



KEYNOTE ADDRESS

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GFMD Side event: GFMD Reflection on Migration-related SDGs in the 2030 Agenda

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Dear Excellencies, colleagues and friends,

Thank you for inviting me to be here today.

In 2015, when Member States adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, they for the first time mainstreamed migration in a global development framework. The SDGs recognize migration multidimensional reality and its positive contribution to sustainable development in countries of origin, transit and destination. By including a specific target committing to facilitate safe orderly and regular migration with full respect for human rights (target 10.7), and a number of migration-related targets, the international community has recognised that well managed migration holds great potential for development.

The New York Declaration, adopted in September last year, provides yet a new commitment. It recognized that no one state can deliver on better managing migration in isolation. It therefore sets out steps towards the achievement of a Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in 2018 which is in line with target 10.7 of the SDGs. The Global Compact should, therefore, be framed in a way that contributes to the implementation of the migration elements of the 2030 Agenda.

But it is not enough merely to reaffirm and update existing frameworks. Instead, the task ahead of us is to launch a program of action with real operational commitments, laying out the implementation mechanisms with robust follow-up systems. The Global Compact should provide us with a practical road map on how to achieve target 10.7. It should make an important contribution to the global governance of migration, dealing with all aspects of international migration, including development linkages, human rights protection, humanitarian needs and the institutional framework on migration more broadly.

To this end, collecting factually accurate information and showcasing positive examples of the many contributions of migrants and migration is crucial. Let me highlight a few facts.

Most migrants are migrant workers. Not only do they contribute to their host communities by paying rent and taxes, consuming goods and launching business initiatives, small and large. But they also support the communities they left behind by sending, in small but regular amounts, vastly larger sums of money than developed countries expend in

development aid. In 2016, global remittances to developing countries amounted to \$429 billion dollars. Most remittances sent to countries of origin are used by families to invest in health, education, sanitation and housing. Remittances to developing countries have lifted millions of families out of poverty. In short, remittances allow families to reach their “own” sustainable development goals.

Building on commitments taken within the Sustainable Development Agenda, the Global Compact could accelerate action to reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent. This could be pursued by promoting an enabling environment for cost-effective remittance transfer methods and facilitating financial inclusion.

The contribution of migrants to development of their countries of origin goes far beyond financial remittances, including transfers and circulation of ideas, skills and knowledge, entrepreneurship, investments network building, and breaking down gender stereotypes. While less easily quantifiable than financial remittances, these contributions – often called social remittances - make a difference for the lives of migrants, their families and their communities.

To harness the development potential of migration, governments must manage migration through international co-operation and coherent national policies. Admission policies and circular migration programmes, for example, can influence the development potential of migration.

The Global Compact presents us with an opportunity we cannot afford to miss. The need for a global framework for international cooperation in dealing with human mobility is self-evident. A successful Compact, with operational deliverables, will enhance security, development and human rights – the three founding pillars of the United Nations system.

I believe the Global Compact should bring together what has come before – and augment it in a smart way as a comprehensive framework for international cooperation on international migration. The Compact provides a unique opportunity to address some of the gaps and shortcomings in the way states cooperate with one another on migration governance. Given the divergence of state interests and expectations for migration governance, and in order to be effective in advancing cooperation and promoting good governance, it will be important for the Global Compact to rest on agreed international commitments, reflecting the people-centered spirit of the SDGs.

Thank you.