

Eritrea's Views on Global Compact on Migration

In recent years, large-scale human mobility across national borders and the resultant loss of life has put the issue of migration at the center of national public debate and international agenda. Notwithstanding the increased attention that migration garnered, international response continues to be reactive, fragmented and lacks collective vision.

Migration remains unsafe. In the absence of accessible pathways, thousands have resorted to irregular ways to migrate, falling victims to migrant smugglers and human traffickers. Migrants face the danger of abuse and violation of their liberties in detention facilities in countries of transit and destination. Migrants are being scapegoated for fears of crime, unemployment and cultural erosion. Many migrants work in disproportionately vulnerable situations with minimum or no physical, social or economic safety net. Migrants are also facing hindrance in their effort to celebrate their cultural identity, maintain link with their country of origin and contribute to its development.

Migration is a desirable outcome of our interconnected world, not a crisis that requires remedy. The contribution of migrants over centuries to the cultural, economic, political and educational transformations of the nations of destination and origin cannot be overstated. The upcoming intergovernmental negotiation for a Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration is an opportunity for member states to initiate genuine dialogue and embark on a serious process to better manage international migration. It is in the interest of every state that migration occur legally and migrants are enabled to contribute to their receiving communities and countries of origin. However, without clear commitments, measurable and time bound targets; and, a monitoring mechanism, the Global Compact will invariably face the fate of previous such initiatives.

In Eritrea's view, the Global Compact on migration must aim to enhance international cooperation and solidarity for a well-managed human mobility to the benefit of migrants and nations. Four goals should underpin the Global Compact for migration:

1. Reducing the need for fatal journeys through addressing the root causes of migration and combating smuggling of migrants;
2. Recognizing the vulnerability of migrants in transit and countries of destination. Protecting their human rights and fundamental freedoms;
3. Recognizing and enhance the contribution of migrants for countries of origin and destination; and reducing the risk associated with migration for countries of origin and destination.

To achieve those goals, the Global Compact needs to stipulate clear targets which, inter alia, should include:

- Addressing the drivers of migration. There is a need for a strong international partnership and solidarity to deal with the root causes of migration including conflicts, global

inequality, poverty and lack of development, violations of fundamental freedoms, demographic change and environmental degradation. The Global Compact should include specific targets on—timely and full implementation of internationally agreed development goals, finding durable solutions for conflicts on the bases of the UN Charter and international law. It should encourage genuine bilateral and multilateral partnership between countries of origin and destination in implementing educational and economic opportunities for the youth; as well as, designing and disseminating advocacy materials in the countries of origin and destination regarding the risks associated with irregular migration.

- Facilitating safe, orderly, affordable, accessible and dignified avenues for regular and voluntary migration. This can be achieved through genuine partnership between countries of origin and destination to expand legal avenues for labor migration at all levels of skill, educational and family reunion.
- Intensifying our efforts to eradicate human trafficking and smuggling that often lure or force people to migrate illegally. International response in combating smuggling of migrants has not, unfortunately, been commensurate to the level of the danger this transnational organized crime poses for individuals and states. This is despite the fact that for over a decade member states of the United Nations have identified smuggling of migrants as a crime that violates human rights, hampers socio-economic development and encroaches on the sovereignty of states. The investigation by Italian authorities on the collusion between non-governmental organizations who ostensibly rescue migrants in the Mediterranean Sea and smugglers and trafficker reveals the need for a better international cooperation. The Global Compact should emphasize the need for enhanced cooperation between the countries of origin, transit and destination to confront and eradicate smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons as well as the implementation of the United Nations Convention on Transnational Organized Crimes and its protocols.
- Protecting the dignity and fundamental freedoms of migrants while in transit and in countries of destination regardless of their migratory status. The Global Compact should include specific targets aiming at strengthening legal mechanism to ensure impartial and effective access of migrants to justice as well as remove the barriers for remedies and redress regardless of their migratory status in the host country. Protecting migrant economic and social rights through non-discriminatory access to health, education, vocational training, employment, financial inclusion as well as appropriate recognition of educational and employment experiences. Promote responsible and factual media coverage as well as introduces education curricula and awareness campaigns in order to promote tolerance and understanding as well as to combat prejudice and stigmatization of migrants. The Global Compact should discourage the utilization “migrant holding camps” at countries of transit as a means to hinder irregular migrants from reaching their desired destination. In our region, migrants in “migrant holding camps” continue to face abuse in the hands of local authorities and fall prey to smugglers and human traffickers with a

knowledge of local authorities. Only investing in the countries of origin, not transit, could bring a more durable solution to irregular migration.

- Promote the right of migrants to maintain link with their country of origin, including through legal protection of their rights for assembly and association. The Global Compact should call member countries to support the endeavor of migrants to maintain their link and contribute to the development of the countries of origin. It should contain specific targets on how to reduce cost of remittance to the agreed below 3% of the proportion of the amount remitted as agreed in the Sustainable Development Goals. It should also include targets regarding the transfer of skills and knowledge of the diaspora members to their countries of origin. Countries of destination and origin should create a conducive environment to invest in their countries of origin by creating access to financial system, saving and investment.

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