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Closing remarks

BY

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Closing Ceremony of Preparatory (stocktaking) meeting

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**Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me start by thanking the co-facilitators of this intergovernmental process, ambassador Gomez Camacho and ambassador Lauber, for planning, organizing and presiding over this successful meeting which has brought us closer to defining the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. It has been three days of extra-ordinarily intense stocktaking. I would also like to thank the President of the General Assembly, His Excellency Miroslav Lajcak, for his firm commitment to the issue of global migration. A special thank you goes to the government of Mexico and the state of Jalisco for hosting all of us in such an excellent and inspiring way which, I am sure, contributed to the positive outcome of this meeting. Last but not least, thank you to all participants - member states and multi-stakeholders – for your active and constructive contributions to what has truly been encouraging deliberations.

The Mexican hospitality, and sunshine, have provided us with the required energy to go back to New York and undertake the critical part of our collective mandate, to design and agree upon a global compact for safe, orderly, regular migration. Like all of you, I am conscious that this is no small task.

But before we get immersed in the details of content, language, trade-offs and strategies, we should take this opportunity to remind ourselves of the true significance of what we have embarked upon together.

Like other species, humans are territorial. We have inherited from our ancestors a geographic allocation of our respective place on this planet. This has brought us order and security but also inequities, constraints and conflict. We have an opportunity today to agree of ways of enhancing our collective security by addressing some of these inequities.

Even though it has been asserted time and again that the Global compact is not meant to be a legally binding document, I believe that the objective of enhancing safe and orderly migration is very much rooted in the Rule of Law. I don't mean here law in the sense of a Convention or Treaty or even domestic legislation. I mean it in a broader sense, as a fair and orderly organization of our interactions with each other, as individuals, and as groups of individuals.

This has never been better expressed than by French cleric Lacordaire who said: “Between the rich and the poor, between the master and the servant, between the strong and the weak, it is freedom that oppresses and the law that sets free”.

The objective of putting in place enhanced international cooperation on the many aspects of migration reflects this vision of the Rule of Law. We are set to improve the lives of millions of migrant workers and their contribution to our communities; to reduce recourse to dangerous channels of migration and to maximize the convergence of our values with our interests.

When we convene under the auspices of the United Nations, we engage in the pursuit of a truly global public interest. In doing so, there is no need to sacrifice national interests and ambitions. Quite the opposite. In facilitating the orderly growth of a well- managed international labour market, privileging legal routes and the fair treatment of migrants, we will reduce the insecurity inherent in disorder and illegality.

We have an opportunity today to begin to deal with one of the many challenges posed by the growing number of us occupying this planet. We will not solve every problem. Some of the most compelling arguments for action will be met by skepticism, ignorance, arrogance, selfishness, deep-rooted prejudice and even hatred. But the case for safe, orderly, regular migration is a compelling one, and the means of improving it have become increasingly clear in the course of our consultations in the last few months.

Most of our fellow citizens are open-minded and ready to be convinced by a rational discourse about the benefits of well-managed migration. Your leadership has never been more important. The steps we are poised to take will not resolve everything. But they will make a lot of things better.

I look forward to working closely with you in the months ahead. Thank you for your attention, and safe travels back home.