



Working Papers

Paper 167, September 2020

A History of Global Migration Governance: Challenging Linearity

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Abstract

In December 2018 states adopted two Global Compacts, one on migration and one on refugees, establishing roadmaps for the future of international cooperation relevant to population movements. While often attributed to the “migration crises” of 2015, the Global Compacts are the product of more than one hundred years of institution-building during which the world has evolved tremendously. Challenging linear accounts of the evolution of global migration governance, this paper reviews the main developments relevant to global migration governance from 1919 to 2018. A tension between informality with action, and formality with inaction, has impacted the way that global migration governance has evolved. Proponents of a ‘management’ approach to global migration governance, primarily countries in the Global North, have preferred to keep intergovernmental discussions regarding migration outside of the United Nations (UN) in various state-led fora in different regional and global settings. Conversely, countries in the Global South, along with normative organizations such as the International Labour Organization (ILO) and Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), have sought to further a rights-based approach to the governance of migration within the UN. The ‘migration and development’ approach to global migration governance was used by Kofi Annan and Peter Sutherland in the 2000s to bring together states with fundamentally different views concerning the governance of migration. However, the outcome of these efforts is arguably a form of global governance that continues to reflect the preference of states, particularly in the Global North, to organize intergovernmental relations on migration in an informal and non-binding way.

Keywords: global migration governance; international organizations; multilateralism; United Nations

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Acknowledgments: This paper is largely based on Chapter 4 of my PhD dissertation (Lebon-McGregor 2020). I am grateful for comments on various drafts provided by Katrin Marchand, Michal Natorski, Katharina Natter, Nora Ragab, Melissa Siegel, Ronald Skeldon, and Colleen Thouez. Any errors remain my own.

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1. Introduction

In December 2018, almost a century after the end of the First World War and the signing of the Treaty of Versailles, states adopted two Global Compacts, one on migration and one for refugees, establishing roadmaps for the future of international cooperation relevant to population movements. While commentators often attribute these developments to the ‘migration crises’ of 2015 (Betts 2018; Guild 2018; Klein Solomon and Sheldon 2019; Newland 2019), they are also the product of more than one hundred years of institution-building during which the world has evolved tremendously. The world in 2018 looked very different from that of 1919. Rapid population growth, the advancement of technologies, war and conflicts, decolonization, economic crises, and other significant events have had implications for the patterns and governability of population movements. The environment within which international organizations (IOs), states and other actors operate has also dramatically changed. While there is a body of literature that investigates the history of various aspects of the global migration governance landscape (Bauloz 2017; Betts and Kainz 2017; Böhning 1991; Chamie and Mirkin 2013; Crush 2013; de Wenden 2012; Doyle 2004; Ghosh 2005; Karatani 2005; Koser 2010; Long 2013; Martin, Martin, and Cross 2007; Martin 2014; Miller 2000; Newland 2010; Pécoud and de Guchteneire 2007; Thouez 2018; Thouez and Channac 2005; Widgren 1990) few studies focus on providing a picture of its overall development¹. Historical developments are often presented as landmarks in the journey towards a coherent migration regime.

The challenge with adopting an overly linear view of the evolution of the global migration governance landscape is that one may ‘fall into progressive narratives in which global solutions build upon themselves, in which bilateral arrangements beget regional ones, regionals ones beget global multilateral ones, and multilateral solutions should and will deepen over time’ (Cohen 2018, 48). Cohen (2018) argued that multilateralism has a life cycle and that the success of early multilateral efforts which shifted the balance of power in the international system towards a multipolar model has made it increasingly difficult to reach agreement in a multilateral setting. Hence, multilateralism, as a ‘problem solving strategy or organizing principle’ (Cohen 2018, 50) has evolved and matured over time (see Kahler 1992; Van Langenhove 2010; Weber 1992). This implies the possibility that the governance of international migration may have in fact, become less multilateral over time.

A need exists to consider the evolution of global migration governance in a way that accounts for non-linearity in its development, and which does not disconnect global migration governance from the context within which it evolved. Departing from the traditional linear accounts of the evolution of global migration governance, the paper addresses the following question:

How has global migration governance evolved over the past century, and what factors have broadly affected the way that global migration governance has evolved?

After constructing a basic timeline of key events in the evolution of global migration governance (Annex 1), seven distinct, yet overlapping, phases provide structure to the remainder of the paper. Section 2 reviews the period between 1919 and 1951, which was an *era of institution building*. The majority of the institutions with a mandated role in migration governance today were established by 1951. With the institutional landscape largely in place,

¹ Notable exceptions include Martin (2014) who, in ‘International Migration: Evolving Trends from the Early Twentieth Century to the Present’, traced the evolution of an ‘international migration “regime”’ (p.1) and Betts and Kainz (2017) who traced the evolution of global migration governance from 1919.

Section 3 reviews the period between 1939 and 1990, during which various attempts were made to *develop binding norms* to govern population movements. Attempts to develop international conventions on migration have generally failed to gain traction, with the finalization of one convention shortly followed by the negotiation of a new instrument, with none receiving significant ratification, particularly among key countries of destination. Thus, from the mid-1980s, one begins to see attempts to govern migration proliferating in *regional* and *informal* as opposed to in global and formal settings (Section 4). After the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1991, renewed optimism for international cooperation saw the UN host a flurry of *conferences* on a range of different issues, which culminated in the adoption of an ambitious plan to tackle poverty, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Attempts to organize a conference on migration did not garner the necessary support, which, along with human rights more broadly, was omitted from the new agenda (Section 5). While efforts to organise a conference on migration in the 1990s did not succeed, by the turn of the century, interest in migration had increased, perhaps as a result of 9/11, the exclusion of migration from the MDGs or the realization that remittances represented a more significant source of income to developing countries than development aid. However, two distinct trajectories in migration's journey as a global policy issue were apparent: one focused on migrant rights within the UN system and in a continuation of the efforts outlined in Section 5, on migration management, addressing security concerns in particular, largely outside of the UN (Section 6). To bridge these approaches in order to further international cooperation on migration, a third trajectory emerged focused on *migration and development* which took place chiefly externally to the UN but with a degree of UN involvement (Section 7). The developments from 2006 arguably resulted in the acceptance of migration as a global policy issue through the inclusion of several migration relevant targets in the unanimously adopted Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015. However, a series of migration crises around the world in 2015 demonstrated the limits of the existing international architecture, which led states to discuss *new global arrangements*. These discussions ultimately led to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) entering the UN as a 'related agency' and states to decide to negotiate two Global Compacts (Section 8).

2. Building Institutions and Categories that Last (1919-1951)

Although a desire to control population movements can be traced far back in history, for example, to the birth of the concept of state sovereignty in the 17th century, many of the international institutions that exist today were created by states in the early 20th century. A general trend towards international cooperation on a range of issues characterized the 20th century, and the number of international organizations increased exponentially. Particularly before 1945, intergovernmental organization was primarily used by states to tackle inefficiencies caused by a lack of coordination. Notable examples include the postal service (Armstrong 1982) or telegraphs (Ruggie 1992). With the creation of the League of Nations in 1920, replaced by the United Nations in 1945, a new form of international organization emerged, 'based on little more than shared aspirations, with broad agendas in which large and small had a constitutionally mandated voice' (Ruggie 1992, 583). Hence, one should view the evolution of global migration governance in the context of ongoing efforts to shape and define the contours of what should fall under the remit of these respective organizations, a discussion influenced profoundly by the experiences of two World Wars. As this section demonstrates, the result was that states, most notably the US, used their influence to create several temporary organizations to address specific issues which required international cooperation. Many of these organizations no longer exist, but some, such as the Provisional Intergovernmental

Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), now the IOM, survived. As this section demonstrates, the result of these actions has been a clear institutional separation between refugees, covered by UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) within the UN, and (other) migrants covered by the mandates of a diverse set of organizations.

The creation of the ILO by the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 marked a key starting point for the journey of migration as a global policy issue (see Betts and Kainz 2017; Karatani 2005; Long 2013; Martin 2014). The preamble of ILO's Constitution identified the 'protection of the interest of workers when employed in countries other than their own' as one of the 'conditions of labour' that needed to be improved to address the injustice that can 'imperil' peace (ILO 1919). The constitutional role of the ILO in labour migration was quickly operationalized. At the first meeting of the General Conference in 1919, two bodies were created within ILO tasked with migration matters: a special section in the International Labour Office dealing with questions relating to worker migration and their conditions in destination countries; and an international commission focusing on measures to regulate and protect migrant workers (Martin 2014).

Although mandated to work on labour migration, the ILO was soon called upon to assist Fridjolt Nansen in his role as High Commissioner for Refugees for the League of Nations. Nansen's position was initially created to support Russians affected by the Denationalisation Decree of the then Soviet Union in 1921, although in subsequent years, his mandate expanded to include Armenian (1924), Assyrian and Assyro-Chaldean (1928) refugees (Long 2013; Martin 2014). One of Nansen's most notable contributions was the introduction of the Nansen Passport in 1922, which facilitated the international travel of refugees and is the antecedent of the modern-day passport. The Nansen Stamp Fund was established to facilitate the cost of obtaining this document but, between 1927 and 1930, also offered small business loans to refugees to help their integration in their new destinations. These measures reflected the nature of refugee protection of the time, which was focused on the economic inclusion of displaced populations driven primarily by development concerns (Long 2013). Reflecting this focus, and on Nansen's initiative, the ILO assumed operational responsibility for refugees, supporting Nansen's office between 1925 and 1929. After Nansen died in 1930, his position as High Commissioner ceased to exist. However, the Nansen International Office for Refugees was created, working under the authority of the League of Nations for the best part of the next decade (Long 2013; Martin 2014).

From 1938, states created a series of temporary organizations to carry on Nansen's work with refugees. In July 1938, a conference convened by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt in Evian brought together 32 states and other actors to discuss solutions for Jewish refugees (Martin 2014). Many commentators look back at the Evian conference with scepticism arguing that 'some delegates spent far more time enjoying the Alps than they did discussing the plight of refugees' (Martin 2014, 55). A concrete outcome of the Evian conference was the establishment of the Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR). However, the IGCR 'became inactive as soon as it was founded' (Karatani 2005, 523). Karatani (2005) argues that its creation was more about establishing an institutional framework for addressing refugee matters to demonstrate US compassion for refugees and willingness to cooperate internationally while drawing attention away from US domestic policies. Amid the war, the US organized a conference in Bermuda to 'revitalise the dormant IGCR' (Karatani 2005, 527), which resulted in the creation of the United Nations² Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) which would become part of the UN upon its establishment in 1945. In 1947, in the

² Although founded before the United Nations as we know it today, the use of United Nations in this context was a reference to a term coined by US President Franklin D. Roosevelt to describe the 26 nations that formed the 'Allied Powers' who were united against the Axis Powers (Germany, Italy and Japan) during the Second World War.

wake of displacement caused during the Second World War, the International Refugee Organization (IRO) was established to replace the UNRRA. After a series of other temporary organizations, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established in December 1950, followed shortly by the adoption of the UN Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees in July 1951.

While historically ILO had provided operational support to the High Commissioner under the League of Nations, the politics of the Cold War came into play as states and other actors discussed how the international system should respond to displacement caused by the Second World War. The separation of the migration and refugee regimes, a separation that continues to influence the migration governance landscape today, occurred in the post-Second World War period (Karatani 2005). To understand the separation further, one must take a step back and follow ILO's journey at that time. In 1944, the Declaration of Philadelphia reinforced ILO's mandate to work on programmes relating to migrant workers. In the years following World War II, the ILO continued to assert its place as the key institutional actor with a constitutional mandate to coordinate the international community's response to migration. An ILO-UN plan on international coordination in the area of migration makes a distinction between different institutional actors operating in the area of migration based on their longevity and mandates. In the first category, the ILO and the UN are defined as being 'of permanent character and are charged by their constitutional characters with the responsibility for considering and solving international problems of an economic and social nature, and whose activities and programmes of work demonstrate their direct and major interest in migration problems' (ILO 1947 in Karatani 2005, 523). The second category included organizations that were 'not of a permanent character or whose consideration of migration problems is only incidental to their other responsibilities and programmes' (ILO 1947 in Karatani 2005, 523). The second category included the newly established IRO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the International Bank for Development and Reconstruction (IBDR).

In the years to come, ILO continued to assert its role and in 1951, organised a conference to lay out a proposal for the relocation of those displaced during the Second World War. However, ILO's proposal to be the central coordinator of international responses to migration was not to bear fruits. At a conference in Naples in October 1951, the ILO proposal to organise migration was rejected, largely due to opposition from the US (Perruchoud 1989). Shortly after the conference, a Congressional Decision made their objections to ILO's involvement clear:

'The US Congress was not prepared to release \$10 million in funding to an organization whose members included the Soviet bloc states Czechoslovakia and Poland, and instead favoured the establishment of a much more tightly controlled inter-governmental—rather than international—organization which would focus solely on the transportation of migrants and refugees' (Long 2013, 18).

Shortly after the rejection of ILO's plan, an intergovernmental organization, the Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME), was established to provide support to the newly established UNHCR. In an arrangement not dissimilar to that established between Nansen's office and the ILO in the 1920s, PICMME was designed to provide operational support to UNHCR (Elie 2010). Although initially also created as a temporary body, PICMME would eventually become a permanent institution, known as the IOM since 1989.

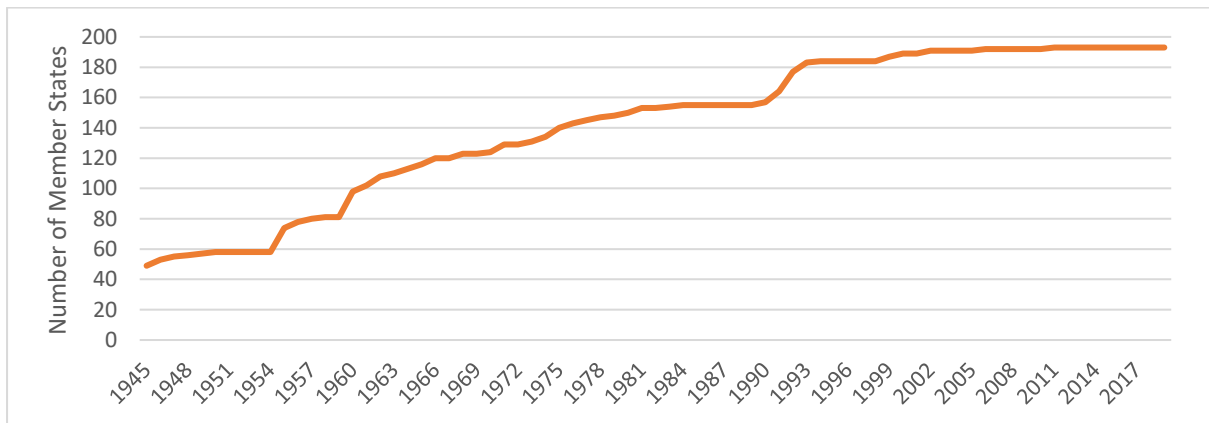
By 1951, therefore, the institutional blueprints for global migration governance were mostly in place. Although new actors have since joined the ranks, ILO, UNHCR, and IOM continue to be the three IOs specifically mandated to deal with matters related to population movements. In the case of ILO, the focus is on labour migrants, for UNHCR it is refugees, and IOM has a broad mandate to work on migration-related matters. The US played a significant role in establishing this institutional framework driven by the politics of the Cold War. The US viewed the League of Nations and the ILO as unsuitable venues within which to discuss refugee matters. Hence, as the dominant political power in the post-World War II era, the US used its financial power to establish new institutions, at first temporary in nature, to handle these matters. The US, therefore, influenced the separation between the refugee regime within the UN, and the migration regime mostly external to the UN.

3. Attempting to Create Binding Norms (1939-1990)

From an initial attempt in 1939 that failed because of the outbreak of war to the adoption of the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families in 1990, various attempts to create binding norms in the area of migration have generally failed to gain traction. It is critical to view these developments in the context of a rapidly changing world. Next to the implications of Cold War politics in the establishment of the main institutions that remain relevant in the contemporary landscape of global migration governance, the end of the Second World also marked the start of a process of decolonization which was to change the nature of labour migration. Previously the movement of an individual between the different territories was not considered to be international migration and therefore was excluded from the original migrant workers convention adopted by ILO in 1939. As countries became independent, and Europe required workers for their post-war reconstruction, the question of governing international labour migration became increasingly pertinent.

Next to increasing the number of individuals qualifying as international migrants, decolonization was also to change the balance of power in the global system. As countries gained independence, many became new members of the UN (Figure 1). As Van Langenhoven (2010) notes, ‘when the UN was founded, two-thirds of its current members did not even exist as sovereign states as their people were still living under colonial rule’ (p.264). As more states joined the multilateral system, reaching an agreement that aligned with the interests of a greater diversity of states became increasingly tricky (Kahler 1992). Given that the UN was founded based on multilateral principles, that of the sovereign equality of states, the increased membership due to decolonization altered the playing field upon which international relations occurred. The end of the Cold War and the dissolution of the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia in 1991 saw the UN membership grow even further. Furthermore, many Pacific Island states joined the UN in the 1990s. It is within this evolving context that one should view the evolving normative framework that sought to govern population movements (Figure 1).

Figure 1. UN Membership, 1945-2019



Source: United Nations (2019)

The negotiation of ILO's first international convention for labour migration began before the Second World War (Miller 2000). The convention responded to concern among countries of origin, most notably Italy, that migrants were an exploitable labour force. The Migration for Employment Convention, 1939 (No. 66) was adopted at the 25th Session of the International Labour Conference in June 1939. However, because of the outbreak of the Second World War, the convention did not receive one single ratification. A decade later, with new concerns primarily relating to the need for workers to rebuild Europe, the ILO adopted the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) to revive interest in its pre-war attempt at creating binding norms in the area of labour migration. While the new convention reflected the essence of its antecedent convention, it gave more prominence to the notion of equal treatment and discrimination, as well as provisions relating to social security, remittances, and the health of migrant workers at all stages of the migration process. Convention No. 97 has arguably been the most successful attempt at creating binding standards in the area of labour migration because several notable countries of destination have ratified it. However, viewed against other international conventions, it remains poorly ratified.

After Convention No. 97, the focus of ILO's next convention was on irregular migration. Between 1945 and 1974, many European countries, such as Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Switzerland and from 1948, Germany, organized the recruitment of migrant workers to fuel post-war reconstruction efforts. Following the 1973 oil crisis, recruitment stopped, and migration from countries outside of the European Community was banned (Castles 1986). However, migration continued, mainly through family reunification and formation at first, but then asylum increasingly became a *de facto* immigration channel for migrant workers (Freeman 1992), which provided the rationale to develop a complementary convention that would address irregular migration. The Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975 (No. 143) placed even more emphasis on ensuring the rights of migrant workers. In addition to requiring states to repeal discriminatory legislation and practice, the new Convention also requires states to adopt 'positive actions in order to promote equality of treatment and opportunity' (Chetail 2019, 209), which perhaps reflected the changing composition of UN membership. When the Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97) was adopted, the UN had 57 Member States, a number which had more than doubled to 134 by the time the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975 (No. 143) was adopted in July 1975.

However, Convention No. 143 was not well received. Just as the US' decision to fund PICMME had thwarted ILO's efforts in the 1950s, the ILO was side-lined, this time by developing countries concerned that the Convention No. 143 would restrict overseas

employment opportunities and remittances (Böhning 1991). Furthermore, the US and the UK, still the main centres of power in the international system, had little interest in the convention. For the US, it was not until the late 1980s that the US faced increased irregular migration from Mexico and introduced employer sanctions coupled with an amnesty campaign in 1986 in a largely unsuccessful bid to tackle irregular flows (Freeman 1992). However, for many developing countries, what Böhning (1991, 699) describes as ‘the battle for the UN Convention’ arose from dissatisfaction with Convention No. 143. As Böhning (1991, 699) described, ‘the ink on ILO Convention No. 143 had hardly dried when the Mexican and Moroccan governments began to join hands in UN circles but outside the ILO to launch the elaboration of a new Convention on illegal migrants and their employment. This led Mexico to sponsor a General Assembly Resolution³ on "Measures to Improve the Situation and Ensure the Human Rights and Dignity of All Migrant Workers" in 1977. Two years later, the UN formed an Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly to develop a new UN convention on migration⁴.

Böhning (1991) posits that the reasons Mexico and Morocco wished to pursue a convention within the UN as opposed to through the ILO was because they did not enjoy an “automatic majority” within the ILO making the UN an easier venue within which to achieve their goals. By the time the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW) was adopted, the UN had 157 Member States. It took nine years from the presentation of the first draft of the ICRMW in 1981 before the text was finalized - a testament to the difficulty of achieving consensus within the expanded UN. It took a further 13 years for the Convention to receive the 20 ratifications required for the Convention to come into force. The ICRMW further solidified the distinction between refugees and migrants, by explicitly excluding refugees from its definitions where Convention No. 97 and Convention No. 143 had included them (Chetail 2019). This exclusion was likely to appease actors such as the US and UNHCR who wished to keep the refugee and migration regimes separate (Pécoud 2017).

The controversy surrounding the ICRMW and ILO conventions resulted in a relatively low rate of ratification, particularly among key destination countries. As of 20 August 2019, less than half (n=91) of UN Member States had ratified at least one of the three migration-related conventions (C97, C143 and the ICRMW) (Table 1). Of these states, 61 Member States had ratified one convention, and 24 had ratified two conventions. Six states had ratified all three conventions (Albania, Burkina Faso, Madagascar, the Philippines, Tajikistan, and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela). No EU⁵ Member State had ratified the 1990 ICRMW. Among EU Member States, four countries had ratified the other two conventions (Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, and Slovenia) and six had ratified C97 (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK of Great Britain and Northern Ireland). Sweden had ratified C143. It is of note that ratifications in Europe largely came from countries that were historically countries of emigration such as Italy and Portugal. Some evidence suggests that these countries warned others not to ratify the Convention and that the EU also put pressure on countries not to ratify the ICRMW (Pécoud 2017). The remaining 17 EU Member States had not ratified any of the conventions. Of the traditional destination countries outside of Europe – the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand – only New Zealand had ratified Convention No. 97.

³ Measures to Improve the Situation and Ensure the Human Rights and Dignity of All Migrant Workers, UNGAOR, 32nd Session, UN Doc. A/RES/32/120 (16 December 1977)

⁴ Measures to Improve the Situation and Ensure the Human Rights and Dignity of All Migrant Workers, UNGAOR, 34th Session, UN Doc. A/RES/34/172 (17 December 1979)

⁵ At time of writing this included the UK.

Table 1. Ratifications of Key Migration Relevant Conventions

Convention		Description	Ratifications
C66	Migration for Employment Convention, 1939 (No. 66)	Primarily related to ensuring the rights of migrants in destination countries and regulating the recruitment process.	0
C97	Migration for Employment Convention (Revised), 1949 (No. 97)	Primarily related to ensuring the rights of migrants in destination countries and facilitating migration. Annexes 1 and 2 relate to the regulation of recruitment and Annex 3 to the transfer of personal effects.	50
C143	the Migrant Workers (Supplementary Provisions) Convention 1975 (No. 143)	Primarily related to ensuring the rights of migrants in destination countries and on 'illegal' migration.	24
ICRMW	1990 International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (ICRMW)	Focuses on the rights of migrant workers, primarily in destination countries.	55 ⁶

Source: C66, C97 and C143 (Normlex); ICRMW (United Nations 2019)

Since the adoption of the ICRMW, efforts to establish universally binding norms in the area of migration have waned. Instead, states have pursued unilateral solutions to the challenges of migration at the regional level (Section 4); and, at the global level, through informal multilateralism in the form of non-binding norms and guidelines (Section 5 to 7).

4. Towards Informal Regional Cooperation on Migration (1985-present)

With many states reluctant to subscribe to binding norms in the area of migration, from the mid-1980s a trend towards interstate cooperation on migration at the regional level, through Regional Consultative Processes (RCP) emerged, first in Europe but then in other parts of the world. This change ushered in a period of informal collaboration on international migration in regional settings, and with limited formal engagement with the UN. Two key factors have likely driven this development. The first factor is the increasing complexity of migration patterns (Miller 2000; Thouez and Channac 2005; Von Koppenfels 2001). The process of decolonization greatly increased the number of individuals qualifying as international migrants and created the need for migration policies to govern movements within the former territories. Additionally, the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1991 marked the end of the Cold War resulting in the collapse of the Soviet Union and the removal of exit restrictions from many former Soviet States which ushered in liberal economic policies (Bhagwati 1998; de Haas, Natter, and Vezzoli 2018; Von Koppenfels 2001).

The second factor is the deepening of regional integration projects, starting in Europe. Von Koppenfels (2001) argues that RCPs are both a product and a facilitator of regional

⁶ In addition, 13 countries are signatories to the convention but have not ratified it: 'the signature qualifies the signatory State to proceed to ratification, acceptance or approval. It also creates an obligation to refrain, in good faith, from acts that would defeat the object and the purpose of the treaty' (OHCHR 2014).

integration. The process of European integration started in the immediate post Second World War period. European integration was partly sponsored by the US who was interested in establishing a unified Europe as a centre of power able to resist the potential threat of war between East and West (Dedman 2006; Weber 1992). Combined with the dismantling of the internal borders in Europe, a process starting with the Schengen Agreement in 1985, led to the Maastricht Treaty and the creation of the EU in 1992. In other parts of the world, similar processes emerged. For example, in 1991, the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) was created. In 1992, the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed, and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) created a Free Trade Area (AFTA). In 1994, the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) was founded.

Given these contextual factors, it is unsurprising that the first RCP originated in Europe. As discussed, the 1980s in Europe had seen an increased number of asylum applications. The closure of the guest worker programmes in Europe in the mid-1970s had led to increasing migration through other channels, first family reunification and later through asylum channels. The economic recession, coupled with increased unemployment led to a ‘xenophobic backlash’ against immigrants that heightened the political salience of migration (Thouez and Channac 2005). Given that many European countries were facing similar challenges, intergovernmental cooperation became an increasingly logical choice. To discuss these challenges, Poul Hartling, then High Commissioner for Refugees, convened ‘Consultations on the Arrivals of Asylum-Seekers and Refugees in Europe’, a meeting attended by 35 Member States of the UNHCR Executive Committee in May 1985. However, there was limited interest in pursuing the matter further within the UN, and instead, the then Under Secretary of State to the Swedish Minister for Migration Affairs, Jonas Widgren⁷, called a meeting in Stockholm in November 1985 which was attended by seven European governments: Sweden, Denmark, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland and the UK (Wall 2018). This meeting was retrospectively considered the first meeting of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC), the world’s first RCP on migration. A key feature of the IGC was its independence from the UN even though UNHCR, and from 1993, IOM hosted its Secretariat.

By 1990, the IGC had more than doubled in size as Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Italy, Norway, and the US joined the IGC ranks. With the addition of Australia and the US, the IGC became a group of likeminded states, defined not by geography but by shared experiences and an interest in finding solutions. Although membership has fluctuated, it has remained relatively constant, with between 14 and 17 participating countries at any given point (Wall 2018, 34–35). Significantly, the IGC expanded beyond its European focus, with the participation of three traditional countries of immigration (Australia, Canada, and the US) arguably creating a new, more international, if not global, dynamic for discussion. Coupled with its independence, several core features of the IGC, such as its informal, non-binding and confidential nature, provided the blueprint for other RCPs, which proliferated in the years to come (Von Koppenfels 2001). Early examples include the Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM) (1990); the Budapest Process (1993); the Puebla Process (1996); the Inter-Governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants (APC) (1996); The Pacific Immigration Directors’ Conference (1996); and the now-defunct Manila Process (1996) and CIS Conference (1996). The trend continued, and today there are at least 28 active RCPs (Annex 3).

The place of RCPs in the evolution of global migration governance is the subject of some debate within the literature. Some observers view RCPs as a step towards the creation of an international regime for migration. The argument was that, by establishing networks (Koser 2010) and promoting policy convergence (Thouez and Channac 2005; Von Koppenfels 2001),

⁷ Who would later found the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD).

RCPs ‘could be valuable building blocks towards the establishment of a new international regime for better management of migration’ (Ghosh 2000a, 239), primarily because they could overcome the collective action challenge that characterized cooperation within the evolving multilateral system (Kahler 1992). However, Klein Solomon (2005, 19) argues that while RCPs have ‘helped to create a climate conducive to the formation of other non-binding and informal platforms on migration management... (they) should not necessarily be seen as direct building blocks for the creation of formal institutions or a binding migration regime at the regional or global level’. Not all aspects of migration governance merit a global response. Following the principle of subsidiarity, issues should be managed at the lowest logical level (Lavenex 2018). Much migration occurs within regions, making RCPS logical venues within which to discuss regional migration dynamics, explaining why RCPs have different thematic foci across the world and why, despite the further development of international fora on migration, RCPs and increasingly Interregional Forums (IRFs) continue to exist.

Critics of RCPs and other informal, non-binding intergovernmental fora argue that they represent a shift towards ‘soft modes of network governance’ (Lavenex et al. 2016, 459). They encourage members to emulate the policies and practices of regional or global hegemon regardless of whether their practices are in line with international standards. The tension between informality with action, and formality with inaction, characterized many of the discussions on global migration governance in the post-Cold War era.

5. Post-Cold War Euphoria: The Quest for New Global Arrangements (1991-1999)

The 1990s was a decade of transformation for multilateralism. Particularly after the international response to the Gulf War in the late 1980s, there was optimism regarding what could be achieved through international cooperation (Kamau, Chasek, and O’Connor 2018). This optimism led to a flurry of UN conferences on a range of different issues; however, attempts in the area of migration failed to gain traction. Perhaps the most concrete outcome of these conferences was the adoption of the Millennium Declaration⁸ on the 8th September 2000, which led to the formulation of eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2001. However, the post-Cold War euphoria also led to the diffusion of liberal economic policies around the world. The 1980s had witnessed the rise of neoliberalism, particularly in Western Europe, where the Post-Second World War welfare state projects were under strain (George and Wilding 1994). The rise of neoliberalism led to a wave of privatization of previously public services as well as the injection of market-based principles into state-run services. This trend was transferred around the world through the structural adjustment programmes of organizations such as the IMF and the World Bank (Collier and Gunning 1999). As Miller (2000, 341) argued, ‘the collapse of Communism and the crisis of socialism accentuated the power of market forces’. With the role of the state in society facing upheaval, migration, as a matter of state sovereignty, became an increasingly sensitive topic as its political salience increased.

The liberal expansion is possibly most observable in the further evolution of the global trade regime. In 1994, the Uruguay Round of General Agreement on Trade and Tariff (GATT) Trade Talks, which had started in 1986, concluded, which led to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and the establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1995. Although the ‘movement of natural persons’ was included as the fourth mode of service provision across borders in the GATS, commitments were initially limited to intra-company transferees with management or technical appointments that were considered essential to the functioning of the business; and short-term business visitors. In 1996, the Negotiating Group

⁸ *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, UNGAOR, 55th Session, UN Doc. A/RES/55/2 (18 September 2000)

on Movement of Natural Persons concluded their work which modestly increased the coverage of Mode 4 through the addition of new categories of service providers and, in some cases, increased the permitted duration of stay. However, while no data exist to measure the extent of mobility facilitated through Mode 4, it is not believed to represent a significant proportion of international migration flows (Nielsen and Taglioni 2003). Hence, it was amidst these changes that a discussion began about whether migration should be subject to similar agreements (Ghosh 2000a).

Initially presented in an ILO working paper in 1991, Thomas Straubhaar (1993; 2000) elaborated on the idea of a Global Agreement on Migration Policy (GAMP) similar to the GATT and GATS. Straubhaar's premise was that the free movement of people is generally beneficial to the migrants but also to countries of origin and countries of destination. Thus, his vision for a GAMP was an agreement that would facilitate the entry and exit of individuals whilst also addressing externalities caused by international migration. However, as Böhning (2004) noted, the idea of an international organization that would actively promote more or free movement was unlikely to ever receive political support. In a piece originally published in 1992 in the *Christian Science Monitor*, Jagdish Bhagwati, like Straubhaar, described the GATT as being 'a worthy model' for a World Migration Organization. He suggested that, akin to the trade policy reviews published by GATT officials, periodic migration policy reviews could 'embarrass countries into more human and liberal ways of dealing with influxes of aliens' (Bhagwati 1998, 316). Although not explicitly stated in his 1998 essay, the notion of state sovereignty is present in his reflection on the piece six years later: 'the organization could not tell nations what to do, since control of the border is regarded as an essential part of a nation-state' (Bhagwati 1998, 1). In 1993, Bimal Ghosh brought similar ideas to the Commission on Global Governance with a paper entitled 'Movements of People: The Search for a New International Regime' (Ghosh 2000b). These debates were further fuelled by the New International Regime for Orderly Movement of People (NIROMP) project when it launched in 1997, with financial support from the Swedish government (Ghosh 2000a).

Despite attempts to further institutionalize migration, however, even efforts to organize a conference on migration failed to gain the necessary support. In 1993, a General Assembly Resolution discussed convening a UN Conference⁹. States also discussed the idea for an international conference on migration at the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, where, again, no consensus was reached. The Programme of Action endorsed by 179 states at the conference did, however, devote an entire chapter to international migration and development, and internal migration (including forced displacement) was covered in the context of urbanisation. For this reason, the ICPD conference is often considered to be the genesis of contemporary discussions on global migration governance (see Betts 2011; Newland 2010). After the conference, the UN Population Division surveyed Member States on four occasions, in 1995, 1997, 1999, and 2003 (Chamie and Mirkin 2013). It was not until 2003 that states finally agreed to organize a High-Level Dialogue on Migration and Development (HLD), which was held in New York in 2006.

⁹ *Convening of a United Nations Conference for the Comprehensive Consideration and Review of the problems of Refugees, Returnees, Displaced Persons and Migrants* UNGAOR, 48th Session, UN Doc. A/RES/48/113 (23 March 1994)

6. A New Century, A New Chance? Juggling Migration Management, Security and Human Rights (2001-2006)

By the turn of the century ‘migration was everywhere one looked in the UN system and beyond’ (Newland 2010, 333) and calls for a Global Migration Organization witnessed new energy (Bhagwati 2003; Ghosh 2000b; Helton 2003). However, two distinct trajectories in migration’s journey as a global policy issue are apparent: one focused on migrant rights within the UN system, and, in a continuation of the efforts outlined in Section 5, on migration management, addressing security concerns in particular, largely outside of the UN. It is possible that the exclusion of migration from the MDGs, alongside human rights more generally, gave impetus to advocates of a rights-based approach to international cooperation to further efforts to develop norms to govern migration at the international level. However, another possible explanation for heightened international interest in migration is the attack on the World Trade Centre on 11 September (9/11) which gave legitimacy to security-focused responses to migration. A third explanation is the “rediscovery” of remittances by the World Bank in the early 2000s. In light of the spread of liberalism, and the reduction of aid budgets, the recognition of the volume of remittances by the World Bank also drew attention to an alternative source of development financing, which, despite private money, fit well with the neoliberal principle of individual responsibility. However, the ‘rediscovery’ of remittances also fuelled a shift in how many development actors viewed migration (de Haas 2012).

Regardless of the precise reasons, from the early 2000s, migration started to receive more attention at the global level. With this heightened global attention to migration, the formula developed by the IGC in the 1980s was applied at the global level: through the creation of informal state-led dialogues that promoted intergovernmental cooperation regarding migration. In 2001, the Swiss government launched the Berne Initiative which was a ‘states-owned consultative process with the goal of obtaining better management of migration at the global level through cooperation between states’ (Martin 2015, 71) which led to the adoption of the non-binding International Agenda for Migration Management in 2004. Although a less often discussed process, the Berne Initiative is viewed by many observers as the first attempt to pursue global level cooperation on migration. At the same time, and also outside of the UN, the IOM launched the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) in 2001.

By 2001, migration had been included in the UN’s security pillar through the addition of two protocols to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime in 2000: 1) the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Person, Especially Women and Children; and 2) the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Air and Sea (Ghosh 2005). Significantly, these Protocols have received much higher levels of support than the various migration-related convention discussed in Section 3.

Within the UN, the legitimacy of a rights-based approach to migration was affirmed by the appointment of Ms Gabriela Rodríguez Pizarro from Costa Rica in 1999 as the first Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants. This was shortly followed by the inclusion of a reference to the human rights of migrants in the Millennium Declaration:

‘to take measures to ensure respect for and protection of the human rights of migrants, migrant workers, and their families, to eliminate the increasing acts of racism and xenophobia in many societies and to promote greater harmony and tolerance in all societies¹⁰’ (para. 25, p.7).

¹⁰ *United Nations Millennium Declaration*, UNGAOR, 55th Session, UN Doc. A/RES/55/2 (18 September 2000)

In 2003 the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers (ICRMW) received the necessary ratifications to come into effect (Section 3). However, efforts to further the normative architecture for a rights-based approach to migration were hindered by low ratification rates.

In this context, the ILO also sought to develop a non-binding multilateral framework, specifically for labour migration. At the 92nd Session of the International Labour Conference in 2004, a Governing Body Resolution called for an ILO Plan of Action on Labour Migration (ILO 2004). As part of the Plan of Action, it was agreed that a Multilateral Framework for Labour Migration (MLF) should be developed, which, after expert meetings in November 2005, was adopted at the 295th session of the ILO Governing Body in 2006 (ILO 2006). While it was feared that the MLF would become a ‘backdoor convention¹¹’, it ultimately became little more than a programmatic tool (Siegel et al. 2013). Some evidence suggests that this was because ILO was instructed not to push the framework for the fear that it would undermine the Secretary-General’s efforts to galvanise support for international cooperation on migration in response to a movement by states to further international cooperation outside of the UN context (Section 7).

7. The Era of Migration and Development: Balancing Informality with Action and Formality with Inaction (2001-2015)

With increased attention on migration, and potentially concerned that states may bypass the UN, then Secretary-General Kofi Annan expressed a desire to develop a comprehensive response to migration at the international level. In his 2002 report, ‘Strengthening of the United Nations: An Agenda for Further Change’¹², Kofi Annan noted: ‘I also believe that it is time to take a more comprehensive look at the various dimensions of the migration issue’ (para. 39, p.10). In 2001, Kofi Annan tasked Prof. Michael Doyle, then assistant Secretary-General, to lead a working group on migration. Doyle’s report reviewed the opportunities for international cooperation on international migration assessing, in particular, the feasibility of a global organization for migration, be it through the designation of an existing organization as ‘lead agency’, merging existing organizations, or creating a new one. The report concluded that not enough consensus on migration existed at the international level. Thus, the best interim solution was to enhance inter-agency coordination and to pay more attention to the “management” of international migration.

On 9 December 2003, Kofi Annan, at the behest of Member States, and in response to Doyle’s report, launched the first-ever global panel addressing international migration. The Global Commission on International Migration (GCIM) had 19 members from across the world and it was co-chaired by Hon. Jan O. Karlsson (former Swedish Minister for Migration and Development) and Dr Mamphela Ramphele (South African and former World Bank Managing Director). The Commission’s report, “Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action” was published in 2005 (GCIM 2005). After the GCIM report, and in response to the 2003 agreement to hold an international conference on international migration and development¹³, Kofi Annan appointed the late Sir Peter Sutherland to be his Special Representative (SRSG) on Migration and Development in 2006. As a former and the youngest Attorney General of Ireland, Director of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT)

¹¹ Interview with IO Representative in September 2018

¹² Report of the Secretary-General: *Strengthening of the United Nations: an Agenda for Further Change*, UNGAOR, 57th Session, UN Doc A/57/387 (9 December 2002)

¹³ *International migration and development*, UNGAOR, 58th Session, UN Doc. A/RES/58/208 (23 December 2003)

and the WTO and Chairman of BP plc and Goldman Sachs International, Peter Sutherland came with international authority. One of Sutherland's first tasks was the organization of the first High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in New York in 2006. The linkage of migration with development in the context of the High-level Dialogue and the title of Sutherland's role as Special Representative was to be highly significant in the years that followed.

In the months preceding the first High-level Dialogue, the idea of a global forum started to take shape. An examination of the archives of former Secretary-General Kofi Annan around this time reveals a discussion concerning how to ensure that the High-level Dialogue would mark the start of increasing intergovernmental cooperation on migration, within the context of the UN¹⁴. At the centre of this discussion, the SRSG, Peter Sutherland, and the former Director of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), José António Ocampo regularly engaged with Kofi Annan regarding the idea of creating a global forum for migration. Both men supported the idea of a global forum, although differed in their views on the role that the UN should play. Ocampo promoted a global forum implemented under the auspices of the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (United Nations Archives 2006a). Sutherland, on the other hand, promoted a 'light-link model' whereby states would take ownership of the forum with support from the UN (United Nations Archives 2006b, 1).

While states generally supported the idea of having a global consultative forum, the main differences in opinion related to its relationship with the UN. Chiefly among the reasons to keep the global forum outside the UN was to relieve the fears of states, most strongly vocalised by the US, who were concerned that the UN would use the global forum to further efforts to create a stronger mandate for the UN in the area of migration.

Hence, by the time states met in New York for the first High-level Dialogue, it had already been decided that the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) would be an informal, state-led, non-binding gathering that would take place outside of the UN, but with Peter Sutherland acting as the 'light-link' between the GFMD and the UN. In his opening remarks, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan announced the launch of the GFMD:

'I am especially delighted that so many of you have embraced my proposal for a Global Forum on Migration and Development, and asked me to help set it up. And I am particularly grateful to the Government of Belgium for offering to host the first meeting next year. I believe such a Forum can foster practical, evidence-based cooperation among governments. It can give you a chance to frame the issues in a way that allows you to move forward together, to discover areas where you agree, and to find ways of improving cooperation' (Annan 2006).

The first meeting of the GFMD took place in Brussels, Belgium on the 9-11 July 2007 and it has continued on an almost annual basis ever since rotating between developed and developing countries. Since its inception in 2007, the GFMD has become the most important meeting of states with regards to migration at the international level. The conversations at the GFMD have evolved, often influenced by external events such as the 2008 financial crisis, the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda, and the Syrian crisis (Table 2).

¹⁴ See Chapter 5 of Lebon-McGregor (2020) for a more detailed discussion of this period.

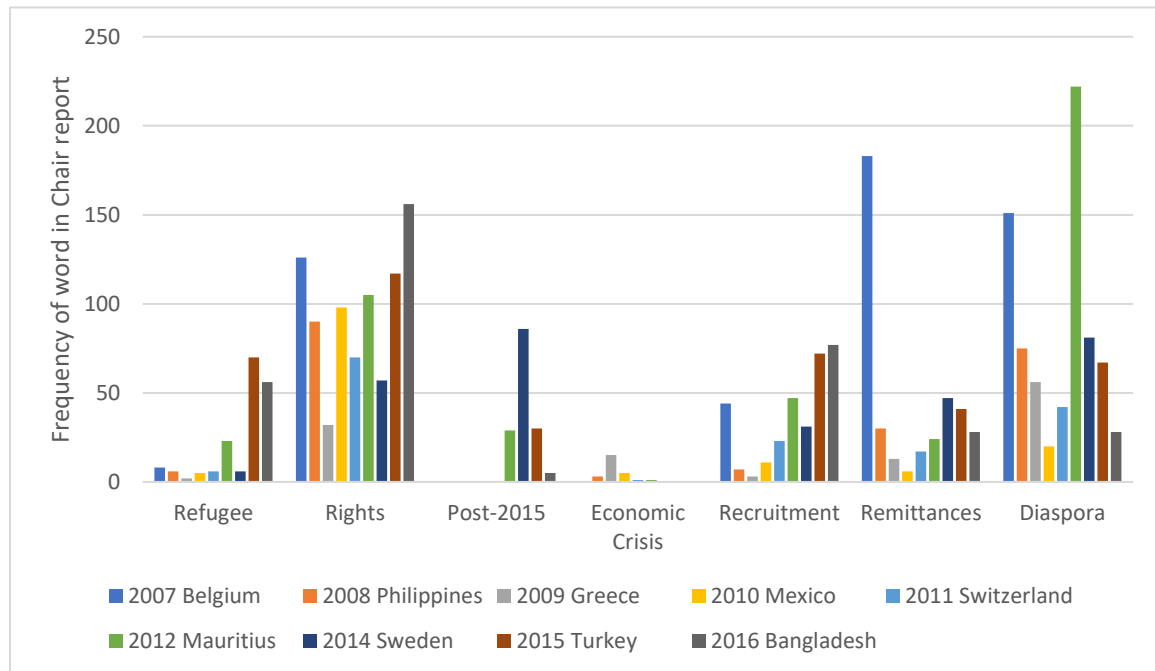
Table 2. GFMD Meetings 2007-2019

Year	Location	Theme
2007	Brussels, Belgium	Migration and Socio-economic development
2008	Manila, Philippines	Protecting and Empowering Migrants for Development
2009	Athens, Greece	Integrating Migration Policies into Development Strategies for the Benefit of All
2010	Puerta Vallarta, Mexico	Partnerships for Migration and Human Development: Shared Prosperity, Shared Responsibility
2011	Geneva, Switzerland	Taking Action on Migration and Development – Coherence, Capacity and Cooperation
2012	Port Louis, Mauritius	Enhancing the Human Development of Migrants and their Contribution to the Development of Communities and States
2013-2014	Stockholm, Sweden	Unlocking the Potential of Migration for Inclusive Development
2014-2015	Istanbul, Turkey	Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development
2016	Dhaka, Bangladesh	Migration that works for Sustainable Development of all: Towards a Transformative Migration Agenda
2017-2018	Berlin, Germany and Marrakesh, Morocco	Towards a Global Social Contract on Migration and Development
2019	Ecuador	Sustainable approaches to human mobility: Upholding rights, strengthening state agency, and advancing development through partnerships and collective action.
2020-2021	Dubai, United Arab Emirates	The Future of Human Mobility: Innovative Partnerships for Sustainable Development

Over time, traditional ‘migration and development’ topics such as remittances and diaspora engagement have played a less central role in the discussions at the GFMD (Figure 2). One explanation for this is that the ‘migration and development’ framing was used instrumentally by the UN and its agencies to bring states together. Once less controversial topics had been discussed, states could turn their attention to more controversial matters, such as the rights of migrants. This view is perhaps why Skeldon (2008) argued that ‘migration and development’ was ‘a passing phase’ and Gamlen (2010, 421) suggested that UNDP’s Human Development Report on migration would represent a ‘high-water mark’ in international discussions on ‘migration and development’.

Many observers note that, over time, the topic of human rights became more prevalent at the GFMD. However, while there was a deliberate decision to exclude human rights from the discussions at the GFMD as it was being conceptualised, human rights was treated as a cross-cutting theme at the first GFMD in 2007 (GFMD 2008). The topic of human rights was more concretely addressed during the second meeting of the GFMD in the Philippines, probably due to the host’s interest in protecting its significant number of emigrants abroad. At the Mexican GFMD, human rights were brought even more into the foreground because of Mexico’s interest in protecting its migrants in the US. From a review of the Chair reports of the GFMD from Belgium in 2007 to Bangladesh in 2016, rights are, with the exception of Belgium, most frequently mentioned in the reports of countries in the South (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Word Frequency in GFMD Chair Reports, 2007-2016



Source: Author’s own, based on GFMD Chair Reports, 2007-2016

One of the concrete outcomes of the years of discussions at the GFMD was that, when the time came to negotiate the successor to the MDGs, the post-2015 development goals, a shared narrative had emerged, as well as new and compelling evidence that migration could have a noticeable impact on development. While arguments put forward for why migration should be included in the post-2015 development agenda varied, reflecting the alternate paths followed by proponents of different approaches to global migration governance (namely rights-based, management and development approaches), the migration community united around one objective: to see migration reflected in the SDGs¹⁵. The importance that IOs accorded to seeing migration included in the SDGs is a testament to the increasingly important role that non-binding frameworks play in global governance.

At the second High-level Dialogue in 2013, Member States acknowledged ‘the important contribution of migration in realizing the Millennium Development Goals’ and recognized ‘that human mobility is a key factor for sustainable development which should be adequately considered in the elaboration of the post-2015 development agenda¹⁶’ (para. 8, p.2). Accordingly, by the time the Member States of the UN unanimously adopted Sustainable Development Goal on 25 September 2015, migration was reflected in several places¹⁷. In addition to a paragraph devoted to migration in the preamble (para 29), migration was explicitly mentioned in four of the SDGs targets (8.8, 10.7, 10.c. and 17.18). Furthermore, some argue that migration is implicit across the entire development agenda (McGregor 2020). The complexity of how migration is included in the SDGs is a testament to the existence of

¹⁵ See Chapter 6 of Lebon-McGregor (2020) for a detailed analysis of the arguments put forward for why migration should be included in the post-2015 development agenda including a discussion of an informal multi-stakeholder working group on the SDGs that was convened by the SRSG.

¹⁶ Declaration of the High-Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, UNGAOR, 68th Session, UN Doc. A/68/L.5 (Oct. 1, 2013)

¹⁷ Transforming our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, UNGAOR, 70th Session, UN Doc. A/RES/70/1 (25 September 2015)

alternative trajectories in the evolution of migration as a global policy issue, which has continued to affect how global migration evolved in response to the 2015 ‘migration crises’.

8. Conclusion: Towards New Global Arrangements: the Global Compacts (2015-2018)

It is widely accepted that the Global Compact process was triggered by the increase in the number of people arriving in Europe (c.f. Betts 2019; Guild 2018; Klein Solomon and Sheldon 2019; Newland 2019; Arnold-Fernández 2019; Hujo 2019; and Maiyegun 2019). With increasing numbers of arrivals in Europe, the focus shifted, as it had in the late 1980s towards the mass displacement of people. Initial discussions focused on holding a conference likened to the conference that led to the Comprehensive Plan of Action (CPA), which was formulated for Indochinese refugees in 1989 (Klein Solomon and Sheldon 2019). However, particularly given that arrivals in Europe represented but a fraction of the world’s displaced population, and with ‘migration crises’ ongoing in other parts of the world, an international conference to solve a problem that many actors felt Europe should be able to address on its own, did not receive much support, including from Europeans. In this context, states began to look for new international solutions to migration-related challenges. Accordingly, in December 2015, states called upon the UN to organize the High-Level Summit to Address the Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants¹⁸. To this end, in January 2016, Ban Ki-moon appointed Karen AbuZayd to be his Special Advisor, to assist in the preparation of the Summit and to prepare a report as input. Her report, released on 21 April 2016, ‘In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants¹⁹’, proposes two Global Compacts: one on responsibility sharing for refugees; and one on safe and orderly migration, and provided the blueprint for the New York Declaration which she would subsequently draft.

At the Summit, the UN and IOM signed an agreement that brought the organization into the UN as a ‘related agency’. IOM’s entry into the UN was a remarkable development in the evolution of global migration governance. While UN Membership had been considered in the past, for example in the early 2000s when Kofi Annan was looking for ways to further international cooperation on migration, it was not until the adoption of the SDGs, and the genuine possibility that the UN would create its own agency for migration, that IOM joined the UN. Faced with the choice between the creation of a new UN agency for migration (or appointment of an existing UN agency) or to bring IOM to the UN system, its Member States chose for the latter with the provision that IOM could become a ‘related agency’ and enter with minimal changes to how the organization functioned, which further supported the trend towards informal multilateralism.

The Summit also led to the adoption of the New York Declaration (NYD), which in turn laid out a roadmap for the negotiation of two Global Compacts, one on Refugees and one for Migration. The Permanent Representatives of Mexico and Switzerland were appointed by the President of the General Assembly to co-facilitate the process. However, the negotiations were to take place in a considerably complex context. Next to shifts in leadership, with Peter Sutherland’s role first being transferred to Karen AbuZayd, and then, when it became clear that he would not be able to continue in his role, to the new Special Representative of the Secretary General on International Migration, Louise Arbour in March 2017, the notion of multilateralism also came under threat.

On 23 June 2016, the British public voted in a Referendum on their Membership in the European Union. The resulting vote, marginally in favour of leaving the EU, triggered several years of negotiations which ultimately resulted in the UK leaving the EU on 31 January 2020.

¹⁸ See Chapter 8 of Lebon-McGregor (2020) for a more detailed discussion of this period.

¹⁹ Report of the Secretary-General: *In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants*, UNGAOR, 70th Session, UN Doc A/70/59 (21 April 2016)

In January 2017, Donald Trump became the 45th president of the US which marked the start of a period of American isolationism. Trump's withdrawal from the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM), shortly before the Puerto Vallarta meeting in November 2017, citing concerns that it was a 'backdoor convention' incompatible with the sovereign right of states to control their borders, is emblematic of a crisis in multilateralism (Ferris and Martin 2019; Ferris and Donato 2019). However, unlike the 1950s, when the US used its power to steer migration outside of the UN, in a markedly different world, the negotiations went ahead.

The withdrawal of the US is one explanation for the distinctly separate nature of the negotiations. The NYD had initially envisaged more overlap between the two Compacts in recognition of the fact that refugees are also migrants, and that a group of individuals exists who do not qualify as refugees under the 1951 Convention and its 1967 protocol and yet face similar vulnerabilities. However, while UNHCR led the GCR negotiations, states retained more control over the GCM negotiations. The Global Compact on Refugees was adopted by consensus, receiving 181 votes in favour, two against (Hungary and the US) and three abstentions (Eritrea, Liberia, and Libya) at the General Assembly of the UN on 17 December 2018.

After a relatively uneventful negotiation, and as the 'Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration' in Marrakech on 10 and 11 December 2018 approached, states, particularly in Europe, became anxious about the implications of the GCM (Guild, Basaran, and Allinson 2019). As Becker (2020) observed: 'a global network of nationalist, far-right activists fuelled a surge in social media activity by framing "compact" as a threat to national sovereignty thereby putting a spotlight on the negotiations' (p.1). After being adopted by 164 Member States in Marrakesh, the GCM was endorsed by 152 Member States at the General Assembly on 19th December 2018. Five Member States voted against the GCM (Czech Republic, Hungary, Israel, Poland, and the US). Twelve Member States abstained²⁰.

Despite state withdrawals and its non-binding nature, Duncan (2019) describes the GCM as 'one of the most important acts of policymaking in the migration field' (p.4). The very fact that the GCM exists has been hailed as 'the beginning for the global regulation of migration' (McAdam 2019, 573²¹). Despite being non-binding, the GCM holds the potential to have legal effects as it builds on existing human rights and other obligations (Costello 2019; Guild, Basaran, and Allinson 2019). Since the adoption of the GCM, several initiatives have been launched to support its implementation. This includes the UN Migration Network, chaired by IOM, which was launched by Antonio Guterres at the Marrakesh meeting. In May 2019, the Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF) was launched to provide financial support to Member States in implementing the commitments outlined in the GCM. Particularly given the context in which the Compacts were negotiated, with rising nationalism and a disdain for multilateralism, it is an achievement that they even came into being (Ferris and Donato 2019). However, as discussed, this is also the reason why several UN Member States withdrew from or voted against the GCM. The non-binding nature of the Compacts does however point to the fact that, while states have accepted the relevance of migration to UN's mandate, they remain hesitant to create legally binding norms. Whether this new form of informal governance will result in tangible impacts upon national policies remains an empirical question for the future.

The adoption of the GCM does not mark the end of the journey for global migration governance. The COVID-19 pandemic may lead to further developments in the global migration governance landscape. Advocates of a rights-based approach may use the pandemic

²⁰ For a full list of the votes see United Nations (2018b).

²¹ A similar observation is made by Klein Solomon and Sheldon (2019).

to seek further commitments from states regarding the protection of different categories of migrants who are being recognized as ‘key workers’ providing essential services in, among others, the health care sector, the agriculture and food sector; and the transportation and logistics sector. However, the pandemic also lends credence to the necessity of improving the management of human mobility from a virus containment perspective. The next chapter in the evolution of global migration governance will be a further test of how states cooperate multilaterally on matters that transcend state borders. Advocates of a more formal system of global governance for migration may seize the opportunity presented by the current crisis, to push forward further policy change. Time will tell.

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Annex 1. Timeline: The History of Global Migration Governance

Year	Event
1648	Concept of State Sovereignty born in Westphalia
1919	ILO Founded
1921	Fridjolt Nansen appointed as High Commissioner for (Russian) Refugees by the League of Nations
1922	Nansen Passport
1924	Nansen's mandate extended to include Armenian refugees
1925	ILO assumes operational responsibility for refugees (until 1929) / ILO Refugee Service
1927	Nansen Stamp Fund (Refugees Revolving Fund) started (to run until 1930)
1927	League of Nations Conference exploring adoption of an international convention to 'facilitate and regulate' the exchange of labour
1928	Nansen's mandate extended to include Assyrian and Assyro-Chaldean refugees
1929	In 1929, the High Commission took back technical responsibilities for refugee settlement and employment from the ILO.' (Long 2013, 11)
1933	League of Nations establishes a High Commissioner for Refugees (Jewish and Other) Coming from Germany
1933	Refugee Convention
1935	Nansen's mandate extended to include Saarland refugees
1938	ILO holds conference on international collaboration on migration establishing the Permanent Migration Committee (PMC)
1938	League of Nations Conference in Evian
1938	Creation of Intergovernmental Committee on Refugees (IGCR) outside of League of Nations (but never became active)
1938	Refugee Convention
1939	ILO convenes a meeting to establish an 'international scheme for financing migration.'
1943	US organizes a conference in Bermuda to 'revitalise the dormant IGCR' (p.527)
1943	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA) established
1944	Declaration of Philadelphia asserts ILO role in the transfer of labour
1946	The first conference of ILO's PMC
1946	IRO founded, replaced UNRRA and IGCR (as non-permanent specialized agency meaning not under the supervision of General Assembly)
1947	ILO-UN Plan on international coordination in the area of migration (mentions seven organizations - ILO and the UN (as permanent) and IRO, UNSECO, FAO, WHO, International Bank for Development and Reconstruction (as temporary)
1948	ILO PMC Conference discussing Migration for Employment Convention
1948	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1948	Organization for European Economic Cooperation (OEEC) founded - now OECD - in the context of Marshall Plan
1949	United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
1949	ILO 1949 Convention
1950	ILO convenes the Preliminary Migration Conference
1950	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
1951	ILO convenes a conference in Naples

Year	Event
1951	Provisional Intergovernmental Committee for the Movement of Migrants from Europe (PICMME) later to become ICM in 1980 and IOM in 1989
1951	Refugee Convention
1953	PICMME becomes ICEM
1967	Refugee Protocol
1975	ILO 1975 Convention
1978	UN Resolution "to explore with Member States, and in cooperation with the United Nations agencies, and in particular the International Labour Organization, the possibility of drawing up an international convention on the rights of migrant workers."
1979	Adoption at ICEM council that ICEM is relevant (for the foreseeable future) and to the global community, not just Europe
1980	PICMME becomes ICM
1980	The creation of an Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly to develop a new UN convention.
1980	West Germany makes a proposal at UN General Assembly which results in 'International Cooperation to Avert New Flows of Refugees' as discussion point (Widgren 1990 argues this resulted in little more than a data collection (bureaucracy))
1981	The first draft of ICRMW presented (May)
1981	The decision to expand ICEM's transfer of qualified human resources programme from LA to other regions.
1982	The UN Commission on Human Rights releases 'Human Rights and Mass Exoduses.'
1984	ICM Constitution updated to reflect global activities
1985	Launch of the Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees
1986	Single European Act
1987	The decision to amend the ICEM Constitution
1989	ICM becomes IOM and constitution changes accepted
1990	Creation of the Central American Commission of Migration Directors
1990	International Convention on the Rights of All Migrant Workers and their Families (ICRMW)
1991	UNHCR Declares 'Year of Return'
1992	ICMPD Founded
1992	Meeting in Bellagio resulting in statement 'Humanitarian Action in the post-Cold War Era'
1992	UNDP Human Development Report highlights economic gains of liberal immigration policies
1993	Commission on Global Governance considered a paper (by Ghosh) on a new global regime to better manage the movement of people.
1993	RES/48/113: Convening of a UN Conference for the Comprehensive consideration and review of refugees, returnees, displaced persons, and migrants
1993	Launch of the Budapest Process
1993	Creation of the European Union
1994	NAFTA
1994	Uruguay Round of Trade Talks - General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
1994	Cairo International Conference on Population and Development

Year	Event
1995	Survey of member state views on an international conference on international migration
1995	Member States adopted an annual resolution on international migration and development, which subsequently became a biennial resolution of the UN General Assembly
1996	Launch of the Regional Conference on Migration (Puebla Process)
1996	Launch of the Inter-Governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants
1996	International Metropolis Project founded
1996	Launch of the Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference
1996	Regional Conference on Migration in the Soviet Union
1996	Inclusion of Mode 4 commitments (on the movement of natural persons) under the Third Protocol to the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS)
1996	Launch of the Manila Process
1997	New International Regime for Orderly Movement of People (NIROMP)
1997	Survey of member state views on an international conference on international migration
1997	Human Rights Commission establishes a working group on migration
1998	ILO's Committee of Experts on the Application of Convention and Recommendations (conclude conventions on migration written in a different context)
1998	International Labour Conference, ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work, 86th Session of 18 June 1998
1998	Launch of the International Migration Policy Programme
1999	Survey of member state views on an international conference on international migration
1999	Appointment of a Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants by the UN Commission on Human Rights
2000	Publication of Replacement Migration: Is It a Solution to Declining and Ageing Populations?
2000	Launch of the Hague Process on Refugees and Migration
2000	Launch of the Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa
2000	Launch of the South American Conference on Migration (Lima Process)
2000	Launch of Issyk-Kul Dialogue
2000	Adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration (Millennium Development Goals)
2000	UNHCR's Global Consultation Process
2000	Trafficking/Smuggling Protocols
2000	West African Ministerial Conference on Migration, held in Dakar (the Programme of Action mirrors recommendations of NIROMP project)
2001	Creation of the Berne Initiative
2001	Launch of the IOM International Dialogue on Migration (IDM)
2001	Launch of the Cross-Border Cooperation Process (Söderköping Process)
2001	Doha Round of Trade Negotiations
2001	Launch of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa Process
2001	Debate NIROMP report (growing interest in multilateral regime to manage migration) + launch of the Commission on Human Security (2001-2003)
2002	the Hague Declaration on the Future of Asylum and Migration Policy

Year	Event
2002	Launch of the Coordination Meeting on International Migration, United Nations Population Division of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs
2002	Launch of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Migration in the Western Mediterranean (5+5 Dialogue)
2002	Launch of the Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime
2002	Adoption of the Migration Working Group's Report to the Secretary-General (Doyle Report)
2002	UN Secretary-General Report: Strengthening of the United Nations: an agenda for further change
2003	Conference on Migrant Remittances: Development Impact, Opportunities for the Financial Sector and Future Prospects organized by DFID and the World Bank (but more generally the point made (in Newland 2010) is the role of the World Bank, Bretton Woods, and other financial institutions on the realization that remittances exceeded ODA
2003	1990 Migrant Workers Convention comes into force
2003	Launch of Convention Plus - the asylum-migration nexus is on the agenda (Newland 2010)
2003	Survey of member state views on an international conference on international migration
2003	Establishment of the Global Commission on International Migration
2003	Berne Initiative Publication: Migration and International Legal Norms
2003	Establishment of the Geneva Migration Group
2003	Launch of the Mediterranean Transit Migration Dialogue
2003	Launch of the Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia (Colombo Process)
2003	Launch of the Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative
2003	General Assembly resolution 58/208 in December 2003 called for high-level dialogue on international migration and development within the context of the 2006 General Assembly.
2004	Adoption of the non-binding International Labour Organization (ILO) 'Report VII: Towards a Fair Deal for Migrant Workers in the Global Economy, International Labour Conference
2004	Adoption of the non-binding Berne Initiative, International Agenda for Migration Management
2005	Migration in an interconnected world: New directions for action
2005	New Special Rapporteur (OHCHR): Mr Jorge A. Bustamante (Mexico), August 2005-July 2011
2005	Migration is the theme of its 10-year review at the Beijing World Conference on Women and Development.
2005	Europe's Global Approach to Migration (GAM)
2005	Secretary-General Resolution 60/227 on organization details of HLD
2006	Establishment of the Global Migration Group (GMG) (formerly the Geneva Migration Group)
2006	First High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2006 HLD)
2006	Appointment of a Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration and Development by the UN Secretary-General

Year	Event
2006	Launch of the Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development (Rabat Process)
2006	Adoption of the non-binding ILO Multilateral Framework on Labour Migration
2006	Establishment of Human Rights Council by UN General Assembly
2007	Launch of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)
2008	Launch of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development “ Regional Consultative Process on Migration
2008	Launch of the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia (Abu Dhabi Dialogue)
2008	The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies appoint a Special Representative on International Migration
2010	GMG Handbook on Mainstreaming Migration into Development Planning
2011	Launch of the Global Diaspora Forum
2011	Launch of the Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration and Asylum (incorporating the Söderköping Process)
2011	Adoption of the Istanbul Declaration and Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries
2011	UN Conference of the Least Developed Countries
2011	Nansen Conference on Climate Change and Displacement in Oslo
2011	New Special Rapporteur (OHCHR): Mr François Crépeau (Canada), August 2011 - present
2012	UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20)
2012	Launch of the Nansen Initiative on Disaster-Induced Cross-Border Displacement
2012	Launch of the Migration Dialogue for Central African States
2012	Adoption of the non-binding IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF)
2012	UNDESA Launch UN Migration Strategy (received no traction - Thouez 2018)
2013	Second High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (2013 HLD)
2013	Launch of the Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration
2013	Launch of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Regional Consultative Process (Migration Dialogue for the COMESA Member States)
2013	Report to UN General Assembly by the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, François Crépeau: Global migration governance (A/68/283)
2014	Launch of the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative
2014	Launch of the Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development
2014	Adoption of the non-binding report, 'Fair Migration: Setting an ILO Agenda'
2014	International Labour Conference
2014	Adoption of the non-binding Small Island Developing States Accelerated Modalities of Action Pathway (SAMOA Pathway)
2015	Launch of the Intra-Regional Forum on Migration in Africa (Pan-African Forum)
2015	Launch of the Arab Regional Consultative Process
2015	Adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by the UN General Assembly
2015	Adoption of the Migration Governance Framework by the IOM Council
2015	Adoption of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development

Year	Event
2015	Adoption of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Third UN World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction
2015	Adoption of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change
2015	Adoption of the non-binding Nansen Initiative's Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change
2015	OHCHR's Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders
2015	Formation of the 'ad hoc UN Quartet' including heads of agencies of IOM, UNHCR, OHCHR, and the SRSG
2015	EU Agenda on Migration
2016	In safety and dignity: addressing large movements of refugees and migrants' Karen AbuZayd's report to Secretary-General ahead of the Summit on 21 April 2016
2016	World Humanitarian Summit and launch of the Grand Bargain
2016	Adoption of the New Urban Agenda, UN Conference on Housing and Sustainable Development (Habitat III)
2016	Adoption of the non-binding MICIC Initiative's Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disasters
2016	OHCHR-GMG Guidelines and Principles on Migrants in Vulnerable Situations
2016	Adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants at the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants
2016	IOM incorporated in UN
2016	Obama Leaders' Summit on Refugees
2017	Sutherland Report
2017	Appointment L. Arbour as Special Representative to UNSG on International Migration
2017	SG Report Making migration work for all - 12 December 2017
2017	UN MSs agreed to host a third HLD in the first half of 2019 and to reconvene every four years after that
2017	PGA (President Miloš Zeman) identifies migration as one of his six priorities on 12 September 2017
2018	Global Compacts on refugees and migrants

Sources: Bauloz 2017; Betts and Kainz 2017; Martin 2014; 2015; Koser 2010; Chamie and Mirkin 2013; Newland 2010; Pécoud and de Guchteneire 2007; Thouez 2018; de Wenden 2012; Karatani 2005; Long 2013; Crush 2013; Ghosh 2005; Thouez and Channac 2005; Bohning 1991; Doyle 2004; Miller 2000; Martin, Martin, and Cross 2007; and Widgren 1990.

Annex 2. Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms

Inter-State Consultation Mechanism	Shorthand Name	Region Covered	Founded	Status
The Intergovernmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees	IGC	Europe, Asia, and Americas	1985	Active
Central American Commission of Migration Directors (OCAM)	OCAM	Americas	1990	Active
The Budapest Process	Budapest Process	Europe and Asia	1993	Active
Regional Conference on Migration	Puebla Process	North and Central America	1996	Active
Inter-Governmental Asia-Pacific Consultations on Refugees, Displaced Persons and Migrants	APC	Asia-Pacific	1996	Inactive
The Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference	PIDC	Pacific	1996	Active
CIS Conference	CIS Conference	CIS	1996	Inactive
The Manila Process	Manila Process	Asia-Pacific	1996	Inactive
Migration Dialogue for Southern Africa	MIDSA	Africa	2000	Active
South American Conference on Migration	SACM/Lima Process	South America	2000	Active
African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States (ACP) – European Union (EU) Dialogue on Migration	ACP-EU	Africa, Asia, Americas, and Europe	2000	Active
Launch of the Migration Dialogue for West Africa Process	MIDWA	West Africa	2001	Active
Eastern Partnership Panel on Migration, Mobility, and Integrated Border Management	EaP (former Söderköping Process)	Europe	2001	Active
Launch of the Regional Ministerial Conference on Migration in the Western Mediterranean	5+5 Dialogue	Europe and Africa	2002	Active
Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime	Bali Process	Europe, Asia, Americas, Africa	2002	Active
The Asia – European Union Meetings (ASEM) Conference of the Directors General of Immigration and Management of Migratory Flows	ASEM	Asia and Europe	2002	Active

Inter-State Consultation Mechanism	Shorthand Name	Region Covered	Founded	Status
Launch of the Ministerial Consultation on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia	Colombo Process	Asia	2003	Active
Euro-African Dialogue on Migration and Development	Rabat Process	Africa and Europe	2006	Active
Launch of the Ministerial Consultations on Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin and Destination in Asia	Abu Dhabi Dialogue	Asia and the Middle East	2008	Active
Intergovernmental Authority on Development Regional Consultative Process on Migration	IGAD-RCP	Africa	2008	Active
Ibero-American Forum on Migration and Development	FIBEMYD	South America, Central America, Caribbean, and Europe	2008	Active
The Prague Process	Prague Process	Europe	2009	Active
European Union – Latin America and the Caribbean Structured and Comprehensive Bi-regional Dialogue on Migration	EU-LAC	Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean	2009	Active
Migration Dialogue for Central African States (MIDCAS)	MISCAS	Central Africa	2012	Active
Ibero-American Network of Migration Authorities (RIAM)	RIAM	Americas and Europe	2012	Active
Almaty Process on Refugee Protection and International Migration	Almaty Process	Eurasia	2013	Active
Migration Dialogue from the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa Member States	MIDCOM	Africa	2013	Active
EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative	Khartoum Process	Horn of Africa and Europe	2014	Active
Arab Regional Consultative Process on Migration and Refugees Affairs	ARCP	Middle East and Africa	2015	Active
Pan-African Forum on Migration	PAFoM	Africa (all regions)	2015	Active
Caribbean Migration Consultations	CMC	Caribbean and Central America	2016	Active