



CLOSING REMARKS

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INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION

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Honorable Ministers,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'd like to start by thanking you all for having been active and engaged actors over the course of these past two days in this timely discussion.

I'd also like to thank all the key actors in the GCM process, namely the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Mr. Peter Thomson, the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration, Ms. Louise Arbour, and the two co-facilitators Ambassador Jürg Lauber of Switzerland and Ambassador Gomez Camacho of Mexico to the UN, for their inclusive approach and inspiring leadership in guiding our efforts towards a balanced and comprehensive GCM.

This was the second of the two IDMs scheduled by IOM in 2017 as part of its contribution to the preparatory process of the Global Compact for Migration, and in response to the call in the modalities resolution to utilize IOM's principal policy forum on migration, to gather views from all relevant stakeholders for consideration by Member States in the elaboration of the global compact.

The discussions and numerous valuable views and the experiences that were shared during this workshop highlight the importance of placing the rights, vulnerabilities and agency of migrants at the center of the international community's efforts to address migration in a holistic and comprehensive manner. I believe that the ideas that have emerged at this IDM can make an important contribution to the elaboration of the Global Compact.

The range of views expressed at the workshop no doubt improved our understanding of the kinds of vulnerabilities migrants face as well as existing and potential measures to reduce situations of vulnerability and respond to the protection and assistance needs that migrants have at different stages of their migratory journey.

Yesterday and today we heard inspiring and valuable remarks from His Excellency the Deputy Minister Mohammad, His Excellency Minister Hussen, Her Excellency Minister Thomas, Her Excellency the Minister Mbareck Fall, the representatives of diaspora and civil society in the Migrant's Voice panel and from many senior experts and distinguished representatives of governments, civil society, international organizations, academia, and the private sector. Together they contributed critical views and enriched this timely discussion with their experience. I wish to thank them again for having made time to join this discussion and present their important views.

To summarize the main conclusions that have emerged from this rich dialogue, I would like to highlight 7 main takeaways:

1. This first is that migrants are not inherently vulnerable or uniformly victims.

It is important not to generalize or stigmatize. Rather migrants are heterogeneous human beings, with rights, agency, and capacities, and not a homogenous vulnerable group. Appropriately, discussion has been migrant-centric. Migration, is after all, about people. It is about how and why people move. Our efforts here to look at situations of vulnerability is not intended to create a new category of vulnerable migrants for international protection. Rather, we need to understand and identify situations of vulnerability for migrants and their impact to achieve well managed, safe and orderly migration.

Identifying and taking seriously situations of vulnerability for migrants is a matter of responsibility and of common sense to ensure effective protection of their rights on the ground and safer and more orderly migration.

Equally importantly, you underlined the importance of distinguishing between refugees and migrants, given the separate legal frameworks involved and the need for international protection in the case of refugees, while recognizing that, in practice, migrants and refugees can experience many of the same vulnerabilities.

Many speakers emphasized the need to address the vulnerabilities caused by being in an irregular situation by creating more legal pathways for migration.

Speakers highlighted the need for stakeholders to differentiate the response to vulnerabilities, distinguishing between those that require an immediate short term response and those that requires prevention and long term consideration.

2. Second: there are a range of factors both in terms of structural and situational factors that impact vulnerabilities at different stages of the migration process: in country of origin, en route, in the destination countries.

Many of you stressed the critical importance of recognizing that vulnerabilities can be embodied, structural or situational. It is therefore important to consider each individual migrant's particular situation, the factors that contribute to vulnerability, and the factors that contribute to resilience. These need to be identified and addressed distinctly and depending on the specific conditions of individual migrants.

While looking at the specific needs of certain migrants, such as children, ill or trafficked migrants, as well as migrants displaced as a result of environmental degradation exacerbated by climate change, who are more likely to experience vulnerabilities, it is essential to recognize in the GCM how to address the situational factors that make migrants vulnerable and to look at ways to increase their resilience and empower them.

There is increased recognition of the necessity to address environmental and climate impacts on the migration of people. It is important to recall that the New York Declaration formally acknowledges that climate, environmental and natural disasters are key drivers of migration and that population movements can also adversely impact the environment. Environmental or climate migrants do not fall under the 1951 Geneva Convention, and to provide protection for these migrants, the GCM should formally recognize the importance of environmental and climatic factors in the set of common principles and understandings that Member States will develop regarding international migration.

3. Third: there is a need to develop well-coordinated and holistic policy to address and reduce migrants' vulnerabilities in a comprehensive way.

When assessing or predicting the vulnerability of individuals, households, or groups we should always adopt a holistic evaluation of the risk, the factors and the resources at their disposal.

There is a need to work on policies, programmes, and frameworks for safe and regular migration, including labour mobility; guarantee respect for the human, social, economic, and labour rights of citizens and migrants; work to reduce discrimination against marginalized groups; improve access to justice in a manner similar or equal to nationals; and uphold the rule of law.

There is a need to consider implementation of standardized pre-departure and post-arrival orientation for migrant workers that empowers them with information regarding the migration process, life in the country of destination, and their rights and responsibilities in the workplace and as residents.

Many of you agreed that responding effectively to the immediate needs of migrants in vulnerable situations also requires appropriate programmatic responses and distribution of tasks. Building national and regional responses on a shared and comprehensive foundation that works to reduce the sources of vulnerabilities is a critical step.

Moreover, the importance of comprehensive, inclusive migration policies at the national level was stressed. Towards this aim, promoting a whole of government and whole of society approach is necessary, considering the role of local authorities, communities, civil society, private sector and migrant associations themselves.

4. The fourth takeaway is that while policies and operational frameworks are important, they must be implemented in order to address vulnerabilities.

Some speakers indicated that there is already a robust international legal framework, the key challenge is not creating new norms but rather effectively implementing those that already exist, regardless of a migrant's administrative status, and ensuring in practice the rule of law. However others expressed that, at this point, creating new norms where gaps are identified is still envisaged within the GCM process.

Applying instruments available to ensure respect for human rights of migrants at borders, in return, readmission and post-return monitoring, and establishing accountability mechanisms.

Existing legal frameworks protect all individuals regardless of “category” and all individuals are rights holders, but effective implementation needs to be better geared to meet the needs of migrants in vulnerable situations.

An example of this is the need to implement measures to regulate labour recruiters, including the ratification of Convention 181 on Private Employment Agencies (1997).

5. The fifth takeaway is that successful integration and social inclusion are critical to address and mitigate migrant vulnerabilities and promote migrants’ resilience.

This message resounded strongly at the first IDM event in New York in April and was reiterated again by many discussants over the last two days.

Migrants are an integral part of today’s societies and, if well integrated and included socially and economically, they are more likely to find the needed support, to be less prone to vulnerabilities and to be more resilient. If well integrated they can contribute to development and prosperity of the destination country. At the same time, respecting, protecting and fulfilling migrants’ rights is itself a powerful means to facilitate social cohesion, respect and future development.

In this sense, as our distinguished panelists from Spain, Ecuador, UK, Ireland, US and Kazakhstan showed us in today’s panel on integration we must acknowledge and promote the role of integration, inclusion, access to health services, education, linguistic and cultural skills as important means to reduce situations of vulnerability on the ground and to enable them to contribute to development of both their destination country and country of origin. It was noted that vulnerabilities can also apply to citizens. Fixes put in place for citizens should apply equally to migrants.

This should include measures to foster self-reliance by expanding access to opportunities for migrants, especially the most vulnerable, as appropriate, livelihood and labour market opportunities, without discrimination, and in a manner which also supports host communities. Equitable access to health for migrants can reduce health and social costs,

improve social cohesion and protect public health. Human rights should underpin health policies in migrant-receiving communities.

States, diaspora, private sector, civil society, health personnel, schools and local institutions have a crucial role in combatting all forms of discrimination against migrants, rejecting all hateful rhetoric and narratives to avoid marginalization of migrants, and combat them in line with relevant domestic and international laws. Our speakers today presented valuable practices in doing so.

6. The sixth message is that international cooperation is at the hearth of the GCM.

The GCM is an opportunity to strengthen cooperation between all stakeholders to ensure the effectiveness and coherence of the efforts of the international community's in support of migrants in vulnerable situations.

Many of you called for better coordination between all parties. International cooperation, including bilateral cooperation measures to respond to cross-border migration flows, are essential to GCM and to addressing vulnerabilities. As the representatives of Italy and the Philippines mentioned there is need for a shared responsibility.

When dealing with such a complex and dynamic phenomenon as migration is, especially when we look at the great challenges that migrants and States are faced with, one can only agree that cooperation and coordination are the only realistic options to respond to these quickly and efficiently. The GCM comes in at this timely moment to strengthen States' commitments on migration and enhance cooperation with all stakeholders involved.

7. The seventh and last takeaway is the need to carefully plan the implementation phase following the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration.

As many of you rightly pointed out, a global compact without implementation and monitoring instruments would be an empty exercise. We must ensure that the commitments made are fulfilled and followed-up on.

The GCM should set goals, benchmarks, and propose review mechanisms to measure progress. To this end, we would need data and concrete tools to measure the progress of implementation.

Conclusions:

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We must place migrants and their rights, vulnerabilities, needs, responsibilities and capacities, at the heart of our efforts, and address migration comprehensively including in relation to development, humanitarian, climate change, and peace and security matters.

The Global Compact for Migration presents an historic and unique opportunity for the international community to reach common understandings and clear commitments to manage the global phenomenon of migration in a safe, orderly and regular manner through a comprehensive cooperation framework.

A more elaborate summary of the discussions and proposals gathered in the past two days will be shared with you in the coming days. The outcome of this discussion and of the first workshop will be consolidated in a publication that we will aim to finalize in time for the stocktaking conference in December to inform the development of the Global Compact on Migration.

I thank all panelists and all of you once more for your participation and important contributions to this debate. It was great to have such a numerous audience during these 2 days.

I would also like to thank the Government of Turkey, the Government of the United States and the Government of Australia for their generous financial contribution towards the IDM. This event would have not been possible without their support.

Last but not least, I would like to thank my IOM colleagues who worked hard to organize this IDM.