

Opening Remarks by the Director General of IOM
Second International Dialogue on Migration in 2018
Towards effective migration governance: partnerships for capacity
development
8-9 October 2018, Geneva

It is with great honour that I welcome you here today, for the second session of the International Dialogue on Migration this year. It is my first as Director General of IOM, though far from the first for many of you.

We are at an historic moment. In two months, many of us will meet again in Marrakesh to sign a landmark document, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and I want to take this opportunity to thank Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration, Louise Arbour, for her dedication and expertise in shepherding us to this point.

The Compact provides a new reference point for actors working on migration, including IOM itself. Though legally non-binding, it is a comprehensive framework that offers both state and non-state actors the guiding principles for cooperating on migration and sharing responsibility for those who migrate. In this, it joins the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in setting out foundational objectives for the global community, which is further facilitated by a number of consultative and dialogue processes - not least the one for which we have come here together today.

Allow me also to pay tribute to the work of Ambassadors Lauber and Gomez-Camacho, the co-facilitators, who provided the necessary support to a successful conclusion of the Global Compact.

The energy and commitment that has led to the final text of the Compact has been inspiring, even more so given the charged debate on migration that has emerged in many parts of the world since 2015. The Compact has been forged in the shadow of political crisis, not least here in Europe. However, the open and inclusive process of negotiating the text has brought an unprecedented number of member states together with civil society, UN agencies and a wide range of experts to recognize commonly key areas of convergence, resolve critical questions of divergence, and set clear priorities for work. It has resulted, in my view, in a rounded and balanced document that acknowledges the urgency of a shared approach to managing migration, without bowing to the panicked narrative of crisis. A lot will now depend on the voluntary engagement by Member States to attain the objectives of the Global Compact.

Today, here, we turn to the difficult task of transforming the words of the Compact into action.

IOM has been given a central role in the implementation of the Global Compact, a role that will require deep commitment and dedication. IOM's staff and membership stand ready to take on this responsibility, and we look forward to forging stronger partnerships with actors in the UN system, with our Member States, and beyond.

This takes several forms.

The establishment of a UN Network on Migration will have a transformative effect on how all UN agencies coordinate on this key issue. This coordination will not stand alone, but nor will it seek to duplicate the many other valuable means of collaboration, whether the Global Forum on Migration and Development, or the many key Regional Consultation Processes on Migration in which IOM plays a key role.

In one week's time, UN agencies will come together to establish the terms of reference and the mission statement of the new network under the aegis of the Special Representative. As coordinator and secretariat of the Network, IOM is committed to executing its role in a full and open spirit of partnership and cooperation with its fellow UN agencies, building upon the strong and effective cooperation between agencies that we already witness on a daily basis at regional and country level. In addition, IOM will ensure that all stakeholders and Member States are well informed on the activities of the Network and can actively participate in its development. We welcome your views and suggestions, and I look forward to hearing from you your thoughts and perspectives during these two days.

Second, a capacity-building mechanism will be established within the United Nations system, designed to support the implementation of the Compact itself. We will hear tomorrow how governments, civil society and development banks might develop innovative solutions, new means to cooperate and, critically, measure efforts to build capacity.

The proposed capacity-building mechanism includes a start-up fund, in recognition of the fact that the work to proactively address the objectives of the Compact will require strong financing from a variety of sources. Long-term funding strategies afford agencies the opportunity to invest in key aspects of migration support and reduce the risk that governments are forced to divert resources, at last minute, to address crises that might have been more effectively managed at an earlier point. Supporting states to have the confidence to look ahead, rather than over their shoulders, will have a ripple effect on how migration itself is perceived, as an integral part of modern life, and not a risk to be minimized. A prominent part will be devoted to address the deep root causes of migration, linking in an effective way migration and development policy. And finally, more broadly, the principles and philosophies espoused in the Compact itself. IOM is already working on many, if not all, the objectives set out in the Compact, and working with many of you to identify solutions to newly emerging challenges. Migration dynamics are increasingly complex, and that complexity has given rise to an ever more diverse, mobile migrant population. Some people move for the purposes of work, family, and love; many more find themselves moving for other compelling reasons, whether violence, disease, poverty, or disaster. We should remain vigilant in understanding how drivers of migration will continue to shift, and develop strategies that can increase resilience, reduce vulnerability, and offer choices to those who move. For example, the Compact highlights the impact that changes in our climate will bring to communities across the globe, and seeks to further strengthen coordination and coherent response, particularly at regional and sub-regional level.

At the same time, IOM will stick to its DNA: a decentralized, flexible, cost-effective, capable of delivering tailor-made solutions, and above all, close to migrants, organization. While designing structures which can respond to the overlapping – and sometimes conflicting - needs of countries of destination, transit, and origin, we must also incorporate the complex needs and desires of migrants themselves. It is all too easy, when talking at the global level, to forget who we are talking about. We need better data to track emerging patterns of migration, and to map the characteristics of those who move, and here the use of modern technology is central. But this should not simply be an aggregation of numbers, used flatly to indicate success or failure. Rather, data collection should be used smartly, alongside qualitative research and strong evaluation processes, to form the basis for policies that can be responsive to change, and properly resourced.

The Compact highlights that the physical movement of people is just the starting point: it will be just as important to create the conditions for migrants to fully contribute to the communities in which they find themselves, as well as communities at home. Looking beyond the journey, and understanding the full experience of migration, will be crucial to finding common ground for collaboration.

Implementation of the Compact will not be a small undertaking. It lays upon the shoulders of Member States and needs to count on cooperation and support from IOM. It certainly cannot be undertaken alone. The act of migration is individual, but to be successful requires the support of

multitude of different players. In the same way, fulfilling the promise of the Compact will require the active engagement and partnership of an international village of actors, many of which you yourselves represent.

Migration, is, we all know, at the core of national sovereignty. National governments set the parameters for migration, both through their policies and their engagement with each other. Every country that experiences migration and mobility has lessons - both good and bad - to impart, not least on the need for institutional coherence and coordination. The Compact can become the reference point around which those lessons are shaped and exchanged.

But it is local governments who do much of the critical work within those parameters. The local level is where shelter is provided, where public services are delivered, where security is assured and where employment opportunities are accessed. It is, in short, where migration is experienced. The Global Mayoral Forum - an annual dialogue led by cities on migration and development - highlights the role of cities as a catalyst for more coordinated policy. And indeed, we heard in the last session of this Dialogue - hosted in New York - from several mayors who would like to see deeper collaboration and partnership on migration.

Across the world, governments at all levels rely on the expertise and partnership of civil society, including key NGOs, academics, unions, employer groups and, increasingly, the private sector. These trusted partnerships between political actors and civil society will continue to be key in helping Member States build capacity across the full range of objectives set out in the Compact.

Migrants themselves, when arriving a new community, frequently look to their peers for immediate support. Diaspora groups have emerged as a key actor not only for development, but as a catalyst to immigrant empowerment. The iDiaspora platform -- launched here later today -- is not only an example of the power of migrant communities working together, but also a testament to the role of technology in creating new opportunities for cooperation, reducing the distance between those scattered around the globe.

Ladies and gentlemen, I think we are on the verge of a unique opportunity and I believe all of us together should invest in a more optimistic, and constructive, approach to migration. Not by avoiding hard questions, but by leaning into them. Sometimes this will require new and innovative solutions; more often it will require learning from our successes as well as our mistakes, building the capacity to do more, and do it better. By striving for a stronger, more positive, proactive management of migration, the international community can support the millions of individuals who – for a wide variety of reasons - take the courageous step and dangerous step sometimes of determining their own futures by crossing borders.

Our discussions today will strengthen the foundations of partnership between all stakeholders, and I hope that over the next two days, you will have the opportunity to learn, exchange ideas, and already begin to fulfill the promise of the Global Compact for Migration, ahead of the Intergovernmental Conference in December.

Once more, I welcome you all, and hope you have a productive discussion.