

Remarks
Ms. Karen AbuZayd
Talking points for the GFMD's Thematic Workshop on
Migration for Peace, Stability and Growth
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I thank His Excellency Mohammed Shahidul Haque and colleagues at the Permanent Mission of Bangladesh for organizing this thematic workshop. Its title – Migration for Peace, Stability and Growth – points us toward a vision for migration, a positive vision that is quite different from the narrative dominating the headlines in many countries around the world. Those headlines warn us about insecure borders, forced displacement, and human trafficking, and they instill a sense of fear about migration. This hurts migrants, who face discrimination and stigmatization; it is chipping away at the moral foundations of diverse, free societies.

The United Nations is the place to work toward a more positive vision—to inform how States can cooperate in governing migration effectively to harness benefits that extend to individual migrants, their families, and to both countries of origin and destination.

The GFMD has fostered many of these discussions on an informal basis and built trust among States to discuss an issue that has multiple sensitivities.

Last year in the Agenda for Sustainable Development, the United Nations recognized that migration makes an important contribution to development, and the Agenda set a number of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) specifically relating to migration, such as ‘facilitating safe, regular, orderly and responsible migration.’”

The UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants on 19 September provides an important occasion to take forward the implementation of this goal. In the Secretary-General’s report in preparation for the Summit, there is a call to undertake a state-led process to elaborate a comprehensive international cooperation framework on migrants and human mobility, in the form of a Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration, and to hold an inter-governmental conference on international migration in 2018 to adopt this Global Compact.

A comprehensive international framework must also address the problematic areas of migration—such as irregular movement, violations of rights, and security matters.

But this is only a small part of the story. The purpose of the framework is to provide safe and legal options for people to move from one country to another in ways that are beneficial to them and to their countries of origin and destination. This is about making it easier for young people to study in another country, a migrant worker to earn enough money for her children to go to college, or for family members to have a joyous reunion with their relatives who live abroad. There are many more migrant success stories waiting to happen.

I look forward to the discussions today as an exercise in preparing for a comprehensive international framework. We will be determining priorities and discussing policy options. We have an opportunity to change the tenor of the conversation and talk about migration as a driver of peace and stability. My hope is that a decision will be taken in September to move concretely toward a comprehensive international framework by 2018, and that the GFMD will continue in its role of facilitating the open dialogue that will help bring about a strong result.