

**108th Session of the Council of the International Organisation for Migration
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STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF IRELAND
Ambassador Michael Gaffey
Permanent Representative of Ireland to the United Nations, Geneva**

Ireland aligns itself with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. We congratulate the new Chair of the Council on her election and welcome the Cook Islands and Cuba as new members of IOM.

Madam Chair,

May I thank the Director General for his incisive Report, which reflects fully his commitment and effectiveness for almost ten years now at the helm of International Organisation for Migration. Now welcomed into the UN family, the Organisation, throughout its 66 years history has provided vital leadership in promoting international cooperation on migration issues and humane and orderly management of migration.

The history of the human race is defined by migration. In September 2015, the global community adopted a new, universal and indivisible framework for sustainable development, the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development. They focus on the needs of our people and our planet. Through them, we have pledged to leave no one behind and to prioritise the most vulnerable. The SDGs provide the essential framework for addressing the challenges of migration and development.

The history of my country has been particularly characterised by the challenges, but also more recently the opportunities, of migration. Ireland was therefore honoured to play a leading role in brokering agreement on the New York

Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, along with important partners including then Special Representative of the Secretary General, Peter Sutherland, whose contribution was so rightly recognised by the Director General yesterday.

The New York Declaration marked an important step towards a more coordinated and humane global response to the reality that more people than ever before are on the move. This is sometimes by choice but also because poverty, inequalities, instability, conflict or environmental degradation drive them to seek a real or perceived chance of a better life elsewhere.

However, the New York Declaration was a step. Our challenge now is to forge the path towards better global management of human mobility. In the short term, we must ensure that the Global Compact on migration, as foreseen in the New York Declaration, builds on the essentials of the Declaration and is not a mere restatement of it.

The complexities of migration and displacement have dominated the headlines in recent years because of crisis, and especially the impact on systems in developed countries. Fundamentally, however, the Global Compact must look beyond crisis management. Ireland believes strongly, and we know from our national experience, that well-managed migration has the potential to contribute significantly to the development of both countries and regions of origin and of destination, as well as to the lives of the women, children and men involved.

An emphasis on our obligations as States must be at the heart of the new Compact - above all the obligation to respect fully the human rights of all migrants, particularly those in vulnerable situations, including children, and to recognise the gender dimension of migration and the particular dangers and threats to

women and girls in the migration process. But we need also to ensure that the Compact also reflects an understanding that our response to migration is not just about what we *have* to do but also about what we can all gain from well-managed migration. When we refer to ‘addressing drivers’ or ‘dealing with root causes’, we must be clear that we are referring to the drivers and root causes that result in migration that is not freely chosen, by either the migrant or the destination country. In this regard, Ireland considers that the Compact should reflect the importance of exploring new legal pathways to migration, as well as expanding existing ones where appropriate.

We look forward to the important stocktaking in Mexico, building on the series of informal consultations on the Compact. Ireland will engage actively, and we are seeking the views of civil society and its vision for the Global Compact.

It is well recognised in this Chamber that the formal intergovernmental negotiations will be challenging; but we are hopeful that the spirit of cooperation and mutual respect which made agreement on the New York Declaration possible will continue to animate us.

No single agency has a bigger role to play in maintaining the momentum towards improved migration management at the global level than the IOM. The support which the IOM is providing to this process at global, regional and national levels is critical, and it will continue to be central in the follow-up to and delivery on the Global Compact, once it is negotiated. Indeed, the integration of the IOM within the wider UN family is simply a recognition of the centrality of the agency to any meaningful response to one of the biggest challenges facing the world today. We will not achieve the SDGs without a meaningful and effective engagement with the challenges and opportunities of migration. I can assure you of Ireland’s strong support.

Thank You.