



## Press Release by the United Nations Network on Migration

### Enhancing Access to Services for Migrants in the Context of COVID-19 Preparedness, Prevention, and Response and Beyond

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**11 June 2020** – The impact of COVID-19 has highlighted the importance of ensuring access to services for all. Whether as a means to ensure we protect our societies against the virus; or to uphold universal rights, COVID-19 demands a truly inclusive response.

Today, the UN Network on Migration is launching a policy brief entitled *Enhancing Access to Services for Migrants in the Context of COVID-19 Preparedness, Prevention, and Response and Beyond* advocating for enhanced access to services for migrants in the context of COVID-19 preparedness, prevention, and response, building on the commitments States undertook in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. It also provides practical guidance for States and other stakeholders on an improved common understanding of safe and inclusive access to services for migrants.

COVID-19 has taken lives, devastated economies, and upended relationships. It threatens a new normal fraught with fear and uncertainty. But it has also allowed us to take stock of the interconnected nature of our shared humanity and provide impetus for nations and communities to build back stronger. We draw inspiration from the multitude of essential workers and service providers – many of whom are migrants or of migrant origins – on the frontlines of COVID-19 preparedness, prevention and responses. These people show that we can work better together in facing common challenges. We have learnt, too, that exclusion – whether by design or default – makes not just those excluded more vulnerable to the pandemic, but inhibits our collective ability both to defeat it and emerge stronger. This cannot be allowed to continue.

The recommendations set out in this new policy brief emphasize the practical and principled importance of ensuring inclusive, people-centred approaches that leave no one behind. It emphasises the importance of – and how best to – work better together across sectors – including health, immigration, finance, education, labour and other ministries – across government, with local authorities, civil society and other stakeholders.

The key recommendations from the brief focus on the following actions/ measures:

- Inclusive access to essential lifesaving health services and continuity of care
- Prevention and support to victims of sexual and gender-based violence (GBV)
- Access to accurate and timely information, conducting risk communications and strengthening community participation and engagement



- Access to child protection services for migrant children
- Sustained learning for children and adolescents including on-job and skilled training
- Access to adequate housing and shelter
- Continuity and quality of water, sanitation and hygiene services (WASH)
- Essential food and nutrition services
- Scaled up and expanded resilient and pro-poor social protection systems
- Decent work and reinforced protection, occupational health and safety measures for migrant workers

The brief makes the case for responses, plans and policies that are evidence-based, age- and gender-responsive, and which facilitate affordable and non-discriminatory access to services, and include targeted measures ensuring safeguards of migrants' entitlements and fundamental rights at work. It is aligned with the recently published [Secretary-General's Policy Guidance on COVID-19 and People on the Move](#), the [Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#), the [UN Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19](#), the [universal health coverage principles](#), and the [WHO global framework and action plan promoting the health of refugee and migrants](#).

This brief is developed by the [Working Group on Access to Services](#) of the UN Network on Migration under the co-leadership of WHO and UN-Habitat, with support and contributions from its members including FAO, ILO, IOM, OHCHR, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNHCR, UN Women, Caritas on behalf of the Initiative for Child Rights, IFRC, PICUM, PSI and UCLG.

*The United Nations Network on Migration was established to ensure effective, timely and coordinated system-wide support to Member States in their implementation, follow up and review of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Working Group on Access to Services is one of six thematic working groups established under the Network, tasked with developing an improved common understanding of safe and inclusive access to services for migrants. While the Network's mandate is limited to migration and provides the context in which this policy brief has been written, the Network calls on States to also implement these recommendations where they apply to refugees and asylum-seekers and to protect the human rights and health of everyone equally, regardless of migration status.*

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