

**Fourth informal thematic session of the global compact on
safe, regular and orderly migration
New York, 25 July 2017**

**Intervention of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
(OHCHR)**

Thank you, Chair.

We welcome the recognition that has been evident in this discussion of the essential contributions that migrants make to societies and economies in countries of origin, transit and destination.

At the same time, it is important to underline that migrants must not be seen merely as commodities or instruments for the development of others.

Our analysis must start and end with the recognition of migrants as human beings, with human rights.

As such, migrants must not be instrumentalized, marginalized, disempowered, excluded, or left behind.

We must recognize that human rights are also at the core of the development paradigm codified in the 2030 Agenda.

And that if we truly wish to unlock the development potential of migration we must first ensure the promotion, protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their status, of where they are, where they came from, or why they moved.

This endeavour must be the cornerstone of the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

While many migrants are able to move, live and work in safety and dignity, others do so in precarious, discriminatory, and marginalized conditions, often unable to benefit from development at home or in host countries.

Many are compelled to move as a result of poverty, lack of decent work, and environmental degradation.

In other words, they are compelled to move in search of their human rights.

In the absence of sufficient regular migration opportunities, migrants are forced to resort to irregular migration channels which place them at risk during transit and upon arrival in countries of destination.

Chair, there is no doubt that many migrants and particularly those in an irregular situation and those who work in precarious sectors, encounter frequent human rights breaches, including denial of social protection, health care and education, as well as discrimination and xenophobia.

But it is equally evident that no society can develop to its true potential when legal, social or political barriers prevent entire sectors of that society, such as migrants, from contributing to it.

Contrary to much of today's xenophobic rhetoric, when migrants are allowed to contribute, they make economies stronger and sustainable development more achievable.

Migrants and migration should therefore be included in national and sub-national development strategies and plans, such as poverty reduction strategies and National Adaptation Programmes of Action.

And migrants, including those in an irregular situation, should be explicitly included in national strategies and plans of action on health, education, housing, employment and other sectors.

Further attention is also required to the precarious employment and hazardous working conditions in which migrants earn the money that they send through remittances, often putting their dignity and lives at risk.

And we should recall that remittances are private money, and efforts should be made to ensure that migrants are able to make informed choices about the use of remittances and remittance-linked services.

Finally, we urgently require more, better, and more-disaggregated data on the situation of migrants, in order to measure and monitor their development progress, and to ensure that they are not being left behind.

Thank you.