

**Opening remarks for the First
Informal Interactive Multi-
stakeholder hearing of the
preparatory process for the global
compact for safe, orderly and regular
migration and the intergovernmental
conference on international migration**

26 July 2017

*Secretary-General of the
Intergovernmental Conference on
International Migration, Louise
Arbour,
Excellencies,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Welcome to the first informal interactive multi-stakeholder hearing of the preparatory process for the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, and the intergovernmental conference on international migration.

Before continuing, I would like to thank Louise Arbour, the Secretary-General of the Intergovernmental Conference on International Migration, and her team for their great work as part of this process.

Today's hearing follows the General Assembly's decision in September last year to adopt the *New York Declaration for Refugees and*

Migrants, and to develop a ‘*global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration*’ to be adopted in 2018. This declaration was the first ever comprehensive international agreement on migration overseen by the United Nations.

The negotiation and expected adoption of the global compact presents us with an historic opportunity to address human mobility and migration cooperation in a comprehensive way, recognizing our common humanity.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The story of global migration is as old as humanity itself.

It has shaped our world in profound – and largely positive – ways.

Migrants have brought new skills, energy, perspectives, and experiences to their adopted homes.

They have helped to drive innovation; to increase economic growth. And they have enriched the cultural tapestries of faraway lands, building bonds between nations, and strengthening cross-cultural friendship and understanding.

Increasingly, human mobility is being recognised as an *opportunity* for both countries of origin and destination.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development aims to create a world in which extreme poverty is eliminated; people live in peaceful, just and prosperous societies; inequality is reduced; and the environment is protected. The policy nexus between achieving sustainable development and addressing the many dimensions of migration, is central to the process.

As the international community works on the challenges of rising

rates of migration, and of implementing the Sustainable Development Goals, there is a clear opportunity to mutually leverage these two critical policy agendas.

Seizing this opportunity should underlay today's multi-stakeholder hearing.

We are meeting today in the first of a series of multi-stakeholder hearings to be held as part of the preparatory process for the global compact.

It aims to broaden the views and voices participating in the preparatory process, by bringing together representatives of

Government with experts from civil society, the private sector, academia, and diaspora communities.

It builds on the contributions that have come from the four thematic consultations that have been held to date in Geneva and New York, under the leadership of the co-facilitators, Ambassador Juan Jose Gómez Camacho of Mexico, and Ambassador Jürg Lauber of Switzerland.

These contributions will be augmented in the coming months by two additional thematic consultations, and several regional and national-level consultations.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Today's multi-stakeholder hearing seeks to bring focused attention to four critical dimensions of international migration, namely: protecting the human rights of all migrants; understanding the drivers of migration; recognizing the contributions of migrants; and advancing international cooperation and governance of migration.

Participants are urged to make full use of today's opportunity to learn from one another; to share new ideas; and to provide helpful input into the preparatory process for the global compact.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

For most migrants, the decision to move away from families, communities and familiar surrounds to seek a better living elsewhere is both hard and life-changing.

Once they have embarked, many experience discrimination and stigmatisation, have their rights and protections overlooked, and find themselves caught in political crosshairs, with their differences to local populations exploited for political gain.

But for all of these hurdles and disincentives, the global movement

of people is currently occurring on a scale we have not seen before.

Ultimately, no nation can cordon itself off from this swirling global current.

Thus finding durable solutions to the challenges of international migration requires all nations and all stakeholders to work together in a positive spirit.

That task is now at hand and I wish you all the best for your discussions today. I look forward to seeing you again during the closing session this evening.

I thank you.