Foreword

The adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) in December 2018 marked a historic milestone in migration governance, driven by the realization that only through cooperation will it be possible to capitalize on migration's potential for development and address its risks and challenges. GCM offers a 360-degree vision of international migration governance, and provides a non-binding blueprint for countries to improve their ability to effectively manage migration and provide better outcomes for migrants and for countries of origin, transit and destination. GCM represents a convergence of States on a rights-based approach to migration, and a commitment to making migration work in a manner that complements the promise of dignity and shared prosperity for all, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This comprehensive framework comes at a critical time for the Arab region, which is witnessing unprecedented levels of migration as a region of origin, transit, and destination. In 2017, the region hosted over 38 million migrants and refugees, including close to 9 million refugees representing almost 15 per cent of international migrants worldwide. An estimated 29 million people migrated from Arab countries, almost half of whom stayed within the region. Over 9 million refugees have sought protection in the Arab region, including 3.7 million refugees under the UNHCR mandate and 5.4 million Palestine refugees registered with UNRWA. Drivers of migration in the region are as complex as its patterns and trends. The dramatic variation between levels of stability and development across the region is a significant driver shaping intra-regional and international migration. While some Arab countries continue to struggle with conflict, destruction and poverty, others are leading the way in groundbreaking research and development, building cities of the future and attracting migrants from across the globe.

The 2019 Situation Report on International Migration provides new insights into migration trends and patterns in the region, in terms of the nature of movements and the profiles of migrants, and with regard to new policies and regulations adopted in the region. The present Situation Report is produced by the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) and the International Organization for Migration, in collaboration with 15 United Nations agencies and members of the Working Group on International Migration in the Arab Region established in 2013. Building on the 2015 and the 2017 reports, the present report places migration in the Arab region squarely within the framework of GCM. It also showcases the relevance of GCM for the region, and identifies good practices to support countries in realizing that vision.

Migration has gained salience in the policy debates of all Arab States, given the severe demographic, economic and social shifts that have resulted from large scale migration in most countries. However, to meet the 23 objectives of GCM, States are required to take ambitious yet concrete steps to address their policy implications at the national level.

The present report aims to provide policy guidance and encourage multi-stakeholder debates and discussions to strengthen

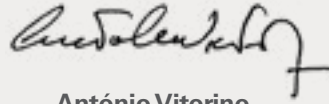effective management of migratory flows, and ensure dignity for all girls, boys, women and men migrants, while harnessing the potential of migration in driving sustainable development.

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