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المملكة المغربية
الوزارة المكلفة بالمغاربة المقيمين
بالخارج وشؤون الهجرة

Royaume du Maroc
Ministère Chargé des Marocains Résidant
à l'Étranger et des Affaires de la Migration

Global Forum on Migration and Development A Dialogue on Global Migration Compact 14 November 2016 – New York

Morocco opening remarks

Your Excellency Ambassador Shahidul Haque, Mr. Peter Sutherland, Ms. Karen AbuZayd, Your Excellency Mr. Jan Eliasson, Excellencies, Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The 19 September United Nations High Level Summit was indeed a historic moment. For the first time, unless I am mistaken, since the establishment of the United Nations have States come together to discuss migration and human mobility.

The New York Declaration that was agreed upon during this summit is an important milestone in this regard. Indeed, the declaration not only reaffirms key principles and commitments, but it also sets the base for an improved global governance of migration.

The work that has been done to reach consensus during the 19 September Summit only brought us half way through. The preparation of the Global Migration Compact obliges us to take the last stride.

Morocco is particularly pleased to see the world unite on this important issue of our time. In this respect, I would like to recall the words of His Majesty the King Mohammed VI at the occasion of the 2nd World Forum on Human Rights in Marrakech on 27 November 2014.

In his message, His Majesty called upon “the international community to resume negotiations more actively with a view to achieving regional and international governance of migration issues, in accordance with the High-Level Dialogue initiated by former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan”. We sincerely hope that the Global Compact will give life to this global governance mechanism.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Morocco sits at a crossroad of civilizations and cultural heritages. It is a country of the Mediterranean. It is a country of Africa. It is part of the Arab World. It has ancient ties with Europe. Morocco is a country of emigration. 4.5 million Moroccans live abroad. But Morocco is also growingly a country of immigration.

So many reasons for Morocco to feel deeply for the plight and the suffering of migrants who risk their lives to cross the Sahara desert and to move on to seek a better future across the Mediterranean. Only smugglers and traffickers benefit from this situation.

So many reasons also for Morocco to commit for so many years to furthering better migration management. It is in this spirit that Morocco played such an active role in the genesis of the Rabat Process. It is in this spirit that His Majesty the King Mohammed VI has launched the African Alliance for Migration and Development.

At the national level, Morocco has played its part in improving its national migration policy. Back in 2013, alarmed by the level of human suffering of migrants on our soil, His Majesty the King called upon the Government to perform a complete overhaul of Morocco's immigration and asylum policy, based on a humanist approach and consistent with Morocco's human rights commitments.

In this context, Morocco conducted in 2014 an exceptional regularization campaign that led to the regularization of more than 23 000 illegal migrants throughout the country – which represents more than 85% of received applications.

A law on fighting against trafficking in human beings was recently adopted by the Parliament. Two new draft laws were also elaborated on immigration and on asylum. They are ready to enter their legislative process.

Last but not least, the Government swiftly adopted a new national strategy for immigration and asylum in December 2014 that we are currently implementing. The strategy pursues four strategic objectives, which are to facilitate migrants' integration in Morocco, to upgrade our regulatory framework, to set up a suitable institutional framework and to manage migration flows with full respect of human rights.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Global Compact needs to be firmly rooted in existing human rights and migrants' rights instruments, in inter-governmentally negotiated agreements and in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

It is however our firm belief that to strengthen migration's global governance we do not need to reinvent the wheel. There are a number of good initiatives and strong mechanisms on which to build and that we can further strengthen. I refer in particular to IOM's migration governance framework, our own GFMD recommendations, the Sendai framework, the Paris Agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the commitments made during the Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul, ILO conventions, but also the product of regional consultations such as the Rabat process, the 5+5 Mediterranean dialogue, or the Valetta Summit declaration.

We see the Global Compact as a way to provide a common framework for existing and upcoming initiatives and as an opportunity to build synergies between them and to establish instruments to operationalize each other's obligations.

What is important though is to establish a follow-up mechanism to ensure that we deliver on our commitments. This is also where the global governance mechanism is key to the overall process.

There are a number of challenges ahead and a number of trade-offs to make to reach consensus on a global compact. And today's meeting is also an opportunity to discuss some of these.

One of the key issues to address is responsibility sharing. Concrete signs need to be sent, for example, on the commitment to contribute to addressing the root causes of forced migration. Political will for responsibility sharing is paramount and cannot be borne by host countries only.

Another key issue for us is the protection of migrants' workers' rights. As we all know, the Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families - which is the main human rights instrument in this area - has, until this day, been signed and ratified only by countries of the South.

In these times of mounting populism and growing xenophobia, we need to consistently highlight the positive role of migration for sustainable and inclusive development. We need to work to rehabilitate the image of the migrant in the eyes of public opinion.

With regard to the Global Compact's governance, we will need to find ways to strengthening regional and international cooperation. This is particularly important with regard to South-South cooperation that is only burgeoning.

Last but not least, the Global Compact shall set the base for an international regulatory framework that will contribute to the codification of international migration law.

Preparations for the elaboration of the Global Compact will entail intensive and participatory consultations at regional, inter-regional and thematic levels. Because migration is so closely associated with issues of sovereignty and national development, it shall be a State-led process. It needs, however, to be lean, transparent and inclusive. The process shall generate genuine partnerships between origin and destination countries, based on mutual trust and respect.

We strongly support, as a country and as the upcoming co-chair of the GFMD, the leading role of IOM to coordinate consultations for the elaboration of the Global Compact.

The Compact needs to be as comprehensive as possible, encompassing issues of human rights, climate change, crisis prevention and response, and human development. In this regard, this Global Forum has a clear contribution to make on issues related to Migration and Development.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I mentioned earlier, Morocco has long been pushing for greater migration governance, through the Rabat Process, the African Alliance for Migration and Development, via bilateral agreements, in international fora, or through its own national initiative. As we speak, migration issues are being discussed in Marrakech as part of the COP 22 international conference on climate change.

As Morocco prepares to assume its responsibilities as Co-Chair of the Global Forum for Migration and Development with Germany for 2017-2018, we are particularly proud to be able to contribute actively to the elaboration of the Global Compact.

The challenges ahead are numerous, but what is at stake is eminently stimulating. As the Director of IOM said in a number of fora, migration today is not a problem to be solved but a human reality to be managed. We sincerely hope that our work as part of this Forum will contribute to a more humane, dignified and mutually benefitting human mobility.

Thank you very much.