

GFMD Dialogue on the Global Compact on Migration

**William Lacy Swing
Director General
International Organization for Migration**

14 November 2016, New York

Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is an honor and pleasure to be here to speak on behalf of the International Organization for Migration at this timely discussion on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. I would like to thank most sincerely our hosts from the Government of Bangladesh and, in particular, my trusted friend the Foreign Secretary, not only for this event but for their determined and sustained leadership on migration issues globally.

As the last speaker on this distinguished panel, I will refrain from seeking to try to convince you that the development of a Global Compact on Migration is both timely and necessary. Instead, I will focus my remarks today on three critical points that I believe will be essential as we move forward together over the coming two years to ensure that the Global Compact makes a meaningful impact on the lives of millions of migrants around the world, and substantially improves governance and cooperation on migration at local, national, regional and global levels. I would like to focus on three guiding “C’s” to inform our efforts.

First, comprehensive:

While migration is very much an integral part of our globalized world, all too often we deal with it in a disjointed way. There are numerous interested parties but insufficient coordination. In today’s context, instead of purely reactive, populist and nationalistic policies aimed at short-term objectives, the world needs a “high-road” agenda to get it off of the “low road” on which it is presently embarked.

IOM’s vision is for a world in which migrants move as a matter of genuine choice and not desperate necessity, in which the rights of migrants are protected throughout their migratory projects, and in which migration is well-governed so it is a positive force for all the world’s peoples and societies.

Such a high-road policy approach serves three major objectives:

1. Facilitating safe, orderly and regular migration – the migration we wish to have; and
2. Reducing the incidence and impacts of forced and irregular migration. – the migration we do not wish to have.

3. Responding to the mobility impacts of natural and human-made disasters – the migration that occurs whether we want to or not.

To do so we must place human rights at the heart of all our efforts and in addition we need to address all adjoining policy domains including development, humanitarian, climate change, and peace and security elements, a truly comprehensive approach.

To that end, IOM would urge you to consider – indeed develop dedicated work streams – on the following clusters of issues, drawn from Annex II of the New York Declaration but organized into workable action areas:

- (1) protection of migrants' rights, including migrants in situations of vulnerability, and those subject to exploitation and abuse;
- (2) facilitating labour migration and mobility at all skills levels, including for educational and family unity purposes;
- (3) reducing the incidence and impacts of irregular migration including trafficking and smuggling, as well as facilitating return and reintegration;
- (4) migration and socio-economic development;
- (5) migrant integration and social inclusion, including efforts to counter xenophobia;
- (6) migration crises, including in relation to conflict, natural disasters and climate change; and
- (7) governance and cooperation – at local, national, regional and global levels.

While the precise clusters of issues can be discussed, the essential point is to address migration in all of its dimensions. We must delve deeply into each, and then bring together the dedicated work streams in an overall framework of cooperation to take us into the next several decades with a concrete, comprehensive agenda and a shared sense of purpose.

Which brings me to my second point, and the second “C” – coherence.

Second, coherent:

While nation states retain the sovereign discretion to determine which non-nationals may enter and stay in their countries, we must collectively do a better job of finding the necessary balance between what can seem to be competing priorities.

We must find the path to conjugate sovereign rights and obligations with individual rights and aspirations. We must reconcile national security and human security. And we must forge means to maintain social harmony in the midst of diversity. While at first blush these aspirations may appear to run contrary to one another, I firmly believe that it is in exercising their sovereign responsibilities that states ensure the protection of individual rights. In putting in place the building blocks of human security, states secure their national security. And in taking a firm stand on managing -- and indeed embracing -- diversity, states will create socially cohesive societies that welcome and value all of their many participants.

In a similar vein, coherence means that migrants and migration are integrated into national, regional and global frameworks and policies on development and humanitarian response; that migration policies at national and international levels are made coherent with trade, development, climate change, human rights and peace and security policies. We can no longer afford the disparate and often contradictory policies we see at so many levels and in so many parts of the world. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development provides the foundation for a coherent approach and we must now make this a reality for migrants and migration.

Which brings me to my third and final point.

Third, cooperative:

The only way that we can possibly succeed in this endeavor is forge deep and lasting cooperation. We must begin from the very outset with a process that is truly inclusive, and one that ensures that all stakeholders and all voices are heard: Member States, international and UN entities, regional bodies, private sector employers and recruiters of migrants, unions, academia, the many civil society entities and actors working around the world tirelessly on behalf of migrants, and, critically, migrants and diasporas themselves.

While the process will be determined here by Member States through the modalities discussions that have recently begun, time is short to develop the substance. We must establish a transparent and inclusive process, and then quickly turn our collective energies and attention to developing the content. IOM is of the view that a sustained period of open and inclusive *consultations* on the substance of the Global Compact -- throughout 2017 and indeed into part of 2018 -- is necessary to canvass the views and garner the input of all, and to begin to identify areas for consensus and action. I would caution against getting into substantive *negotiations* on the content of the Global Compact too early, as this could foreclose the generation of innovative and constructive ideas, and impede the ability to forge a solid, inclusive and durable consensus. I believe we can take inspiration here from the open, inclusive process of the Open Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals, which dedicated the overwhelming majority of its time and efforts to open, inclusive consultations, and only at a very late stage turned to the hard task of inter-governmental negotiations. Let's create a durable climate of cooperation to take us forward.

Conclusion

While I promised to focus on three "C's" here, let me leave you with a fourth – **a call to action**. Two years may feel endless sitting here at the very beginning of the process. But our ambitions must be high and we have no time to waste. Let's get to work together to turn our aspirations into reality; to make a lasting positive impact on the lives of countless migrants around the world; and to make migration the newest domain of global cooperation and governance to help make our world a better place. You have my and IOM's full commitment and support.