

The United Nations Global Compact on Migration Some features for Social Work

In September 2016 the UN General Assembly decided, through the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, to develop a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. The process to develop this global compact started in April 2017. On 13 July 2018 UN Member States finalized the text for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration¹.

The Global Compact for Migration is the first-ever UN global agreement on a common approach to international migration in all its dimensions. The global compact is non-legally binding. It is grounded in values of state sovereignty, responsibility-sharing, non-discrimination, and human rights, and recognizes that a cooperative approach is needed to optimize the overall benefits of migration, while addressing its risks and challenges for individuals and communities in countries of origin, transit and destination².

Migration nowadays has become one of the most difficult human ventures. Worldwide 240 million people are on the move. So, one out of 30 human beings is on the move. Therefore it is, by its numbers, an almost unsolved humanitarian problem.

As migration is a multifactorial driven happening, with complex and mixed pushing and pulling factors, like Climate Change, Unemployment and Poverty, violence, ignorance of special cultural, religious minorities and their vulnerabilities, not least rumours a. s. o.; somewhat forced and somehow voluntarily. Its drivers are as well individual intention, by age, or by being part of a special social or religious group, missing a sufficient and secure political and governing system, a social and/or economic perspective, to – in dignity, respect and (social) security, ground on one's satisfactory livelihood. Migration therefor has also become one of the overlapping handicaps in respect to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's No. 1-17)³.

In a globalised world – means for money, trade and producing, for knowledge and expertise, the average human being in the south is missing the freedom of movement beyond borders, almost hold back to the current conditions in her/his country of origin and its difficult situation. Even there are, - under Article 13 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR, and Article 12, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, ICCPR, human rights to leave and to return to her/his country of origin. The most important question for leaving is, where to and how to go? To which country and more important under which conditions of the selected state - who have to be fulfilled for to successfully move to and at least successfully get there. This, often enough is miscalculated, dangerous and life damaging. The hurdles are high, the chances to fail, and – on the move – to stuck in more difficulties and then protracted situation, which is traumatising, are even higher. To leave and move for individual good reasons, doesn't guaranty, to end up successfully and in good circumstances as in an estimated successfully livelihood in the receiving country. It depends on the given staying permission of the receiving country. By country there are many different systems of selection and access to their different staying permissions, regularly given, more neglected to those, who already came in. Countries themselves are individually driving their own system of reception of foreigners autonomously, but a global, means an international common legal system, with approved criteria's, is missing most.

Just to give one example – a not human driven one reason for migration: 1 cm rise of sea-level, forces 1 (one) million human beings to move. Those people are by now called "refugees", but they are in need of a trustable, safe and secure, durable and long lasting solution, to continue their life somewhere else on-shore. The most exposed countries to this phenomenon are Bangladesh and Madagascar. Where will their population go to, for sure?

¹ For the Compact on Migration itself go to: <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>; citations through this link; available in all UN-Languages; accessed on 28th November 2018

² Cited from first link

³ For more information see: https://www.cdp.net/en/policy-and-public-affairs/sustainable-development-goals/all-sustainable-development-goals?cid=1532793759&adgpid=59251369875&itemid=&targid=kwd-298804836862&mt=e&loc=1003297&ntwk=g&dev=c&dmod=&adp=1t1&gclid=EAlaIQobChMiv8aq7rr83glVhM13Ch0MEAt-EAAYASAAEgJRjFD_BwE accessed on 30th November 2018

Social Workers around the world are working hard on all this – individual – difficulties, sufferings, disadvantages and sadness's, independent from their reasons and origin – and, not seldom, have to stand on, not knowing what the best solution should be, or what the way of solving is.

The UN-Global Compact on Migration now is almost comprehensive and taking into account all the vulnerable issues that can rise from and occur around migration. The intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, GCM will be held on 10 – 11 December in Marrakech, Morocco⁴.

The world at this date, 10th December 2018, is celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UDHR. This is the best occasion to do a major step forward in Human Rights.

The Global Compact on Migration there will be signed by estimated 160 up to 180 states. This is a major step towards a sufficient human right on migration. Although thereafter the UN-Global Compact on Migration will be soft law, it has to be recognised in legal and political interpretation for decision making on al (receiving) country levels as well as in between the signing states, as it becomes inter-national law.

Therefore the International Federation of Social Workers, IFSW, representing the global professional Social Work Community, appreciates the efforts made towards a global legal solution and in advance more (calculable) and regular conditions for migration to count on, very much. The collected items for more regular and thereafter more secure and sufficient migration, reduces the human sadness's Social Work especially is exposed to and mankind is confronted with.

IFSW is asking its members to urge their states to sign-in and adopt the Global Compact on Migration to once more make the world a better place.

Zürich, 30th November 2018 Tobias Roosen, IFSW-Representative at UNOG

⁴ Cited from first link