

# **International Organization for Migration's International Dialogue on Migration 2018**

## **Opening Session**

**UN Headquarters, New York**

**March 26, 2018**

### **Prepared Remarks of Julie Bolcer, Deputy Commissioner, New York City Mayor's Office for International Affairs**

Thank you, Director-General Swing.

Ms. Fore, Director-General Ryder, Special Representative Louise Arbour, the GCM Co-Facilitators Ambassador Camacho and Ambassador Lauber, Excellencies, and honored guests, good morning.

My name is Julie Bolcer and I serve as Deputy Commissioner for International Affairs for the City of New York. On behalf of Mayor Bill de Blasio and Commissioner Penny Abeywardena, I am pleased to welcome you to New York City to discuss an issue that is also at the top of our agenda: partnership and cooperation to make migration inclusive, human-centered, safe, and most importantly, guided by standards that reflect our lived experience.

The Mayor's Office for International Affairs serves as the primary liaison between the City of New York and the largest diplomatic community in the world – the UN Headquarters and 193 Permanent Missions, but also 115 Consulates and over 70 trade missions in our City. Through our consulates in particular, we connect with and serve our City's large and diverse immigrant communities.

My Office actively engages our diplomatic corps to share best practices on urban challenges, and our City is taking bold steps to realize the principles and commitments outlined in the Sustainable Development Goals - s Prior to the adoption of the Global Goals, NYC released *OneNYC* - our City's blueprint for a more resilient, equitable and sustainable city.

More than half the world's population now lives in cities, and that number is rapidly growing. In our City, we grapple with pressing concerns that are likely familiar to all of you – the need for climate resilient development, , equal access to quality education and job opportunities, affordable housing, and, of course, migration.

New York City is – and will always be -- a proud city of immigrants. Approximately six out of every 10 New Yorkers are either immigrants or the children of immigrants. Nearly half of our city's small businesses are owned by immigrants – driving our local economies and lifting up our neighborhoods. Just this week, new Census Bureau estimates showed that NYC's population has reached a record high of 8.6 million residents, with much of that growth located in our vibrant boroughs beyond Manhattan.

People are coming to New York City from all over the world. We embrace and welcome these newcomers, and we want the world to know, especially at this challenging time as our national government turns inward, that the New York City values of inclusion, fairness, and opportunity represent the best of American values.

We also want to share our forward-thinking policies and practices on migration with partners around the world. As the old song about New York goes, if you can make it here, you can make it anywhere. The same goes for policies.

Through the outstanding work of our key partner, the Office of Immigrant Affairs, NYC launched our municipal ID card, ID NYC, in 2015. IDNYC welcomes all New Yorkers, regardless of their documentation status, to participate fully as a member of an integrated community. Today, over 1.2 million New Yorkers have an IDNYC card – including many UN colleagues. IDNYC is so successful because the card is available to all New Yorkers, not only immigrants and other vulnerable residents. In fact, an outside review found that 77% of immigrants with IDNYC say the card has increased their sense of belonging in the city.

In NYC, we take justice and the protection of human rights very seriously. Every New Yorker has access to free and confidential immigration legal service through ActionNYC. Just call 311, and say “ActionNYC” to be connected to a service provider in your borough, in your language.

To share our values and practices on the global stage, during last September’s UN General Assembly – NYC and partners hosted the first-ever Global Mayors Summit on Refugee and Migration Policy and Practice, Mayors and senior leaders from 33 global cities attended to discuss best practices, concerns, and perspectives on the Global Compacts on Migration and Refugees. Over two days, these local authorities shared ideas on how to promote migrant and refugee integration, rights protections, and empowerment, and ensure that the voice of local governments is heard by national and international decision-makers.

Since the Global Mayors Summit, New York City has continued working with partner cities to strategically engage on the Global Compacts. As the UN and Member States negotiate the Migration compact, we encourage them to look to cities and to incorporate our frontline, lived experience.

Local governments often are not responsible for national-level immigration policies, but we are responsible for providing basic services and protecting the human rights of all our residents, regardless of how they arrived in our jurisdictions. Because of this long history of mixed migration in our neighborhoods, cities have spent decades creating and testing inclusive policies and programs. We have deep experience implementing the measures being proposed in the zero draft text for the Global Compacts, and we will be instrumental and essential in helping to implement the Compacts once they are adopted.

Our message to you is this: Cities are ready to help, we have the expertise, and we know that in order to achieve an inclusive and human-centered Global Compact, our voices need to be heard.

The challenges of our 21<sup>st</sup> century demand a fresh approach, where our futures are inextricably linked, and increasingly urbanized. Cities understand that we cannot go it alone – we must work together, in partnership and cooperation.

Thank you for being in New York City for these discussions at the International Dialogue on Migration over the next two days. They will help us work collectively towards our common goal – to ensure an equitable, safe and inclusive world – and the City of New York is pleased to work alongside you on this mission.

Thank you.