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**Statement by Louise Arbour, Special Representative
of the Secretary-General for International Migration**

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Closing remarks at GCM

11 December 2018, Marrakesh

**Excellences,
Mesdames e Messieurs,**

Je tiens tout d'abord à exprimer ma plus profonde reconnaissance au Royaume du Maroc pour son hospitalité légendaire et son engagement indéfectible envers l'un des enjeux les plus dépendants de nos efforts multilatéraux, soit la mobilité humaine au 21e siècle.

We could not have benefited from a more inspiring and convivial environment in which to launch one of the defining projects of our generation. The Marrakesh Compact – as I believe the Global Compact may begin to be called - will remain THE reference for all future initiatives dealing with cross-border human mobility.

Thank you also to all Member states present here for their determination to advance their interest in a cooperative spirit, in the best traditions of United Nations multilateralism.

In that context I wish to acknowledge the leadership of the former President of the General Assembly, Miroslav Lajčák, the co-facilitators, and of course the current PGA, María Fernanda Espinosa Garcés.

Most importantly, the adoption of the Compact is a re-affirmation of the values and principles embodied in the UN Charter and in international law, and a demonstration that national and regional specificities can always be accommodated in the pursuit of a global common good.

I acknowledge and thank also the invaluable the contributions from civil society, the private sector, mayors and many other stakeholders.

Finally thank you to all my colleagues in the UN family, particularly Catherine Pollard and the Deputy Secretary-General for their immense support. First and foremost my thanks to the Secretary General who led the support and expertise that the organization was able to provide to this ambitious project, and who never doubted the importance and the merits of our efforts.

For the first time in the history of the United Nations, we have been able to tackle an issue that was long seen as out-of-bounds for a truly concerted global effort. There is probably no principle more fundamental in the organization of international affairs than the geographic allocation of space on this planet, confirmed by the universal recognition of state sovereignty.

Yet the drawings of lines on maps have never sufficed to confine people whose needs, ambitions, dreams and opportunities expanded their horizons.

Rather than ignore the impetus of some to relocate, or worse, attempt to crush it at unconscionable costs, we are now committed to safer and fairer ways of managing borders.

And to the millions who have left their homeland, either recently or a long time ago, most of them in full compliance with the law, we have much more to offer: whether an opportunity to return home, after years abroad, taking back with them their skills and the fruits of their labour, or whether an increased chance to see their children having a better future in a country that they will be proud to call their home.

As the many initiatives proposed in the Compact start to take roots, we will see lives saved, living conditions improved, communities integrate and flourish through increased development and prosperity in many parts of the world.

Confronted with novel and unpredictable challenges, we will be better equipped to rely on a spirit of solidarity and a culture of sharing, rather than on the indifference and selfishness that tear us apart.

Our efforts will, over time, contribute to reducing the profound inequities that the lottery of birth would otherwise continue to aggravate. We have attained an unsurpassed level of knowledge, competence and ingenuity, allowing us both to imagine a better world and to actually begin to construct it.

Each of us in this room, and many out there who are committed to this common project, should be proud of today's accomplishment and inspired in carrying it forward.

