



Statement by Louise Arbour

Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration

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On the occasion of International Migrants Day

New York, 18 December 2017

A year from now, the world will adopt a ‘Global Compact’ on international migration – an agreement to ensure that migrants can live in safety and dignity. This is a time of hope for the international community.

The reality of migration is a wonderful story of human triumph, ingenuity, sister-, and brotherhood. The majority of the world’s 258 million international migrants move through safe channels and provide a wealth of contributions to their new communities while retaining an essential link to their origin countries.

Yet for many millions of others, on the move or living in the shadows, their status as migrants brings with it danger. Discrimination, persecution, degradation and death are the interlinked by-products both of prejudice and the failure effectively to manage the phenomenon of migration for the optimal benefit of both the migrant and their communities of origin and destination.

The Compact’s objective of putting in place enhanced international cooperation on the many aspects of migration holds within it the potential to improve the lives of millions of migrants and to enhance their contributions to our communities; to reduce recourse to dangerous channels of migration; and to maximize the convergence of our collective values with our collective interests.

When the world convenes under the auspices of the United Nations, it engages in the pursuit of a truly global public interest. In doing so, there is no need to sacrifice national interests and ambitions. In facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration, the international community will enhance individual and collective security and protect the rights and freedoms of migrants and host societies.

This is the Compact's importance and it needs to be told loudly, eloquently, and consistently. A discourse about the benefits of well-managed migration that is grounded in fact will surely prevail over discourse grounded in half-truth and fear.

As the Member States of the United Nations embark next year on negotiations to bring this Compact into being, it is to their representatives that I address this statement on International Migrants Day. I wish you all success; the courage of your convictions; and the determination never to lose sight of our collective goal: a world in which all human beings live in liberty and equality.