

**Statement by  
the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society  
of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America**

**at the UNGA Multi-stakeholder Hearing  
on the Preparatory Process on Global Compact for Migration  
Panel 1: Human rights of all migrants  
UN Headquarters, New York  
July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2017**

Thank you, Mr. Moderator. The Episcopal Church is pleased to participate in this multi-stakeholder hearing and we thank the panelists and all participants for their support of migrants.

Our faith-based organization represents two million Christians in more than 15 countries in North, Central and South America, the Caribbean, Europe and Asia & the Pacific. Migrants join our Episcopal churches, schools and gathering spaces in search of a new community and spiritual family or basic material support: food, clothing, charitable donations, social services, community services and sanctuary. Indeed, we have entire church communities founded from diaspora populations and church wide ministries focusing on Asiamerican, Latino and Hispanic and other diasporas. So we are well versed in welcoming, listening to and caring for migrants.

We would like to make five recommendations:

- First, we recommend that the future Global Compact affirm that human rights are intrinsic and universally applicable to *all* human beings, *all* migrants, regardless of their legal status. Over the past few days, we have heard the term “legally staying migrants.” We flirt with dehumanizing the migrating person when we make this legal/illegal distinction. We are talking here about safe, orderly and regular migration. But what of unsafe, disorderly, irregular migration? How will we collectively ensure the dignity and safety of those whose integrity is threatened by their illegal, undocumented and irregular status? They risk being excluded by their criminalization and having their rights removed. As churches, we know this well, because many come to us seeking sanctuary and fearing deportation. Therefore, we recommend that the future Compact explicitly recognize this reality and affirm the UN Declaration on Human Rights and Agenda 2030, most especially the principle of Leaving No One Behind.
- Second, we recognize that some migrants embark on perfectly legal journeys to a better life, and along the way are duped, exploited, and trafficked. Their livelihood, freedom and their very lives are snatched away in this transition from safe to unsafe migration. It is important that the Compact articulate this reality, and reinforce and build upon the UN’s international legal frameworks for addressing human trafficking.
- Third, we are happy with the focus on migration as a normal, natural, productive and positive part of the human experience. Even when migration is successful, the person migrating still is vulnerable in integrating into a host country. Positive stories can overcome xenophobia, racism, fear, ignorance and beliefs in cultural exclusivity. In this regard, we are pleased to support the Department of Public Information’s Together Campaign and the “I am a Migrant” campaign, which certainly has its place in the Compact.
- Fourth, we welcome the notion of responsibility-sharing between member states, UN agencies and civil society. We recommend the explicit inclusion in the Compact of civil

society and faith-based organizations as key partners in responding to migrants' needs, an opportunity to "love our neighbor as ourselves".

- Finally, at the heart of The Episcopal Church's commitment to migrants are the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, a Palestinian Jew who was himself a migrant and itinerant teacher and preacher in the Middle East. He taught us to welcome the stranger, embrace the outcast and show preferential treatment to the most vulnerable. These values are intrinsic to our faith, many other faiths and even secular belief systems. We humbly propose that the future Global Compact highlight these shared moral and ethical values.

Thank you.