



**GOVERNEMENT**

*Liberté  
Égalité  
Fraternité*



**Rabat Process**

Euro-African Dialogue on  
Migration and Development

**Labelled meeting**

**Rabat Process labelled meeting, chaired by France**

**“National authorities, local authorities  
and migration”**

14-15 September 2021

**OUTCOME  
DOCUMENT**

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## Introduction

Rabat Process-labelled meeting<sup>1</sup> "National authorities, local authorities and migration" held in Paris – 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021

- Driven by the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE) and the French Ministry of the Interior, with the support of the Rabat Process, implemented by the ICMPD and funded by the European Union
- First event organised in a hybrid format (in-person and virtual)
- First meeting of the Rabat Process dealing with this topic and opening a dialogue between local and national authorities
- Reflects the cross-cutting priority of the [Marrakesh Action Plan 2018-2020 concerning the inclusive and multi-stakeholder approach to migration management](#)
- The meeting attracted a diverse public of over 80 participants (in-person and virtually), including not only the partner countries and organisations, but also researchers and representatives from international organisations and civil society

**Objective:** To discuss the various models of multilevel governance in the field of migration and exchange good practices on coordination between local and national authorities on this issue.

**Expected results:**

- Better comprehension of the coordination issues with which national and local face with regard to migration
- Sharing partners' different experience coordinating between national and local authorities on migration matters
- Reflecting on the opportunities that exist to involve the local level into the Dialogue and the implementation of the Marrakesh Action Plan, via the National Focal Points.

**An interactive approach:**

- The meeting started with an icebreaker activity which asked participants to reflect on why they had come to the meeting what their expectations of the meeting and the follow-up were
- A role-play activity on socioeconomic inclusion of new arrivals was organised, to promote discussion among the participants. It allowed them to observe the complementarity between the different levels of authority and the key role of subnational governments in the social and economic integration of migrants.

The present document gives an overview of the **main conclusions of the meeting**, as well as the challenges and opportunities related to coordination between local and national authorities.

## Definition and framing: issues

There are several definitions of **multilevel governance**, also referred to as pan-governmental governance or inclusive multilateralism. However, in the context of this meeting, we consider it as **a non-hierarchical and cooperative method of governance in which the stakeholders at the different governmental levels meet on a voluntary basis with a view to working together for better management of migration**. This process should ideally lead to a convergence of policies between the different levels of government (national authorities and local authorities) and promote the development of a consistent approach to migration.

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<sup>1</sup> Meeting led by France in collaboration with the Secretariat of the Rabat Process. It was labelled "Rabat Process". The labelling system allows Dialogue partner countries to take the initiative in implementing activities compliant with the Marrakesh Action Plan. In doing so, they contribute to achieving the objectives of the action plan whilst meeting their own strategic priorities.

The inclusion of local/subnational governments in global governance on migration issues has accelerated over the **past decade**, as illustrated by:

- The adoption in 2015 of **the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**: local and regional governments occupy a prominent place in this. Inclusion of local stakeholders in the processes of review and follow-up of the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**<sup>2</sup>.
- **The New Urban Agenda**, adopted in 2016, acknowledges that the urban authorities are at the forefront in managing the link between migration and urbanisation.
- **The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration** adopted in 2018. This Compact calls for all sectors of governmental policy and **all levels of government, including the local level**, to be included.
- **Several texts at the local and regional level** incorporate the principle of multilevel governance (Declaration "Cities together for Migrants and Refugees"<sup>3</sup>, or the Charter of Local and Subnational Governments of Africa on Migration<sup>4</sup>).

## Multilevel governance with regard to migration: challenges and opportunities

→ **The sharing of information and knowledge and the establishment of a forum for dialogue and discussion between the different levels of governance are necessary.**

It is important that the national and local authorities initiate a dialogue and consult each other on a regular basis. This dialogue can also be established **between peers**, e.g. among different local authorities, to exchange on good practices.

→ **The access of local authorities to human and financial resources constitutes a major challenge.**

One of the main challenges, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, is that the local authorities **often lack the human and financial resources** to be full partners in governance of migration and to properly meet the needs of migrants in the field.

Nevertheless, there are **several promising initiatives**:

- The [Migration Multi-Partner Trust Fund \(MPTF\)](#)<sup>5</sup> is the only funding mechanism entirely devoted to support of collective action on migration. Here, local authorities are represented by the [Mayors Migration Council \(MMC\)](#).
- At the regional level, [the Urban Agenda of the EU](#) on inclusion of migrants and refugees, which brings together the Member States of the EU, the European Commission and the cities, involves cities in the creation of legislation and funding of the EU.

→ **It is important to link migration policy to sectoral policies in the interest of consistency of public policies.**

Migration must be included in the various **sectoral policies** (education, social protection, job market, health, etc.) and the question of how migration affects and is affected by sectoral policies must also be analysed from an inter-sectoral perspective

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<sup>2</sup>In 2020, local and regional authorities were invited to participate in the preparation of over half of the voluntary national reviews of the progress made with regard to SDGs, while in 2021, 15 cities underwent voluntary local reviews.

<sup>3</sup> Adopted during the 5<sup>th</sup> Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development in December 2018 by over 60 cities

<sup>4</sup> Adopted by the Mayors' Assembly present at the 8<sup>th</sup> edition of Africities in Marrakesh in November 2018, this charter includes 8 concrete commitments of African local and subnational governments with regard to migration on the continent.

<sup>5</sup>The Global Compact called for creation of a start-up fund (Migration Multi-partner Trust Fund/MPTF). This is a funding mechanism of the UN intended mainly to aid the Member States in their national implementation of the Global Compact. The Mayors Migration Council (MMC) sits on the steering committee of the MPTF.

→ **Efforts must be made to concretely implement the policies and commitments with regard to migration.**

The **IMRF (International Migration Review Forum)**, which constitutes the main body for evaluation and follow-up of the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, will come into effect in 2022. It is a suitable arena for implementing the international commitments in the field of migration, by bringing together national and local authorities.

→ **It is necessary to have reliable data on migration, in order to implement well-informed public policies that meet the needs of the affected populations.**

It is necessary to substantiate migration policies with up-to-date and reliable data and objective scientific research. The lack of reliable and up-to-date data on migration, at the local level in particular, is a challenge common to many countries. Without data at the local level, policies and programmes cannot really reflect local needs.

**A number of tools and resources** have been elaborated to develop coordination between local and national authorities on migration. Among these, we can cite:

- The [local migration governance indicators](#) established by the IOM to measure the consistency and efficiency of local migration policies<sup>6</sup>.
- The IOM document entitled "[Migration and the 2030 Agenda: A Guide for Practitioners](#)" assists local and national governments in implementing the migration aspects of the SDGs.
- The OECD report "[Working together for local integration of migrants and refugees](#)" and the pilot initiative LIAT ([Local Inclusion Action Tool](#))<sup>7</sup>. The latter is a tool to enable dialogue and coordination between local and global stakeholders to arrive at common approaches for inclusive cities.

→ **Legal and regulatory frameworks as well as appropriate mandates should be established so that the cities can deal with the local realities in the field.**

The **division of competences** between national authorities and local authorities should be clarified. Although the law often separates the competences of the two levels of governance, in practice, all stakeholders work side by side.

For example, in France, emergency shelter is a State-level responsibility, but since 2014, the city council of Rennes has established an emergency shelter system accommodating 950 people a night. To ensure the practical implementation of these legal and regulatory frameworks, local authorities should be equipped with the **necessary financial capabilities**.

→ **Migrants and members of the diaspora contribute to developing initiatives at the local level.**

Work at the local level, in accordance with national priorities, can considerably improve the involvement of the diaspora. Migrants often experience a sense of belonging at the local or regional level first, to their village or province, before their nation as a whole. In Senegal, for example, the Programme to Support Solidarity Initiatives for Development (PAISD) is financed by the national government, the EU and the French Development Agency. It facilitates diaspora investments in their local communities of origin. The most effective way to engage diasporas is often through coherent vertical coordination.

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<sup>6</sup> In Accra, Ghana, the IOM noted that while the city lacks strategies on migration and climate change, many national authorities, such as the Ghana Immigration Service, have decentralised departments working at the city level.

<sup>7</sup> This was developed in collaboration with UN-Habitat, the IOM, the HCR, UCLG, Council of Europe and Migration Policy Group.

## Some examples of initiatives and dialogues originating from the cities

### The Mayors Mechanism of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)

Created in 2018 to officially incorporate local authorities into the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), the Mechanism creates opportunities for the cities to influence the discussions of the GFMD and to exchange with their peers. It constitutes a platform for interaction among States, civil society and the private sector, and supports the creation of innovative solutions. The Mayors Mechanism is jointly steered by **United Cities and Local Governments** (UCLG), the Mayors Migration Council (MMC) and the IOM.

#### Some specific examples:

- During the last Summit of the GFMD in 2021, over 90 local and regional governments participated in discussions, **including 25 local governments as official panellists.**

Cities are co-directing a working group on **balancing migration narratives** ("*Public Narratives on Migration*"), where cities set the agenda with the States. Several countries/cities in the region of the Rabat Process are part of this working group.

### The approach of African cities and regions: the work of UCLG Africa

United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLG-A), an umbrella organisation of African local governments, was founded in 2005 in South Africa. It includes 44 national associations of local governments from all regions of Africa, as well as 2 000 cities of over 100 000 inhabitants.

UCLG Africa is highly active in the field of migration and is aware of the central role that the local governments and national associations of migrants play in managing migration. As a result, UCLG-A recently organised a series of webinars on the topic of shared migration governance in partnership with the IOM and the city councils of Rabat and Oujda in Morocco.

### The Africa-Europe Mayors Dialogue on Growth and Solidarity

This initiative aims to provide innovative and practical solutions for human mobility in cities. Nineteen African and European cities participate in the initiative, co-chaired by the mayors of Freetown and Milan. The discussions that take place within the initiative aim, in particular, to change the public narrative on migration to highlight its positive aspects.

## Networks and partnerships, key tools in enhancing the relations between local and national authorities

At the regional, continental and international levels, many **formal and informal networks, coalitions and associations** exist, bringing local authorities and cities together to exchange knowledge, encourage decentralised cooperation and explore innovative local solutions. Local authorities and cities are acknowledged as full-fledged stakeholders in migration within these networks, as they contribute to the development of migration policies at the international, regional and national level.

At the European level, DG INTPA (*Directorate-General for International Partnerships*) of the European Commission signed **strategic partnerships with 5 associations of local authorities**<sup>8</sup> in 2015 in order to develop the capacities of their members, strengthen advocacy activities and consolidate their internal structures.

#### **Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project (MC2CM)**

This project, implemented since 2015, brings together **23 municipalities and cities from both sides of the Mediterranean** to discuss and contribute to better migration governance at urban level, including access of migrants to basic services and human rights. The MC2CM project aims to contribute to more open and inclusive cities by drawing on the potential of migrants to benefit cities and their economies.

#### **The Mayors Migration Council (MMC)**

MMC is a network that supports cities wishing to engage in diplomacy and migration policy development at the international, regional and national level. MMC works to ensure that global responses to the problems of migrants and refugees reflect the realities in the field, in the interest of newly arrived migrants and the communities that host them. The Leadership Board of the MMC is composed of mayors from various regions of the world and **peer-to-peer discussion and the sharing of competences** between the cities are the focus of its activities.

## **Some examples of national strategies and their implementation at local level**

#### **Policy of territorialisation – National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum in Morocco**

**The National Strategy on Immigration and Asylum (SNIA)** adopted in 2014 includes 6 guiding principles and 11 cross cutting action programmes (including health, accommodation, employment, etc.) The SNIA encompasses all areas of migration and is the result of an integrated and participatory approach. **The territorialisation process** of SNIA is at work in various regions of Morocco, especially in the **eastern region and in particular, the municipality of Oujda**. This municipality has established governance of migration management at the regional and local level and a Centre for Moroccans Residing Abroad and Migration Affairs in Oujda. A steering and coordination platform has also been created at regional and local level, bringing together all migration stakeholders.

#### **Greater involvement of local authorities as part of the "Integrated Territories" policy in France**

**"Integrated Territories"** is an innovative measure for cooperation between the State and the local authorities for the integration of foreigners. It is carried out in conjunction with public and private stakeholders in the region, especially municipalities. Thus, 11 territorial contracts for the reception and integration of refugees have been signed with several metropolitan areas. The municipality of Rennes, which signed a contract with the State in 2020 to conduct innovative reception and social support activities (housing assistance, education, access to care, etc.), is a case in point. Furthermore, as part of the "Integrated Territories" plan, **the Occitania region** (South-western France) has aimed to promote learning of the French language by setting up language platforms providing information on training programmes, evaluation of training needs and guidance/referral to suitable partners.

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<sup>8</sup> The International Association of Francophone Mayors (AIMF), UCLG and UCLG Africa, the Commonwealth Local Government Forum (CLGF), the Council of European Municipalities and Regions (CEMR) and PLATAFORMA

## **An inclusive, multi-stakeholder approach to socioeconomic inclusion of migrants and refugees: challenges and opportunities**

→ **Coordination between local governments, the central State and civil society needs to be enhanced to ensure proper socioeconomic inclusion of migrants and refugees, often in precarious and vulnerable situations.**

It is important to create **opportunities for dialogue between the State, local government and civil society organisations/community associations** in order to promote migrant integration. Subnational and local governments very often constitute the intermediate level between civil society and the State and are hence essential stakeholders. Coordinated policies are required to improve the living conditions and rights of migrants and refugees<sup>9</sup>.

→ **The day-to-day management of migrant and refugee populations falls largely upon the cities, which have limited financial and human resources. It is therefore important to involve the intermediate levels (regions, territories, provinces) to support the cities.**

The presence of migrants and displaced people in cities creates an additional pressure on the job market and basic services. These tensions sometimes fuel climates of racism or xenophobia. It is thus crucial that beyond cities, the metropolitan areas and the regions undertake specific measures.

→ **Training activities and capacity building of local authorities on migration constitute a good practice to be developed.**

Several initiatives of this type are being conducted:

- The Cameroonian authorities are offering **training on the specific and vulnerable nature of migrants and refugees** to the local authorities in order to ensure effective integration of these populations in the field.
- In Burkina Faso, the IOM has developed a **training manual and a guide for local stakeholders** on how to incorporate the link between migration, environment and climate change into local planning.
- As part of the territorial contract for reception and integration of refugees, the city of Rennes is offering training on **reception and support of migrants** intended for elected officials and services working closely with migrants.
- UCLG Africa promotes discussion and builds capacities among African counterparts by enabling municipal teams in the field to respond in emergencies.

## **Future opportunities to involve the local level in the Rabat Process**

One of the expected results of the meeting was that discussions and debates feed into the reflection process of Rabat Process partners concerning the involvement of cities and local authorities in the Dialogue and the implementation of the [Action Plan](#) in the future.

Given that France led the meeting, the latter reported back to members of the Dialogue Steering Committee (the strategic governing body of the Rabat Process) on the main conclusions of the meeting. The members welcomed

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<sup>9</sup>Such as, for example, access to documents (civil status documents in particular), access to education, healthcare, water, and electricity in agricultural regions, to specific language programmes, to decent housing, etc.

the prospect of future collaboration with local authorities, and it was agreed that France<sup>10</sup> would develop a document proposing different options for how local stakeholders might be included in the Dialogue. This document will be presented during the forthcoming Senior Officials' Meeting (17/18 November in Malabo) for decision.

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<sup>10</sup>With the support of the Secretariat of the Rabat Process (and in coordination with Equatorial Guinea, which currently chairs the Dialogue)