

KEYNOTE ADDRESS:  
GFMD Thematic Workshop  
‘Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration at the National Level’  
21 March 2019, Geneva

Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a distinct honour and privilege to be invited to this thematic workshop of the Global Forum on Migration and Development on ‘Implementation of the Global Compact for Migration at the National Level’.

I wish to thank my distinguished colleagues: Vice Minister for Human Mobility of Ecuador, Mr. Chávez Pareja; Permanent Representative of Ecuador to the United Nations Office at Geneva, Ambassador Izquierdo Mino; Undersecretary for Migrant Workers’ Affairs, Ms. Arriola; and Chief Executive Officer, Labor Market Regulatory Authority, Mr. Al Absi, for giving me the opportunity to deliver the keynote address.

The adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in December 2018 was a landmark achievement. For the first time in the history of the United Nations, a large majority of Member States converged in their commitment to enhance cooperation on international migration to maximize its benefits while addressing its risks and challenges.

The historic importance of this milestone is only appreciated fully when it is placed in its proper context—when we consider how far we have come in a relatively short period.

For many years, global governance and cooperation on migration was fragmented, incoherent, and lacked an overarching vision. This was complicated by the fact that anchoring migration in the United Nations was viewed to be contentious.

Over time, States realized the benefit of including migration in international policy discussions, as demonstrated in a proliferation of working groups, dialogues, processes, and reports on migration-related issues which gained momentum in the first decade of the 2000s and the succeeding years.

Inter-governmental fora, such as the High-Level Dialogues on Migration in 2006 and 2013 and the Global Forum on Migration and Development, contributed greatly in this regard and became important platforms for States to gain a better understanding of migration dynamics and policy options, while also engaging in trust and confidence-building. This paved the way for the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants and eventually the Global Compact in December 2018.

Today, in 2019, we find ourselves in a position that was inconceivable 20 years ago. What we have before us is an unprecedented, non-legally binding blueprint that maps out a 360-degree vision of international migration and a framework for comprehensive cooperation.

Steered by its guiding principles and 23 objectives, States will save lives, improve living conditions, better integrate communities, and increase prosperity in a manner that fully complements the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals.

But, to realize the Global Compact's transformative vision, we must now turn towards implementation. Indeed, the Global Compact document encourages all Member States to develop, *as soon as practicable*, ambitious national responses for implementation.

I will be frank by stating the following clearly: implementation will not be easy and requires support from all actors involved.

The necessary shift in approaches and methods will lead to uncertainties and sometimes discouragement. Equally, a commitment to values of mutual trust, solidarity, and partnership may disrupt 'business as usual' models of operation and require stakeholders to make bold decisions and forge new alliances. In the beginning, quick wins may be few and results slow in coming.

To keep the momentum going, it will be critical that the implementation period is characterized by long-term perseverance.

Of equal importance is our engagement – as the international community – in fora like the one today. It is for this reason that I applaud the Government of Ecuador, as the 2019 Chair, and the Kingdom of Bahrain and the Government of Philippines, as the workshop’s conveners, for choosing the present topic for the first thematic workshop. In doing so, the Global Forum on Migration and Development has demonstrated impressive alacrity in responding to the invitation to support the implementation of the Global Compact.

Over the next two days, you all will have an early and unique opportunity to discuss systematic, robust, and inclusive approaches to the Global Compact’s implementation at the national level.

I expect the discussions will reveal that various and diverse approaches are available since there is no ‘one size fits all’ model for implementation. Every State will need to determine for itself what steps to take. Moreover, national political contexts will certainly be relevant and influence how robust and visible an approach a government may choose to follow.

That said, I will offer you **three possible approaches** to implementing the Global Compact as a primer for the discussions that will take place today and tomorrow:

- (i) There is a **systematic and robust approach**. This approach follows the four-year Global Compact review cycle. It could include a number of steps such as (a) a benchmark review based on Global Compact objectives; (b) the identification of priorities through a whole-of-society approach; (c) the development of a national plan of action for Global Compact implementation; (d) capacity-building to address identified gaps; (e) internal follow-up reviews; and (f) voluntary reporting at the regional level every four years beginning in 2020, as well as globally at the International Migration Review Forum (IMRF) to take place every four years beginning in 2022.

In IOM we believe that this approach would lead to the most meaningful implementation of the Global Compact, not least because it would lay the best groundwork for the follow-up and review of the Global Compact. To this effect, we have developed a range of tools and initiatives, including several in partnership with other UN agencies and stakeholders, some of which are present here today, which can be used to support implementation. Tools, such as the Migration Governance Indicators, are flexible enough to meet a variety of needs and priorities that States may have. And, if applied early in the implementation process, they can help States to realize tangible results within the first four years of the Global Compact's adoption.

- (ii) A second is a **selective approach** where governments may decide to match their existing priorities to Global Compact objectives. This could involve a benchmark review to determine where a government is relative to specific objectives. A government may choose to develop a Global Compact implementation plan limited to those objectives. Alternatively, another option could be for a government to incorporate Global Compact language in existing national migration strategies or plans of action.
- (iii) A third is a **business as usual approach** where governments might decide not to take any specific steps on the Global Compact in the first few years. To play the devil's advocate, I will ask if this is really an option, or to put it differently, what would be the price of not taking action?

Whichever approach States choose to adopt, they will be able to draw on the expertise and resources of an array of partners, particularly with the creation of the United Nations Network on Migration.

IOM, as Coordinator of the Network, is ready to help bring the full expertise of the 38 United Nations participating entities to ensure effective, timely, coordinated UN system-wide support to Member States in their implementation, follow-up and review of the Global Compact.

The principles of additionality, complementarity and non-duplication will inform how the Network operates, with emphasis on collective action by the Network on those issues where a common UN system approach would add value.

The Capacity Building Mechanism, which the Global Compact established in the Network, makes provision for a connection hub, knowledge platform and start-up fund – all of which present opportunities to support demand-driven systematic, robust and inclusive implementation.

Currently, each of these pieces are being fleshed out, but the start-up fund – the Terms of Reference of which are close to being finalized – aims to reinforce national ownership, UN programming coherence, and transparency and inclusivity. The fund will also ensure synergies in programmatic coordination and support to Member States, including in delivering on the Sustainable Development Goals as well as in ensuring a 360-degree vision of implementation.

At the national level, UN Resident Coordinators and UN Country Teams and the new UNDAFs will be instrumental in supporting Member States to implement the Global Compact, as well as to develop policies for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Equally, a whole-of-society approach will be key to ensuring that implementation of the Global Compact is inclusive. National plans of action will benefit from consulting and integrating the viewpoints of migrants, diasporas, local communities, civil society, the private sector, academia, parliamentarians, trade unions, national human rights institutions and others. For instance, these constituencies can add significant value in priority setting as well as the follow-up and review of implementation at the national level.

And, as we consider systematic, robust, and inclusive approaches to the implementation of the Global Compact at the national level, I encourage reflection on the need for vertical coherence. Invariably, national implementation will be influenced by how well the Global Compact is implemented at the regional and sub-national levels. In the context of the latter, IOM welcomes the establishment of the Mayors Mechanism as the newest

addition in the Global Forum on Migration and Development's architecture. That will promote and facilitate a substantive and continuous engagement of local governments in the activities and deliberations of the GFMD. Bearing in mind that most migrants are city-bound, and the impact of migration is felt most keenly at the local level, I encourage national authorities to view local leaders as key partners when implementing the Global Compact.

Finally, I hope that you all will use this workshop as an opportunity to delineate how the Global Forum on Migration and Development will practically support the implementation, review, and follow-up of the Global Compact. This first workshop is a step in the right direction, but more will be needed. It is important that practical initiatives, which leverage the Global Forum's convening power, result from these discussions.

Let me give you a few examples. As the first step, the Global Forum could provide a platform for the Member States to indicate their intentions to go ahead with implementation and to share their plans. Secondly, the Global Forum could be a venue in which states identify compatible approaches to Global Compact implementation and to tracking progress; this would facilitate regional and global reviews further down the road. Next, as we talk about prioritization and addressing specific Global Compact objectives at the national level, the Global Forum can help us to not lose sight of the 360-degree view on migration that the Global Compact puts forward and to ensure due focus on its guiding principles, which are of key importance and should guide all the implementation efforts. Finally, the Global Forum can bring together different stakeholders to identify concrete ways to ensure that Global Compact implementation efforts build on and support measures towards the realization of the 2030 Agenda.

In closing, it is my belief that the open and interactive discussions over the next two days, and the practical initiatives which will (hopefully) follow, will contribute to harnessing the momentum needed to realize the vision set out in the Global Compact.