Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Distinguished Guests
Dear Friends,

Thank you for the opportunity to participate in this IOM workshop and be part of the panel.

Before I address the questions, I would like to introduce you, briefly, to the NGO Committee on Migration. Founded in 2007 to advocate, educate and collaborate to encourage the promotion and protection of migrants and their human rights in accordance with the United Nations Charter, today, our NGO Committee is a coalition of more than fifty Civil Society (CS) organizations. Regarding our advocacy and partnership with Governments, in the next weeks members of our Committee will be meeting with up to twenty Governments to talk about the New York Declaration and specifically about the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.
Last year our Committee, together with the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC) and the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), co-convened the Civil Society Action Committee. The Action Committee organized global civil society strategy in the lead-up to the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants. We continue to work to ensure the implementation of the New York Declaration and the promotion of the campaign against xenophobia and for social inclusion.

And now the questions.

1. Our NGO Committee on Migration, our CS partners and, we believe, all relevant stakeholders see the preparation and implementation of the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) as an opportunity to synergize the efforts of the international community.

To reach a greater system-wide coherence, requires political will, determination, and positive, interactive, dialogue.

As a basis for coherent, cooperative, and synergizing actions, all the stakeholders need to share common plans, based on immediate, intermediate and long-term interventions, understanding each other’s positions.

Our Committee is particularly, but not only, focused on the delivery of protection and assistance, right now, to migrants in vulnerable situations, in crisis and in transit, especially children whose best interest must be served and who must be protected against trafficking, detention and death.

Among CS targets are the following:

- Facilitation of safe, regular avenues of migration (SDG 10.7);
- Establishment of human rights-based procedures at borders;
- Promotion of the respect of the principle of non-refoulement, and return only when it is safe and the procedures are rights based;
- Protection of, and assistance to migrants in vulnerable situations, especially women and children (par.32 NYD).
We support the idea that, emulating the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) process, the GCM could set up an ‘Agenda for Facilitating Human Mobility’, outlining a human rights-based vision setting out goals, targets and indicators for all member states with benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms.

The idea is to formulate targets and indicators in a 2-, 5-, and possibly 12-year framework (to coincide with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development), e.g.:

- 2-year framework:
  - Best interest determination for children;
  - Reduction of 2018 annual number of deaths, disappearances, reports of violence against migrants in transit by 20 per cent (Par. 10 NYD).

- 5-year framework:
  - Reduction of 2018 number of persons trafficked across borders by 60 per cent.

- 12-year framework:
  - Reduction of 2018 number of forced migrants by x per cent.

**We would like to know from Member States: can these targets become our common targets, and the timelines our common timelines?**

2. The governance of migration is often considered an issue solely defined by national sovereignty, but is now clear that international cooperation is a central element of any successful response.

International Organizations, on the basis of coherent, cooperative and synergizing actions, can help MS to build an effective GCM. They can help MS to develop capacities to collect and analyze data; to train health and non-health practitioners to respond to medical, cultural, administrative issues; to provide training on ethical recruitment, engaging private and public sectors; to implement new technology to save lives or to provide pre-departure and post-arrival orientation services, better preparing the migrants for integrating into their new communities and labor markets.

**We would like to know: are the MS ready to ensure inclusive processes that promote a better understanding of the needs of migrants, thanks to the**
collaborative action of International Organizations and CS?

3. In different forums and regional consultative processes we all discuss the human rights of migrants, but on the ground the implementation of these rights, with few exceptions, is still lacking. Now we have to move forward, towards concrete actions. At the same time we share the view that, while international agreements, conventions and treaties are important, they do not meet the criterion of urgency, as migrants die by the thousands in transit. Right now.

We urge a tools-based approach in shaping the GCM based on:
- concrete, deliverable commitments;
- implementation;
- a monitoring framework.

This framework of the GCM requires, first of all, accountability that includes progress reports and monitoring to ensure that targets are met within a specific time period. An accountability mechanism could take several forms, including IOM’s Migration Governance Index and a global independent database maintained, for example, by a university consortium.

We need not start from scratch in the development of an effective governance mechanism; some tools already exist, including IOM’s, *Migration Governance Framework*, MiGOF, and MICIC Guidelines; UNHCR guidelines on mixed migrations; OHCHR, *Recommended Principles and Guidelines on Human Rights at International Borders*, and contributions from ILO, UN-Women, UNODC, UNICEF, WHO etc.

There are also the tools of CS, such as the High Level Dialogue, 2013 8-point 5-year plan, the 2014 Stockholm Agenda (with Goals and Targets), the 2015 GFMD CS Recommendations (with Benchmarks), and the 2016 ACT NOW call (with Scorecard) in response to the NYD for Refugees and Migrants. The most important tool for protecting the rights of migrants is to empower them to defend their own rights.

How do these expectations by CS about the basic requirements for an effective GCM governance mechanism agree with yours? What are your perspectives
from a national and regional point of view?

4. We applaud IOM’s constant support to the MS in their efforts to achieve migration aspects of the SDGs, and we applaud the appointment of Colin Rajah - a seasoned CS activist on behalf of migrants’ human rights – as civil society GCM liaison.

We also applaud the integration of IOM into the United Nations, which allows the United Nations to benefit from its vast experience and expertise. At the same time we stress the fact that the IOM Constitution does not include a protection mandate. IOM should be given an official human rights protection function, and the United Nations human rights framework should be referred to in its Constitution. This would allow IOM to measure its policies and practices against a clear, binding normative framework and ensure that all projects funded by States and implemented by IOM are negotiated in accordance with that framework. The Special Rapporteur for the Human Rights of Migrants, Francois Crepeau, now proposes that the issue of updating the IOM Constitution be included in the agenda for the United Nations 2018 follow-up conference on migration1.

5. CS hopes that the way forward will be an inclusive and participatory process. We have a record of constant collaboration with virtually all States on creating and implementing policies on the ground. CS provides a crucial link between governments and the communities they represent, infusing policy processes with grassroots knowledge to which governments may not otherwise have access.

In the shaping of the GCM and beyond, CS is ready to partner with all stakeholders in this “states-led but not states only” enterprise. The cooperation is a two-way process; MS have made some room for CS but the choice of where we can participate is often in accordance with their needs rather than ours. There should be an institutionalized presence of CS, and not just at the GFMD.

We have some concerns that, with your support, we hope we can resolve:

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1 Report transmitted to the General Assembly by the Special Rapporteurs on the Human Right of Migrants, Mr. Francois Crepeau, ref. 117, p.22, A/71/285, 4 August 2016
• We think the most productive solution in the future, including the next round of negotiations on the GCM, would be to have the organized CS networks choose at least half the CS representatives by themselves.

• We are concerned about the participation of non-ECOSOC accredited NGOs in the preparations for the GCM. While we are thankful for the “footnote” in the Modalities Resolution, we would urge States who object to the presence of an NGO to state who they are, why they object, and to give the NGOs a chance to respond.

• We would like, as a matter of normal procedure, to have a representative at Government Round Tables. We believe our input would be helpful to States, and we would receive valuable input from States about their concerns and proposals.

What are your expectations regarding the role of Civil Society in participating and collaborating in the preparations for the GCM and beyond? What are your views, perspectives and suggestions about the way to resolve these issues and move forward?

Conclusion

It is in everyone’s interest that migration should happen safely and legally,\(^2\) in a regulated, respectful manner. We stand ready, willing and able to seize this extraordinary opportunity to synergize with the international community in order to create a GCM that is human-rights based, gender- and age-sensitive, and that, most of all, protects and assists persons who are most vulnerable, especially women and children.

If I may paraphrase Robert Kennedy: “There are those who look at things the way they are, and ask why? We dream of things that never were, and ask why not?”

\(^2\) Report transmitted to the General Assembly by the Special Representative on Migration, Mr. Peter Sutherland, ref. 4, 3, p. 4, February 2017, A/71/728