



**International Dialogue on Migration 2017**  
**Strengthening international cooperation on and governance of migration towards the  
adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018**

18–19 April 2017, United Nations Headquarters, New York

**Summary of Conclusions**

The International Dialogue on Migration (IDM) is the principal migration policy dialogue forum of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and is comprised of Member States and partner inter-governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. In consultation with Member States, IOM's Director General decided to dedicate the IDM in 2017 to supporting Member State development of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) by providing an inclusive policy dialogue forum focused on key issues for consideration for the GCM. IOM held the first IDM workshop of 2017 on the 18th and 19th April 2017 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York. The first workshop in the series was dedicated to discussing the theme *"Strengthening international cooperation on and governance of migration towards the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018"*. This event gathered over 300 participants, representing governments, United Nations and other international and regional organizations, academia, the private sector, diaspora and migrant organizations, as well as civil society. It was opened by the Director General of IOM and the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration, and closed by the President of the General Assembly, the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations, and IOM's Deputy Director General.

Over the course of two days, the workshop stimulated rich discussion on both the substance and the process leading to the development and planned consideration for adoption of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018, as well as it shared experiences and lessons learnt regarding migration governance and international cooperation on migration. Participants highlighted that the Global Compact for Migration presents an historic opportunity to strengthen the protection of migrants' rights and enhance governance

of and international cooperation on migration and stressed the necessity to make the most of this unique chance. Throughout the workshop, many echoed that this is a pivotal opportunity to make concrete commitments to vulnerable populations to ensure nobody is left behind.

In his welcome remarks IOM Director General, William Lacy Swing, recalled that “the Global Compact is expected to serve as a framework for comprehensive international cooperation to address human mobility and all aspects of international migration” placing the needs, capacities and contributions of migrants at its core, with a view to ensuring their safety, dignity and human rights. Central to IOM’s vision of well-managed migration as a choice and not a desperate necessity are four core elements: (1) protecting the rights of migrants; (2) facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration; (3) reducing the incidence and impacts of forced and irregular migration; and (4) addressing mobility consequences of natural and human-induced disasters. The Director General also stressed the need for the process and outcomes to be inclusive and practical in order to succeed and make a real difference in the lives of migrants and in the ability of governments to manage migration humanely and effectively. He noted that this process is not starting from scratch. Many speakers echoed this theme, suggesting building on and implementing the existing normative framework and in particular the goals and targets set forth in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted on 19 September 2016 – which also ushered IOM into the UN system -- and the report of former Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration, Peter Sutherland. Other key building blocks exist in the Berne Initiative’s International Agenda for Migration Management, the Regional Consultative Processes and inter-regional fora on migration, the Global Forum on Migration and Development, the High-Level Dialogues on International Migration and Development, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, as well as the Migration Governance Framework recently adopted by IOM’s Member States, the Migration Crisis Operational Framework, the Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disasters, and the Nansen Initiative Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change, and more.

Many speakers focused on the need for policies that center on “dignity in human mobility”, ensure protection and promote safe, regular migration channels. The Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration (SRSG), Louise Arbour, pointed out that lack of effective global cooperation often leads to more restrictive migration policies, and called on the international community to strengthen collectively the narrative on migration to recognize the enormous contributions of migrants and migration, including to development. It was underlined that while governments retain the sovereign right to determine which non-nationals

may enter and stay on their territories, consistent with the requirements of international law, cooperation is one of the most powerful expressions of and vehicles for concerted sovereign action. In this context, the panelists and speakers shared a wide range of examples of good practices from their own experiences and offered their ambitions and concerns for the way forward in the development of the Global Compact on Migration.

The discussion was structured around six panels, each followed by a session for questions, comments and answers, and led by 35 speakers representing a balanced mix of policymakers and experts in the areas of migration governance and other migration-related fields. The composition of the panels allowed for good gender and geographical balance, with speakers, of whom 12 were women, representing almost all regions of the world. In addition to SRSB Arbour, the President of the General Assembly as well as the Deputy Secretary General of the United Nations addressed the gathering, showing the strong commitment of senior UN leadership to the Global Compact on Migration and to IOM's efforts to support its development. Each of the senior representatives of the United Nations, and many others, highlighted the important opportunity created by IOM's entry into the UN family.

The workshop addressed six main themes: 1) Implementing the Sustainable Development Goals and other frameworks; 2) The Global Compact on Migration as a tool for migration governance and the role of global and regional actors; 3) Reaching a whole-of-government approach to migration; 4) Promoting a whole-of-society approach to good migration governance; 5) The Global Compact on Migration as an opportunity to synergize the efforts of the international community; and, 6) Existing and envisaged cooperation and follow-up mechanisms for Implementing the Global Compact on Migration.

This document summarizes the main conclusions of the deliberations held over the course of the two days.

Several key areas of convergence emerged:

- 1) The need to ensure that commitments are implemented.** Political will is crucial in strengthening collective approaches to migration but many noted the importance of enhanced operational capacity and resources for effective implementation of the migration-related commitments in the international normative framework, including, importantly, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Building a comprehensive approach to migration through the Global Compact on Migration should ensure that migration governance is consistent and coherent with human rights, humanitarian and development considerations and takes into account each of these considerations.

Panelists from Italy, Ecuador and Mexico, among others, recalled the enormous contributions that migrants and migration make to development. Italy's objectives in this regard are based on three key elements: investing in, protecting and valuing the contribution of migrants and migration. The prevailing message is that increasing opportunities for safe, orderly and regular migration should be prioritized globally, with States leading the effort, but with the active collaboration of civil society and other actors. Several speakers expressed the hope that by facilitating mechanisms that encourage regular migration, more people will avail themselves of formal migration processes, rather than clandestine methods with all their attendant risks. The Canadian Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship emphasized that, as there will always be migration, planned and well-managed migration, including robust regular pathways, is essential. He suggested starting with the Migration Governance Framework as the foundation for well-managed migration policies and building from there.

- 2) **The need to protect and empower vulnerable migrants.** A central issue that came up time and again over the two days was the need to protect vulnerable migrant populations, and particularly women and children. Equally importantly were calls to avoid assuming or characterizing all migrants as victims, and to recognize the capacities and agency of migrants. Multiple statements were made advocating for gender and age-sensitive considerations to be considered. There were specific calls from NGOs to end detention of children on migration grounds and to act consistently in accordance with the best interests of the child. Throughout the workshop, civil society representatives emphasized the importance of the Global Compact addressing the protection of unaccompanied children, notably the representatives from the International Catholic Migration Commission, ICRC, the Holy See, the NGO Committee on Migration and Caritas Internationalis.
  
- 3) **Reinforcing the importance of a whole of society approach to migrants and migration, and the need to combat racism and xenophobia, and reframe the migration narrative in positive terms.** A recurring theme throughout the workshop was the necessity of including not only all ministries of governments with responsibilities on migration or that affect migration – such as justice and home affairs, foreign affairs, development, health, education, labour and social affairs, environment and more – to ensure a whole of government approach, but also civil society, private sector, diaspora communities, migrants, origin and host societies, local authorities, schools, academia and more in migration efforts to generate and sustain a coherent and truly whole of society approach to migration governance. Several speakers emphasized the need to reframe the migration narrative in positive terms. Through the work of actors at all levels, racism

and xenophobia can be curtailed, and the merits of migration can be championed. Suggestions included civil society actors partaking in campaigns to inform the debate about the realities of migration and in fighting erroneous, dehumanizing public discourse about migration. This should include private sector actors, particularly employers -- to recognize and broadcast the contributions migrants bring to the labor force -- and the media -- to disseminate positive stories about migrants and refugees. While many spoke about the significant positive impact of remittances for countries of origin, it was underlined that some noted that campaigns on the contributions of migrants go well beyond remittances and include knowledge and skills transfers, entrepreneurship and innovation, trade and investment, as well as important social, cultural and other contributions.

- 4) The need for synergized efforts of the international community.** Beyond regional consultative fora on migration, which exist in nearly every region of the world and have a critical role to play in fostering dialogue and cooperation amongst Member States on specific migration challenges and opportunities, a resounding theme in the workshop was that the entry of IOM into the United Nations system is a positive step toward strengthening UN leadership on migration. The international community needs to validate and take concrete steps to ensure the effective implementation of existing normative frameworks, including as a necessary step towards advancing common goals for international cooperation. The development of voluntary, targeted mechanisms to promote improved migration governance in specific areas of migration, for example on labour mobility, can facilitate the attainment of these goals. Information and best practices should be exchanged among practitioners to allow the identification of shared interests and areas of aligned efforts between different actors at national and international levels. Implementation of joint actions at the transnational level, promoting evidence - based programming by encouraging long-term, systematic and comprehensive data collection and monitoring and evaluation schemes, will be pivotal in this regard. Several speakers, including the representative from Guatemala, highlighted the importance of international dialogues in developing synergized governance schemes for migration processes. The Minister of State of Sierra Leone highlighted the relevance and significance of IOM organizing the International Dialogue on Migration in New York, where the Global Compact will be negotiated, and to have done so at the very beginning of the GCM consultation phase. The Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) – from the Regional Conference on Migration in Central America, Mexico and North America, to the South American Conference on Migration, to the Abu Dhabi Dialogue in Asia and the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Bali Process and more – are critical to forging understanding and cooperation on migration. RCPs

were identified by participants as often where the most in depth regional and bilateral cooperation results. One example of this is the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) amongst the main Asian labour origin countries and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, accounting collectively for the largest labour mobility annually. Through the trust and confidence built over time in the ADD, the recent Ministerial consultation in Colombo, Sri Lanka, in January 2017, resulted in an agreed focus on (1) promotion and enforcement of fair labour recruitment, (2) certification and development of skills, and (3) leveraging technology, and ICT in particular, in partnerships between countries of origin and destination. Innovative pilot projects, such as that launched between the UAE and the Philippines on improving recruitment practices and ensuring that workers do not pay for the services of recruiters, leveraging skills development, certification and mutual recognition, and preparation of workers for return and reintegration, with a longer term goal of establishing a shared digital platform, emerged from the ADD RCP and provide just one example of the important contributions these mechanisms make to improving migration governance.

**5) The need for a holistic, comprehensive approach.** With nearly all countries today simultaneously, albeit to varying degrees, being countries of origin, transit and destination for migrants, national migration policies need to be balanced and comprehensive, and address nationals moving abroad, migrants transiting through, and migrants coming to their countries, as well as mechanisms for international cooperation. Global migration priorities and principles need to take account of different national and regional migration realities. A unified vision on migration at the national level, as well as coordinated policies that are coherent and comprehensive, are needed. Development, security and protection perspectives on migration, amongst others, need to be integrated and mutually supportive elements of a whole of government approach to migration. Many stressed the importance of a whole-of-government foundation for work on the Global Compact. National government institutions must work together with other governments, and also within their own states at the sub-national and local levels, systematically bringing in mayors and other local authorities, who have important roles to play. There were calls for the establishment of coordination mechanisms to assist the various ministries and other relevant government partners to develop and implement a “whole-of-government” approach to migration. This would help local governments to manage greater diversity and contribute to national, regional and global policies and migration governance. At multiple points, panelists and interveners expressed the need for local government actors to be included in the consultative and implementation process. Discussions underlined the need to enhance capacity, encourage horizontal cooperation and to engage both rural and urban administrations. Moreover, ‘localizing’

migration governance requires integrating it in education, social service delivery and rural development plans. To this end, local administrations must break down barriers to working with both international and internal migrants. Mayor Somers of Belgium, awarded for his efforts to welcome and implement long-term integration mechanisms for refugees and other migrants in recent years, shared his recommendations including that the entire society needs to make efforts for integration to occur successfully, and that we need to encourage societies built on common values and universal human rights (fostering inclusion rather than exclusion or division).

- 6) Understanding the drivers of migration.** Many States called for an understanding of the drivers of regular and irregular migration. It is necessary to take stock of the complexity of causes, such as macro-level factors like poverty and fragile governments, meso-level factors such as social networks and political frameworks, and micro-level factors, like education and access to work, to name a few. Identifying these nuanced drivers will allow a more comprehensive strategy and response for migration governance.
  
- 7) Implementing the GCM and setting-up a robust follow-up mechanism.** A recurring sentiment expressed in the workshop was the need for this endeavor to succeed. Many speakers underscored therefore that the Global Compact should focus on practicable outcomes and effective implementation rather than on simply restating principles. Many also emphasized a priority on setting realistic expectations and for specific indices to track and monitor implementation of goals established by the Global Compact. While it is too early to have a clear view on the particular set of indices needed, many expressed the need to include clear indicators and benchmarks to measure progress and outcomes of commitments agreed upon in the Global Compact. The Swiss Permanent Representative to the UN in New York, and co-facilitator of the GCM process, Jürg Lauber, offered several examples of how the Swiss Government has already implemented coherent and holistic approaches regarding migration management, notably with international cooperation and multi-stakeholder alliances domestically. The way forward requires the elaboration of a set of practical, actionable commitments, articulated within a multi-lateral and human rights-based framework, with ways and means of translating them into practice as well as proposing a framework for follow-up and review of implementation. Cooperation mechanisms at regional and other levels – between states of origin and destination and with civil society, private sector and other critical actors -- must inform the development of the Global Compact as well as its implementation, including reviewing and taking stock of progress achieved.

**8) The need to be clear on the role of civil society.** The discussion surrounding the whole of society approach fostered clear agreement on one critical aspect: participation of civil society, the private sector, diaspora communities, academia and migrants themselves, is imperative in strengthening migration practices at the national level and in the consultative process leading to the development of the Global Compact. Members representing civil society organizations [including Monsignor Robert Vitillo from ICMC, Maria Pia Belloni Mignatti of the NGO Committee on Migration, Berenice Valdez River of IMUMI and Ashley William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia] spoke passionately about the important role of civil society and multi-stakeholder participation in the processes for the development of the Global Compact. Government representatives from Canada, Costa Rica, Chile, Colombia, Switzerland and others echoed this. Some NGO representatives called for a more institutionalized role for civil society in the Global Compact consultations. While there was general consensus that civil society has an important role to play, States were also clear that the process needs to be a State-led one.

Speakers were eager to highlight good practices in their country, at national, transnational and local levels. States shared good migration practices in areas such as civil registration [Sierra Leone and South Africa], use of remittances—especially harnessing the nexus between migration and development [Mexico]—and inclusive policies that build societies based on common values and universal human rights so as to foster inclusion rather than exclusion [Mayor Somers, Belgium]. Many States also shared examples of national and regional policy initiatives concerning combating and preventing human trafficking [Costa Rica, Egypt, Nigeria, Myanmar, Burundi].

In addition to good practices, discussion during the workshop offered a wealth of ideas for further action to be taken leading up to the Global Compact negotiations, including to:

**Establish priorities for the Global Compact.** Given the wide range of issues which might be included in the Global Compact, several speakers emphasized the importance of setting priorities, with many suggesting that a key focus should be on ensuring the protection of the rights of migrants and specifically the need to address the situation of migrants in vulnerable situations, whether in countries of origin, during transit, at destination or upon return.

**Compile evidence that speaks to the benefits of migration.** Both the Global Compact and the consultative process leading to its adoption should emphasize the importance of evidence, particularly long-term, systematic and comprehensive data-collection and analysis. Reliable data and research should be harnessed in order to inform policy and to counter negative

stereotypes of migration. Considerable evidence already exists and should be used, such as the recent report of the McKinsey Global Initiative entitled *People on the Move: Global Migration's Impact and Opportunity*.

**Continue to promote and draw on regional consultative processes on migration.** Many States [Albania, Azerbaijan, Burundi, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eritrea, Kenya, Myanmar] expressed gratitude to IOM for its role in providing technical assistance and/or facilitating regional dialogue on migration. Several speakers shared their country's desire for IOM to continue to support regional and transnational processes that allow exchange of information and development of cooperative arrangements. Delegates from South America and Africa were particularly supportive of continued regional dialogues concerning migration governance and management.

**Rely on existing frameworks to define benchmarks for the Global Compact.** Several comments recalled that existing normative frameworks should be the basis for further commitments and action on the Global Compact. The representative of Sweden, as well as several other speakers, mentioned existing frameworks such as IOM's Migration Governance Framework, Special Representative Sutherland's report, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals as important bases for establishing ambitious benchmarks for the Global Compact.

**Establish a graduated timeline to achieve targets.** Some noted that the targets in the Global Compact could be aligned with the 2030 SDG Agenda in terms of timelines for targets and indicators. The International Catholic Migration Commission and the NGO Committee on Migration provided specific examples of proposed measures that could be achieved within a two-year framework (e.g., the best interest determination for children); a five-year framework (e.g., a 60% reduction in persons trafficked across borders from the 2018 figure); and a 12-year framework for other actions (e.g., a reduction in the number of forced migrants). Deciding on common targets and their timelines should, it was suggested, be part of the negotiation process.

**Consider inclusion of financial institutions in subsequent dialogues and consultations.** Participants appreciated the contribution from Austin T. Fragomen Jr., representative of the Business Mechanism of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and some noted that other international and regional financial institutions (i.e. World Bank and IMF) should be present at future meetings given the importance of financial institutions and major development actors to implementing agreed commitments.

**Define terminology.** Over the course of the workshop, several representatives identified the need for clarification of migration terminology. Several States [Ambassador Juan José Gómez Camacho from Mexico, the representative from Colombia, the representative from South Africa, and the representative from Kenya] all expressed a need for using common, agreed migration terminology in the Global Compact. Today the language about migration is influenced by negative emotions and associated incorrect narratives. The negotiations of the Global Compact must be based on an accurate description of migration supported by reliable data and not influenced by negative stereotypes. Many participants [including the Representative from Colombia] advocated the need to remain consistent in using ‘regular’ rather than ‘legal’ migration and ‘irregular’ rather than ‘illegal’ migration as the latter implies a “punitive approach.”

**Establish a committee to track progress.** The International Catholic Migration Commission has played a coordination role among civil society in the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) and in the lead-up to the New York Declaration. The Civil Society Action Committee created the “Act Now Joint Statement and Scorecard” in order to promote a timely implementation plan for the commitments made in the New York Declaration. A similar committee should be created in order to track the progress of implementation of Global Compact commitments. The committee should be comprised of, amongst others, civil society, private sector, and migrant representatives.

In the closing session, the President of the United Nations General Assembly, His Excellency Peter Thomson, and Her Excellency Amina J. Mohammed, the Deputy Secretary-General of the United Nations, both offered remarks affirming the importance of the development of the Global Compact on Migration to the United Nations. The New York Declaration and September 2016 Summit for Refugees and Migrants were important steps in launching this comprehensive approach to human mobility that the Global Compact on Migration offers the international community. Both called upon IOM to bring its substantial technical and policy expertise gained from working with migrants and governments throughout the world to support ambitious outcomes, and the Deputy Secretary General praised IOM for holding this timely discussion in New York just a few months after IOM’s entry into the UN system, demonstrating the kind of leadership on migration that the UN expects of IOM. Both emphasized that the Global Compact on Migration’s foundational premise must rest on the notion that migration is a potential benefit for all – migrants and their families, as well as the countries and communities they come from, transit through and come to.

Culminating remarks offered by IOM’s Deputy Director General, Laura Thompson, recognized the rich and wide array of viewpoints and experiences expressed by Member States and other relevant actors on enhancing international cooperation on and improving the governance of

migration, as well as in identifying core elements for the elaboration of the Global Compact. It is clear even from this first dialogue at the outset of the process to develop a Global Compact for Migration that well-managed migration is indeed possible, and that there are many existing examples from States and other actors that can be drawn upon. As with the opening remarks for the workshop, the concluding comments offered a call for a true sense of solidarity and working collaboratively to make the concept of “safe, orderly and regular migration” a reality for migrants and their families and or societies worldwide.

**Conclusion:**

The present summary is not all-encompassing. A comprehensive analytical report will be produced and include the outcomes of the two workshops of the International Dialogue on Migration scheduled in 2017. The second IDM workshop of this year will be held on the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at the Palais des Nations in Geneva and will focus specifically on protection and assistance of migrants in vulnerable situations.

The report will be provided as input to, amongst others, the intergovernmental stock-taking conference scheduled in Guadalajara, Mexico, in the first week of December 2017.