

GUIDELINES AND EFFECTIVE PRACTICES

Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative

Regional Consultation

West and Central Africa

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INTRODUCTION AND STRUCTURE

This document is divided into three parts, according to the three phases of crises as identified in the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) West and Central Africa Regional Consultation — Pre-crisis Phase, Emergency Phase, and Post-crisis Phase. Each of the three parts is organized as follows. Text in red identifies general guidelines on protecting and assisting migrants caught in countries in crisis. Text in blue distills, in general terms, practices applicable to the preceding guideline as such practices were explored and suggested during the consultation on the MICIC Initiative.

I. PRE - CRISIS PHASE

(1) RIGHTS AND DIGNITY OF MIGRANTS

- I. Ensure national policy and practice comply with international obligations and standards that have a potential impact on migrants.
- II. Provide migrants with necessary information and support so that they can help themselves during crisis, and ensure that law, policies and practices do not hinder their access to assistance during crisis.

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

States

- **Referral systems:** Ensure refugees, asylum-seekers and stateless persons are identified and ensure referral to national dedicated agencies or UNHCR to enable their access to specific protection emanating from their status as well as protection from refoulement.

Countries of Destination

- **Right to associate and organize:** Ensure migrants and diaspora have the right to associate and organize, to join unions and associations, and to establish, register, and operate non-governmental organizations. Reform laws, policies, and practices that prohibit or limit such freedoms. These actions also facilitate the building and maintenance of migrant networks and relationships which in turn enhance resilience and empowerment during times of crises.
- **Culture of tolerance, non-discrimination, and respect:** Work with migrants, host communities, including religious and traditional leaders, and youth, *inter alia*, to foster and engender strong relationships between migrants and citizens and to build a culture of social inclusion, non-discrimination, and respect in society towards migrant populations and prevent xenophobic tendencies and stigmatization. Awareness-raising could include media campaigns against xenophobia, or organizing targeted events such as a national migrants day.

International Organizations and Civil Society

- **Advocacy:** Advocate, in countries of destination and transit, for better protection and assistance to migrants and for respect and protection of their rights and dignity, including social protection and healthcare.

- **Compliance with International Obligations:** Advocate for State compliance with international obligations relating to migrants.
- **Research:** Undertake, analyze and synthesize research on States' compliance with international obligations relating to migrants or the integration of migration within States' laws, policies, strategies, plans, and programs relating to preparedness and response to conflicts and natural disasters. An example of research on national migration policies in West Africa is The ['Survey on Migration policies in West Africa'](#), IOM, ICMPD, 2015.

(2) DATA ON MIGRANTS AND MIGRATION

- I. Establish formal and informal systems to collect and regularly update information on nationals abroad, including contact details, emergency contacts and place of residence.
- II. Identify informal networks including migrant associations and the mechanisms they use to collect and manage contacts of nationals abroad and establish cooperation to reach out to their networks.
- III. Collect and harmonize data on international migration, regional migration trends, etc.

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

States

- **Data at borders:** Monitor borders to gather data on migrants that may be entering the country, in particular those that may be traveling irregularly. *(See section below on capacity building for more on gaps in border management infrastructure and "green" borders.)*
- **Awareness-raising:** Launch innovative awareness-raising initiatives and use existing relationships or channels for communication with migrants, including through migrant associations or networks to encourage migrants to register in the country of destination upon arrival, irrespective of their legal status.
- **Research:** Undertake, analyze and synthesize research on statistics, demographics, and characteristics of migrants in destination countries as well as pertinent emigration and immigration trends.

Countries of Origin

- **Registration systems:** Establish or improve and regularly update systematic registration systems to increase registration rate of nationals living or traveling abroad, in order to be able to locate and reach out to migrants in the event of a crisis, by *inter alia*:
 - Recording and regularly updating information on contact details, time of stay, place of residence;
 - Creating electronic systems harnessing new technology rather than paper-based ones to allow nationals to register online and upon arrival in the destination country;
 - Encouraging migrants to register their travel upon departure and/or arrival and to update their information if/when they move;
 - Offering services in consideration of registration, such as regular SMS or Email updates on security conditions to establish a communication channel that can be used in times of crisis and to establish a relationship of trust with migrants;

- Establishing other innovative ways to keep in touch with registered migrants to keep updated on changes in their situation;
 - Launching awareness-raising campaigns and providing other forms of incentives, including those that may appeal to irregular migrants, to encourage registration upon departure or arrival in the country of destination;
 - Facilitating biometric registration in embassies /consulates abroad;
 - Encouraging parents to register their children born abroad;
 - Inserting a disclaimer in data collection forms giving consent that data can be accessed or forwarded to relevant authorities in times of crisis to facilitate reaching out to migrants or evacuation.
- **Informal networks:** Identify informal networks including migrant associations and civil society and the mechanisms they use to collect and manage contacts and other personal information of nationals abroad, including those that may travel by irregular means or become irregular once in country of destination. This could be done by, *inter alia*:
 - Identifying community leaders and focal points amongst nationals (prior to departure to the country of destination or upon arrival) to facilitate contact with and information dissemination and assistance to wider networks of nationals abroad;
 - Maintaining a list of names and contact details of such persons;
 - Developing relationships with nationals abroad (particularly associations and groups) during ordinary times to collect information and contacts that can be used in the event of a crisis. Migrant networks or associations can also play an important role in awareness-raising within their network on the benefits of registration.
 - **Technology:** Harness new technologies (mobile applications, SMS travel advisories, social media platforms, etc.) to locate and track the movement of registered nationals abroad.

Countries of destination

- **Registration systems:** Develop requirements/incentives for migrants to register within a certain time of arrival in the country. Issuing non-national ID cards to migrants upon registration that can be used to access services can function as an incentive.

International Organizations

- **Research:** Undertake, analyze and synthesize research on statistics, demographics, and characteristics of migrants in destination countries as well as pertinent emigration and immigration trends.
- **Support registration systems:** Support States in improving and establishing online registration systems and raising awareness with migrants or reaching out to migrant communities to encourage registration.

(3) COMMUNICATION WITH MIGRANTS

- I. Establish mechanisms to ensure regular two-way communication with migrants to convey information about security alerts and receive information on their condition and needs by using various communication means in regular times that can be accessed in times of crisis.
- II. Provide information to migrants on country-specific emergency information such as what to do, where to go, who to contact in the event of a crisis and how to access timely information on impending or ongoing crises.

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

Countries of Origin

- **Send messages to mobile phones:** Most people have phones and even illiterate people can be reached via voicemails. Use information from registration with consular services send regular security messages and updates via SMS or email in regular times and to reach out to migrants in the event of a crisis. Make agreements with telecommunication companies to inform people and send messages directly to their phones in the event of a crisis.
- **Radio, press:** Radio and other media are cost-efficient means to reach large numbers of migrants. Manage relations with press to inform people in times of crisis as well as in normal times. Also consider relevant languages to target migrant populations.
- **Social media:** establish communication channels with migrants in regular times that can be used in the event of a crisis to reach migrants using various, inclusive communication means. Social media platforms often represent cost-effective means to reach a large number of migrants.
- **Relationship- and network building** with nationals abroad: Encourage the creation of networks and associations abroad and build relationships with existing migrant networks and support their capacity to reach out to migrants, including diaspora and hometown associations established by nationals outside of their country of origin. Use these networks in the event of a crisis to reach out to migrants. Such mechanisms could include, *inter alia*:
 - Targeted network building;
 - Identification of focal points in local or religious communities and migrant associations;
 - Establishment of an emergency communication structure;
 - Designation of contact persons for different geographic areas of a city / region, and designation of emergency gathering points for evacuations.
- **Hotlines:** Establish hotlines to be activated or strengthened in crisis situations.

Countries of Destination

- **Interpretation:** Make sure information in times of crisis is accessible to non-nationals.

(4) CAPACITY BUILDING AND SUPPORT

- I. Provide capacity building and technical assistance to relevant government authorities to better protect and assist migrants in the event of a crisis.
- II. Create the necessary capacity for embassies and consular services in host countries to act as first responders in the event of a crisis.
- III. Enhance capacity of States to manage their borders, and to assist migrants in times of mass arrival, including in recognizing and assisting victims of trafficking or smuggling.

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

States

- **Mobile Border Posts:** Use mobile border posts, remote surveillance and other tools to monitor “green borders”, e.g. informal crossing points. For donor states, provide funding and other assistance to improve management of borders and monitoring of displacement.
- **Identity management:** Continue to improve identity management practices to ensure nationals have reliable identity documents, so that if they go abroad, they can easily access support (i.e. evacuations) in case of an emergency.
- **Procedures for mass arrivals:** If at risk of experiencing mass arrivals, develop clear, simple procedures for border officials and leaders in border communities to follow, which avoid closing borders and instead provide other alternatives to dealing with mass arrivals.

Countries of Origin

- **Training for consular officials:** Provide training to consular officials including on a range of issues, *inter alia*:
 - How to conduct evacuations and repatriations of nationals including regular simulation exercises and roleplays;
 - Provision of identity and other documents to crisis-affected nationals;
 - Data collection and analysis, registration of migrants using relevant IT systems;
 - Better customer relations and service provision to nationals.

Countries of Destination

- **Training on crisis assistance to migrants:** Provide training to relevant authorities on how to build their capacity in migrant-sensitive crisis preparedness and response, including data collection to include needs and vulnerability of non-nationals, identification of vulnerable populations, referral systems, cooperation with international organizations.
- **Local authorities:** Train local authorities in dealing with stranded or vulnerable migrants and in areas such as consular services, protection and assistance mechanisms for non-nationals to be prepared for providing consular assistance in emergency situation and referring migrants to relevant authorities. Work with local authorities to foster strong relationships with migrants and raise awareness of human rights and international standards.

Countries of Transit

- **Training for border officials:** Build capacity in recognizing, assisting and referring victims of trafficking and smuggling, build capacity to deal with mass arrivals of migrants in the event of a crisis and establish referral mechanisms and preparedness mechanisms, information-sharing and intelligence.

International Organizations

- **Technical capacity building:** Seek funds and provide technical capacity building and training to States. This may include, capacity building for border authorities to better protect and assist migrants from crisis-affected countries by preparing them to manage mass arrivals of migrants at their borders or recognizing and assisting victims of trafficking or smuggling.

- **Train the Trainers:** Undertake train the trainers activities to build the capacity of migrants and other civil society actors in countries of destination to facilitate better responses in the event of a crisis.
- **Training support:** Support national authorities in organizing, designing and conducting training for relevant government officials.

(5) COOPERATION AND COORDINATION

- I. Set up cooperation and coordination structures and frameworks at the national level among relevant agencies providing assistance to migrants in crises through all phases, at all levels, including national, sub-national and local authorities.
- II. Set up bilateral and multilateral partnerships and agreements with other states and organizations on wide-range of issues including evacuation, consular protection, and other service provision.
- III. Increase regional cooperation mechanisms on wide-range issues including migration policy, identity management, consular protection and crisis preparedness.

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

States

- **Consular protection agreements:** Establish and formalize bilateral, multilateral, and/or regional agreements with other countries for consular assistance and representation in situations where there is limited or no diplomatic presence in a third country to facilitate efficient cooperation in times of crisis. Such agreements could include provisions on:
 - Guidance on the types of assistance to be provided in pertinent situations;
 - Guidance on modes of operation and procedures to be undertaken when a request is made for assistance;
 - Guidance on financial responsibilities and obligations;
 - Guidance on logistical arrangements, including accommodation, organizational facilities, and transportation arrangements.
- **Ad hoc consular cooperation:** In the event of a crisis and non-existent agreements, facilitate ad-hoc cooperation with third countries for consular assistance and cooperate with consular missions present in neighboring countries to support nationals who are caught in the crisis.
- **Cooperation in border management:** Increase bi-lateral, multi-lateral and regional cooperation in border management through increased operational cooperation, for instance mixed patrols, information-sharing, data and risk analysis and intelligence, and integration of border communities through awareness-raising and informal meetings. Set up cooperation agreements with international agencies.
- **Inter-ministerial and/or inter-agency mechanisms:** Establish inter-ministerial and/or inter-agency structures that incorporate national and local actors pertinent to protecting and assisting nationals caught in countries in crisis through all phases of the crisis to engender planned, coordinated, and prompt responses. Such structures also need to provide mechanisms for timely and effective information exchange between relevant ministries and actors at all levels.

- **Crisis Committee:** Create a dedicated focal agency for humanitarian emergencies bringing together and managing cooperation among a range of different stakeholders that can be activated in times of crisis. Crisis Committees set up in times of crisis such as the National Ebola Response Centre in Sierra Leone, that involved different actors from a range of sectors relevant to health, disaster response, migration and others to coordinate the national Ebola response, could be turned into more permanent structures.
- **Coordination between migration and disaster management:** Set up a coordination framework between institutions responsible for migration and disaster management to ensure migrants are incorporated in disaster preparedness and planning.
- **Coordination structures to assist children:** Set up a coordinating mechanism to assist and protect children, including unaccompanied migrant minors, in times of crisis, involving national actors, international organizations and civil society.
 - In Mali, the inter-agency management system for information regarding the protection of children, which includes the Direction Nationale du Développement Social (DNDS), the Direction Nationale de la Promotion de l'Enfant et de la Femme (DNPEF), Samu Social, IOM and UNICEF, aims to identify, document, assist and follow up on children affected by crisis, including unaccompanied migrant minors.
 - On a regional level, ECOWAS has created child protection standards and is planning to establish a monitoring system. The Mano River Union is in the process of drafting a sub regional child protection policy framework.
- **Information exchange agreements:** Form bilateral, multilateral or regional agreements to share information relating to nationals/migrants.
- **Migration policy exchange frameworks:** Establish a regional, multi stakeholder platform to exchange good practices, lessons learnt on migration policy and the protection of migrants in countries in crisis. Use the framework to promote the adoption of good migration governance, mainstreaming migration into other policy areas and for regularly reviewing national migration policies and their implementation.
- **Increase regional cooperation** in a number of areas including migration policy, consular protection, identity management, including by building synergies and engaging with other agendas, processes, and strategies that are pertinent to the MICIC Initiative or to particular issues encompassed within it:
 - Use regional organizations as fora to promote good migration governance and the integration of migration into other policy areas such as disaster preparedness. This could be done by, inter alia, building on the ECOWAS Common approach to Migration to steer migration policy reform in Member countries, oversee policy formulation and implementation. The African Union's plan to harmonize national legislation on crisis management could be used to promote the integration of migrants into Member States' disaster preparedness strategies.
 - Establish regional agreements on consular protection for instance using representations of regional organizations such as ECOWAS to register and support nationals in case of crisis;
 - Increase regional cooperation on identity documents to increase the quality and standards of documents including by issuing Biometric Identity Cards; and making identity documents more accessible to the population. Having recognized identity documents will facilitate access to protection and services for migrants abroad, also outside of the region;

- Encourage free movement, such as through the ECOWAS Common approach to Migration to facilitate mobility in regular times as well as in crisis;
 - Harmonize entry requirements for regional travel, i.e. documents required for entry such as ID, vaccinations.
- **Agreements with international organizations and other humanitarian actors:** Establish coordination and cooperation mechanisms with international organizations and other humanitarian actors to improve coordination and cooperation in the provision of assistance to nationals and migrants in crisis situations and share information.

Countries of Origin

- **Agreements to protect nationals abroad:** Adopt agreements with countries of destination to protect the rights and dignity of migrants in times of peace and during times of crises and increase cooperation between countries of origin and destination to improve the coordination of crisis response.

(6) COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

- I. **Develop consultation and engagement strategies to reach out to migrants, diaspora and civil society organizations as crucial partners in assisting migrants in times of crisis and understand and make use of their competencies.**

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

- **Role of migrants and civil society:** Recognize and support the crucial role of migrants, and civil society through all phases of the crisis. Their competencies include access, language, cultural affinities, networks, pre-established relations of trust, good knowledge of the situation on the ground, investment in the protection and assistance to vulnerable migrants.
 - Ensure migrant and civil society representatives are engaged in relevant preparatory and planning activities at the pre-crisis phase including policy development and crisis planning;
 - Establish permanent mechanisms and structures that systematically engage and consult migrant and civil society representatives and promote dialogue with government representatives;
 - Establish regular consultations between civil society and governments to ensure civil society concerns for migrants rights are heard by governments;
 - Organize ad hoc or regular fora for consultation with migrants, for instance organizing a migrants day, as a means to create a platform for dialogue and for consulting migrants on their needs and capacities;
 - Engage migrants and civil society in diverse roles throughout all phases of the crisis, including education, training, and capacity building, awareness-raising, information dissemination, communication, service provision;
 - Build appropriate infrastructure to enable migrants and civil society to provide services, contributions, and/or financial assistance, as applicable;
 - Amplify and raise awareness of migrant and diaspora independent efforts to provide services, contributions, and/or financial assistance;
 - Involve and consult migrants and civil society in early warning systems.
- **Relationship- and network building with diaspora organizations:** Create a sound institutional framework for diaspora engagement and strengthen governments' ability to

support and reach out to diaspora groups in times of crisis and get their support for emergency response and recovery to develop joint post-crisis programmes. This can be done by inter alia:

- Institutionalizing relations with diaspora in dedicated national institutions or ministries that maintain regular contacts with diaspora members and facilitate cooperation, trust and information-sharing;
 - Creating ways for policy dialogue and engagement such as diaspora public dialogues or roundtables online or in places with large diaspora communities;
 - Encouraging engagement and promoting productive investments in countries of origin by rewarding good initiatives;
 - Mapping diaspora and keeping updated lists of diaspora including specific skills and expertise (such as legal skills, contractual negotiations, cross-cultural communication, etc.) to create skills transfer programmes and maximize the diaspora potential for humanitarian response and reconstruction;
 - Cooperating on reducing costs for remittances: Design programmes and work with partners to reduce the cost of money transfer;
 - Strengthening diaspora networks and relationship with and between diaspora members.
- **Traditional and religious authorities:** Integrate traditional and religious authorities, particularly in border areas, in conflict prevention, disaster preparedness and crisis response by creating permanent structures for consultation and involving them in capacity building efforts and policy formulation.

(7) PREPAREDNESS AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

- I. Map potential natural disaster and conflict hotspots on an ongoing basis and establish mechanisms to monitor the outbreak and the development of crises.
- II. Build and enhance the capacity to protect and assist nationals abroad through clear, coherent and well-articulated and disseminated national laws, policies, regulations and institutional mechanisms and institutions.
- III. Build frameworks and capacity including the creation of funds or insurance mechanisms to address post-crisis needs.

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

States

- **Early warning systems:** Establish regional and country-level early warning systems integrating national authorities, civil society and international organizations to monitor political, economic and social developments and detect signs for conflict, for example:
- In ECOWAS, the ECOWAS Warning and Response Network (ECOWARN) was established in 1999. This system is an observation and monitoring tool for conflict prevention and decision-making involving national and civil society monitors. It is designed to capture data collected from the field on the causes and risks of conflicts, paying attention to trans-border cooperation, border management, and refugee and migration issues. All its information is from an open source and accessible for the general public.
 - The Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC - Mécanisme d'alerte rapide d'Afrique centrale) is a mechanism to observe, monitor and prevent crises and

conflicts within ECCAS. It is responsible for daily data collection and analysis. MARAC includes a central structure based at the ECCAS headquarters and national bureaux, which involves government agencies, international organizations, civil society organizations and research institutions.

- **National laws, policies, regulations and institutional mechanisms:** Encourage the elaboration of a dedicated migration policy protecting migrants present in the country, including regulations regarding disaster management. The creation of a dedicated migration agency could ensure the operationalization of such a policy. Mainstream assistance and protection of migrants into other policy areas including disaster preparedness and crisis management laws, policies, strategies, and plans.
- **Migration and development linkage:** Integrate migration into national, regional and local development plans and make sure that risks to human security are integrated in such plans.
- **Public institutions:** Upgrade capacity and preparedness of public institutions to address the protection and assistance of nationals caught in crises abroad. This may require action relating to institutional coherence and a whole-of-government approach; policies and strategies and multi-disciplinary skill building and training.
- **Encourage research** to fill gaps in research and increase understanding of needs of migrants caught in countries in crisis and good practices.

Countries of Origin

- **Enhance consular capacity:** Create the necessary capacity for embassies in host countries, and in particular consular offices, to act as first responders in the event of a crisis, including:
 - Training of consular staff on emergency response;
 - Establishing and regularly updating consular crisis plans in every country with consular presence and ensuring sufficient technical and staffing capacity;
 - Equipping missions with contingency funding to procure emergency items to assist migrants or organize evacuations;
 - Having necessary structures in place to support consular services in countries in crisis with additional human resources.
- **Evacuation arrangements:** Set up evacuation arrangements in embassies / consular services for nationals that have to be repatriated in the event of a crisis:
 - Establish agreements with transportation companies such as airlines, shipping companies for the event of evacuations;
 - Establish agreements with international organizations to help with evacuations;
 - Establish agreements with destination countries to grant re-entry after the crisis;
 - Establish communication structures to reach nationals abroad;
 - Map local resources and infrastructure in the destination country such as hospitals, hotels, restaurants, doctors that can be accessed in the event of a crisis;
 - Establish procedures on nationals with dual nationality / mixed families for providing support or evacuation assistance in times of crisis.
- **Identity documents:** Having recognized identity documents is crucial for accessing services and assistance in times of crisis. Improve access to documentation for migrants and nationals including through lowering or exempting costs for documents and decentralizing birth certificate issuance to rural areas. Increase investments in birth registries and improve the quality of identity documents and maintenance of civil registries and ensure passports or

other forms of identity documents include bio-metric data to facilitate easier verification of identity and prevent fraud. Issue border resident cards for border communities that allow regular crossing at official border points and can be crucial in times of crisis to facilitate fleeing to safety.

- **Institutional framework:** Establish an institutional framework to ensure assistance to and protection of nationals abroad.
 - An example of such structures can be found in the practice of countries of West and Central Africa, which have established a dedicated Ministry or Secretariat of State for nationals living abroad to ensure the protection and the establishment of actions for their return home and their reintegration, especially in crisis situations. In addition, High Councils of nationals abroad have been created, representative bodies which maintain close relations with associations established in countries of destination. They support the identification of nationals in an emergency situation abroad as well as their protection and assistance, especially when they return to their country of origin.
- **Emergency response teams:** Establish emergency response teams that can be deployed to assist national services and migrants in countries in crisis.
- **Funds:** Establish emergency funds for evacuation or repatriation or special budgetary lines to support consular services in times of crisis.
- **Funds and insurance schemes to address post-crisis needs:** Establish funds and insurance systems to address crisis and post-crisis needs of returning migrants, including:
 - Funds (at the national or regional level) to provide loans with low interest rates and grants to returning migrants;
 - In partnership with private sector actors, set up insurance systems to pay for evacuations or loss of goods in the event of a crisis and raise awareness among migrants for these services.

Countries of destination

- **Migrant inclusion in disaster risk reduction plans:** Factor in migrants and their specific vulnerabilities and needs into crisis preparedness and disaster risk reduction strategies, plans, and programs at national, regional and global levels.
- **Assessments of needs:** Undertake assessments to understand the needs of migrants caught in conflict or natural disaster. This may be undertaken by, inter alia:
 - Including question on nationality in data collection forms assessing needs for humanitarian response to account for migrant population;
 - Collecting demographic and other pertinent information on migrants living within local administrative zones including information on specific characteristics, needs, and resilience and factoring these into preparedness policies, plans, strategies and programs.
- **Humanitarian coordination cell:** Create a humanitarian coordination cell to coordinate crisis response on national and local level and with international organizations and other humanitarian actors, clearly determine roles of humanitarian actors and government actors, review practices and develop and conduct scenario trainings.

- **Encourage circular migration and issue multi-entry visas**, free movement for business to increase mobility and enable migrants to return to the country of destination after the crisis in case of evacuation or repatriation.
- **Awareness-raising** in disaster prone communities for disasters including for migrants.
- **Mechanisms to submit requests for assistance:** Establish mechanisms, such as focal contact persons/ministries/departments or hotlines that allow persons affected by crises, including migrants, to submit requests for assistance.
- **Social security systems:** Mainstream migrants in social security systems.

Countries of Transit

- **Infrastructure:** Plan and prepare for infrastructure and other services that may be necessary in the event of an influx of migrants from a country experiencing a crisis.
- **Improve border management:** Establish mobile border posts and provide mobile equipment to bring infrastructure to remote areas, increase information exchange with national authorities and neighboring countries, increase cooperation with domestic authorities and community leaders.

Diaspora

- **Use of remittances:** Use networks to raise awareness with migrants and their families to make better investment of remittances and save money to build upon on return in crisis situation. Design programs and work with partners to reduce the cost of money transfer.

II. EMERGENCY PHASE

- I. **Ensure non-discriminatory access to, and provision of assistance and protection.**
- II. **Ensure freedom of movement and the ability to flee to safety including facilitating evacuation or repatriation.**

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

Countries of Origin

- **Communication with nationals** in countries in crisis: Use new technology, consular offices, established formal and informal networks to reach out to migrants and provide them with updates on the situation, such as sending messages to phones, or via radio, social media, and offer evacuation assistance if necessary.
- **Networks:** Utilize pre-established networks i.e. migrant or diaspora associations to identify, reach and provide assistance and protection to migrants.
- **Alternative consular support:** Strengthen the capacity to provide consular support to nationals during crises by engaging alternative actors to provide support where this is

necessary. Such alternate actors may include migrant networks, international organizations, or civil society actors, among others.

- **Identity documents:** Ensure nationals have documents to enable freedom of movement including evacuation and repatriation. This could be done by, inter alia:
 - Providing nationals with new identity documents if they are lost, have been confiscated by employers (which is often the case with domestic workers), or never had them. Emergency documents might be issued on the basis of conducting interviews with persons without documentation to establish their nationality according to determined protocols, or relying on a witness, as well as tracking certificates;
 - Establishing capacity to issue emergency documents and/ or laissez passer to enable evacuations at consular posts;
 - Facilitating access to documentation for diaspora abroad by providing new identity or other documentation (e.g. passports, other forms of identity documents, or travel documents) at overseas consular or diplomatic posts;
 - Deploying additional and specialized personnel to countries of destination or transit to facilitate the provision of documentation and organize evacuations;
 - Use new technologies to facilitate verification of identity and invest in equipment, technology and biometric documents;
 - Ensure passports or other forms of identity documents include bio-metric data to facilitate easier verification of identity and nationality.

- **Evacuation assistance:** Provide evacuation assistance, including pre-and post-evacuation support to migrants, supported by sending additional personnel and creating crisis cell in embassy. Evacuation support could include, inter alia:
 - Before evacuation: Reaching out to migrants to provide information on evacuation, gathering migrants and providing housing and food until evacuation;
 - Upon arrival in home country: Providing basic services such as shelter, transport assistance, healthcare;
 - Setting up communication mechanisms with relatives at home to update them on the evacuation;
 - Establishing agreements to waive taxes for goods/assets migrants want to take home;
 - Establishing follow up mechanisms with migrants who have been evacuated.

- **Services:** Provide basic services and assistance to migrants arriving from crisis-affected countries, inter alia:
 - Providing transportation from border areas/remote areas to capital, airport;
 - Establishing reception and transit facilities to identify and take a census of migrants and provide them with shelter, food rations and emergency medical care;
 - Providing or referring migrants for services including shelter, food, healthcare, counseling, education, access to livelihood and labor market;
 - Setting up assistance programs for evacuated migrants to take care of livelihood concerns, including financial support for reintegration;
 - Registering migrants and providing documentation, especially for those who were evacuated with emergency documents only.

Countries of Destination

- **Equality of access to assistance:** Ensure migrants have same rights and access as nationals in crisis response including through making relief personnel responsible and accountable for

non-discriminatory provision of emergency assistance and for ensuring such assistance reaches all affected persons.

- **Assistance to unaccompanied and separated migrant children:** provide targeted assistance to unaccompanied children and mechanisms to address their specific protection concerns:
 - Reinstatement access to basic services such as health, education, food, psycho-social support, housing, education, recreational activities;
 - Set up family tracing and reunification mechanisms;
 - Establish referral mechanisms with relevant national and local authorities, international organizations or civil society organizations;
 - Establish systems to monitor safety and wellbeing of children in the long term care of foster families or shelters;
 - Establish standing platforms for information exchange and tracking with relevant authorities from neighboring countries;
 - Prevent armed group recruitment through training to build resilience;
 - Build capacity of authorities to properly identify adults accompanying minors and verify relationships.

- **Identification of vulnerable migrants:** Engage local authorities, international organizations, and civil society to identify and make appropriate referrals for protection and assistance for crisis-affected migrants, including unaccompanied children, victims of trafficking and smuggling. Often, these actors may have better access to, networks with, and the capacity to build relations of trust with affected populations.

- **Referral structures and mechanisms:** Establish mechanisms or structures to identify and refer stateless person, asylum seekers or refugees to appropriate assistance and protection services and actors, including government agencies or UNHCR building on international laws and practices, such as UNHCR'S [Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration: A 10-Point Plan of Action](#) from 2007 giving guidance on referral for mixed flows. Such structures should also be set up for migrants with particular vulnerabilities, including victims of trafficking; victims of smuggling; victims of torture; victims of sexual or gender-based violence, etc.

- **Exit:** Facilitate the departure of migrants, including those that may have been in an irregular status or have lost documentations and waive taxes on goods to allow migrants to take back home some of their property. Facilitate re-entry of migrants after the crisis has decreased through provision of exit visas or *laissez passer*.

- **Emergency response teams:** Establish emergency response teams or other similar mechanisms, with appropriate resources, command structures, and capabilities to make decisions, coordinate necessary multi-sectoral actions, provide services and adapt to the changing needs of a given influx situation.

- **Decentralization** of humanitarian assistance and good coordination structures on national regional, local, level.

- **Coordination of response:** Set up or activate coordination mechanisms with neighboring countries, international organizations, etc.

- **Encourage diaspora contributions:** Reach out to diaspora networks and encourage active engagement of diaspora in humanitarian response through funding, awareness-raising and contribution with relevant skills.

Countries of Transit

- **Services:** provide services to migrants arriving from crisis-affected countries, inter alia:
 - Provision of transportation from border areas / remote areas to capital, airport, housing;
 - Reception and transit facilities to identify and take a census of migrants and provide them with shelter, food rations and emergency medical care;
 - Assistance programs for evacuated migrants to take care of livelihood concerns;
 - Registration and provision of documentation;
 - Provision or referral for services including shelter, food, healthcare, counseling, education, access to livelihood and labor market.

- **Open Borders:** Maintain and facilitate access to territory to all migrants fleeing from crisis-affected countries regardless of migratory status and facilitate the entry, exit, and movement of crisis-affected migrants by waiving any entry and/or exit visa requirements, penalties, or other restrictions that may inhibit movement. Ensure that a person or body with sufficient authority is identified and trained in advance for this purpose to enable prompt action in the event of important influx. *(See section above on capacity building for more on procedures to deal with mass arrivals.)*

- **Trafficking and smuggling of migrants:** Address risks for trafficking and smuggling in times of crisis and ensure border officials are trained to recognize and assist victims of trafficking or smuggling.

International organizations / civil society organizations

- **Services for migrants:** Ensure services targeted to migrants are also provided to local/host communities.

- **Emergency and humanitarian services:** Provide emergency and humanitarian assistance including necessary in-kind provisions, evacuation, and repatriation, in general and as a means of augmenting insufficient or unavailable State capacity.

- **Secondment:** Facilitate secondment of staff to government authorities i.e. accessing national/international networks of social workers to deploy to crisis situations.

III. POST-CRISIS PHASE

- I. Promote and facilitate the engagement of local authorities and local/host communities including traditional and religious leaders in reintegrating returned migrants.

- II. Address development and social cohesion impact of crises on local communities through targeted community development and stabilization programs.

- III. Provide targeted support to address the immediate and longer-term needs of migrants following the return to their country of origin.

Among others, the following practices may be valuable:

All stakeholders

- **Trafficking / smuggling of migrants:** Address elevated risks for trafficking and smuggling in post-crisis contexts and ensure border officials are trained to recognize and assist victims of trafficking or smuggling.
- **Assistance to unaccompanied and separated migrant children:** Provide targeted assistance to unaccompanied and separated children and mechanisms to address their specific protection concerns, including setting up listening posts to map and monitor routes of children and assess their needs.
- **Research and lessons learnt:** Undertake research to assess, analyze, and understand short and longer-term socio-economic impacts of return following crises, at the local and national levels in countries of origin and destination, as well as on migrants, their families and local/host communities. Evaluate measures to support reintegration and foster social cohesion. Draw lessons from experience of mass returns and make policy recommendations available.
- **Pre-crisis planning:** Encourage and foster pre-crisis planning and preparedness at the post-crisis phase, when motivations and awareness are high.

Countries of Origin

- **Identification of returning migrants:** Through registration systems at borders and/or the creation of national, local or municipal structures, identify returning migrants, including their vulnerability and specific needs. Returnees may include nationals, internally displaced people, international migrants as well as regional migrants. Register skills and qualifications to target interventions to returnees' needs and capacity.
- **Post-crisis needs assessment:** Conduct a needs assessment of the returning population, i.e. through a census of the returning population to identify skills and qualifications, existing ties with the local community to determine a targeted response.
- **Consult migrant returnees:** Consult migrants in the development of the response, individually or through reaching out to migrant leaders or migrant associations and setting up permanent structures for consultation.
- **Diverse and multiple reintegration support:** Provide returned nationals (and their families, where necessary) with a range of services and support to address diverse realities and needs, distinguishing and accommodating, where necessary, immediate and longer-term needs. Immediate needs, in general, may be humanitarian in nature, whereas longer-term needs may relate to development, social policy and integration. Many of these services may need to be provided to returned migrants as well as local/host communities. Among the services that may need to be provided, and which could be provided individually, are:
 - Medical and psychological services;
 - Tracing and family reunification;
 - Access to education for children and youth;
 - Food support;
 - Adequate Housing;
 - Social protection;
 - Livelihood training and programs including support to boost local agriculture for instance through the distribution of kits and seeds;

- Skill development and upgrading, including business enterprise and small business management training, financial literacy, education and awareness seminars and campaigns, entrepreneurship programs, vocational training etc. including targeted programs to youth;
 - Recognition of qualifications acquired abroad to facilitate integrating migrants and their skills into the local economy;
 - Grants or microcredits to support revenue generating activities such as business startups and other entrepreneurial activities for individual or community projects, including migrant associations;
 - Community stabilization and social cohesion services and support, particularly in circumstances of mass returns, if persons who have been away from the country for extended periods return, or if persons from dissimilar ethnic or other backgrounds are required to coexist upon return;
 - Cultural orientation and awareness-raising for returnees who have been away from the country for extended periods.
- **Reintegration experience in other areas:** Build on experience from reintegrating returning migrants in normal times, for instance through assisted and voluntary return (AVRR) projects and involve relevant officials in the development of reintegration programs for returnees from crises.
 - **Involvement of local communities** hosting large numbers of returnees, engaging and supporting community leaders, including traditional and religious leaders as actors in the reintegration programs for migrant returnees and in community stabilization and social cohesion programs to foster trust and solidarity between migrants and the host community, for instance by:
 - Establishing permanent consultation mechanisms with local communities, including religious and traditional leaders and migrant returnees;
 - Establishing systematic cooperation and consultation with communities to address issues such as housing, access to natural resources and land, access to services, questions of local economic development;
 - Raising awareness within the community for the needs and rights of returning migrants and promoting active engagement, i.e. by organizing a national solidarity campaign to raise funds to assist returnees or by organizing a migrants day;
 - Promoting active civil society engagement;
 - Improving social services and infrastructure to cushion pressure on health services, education, food supplies and natural resources;
 - Involving local communities in the development of economic reinsertion programs to develop targeted, inclusive and locally suitable economic offers;
 - Making services and training programs available for both locals and migrants;
 - Establishing community development programs involving different social, religious and professional groups;
 - Establishing education programs in conflict prevention.
 - **Culture of tolerance, non-discrimination, and respect:** Work with migrant leaders, host communities, and youth, inter alia, to foster and engender strong relationships between returnees and local citizens and to build a culture of social inclusion, non-discrimination, and respect in society towards migrant populations.
 - **Local banks/ micro-finance institutions:** Establish cooperation with local banks or finance institutions to set up programs providing returning migrants with micro credits or loans.

- **Diaspora contributions:** Facilitate the receipt and effective use of contributions, services, and support that may be provided by diaspora towards the post-crisis phase, both in terms of addressing the needs of returned migrants as well as impacts on countries of origin. Encourage active engagement of diaspora also to act as pressure groups and raise awareness for funding needs. In this context, actions could include, inter alia:
 - Facilitate the provision of both financial and in-kind support, including necessary infrastructure and equipment including through custom waivers;
 - Facilitate the provision of financial and in-kind contributions to cooperative and other mechanisms that can distribute assistance widely;
 - Facilitate the entry of diaspora, including professionals such as doctors to provide services to returned migrants and contribute to the reconstruction after a crisis for instance through government-led programmes or with support from international organizations.

- **Monitoring and evaluation committee:** Establish structures to follow up with vulnerable persons after their return and monitor their reintegration over a longer term. Evaluate achievements and shortcomings of reintegration programmes and share lessons learnt.

- **Widespread and decentralized infrastructure:** Create an expanded infrastructure at local level to facilitate return of migrants to their places of origin rather than to the big cities; decentralize the response to regional /departmental/village level and establish frameworks of consultation between relevant actors.

- **Coordination:** Set up structural coordination platforms or mechanisms, involving different ministries, civil society and international organizations, local community leaders and particularly in border areas with large numbers of migrant returnees use existing or establish cooperation mechanisms with neighboring countries.

- **National development plan:** Integrate socio-economic reintegration of migrants in national/regional development plans.

- **Capacity building for local authorities:** provide training and capacity building for local authorities on reintegrating large number of migrant returnees.

Countries of Destination

- **Portability of social contributions and personal benefits:** Promote and facilitate the cross-border portability of social contributions and other personal benefits.

- **Assets and goods:** Ensure adequate measures to secure or restore assets left behind in the country in crisis.

- **Re-migration:** Facilitate re-entry of evacuated or repatriated migrants after the crisis, including through multiple entry visas.

International Organizations

- **Reintegration assistance:** Support national efforts of providing reintegration assistance to migrants making funds available, setting up capacity building programs for returnees or investing in community stabilization programmes.

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