

UNITED NATIONS



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Closing remarks at the Inter-state Consultation
Mechanisms on Migration and the Global Compact for
Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration

CLOSING SESSION: REFLECTIONS ON THE GCM PROCESS,
CONTRIBUTIONS AND WAY FORWARD

Geneva, 11 October 2017

**Deputy Director General Thompson,
Distinguished Co-facilitators,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a great pleasure to join you at the closing of this important meeting, which brings together the many inter-state consultation mechanisms, and I thank IOM for this invitation.

Our objective for the global compact on migration is clear, and anchored in the Sustainable Development Goals and the New York Declaration: namely, to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.

This objective can only be achieved through strong partnerships between governments and stakeholders and through enhanced inter-state cooperation on migration in all its dimensions. Your discussions of how existing inter-state consultation mechanisms can contribute to the success of the global compact is therefore crucial and timely.

As you know, we are in the nearing the end of the consultations phase in preparation for the global compact. On the global level, Member States have exchanged views and experiences on a number of thematic issues at sessions held in New York, Geneva and Vienna. In addition, the UN Regional Economic Commissions have examined the regional and sub-regional aspects of international migration. These discussions so far – which I have had the pleasure to attend - have contributed immensely to grounding the global discussion in regional specificities, notably as many migrants undertake cross-border journeys within the same region or sub-region. As a matter of fact, migration first and foremost is happening at the regional level.

Similarly, the regional consultative processes are contributing through the analysis of migratory trends and patterns, best practices and policy recommendations at the regional and sub-regional levels to help sharpen our understanding of the nuances and complexities of migration. It is in this spirit that the global compact can be inspired by existing efforts and repositories of knowledge from the regional level.

In essence, many of these inter-state consultation mechanisms have shown us that cooperation, trust and compromise are critically needed on migration issues, particularly in light of changing demographics, economic inequalities, modern communications, climate change, and innate human aspirations for self-fulfillment. Addressing migration challenges and maximizing its positive impacts *together* is possible. And such cooperation, trust and compromise is what will be required as we work towards a global compact on migration.

A new cooperation framework at the global level therefore, should incorporate both the experiences and lessons learnt from the existing mechanisms and the renewed commitment for cooperation on key migration issues in the multilateral setting.

Let me share a few of the key issues that I believe have emerged from the discussions so far.

First, there is a critical shortage of reliable data on migration at all levels, which hinders policy making based on evidence and capable of targeting to the real needs of different population groups, including children, youth and women. This is particularly true for the phenomenon of irregular migration and for migrants working in the informal economy. The collection, analysis and dissemination of disaggregated data including by sex and age is key to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration.

Second, there is a need for enhanced cooperation on labour mobility and better information sharing and planning to offer more legal migration pathways for the greatest number of prospective migrants. Safe, orderly and regular access to jobs in formal economies, through fair and transparent varieties of decent work programs and systems for effective skills recognition, can also be expected to reduce recourse to irregular migration. It is equally important that we harvest the economic potential of cross border labor for the benefit of host and home communities and migrants themselves in particular in the form of remittances and transfer of skills at all levels.

Let us recall that cooperation on these and other migration-related issues are included in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and many commitments were made in the New York Declaration last fall. Migration can be a development enabler to address inequalities *if* it is safe, orderly and regular. We therefore must step up cooperation towards developing a global compact to help realize and implement the 2030 Agenda.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The need for a global framework for international cooperation on human mobility is self-evident and long overdue. The compact itself – as you are aware- will be the result of many months of governmental negotiations starting early next year. The output of a preparatory meeting co-chaired by the co-facilitators in Mexico to take stock of inputs received during the preparatory phase of the process will serve as one form of input into the zero draft text. The Secretary-General’s report which my office is currently preparing, is another input to the zero draft text and will aim to provide some conceptual coherence and a vision within which to anchor the more detailed aspects of the global compact.

In this context, I thank all Member States and stakeholders who have provided their inputs.

The compact should be centered around people, anchored in their fundamental human rights; it should promote international cooperation, and be forward looking if we want to be able to address migration challenges in the next decades. The inter-state consultation mechanisms are a vital part of the current international architecture on migration. They have been a critical factor for cooperation and we will need to leverage their positive results and lessons learnt in shaping the future of migration governance globally.

Thank you.