

**WHO Department of Health and Migration Statement**  
**Working group on Smuggling of Migrants, Vienna, Austria, 11 and 12 July 2024**

Esteemed Chair, distinguished delegates,

The WHO commends the working group's recognition of the critical issue of health access for smuggled migrants, which aligns with the WHO's mandate to promote the health and wellbeing of migrants. The WHO underscores the urgent need to address the significant health risks associated with migrant smuggling. These risks permeate all stages of the migration journey, with devastating impacts on the health and wellbeing of migrants, refugees, and other displaced populations.

In line with the Global Compact for Migration and the WHO Global Action Plan, the WHO supports Member States in integrating migrants' health needs into national and local healthcare policies, through technical guidance, capacity building, knowledge generation, and policy recommendations.

WHO has collaborated with Member States, United Nations agencies, and other partners, to undertake six health system reviews aimed at strengthening health care systems for migrants and refugees, resulting in actionable recommendations integrated into national policies.

To support the implementation of these recommendations, WHO developed competency standards for migrant and refugee health to build healthcare workers' capacity and improve healthcare delivery for these populations. We are expanding these efforts with additional training courses planned to further build capacity.

In addition to our initiatives, we would like to commend the efforts of the 49 Member States highlighted in the WHO compendium, for their promising initiatives to address the health needs and wellbeing of migrants. We leverage these country experiences and best practices through the WHO Global School on Refugee and Migrant Health, which convenes health and non-health sectors to promote knowledge sharing, foster collaborative solutions and build competencies to advance migrant health. We also support and endorse the efforts of the UN Network on Migration.

Looking ahead, there is an imperative need for a concerted international effort to facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration. WHO will continue to support Member States in addressing the health needs of (smuggled) migrants, as not only a health issue but a matter of human rights.

Thank you.