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**Statement by Louise Arbour
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International Migration**

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International Dialogue on Migration 2018

**Towards effective migration governance: partnerships for
capacity development**

8 October 2018, Palais des Nations, Geneva

**Ambassador Eguiguren,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is a pleasure to be with you today. As we move ever closer to the conference in Marrakech, where I believe partnerships – of all varieties – must be a constant thread in our discussions, this gathering could not be more timely or better calibrated.

But it is a double pleasure, in fact, to be here as this is my first opportunity to welcome into his new role, António Vitorino. There's no question that IOM – indeed the broader migration community – will benefit immeasurably from António's presence among us. I wish him well and I look forward to working closely with him in these next, crucial few months.

I would like to focus my comments, this morning, on how the United Nations system is preparing to ensure that it is best placed to fully support the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration. This will require a clear sense of partnership on two levels.

First, as among the many parts of the United Nations, which can bring to bear an extraordinary breadth and depth of capacity and expertise to the whole range of issues covered by the Compact. And secondly, a broader partnership will draw on the equally varied and deep expertise on these issues that exists at large.

Next week, the UN system will meet here in Geneva to activate the UN network on migration.

This network, welcomed in the agreed text of the Compact, was called for by the Secretary-General in his January report, 'Making Migration Work for All'. It represents the visible manifestation of our collective commitment to support the Compact's implementation in a coherent, collaborative, systematic fashion, while bringing IOM squarely in to the center of this UN endeavour.

By now the network's main contours are well known:

a) IOM will serve as the coordinator and secretariat of the network, which will:

b) fully draw from the technical expertise and experience of relevant entities within the United Nations system and which will ground its work in the UN Charter, international law, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, alongside the Compact;

c) fully align its work with existing coordination mechanisms and the repositioning of the United Nations Development System;

d) be structured around a small core group of UN entities, an extended membership drawn from the UN system, and a small number of working groups chaired by a UN entity with IOM as secretariat and with external partners as may be desirable.; and,

e) also have, as part of its structure, a capacity building mechanism, as called for in the Compact. This will comprise three parts: a start-up fund; a connection hub; and a knowledge platform.

It would be inappropriate to get ahead of the meeting next week except to say I am confident we are on track. Terms of reference for the network are close to finalization. Likewise, the initial composition of its core and extended groups. I'm hopeful, too, that the meeting will lend further clarity on the question of the network's working groups and some initial priorities.

By Marrakech, the network will have a much clearer sense of how best it can move rapidly to help support the Compact's implementation.

I'd like here to impress upon you a number of features of the network's DNA.

First, its agility. We are determined that the network must at every stage place priority on supporting Member States' implementation of the Compact. This – rather than elaborate grounding legislation or ever more intricate structures – must be at the forefront of our planning.

That means not engaging in work that is already being done well by others. It also means being ready to change tack as circumstances warrant. And it means being responsive, as appropriate, to calls for support whether from Member States, UN country teams or other partners.

The network's working groups should reflect this agility. They should be task-oriented, and wherever possible timebound. Those that achieve little should be stood down; those that deliver could be scaled up. Lessons must be learnt from both. Indeed, in setting up the working groups, in how they run, and in how their impact is measured, the network has perhaps its biggest opportunity to do things differently.

Second, the network must be greater than the sum of its parts.

We should encourage a focus on those projects which require inputs from a range of UN system entities. The network should not, on the one hand, supplant the mandate-driven work of its members, nor, on the other, should it seek simply to be a grouping of otherwise disconnected projects. Rather, it should seek to maximize impact grounded in a spirit of collaboration and commitment to collective success.

Third, while focusing on results – on implementation – the network must also ensure an appropriate balance in its work.

One of the strengths of the Compact is its comprehensive approach: in its words, that it possesses ‘360-degree vision’. In saying that, we need to be clear that the scope of the Compact’s objectives, alongside its commitment to a comprehensive approach, presents both a challenge and an opportunity for the network.

The challenge is how best to deliver uniformly on all fronts, given finite resources. The opportunity lies in the range of expertise on which the UN system can draw (including with external partners).

Fourth, the network is fully aware that it does not operate in a vacuum. If we have learnt anything from the process of putting together the Compact, it is the sheer number and range of actors who can contribute to our collective agenda.

Formally, informally, at all levels and in all different combinations, engagement with partners will be frequent and intensive and two-way. Don’t wait for us to call you – and I know you’re not shy – feel free always to call us.

My fifth point should be self-evident; namely, that it is vital for the network's success that both its members, and partners – particularly the Member States – do all that they can to support it.

During the recent high-level week of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General had this to say:

I think that there is a type of schizophrenic debate within the humanitarian and development community; everybody asks for coordination, everybody asks for accountability, everybody asks for transparency and then we have this trend of each one going by itself – those at the donor level and...also at the agency level.

Let's not permit the same to be true of the migration community. The network will be organic. There will be many opportunities for course correction. Right now, its most pressing need is for it to come into being and begin the work with which it is tasked. Your support for this will be vital.

Finally, the network must approach its work with a combination of both humility and urgent ambition.

Humility because of the scale of the tasks ahead of us and because overselling ourselves will serve no purpose. Humility, too, because of the very real human dimension of migration. In fact, it is very much its human dimension that has made it so difficult to tackle international migration for a long time inside the UN system, and yet that has brought us to where we are today.

And, for the very same reasons, we must approach our task with urgent ambition.

In some six months, the United Nations membership was able to agree on a far-reaching framework to cooperate on one of the most pressing issues of our time. They – you – deserve nothing less than a system that does all that it can to help realize the scale of your ambition.