

Second informal interactive multi-stakeholder hearing

Preparatory process for the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the intergovernmental conference on international migration

11 October 2017

Room XIX, Palais des Nations, Geneva

The President of the General Assembly organized the second informal interactive multi-stakeholder hearing as part of the preparatory process for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration on 11 October 2017 in Geneva, in accordance with paragraph 30 of General Assembly resolution 71/280. Representatives of Member States, observers, civil society organizations, academic institutions and the private sector participated in the hearing. The hearing was organized in Geneva with support from IOM to benefit from the wide expertise Geneva-based organizations have on issues related to international migration.

At the opening segment of the hearing, **President of the General Assembly**, H.E. Mr. Miroslav Lajčák, emphasized the strength in diversity. Sharing different viewpoints, experiences, lessons learned, and best practices would contribute to a better and more effective Global Compact. The President highlighted that migrants should be viewed as people first and foremost, and noted that the theme of the 72nd session of the General Assembly is focus on people.

The **Secretary-General of the intergovernmental Conference to adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**, Ms. Louise Arbour, noted the important role of the civil society in targeting gaps and shortcomings in Member States discussions. She encouraged participants to provide action-oriented contributions to the Global Compact. Enhancing cooperation at the regional level would be key to the Global Compact, and the regional civil society consultations were a commendable effort to achieve this.

The first panel entitled **“Smuggling of migrants, trafficking in persons and contemporary forms of slavery”** was moderated by Mr. Ilias Chatzis, Chief of Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling Section of United Nations Office on Drugs & Crime. Panellists were Ms. Claire Falconer, Legal Director of Focus on Labour Exploitation; Ms. Kate Sheill, International Advocacy Officer of Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women and Ms. Tuesday Reitano, Deputy Director of Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. The panellists underlined how fear of criminalization enabled traffickers to exploit their victims, the need for better labour inspection, law enforcement and access to remedies, the nexus between smuggling and trafficking while the two needed to be separate, as well as the need to look at trafficking and smuggling with a broader sociological perspective instead of focusing exclusively on criminal justice.

During the interactive segment, the role of the shipping industry in saving lives on the seas, the work done by GFMD on trafficking and smuggling, the need to expand legal pathways as the most effective preventive measure against smuggling and trafficking, victims’ rights and protection and the importance of regional cooperation on preventing smuggling and trafficking were highlighted.

The second panel focused on **“Irregular migration and regular pathways, including decent work, labour mobility and recognition of skills and qualifications”** and was moderated by Ms. Michelle Leighton, Chief of the Labour Migration Branch of the International Labour Organization. Panellists included Mr. Jeroen Beirnaert, Human and Trade Union Rights Coordinator of International Trade Union Confederation; Mr. John Bingham, Head of Policy of International Catholic Migration Commission and Mr. Jochem de Boer, Global Public Affairs Manager of World Employment Confederation. Panellists underlined the need to create and expand legal pathways for all migrants, including labour migrants, and the duty of states to exercise their sovereign right of admission and border control in accordance with existing obligations under human rights conventions and international labour law. Grey economy creates demand for illegal migration, while exposing migrants to exploitation. Sector-wide visa schemes could be a useful tool to address labour shortages – at the same time, predicting evolving labour market needs is difficult and requires effective public-private collaboration. Recognition of skills and certificates obtained abroad can significantly improve labour migration, as well as provide work opportunities for people who migrate for other reasons. The panellists also noted that many migrants fall into an irregular situation with no fault of their own.

During the interactive segment, the work done under GFMD framework by civil society, business mechanism and intergovernmental discussions were highlighted. The potential of the Global Compact to galvanize action to implement already existing commitments and obligations was emphasized. Many speakers expressed the view that return should not be the sole or the leading response to irregular migration. Skills-matching and recognition could benefit both migrants and host communities, international efforts to harmonize professional regulatory standards would help to achieve this.

The third panel was preceded by remarks by Mr. **William Lacy Swing**, Director General of International Organization for Migration. Mr. Swing underscored the critical importance of stakeholder contributions and the need to base the Global Compact firmly on human rights. Although the Global Compact would become the first-ever holistic political agreement on international migration, it builds on a long history of debates and practical work on migration. Mr. Swing also laid out the work of IOM with different stakeholders, and the role of non-governmental stakeholders in the upcoming stock-taking and negotiation phases.

The third panel discussed **regional perspectives on migration**. Moderated by Mr. Colin Rajah, Civil Society Liaison on the Global Compact on Migration of the International Organization for Migration, the panel discussion provided an opportunity to share experiences and best practices from different regions, including the key findings of the regional civil society consultations. Structured loosely around the three main migration corridors, the panellist included Ms. Shannon Lederer, Director of Immigration Policy of American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations and Ms. Lizeth Lema, Regional Advocacy Coordinator of Asylum Access Latin America for the Americas, Ms. Milka Isinta of Pan-African Network in Defence of Migrant Rights, Ms. Michele LeVoy, Director of Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants and Mr. John Murray, Marine Director of International Chamber of Shipping for Africa and Europe, and Mr. Rafeek Azeez,

Executive Director of Migrant Forum in Asia, Ms. Roula Hamati, Head of Research and Advocacy of Insan Association and Mr. Murtaza Khan, Partner in Fragomen LLC for Asia and Middle East. During the discussion focused on the Americas, panellists and other speakers noted that policies are often designed to restrict migration and secure borders, rather than to harness full potential of migration or to secure migrants' rights. Need for social protection and social dialogue to combat xenophobia and discrimination was emphasized, as was the need to pay special attention to vulnerable groups including children. Both push and pull factors would have to be addressed to reduce irregular migration. Complementarity and interconnectedness of the migrant and refugee compacts was also stressed by many speakers.

The second discussion on Africa and Europe highlighted the need for effective non-discrimination policies for migration, for recognizing diasporas and the different ways civil society and private sector can contribute to making migration safer and integrating migrants in host countries. Global Compact should define a minimum set of rights that all migrants irrespective of their status are entitled to. Return and detention policies should be reviewed, better labour migration schemes, more effective family reunification and regularization campaigns should be considered as alternatives to punitive migration policies. Africa offers many interesting examples on upcoming policies for regional migration, e.g. mobility within ECOWAS and the proposals for African passport. The role of shipping industry in saving migrants in the Mediterranean irrespective of their status was also discussed.

In the last discussion focused on Asia and the Middle-East also discussed best practices on regularisation and integration. Need to ensure decent work and fair recruitment were highlighted as urgent challenges needing attention. Wages protection schemes and standard contracts can be beneficial to prevent exploitation of migrant workers. Many regional mechanisms and framework exist and need to be fully implemented. Private sector is getting more engaged in national policies in many countries in the region.

During the **closing segment**, the co-facilitators of the intergovernmental consultations and negotiations on the Global Compact, H.E. Mr. Jürg Lauber, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the United Nations, and H.E. Mr. Juan José Gómez Camacho, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations, stressed the importance of open and transparent exchange on all aspects of international migration, and the value of inputs from different stakeholders of various regions. In his closing remarks, the President of the General Assembly noted the importance of hearing the realities on the ground, and the need to agree on Global Compact that is universal, but takes into account the best practices and specific challenges experienced in different parts of the world.