

Mr. President

Excellencies, Ladies, and Gentlemen.

At the outset, I would like to convey my country's and my delegation's gratitude to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, to The Moroccan Government, and gracious and hospitable people of Marrakesh for hosting this historic event.

And to all the people that made this day possible; Mrs. Arbour and her team, Mr. Vitorino and the capable team of the IOM, the Co-facilitators, and everyone who gave the GCM an honest attempt:

Salute!

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are at a dangerous era, we are at a time of increased knowledge, and decreased empathy.

we are in the era of Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence, and at the same time primitive human behavior.

Not far ago, we spoke of the 2030 agenda and the sustainable development goals, with the theme of Leaving no one behind; well

this is the time we walk the talk, and truly leave no one behind particularly within our respective societies.

The Global Compact for Migration is not about who passes through our borders, the sovereign right of a state to admit or not admit foreign nationals is uncontested by the compact; but the compact is about how we deal with them once they do.

The Kingdom of Bahrain has long embarked on a reform initiative that touches the heart of this issue. We started in 2004, and we started by changing the narrative before changing the laws, we started with how we address our own issues, and how we deal with our own people before dealing with migrants... reform starts from within!

When we embarked on this initiative we had a goal, we didn't know how long it would take us to achieve it, but we knew it had to be done; The goal was to leave behind the legacy Sponsorship system as the one and only way for migration management.

Then in 2006 we began changing the laws; reforming Sponsorship, giving due rights and protection to migrants, and educating the host people.

We did so through the Economic Crisis of 2008/2009, we continued despite the troublesome times of 2011, and the oil crisis of 2014, we knew reform was not going to be easy.. and that there would never be the 'perfect time'.

Ultimately, we took the leap of faith in 2017 by introducing the first of its kind system that allows a migrant to live and work in Bahrain without a sponsor, without a specific employer, and without a specific job.. Holders of the New Flexi Permit are the masters of their own fate; they can work anywhere and with anyone, demand their own wages, and unleash their potential, regardless of their skill level or education... regardless of where they come from, or what job they will perform, and for as long as they want.

Temporary migration has never seen anything like this; this is not a permanent Immigration scheme, yet it opens doors of hope for

migrants to reap the fruits of their labour and truly be a member of our society.

By empowering the migrants, we levitated hardship, gave them access to justice, but more importantly gave them a choice.

The new system also gives the economy full access to all kinds of talent, full time or part time, long term or ad hoc, unhindered by bureaucracy... a truly unrestricted and open labour market.

That was less than 18 months ago; today the scheme went from a pilot to mainstream, where regular AND irregular migrants can avail of it, available to PhD holders and Domestic Workers alike, with tens of thousands migrants availing of it thus far, and more are lining up daily to join.

Therefore, and beyond rhetoric, we believe that the Global Compact for Migration is a testimony; it can be a testimony to our collective humanity, or a testimony to the lack of.

Bahrain chooses to believe in humanity..

Bahrain chooses to recognize the principals of the Global Compact for Migration, because they reflect our values.

Mr. Chairman,

The Kingdom of Bahrain -in good faith- embraces the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration as a non-legally binding document.. yet a morally binding set of values.

Thank you