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*Excellencies, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,*

I want to thank Director-General Lacy Swing for inviting me to address you today. My thanks also go to Ambassador Mauras, as Chair of the International Organization for Migration Council, along with Ambassador Quinn, as outgoing-Chair, for their work and commitment. Furthermore, I want to acknowledge the valuable work being done by Special Representative Arbour, and Deputy Director-General Thompson.

We are meeting here, in Geneva - the headquarters of the International Organization for Migration. I think it is fitting to reflect, for a moment, on what migration means for our world.

In doing so, I want to point something out: we have never lived in a world without migration. There are different theories about how humans came to be on this planet. One thing we can all agree on, however, is that we have always moved. We have always migrated. This has happened in response to the circumstances around us.

Migration is part of our humanity. It would not be possible to make it disappear.

Nor should we want to. It has enriched our society. It has allowed composers, artists and writers to advance their crafts. It has seen researchers and scientists explore new terrains, and exchange ideas towards ground-breaking discoveries. It has influenced and enriched cuisines, cultures and languages. Without it, our world would be a lot less colourful.

However, while migration is as old as we are, how it is happening is new. The planet is now home to more people. And when there are more people, there are more chances that these people will move and migrate. In fact, there are now 244 million international migrants in the world. Another development, which has affected migration trends, is technology. Information and communication technology is changing every part of the migration process - from the decision to move, to life in a new community. What we are currently grappling with is how to react and adapt to these new trends. We've done some good work, but we need to do better.

I want to make four main points today in this respect.

First, we've already had a major achievement.

This came through the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, in 2016.

This was a first and major move towards international action in response to the changing nature of migration. And it was the first concrete step towards the kind of global framework we badly need.

Because, migration touches everything. The journey of an international migrant is made across national borders. Every country, every community, and every person has experienced migration – in some way. It is a truly global phenomenon.

And, we have a body which is set up to address global phenomena: the United Nations. It defies logic, therefore, that we have been trying to address migration on our own - at national level – in an ad hoc way - with no framework in place to guide our international cooperation.

But, we already know this. That is why, last year, we came together, to say no to business as usual. That is why we adopted the Declaration. That is why we committed to negotiating and adopting the world's first international compact on migration. And that is why we need to do even more.

I want to focus my second point on the need to do more, and to take action.

The New York Declaration was a big achievement. It was a bold, and visionary commitment by all countries in the world. However, it is still not enough. Aspirations must become actions. Promises must become realities. Commitments must become results.

We will need to find more pathways for regular migration, and tackle causes of irregular migration. We will need to ensure that women migrants are protected and empowered to participate in finding local solutions. We will need to address the special needs of migrants in vulnerable situations. We will need to fight against human smuggling. We will need to dismantle cultures of stereotypes and xenophobia, and replace them with tolerance and integration. We will need to ensure that everyone who leaves his or her home enjoys the same human rights as everyone who doesn't. We will need to make difficult structural and institutional changes.

None of this will be easy. Which is why none of us can go it alone.

This brings me to my third point, on partnerships.

One person may decide, or be forced, to leave his or her home. Everything that happens afterwards, however, involves a multitude of other actors and entities. I'm talking about the crew on board the airplane or ship. The law enforcement officials at border crossings. The first person to stamp a passport or record personal details. The recruiter aiding in the search for job placements. The clerk who facilitates the transfer of money to family back home. The neighbours in a new community.

Our response must therefore involve coordination - not only among national governments, but with a wide array of other partners at national, regional and international level. These include local authorities, civil society, faith-based organisations, the media, regional organisations, international financial institutions, and the private sector.

A focus on partnerships must be present throughout this process - from negotiations to implementation. We cannot call for a whole-of-society approach, but settle for some-of-society inclusion instead. We cannot stress the need for participation from everyone, while only listening and engaging with a few. We cannot call this a global compact, unless it will touch upon each person and entity involved in international migration around the world.

Finally, for my fourth point, I want to stress that IOM will be one of the most important partners of all. The decision made in 2016 to integrate IOM into the UN system was a significant step. It paved the way for the Organization's experience and expertise:

- To enhance the UN's capacity to assist and protect migrants;
- To support Member States in addressing migration; and
- To promote coherence between migration and related policy domains.

So, the International Organization for Migration is uniquely positioned to strengthen the United Nations' approach to international migration.

IOM will also be crucial as we begin to negotiate the Global Compact, in 2018. Not only because of its years of policy-making and advocacy. But also because of the work it has done, on the ground, with people.

We need people to be at the forefront of all of our discussions. We cannot measure migration only by laws, and policies, and regulations. It should instead be measured by the people it affects. Because, before people are migrants, they are, simply, just people. They are engineers, shopkeepers, doctors, musicians, mothers, fathers, children, young people. They have the same hopes and fears as those who have not left their homes.

And, importantly, they are entitled to the same fundamental human rights. Throughout its 400 locations, IOM interacts with these people every day. It has heard their stories. And it has brought them to the international stage. We will therefore need the help of IOM in ensuring that we put people first in all of our negotiations.

We can start here, at this annual Council session. I'm pleased to hear that IOM will co-lead, along with *the UN's Food and Agricultural Organization*, the *Global Migration Group* during the negotiation process next year. I also want to call on you, on IOM, today, to play a role in updating Geneva-based UN Member States on the negotiation process. This will help to ensure that Geneva is adequately informed, and that it can play an active role throughout the process – even when negotiations are taking place elsewhere.

*Excellencies, dear colleagues.*

I want to conclude by acknowledging that we do not have an easy task ahead. Like many of you, I am a career diplomat. So, I know, all too well, the challenges facing us. I know that many of us will arrive to negotiations, with rigid instructions. I know that some of us will be requested to pair back language, or mark out red lines. And I know there will be late nights at the office, as we work towards an agreement that is inclusive, effective and politically relevant.

However, we must persevere. Simply because we have no other choice. Our response to today's trends of international migration is not working. It is not working for governments. And it is not working for people.

Migration is a global phenomenon. And a global phenomenon demands a global response, led by a global framework. The United Nations has seen this, first-hand. It has risen to the challenges before. It has led the drafting and implementation of international responses to almost all of the most pressing global issues - from disaster response to the promotion of human rights. It is time for the UN to lead the charge towards a global response to international migration.

However, it can only do this *if* we let it. If we don't, we cannot criticise the United Nations; we will have only ourselves to blame.

*I thank you for your attention.*