



**IOM - 107<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council - General Debate**  
**Statement by Ms. Sandra Aviles, Officer-in-charge - FAO Liaison Office in Geneva**  
Geneva, 8 December 2016

Thank you chair,

On behalf of FAO, let me first congratulate Director-General Swing for his leadership and the efficient management of the Organization, as well as the remarkable work of his staff in promoting humane and orderly migration. FAO welcomes the integration of IOM in the UN family and we look forward to our continued collaboration in this time of urgent and growing global needs.

For FAO, migration should be an act of choice, and not a desperate last resort. This is our common responsibility to ensure this. In light of the unprecedented challenges faced by migrants around the world, the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration offers a unique opportunity to work collectively towards global shared responsibility, practical actions, innovation, and coordinated solutions, with the aim to agree on a long-term, coherent, human rights-based framework for migration.

FAO would like to reaffirm its position made at the UN Summit on Refugees and Migrants. Rural people are among the most vulnerable to conflict, violence, poverty, food insecurity, lack of employment opportunities and the adverse impacts of environmental degradation and climate change.

We are convinced that investing in sustainable agriculture and rural development is an integral part of the solution for migration, including in conflict-affected areas and protracted crisis situations. Agriculture and rural development can address the root causes of migration, strengthen the resilience of rural population and contribute to conflict prevention, sustainable peace and improved stability.

This is particularly important if we consider that over half of the population in least developed countries will be living in rural areas by 2050; three-quarters of the extreme poor worldwide base their livelihoods on agriculture; and one-third of international migrants from developing countries are aged 15-34 and mainly move in search of better employment opportunities. Moreover let's not forget that in conflict situations, although refugees are more visible, on average, over 80% of those affected, do not flee their homes and stay on their land, with their productive assets.

Therefore, FAO considers that a successful global compact on migration needs to be informed by evidence on the ground and include measures to promote decent rural employment opportunities, rural education, sustainable agricultural practices, inclusive social protection systems and financial inclusion in rural areas.

FAO stands ready to contribute to these joint efforts, bringing its specialized expertise on food security, resilience-building, sustainable agriculture and rural development and its experience in generating evidence; strengthening national capacities; disseminating and scaling-up innovative ways to protect, restore and enhance agriculture based livelihoods and promoting policy dialogue through partnerships and advocacy.

M. Chair,

To conclude, let me reaffirm FAO's interest and commitment to actively support IOM for leading us towards the adoption of a global compact on migration in 2018 and stress that we will continue to work closely with governments, civil society organizations, the private sector, the UN System and other partners at global, regional and country level.

Thank you.