

**Statement by**

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**International Dialogue on Migration in 2017**

**New York  
18-19 April 2017**

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Excellences,

Distinguished representatives,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am delighted to participate in “the International Dialogue on Migration” held for the first time under the ambit of the United Nations, which this year aims to contribute to the very important preparatory process for the realization of a Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. I would like seize this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations to the IOM for joining the UN family, and convey my appreciation to the efforts exerted by the organization in preparing for this workshop.

All me at the outset to make a few general remarks on the issue at hand then move to discuss in greater detail the thematic topic under consideration. As you all know, despite the immense importance of the subject issue, limited international attention has in fact been accorded to migration on the international level, and it is often dealt with in a piecemeal and disjointed manner. To date, we have no international binding document dealing with the people on the move, or how to protect their fundamental rights. This legal vacuum needs to be rectified promptly and effectively, especially in light of the tragic events that we have witnessed in the past few years, where countless people, in pursuit a better life for whatever reasons, fell victim to smuggling and trafficking networks that exploited their needs, often exposing them to a perilous journey to reach their aspired destination. Last year, more than 4500 people lost their lives in the Mediterranean Sea, and countless more in the desert. This situation should no longer be tolerated by the international community, which has a duty to fulfil its obligation, in the spirit of burden-sharing and common responsibility.

Recently, with the rise of populism and the political right, migration has increasingly become a polemical and contentious issue. These forces sought to manipulate the issue for political gain and in the process have fueled xenophobia and hatred, focusing on the problems related to migration, while ignoring all its beneficial aspects. Migration should be perceived for what it is: a positive phenomenon that if managed in an orderly manner, will generate enormous economic, social, and cultural benefits in both host communities and countries of origin.

There is no doubt that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development creates new opportunities and partnerships for to address this pertinent issue. More broadly, we believe that our negotiations in formulating the global compact should be guided by a number of the following parameters:

- 1- Migration should be dealt with through a **holistic and comprehensive approach, which should tackle the root causes of migration, such as political instability, poverty, unemployment.** Hence, development strategies in countries of origin or transit should be rigorously supported to stem potential irregular flows of migrants.
- 2- Migration is a multifaceted phenomenon, and hence cannot be fixed by applying **security measures only**; it requires rethinking of how development can work and what role the international community should play in that regard.
- 3- Opening legal pathways for safe and orderly migration must be discussed in a frank and objective debate the coming year, including facilitation of circular mobility schemes, seasonal work, and visa facilitation.
- 4- We should avoid as much as possible divisive and controversial issues that would ultimately lead to fragmentation and foment division, ultimately diverting our attention from the key issue at hand. It would be a shame not to take full advantage of this historic moment.

On the topic of the panel, I would like to briefly note that, the modalities resolution clearly stipulated that the negotiations process leading to the formulation of the GCM would be a States-led process. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge the immense scale and multifaceted nature of the phenomenon of migration, which necessitates the participation and contribution of key stakeholders in order to effectively address the issue in all its inter-linked aspects. Hence, as the title of this panel suggests, we should promote a whole-of-society approach to tackle the migration issue.

To that end, I will explain today how the Egyptian Government was able to involve the relevant stakeholders, such as civil society, private sector and the diaspora community, to contribute substantially to support the Government's efforts to tackle the migration issue.

**Q1: How can civil society and other relevant actors best organize themselves to contribute to migration policy and its implementation?**

- Information is key. By being better informed about developments concerning migration trends, routes, risks, the *modus operandi* of the smugglers of people and traffickers in persons, the stakeholders will be better positioned to contribute positively to the GCM.
- To that end, it is important to remain in close contact with the relevant national governmental agencies, and civil society organizations.
- In parallel, it is also important that the civil society agencies share their experiences of best practices and lessons learnt, based on their involvement with the daily realities of migration, and express their needs according to their direct contact with migrants.

- In Egypt, NGOs were very much involved in the formulation of the national law on combatting human trafficking. Since the promulgation of the law in 2010, the NGOs also actively participate in the implementation of the law, through their collaboration with the government to provide protection to the victims of trafficking, as well as to implement the national referral mechanism. This example shows that synergy and complementarity between NGOs and governmental agencies can lead to a better implementation of migration related laws.

**Q2: In view of the role of the private sector and civil society in managing day-to-day impacts of migration, how can governments work with these groups to promote well managed migration?**

- The areas of coordination and complementarity are endless. In Egypt we have a long history of cooperation with non-governmental stakeholders to deal with migration issues in all its aspects. Here are some examples:
  - **“Buy the Egyptian Product initiative: “**
  - Under the auspices of Minister of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the Ministry of Social Solidarity and the Social Fund for development, the NCCPIM & TIP has organized an exhibition for traditional Egyptian handicrafts, in cooperation with the Academy of Arts, under the title "**Buy the Egyptian Product**". This fair is a part of the exhibition series organized by the National Committee in the framework of the implementation of the national strategy to combat illegal migration.
  - The exhibition came as one of the NCCPIM&TIP planned activities to support young entrepreneurs as part of a wider strategy to combat irregular migration through provision of real and sustainable livelihood opportunities

to young Egyptians. The exhibition offered them a chance to market their products, guarantee the sustainability of their projects as well as increase their income and raise their living standards.

- **“Mashroo’ak (Your Project)”**:

- Mashroo’ak is **one** of the most distinctive economic initiatives launched after the concluding events of “Egypt the Future” Conference 2015.
- The Ministry of Local Development established a board of trustees for the **project**, chaired by the Prime Minister and run by representatives from the Ministry of Interior, Armed Forces, universities, media, banks, civil society, and the youth, with the aim to tackle the crisis of unemployment and the exacerbating problem of poverty.
- Mashroo’ak was initiated to encourage young people to establish small and micro enterprises, which are the provenance of any economic development, as they could be later transformed into medium and large enterprises. Small and micro enterprises can also greatly contribute to the development process, as they rely on younger labor and tend to have a more equitable income distribution, compared to larger enterprises.
- They also play a significant role in **generating job opportunities**; hence, alleviating poverty as they often provide jobs in return for reasonable incomes for workers from poor households, and for women lacking alternative income sources.
- **“Egyptian Central Bank Initiative to support SMEs”**
- The Central Egyptian Bank (CBE) launched, in January 2017, a program to fund 350,000 SMEs in four years. The CBE directed banks to increase the

percentage of loans allocated to this sector to 20% of their total loans portfolio and decrease the interest rate, annually, by 5%. This program aims to create almost 4 million job opportunities for youth and women over the 4 years, in order to decrease unemployment rates, boost the economy, and stimulate Egyptian exports.

- **“Researches on illegal migration of Egyptian Youth and Egyptian Unaccompanied Migrant Children”**
- To better understand the map of cities more prone to migration in Egypt, the Egyptian National Council of Human Rights, the Nation Committee of Combatting illegal migrations and human trafficking and the National Center for Social & Criminological Research conducted an important study on the reasons pushing youth to risk their lives to migrate to Europe. This study helped to identify the most urgent needs of the poor governorates in Egypt, and we are currently working with the EU, within the framework of the European Trust Fund for Africa, to formulate series of projects that will help to boost the socio-economic development in those areas, and how to increase the resilience of the communities receiving Egyptian returnees to better integrate them in their homes town.
- These institutions also conducted a research on Egyptian Unaccompanied Migrant Children, in order to tackle this alarming phenomenon. It’s important to state that the National Council of Childhood and Motherhood is currently playing an extremely commendable role to return Unaccompanied Minors and help them reintegrate in their home lands.

**Q3: What role will these actors have after the adoption of the GCM to assist States in fulfilling their commitments?**

- As I said in the beginning of my speech, the migration phenomenon is so complex and multifaceted, that we need to observe a “whole of society” approach to manage it in the soundest and most effective manners, to make sure we capture the benefit of migration, which is – and will remain – a natural movement of people since the dawn of history.
  - I would like to particularly emphasize the role of the private sector and financing institutions, as contributors to economic growth and job creation, two factors imperative to reach a socio-economic sustainable development that will tackle the root causes of irregular migration, such as poverty and unemployment. The private sector is – and should remain actively – a major contributor, with the help of government, to implement the Global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, by opening channels to training, capacity building, knowledge transfer which will lead to a better livelihood for migrants, especially in the countries of origin and transit.
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