building blocks for future discussions and actions.

Key Overarching Ideas

- Regular pathways offer States the opportunity to meet their international law obligations, their commitments under the GCM and are one of the best ways for States to harness migration benefits.
- A horizontal approach to regular pathways is needed in addition to considering each pathway vertically, to optimize crossover potential between pathways.
- A focus on South-South migration is needed to counter the focus on South-North migration in migration governance discussions and because regular pathways within Africa are limited and currently not implemented effectively.
- A politicized negative migration narrative often distorts migration realities and feeds xenophobia, which is a significant obstacle to regular pathway implementation.
- Protection pathways need to address the specific situations of vulnerable migrants.
- Skills mobility partnerships need to be scaled up, made sustainable and be available to migrants of all backgrounds including those migrants in vulnerable situations. SMPs need to be available not just to the highly educated and should not only focus on high skills.
- Climate and environmental degradation-related migration pathways need to be much more developed, beyond some existing limited pathways in some States. Such pathways need to be developed in a timely, innovative and effective manner to keep pace with climate change and environmental developments.
- States must recognize the myriad of benefits, including economic benefits and social cohesion advantages, of family reunification and uphold the right to private life and family unity, including an inclusive and culturally appropriate definition of family.
- Data-driven research, partnership building, and knowledgesharing are all integral elements of regular pathways. Data should be used for the development, monitoring and adaptation of regular pathways.
- Migrant input is critical to regular pathway development and migrants' agency should be acknowledged and respected.

1. See States' pledges on regular pathways at: https://migrationnetwork.un.org/the-pledging-dashboard?title=&country=All®ion=All&gcm_objectives=283&gcm_guiding_principles=All&pledge_nature=All&pledge_type=All&pledging_entity=All

What are regular pathways?

IOM defines regular pathways as “Migration schemes or other migration options that allow eligible persons to migrate regularly to the concerned country of destination based on conditions and for a duration defined by such country”¹. The UN Migration Network definition is more detailed, calling them “legal, policy and/or administrative mechanisms that provide for regular travel, admission and/or stay in the territory of a State (regardless of whether the initial entry was regular and/or temporary)”².

Regular pathways are mechanisms that allow people to move to, enter, stay, and potentially adjust status within a destination country, in an authorized way, predicated upon fulfillment of certain conditions that must comply with national and international law. There are both discretionary and non-discretionary regular pathways. Non-discretionary pathways give effect to international law obligations, while discretionary pathways are based on the exercise of discretion, international cooperation and solidarity. They include a wide range of policies, programmes, regulatory frameworks and implementing tools.

Although the four pillars discussed in the workshop represent most of the main types of regular pathways, they should not be understood to stand apart from one another. Effective progress on expanding regular pathways requires a horizontal approach, recognizing the existing and potential interplay between the categories. For example, humanitarian pathways were a crosscutting theme throughout the workshop. Although these pathways--which might include everything from complementary protection to private sponsorship to temporary protected status--are important options for regular migration, they are limited because of their ad hoc nature. For regular pathways to truly serve the needs of migrants and States, opportunities for hybrid pathways that take advantage of a blend of protection, labour, family reunification, climate mobility and education must be developed and made accessible.

Workshop Summary and Analysis

After welcoming remarks by Mr. Laurent de Boeck (Chief of Mission, IOM Nigeria), several Nigerian Government officials and Ms. Monica Goracci (IOM HQ), the workshop opened with a presentation by Paola Pace (Deputy Chief of Mission a.i., IOM Nigeria) and Kristi Severance (Lawyer/Independent Migration Specialist), introducing the benefits of regular migration pathways and giving an overview of each of the four pillars. Building on their decade-long work on the need for individual assessments to determine the specific needs of migrants and thus the appropriate long-term solution for each of them, Ms. Pace and Ms. Severance

discussed the role of regular pathways in ensuring migrants’ rights are protected.

In particular they noted that regular pathways must be implemented or constructed in a way that is rights-compliant, meaning fully embedded in a rights-based approach³ that protects the rights of all migrants. This includes migrants in vulnerable situations, such as unreturnable migrants, for whom existing pathways may be insufficient or close to non-existent, either because of lack of adequate legal framework, or implementation issues or because their boundaries are not drawn expansively enough. Having more regular pathways that are available to more migrants helps guarantee migrants’ rights are safeguarded. At the same time, they provide numerous benefits to States, such as allowing them to fulfill their GCM and international migration law obligations⁴, increasing regulated revenue streams at the expense of criminal facilitators (smugglers), augmenting the tax base and pension scheme contributions and providing oversight of the migration process. With the number of migrants up in many parts of the world, evidence indicates that the securitization approach to migration governance that has prevailed in many countries not only does little to discourage irregular migration, it relegates States and migrants to a system that does not optimize outcomes for either.

Protection-related Pathways

Dr. Pablo Ceriani Cernadas, Professor, Argentina; Ms. Lucie Bichet, lawyer, CSO, France; Ms. Giulia Perin, lawyer, academia, CSO, Italy; Mr. Amanuel Mehari, IOM; Mr. Patrick Corcoran, IOM; Ms. Mwhaki Kinyanjui, UNHCR; Ms. Liisa Coulombe, Canada; Ms. Eleanora Servino, IOM

The first panel discussion focused on protection pathways, perhaps the most commonly understood pillar because many are familiar with resettlement. However, other pathways in the protection context are not as well-known or developed. Dr. Pablo Ceriani Cernadas, an Independent Expert with the UN Committee for the Protection of the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families, gave the keynote presentation.

Of the four pillars discussed at the workshop, protection-related pathways may be the most familiar to many participants. However, there are common misperceptions about the scope of existing regular pathways in the protection context and the need exists for some to be expanded and for additional pathways to be created. A significant and persistent problem is that vulnerable migrants who may qualify for either a current or future regular pathway never have access to them because their situations are not individually assessed.

1. IOM Glossary on Migration, <https://publications.iom.int/books/international-migration-law-ndeg34-glossary-migration>.

2. United Nations Network on Migration. Guidance Note, Regular Pathways for Admission and Stay for Migrants in Situations of Vulnerability: https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd1416/files/docs/guidance_note-_regular_pathways_for_admission_and_stay_for_migrants_in_situations_of_vulnerability_final.pdf

3. See IOM Rights-based approach to programming, <https://publications.iom.int/books/rights-based-approach-programming> An updated version will soon be available

4. Vincent Chetail. The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration: a kaleidoscope of international law, *International Journal of Law in Context* (2020), 16, 253–26.

In order to speak meaningfully about protection-related pathways, it is first important to talk about what constitutes a “migrant.” “Migrant” is an umbrella term, covering many different categories and characteristics. Refugees are one category of migrant who, pursuant to international refugee law, are entitled to international protection, a legal term that signifies a specific legal status and a set of accompanying benefits. Resettlement is one well-known regular pathway through which refugees move to destination countries to take up residence.

Other categories of migrants include migrant workers, whose rights are protected under human rights law, including the specific International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families and international labour standards;¹ international students; persons who have been trafficked and a wide range of others². What all migrants have in common, regardless of whether they migrate in a regular or irregular manner, is human rights. These rights attach to each individual and are not dependent upon status.



Cross section of participants at the workshop. Photo: IOM 2024/ Iselowo Oluwafemi Samuel

Some protection-related regular pathways derive from the principle of non-refoulement, which protects individuals from being returned to a country where there is a real risk that they would face torture, cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment, or other irreparable harm⁸. Under international human rights law, humanitarian law, refugee law and customary law, the principle of non-refoulement prohibits States from removing individuals from their jurisdiction to anyplace where they are at risk of these harms. As the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) has stated, the principle is “characterized

by its absolute nature without any exception” and, important in the migration context, it “applies to all persons, irrespective of their...migration status” which means when the test is met, the principle must be applied⁹. In other words, this principle, when applicable, must apply without limitation or derogation, even in times of crisis, pandemic or other exigency. Complementary or subsidiary protection, terms used interchangeably to signify a level of protection lesser than refugee status that nonetheless recognizes the principle of non-refoulement are examples of such pathways, but others could and should be developed.

1. See Juridical Condition and Rights of the Undocumented Migrants, Advisory Opinion OC-18/03 (Inter-Am. Ct. H.R. Sept. 17, 2003) Google Scholar [hereinafter Advisory opinion]. The advisory opinions and other decisions of the Inter-American Court of Human Rights are available at <http://www.corteidh.or.cr/juris_ing/index.html>.

2. IOM Glossary on Migration, footnote 2.

Humanitarian pathways, such as humanitarian corridors, humanitarian visas or humanitarian parole, are all important pathways to protect migrants, but they are largely reactive rather than proactive and they are also primarily discretionary. This means that they are not always predictable, and they do not necessarily provide the full spectrum of protection, from entry to permanent residence, that might be warranted in an individual migrant's case.

For both complementary/subsidiary pathways and humanitarian pathways, an impediment to implementation is the lack of dedicated, sustained financing to support the various stages of the pathway from departure to arrival. This forces migrants to piece together whatever financial support they can from family members, charities, CSOs, and others, and it also places a strain on international organization budgets that often do not have a dedicated stream from the receiving country. Another problem is that in order to claim complementary or subsidiary protection, migrants too often may have no choice but to travel with the use of smugglers, which elevates risks and also causes the migrants to incur substantial debts. This feeds criminality and represents a loss for the migrant's individual finances and the regulated economy. It can be characterized as a lose-lose-lose situation.

As the workshop discussion demonstrated, a horizontal approach to pathway development is needed. Small-scale pathways that remove onerous documentation requirements that would otherwise prevent vulnerable migrants from taking jobs are one example of efforts that are bearing fruit. Another way to develop regular pathways is to include vulnerable migrants in skills mobility partnerships schemes that are tailored to their needs, providing skills training from scratch together with support with pre-departure preparation and support on arrival, including psychosocial support, additional skills training, employer matching and employer training and monitoring.

The only way to know for sure which existing regular pathways are appropriate for a migrant is to conduct a thorough individualized assessment, by appropriately trained specialists, of the migrant's specific situation. In the non-refoulement context this is extremely important; a migrant's life may depend upon it. It is not only refugees or asylum seekers that should have an assessment made of whether they are at risk of the harm the principle protects against. Examples of situations in which this may be true are migrants who cannot be returned on legal grounds because a serious health condition is untreatable or cannot be treated affordably in the return country and the person would therefore be in a situation amounting to cruel treatment, or be at risk for his/her life if returned¹. For migrant children, the protections needs are also numerous and important. Regular pathways should be made available to these migrants, leading to a level of status in the host country that ensures stability in that country through work and the opportunity to integrate. As Dr. Ceriani discussed in the

workshop, the regularization-regular pathways nexus is vital. It is also vital for migrants who cannot be returned for logistical reasons, such as the impossibility of establishing nationality or obtaining the agreement of the State of origin.

Without meaningful regularization mechanisms, even migrants who enter regularly face challenges in the destination countries if eventually they fall into irregularity; this is why longer-term regularization possibilities are key to avoid precarious and vulnerable situations.

Migrants in irregular situations, in particular those who enter irregularly and are incorrectly denied regularization in certain countries, and who cannot be returned because of logistical or legal reasons, are in situations of vulnerability and their only real choice may be to migrate further in an irregular manner. They may see this as the only alternative to remaining in arbitrary detention or staying in a state of protracted vulnerability. Regular pathways counteract this, creating avenues for people to migrate safely and to reside, bringing all the benefits of migration to States, provided they are comprehensive and address the full spectrum of migration concerns. Such regular pathways therefore save lives, by diminishing risks of tragedies en route, and ensuring that the migrants contribute to the community and economy in the country of destination.

PROMOTING BRAIN GAIN: A REGULAR PATHWAY IN ACTION

What would a protection-related regular pathway look like in practice? The following example blends protection and labour migration components, in keeping with a horizontal approach to regular pathways. It contains components of existing practices within IOM to facilitate regular pathways and envisions their expansion.

- To reverse brain drain and promote brain gain in countries of origin, focusing on vulnerable migrants at risk is a key action for IOM to take.
- IOM would identify nationals and migrants at risk, including, for example, victims of trafficking at risk of re-trafficking, LGBTIQ individuals in countries where they face discrimination and violence, victims of torture and IDPs for whom one of the standard solutions is not possible, and unreturnable migrants.
- IOM could select this caseload in cooperation with OHCHR and UNHCR.
- These vulnerable migrants would then begin training for skills needed in numerous sectors, such as the health sector's skills gap for paraprofessional health care workers (e.g. paramedical such as caregiver). Private sector actors,

1. See, for example, the case of an African woman in a European country undergoing cancer treatment who was deported with her child mid-treatment and died as a result of unaffordable care. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/mar/20/immigration.immigrationandpublicservices>.

in collaboration with ministries of labour, would conduct the trainings.

- The private sector partner would be responsible for identifying employers who need the trained migrants and matching them. The employer would pay the recruitment fees and related costs including the flights.
- IOM would be responsible for working with the employer, in conjunction with ILO, to make sure ethical recruitment practices are adhered to.
- IOM would also work with CSOs and any other relevant stakeholders to support and prepare the migrants for departure and arrival. In addition, IOM would support the documentation process, including obtaining necessary visas.

As Dr. Ceriani emphasized in the opening presentation, people have the right to leave their country¹. However, there is an inversely proportional relationship between vulnerability and opportunities to exit, transit, enter and stay in a regular manner. Visa requirements, costs, obstacles in accessing documentation and selectivity can all be roadblocks for people in vulnerable circumstances in countries of origin. The effect of this disconnect is that these individuals frequently resort to clandestine means of migrating, their exits marking the beginning of an unsafe, irregular and disorderly process.

A lack of regular pathway options leads to irregular stay in the country of destination, a situation Dr. Ceriani describes as a loss-loss situation. Migrants lose, and States lose. Migrants are susceptible to violence in a variety of forms, including labour and sexual exploitation, and must construct their lives at the margins of society rather than being allowed to flourish within it. States lose on several fronts: they do not have full knowledge of their population's parameters and therefore risk constructing policies that do not work; they cannot rely on migrants who fear deportation to report crimes or workplace abuse; they risk decreased security due to lack of oversight of the migration process and they fail to take advantage of work that is part of the regular economy losing revenue, taxes and contributions to medical insurance and pension schemes (also loss in revenues, taxes, contributory schemes including pension schemes, medical insurance etc.).

States also have development goals and should keep these in mind when they impose laws or policies that prevent people from migrating in a safe way. In terms of human development, States should recognize they work against themselves when they hinder the human development of migrants, which can occur when a protracted irregular status prevents individuals from working, accessing services and otherwise becoming integrated

and productive.

By contrast, regularization is a “win-win” strategy, in which migrants and States benefit. Dr. Ceriani noted that regularization can prompt a “virtuous cycle,” in which States and migrants harness the development benefits of regular migration, such as filling labour gaps, allowing for better-planned security policies, and funneling money into the regulated rather than criminal economy.

South American best practices may be relevant to the African context, Dr. Ceriani noted. An example is the South American Conference on Migration (CSM), an ongoing process since 2000, which is a collective regional effort working to achieve policy and legislative harmonization on migration at the national and regional levels. Addressing irregular migration through facilitating regular pathways is one of its main goals. In 2013, an outcome of the CSM was the stated goal by all the countries that no national from the region should be in irregular status. Colombia provides a good example of utilizing effective practices. Its migration profile has shifted from a country of origin to one of origin, transit and destination. In the context of the Venezuelan crisis, between 2017 and 2023, Colombia received 3 million Venezuelans and became a transit country for an equal number of other migrants (including Venezuelans and many other nationalities). In 2021, Colombia created a regular pathway for Venezuelans via a Temporary Protected Status, a 10-year program lasting through 2031. Colombia's strategy stands in contrast to other countries in the region that have imposed entry visas on Venezuelans, which has driven up irregular migration.

Dr. Ceriani's tool for building effective migration governance rests on Four R's:

Regular Pathways, Rights Protection, Regularization and Root Causes. Regular pathways, rights protection and regularization were all discussed at the workshop and the linkage between the three concepts is clear, but root causes cannot be left out. The complexity of the fourth “R” warrants additional investigation and analysis to ensure its relationship with the other three “Rs” is understood so that policies and pathways can be appropriately constructed and implemented².

Ms. Lucie Bichet (Legal Manager, Safe Passage International) described the European Union perspective on protection pathways in the context of her work for Safe Passage, a charity that champions the rights of refugees and displaced people more broadly as they flee persecution, using the law to help them access a safe route to a place of safety. She identified key trends, challenges and opportunities.

Over the past few years, the EU has taken significant steps towards a more integrated approach to protection-related pathways. A

1. Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 13.

2. Fratzke, S. and Salant, B. “Moving Beyond Root Causes: The Complicated Relationship Between Development and Migration. Migration Policy Institute (January, 2018). https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/DevelopmentAssistanceMigration_FINAL.pdf



Hon. (Dr.) Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO, NiDCOM delivering a goodwill message at the workshop. Photo: IOM 2024/ Iselowo Oluwafemi Samuel

recent key development within the EU is the proposal for a New Pact on Migration and Asylum, introduced by the European Commission. Significant drawbacks include provisions that make it more difficult for people arriving irregularly in the EU, although regular migration and the development of safe pathways have been made a cornerstone of the proposal. In particular, it creates a Union Resettlement and Humanitarian Admissions Framework intended to provide clear and predictable mechanisms to replace the current ad hoc EU-sponsored resettlement schemes, and to encourage EU countries to develop Humanitarian Admissions programs that are still underdeveloped within the EU. The new Asylum and Migration Management Regulation also foresees a permanent relocation mechanism among EU countries.

She noted that resettlement to European countries has primarily been from Turkey and the MENA region, with very little resettlement from the rest of Africa despite UNHCR having highlighted its need. There is thus an unmet need and an opportunity for the EU and African States to work together to amplify the existing resettlement pathway.

Contrary to recent efforts to build a common European approach to resettlement and humanitarian admissions, there is no EU framework governing the issuance of humanitarian visas, and pursuant to an EU Court of Justice ruling in 2017, they can only be issued by States in accordance with their domestic legal frameworks and only on a very exceptional basis. Switzerland and France are two of the very few States that issue them.

One challenge within the EU is that pathways have been treated too vertically. Ms. Bichet pointed out that in the EU, displacement and labour have been treated as separate issues with separate policies for a long time, despite the reality that the EU has an ageing population and many of its countries face labour shortages. Until recently, there have been few crossovers between protection-related pathways and skills mobility, but this perspective is now changing and the EU is encouraging Member States to promote skills-based protection-related pathways. This objective is reflected in the New Pact on Asylum and Migration, whose relevant texts will come into force in 2024. Although skills are not a defined parameter in the EU resettlement framework or in the Asylum and

Migration Management Regulation, the EU Commission proposed legislative changes to the existing legal framework to simplify the admission procedures for workers of various skills, as well as the creation of two operation tools (an EU Talent Partnership programme and an EU Talent Pool to connect non-EU workers with EU employers) with the objective of facilitating access to complementary labour pathways for people in need of protection.

Ms. Giulia Perin (Lawyer/Adjunct Professor of Law, Lumsa University) highlighted the efforts of lawyers in Italy to advocate for allowing the possibility of asking for protection at the embassy, which would lead to some kind of asylum or protection visa. She noted that several judges support this idea.

Opportunities exist to maximize opportunities for Nigerian and other African migrants to get to Italy, but it requires knowledge and information-sharing about opportunities between CSOs and companies in Italy and those organizations working with individuals in the protection space. Skills mobility partnerships or one-to-one job matching could and should be possible. She encouraged training programs, which form the basis of skills mobility partnerships, identifying them as a good basis for Italy to partner with Nigeria.

Ms. Perin advocates going beyond the humanitarian corridors that operate in Italy to create specific regular pathways. The humanitarian corridors are vital, and provide safety and stability for vulnerable migrants, but they are not widely available. As an example, study visas were issued to Afghan nationals to open a pathway for them to arrive and stay in Italy.

Day-to-day challenges continue to be problematic for lawyers advocating for vulnerable migrants. Information-sharing is key

when facing obstacles such as getting a passport for a young child from Afghanistan. A broad collection of expertise and lessons learned, perhaps developed and housed by a CSO, could allow troubleshooting techniques to be readily available.

Mr. Patrick Corcoran (Change Management Advisor, United States Refugee Admission Program (USRAP), IOM) discussed innovation in the implementation of one of the most longstanding protection pathways refugee resettlement. The USRAP is an interagency effort involving numerous U.S. governmental and non-governmental partners including the U.S. Department of State (DOS), the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Since the creation of the program in 1980, the U.S. has accepted over three million refugees. Under the current U.S. administration, the USRAP has seen many enhancements and undergone a significant strengthening and modernization, which has resulted in a streamlining of the process, reducing the timeline for processing a refugee in some locations, to as little as 30 days. (Previously, the process could take a year or more).

Innovations include a more robust, cloud-based processing platform (START), concurrent refugee case processing, the digitization of case files and expanded use of two existing pathways which were previously less utilized—Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) and Humanitarian Parole, which is a form of temporary entry into and stay in the US. Special immigrant visas are available to Afghans who assisted the US Government in Afghanistan and Humanitarian Parole can be applied more broadly to a range of possible situations in which humanitarian entry is warranted, such as to Afghans and Ukrainians. Acceleration of these two pathways has allowed more vulnerable migrants to enter the U.S.



Cross section of participants at the workshop. Photo: IOM 2024/ Iselowo Oluwafemi Samuel

A new regular pathways channel to the U.S., which followed Canada's lead in utilizing private sponsorship, is the recently announced Welcome Corps (see: <https://welcomecorps.org/>). The Welcome Corps allows groups of private individuals to collectively sponsor a refugee family. Currently the program is available on a matching basis but will soon allow the private groups to identify the person/family member they would like to sponsor.

A multifaceted regular pathway assessment program is also being operated by IOM in conjunction with UNHCR to screen nationals from certain countries in the Americas (currently Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Colombia) to determine eligibility for either protection pathways or other regular pathways, such as family reunification. The Safe Mobility/Movilida Segura program (<https://movilidadsegura.org/>) involves a network of "safe mobility offices" that serve as screening sites, which are located throughout the participating countries. Vulnerable individuals from the designated countries register and then are screened to see if they qualify for resettlement, parole, family reunification or any other regular pathway. The Government of Canada recently joined the initiative with the launch of a new humanitarian pathway to provide permanent resident status to 11,000 Haitian, Venezuelan and Colombian foreign nationals who have family connections in Canada.

Mr. Corcoran laid out practical elements to consider when operationalizing large-scale regular pathways:

- Keep eligibility requirements simple, to avoid migrants needing to seek out "agents" who claim to simplify the process but take advantage of vulnerability. Provide concrete facilitation; advice and counseling are not sufficient.
- Governments should leverage data, prioritizing research and analysis when activating existing pathways or creating new ones, to anticipate the demand that will result and to take into account critical drivers such as push and pull factors. Flexibility to adjust to delays or the unexpected is key. Information should be language-appropriate and take into account the special needs of particular migrant groups, such as women and children.
- Use strategic messaging, to convey information in a straightforward, accessible manner so individuals can clearly understand the eligibility requirements and the application process, as well as the risks inherent in choosing irregular migration.
- Capitalize on the strengths of partnerships, giving partners clearly defined roles and providing regular touchpoints adjusting, pivoting, pulling back, or accelerating as necessary. From the outset, host government buy-in is a must, with opportunity for continuing dialogue, and host government concerns like security and brain drain should be considered.
- If private sector partners are involved, make sure their values and goals are aligned with the policy/pathway and its objectives. Partner only if it adds value, not just to check a box.
- When operationalizing pathways, non-profit partners such as CSOs, like IOs, should be utilized for direct processing of vulnerable migrants. The commercialization of migration management and protection pathways by for-profit is concerning. For-profit companies lack a protection mandate and expertise in processing vulnerable individuals. There is an important role for private sector partners to play, but direct processing of vulnerable migrants should be managed by non-profit organizations with a humanitarian mandate.
- Tailor regular pathways programs to meet the unique needs of vulnerable migrants, which are often misunderstood. Ensure that program impacts on migrants are well understood and analyzed, including migrant input and feedback.
- Ensure that beneficiaries understand each implementing partner's role. Referral networks should be thoroughly mapped and kept up to date. Manage expectations, particularly regarding timelines.
- Carefully consider the use of technology and the 'digital divide'. When utilizing online platforms, ensure reliable access and clear messaging, especially regarding requirements and timelines. A human-centric option must be available for those without access to a computer, smart phone, the internet. Ensure secure capture, transfer and storage of data.
- Where possible, strive to facilitate processing at a single site (one-stop shop concept); accessing processing centers should not impose undue travel or logistical burdens on vulnerable migrants. Co-locate processes such as registration, application submission, biometrics and health assessments, where possible.
- Reduce, eliminate or adjust requirements, such as fees, taking into account realities such as difficulties obtaining exit permission, and single parents travelling with minors without documentation of consent from the other parent-issues such as these can present serious obstacles to the effective and timely implementation of regular pathways.
- Family unity is key to integration, long-term success and sustainability. As such, regular pathways should facilitate family unity. Consider private sponsorship schemes, which have cost-sharing benefits. These can augment government-led resettlement efforts in the refugee context and may also be considered with respect to labour and education pathways.
- Focus on skills mobility and skills recognition, identifying migrant's skills and experience at the front end of processing.

- Look at regional and local options if vulnerable migrants do not qualify for regular pathways in other words, find a solution to dissuade them from embarking on dangerous irregular pathways.

Mr. Amanuel Mehari (IOM New York) focused on the need to capitalize on existing options. Rather than wait for new pathways to be made available, existing avenues that already exist (such as the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and the Convention Against Torture (CAT) and relevant protocols) should be utilized. Particularly relevant is the [Joint Comment 3](#) of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families on the general principles regarding the human rights of children in the context of international migration.

The CRC is not in and of itself a pathway, but it does offer a channel through which child migrants can remain in a destination country in safety, with the prospect of holding a regular status, based on the rights that are enshrined in the treaty. Most Member States are obligated to act to protect children under the convention's parameters, which include preventing children from being held in migration related detention (such detention of migrant children is always a child's rights violation as it is never in their best interest – and must never be used, even as a last resort) and guaranteeing that a child's rights do not depend on any kind of status, including immigration status¹. A child should be allowed to enter a destination country, even if irregularly, for a best interest determination to be made².

There is a need to work on agreed upon criteria of vulnerability and create uniform, predictable procedures to facilitate access to humanitarian pathways at the national and international levels and cooperation among UN sister agencies especially on areas of intersecting interest/mandate is especially in areas where mandates intersect.

Some additional grounds to consider humanitarian pathways would be in situations when:

- An individual needs to remain in host country due to a specific risk to their life or health;
- An individual is in a vulnerable situation that makes their deportation difficult or impossible (for example, dialysis requirements);
- Violence or natural disaster present a danger to an individual's life;
- The individual is a child or adolescent who is subject to proceedings for international child abduction and restitution.

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child, Articles 2 and 37.

2. 'allowing the child access to the territory is a prerequisite to this initial assessment process' of the best interests of the child. UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General comment No. 6 (2005): Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin, 1 September 2005, CRC/GC/2005/6, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/42dd174b4.html>.

- One of the main points of providing a humanitarian pathway should be consideration of how to ensure the beneficiary's vulnerability is reduced, beginning from the time of identification. This should include ensuring access to avenues for the individual to be a productive member of society during their stay in the host community. The authorities must facilitate regularization as a duty to uphold migrants' rights.
- Existing protection related pathways can be accelerated to better serve the needs of states and migrants. For example, building on the IOM, UNHCR and UNICEF initiatives that support national Best Interest Determination (BID) processes in various countries by including options for making referrals to humanitarian pathways would be productive. At the moment referrals/ access to the various initiatives, such as humanitarian corridors are limited to some partners and as such the criterion for entering such corridors is narrow and sometimes discretionary and subjective.
- Examples of good practice should be disseminated widely, and currently include measures such as special visitor cards, humanitarian parole, humanitarian visa quotas issued to churches/faith based groups and CSOs to support migrants, including through helping them out detention. These kinds of initiatives should be expanded to elevate access to protection-related pathways.
- The key challenge for expanding humanitarian pathways is the current unhealthy political environment where many politicians have managed to weaponize the migration narrative, cultivating the idea that migrants should be feared and using it as political currency. This has also led to more restrictive processes and actions by some governments including some actions such as collective expulsions, which are against international law. Within Africa, a challenge is that humanitarian pathways lack clear definition within legislation. However, Africa has had a strong history of providing international protection and active work against trafficking in persons which provides a strong basis to expand such avenues. For other destination countries, advocacy for the expansion of partners accessing quotas of humanitarian corridors, having more predictable criteria, and leveraging the capacity of civil society and community organizations are the key actions to take.

Skills Mobility Partnerships

Professor François Crépeau, McGill University, Canada; Professor Akrame Boubtane, France; Ms. Naomi Shiferaw, IOM Regional Office, Senegal.

The second panel discussion considered Skills Mobility Partnerships (SMPs), a regular pathway whose growth in recent years reflects

the potential to fill labour market gaps by utilizing migrant skills and to support migrants through upskilling. The keynote presentation was given by Professor Francois Crépeau, the former Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants and Professor in Public International Law at McGill University.

Professor Crépeau's describes SMPs as a "great global idea in need of strategic planning and scaling up." SMPs are an excellent regular pathway in the labour mobility space, but to date they only involve a tiny fraction of migrant workers and SMPs have some structural obstacles that need to be addressed in order for scale-up to be possible.

Labour is in a state of change worldwide, with technological

advances changing the nature of work and the workers themselves being more mobile. Workers move from country to country, either with or without documentation, responding to shifting labour needs, and in many cases enter unregulated markets that are exploitative. The landscape for governing migration is thus quite complex and a global approach is necessary.

Professor Crépeau identified the four main stakeholders as the market, the employer, the country of origin and the country of destination, between which there is a needs mismatch. This holds true for other stakeholders as well, such as recruiters and unions. Within this terrain of competing needs, the migrant is always at risk, of deskilling, being underpaid or not paid at all, and of other exploitation.



Ms. Kristi Severance, Lawyer/Consultant making a presentation at the event. Photo: IOM 2024/ Iselowo Oluwafemi Samuel

Countries of origin risk losing skilled workers and they often bear the brunt of the costs of emigration, which is frequently funded by debts that need to be repaid. Countries of destination are often looking for cheap labour, and migrants fill those positions. To transcend this risky, unequal playing field, it is important that global migration governance be a well-oiled machine, so that the primary stakeholders are happy with the result, but also that the worker and her skills and rights are protected.

To make SMPs operational, a shift away from the practice of countries of origin being responsible for greater costs and also

losing more workers, to a global partnership model that distributes costs more evenly and allows countries of origin to benefit from the training of their own workers. This requires multi-State cooperation and a legal framework that apportions the obligations between the countries. Key features are:

- Formalized state cooperation through agreements, North-South and South-South.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement in origin and destination countries.

- Formalized state cooperation through agreements, North-South and South-South.
- Multi-stakeholder involvement in origin and destination countries.
- Recognition of the participant's previously earned degrees, qualifications and competences, at all skill levels.
- Cost sharing and joint programming keep the expenses for training local workers and future migrants low.
- Vocational training in the origin or destination country and upskilling.
- Trained workers are placed in jobs in the local labour market or in the destination country.
- Migrants' new skills are certified, by all parties to the SMP so certification is easily recognized.
- SMPs can include internships and scholarships.
- SMPs must include low-wage or mid-wage workers in addition to workers in high-skilled or high-wage jobs.

The current position of SMPs—existing, but small in scale—is both a challenge and an opportunity. SMPs can be made sustainable from their inception by ensuring several essential prerequisites are met:

- Mid-term and long-term planning: it takes time to develop partnerships and bring employers on board to identify needed skills and training and get all stakeholders to agree on an administrative platform.
- Multi-stakeholder approach & policy coherence: migration policy tends to be incoherent because it is reactive not proactively planned.
- Data for evidence-based policy.
- Local development and job creation.
- Skills recognition at national level and beyond and investment in migrants in low-paid jobs.
- Addressing the social aspects of employment and mobility, including migrants' agency: migrants are not a package, a good or service, or an element of capital, they are people with aspirations and objectives.
- Consideration of the impact of existing migration parameters, such as corridors migrants find easier to access.

With these elements in place, the likelihood is greater that SMPs can become resilient enough to respond to external pressures

like changes in political will and can be scalable. The biggest challenges to scalability are lack of oversight of the labour market in destination countries, in which employers are rarely sanctioned for exploitation and migrant workers do not complain out of fear of job loss or deportation, a persistent desire for cheap labour that benefits many stakeholders but not migrants, and a lack of avenues for permanent immigration status. The lack of oversight is particularly problematic in industries that cannot be de-localized and where wages are generally low, such as agriculture, care and hospitality.

Facilitating migrant mobility, as has been done in the European Union (EU) or the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), can reduce precarity while bringing economic benefits to migrants and States. Professor Crépeau emphasized that “progressively allowing migrants to decide for themselves where to go and thrive will unlock the full potential of migration to respond to labour needs and economic development.” SMPs are one vital tool to be used in service of this goal.

Professor Ekrame Boubtane provided some comments to the panel, reiterating the need to include workers in low-skilled jobs or with limited educational backgrounds, as well as technical workers, in labour migration schemes like SMPs. She raised the issue of brain drain, which has been an increasing problem in the context of South-North migration, particularly in the health sector. To guard against it, skills recognition and equivalencies must also be improved.

Ms. Naomi Shiferaw also confirmed that labour markets have been changing, but without concomitant adjustment of labour immigration policies. IOM has important experience operationalizing SMPs. The majority of SMP initiatives have been conducted on a small scale but these have nonetheless provided IOM with significant lessons learned.

A key to success is long-term planning, because for any full intervention to yield an impact it must be implemented over a period of time. A multistakeholder approach is necessary when designing SMPs including engaging the private sector from the outset. Skills development is then central to the SMP objectives. Providing in-demand skills to both those who will move and use them abroad and those who will remain and use them locally is critical. This capitalizes on the salient feature of SMPs—their ability to benefit countries of origin and countries of destination if they are well-constructed.

Catering to the needs of the labour market is a core element of SMPs. Current skills gaps are particularly noticeable in the healthcare, construction, transport, ICT, hospitality and agriculture sectors. SMPs provide a forum in which in-demand skills are acquired by all workers. The skills gap has been identified as the major foreseeable challenge in labour markets by two notable surveys, where it was flagged as a challenge by 87% of the companies.

Labour shortages are not exclusively a challenge for the global North. Similar bottlenecks are faced by businesses in the global South. Within the African Continental Free Trade Agreement, for example, assessments were made to better understand the needs of the private sector, to tap into the opportunities this bigger market presents. Here too, skills gaps were identified as a major hindrance to competition and productivity. Given these findings from both the global South and North, the need to use analytical forecasting to identify future labour needs in countries of origin and countries of destination is paramount, and it must include all skill levels. It should also take into account the shifting nature of work toward digital transformation and the greening of economies.

Ms. Shiferaw pointed out that IOM has learned that SMPs work better when they are anchored in existing migration corridors, leveraging linguistic and cultural affinities. To make them scalable, it is also reasonable to expect approximately a decade of financial support through development partners before financial self-sustainability is achievable. This is because it takes time to build

trust between partners, and some elements of the SMP may have to be built from the ground up, such as creating mechanisms for international recruitment where none previously existed.

From an African perspective, most migrant workers are not employed by multinationals with dedicated departments to handle complex and cumbersome immigration processes. Most migrant workers are employed by small and medium enterprises and in order for SMPs to be implemented at scale, this reality must be taken into account.

Despite media and political narratives about migration that over-focus on South-North migration, South-South corridors are actually more accessible for a bigger number of migrants in the global South. If opportunities are to be created for Nigerian migrant workers beyond the ECOWAS space, this is important to focus on. With its demographic dividend, Nigeria has a lot to offer the African labour market, so the specific skill sets need to be identified.



Cross section of participants at the workshop. Photo: IOM 2024/ Iselowo Oluwafemi Samuel

Climate Change-related Pathways

Dr. Tamara Wood, Professor University of New South Wales (UNSW Sydney), Australia; Ms. Anne Althaus IOM HQ

The third panel addressed climate change and environmental degradation-related pathways, rapidly rising to the fore of migration governance discussion. No less important for being relatively new, these regular pathways will need to be developed quickly to keep pace with climate change developments and environmental degradation. The keynote presentation was made by Dr. Tamara Wood, of the Kaldor Center for International Refugee Law at the University of New South Wales.

Pinpointing climate change as the push factor in any one instance of migration is difficult. As Dr. Tamara Wood highlighted, climate change does not drive migration, but it increases vulnerabilities that do. It functions as an accelerant, multiplying the conditions that lead people to migrate and rendering them more acute. Furthermore, to the extent that climate change influences weather patterns, the resulting dramatic weather events may also force people to move in a more immediate and unplanned way. Although migration rhetoric too often includes the word “crisis” when it is not warranted, climate-related movement risks becoming an actual crisis if it is unplanned and unmanaged because the effects of climate change are at the same time not fully known and increasing.

According to Dr. Tamara Wood, climate mobility encompasses numerous varieties of movement, with a range of push and pull factors. It may be planned, prompted or forced to varying degrees and can be implemented over immediate, short or long-term timeframes.

Africa is a critical continent for examination of climate-related pathways, Dr. Wood noted, because it is “already experiencing severe climate change impacts, including loss of biodiversity, water shortages, decreasing food production, loss of lives and reduced economic growth”¹. These effects are disproportionate to Africa’s role in creating the climate crisis because it is responsible for only 3 percent of historical greenhouse gas emissions globally.

An area that needs further development is the intersection between free movement protocols and climate-related movement. As the African Shifts report found, a failure to consider and develop regular pathways would leave vulnerable people without options to move in the face of severe climate change effects. They would be stranded and unable to escape the deleterious effects of floods, fires, land degradation and other climate-related issues. Africa has pioneered some free movement protocols, including ECOWAS and the IGAD Free Movement Protocol. The latter specifically addresses the movement of persons affected

by disasters, requiring Member States to allow nationals of other Member States who move in anticipation of, during or in the aftermath of disasters to enter their territory and to have extension of their stay facilitated if they are unable to return home. An avenue for regular pathway expansion is therefore the possibility that climate change movements could be addressed with additional protocols to existing free movement agreements. However, these offer limited options for permanent settlement.

The recently agreed Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment and Climate Change, initially adopted last year, highlights the African continent’s awareness of and commitment to addressing climate mobility. It calls on cooperation and action in five key areas: forced mobility of people and livestock due to land degradation; the effects of unsustainable ecosystem use and frequent/intense weather events on people and livestock; unplanned rural-to-urban migration as the result of climate change or disasters; the lack of data to measure climate change’s impact on human and livestock mobility; and the limitations of financing and partnerships to respond to climate mobility.

In the context of international protection, UNHCR has highlighted the importance of considering the social and political characteristics of climate change and disaster effects and their interaction with other displacement drivers. Dr. Wood highlighted the more broad perspective needed, given the negative effects on government and societal structures that such effects can have. These include a potentially deleterious impact on individual well-being, human rights and health, which engage other areas of the law beyond refugee law.

Ms. Anne Althaus (International Migration Law specialist, International Migration Law Unit, IOM Geneva) emphasized the importance of the GCM, a multilateral instrument that carries significant weight because it has been adopted by 152 Member States and contains commitments in all domains relevant to migration and migrants. It represents the cumulative efforts of all involved states to craft a cooperation framework that articulates a common set of commitments on migration. Objective 5 of the GCM requires States to “adapt options and pathways for regular migration in a manner that facilitates labour mobility and decent work reflecting demographic and labour market realities, optimizes education opportunities, upholds the right to family life, and responds to the needs of migrants in a situation of vulnerability, with a view to expanding and diversifying availability of pathways for safe, orderly and regular migration”².

In relation to climate change, the GCM outlines the need for states to cooperate to identify, develop and strengthen solutions for people migrating in the context of slow-onset environmental degradation and slow-onset disasters. The text also acknowledges that adaptation in situ or return of migrants might not be possible

1. African Shifts, *The Africa Climate Mobility Report*. Africa Climate Mobility Initiative, 2023.

2. GCM. <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/451/99/PDF/N1845199.pdf?OpenElement>.



Cross section of participants at the workshop. Photo: IOM 2024/ Iselowo Oluwafemi Samuel

in some cases and that the strengthening of regular migration pathways needs to be part of effective migration governance. Ms. Althaus mentioned the Guidance Note developed by the UN Network on Migration to support States with implementation¹.

She pointed out that to date, the 1951 Refugee Convention does not include the category “climate refugee” sometimes referred to by the media, because the convention is applicable only to people who need international protection due to well-founded fear of persecution based on the five listed grounds in the Convention (which does not include any reference to climate change or environmental degradation). Only if climate change triggers persecution does the refugee convention of 1951 become relevant. There is, however, the potential for Africa to be a frontrunner on refugee protection pathways related to climate change, given the expansive definition of “protection” in the AU Convention. The principle of non-refoulement is also relevant in the climate migration context, although case law is nascent.

Therefore, to date, the most relevant body of law appears to

be human rights law, because it effectively addresses all aspects of climate related migration, from risk reduction, preparation, preventive measures, protection of rights before, during and after the change or degradation. Importantly, the principle of non-refoulement may be applicable to certain cases of migration related to climate change and environmental degradation. The UN Human Rights Committee's finding in *Teitiota v. New Zealand*² has garnered widespread global attention for its recognition that the effects of climate change may put people's lives at risk or expose them to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, thus triggering States' non-refoulement obligations – but this has not been applied to any specific case to date. The decision of the UN Committee on Human Rights in this case³ is also complicated because it lacks clarity as to how imminent the harm must be. Going forward, strategic litigation cases could help clarify the scope of State obligations in this respect. Complementary protection pathways might then also be applied to migrants in similar situations in the future.

1. https://migrationnetwork.un.org/sites/g/files/tmzbd416/files/resources_files/guidance_note_-_regular_pathways_for_admission_and_stay_for_migrants_in_situations_of_vulnerability_final.pdf.

2. *Ioane Teitiota v. New Zealand* (advance unedited version), CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016, UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), 7 January 2020, available at: [file:///Users/iom/Documents/ https://www.refworld.org/cases,HRC,5e26f7134.html](file:///Users/iom/Documents/https://www.refworld.org/cases,HRC,5e26f7134.html).

3. *Ioane Teitiota v. New Zealand* (advance unedited version), CCPR/C/127/D/2728/2016, UN Human Rights Committee (HRC), 7 January 2020, available at: <https://www.refworld.org/cases,HRC,5e26f7134.html>.

Procedures to assess admission and stay claims submitted by migrants in situations of vulnerability should be people-centered, child-sensitive, including the best interests of the child, gender-responsive, trauma-informed, and uphold international human rights and labour standards, including the prohibition of discrimination.

Some States have developed specific pathways, including some national forms of protection. Such pathways often take the form of humanitarian pathways but more need to be developed to address this issue. New laws have been adopted in several States and can be used as examples by others. South American States have been particularly active in developing new legislative initiatives in this area. For instance, Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador have adopted new laws affording temporary protection for persons displaced by climate change in general, or by disasters. In May 2022, Argentina launched the Special Humanitarian Visa Program for the benefit of citizens of Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean displaced by “socio-natural disasters”. Beginning in 2018, Italy introduced a 6-month residence permit to be issued in case of disasters, to be renewed as long as the situation of environmental insecurity persists in the country of origin. These are some examples amongst others.

Bilateral migration agreements with climate vulnerable countries can facilitate safe migration provided such agreements are non-discriminatory and comply with international human rights obligations. Italy, for example, has concluded several bilateral agreements that could potentially facilitate safe migration pathways as a climate change adaptation strategy. Another recent example of an agreement on special mobility pathways is the climate visa agreement between Australia and Tuvalu granting a limited number of Australian residency visas each year to people affected by climate change in Tuvalu¹.

Finally, Ms. Althaus stressed that all types of regular pathways can be relevant for people affected by climate change or environmental degradation. The connection with protection-related pathways is clear, but labour migration pathways, family reunification, and avenues for study are also relevant. It is therefore, importance to devise and implement hybrid pathways. Labour mobility pathways are an option for migrants who are compelled to leave their country of origin, require international protection (including refugees) or are in vulnerable situations, and these pathways are increasingly being explored.

Family Reunification

Professor Ekrame Boubtane, Economist, France; s. Lucie Bichet (lawyer, CSO, France), France, Mr. Amanuel Mehari, IOM New York.

Family reunification is one of the most established regular

pathways. Despite the principle of family unity being protected under international law, however, not all States have a family reunification pathway. In States where it does exist, significant obstacles prevent it from working optimally. The keynote presentation was given by Dr. Ekrame Boubtane (Economist specialized in migration) and focused on an often-ignored aspect of family reunification—its economic benefits.

Dr. Boubtane presented a summary of her research demonstrating that family reunification poses no undue economic burden on countries of destination. She distinguished between the budgetary, or short-term, costs to States of facilitating family reunification and the economic, or long-term costs. Although short-term costs of family reunification may be slightly elevated, in the long term, family reunification does not pose an economic burden on States and, indeed, provides many economic and social benefits that flow from migrants having stability.

Family unity is inextricably linked to labour migration. People move to seek better jobs and improve their economic situations and their productivity as workers is elevated if they benefit from the stability and support that family reunification brings. This represents an important economic growth stream for destination countries and remittances are an important economic source for countries of origin. Dr. Boubtane highlighted the failure to recognize diplomas or other credentials as a key obstacle to optimal labour outcomes, because it forces migrants to work in positions that do not correspond to their competencies, amounting to an underutilization, if not waste, of human capital.

Migrants who work fill labour gaps in countries of destination. These gaps are becoming more significant in many developed countries as aging populations require home- and medical facility-based health care and labour shortages exist in other sectors as well. Migrants’ filling of these labour gaps plays an essential role in economic development, Dr. Boubtane noted. There is an imbalance between countries of origin and destination in this context because countries of origin bear the financial cost of educating younger people, particularly where the school-age population is large. The same is true for professional training. Agreements on migration, such as bilateral agreements, must exist on equal footing, so that countries of origin don’t have greater costs and so that the work talent created through education and training can be used either in the country of origin or destination.

Dr. Boubtane reiterated Dr. Crépeau’s point that skills mobility partnerships must include not only those with higher education and skills training, but also those without formal educational background or those who have technical skills that are needed. This is one of the biggest regular pathway needs—expansion to include workers whose formal education may be limited but whose skills are needed.

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2023/nov/10/australia-to-offer-residency-to-tuvalu-residents-displaced-by-climate-change>.

Ms. Lucie Bichet, whose advocacy work focuses largely on family reunification, identified several key challenges with this regular pathway. One of the largest problems with family reunification in the EU is that despite being enshrined in law and policy, it is often inoperable in practice. The legal framework in the European Union is EU Directive 2003/86/EC on the right to family reunification. It establishes common a minima rules under which non-EU nationals can bring their family members to the EU country they legally reside in. When it comes to implementation, however, advocates must expend large amounts of time resolving issues on individual cases that manifest because of processing delays, overly burdensome documentation requirements, variability in requirements across jurisdictions and high fees.

Within the family reunification panel and throughout the workshop, participants mentioned xenophobia, a major roadblock to regular pathway implementation. Advocates trying to reunite families describe physical, psychological and administrative harm their clients suffer as a result of xenophobia. The phenomenon exists on every continent, constituting one of the most significant challenges migrants and their advocates face.

Other roadblocks stem from the discretion States are allowed in determining the procedures under which non-EU nationals can apply for family reunification. The need to appear in person at a diplomatic mission to submit an application can be burdensome and time limits on applications similarly work against applicants. In terms of substantive requirements, strict income and accommodation requirements are two large barriers that prevent people from accessing the right to family reunification. Another impediment is exclusion of some beneficiaries of subsidiary protection and a too-narrow scope for defining family, restricting it to only core family members.

Ms. Bichet emphasized that another major challenge to effective family reunification implementation is the political discourse that surrounds the topic. Family reunification leads to better migrant integration into the country of destination among other benefits, yet politicians in numerous countries across the globe portray it as the dangerous gateway to mass, uncontrollable migration. In the EU, some politicians have threatened to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights because they state incorrectly that it grants an absolute right to family reunification.

Family reunification for unaccompanied children is one of the most pressing implementation concerns. Long delays in joining family members have an enormous impact on the well-being of children, who may already be contending with trauma experienced during the migration journey. Recommendations to improve this regular pathway are:

- In general, expedite the process of family reunification for

children.

- Allow unaccompanied children to reunite with other family members, not just parents, but anyone with whom the child has a bond and/or views as a primary caretaker, following IOM's emphasis on the need for a broad and culturally appropriate definition of family¹.
- Make the process of obtaining consent from a parent the child is not joining more streamlined.
- Waive visa fees and provide economic support to children in the process.
- Children need to have child-friendly and timely access to information about the process.
- Facilitate exit visas from the country of origin or host country².
- Provide legal aid and/or guardianship or representation to children to support them through the process.

Mr. Amanuel Mehari focused his contribution on the humanitarian angle for family reunification and the expression of this right for migrants working within the medium and low skill labour markets. Under international law, the protection of the family unit is part of international customary law first detailed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that it is the natural and fundamental unit of society. The GCM encourages States to pursue family reunification as a necessary step towards safe, orderly and regular migration.

As part of international customary law, strong support for the exercise and protection of this right exists, particularly for refugees and IDPs, for whom there is clear designated guidance on the right with guidance on how states need to minimize family separation. Unfortunately, things are not as clear for migrants in situations of humanitarian strife. For example, the exercise of the rules in the EU for non-EU nationals has not been standardized across the members. Some subsidiary protection schemes have been used to deny the right to family reunification using arbitrary criteria.

While states often fight and compete to attract highly skilled migrants in the higher wage brackets which often come with clear guidelines and procedures for the facilitation of travel with family, and sponsorship of family members, such guidelines are often lacking with respect to the lower-skilled section of the labor market, which is viewed as disposable labour.

The first part of the equation is how to best advocate against the mischaracterization of family reunification. That can be done by showing the immense potential family reunification has towards facilitating regular and orderly migration. Several studies have

1. IOM, Family Reunification: Policies and Practices Supporting Regular Migration Pathways <https://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/documents/2023-07/family-reunification.pdf>.

2. Exit visas do not align with international law because they are overly restrictive of the right to leave one's country (see footnote 11). However, they currently exist in some States and constitute an obstacle to family reunification implementation.



Ms. Paola Pace, IOM Deputy Chief of Mission making a presentation at the event. Photo: IOM 2024/ Iselowo Oluwafemi Samuel

illustrated the positives of migrant workers and their benefits to the labour market and the positive implications of family reunification on productivity.

- The presence of fellow family members in the host country can reduce risks of abuse, abandonment, and exposure to exploitation;
- Opportunities for regular and predictable family visits to temporary migrants may contribute to reducing the incidence of overstays or irregular entry;
- Health experts confirm that the long-term separation of family members can have negative developmental, emotional and health effects¹;
- Family units are more likely to settle and integrate faster in the host community—with the family unit in place, participation in economic, social, cultural and political life is more likely.
- Lack of such options leads to migrants taking dangerous migration routes.

Recent research undertaken in Tunisia among young migrants including refugees recently indicated that:

- 82% of respondents who expressed a family reunification aspiration, cited it as one of the reasons for leaving their country of origin, and 94% cited it as a reason for selecting their intended destination.
- Administrative delays and access to information were the most commonly reported challenges within formal family reunification processes and were mentioned by 22/50 and 21/50 respondents, respectively.

A second issue is the standardization of processes, especially documentation. Many migrants who travel from the global south have significant difficulties proffering documents such as birth certificates, and marriage certificates to prove kinship. Such documents might have been lost or destroyed during their journeys or simply were not available. States can work with international organizations such as IOM to facilitate other complementary identification and verification methods such as affidavits from community leaders, religious leaders and consular services.

1. See http://www.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbd1486/files/our_work/ODG/GCM/IOM-Thematic-Paper-Family-reunification.pdf.

Accelerated, simplified procedures should be considered to support unaccompanied children. Another necessity to improve family reunification implementation is the expansion of the definition of family for the benefit of the child. The narrow definition of family as consisting of only biological parents and children is quite restrictive when considering protection solutions for unaccompanied children, who come from all over the world. “Family” does not have a universal definition across cultures, and different definitions should be respected.

States can help by defining the criteria for family reunification for nuclear and extended family members, especially for vulnerable family members whose condition can significantly be bettered through facilitating family reunification. In humanitarian situations where the State is not able to provide such support International Organizations such as IOM, UNHCR, and UNICEF need to be leveraged to facilitate the protection of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) to determine the best interest of the child and facilitate family reunification.

The Nigerian and African Perspective

The final panel of the workshop drew together all the elements of the first four panels and analyzed them in the Nigerian context, as well as in an all-of-Africa context. Panelists represented numerous sectors in Nigerian government, CSOs and trade, and each responded to a question considering regular pathways through a Nigerian lens.

Engineer Dr. Sule Yakubu Bassi, pioneer Secretary of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM), spoke about brain drain, a problem that has been harmful to Africa and is a concern in the implementation of regular pathways. He recommended that the issue of brain drain be discussed holistically to ascertain its advantages and disadvantages, noting the importance of developing a strategy to turn the disadvantages into advantages.

Nigeria has a large diaspora that remits over USD20 Billion Dollars annually and invests in Education, ICT, health, and agriculture sectors in the country. Its importance is reflected in the National Diaspora Policy developed with the support of IOM through a consultative process involving relevant Ministries, Departments and Agencies of Government, CSOs, and development partners and adopted by the Federal Executive Council in 2021. The policy encourages the diaspora to participate in meaningful development in the country, and NiDCOM. Through its 3Es approach, engage, enable, and empower, it has developed several programmes to mobilize the diaspora for sustainable national development.

A significant outcome of the Nigerian panel was agreement among the presenters that more needs to be done on the continent of Africa, in recognition that South-South pathways are often neglected, though data reveals that most African migration is inter-regional; therefore, South-South pathways are relevant to migrants from, to and within Nigeria. In an impromptu “poll,” the

Nigerians present in the room were asked by presenter Ms. Kachi Madubuko (IOM, Special Liaison Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia) whether they would “japa,” the Nigerian term for migrating out of the country. Many said they would not, preferring to stay and work in Nigeria if the economic landscape were conducive, with good jobs and opportunities; others said they may consider it. She noted that this underscores the migration conundrum wherein the root factors are not sufficiently addressed, and migration stems out of necessity rather than out of choice, and she called for a holistic approach in advancing regular pathways to migration. She noted this and many other African migration dynamics are clearly articulated in the Revised Africa Migration Policy for Africa 2018.

Furthermore, it was noted that Africa has not attained its full developmental potential because some critical human resources that could contribute to the development of the continent are not remaining on the continent. There are skills gaps within the African continent that can be filled by Africans therefore it is important to explore existing opportunities, as Africa has enough skill and human capital to grow the economy. Considering measures that will enhance intra-regional regular pathways will enable Africans to balance out the labour demand and supply gaps, leverage African diaspora engagement, investment and remittances and provide necessary humanitarian access and protection responses from and to other African Member States.

Ms. Madubuko further emphasized Africa’s integration agenda as elucidated in the AU Agenda 2063, wherein the continent seeks “an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens...” aiming to “prioritize inclusive social and economic development, continental and regional integration...”. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), a flagship project of Agenda 2063, seeks to drive the integration agenda by boosting the economic potential of the continent and positioning Africa as a global player within and outside the continent.

There is an understanding however that for the AfCFTA to work effectively, people must move. Emphasizing the successes and immense benefits of freedom of movement protocols within Regional Economic Communities, notably ECOWAS, of which Nigeria is a member state, Ms. Madubuko advocated for greater freedom of movement, noting the urgency for African States to ratify the AU Free Movement of Persons protocol (another agenda 2063 flagship project) which will allow Africans to migrate with ease throughout the continent, hence regularizing migration pathways and promoting integration and socioeconomic development for Africa.

Ambassador Catherine Imaji Udima mni, currently Director of Migrants Affairs at the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons and Nigeria’s Focal Point for the Rabat Process, drew the participants’ attention to an overemphasis on Nigerians abroad and an underemphasis on migrants in Nigeria, noting that there is no good data on migrants within the country or coming into the country.

Ambassador Udida also mentioned several other key concerns:

- Free movement within ECOWAS has been very useful regarding pathways. Nationals of West Africa can move freely, engage in economic activities, and seek regularization of stay upon the expiration of the 90 days provided by the Free Movement Protocol. However, the process is not as smooth as it should be. The challenge can be addressed through the effective implementation of the Protocol.
- There is a need for a general and holistic repeal of how migrants are treated not only at the global level but also at the regional level given human rights abuses within the African continent.
- There is a need to draw Bilateral Labour Agreements to ensure the protection of migrants.
- Climate change is impacting mobility and has led to the displacement of about 2.4 million people. 33 states have been affected by displacement with about 5 – 6 million IDPs.
- There is no international Convention that takes into cognizance the issues of climate change.

From the civil society sector, Mr. Victor Aihawu, Director, Center for Youths Integrated Development, emphasized the responsibilities of CSOs. He recommended the following:

- It is the responsibility of CSOs to create awareness. Aside from awareness creation, there should be a place where people can be able to access information. The Migrant Resource Centres whose functions are to provide accurate information on migration should be more accessible.
- For the Private Sector, there is a need to build labour mobility ecosystem as mobility is all about skills. A lot of countries need people with skills. The role of the private sector is to build the capacity of people to access the available opportunities in the labour market.
- Given the significance of Labour Migration, countries must ensure that their legislation and policies align with regional and global frameworks on migration.

Mr. Brendan Kelly, head of the Migration and Development unit at IOM Tunisia, discussed his experience in a North African country and its relevance to the rest of the Continent.

Despite the long history of mobility between Tunisia and Europe, and the mutual interest in expanding mobility opportunities, political considerations have diminished pathways in recent years. While Tunisia has mobility agreements with several European countries, the complexity of accessing the pathways limits their applicability. For example, the mobility agreement between Tunisia and Switzerland, signed in 2012, authorises 100 Tunisian youth to

live and work in Switzerland each year. However, after more than 20 years in force, a cumulative total of less than 100 Tunisian youth has benefitted from the agreement. The lack of regular pathways is one of the reasons for the exponential increase in irregular arrivals to Europe from Tunisia in recent years.

Expanding regular pathways for their citizens is a key priority for the Tunisian authorities. IOM Tunisia recently agreed to support the Tunisian authorities in supporting bilateral cooperation on labour and educational regular pathways with Italy, promoting constructive dialogue between IOM's two member states on expanding and improving regular pathways.

Tunisia is also a key priority for migrant workers for many European countries, and particularly Italy, which faces significant skills shortages. Tunisia and Italy signed an MoU in September, authorising 4,000 Tunisians per annum to work in Italy on a non-seasonal basis. To support mobility between Tunisia and Italy, IOM recently signed the THAMM+ labour migration project with DG NEAR, a Skills Mobility Partnership (SMP) which will support the training and mobility of 2,000 Tunisians to work in the construction sector in Italy. This SMP builds upon previous experience IOM Tunisia has had in facilitating labour mobility, with Belgium and Italy.

Based on experience from Tunisia, several points were highlighted that may apply to the larger, African and global context, including:

- The need to ensure that mobility schemes benefit migrants, countries of origin and countries of destination, and the private sector: Skills mobility partnerships (SMPs) are a unique approach to mobility schemes, avoiding brain drain, through training a cadre of work in the domestic labour market, in addition to the country of destination.
- The need to have private sector involvement from project design stage: Previous experience has highlighted the difficulty in bringing the private sector into an already designed project, as it does not meet their specific recruitment requirements. THAMM+ has therefore coordinated with the private sector from the project conception phase and they have been involved throughout the design and implementation phase. This should ensure that training, for example, is tailored to private sector needs, both in Italy and Tunisian, resulting more engagement with the project.
- The importance of scalability: A key factor in the viability of SMPs is their scalability. The magnitude of the challenge in terms of skills shortages in countries of destination, and the lack of regular pathways for prospective migrant workers in countries of origin, is enormous.
- The need for labour migration at all skill levels: There has been a strong bias from countries of destination for migrant workers with high levels of education and skills. However, of labour shortages in the EU, 50% require only craft level skills.

- The need for evidence to influence policy: There have been few impact evaluations of large-scale SMPs. Such evidence is critical to the model's adoption to both Governments and the private sector. IOM intends to rigorously evaluate THAMM+ to contribute to the policy debate. For Governments, and particularly the private sector, value for money, and economic returns are key factors that will be determinative in the widespread adoption of SMPs. To assess the overall impact of regular pathway initiatives, irregular migratory flows and skills shortages could be used as proxy indicators.
- The role of the diaspora in SMPs: The diaspora plays a critical role in SMPs in a variety of ways. Engaging the private sector originating from the country of origin can significantly increase buy-in and can lead to FDI in the country of origin. The diaspora also can play a crucial role in supporting the integration of individuals benefitting from SMPs.
- Politicized migration narratives and xenophobia are impediments to effective regular pathway implementation. Human rights are not dependent upon immigration status and regular pathway development should prioritize migrants in vulnerable situations.
- South-South migration should be a priority in enhancing the availability of regular pathways; data shows that most African migration is inter-regional.
- Data-driven research, partnership building (such as with the private sector), and knowledge-sharing are all integral elements of regular pathway expansion and development.
- A security-only approach to migration governance has not resulted in lower numbers of migrants. A more advantageous approach is to develop and use regular pathways.

Conclusion

The workshop provided a valuable collaborative platform for participants to engage with the theoretical and practical aspects of existing and future regular pathways. Across the spectrum of regular pathway concerns, from the underserved needs of vulnerable migrants to the logistical challenges of adopting SMPs at scale, experts provided insights, critiques and suggestions. The workshop was a multi-stakeholder effort, enriched by the variety of perspectives brought to bear on regular pathways. The most important point of agreement among all stakeholders was that regular pathways have enormous potential to promote good migration governance, with all the benefits to States and to migrants that flow from a fair and effective system. Within that overarching goal, which aligns with States' commitments to facilitate regular migration under the GCM, the recommendations that emerged from the workshop should inform the regular pathway development and implementation process. The final section of this report summarizes them.

General Considerations

- Regular pathways provide an avenue to reap the benefits of migration for States and to ensure the rights of migrants. For States, regular pathways allow oversight over the migration process, they direct revenue into the regulated economy instead of into the hands of smugglers or traffickers, they can bolster the workforce and they are a conduit to the many benefits associated with migration when migrants can participate fully in society.
- Regular pathways are a mechanism for making sure migrants' rights are safeguarded, which helps States meet their obligations under international law and the GCM. They reduce the risks to individuals inherent in many irregular migration channels.
- Protection-related pathways are at once well-known and not fully understood. Refugees and international protection comprise only one portion of this pillar. The principle of non-refoulement applies universally, and individual assessments should be conducted for all migrants to see whether they qualify for protection under its aegis or for any other regular pathway.
- While facilitating migration through regular pathways (for work, family unity and protection), it is critical for Member States to address policies and practices that create the conditions for exploitation, violence and loss of status.
- National protection mechanisms, such as humanitarian pathways, are valuable but not currently comprehensive enough to address the needs of vulnerable migrants, so regular pathways need to be further developed to protect the needs of migrants who cannot be returned or who have other vulnerabilities. These can also provide a real alternative to irregular emigration from their country of origin for some nationals at risk (e.g. victims of torture).
- Regularization must be a core feature of regular pathway implementation in the protection context, so that migrants can enter and stay without adding the vulnerability of an indeterminate status. Where migrants are not provided any form of status in the destination country, the risk of further irregular migration increases.
- The protection/labour migration nexus is important and vulnerable migrants and nationals at risk should be targeted for inclusion in SMPs to fill labour gaps such as a global shortage in health care aids. Expanded labor mobility programs, such as those instituted in certain countries as a supplement to

Protection-related Pathways

Key Takeaways

their resettlement pathway, provide flexibility in administrative and financial requirements so that migrants with displacement backgrounds can access regular labour pathways on the same footing as other migrants. Businesses benefit from hiring talent that may not otherwise be available, and migrants in such programs enjoy equivalent support to those who are resettled. Such programmes should be extended to unreturnable migrants.

Skills Mobility Partnerships

Key Takeaways

- SMPs are a unique approach to labour mobility schemes, avoiding brain drain by training cohorts of workers who fill labour gaps in both the domestic labour market and in countries of destination. This promotes brain gain and prevents brain drain.
- Labour migration is needed at all skill levels and destination country bias in favor of migrant workers with high levels of education and skills for high skilled jobs should be countered by developing regular pathways that include migrant workers with limited educational backgrounds or technical skills, of all ages that can fill the most urgent labour market needs, primarily positions that traditionally are low-paying or require less education.
- Recognition of credentials is crucial to success in labour migration generally and within SMPs; a uniform system for allowing diplomas, training and life-acquired skills to be acknowledged should be developed.
- Scalability is a key factor in expanding SMPs. To be sustainable, SMPs must be developed through a multistakeholder approach, include cost-sharing to prevent overburdening countries of origin, formalized State cooperation in both the South-North and South-South contexts, and mid- and long-term planning. Financial support is also essential.
- Worker exploitation, especially among undocumented migrant workers, is a serious problem. Current measures to prevent unethical recruitment and exploitative work must be more comprehensively implemented.
- IOM's experience with skills development indicates SMPs anchored in existing migration corridors work better. In Africa, South-South corridors are far more accessible to most migrants and most migrant workers are employed by small and medium enterprises.

Climate Change and Environmental Degradation-related Pathways

Key Takeaways

- Climate change may not be a specific driver of migration, but it accelerates the conditions, such as more frequent or

intense weather patterns, that may force people to move in an immediate and unplanned way.

- Climate mobility encompasses numerous varieties of movement, with a range of push and pull factors. It may be planned, prompted or forced to varying degrees and can be implemented over immediate, short or long-term timeframes.
- Failure to develop regular pathways in this context could leave people vulnerable and without options in the face of severe outcomes influenced by climate change, such as drought, flooding or degraded soil quality.
- Regional free movement protocols pioneered in Africa may form the basis for new climate mobility pathways to be expanded, but more research on this is needed and a restriction is that free movement protocols may not provide options for regularization.
- The GCM outlines the need for States to identify, develop and strengthen solutions for migration in response to slow-onset disasters and environmental degradation.

Family Reunification

Key Takeaways

- Family reunification is an established regular pathway that not only protects the principle of family unity, it brings myriad benefits to destination countries through increased social cohesion, decreased medical care costs and long-term economic benefits derived from families being stable and allowed to work.
- Despite being longstanding and widely used, significant administrative and substantive obstacles often render it inoperable in practice. These include processing delays, overly burdensome documentation requirements, variability in requirements across jurisdictions, high fees and xenophobia.
- The family reunification/labour migration nexus is clear, because people move to seek better jobs and productivity is elevated when workers benefit from the stability and support family reunification brings. This connection is a boon in both directions; economic growth in destination countries and remittances in countries of origin.
- Arbitrary limitations on the scope of family reunification are not justified (for example, excluding some subsidiary protection holders) and too-narrow definitions of family that are not culturally appropriate hinder the process and harm individual migrants.
- Perhaps the greatest need for improvement is to streamline and accelerate the family reunification process for children, particularly unaccompanied children, whose development is profoundly affected by long-term separation from primary caregivers.

Next Steps

IOM should be the thought and implementation leader aiding States to fulfil their commitments to facilitating regular pathways under the GCM.

- Partner selection and coalition-building is an essential first step, with the roles and responsibilities of each partner organization being clearly defined. In addition to Member States, partners should include the UN Migration Network Members-- OHCHR, ILO, UNHCR--and CSOs such as Caritas, Safe Passage, the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE), the Platform on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), the Migrant Forum of Asia, Pathways International, HIAS and Lutheran Immigration Services. Migrants themselves are key stakeholders to involve.
- Design a theory of change for each pathway, looking at them

both vertically and horizontally to identify and capitalize upon areas where they overlap and can provide benefits in multiple ways.

- Create an expert advisory board to provide research/ methodology guidance for IOM work products generated to inform and direct the pathway development and implementation process, and ensure a method is put in place for regular input from migrants themselves.
- Set up metrics to define, track and measure successes and develop a knowledge-sharing platform to ensure that best-practices and lessons learned are available across IOM missions and to the other partners.
- Explore funding mechanisms for the coalition members to ensure that regular pathway development and implementation is not hindered by budget constraints.



3. CONCEPT NOTE

Introduction

Expanded regular migration pathways offer opportunities for States to benefit from migration. Within West Africa, the free movement of persons regime has been in place since 1979. However, challenges still exist in terms of implementation regarding the rights of establishment, difficulties relating to proof of identity, which hinders access to critical services, and regional identity or travel documents (e.g. the common passport). At the continental level, the African Union has been driving discussions on free movement policies, an agenda that has recently gained momentum with its 2018 Protocol to the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community Relating to Free Movement of Persons, Right of Residence, and Right of Establishment. Under AU Agenda 2063, the African Passport and Free Movement of People project was designed to fast-track continental integration through a common African Passport. However, given the limited number of ratifications, this initiative faces difficulties with take-off, preventing the protocol from entering into force. Implementation of this flagship project aims to transform Africa's laws, which remain generally restrictive on the movement of people despite political commitments to facilitate cross-border movement to the benefit of all States¹. As a leading economy of the continent, Nigeria is a significant regional and continental powerhouse that could play an important role in leading the discussion on expanding regular pathways of migration.

Furthermore, the Revised Migration Policy Framework for Africa (MPFA), which IOM supported, offers a strategic framework to guide AU Member States and RECs and advocates for the establishment of regular, transparent, comprehensive, and gender-responsive labour migration policies, legislation, and structures at national and regional levels, noting that the securitization of migration only hinders capitalization on migration's benefits to States and it also fosters the use of irregular channels. The MPFA calls instead for cross-border cooperation and collaboration among Member States.

This concept note highlights the potential of expanded regular migration pathways and how they can benefit States by balancing labour market supply and demand, enhancing workforce development, regulating migration, improving security, and promoting long-lasting benefits for migrants.

Rational

Expanding regular migration pathways has several benefits for sustainable development. It is against this backdrop that the Global Compact for Migration (GCM), specifically Objective 5, was formulated, recognizing the need to 'Enhance availability

and flexibility of pathways for regular migration'. These pathways have the potential to create a well-organized system that regulates

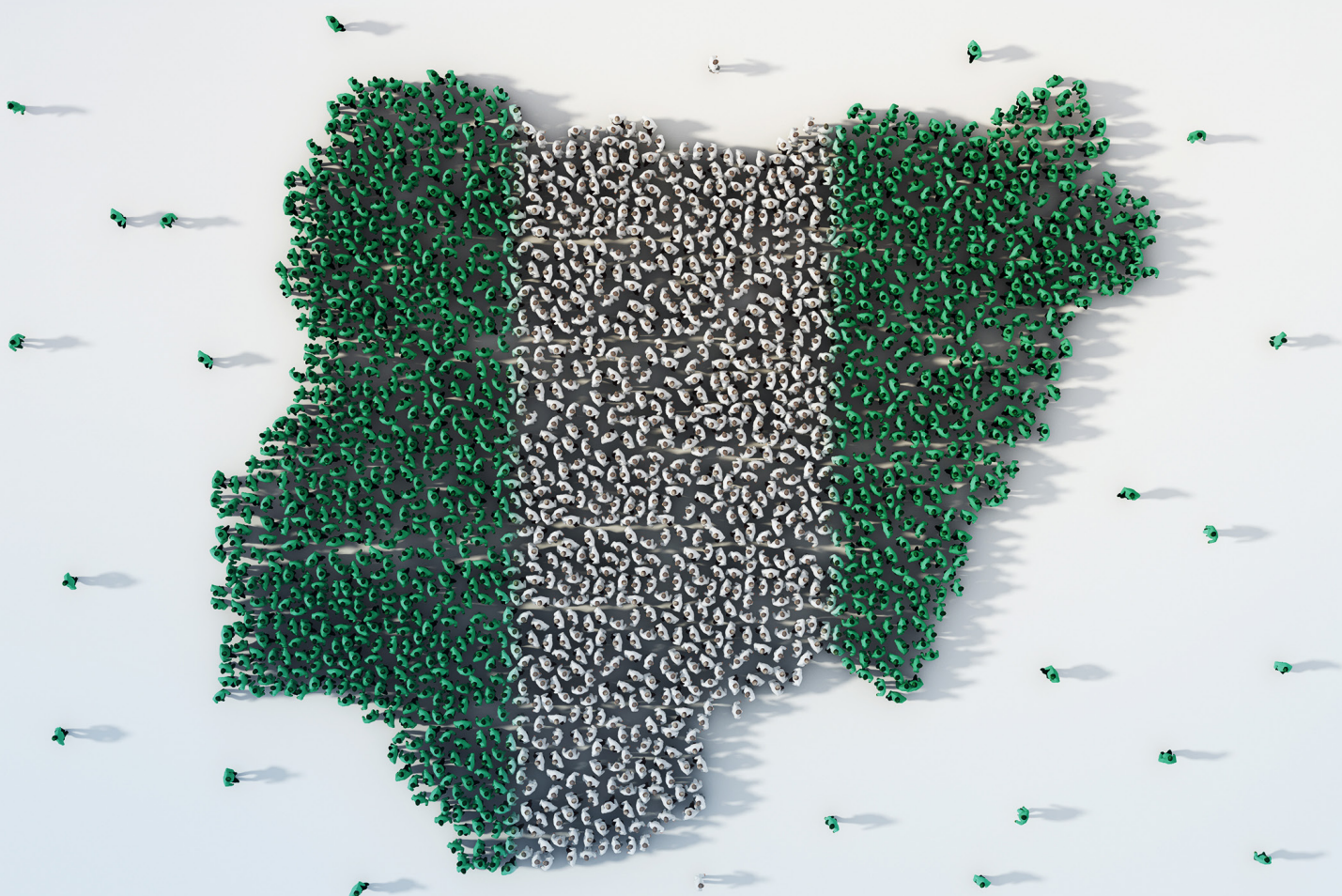
the movement of migrants whilst reaping its socio-economic benefits. This organized approach helps member states monitor and shape the arrival and stay of migrants, ensuring they fulfill labour market demands and support social cohesion within both countries of origin and those of destination. By doing so, it enables governments to effectively manage migration in a holistic manner throughout the different phases of the journey, thereby facilitating the integration of migrants and their contribution to society.

Secondly, regular migration pathways have a significant impact on the workforce and economic growth of both countries of origin and those of destination. Migrants contribute to the workforce at the same level of quality as nonmigrants, which is particularly essential in nations grappling with aging populations and labor shortages. These pathways streamline the integration of migrants into the formal labor market, benefiting the economy of both countries and the well-being of the migrants themselves. In this way, migrant workers play a pivotal role in supporting employment growth and fostering economic stability. For countries of origin with a strong demographic dividend, regular migration pathways create employment opportunities for the youth, thereby reducing the stress of unemployment and underemployment of the local labour market.

In addition, regular migration pathways contribute to improved security in the context of migration. Access to regular migration channels reduces the likelihood of migrants resorting to irregular and often life-threatening routes that are exploited by criminal organizations. This, in turn, decreases the occurrence of human trafficking, smuggling, and other criminal activities commonly tied to irregular migration. Protection-related pathways need to be improved and expanded to meet the needs of these migrants as well. Furthermore, the expansion of regular pathways is not only an issue with respect to migrant workers. Other migrants, particularly refugees, asylum seekers, and those in vulnerable situations for example, migrants who do not have regular status but cannot be returned, such as unaccompanied migrant children or people with severe health conditions are also of concern in this context.

Regular pathways play a fundamental role in safeguarding the rights and dignity of migrants. By promoting regular migration, states ensure that migrants are entitled to the same labor rights as their national counterparts. This not only mitigates the risk of exploitation and abuse but also simplifies access to the legal system for regular migrants, making it easier for them to report labor-related grievances and seek justice when necessary. In essence, expanded regular migration pathways offer a comprehensive solution to the challenges posed by irregular migration, benefiting both destination countries and the migrants themselves.

1. African Union Commission and African Union Development Agency - NEPAD. 2022. AUC & AUDA-NEPAD Second Continental Report on the Implementation of Agenda 2063. AUC & AUDA-NEPAD, Midrand, South Africa. See also IOM, Schöfberger, I., Free movement policies and border controls: regional migration governance systems in West and North Africa and Europe, and their interactions in Migration in West and North Africa and across the Mediterranean: trends, risks, development and governance, Third country nationals and freedom of movement in the EU By Giulio Ferraresi.



Nigeria

Nigeria is the most populated country in Africa and the seventh most in the world, with an annual growth rate of approximately 2.7 per cent. More than half of Nigeria's population is under 30. In Nigeria, hundreds of thousands of people are emigrating every year. Within this group of migrants are students but also highly-skilled health professionals trained in Nigerian Universities who are much needed in a country with a doctor-to-patient ratio of one doctor to 4000-5000 patients, instead of the one doctor to 600 patient ratio recommended by WHO. This means that any discussion of regular migration pathways in the Nigerian context, as is true for many other countries, must include strategies to prevent brain drain.

A misperception that only high-skilled migrants benefit destination countries is as untrue for Nigerian migrants as it is in other contexts. Workers with different levels and types of skills are needed in many countries; the need for long-term home care workers for the elderly mostly but not only in high-income countries is a pressing example of this need. A lack of regular pathways for migrants with limited educational backgrounds and low income only elevates the risk of smuggling and trafficking. In Nigeria, evidence of this

risk is apparent among Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)¹ who have been identified as being at risk of trafficking or resorting to smugglers because of their displacement.

As an origin, transit, and destination country, Nigeria provides an ideal context for examining the myriad benefits of making more regular pathways available to migrants. From protecting migrants leaving the country to promoting "brain gain", to analyzing the benefits of freedom of movement agreements with neighboring countries, Nigeria is a snapshot of the global regular pathways landscape. A workshop on regular pathways in Nigeria offers the opportunity to analyze, understand, and propose ways forward for international cooperation on migration not only in the most populous country in Africa but in the West African region and globally.

Looking at current migration patterns, it is evident that regular pathways should be thoroughly explored and subsequently expanded and diversified to capture the current demographic, labour market-related, and protection realities, supported with relevant data and in cooperation with critical actors such as the private sector. Expanding these pathways with the expertise of stakeholders will also contribute to the reduction of criminal

1. UNHCR Nigeria: Assessment of Trafficking Risks in IDPs Camps in NE Nigeria, 10 March 2020.

activities associated with irregular migration, the protection of human rights, and the economic enhancement of countries, which ultimately ensures the dignity and rights of migrants, leading to an improved quality of life for their citizens while stimulating economic growth. This approach presents a mutually beneficial solution, creating a safer, more equitable, and prosperous future for all stakeholders.

Objectives and expected outcomes

IOM Nigeria is organizing this workshop to provide a platform for consultations among key actors, including academic experts, governmental and non-governmental partners, members of the UN Migration Network, and the private sector. On the basis of

these discussions, the following outcomes are expected to be met:

- Generate discussion on the expansion of regular migration pathways in Nigeria and elsewhere focused on four pillars: protection pathways, climate change pathways, skills mobility partnerships, and family reunification.
- Formulate a set of key questions to inform future actions, including research and monitoring, operationalization of existing pathways, and development of additional pathways.
- Produce a white paper synthesizing and analyzing the workshop discussions with recommendations for additional action.



4. WORKSHOP AGENDA

Programme:

National Workshop: A Nigerian Perspective on Expanded Regular Migration Pathways

13 - 14 December 2023 - Venue: Abuja Continental Hotel, 1 Ladi Kwali Street, Wuse Zone 4|

DAY 1, WEDNESDAY 13 DECEMBER 2023		
TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCAL TIME
9.00 - 9.30	Walk-in – registration - All participants	
9.30 - 9.35	Introductory remarks - The Moderator	
9.35 - 9.45	Welcome remarks - Mr. Laurent De Boeck, Chief of Mission, IOM	
9.45 - 10.00	Goodwill messages: Hon. Minister of Humanitarian Affairs, represented by Mr. Valentine Ezulu, Director, Humanitarian Affairs Hon. (Dr) Abike Dabiri-Erewa, Chairman/CEO, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission	
10.00 - 10.10	Opening remarks - Ms. Monica Goracci, Director of the Department of Programme, Support & Migration Management, IOM HQ in Geneva	
10.10 - 10.30	Migrant story	
10.30 - 11.30	Overview of Regular Pathways - The Four Pillars: Ms. Kristi Severance, Migration Specialist, Overview of Workshop Methodology and Goals - Ms. Paola Pace, IOM Deputy Chief of Mission a.i., Nigeria, and Kristi Severance, Synopsis of Regular Pathways	
11.30 - 12.00	Break - All Participants	
12.00 - 14.00	Walk-in Session 1: Protection-Related Pathways: Professor Pablo Ceriani, Presenter Argentina, Ms. Lucie Bichet, Responsable juridique du Pôle Union Européenne, Safe Passage, Discussant France - Ms. Giulia Perin, Discussant Italy, Mr. Amanuel Mehari, Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, IOM Discussant - Mr. Patrick Corcoran, Change Management Advisor (USRAP), IOM Discussant from Washington - Ms. Mwihaki Kinyanjui, Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR, Nigeria (Discussant) Ms. Liisa Coulombe, Program Manager (Migration) Counsellor (Migration), High Commission of Canada, Abuja, Nigeria (Discussant) Ms. Eleonora Servino, Deputy Head of Operations, East & Southern Africa, IOM Kenya (Discussant)	08:00 A.M 06:00 A.M
14.00 - 15.00	Lunch Break - All participants	
15.00 - 16.30	Session 2: Skills Mobility Partnership - Professor Francois Crépeau, Presenter Canada, Ms. Naomi Shiferaw, Senior Regional Labour Migration/Migration Development Specialist, IOM Regional Office for West and Central Africa, Dakar, Presenter	09.00 AM

16.30 - 17.00	Discussion and Take-Aways - All Participants	
17.00	Coffee/Departure - All participants	
DAY 2, THURSDAY 14 DECEMBER 2023		
TIME	ACTIVITY	LOCAL TIME
9.00 - 9.30	Walk-in – registration - All participants	
9.30 - 10:30	Migrant story	
10.30 - 11.30	Session 3: Environment and Climate Change Pathways: Professor Tamara Wood, Presenter Australia Hobart, Presenter Ms. Anne Althaus, Migration Law Officer, IOM HQ, Discussant	20.00 PM
11.30 - 12.00	Coffee/Departure - All participants	
12.00 - 13.30	Session 4: Family Reunification: Professor Ekrame Boubtane, Presenter France Ms. Lucie Bichet, Safe Passage, Discussant France Mr. Amanuel Mehari, IOM Discussant	
13.30 - 14.00	Discussion and Take-Aways Continued - All participants	
14.00 - 14500	Lunch - All participants	
15.00 - 16.30	Regular Pathways within and from Africa and through a Nigerian lens: Ms. Elizabeth Poage, National Project Officer (Labour Migration & Diaspora), IOM Nigeria, Moderator and Presenter Mr. Victor Aihawu, Centre for Youths Integrated Development, Discussant Dr. Engr. Dr. Yakubu Sule Bassi, Secretary, Nigerians in Diaspora Commission, Discussant Amb. Catherine Udida, mni, Director, Migrants Affairs, National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons, Discussant Ms. Kachi Madubuko, Senior Liaison Officer UNECA/AU/ECA/ IGAD IOM's Special Liaison Office, Addis, Discussant Brendan Kelly, Head of Labour Migration and Migration and Development, Discussant IOM Tunisia	
16.30 - 17.30	Making Pathways Operational Group discussion - All participants	
17.30 - 17.45	Migrant Story	

5. LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANIZATION
1	Mr. Abdulraheem Al-Ameri	Associate Protection Officer	UNHCR
2	Hon. (Dr) Abike Dabiri-Erewa	Chairman/Chief Executive Officer	Chairman/Chief Executive Officer
3	Ms. Adwoa Kufuor	Senior Human Rights Adviser	IOM, Washington
4	Ms. Ajara Jallow	Programme Officer	IOM Abuja Nigeria
5	Mr. Akinboye Akinsola	Special Assistant to the Chairman	NiDCOM
6	Ms. Akor Adijetu Ademu	Chief Executive Officer	Federal Ministry of Education
7	Mr. Akor Geoffrey	Migration Desk Officer	National Bureau of Statistics
8	Mr. Amanuel Mehari	Senior Humanitarian Officer	IOM, New York
9	Ms. Amuzie Udodirin	Nursing Officer	Women Trafficking and Child Labour Eradication Foundation
10	Amb. Ms. Catherine Udida, MNI	Director, Migrant Affairs Department	National Commission for Refugees, Migrants, and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI)
11	Ms. Ana Medeiros	Senior Programme Manager	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
12	Ms. Anne Althaus	Migration Law Officer	IOM, Geneva
13	Mr. Balogunn Abdurrahman	Director	NiDCOM
14	Ms. Blessing Okoedion	Migrant	
15	Mr. Brendan Kelly	Head, Labour Migration & Development	IOM Tunisia
16	Mr. Clement Ohenzuwa	Camera Operator	Africa Independent Television (AIT)
17	Ms. Chibalani Katogo	Protection Officer	IOM Lagos, Nigeria
18	Mr. Denis Martin Andrew Wani	Programme Officer, Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)	IOM Maiduguri, Nigeria
19	Ms. Eleonora Servino	Deputy Head of Operations, East and Southern Africa	IOM, Nairobi
20	Ms. Elizabeth Poage	National Project Officer, Labour Migration and Diaspora	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
21	Professor Ekrame Boubtane	Professor and Economist	University Clermont Auvergne
22	Mr. Emmanuel Agodi	Head Migration	Nigerian National Volunteer Service
23	Ms. Esther Balami	Human Rights Officer	OHCHR
24	Ms. Essien Nsikan	Assistant Director	NCFRMI
25	Ms. Eva Akerman Borje	Director, Department of Policy, and Research	IOM HQ
26	Mr. Ezenekwe Tochukwu	Programme Officer	Federal Ministry of Humanitarian Affairs and Poverty Alleviation (FMHAPA)

	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANIZATION
27	Ms. Faldamu Adamu	Junior Project Assistant	IOM Maidugari, Nigeria
28	Ms. Falmata Aliyu Mohammed	Programme Officer, Health and Nutrition	Aliko Dangote Foundation
29	Professor Francois Crépeau	Law Professor and Legal Practitioner, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants	McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism
30	Ms. Giulia Perin	Employment and Immigration Lawyer	Private Sector
31	Mr. Ibrahim Shobonde	Protocol Officer	NiDCOM
32	Mr. Ikechukwu Attah	National Protocol Officer	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
33	Mr. I. S Sarka	Assistant Comptroller	Nigeria Immigration Service
34	Mr. Iyasi Abraham Earnest	Programme Officer	African Youth Growth Foundation (AYGF)
35	Mr. Jerry Ifeanyi	Communication Officer	AYGF
36	Mr. Jide Olatuyi	Director	Policy Consult
37	Mr. John Idoko	Junior Project Assistant	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
38	Mr. Jonathan Martens	Head of The IOM African Capacity Building Centre (IOM ACBC)	IOM, Moshi
39	Mr. Jude Okoye	Senior Programme Assistant	IOM Lagos, Nigeria
40	Ms. Justina O. Isaac	Programme Officer	CSOnetMADE
41	Ms. Juliannah Vincent-Yakubu	Information Officer	NiDCOM
42	Mr. Kar Wilson	Migrant	Public Health Specialist
43	Ms. Kachi Madubuko	Senior Liaison Officer to UNECA and African Union Special Projects	IOM, Addis Ababa
44	Ms. Katia Lobo Fitermann	Lawyer	Caritas Internationalis
45	Mr. Kingsley Osisanya	ICT Assistant	IOM, Abuja
46	Ms. Kristi Severance	Lawyer/independent migration specialist	USA
47	Mr. Laurent de Boeck	Chief of Mission	IOM Nigeria
48	Ms. Liisa Coulombe	Migration Programme Manager, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)	High Commission of Canada in Abuja
49	Ms. Lucie Bichet	Legal Coordinator	Safe Passage International, Paris
50	Mamady and Fanta Cissé	Migrants	
51	Ms. Mary Omolara Oludoun	Assistant Director	Federal Ministry of Education
52	Ms. Mwhaki Kinyanjui	Senior Protection Officer	UNHCR, Abuja
53	Ms. Monica Goracci	Director, Dept Programme Support and Migration Management	IOM HQ
54	Mr. Victor Essiet	Protocol Officer	NiDCOM
55	Ms. Wintana Tarekegn	Head of Sub-Office	IOM Benin, Nigeria

	NAME	DESIGNATION	ORGANIZATION
56	Mr. Nahashon Thuo	Chief Migration Health Officer, Migration Health Division	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
57	Ms. Naomi Shiferaw	Senior Thematic Specialist on Labour Migration and Social Inclusion	IOM, Dakar
58	Mr. Nicky Okoye	Financial Consultant and Business Strategist	Private Sector (African Enterprise Institute, the Nicky Okoye Foundation and Anabel Group)
59	Ms. Nwosu Yvette	Senior Programme Assistant	IOM Nigeria
60	Mr. Oladunjoye Musiliu A.	Director International Organization Department	Office of the Secretary of the Federation
61	Ms. Olufunke Olajumoke Omosola	Principal Programme Officer	NiDCOM
62	Ms. Olive Asobie Oghi	Project Assistant	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
63	Mr. Olutoye Daniel	Administrative Officer 1	Directorate of Technical Cooperation in Africa
64	Ms. Opeyemi Kolawole	National Project Officer	IOM Lagos, Nigeria
65	Mr. Osasunwen Adun	Senior Project Assistant	IOM Benin, Nigeria
66	Ms. Paola Pace	Deputy Chief of Mission	IOM Nigeria
67	Professor Pablo Ceriani	Vice-Chairperson (Law Professor)	The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW)
68	Mr. Patrick Corcoran	Change Management Advisor	IOM Washington
69	Mr. Praise Oyedele	Senior Information Management Assistant	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
70	Ms. Ruth Balogun	Executive Assistant/Legal Associate	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
71	Mr. Saminu Simon Dogo	Senior Programme Officer	National Orientation Agency
72	Ms. Sunday Smith	Migration Health Consultant	IOM, Nairobi
73	Mr. Taehohn Lee	Global Migration Data Analysis Centre (GMDAC), Data Innovation & Capacity-Building	IOM, Berlin
74	Dr. Tamara Wood	Law Professor	Kaldor Centre Principles on Climate Mobility, Australia
75	Ms. Teresa Botella	Policy and Liaison Officer (ECOWAS)	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
76	Ms. Ukamaka Anyanechi	National Programme Officer, Migration Management	IOM Abuja, Nigeria
77	Mr. Valentine Ezulu	Director	FMHAPA
78	Mr. Victor Aihawu	Director	Centre for Youths Integrated Development, Abuja, Nigeria
79	Mr. Victor Lutenco	Head of Sub-Office and Senior Programme Coordinator, Migration Management	IOM Lagos, Nigeria
80	Engr. Dr. Yakubu Sule Bassi	Secretary	NiDCOM
81	Mr. Uhimwen Aigbeze	Senior Project Assistant	IOM Benin, Nigeria

6. BIOGRAPHIES OF PRESENTERS AND DISCUSSANTS

Paola Pace – Workshop Convener, Presenter and Panel Moderator

Paola has substantial global, regional, and national experience working with cross-border teams on migration on 4 continents, which has yielded clear, quantifiable improvements in migration policy and practice and in the lives of individual migrants.

In twenty years, she has promoted human rights law and protected migrants, culminating in her positions of Deputy Chief of Mission a.i. of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in Nigeria, Interim Chief of Mission of IOM in Niger, and Deputy Chief of Mission in Tunisia. In the latter capacity, she has led advocacy work and programs in five North African countries. As Regional Migration Health Coordinator in Nairobi, she has previously directed advocacy efforts and migration health programs in eleven East and Southern African countries. Before that, she also headed the International Migration Law Unit and served as a Migration Law Specialist in IOM in Geneva. Before IOM, she worked for the UN International Law Commission and two law firms in Belgium and Italy. She has years of volunteer experience in civil societies. She earned degrees in Law from the University of Padua and Public Health from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. She is fluent in English and French. Her mother tongue is Italian, and she has basic Swahili.

Her defining characteristic is her dedication to making a difference and amplifying the voice of migrants, who often struggle to be heard or are misrepresented so they can exercise their rights and contribute to their societies.

Kristi Severance—Workshop Presenter and Panel Moderator

Kristi is a lawyer from the United States with more than 20 years of experience in migration research, policy work and direct advocacy representing migrants. She is a licensed lawyer who holds a JD and an MSc in Global Health.

Ekrame Boubtane – Economist, Presenter from France

Ms. Ekrame Boubtane holds a PhD in Economics, a master's degree in Statistics and Quantitative Economics, a Master's degree in Macroeconomics as well as a Bachelor's degree in International Economics.

Ms. Boubtane is an associate professor at University Clermont Ferrand, researcher at the CERDI, a research Centre on international development research associate at the Paris School of economics, at the "GPET group: Globalization, Political Economy, Trade" group and research affiliate to IZA Institute for the Study of Labor

Her research interests are in applied macroeconomic, labor economics and development economics. Her work focuses on the economic implications of international migration in the OECD countries. She also conducted a study on immigration economy in Tunisia and a regional one in five North African countries (Algeria,

Egypt, Libya, Morocco, and Tunisia).

Francois Crépeau - Law Professor and Legal Practitioner, former UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, Presenter Canada

Pr. François Crépeau is Full Professor in Public International Law, at the Faculty of Law of McGill University.

Pr. Crépeau was the Chair of the Thematic Working Group: Migrant Rights and Integrations in Host Communities, KNOMAD Global Knowledge Partnership on Migration and Development, World Bank Group, Washington, DC, from 2018 to 2023, as well as a member of the Scientific Committee of the Agency for Fundamental Rights of the European Union from 2018 to 2023, and a member of the Advisory Board of the International Migration Initiative of the Open Society Foundations (NYC) from 2016 to 2021.

Pr. Crépeau was the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants from 2011 to 2017.

Pablo Ceriani - Independent Expert, The Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families (CMW)

Pr. Ceriani holds a PhD in Human Rights as well as a master's degree in international Migration and Migration Law. Pr. Ceriani is currently the Coordinator of the Migration & Asylum Research and Advocacy Program at the Institute for Justice and Human Rights of the National University of Lanús (Argentina) and the Director of the Specialization on Migration, Asylum and Human Rights (UNLA).

Pr. Ceriani is the former Vice-Chairperson of the UN Committee on the Rights of Migrant Workers and Their Families (CMW), Professor on Migration & Human Rights at the Master on Human Rights (UNLA), Law School & Postgraduate Diplomate on Migration and Refugees (University of Buenos Aires) and master's in human Rights and Democratization (National University of San Martin).

Pr. Ceriani is a consultant for UNICEF offices (Latin America and others) on the rights of children in the context of migration and is also a member of the Global Migration Policy Associates (GMPA) and a member of the Advisory Board of the UN Global Study on Children Deprived of Liberty.

Tamara Wood - Law Professor, Presenter Australia Hobart

Dr. Tamara Wood is a Senior Research Fellow at the Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law and a former PhD graduate and Netheim Doctoral Teaching Fellow at UNSW Law. Dr. Wood is a member of the Advisory Committee for the Platform on Disaster Displacement, Climate Mobility Africa Research Network (CMARN) Steering Group, and International Journal of Refugee

Law, Case Law Editorial Team. Dr. Wood is also a Research Affiliate at the Refugee Law Initiative, University of London, and an Adjunct Senior Researcher in Law at the University of Tasmania. Dr. Wood researches focuses in the fields of international refugee law, regional refugee law (with a focus on Africa), free movement agreements, complementary pathways to protection, and displacement in the context of natural hazards, disasters and climate change. Dr. Wood has published widely on refugee protection and forced migration among others.

Dr. Wood has acted as a consultant to UNHCR, IOM, Platform on Disaster Displacement, Nansen Initiative on Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement, Institute for Security Studies Africa and the World Bank. Dr. Wood lectures in international refugee law, regional refugee protection and Australian public law at both undergraduate.

[Giulia Perin - Immigration lawyer, professor, Discussant Italy](#)

Giulia Perin is an Italian lawyer and an adjunct professor (“professore a contratto”) of Immigration Law at Lumsa University in Rome.

Her interests and expertise lie primarily in the area of Migration and Asylum Law, Children Rights and Labour Law.

Pr. Perin holds a PhD in Fundamental Liberties in Constitutional and Administrative European and Comparative Law from the University of Trento.

As a legal aid and pro bono lawyer, Pr. Perin provides legal assistance to individuals and NGOs in the areas of specialisation. At international level, Pr. Perin has successfully represented migrant parents and grandparents in front of the European Court of Human Rights (Zhou v. Italy, Barnea v. Italy, Terna v. Italy).

Pr. Perin is a member of ASGI, the Italian Association for Juridical Studies on Immigration.

[Lucie Bichet - Responsable juridique du Pôle Union Européenne, Safe Passage, Discussant France](#)

Ms. Lucie Bichet studied Law in France and have a master's degree in international Humanitarian Law. After her studies, Ms. Bichet went on to work in the asylum sector, first with UNHCR in Brussels and in Geneva, and then at the French Asylum Office (OFPPA) in Paris. Ms. Bichet has been working at Safe Passage International for over three years where she provide legal support in family reunification cases and asylum visa applications, and advocate for the opening of safe routes to and from France for refugees and asylum-seekers.

[Liisa Coulombe- Migration Programme Manager, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada \(IRCC\), High Commission of Canada in Nigeria, Discussant](#)

Ms. Liisa Coulombe leads a team as Migration Program Manager

for Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) at the High Commission of Canada in Abuja, Nigeria, since September 2023. Focus on engagement and liaison with stakeholders accompanies operational activities with IRCC's global work-sharing arrangements.

Previously, she twice headed the Permanent Resident Unit involved in processing visa applications for all categories of clients heading to Canada to settle as Family Class members, Refugees, and Skilled Workers for IRCC at the Embassy of Canada in Dakar, Senegal. In between, she undertook postings in other locations and in Canada, during the COVID pandemic, when IRCC shifted to more centralized processing and improved its client service on-line application and communication tools.

[Mwihaki Kinyanjui- Senior Protection Officer, UNHCR Abuja, Discussant](#)

Ms. Mwihaki Kinyanjui is a Senior Protection Officer at UNHCR in Abuja, Nigeria, with a Master of Law & Development, Master of Arts in Gender Studies, and a Bachelor of Laws Degree. Since June 2020, she oversees protection delivery in Nigeria, covering

internal displacement in the Northeast, refugee response for Cameroonian refugees, and urban refugee response. With 17 years of experience, she has worked in seven countries on refugee protection and internal displacement. Ms. Kinyanjui is a Subject Matter Expert on population displacement, involved in population registration, documentation, resettlement, and solutions for displaced populations. Her commitment to human rights and humanitarianism is evident in her work.

[Naomi Shiferaw - Sr. Regional Labour Migration/Migration Development Specialist, Discussant](#)

With over 15 years of experience in the development sector, Ms. Shiferaw is now working as a Senior Specialist for Labour Migration and Social Inclusion at UN Migration, the leading intergovernmental organization in the field of migration.

Her core competencies include policy analysis, program development, and liaison with regional and multilateral organizations to integrate migration in the broader development discourse. Ms. Shiferaw is passionate about Africa and its potential, and strives to promote the rights and well-being of migrants and their host communities. Ms. Shiferaw has contributed to several regional initiatives and frameworks on migration governance, such as the African Union Joint Labour Migration Program, the IGAD Regional Migration Policy Framework, the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa, and the Inclusive Diaspora Engagement Program in selected African countries in collaboration with the African Development Bank.

Ms. Shiferaw has also supported the implementation of multiple projects on migration governance, labour migration, community development and inclusion, in collaboration with various

stakeholders, such as governments, civil society, private sector, and academia.

[Patrick Corcoran - Change Management Advisor \(USRAP\), IOM Discussant from Washington](#)

Mr. Corcoran is a migration management specialist, with demonstrated experience in operationalizing the visa policies of States by facilitating regular migration, including management of innovative global programmes in support of temporary and permanent resident, family reunification, humanitarian visa and refugee resettlement schemes.

Mr. Corcoran is skilled in Refugee Resettlement, Immigration, Visa and Consular Affairs, Programme Management, International Relations, Private Sector Partnerships, Humanitarian Assistance, International Organizations, Capacity Building and Change Management.

Mr. Corcoran has previous international management experience in business, sales, marketing and logistics in Southeast Asia.

[Amanuel Mehari – Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer, IOM New York, Discussant](#)

Amanuel Mehari is a Senior Humanitarian Affairs Officer based in New York where he contributes to IOM's engagement with and inputs to UN system discussions on emergency response and crisis management programs. Before his post in New York, Amanuel served as Senior Programme Coordinator (Protection) and co-lead of the Migrants and Refugees Platform in IOM Libya, Mixed Migration Hub (MHUB) Coordinator at the IOM Middle East and North Africa regional office in Cairo and as Regional Mixed Migration Coordinator for UNHCR regional office in Southern Africa.

[Anne Althaus, Migration Law Officer, IOM HQ, Discussant](#)

Anne Althaus is a Swiss attorney (Geneva bar 2000) specialized in human rights and international criminal law. Anne has been working as an international migration law specialist within the International Migration Law (IML) Unit of the IOM since 2013. The IML Unit is responsible for the promotion, understanding and dissemination of the international legal standards governing migration and providing protection of the rights of migrants. Her specific areas of work include migrants human rights at the border, regular pathways, and migrant workers as well as migrant children's rights. She is also working within UN working groups to advance alternatives to immigration detention. Anne holds an LL.M. in Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law from the Academy of Human Rights, Geneva. Prior to her work with IOM, Anne worked as a barrister, and then as an appeals counsel and legal adviser for the Office of the Prosecutor of the Special Court for Sierra Leone, working notably on the prosecution of sexual violence, forced marriage, and violence against children

perpetrated during the conflict in Sierra Leone. She also worked for the NGO REDRESS to ensure participation of children and other victims of war crimes and crimes against humanity in trials before the International Criminal Court, and reparations for victims of conflicts and human rights violations.

[Elizabeth Poage – National Project Officer, Labour Migration and Diaspora, Moderator and Presenter from IOM Nigeria](#)

Ms. Elizabeth Poage is a lawyer by profession. She is currently the National Project Officer, Labour Migration and Diaspora at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Nigeria, where she provides technical support to the Labour Mobility and Social Inclusion Division. Before joining the IOM, Ms. Poage worked as a Coordination Associate in the Office of the United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator, where she played a key role in the implementation of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework as well as supported in the coordination and streamlining of UN agencies' programmes and activities in Nigeria to avoid duplication of efforts. She has experience in labour migration management and governance, recruitment regulation, migrant protection, diaspora engagement, capacity strengthening, private sector engagement, policy formulation/implementation, project management, coordination, advocacy, inter-agency collaboration, networking, and administration.

[Victor Aihawu. Mr. Aihawu – Director, Centre for Youths Integrated Development \(CYID\), Nigeria and the United Kingdom, Discussant](#)

Mr. Victor Aihawu. Mr. Aihawu is a social entrepreneur and growth enthusiast with 16 years of professional experience in humanitarian and social services delivery. He is the Director, Centre for Youths Integrated Development (CYID), for Nigeria and the United Kingdom, the Board of Trustee Chair/Director, Platform for Cooperation on Mixed Migration (PCMM) a network of CSOs working on migration and development. He is a board member across many NGOs.

[Engr Dr. Sule Yakubu Bassi – Pioneer Secretary General, Nigerians Diaspora and Alumni Network \(NiDAN\), Discussant](#)

Engr Dr. Bassi is a chartered engineer. He was once a lecturer at the Ahmadu Bello University Zaria and a pioneer lecturer at the Federal University of Technology, Minna. He has been engaged in advocating the engagement and mobilization of Nigerians in the Diaspora for development projects in Nigeria and Africa over the past 30 years, leading to his being nicknamed "Shine Your Eyes" by the Nigerian Diaspora. He is a founding member and pioneer Secretary General of the Nigerians Diaspora and Alumni Network (NiDAN). Together with Hon. Dr. Abike Dabiri-Erewa and others, he worked on drafting and seeing to the passage of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission Bill by the National Parliament of Nigeria. He was appointed the pioneer Secretary of the Nigerians in Diaspora Commission (NiDCOM) in October

2018 by H.E. President Muhammadu Buhari GCFR and since then has been actively involved in setting up the Commission as Head of its Secretariat. Engr Dr. Bassi is a Fellow of several professional Associations and a recipient of many Merit Awards.

Ambassador Catherine Imaji Udida mni – Director, the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons (NCFRMI), Discussant

Ambassador Udida has had an illustrious career in the Diplomatic Service, with various postings within and outside Nigeria, including Nigeria's missions in London, the United Kingdom, Lome Togo, Berne, Switzerland, and the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations, New York, and USA. She was head, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism at the Office of the National Security Adviser, and currently the Director Migrants Affairs at the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons and Nigeria's focal point for the Rabat Process.

Kachi Madubuko - Senior Liaison Officer, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA), IOM Addis Ababa, Discussant

Ambassador Udida has had an illustrious career in the Diplomatic Service, with various postings within and outside Nigeria, including

Nigeria's missions in London, the United Kingdom, Lome Togo, Berne, Switzerland, and the Permanent Mission of Nigeria to the United Nations, New York, and USA. She was head, Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism at the Office of the National Security Adviser, and currently the Director Migrants Affairs at the National Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Internally Displaced Persons and Nigeria's focal point for the Rabat Process.

Brendan Kelly - Head, Labour Migration and Development, Discussant from IOM Tunisia

Mr. Kelly manages the Migration and Development (M&D) Unit of IOM Tunisia. IOM Tunisia's M&D programming seeks to maximize the potential of migration for the achievement of sustainable development outcomes for the host government, migrants, host communities, and societies alike. The M&D unit implements programming related to regular migration pathways, social cohesion, and diaspora engagement. Before joining IOM, Mr. Kelly worked on sustainable development and migration, including displacement issues for UN organizations, national Governments, and donor organizations, in a wide variety of countries, including Angola, Libya, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, South Africa, Timor-Leste, Turkey, and Vietnam.



Cross section of participants at the workshop. Photo: IOM

7. PRESENTATIONS AND SHARED DOCUMENTS

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Wood, T. (2023). Environment and climate change pathways.

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