

## UNHCR Statement

### ***For the 6<sup>th</sup> thematic discussion on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration***

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In UNHCR's view, the widening of regular migration pathways, including expanded labour and skills mobility schemes, should be central feature of the global compact on migration. The more opportunities for people to migrate regularly, including through migration schemes that meet labour market needs, the less the need some will perceive to move irregularly. Regular migration maximizes opportunities and benefits for migrants and States, while mitigating the physical and security risks faced by those who move irregularly. It allows for greater management of population movements by States and helps to realize the targets set by the Sustainable Development Goals.

Expanded legal pathways for migration also carry indirect benefits for the global refugee regime. Too often, the lack of legal migration opportunities leads people to make use of asylum systems in countries of destination to secure a stable legal status, even if they do not have international protection needs. This impacts upon the effectiveness of the international refugee regime and puts additional pressure on asylum systems.

Some ideas for expanded migration pathways may include:

- Removal of legal barriers to regular migration, including through expanded criteria for labour migration programmes, in particular those which can help address temporary and longer-term labour market needs;
- Expansion of labour mobility and circular migration arrangements, including through skills partnerships between sending and receiving countries;
- Conclusion of bilateral and multilateral agreements to address labour mobility needs within a region, including the free movement of workers
- Establishment of ethical recruitment practices, including decent work options for women; and
- Further research on labour market needs and forecasting, to help States in making informed policy decisions in this area.

In the New York Declaration, States also commit themselves to considering the facilitation of family reunification (para 57). In the framework of the right to family life, Member States should refrain from action that would lead to family separation, while proactively take measures to maintain the unity of the family and reunite family members who have been separated.

Family reunification provides an additional safe and regular pathway, while also reducing reliance on the use of smugglers and mitigating the risks associated with irregular migration. It has been linked with improved integration prospects for migrants, while also having a positive impact on their mental health. Furthermore, family reunification can provide migrants with essential support that facilitates their adaptation to their new environment and multiplies the efforts of external actors in this regard. This enhances self-sufficiency and lowers social and economic costs of migration in the long-term.