



OPENING REMARKS

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International Migration
INTERNATIONAL DIALOGUE ON MIGRATION**

**“Strengthening international cooperation on, and governance of, migration towards the
adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018”**

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**Dear Director General Swing,
Dear Excellencies, Dear colleagues,**

Let me thank IOM for inviting me to speak with you today at the International Dialogue on Migration, and allow me to take this opportunity to recognize Bill Swing’s remarkable leadership of IOM.

As we begin the process of envisaging what a global compact on migration will look like, IOM’s first International Dialogue of Migration this year rightly focuses on strengthening international cooperation and governance on migration.

Our objective here is a clear common one, expressly articulated in the Sustainable Development Goals and the New York Declaration: namely, to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration. And our topic today is timely, as this objective requires strong partnerships and enhanced migration governance.

At the outset, let me acknowledge the excellent work of my predecessors, particularly the reports of Ms. Karen AbuZayd and Mr. Peter Sutherland, who have so effectively improved our understanding of the reality of modern migration. Through their work, and that of many others, we are poised to improve our migration governance for the benefit of both the millions who move today in relative order and safety and for the many still who do not.

While the Global Compact process will focus on a number of substantive issues, some complex and difficult ones, it is also clear that its effectiveness will require strong partnerships among States, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, and migrants. This is true both in the compact’s development, and in its implementation, as partnerships will be key to a well thought-out, implementable outcome. The Sustainable Development Agenda framework provides us with a normative base from which to work in partnership so as to leave no one behind, including migrants.

In this context, today and tomorrow's forum is all the more important as it brings together so many of you, key migration partners governmental, non-governmental, the UN and others - at this crucial time.

The landmark New York Declaration entrusts us with an important responsibility to deliver on safe, orderly and regular migration in a manner that is principled and practicable, designed to improve the lives of millions of people on the move, of those they leave behind, and of those who will receive them throughout and at the end of their journey. The New York Declaration has emphasized that migration can provide substantial contributions to home and host societies. At the same time, the Sustainable Development Agenda has rightfully recognized migration's true development potential when it is safe, orderly and regular.

It is not an overstatement to say that migration is one of the most important issues we face. Migration issues are discussed not just here at UN headquarters; but across multiple ministries in every capital. As we have seen time and again, it can be a make or break issue in national elections. It is debated in national parliaments, local elections, company boardrooms, and across kitchen tables.

Our discussion today and tomorrow, and the ones we will have throughout the process leading to the Global Compact, invites us to address the fact that migration policies have long been the product of disjointed approaches, lacking central, integrated focus.

Further, national migration policies have often been disproportionately responsive to security concerns, insufficiently taking into account the broader, positive aspects of migration and often times not based on solid factual evidence. When these policies are unduly focused on one aspect of migration – say security – instead of integrating the whole range of migration issues, such as labour, health, foreign affairs and others, the outcome lacks coherence and fails to take into account realities reflected across different public and private sectors including the labour market and domestic host communities.

Tapping into the experiences of local authorities is also essential: migration policy is often made at the national level, yet most of its impacts are felt locally. Local voices are critical to the formation of coherent policy responses, including the need to assist host communities often facing hardship not entirely dissimilar to that of the migrants. Having a whole of society and whole of government approach will be a crucial element for strengthening migration governance within the forthcoming Global Compact.

An equally critical component of good migration governance is effective global cooperation, given that all countries, whether of origin, transit, or destination, share the opportunities as well as the challenges that migration presents. Lack of international cooperation often leads to more restrictive migration policies that ultimately leave migrants with few legal pathways and instead puts them in precarious situations, creating or

perpetuating the perception of a “migration crisis”, which those policies have been largely responsible in fomenting. Much of today’s migration is relatively safe and regular, but as much as regular pathways must continue to be improved, we must also acknowledge and better manage all the circumstances leading to irregular migration.

It is up to all of us to embrace human mobility, and recognize that good migration governance requires a commitment to genuine cooperation. People in transit and destination countries should not be made to look at migrants as burdens, or even worse as threats to themselves or their way of life. Instead, we need collectively to strengthen the narrative – one which has the virtue of truth – that recognizes human mobility and diversity as a contribution to evolving societies and strong economies. In this regard, we have committed ourselves, in the New York Declaration, to working together and in solidarity towards creating a Global Compact that will look at protecting migrants, facilitating legal pathways, and better assisting migrants in vulnerable situations.

Finally, let me also recognize the particular opportunities created by the entry of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) into the UN system as a related organization. With decades of experience and 10,000 staff worldwide, IOM brings with it unparalleled field experience and substantive expertise. I believe that your Heads of State and Government endorsed the entry of IOM into the UN system at the same time as the New York Declaration for a good reason: to take a concrete step towards better cooperation and governance on migration issues. The New York Declaration has transformed the global agenda to make migration a major priority, and the UN system is poised to rise to the challenge of transforming our approach to the global governance on migration.

Our task is formidable, and timelines are tight. But we are on the eve of harnessing the positives forces of human mobility and setting a new course for governance of international migration. Our efforts will be transformative for the lives of millions, our fellow human beings, our neighbours. I look forward to working with all of you in the months ahead towards this worthy objective.

Thank you.