

STATEMENT OF WELCOME

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“Inter-state Consultation Mechanisms on Migration and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration”

Seventh Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional, Inter-regional and Global Consultative Processes on Migration (GRCP 7)

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Excellences, distinguished delegates,

INTRODUCTION

It is honor and privilege to welcome you to this -- the 7th Global Meeting of Chairs and Secretariats of Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs).

This year, the seventh GRCP Meeting brings together 22 Regional Consultative Processes on Migration (RCPs) and Inter-regional forums on migration (IRF) -- and their main partners at the regional level -- the 5 UN Regional Commissions (UN RCs) -- and 4 regional economic organizations. We are gathered here around several common objectives:

- to reflect together on your role – as key regional actors – in the preparatory process to the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration;” (GCM) and
- to identify good practices and other contributions relevant to the formulation of the GCM as a comprehensive international cooperation framework on migration and human mobility.

I would like to highlight three points:

1. The Historical Significance of the Global Compact;
2. The RCPs as the Pioneers of the Global Compact; and
3. Your Key Role in the Global Compact Process.

1. The Historical Significance of the Global Compact

With the adoption on 19 September 2016 of the “New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants,” Member States of the United Nations (UN) agreed to embark on a path to develop two Global Compacts in 2018, one on refugees and one on migration.

For the first time, Heads of State and Government came together at the UN General Assembly, to discuss issues related to migration and refugees. This was a powerful political message – a signal that migration and refugee matters are squarely on the international political agenda – and that a comprehensive, long-term vision for human mobility is urgently needed.

On that same day, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) joined the UN system – in itself a further recognition of migration as a global governance issue. After 71 years, the UN finally has its own Migration Agency.

The Global Compact on Migration is intended to address migration from a global perspective and in all its dimensions – including human rights, humanitarian, development and environmental aspects.

In embarking on this process to develop the Global Compact, Member States have committed to develop a comprehensive framework for cooperation on international migration -- based on the existing international frameworks.

The Global Compact is expected to fill important gap in today's international system. (1) The Compact will define the global migration policy agenda and landscape for decades to come. (2) It would create the first comprehensive global agreement on human mobility. (3) The compact will help guide States' approach to migration through a set of common principles and understandings regarding migration in all its dimensions.

To be effective, the Compact will need a means of implementation and a mechanism for follow-up and review. This would ensure that the Compact is not simply words on paper, but that it will make a real difference in the lives of migrants and the capacity of Member States to govern migration responsibly...

In IOM's view, the Global Compact on Migration also presents an opportunity to work toward a world in which migrants move as a matter of genuine choice and not desperate necessity; a world in which the rights of migrants are protected throughout their migratory cycle; and one in which migration is well-governed so it can be the positive force that migration has always been for all the world's peoples and societies.

Central to this vision are four core elements:

- (1) Protecting Migrants human rights;
- (2) Facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration including creating greater opportunities and greater access to opportunities;
- (3) Reducing the incidence and impact of forced and irregular migration; and
- (4) Responding to the mobility impact of natural and human-made disasters, including climate change.

It is important to reiterate, however, that as a state-led process, ultimately it is the collective vision of Member States, not that of IOM, that will be reflected in the Global Compact for Migration. IOM's role is to "jointly service" the GCM process together with the UN Secretariat, including through the "provision of policy and technical expertise". The overall process leading to the adoption of the Global Compact for Migration, however, is led by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for International Migration, Ms. Louise Arbour, who is also present and will be speaking at the forthcoming sessions of this event; the President of the UN General Assembly and the GCM Co-facilitators (Ambassadors Gómez-Camacho of Mexico and Lauber of Switzerland) are also actively engaged in the process.

2. The RCPs as the Pioneers of the Global Compact.

The Global Compact on Migration has important antecedents. A certain structure and architecture has been built up over the last 30 -40 years. We are not starting from scratch.

The Global compact for migration will be building on a solid foundation of migration management and effective practices and partnership models for addressing migration issues.

Inter-state dialogue on migration dates back to the establishment of the first RCPs. The Inter-Governmental Consultations on Migration, Asylum and Refugees (IGC), established in 1985 is often considered the first migration dialogue. In 1990s the Budapest Process; Pacific Immigration Directors' Conference and the Regional Conference on Migration were established. Since 2000 we have witnessed an expansion of RCPs and IRFs: today we count 15 active RCPs and 16 active IRFs. Thanks to these initiatives gradually expanding in scope and geographical coverage, governments in all regions of the world have increasingly committed themselves to regular dialogue and cooperation through RCPs and IRFs, thereby enabling migration governance to gain acceptance as a topic of consideration in international fora.

There were several important milestones in the long road taking to the New York Declaration and subsequently to the GCM Consultations Phase.

- a. International dialogue on migration (2001);
- b. Bern Initiative (2003);
- c. Geneva Migration Group / Global Migration Group (GMG) (2005);
- d. Regional Consultative Processes on migration (1985 – continuing);
- e. UNGA High-Level Dialogues on International Migration and Development (2007, 2013 and a third foreseen by 2019);
- f. Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) (2007); ten meetings to date, with more to follow, including 2018 Summit (Morocco);
- g. Appointment of a Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General (SRSG) for International Migration and Development (2007-2017);
- h. Global Summit on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants at UN General Assembly on 19 September 2016;
- i. IOM's formal entry into the UN system at Summit on 19 September as a related organization (2016), preceded by UN Observer-ship in 1996;
- j. Appointment of a Special Representative of UN Secretary General on International Migration as Secretary-General of the Inter-Governmental conference; and the appointment of the Ambassadors of Mexico and of Switzerland to the United Nations in New York as the Co-facilitators leading the intergovernmental consultations and negotiations on issues related to the Global Compact and the intergovernmental conference.

All the above have contributed to a solid foundation on which to address international migration.

The foundation for the GCM also includes international human rights law, international labour law, international and transnational criminal law, international environmental law, as well as such important documents as the:

- 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,
- the Addis Ababa Action Agenda,
- the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of all Migrant Workers and Members of their Families,

- the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD),
- UN General Assembly Resolutions on Protection of migrants and on International migration and development,
- the Paris Climate Change Agreement, and
- the New Urban Agenda, among others.

Migration dialogues and consultative processes on migration, at the global inter-regional and regional level represent an important source of good practices and partnership models. These consultation mechanisms on migration have played an important role in promoting inter-state policy dialogue and shaping regional, inter-regional and global governance of migration. They have contributed to the emergence of common principles and approaches in addressing international migration, which can guide the preparation of the Global Compact for Migration.

Migration dialogues' important role in the global governance of migration is reflected in both the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and the ensuing Modalities Resolution: these documents refer to "existing bilateral, regional and global cooperation and partnership mechanisms", in particular global processes and RCPs as valid mechanisms to contribute to the preparatory process and negotiations towards the Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

The GCM can make use of the important resources developed through the global processes on migration, such as the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), IOM's International Dialogue on Migration (IDM), the UN High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development (UN HLD), in particular the Eight-point Agenda for Action on Making Migration Work, as well as the International Agenda for Migration Management (IAMM) by the Berne Initiative, a pioneering global process on migration.

Your regional groups have given rise to an array of effective practices on migration, regional and inter-regional policies, legislation, projects and structures that can inform and inspire the GCM preparation. The survey conducted among the inter-state consultation mechanisms on migration in preparation to this event has revealed a rich assortment of strategies, procedures, standards, action plans, handbooks, initiatives and funds on almost each one of the twenty-four GCM elements listed in the New York Declaration. Most of these practices are human-rights-centered and directly or indirectly geared to the migration-related Sustainable Development Goal targets in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Inasmuch as the GCM will be anchored in the 2030 Agenda, it is important to note that some of your regional and global processes on migration address the nexus between migration and development. All of these processes acknowledge migrants' and diasporas' contributions to sustainable development. This way they all contribute to GCM.

I look forward to your reflections on the significant groundwork that your processes on migration have established in support of overall migration governance and leading to the GCM, its implementation and follow up.

3. Your Key Role in the GCM Process

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is a Member-state-led effort. The GCM foresees your contributions and also, those of other partners including civil society, and the private sector, regional economic organizations and UN Regional Commissions -- all of whom I am honored to welcome here today.

“Partnerships in support of the Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration” is a key component of this event’s proceedings.

The following main achievements by you can inspire elaboration of common principles, commitments and understandings on international migration:

- Confidence-building among their constituent states;
- Identification of key migration issues and challenges in their given regions;
- Networking and partnerships with various entities, including intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations;
- Consensus by their constituent states on a common language on migration.

Many, if not most of you are already consulting on the GCM.

This Meeting provides an opportunity to review and collate your most relevant good practices and other contributions to identify core recommendations on the GCM; and to reflect on potential partnerships to make a comprehensive international cooperation framework on migrants and human mobility a reality.

RCPs, IRFs, Global Processes on migration and their partners can provide support in many ways, for example by:

1. Offering platforms for Member States to discuss the GCM.
2. Helping shape individual Member States thinking on the GCM.
3. Stock-taking, collating research, data and compiling good practices and common principles.
4. Compiling respective inputs on means of implementation and a framework for follow-up and review of implementation as GCM components.
5. Formulating recommendations to the GCM as a comprehensive international cooperation framework on migrants and human mobility.
6. Relating your work towards attainment of the SDGs to the preparatory process of the GCM and prepare analyses, studies, papers or other input towards the development of the GCM.
7. Revisiting existing strategies and programmes and aligning them with the Global compact for migration, once it is adopted.
8. Building capacities of respective member states.
9. Planning and implementing projects in support of the GCM.
10. Engaging in the GCM follow-up and review.
11. Seeking and entering into partnerships in support of the GCM.

All participants – governments, international organizations, civil society, the private sector, and others – are expected to contribute to the realization of the Global compact for migration.

It is through partnership and cooperation that the international community can best achieve orderly and safe migration for the benefit of all. Rather than replacing the existing regional, inter-regional and global migration dialogues, the GCM gives greater scope for all of you to become even more purposeful and more productive.

CONCLUSION

In closing, I would like to thank the Government of the United States of America for its generous contributions to make this meeting possible. I would further like to acknowledge the financial and in-kind contributions of several other donors to various RCPs and IRFs. These contributions are critical to RCPs' and IRFs' capacities to fulfil their potential for sustained dialogue and cooperation on migration issues.

IOM will continue to support RCPs, IRFs and global processes on migration as part of our core work, fully respecting their state-driven nature. I am confident that the Global Meetings of RCPs will continue facilitating enhanced dialogue and information exchange among RCPs, IRFs and global processes on migration, and I look forward to Global RCP Meetings continuing to catalyze and consolidate existing expertise.

I would like to reiterate IOM's commitment to continue supporting all actors, RCPs, IRFs and global processes on migration, UN RCs, regional organizations in the process leading to the adoption of the Global compact for migration.

As the UN agency for migration, IOM is well placed to facilitate the contributions of Inter-State Consultation Mechanisms on Migration, whether regional (RCPs), inter-regional (IRFs) or global processes.

I wish you a successful Meeting and interactive, fruitful discussions. I look forward to its outcomes.