

OPENING REMARKS

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**International Dialogue on Migration in Geneva
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Introduction and Workshop Context

Distinguished participants and panelists, ladies and gentlemen.

It is an honor to welcome you to Geneva for the convening of the International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) in a series of two workshops on *Follow-up and review of migration in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*.

For the past 15 years IOM has been making available its regular and principal policy dialogue forum—the IDM—to strengthen global governance of migration.

This workshop will build upon the conclusions of the first workshop which took place from the 29th February – 1st of March, and which gathered over 400 participants representing Member States, International Organizations, Civil Society, and other relevant actors at the United Nations Headquarters in New York to discuss the role of migration in the 2030 Agenda.

This year's IDM emphasized the opportunity presented by the SDGs to establish momentum for better migration policies in line with internationally agreed frameworks, including the existing normative framework as well as important recent frameworks, such as IOM's Migration Governance Framework and the *Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disasters* stemming from the Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative.

This second IDM workshop will follow-up on the discussions in New York and provide representatives of the diplomatic community here in Geneva, together with many participants from capitals, an opportunity to engage in interactive exchange on how to best implement the migration-related SDGs.

This is a moment of cautious optimism in the multilateral arena,

- with migration included in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the Paris Climate Change Agreement,
- with the international community coming together to adopt the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and committing to develop a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and
- with IOM joining the UN family, cementing IOM's role as the global leading international organization on migration.

This landmark decision poises IOM to continue to work closely with Member States and its UN family and civil society partners towards strengthening global migration governance and improving assistance to and protection of migrants.

However, the past year also highlighted some of the biggest challenges migrants face while we are trying to implement all these ambitious commitments.

- (a) A record number of people have been uprooted, forced to move -- refugees, internally displaced persons, victims of trafficking, and unaccompanied minors.
- (b) Climate change threatens yet another 75 million persons living just 1 meter above sea level.

- (c) We are also facing a series of unprecedented simultaneous, complex and protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies in an "arc of instability," that stretches from the Western bulge of Africa to the Himalayas.
- (d) Finally, the public narrative on migration is too often a toxic one, rooted in disinformation and xenophobia.

As I do not want to leave you on a negative note, I would like to highlight three main areas where solutions can be found to successfully realize the migration-related aspects of the SDGs. These three “C”s are at the core of IOM’s strategy to assist Member States in this endeavor.

1. Continuity

First, we must acknowledge the fact that we do not start from scratch. IOM has a long history of assisting Member States, who even before the SDGs, saw the importance of:

- Reducing remittance costs (SDG target 10.c)
- Mobilizing diaspora investments (SDG target 10.b)
- Making sure that the recruitment of migrants is fair and ethical (SDG target 8.8)
- Ensuring that migrants have access to basic health services (SDG target 3.8)
- Eradicating all forms of modern day slavery, including trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants, and protecting migrants in vulnerable situations (SDG Targets 5.2/8.6/16.2)
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We need both (1) to ensure achievement of the migration-related targets, and (2) to achieve the other goals and targets that affect the lives and well-being of migrants – although not specifically dedicated to migrants or migration – to ensure that the rights of migrants are protected and that no migrant is left behind. .

During this workshop, we will hear some of the best practices in these areas from various governments and other actors, but also some of the areas that need to be strengthened if we want to achieve substantial progress on these targets.

2. Change

While it is important to continue and strengthen the work that is already being done, implementing the SDGs cannot be achieved by continuing business as usual. We need **innovation**; new tools and frameworks that will help Member States implement the SDGs.

During the first IDM, the Migration Governance Index was presented. It is a truly innovative policy-benchmarking framework developed with the Economist Intelligence Unit to assess the extent to which national migration policies facilitate safe, orderly, and regular migration, including through planned and well-managed migration policies, as laid out in SDG Target 10.7.

In addition, a representative from Gallup – the premier polling service -- presented how surveys can be used to make sure that the migration policies geared towards achieving safe and orderly migration do in fact achieve their aim, namely improving migrant's well-being. This tool is an example of what Mr. David Nabarro calls “seeing the SDGs through the eyes of those left behind”.

Finally, we also discussed the need for innovative data collection methods to guide policy makers' decisions, including making better use of big data.

The SDGs give governmental and non-governmental actors the opportunity to think outside the box, and I am looking forward to hearing some of the innovative measures our participants have to share. These no doubt will also inform our collective efforts over the coming two years to develop a Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

3. Cooperation

No country or international organization will be able to implement the SDGs on their own. The concepts of “continuity” and “change” also apply to the types of partnerships needed to achieve both the migration-related aspects of the SDGs. We need to make use of existing mechanisms in place to discuss progress, share experiences, and address some of the challenges in implementing migration-related SDG targets, and other goals and targets with respect to migrants to ensure that migrant's rights are protected and that no migrants is left behind.

At the global level, the IDM will continue to offer opportunities to share, expand upon, and better mobilize resources for reaching the migration-related SDG targets and goals and targets for migrants. The Global Forum for Migration and Development can also play an important role in this regard. At the regional level, Regional Consultative Processes on migration will continue to be platforms for countries to share regional concerns and discuss regional solutions and cooperation to achieve the SDGs.

Partnerships touch all levels of the SDG attainment process: data collection, developing innovative financing models, and sharing best practices. While the SDGs provide a framework for building national policies and

strategies, only action at all levels will ensure substantive, enduring improvements in conditions for migrants. We must recognize and realize the intersecting and cross-cutting nature of working on migration-related SDGs. Not only is development affected by migration outcomes; migration in turn affects development. Moreover, migrants' rights are many-fold – starting with their human rights as human beings, and additional rights for example as migrant workers or as victims of trafficking, exploitation or abuse.

We also need new innovative forms of partnerships, notably by strengthening our work with civil society and the private sector. IOM is very proud of its recent engagement with private sector companies (such as Facebook, Microsoft and Apple to name a few) on ensuring the respect of migrant's fundamental rights.

On the 19th September this year, the UN General Assembly adopted the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants that calls for the development of a Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. This is an unprecedented opportunity for the international community to demonstrate the type of political will needed to achieve the ambitious commitments of the SDGs. The process of crafting a Global Compact on Migration is now beginning. IOM will continue to offer its IDM as a space to analyse current and emerging issues in migration governance and to exchange experiences, policy approaches and effective practices, including in the context of developing a Global Compact on Migration. I am sincerely grateful to all of you for being here to participate, engage in panel discussions, and collectively envisage steps toward improved conditions for and treatment of migrants.