

“Implementing the Global Compact on Migration: Existing and Envisaged Cooperation and Follow-up Mechanisms”

**Statement of Austin T. Fragomen, Jr.
Chairman, Business Mechanism, GFMD**

The New York Declaration on Refugees and Migrants makes an unequivocal case for the benefits and opportunities for safe, orderly and regular migration in furtherance of the goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Significantly, it invites the private sector and civil society to participate in multiple stakeholder alliances to support efforts to implement the commitments of this historic document.

The business community is an important private sector stakeholder and is recognized through the establishment of the Business Mechanism by the Global Forum on Migration and Development. The Business Mechanism will provide the vehicle to channel the voice of business in the development of migration policy by articulating the priorities of the private sector and bringing its expertise to the shared goals of the UN member states and civil society in implementation of the migration related goals of the SDG's and ECM. The Business Mechanism was established in 2016 by the GFMD to assure that the private employers of all sizes would have a seat at the table in presenting more effective, transparent and human migration policies taking into account labor market needs and economic perspectives. We presented a detailed report entitled “The Business Case for Migration” at the 9th Annual Meeting of the GFMD in Bangladesh. Moreover, we conducted our second annual Business Mechanism Thematic Meeting two weeks ago in Geneva with the theme of strengthening the public-private dialogue in achieving the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular

migration. There are 244 million migrants worldwide with approximately 150 million individuals employed. Migrants range in skill level across the spectrum and comprise a significant portion of the labor market in many countries. The goals of the global compact for safe, orderly regular migration align with the requirements of businesses which rely upon migrant workers.

I would like to briefly outline how each of these goals affect the business community. To facilitate orderly migration, it is crucial to focus upon governance through a comprehensive migration plan that is well-planned and well managed - a plan that recognizes the needs of the workforce while safeguarding the welfare of migrants. Policy makers should recognize labor market needs and modern business practices. Migrant policies should be predictable and coherent. These processes must be consistent and transparent. All elements of the process must be shielded from corruption and exploitation. These basic principles pertain to any immigration regime and should be set forth in the Compact.

Low skilled migration must be addressed as a source of employees, particularly for medium and small employers. Employers frequently are unable to recruit workers from the domestic labor force. Legal pathways must be established for low skilled migrants to provide services in short supply, lawfully. Where migrants lack permission to work lawfully, the immigration systems of the host country should provide the mechanism to regularize status. The practices of employing irregular migrants is pervasive and conducive to trafficking and other forms of human exploitation. Moreover, since most irregular migrants are not legally

employed, they typically do not participate in social services and health care programs. Moreover, the process of irregular migration results in substantial risk of physical harm and even death. Finally, addressing irregular migration is a political imperative given it's a major cause of negative public perception of migration and belies security concerns.

At the same time, the Business Mechanism appreciates that the private sector has a responsibility to promote coherent and comprehensive migration strategy. Businesses are committed to responsible recruitment, decent work, legal compliance, and promoting opportunity and integration for all workers.

Priorities of the Business Mechanism include encouraging circular migration beyond traditional seasonal work to include new sectors; and the introduction of job sharing schemes. The role of the diaspora should be expanded including , funding, facilitation and stimulation of structured diaspora investment options. Governments should support and encourage systems to promote and support entrepreneurial investment. Responsible recruitment is another high priority to assure that companies recruiting abroad and recruitment agencies assure transparency in their labor supply chain and ensure that all recruitment activities are performed in accordance with ethical recruitment principles and local legislation. Governments need to adopt and enforce the appropriate legal and regulating framework by addressing their legal gaps and practices that have been embedded in local labor markets. Existing international standards such as the ILO Convention 181 for Private Employment Agencies and the IOM International Recruitment Integration System (IRIS) provide international

voluntary ethical recruitment standards that will bridge international regulatory gaps. Sectorial and industry codes of conduct provide another important vehicle to monitor employer practices and final, education of and dissemination of information to migrants is essential. Development of innovative systems to facilitate placement of migrant workers with employment opportunities is also an important topic for the GCM, including skills identification and matching, skills assessment, certification and recognition, and skills development and integration . The major role of the private sector is to provide jobs and this can be facilitated by electronic cutting edge solutions to allow for the matching of global talent to private sector demand across enterprises and size of employer. Global skills partnerships should be encouraged where a country in need of skills trains workers abroad to return and fill that need. Refugees as well as other migrants will benefit from expanded job opportunities outside their native or host country. An attendant issue, particularly for refugees is the, issuance of travel documents and granting of work authorization either by the host country or the new receiving country. Predictable legal and regulatory regimes with timely outcomes are necessary for refugees as well as migrants Hopefully, the GCM will espouse these principles as well.

Finally, the private sector has a unique role to play in changing the public narrative about labor migrants and the critical need for their services. This advocacy would include the awareness of the causes of migration, the contribution of foreign talent to the economy, the realities of skills gaps, mismatches and demographics, the win-win that can be achieved for both the country of origin and the host country, and a condemnation of xenophobia and prejudiced anti-alien rhetoric.

The final point of significance is the cooperation mechanisms between stakeholders and the methodology of measuring programs in achieving the goals set forth in the GCM. The Business Mechanism plans to work closely with Civil Society in an effort to present unified recommendations expressed in simple and achievable terminology, with appropriate metrics and benchmarks to track progress in meeting the objectives. We believe that rigor and discipline is necessary to define and measure “what is success” in implementing the noble goals of the GCM.