

Press Release

Managing migration is one of the most urgent and profound tests of international cooperation in our time

New York, 11 January 2018

“Migration is an expanding global reality” United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres maintains in his report released today. “The time for debating the need for cooperation in this field is past”, and “managing it is one of the most urgent and profound tests of international cooperation of our time.”

Making Migration Work for All, the report released to the UN General Assembly on 11 January 2018, is the Secretary-General’s contribution to the process of developing a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The report offers the Secretary-General’s vision for constructive international cooperation, examining how to better manage migration, for the benefit of all – the migrants themselves, their host communities and their societies of origin.

The Secretary-General emphasizes that “migration is an engine of economic growth, innovation and sustainable development”. The reports highlights that there is a clear body of evidence that, despite real challenges, migration is beneficial both for migrants and host communities, in economic and social terms. The Global Compact will provide Member States the opportunity to maximize those benefits and better address migration challenges.

The report points to an estimated 258 million international migrants, or 3.4% of the world’s population, with levels expected to increase. While the majority of migrants move between countries in a safe, orderly and regular manner, a significant minority of migrants face life-threatening conditions. The report notes that around 6 million migrants are trapped in forced labour, and that recent large-scale movements of migrants and refugees, in regions including the Sahel and South-east Asia, have created major humanitarian crises. The report calls for the Global Compact to include a special strategy to address this.

The report underscores the economic benefits of migration. Migrants spend 85% of their earnings in their host communities and send the remaining 15% to their countries of origin. In 2017 alone, migrants sent home approximately \$600 billion in remittances, which is three times all official development assistance. Women, who make up 48% of all migrants, send home a higher percentage of their earnings than men, yet they face more restrictive labour policies and employment customs than men, thus restricting their economic income and social contribution. Member States are urged “to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls” as a central element of the Global Compact.

The Secretary-General encourages governments to work together to establish a productive and humane global migration system which would enhance, rather than detract from sovereignty. If governments open more legal pathways for migration, based on realistic analyses of labour market needs, there is likely to be fewer border crossings, fewer migrants working outside the law and fewer abuses of irregular migrants.

The Secretary-General maintains that a new approach to migration is necessary. “It is now time to draw together all parts of the UN system, including International Organization for Migration (IOM), to support Member State efforts to address migration.” The Secretary-General commits to work within the UN system to identify new ways to help Member States manage migration better based on the Global Compact.

Further information:

UN Member States will soon undertake the final negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. The Global Compact will then be finalized in 2018.

The Report is available at: <http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/2017-secretary-generals-report>

More information on the Global Compact: <http://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>

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