

**“Ensuring the right of all to remain in dignity, peace and security
in their countries of origin”**

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Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

Let me start by thanking the Permanent Mission of the Holy See for convening this important discussion today on the margins of the Global Compact's second thematic session, which is focusing on the drivers of migration.

There are three key points that I would like to make to contribute to this debate:

First, that the perilous movements we are increasingly witnessing are not truly voluntary. Rather, they are the consequence of a range of factors which erase any reasonable notion of choice.

Second – a direct corollary of the first – the causes that deprive people of a life in dignity, peace and security and force them to take desperate journeys must be urgently addressed.

And third, we must distinguish between drivers which remove the element of choice and those which enhance it. We must seek to maximise access to the latter, while seeking to reduce the prevalence of the former. This will require, as a vital component of any comprehensive response, the expansion of avenues for regular migration that facilitate safe mobility.

As recognized in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, while many people move through genuine free choice, others are compelled to leave their homes. Some flee persecution and conflict. Others flee drivers no less dangerous. In the first five months of this year alone, almost 2,000 deaths have been reported along migratory routes worldwide.

When individuals and their families find themselves in areas rendered inhospitable by the impacts of climate change, when they face biting poverty and discrimination, when they are unable to receive the medical care they require or when their children cannot go to school, they don't move "voluntarily"; they are compelled so to move.

In short, the dichotomy between voluntary and non-voluntary movement is becoming increasingly blurred – or, perhaps rather, our awareness of it is becoming increasingly unquestionable. It is essential, given this, that we seek to understand and assess why people move on an individual basis. Only then can we form effective responses.

While the “right to remain” is not recognized in international law, States have the duty to protect the enjoyment and realization of all human rights for everyone, in part to ensure that people are not compelled to make desperate choices. It is also essential that our development policies are linked to our concerns about human mobility. People should have the choice to remain in their countries of origin with access to opportunities to build full lives there.

But let me be clear: our focus should not be on stopping migration. We should not by any means endanger the right of individuals to leave a country, nor the right to seek protection in other countries, in accordance with international law.

Our focus should be on addressing the causes that deprive people of their dignity, their safety, their homes and families and which force them to abandon their homes and communities. We need to develop – and implement – policies that make it possible for people to realize their potential, meet their needs and fulfill their aspirations, alongside those communities from which they come and those which receive them.

Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

In line with the primary aim of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to “leave no one behind” and to “reach those furthest behind first”, Members States committed in the New York Declaration to respond to the drivers that exacerbate large movements and to cooperate to create conditions that allow communities and individuals to live in peace and prosperity in their homelands.

Eradicating poverty and inequality, promoting peaceful and inclusive societies, creating conditions for sustainable and inclusive growth, strengthening educational opportunities, and ensuring effective responses to natural disasters and

the adverse impacts of climate change are some of the much needed responses to which States committed last September in New York.

But this is a statement of the blindingly obvious. We know this. Achieve all these things and the world will be much better off. Yet, poverty will not be eradicated overnight; inclusive societies for all are not around the corner; the adverse impacts of climate change are not to be reversed any time soon. Indeed, for many, their futures, through climate change, are called into existential question.

What, then, needs to be done to address this challenge, starting now? As we strive for a world without poverty, one of greater equality and freedom for all, what can we do to address the most pressing situations in which people find themselves and which force them to undertake life-threatening, non-voluntary journeys?

This, more than a re-articulation of our common aspirations, needs to be the goal of the Global Compact.

I leave you with three ideas for the way forward. They represent only part of what needs to be done and, in themselves, are not fully formed. But they are suggestive, perhaps, of a course of action which seeks, concretely, to reflect the level of ambition and commitment demonstrated by Member States through the New York Declaration.

First, only genuine international cooperation will make a success of the GCM. This will entail – as is typically the case with cooperation – all involved making compromises. There is no solution out there, given the scale of the challenge and the very nature of migration that will not require truly collective action.

Two, identify those most in need of support now. The list is long: victims of trafficking, unaccompanied children, those whose countries/communities will no longer be habitable due to climate change all spring to mind. There will be many others, too. How can we ensure their protection, today? A Global Compact

containing concrete, measurable, time-bound commitments in this regard will be a major step forward.

And third, as we strive to combat those drivers of migration which, effectively, remove the element of choice from an individual's decision whether or not to move, greater progress is required to expand safe channels for regular migration. Without this, too many will continue to fall prey to the dangers of irregular pathways. The right to remain will have much more meaning if it encapsulates, too, the right to return home, knowing that this need not be for life.

We are now well underway in the process that will culminate, late next year, with a Global Compact on migration. That process requires us to explore ideas that might help give shape and form to our collective commitments. That will only come if we are brave enough to explore concrete proposals without fear. This requires listening to each other; it also requires pushing the envelope – exploring the possible, rather than simply pointing to the impossible.

I thank you for your attention.