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**at the September Summit and signing of the IOM-UN Agreement**  
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**INTRODUCTION.**

The signature of this historic agreement brings the leading global migration agency -- the International Organization for Migration (IOM) -- into the United Nations and culminates a 65-year relationship with the UN. So, for the very first time in 71 years, the United Nations now has a "UN Migration Agency." This is a singular honor for our Organization and, I believe, a genuine success -- for migrants in particular but also for Member States and indeed for this Summit.

On behalf of IOM's 10,000 colleagues in some 500 duty stations on all five continents, I wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Presidents of the 71<sup>st</sup> and 70<sup>th</sup> General Assemblies, as well as IOM's 165 Member States and the 193 Member States of the United Nations who are assembled here today. Thank you for this bold and visionary decision.

There are three developments have brought us to this landmark moment today and these are my three points. First of all global migration trends, secondly fortuitous timing and thirdly trust built on a half-century of cooperation.

**I. MIGRATION AS A "MEGA-TREND"**

The first point is that migration has become a mega-trend of our century.

- We live in a world on the move – there have never been so many people in movement. Then, unprecedented human mobility: one billion of our seven billion world are migrants; one in every seven of us is a migrant. Were the 244 million international migrants to constitute themselves as a country, they would have a population slightly smaller than Indonesia's and slightly larger than Brazil's. They would have a gross domestic product roughly that of a small to medium size European country and far exceed all foreign aid.
- Driving migration are of course demography; disasters; the digital revolution; distance-shrinking technology; north-south disparities; and environmental degradation.
- Unfortunately, as a result of these driving forces, a record number of people are uprooted, forced to move -- refugees, internally displaced persons, victims of trafficking, unaccompanied minors. And climate change threatens yet a further 75 million living just 1 m above sea level.
- We're facing, also, a series – that I have not seen in my lifetime – of unprecedented simultaneous, complex and protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies in an "arc of instability," that stretches from the Western bulge of Africa to the Himalayas.
- Worse still, there is little prospect that I see to resolve any of these crises in the short to medium term. Widespread, growing anti-migrant sentiment and policies have led to the cruel irony that



those fleeing terrorism and fleeing armed conflict are themselves now accused of terrorism and criminality in the public mind of many.

- Besides the challenge of disasters, we face the demographic challenge of a Global North in demographic deficit, and a Global South with a turgid rate of job creation facing demographic surplus.
- So our thesis is that migration is inevitable in this century owing to the drivers that I mentioned; necessary if our economies and societies are to flourish; and highly desirable if we have responsible and humane migration policies.

-- To do this, we have to change the toxic public narrative now on migration, and learn to manage inexorably growing ethnic, cultural, social and religious diversity.

## **II. AN EVOLVING MIGRATORY LANDSCAPE.**

Second point, we live with an evolving migratory landscape.

- The timing for such an agreement today proved to be fortuitous. Global concerns, especially in Europe, led to a series of major agreements in 2015 -- a watershed year. Agreements that give the United Nations, for the first time, an explicit, official migration mandate and, as a non-UN member, this made a more formal IOM Association with the UN in the interest of both institutions.
- These agreements of course are: the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Framework; the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of September; and the Paris Climate Change declaration of December.
- Migration also had a prominent place on the agenda of the World Humanitarian Summit.
- We are gathered here today at an historic Summit -- the first ever to assemble Heads of State from around the world to address the questions of refugees and migrants. I am very grateful to the co-facilitators and others, who took part in this important New York declaration.
- Timing, therefore, became a critical element in the decision of our IOM member states to seek formal association with the UN.

## **III. FORMALIZING AN OLD RELATIONSHIP**

Let me just say thirdly, my final point, we are actually formalizing an old relationship.

Many people long thought that IOM was already in the UN. We've done everything together, we cooperate with all agencies, and we've built up a level of trust that made the negotiations fairly straightforward.

We were born, after all, together with our traditional partner UNHCR in 1951 to bring Europeans ravaged by the Second World War to safe shores and new lives. Since then, we have collaborated so closely that we have continued to think of ourselves as UN in many ways. Together with UNHCR we have brought at least 6 million people, refugees, to safe shores.



Through our negotiations, therefore, trust became a precious commodity. We will continue to keep our Member States fully and regularly informed. We will continue to insist on being cost-effective with our business model: where 97 percent of our 10,000 people are overseas, and out of a budget of 1.5 billion we will use less than 50 million to run the organization. We will also to continue to offer quick delivery – the same sort of openness that allowed us to come to consensus on this agreement.

## **CONCLUSION.**

Let me just conclude by saying that these three elements made the agreement possible: global trends, decade-long trust and fortuitous timing.

The positive nature of this agreement underscores that migration is not so much an issue to be resolved or a problem to be solved, it is a human reality that together we all have to manage. To do that we have to be both responsible and humane. This can be a “defining moment” for human mobility, beginning with this summit.

Thank you.