

Statement by

H.E. Mr. Kai Mykkänen

Minister of the Interior of Finland

General Debate [item 8]

**Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe,
Orderly and Regular Migration**

Marrakech, 10-11 December 2018

Madam/Mr. President/Vice-President, Secretary-General,
Your Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates.

Let me start by thanking the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting us here in Marrakech. We live in an era where the need for collective action has never been greater. At the same time, the rules-based international system is facing challenges.

It is not possible to have a world without migration. It has always existed. And, it will continue to do so for economic, demographic, security and human reasons. We easily realize the challenges posed by migration, but we should also not forget its positive dimensions and potential.

In Finland, we seek to double the volume of regular work and studying based migration to our country. In line with the commitments of today's Compact, we are currently working on reforms that enable faster permitting and more successful integration.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is in our view an honest attempt of the international community to find a way to deal with issues that concern us all and which – if left unattended – will make it even more difficult to handle international migration.

The Compact has been the subject of political debate in many countries, including in Finland. This is an indication of the need to find a better approach to issues related to migration. It can only be done through international cooperation. It is not possible to have a world where migration would be without control and restrictions. We need control for security and sustainability.

The future we foresee is one where migration will remain on the agenda: climate change, conflicts, demographic structures, technological developments, needs for labour force and the wish to make full use of the human potential – all of these will contribute. If we get it wrong – and I hope we don't – migration will be a source of disunity, fear, insecurity, exclusion

and racism. If we handle it right, migration can be managed and will contribute to the benefit of us all.

This is why we have gathered here in Marrakech, and this is why the decision was taken in New York to engage in the process leading up to the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. And, while not a legally binding agreement, the Compact merits to be regarded as an effort by the international community to do more.

The Compact does not remove the sovereign right of states to decide who can enter their territory, it does not endorse illegal or irregular migration. It does not give any of us the right to freely decide where we want to live.

At the same time, we consider it important that all migrants are entitled to the same universal human rights as everybody else. Exactly 70 years ago humankind recognized fundamental rights to be universal by making a common commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. We must be able to keep our commitment to respect, protect and fulfill the human rights of all people now, when the world is so much more prosperous than 70 years ago!

However, it is important to understand these rules and rights correctly or otherwise they become impossible and the commitment collapses. We note that the Compact does not establish a human right to migrate, nor does it create any new legal categories of migrants or associated benefits.

In Finland, we will do our best to ensure that decisions on matters of migration will be taken based on law, facts and knowledge. An important aspect of this story is readmission. It is in many ways crucial that there are good working relations with the receiving countries in the field of readmissions. We need to have clear, predictable rules on how to apply asylum or find a job and move as a work-based immigrant. But these rules collapse and become impossible, if we are unable to return those who don't meet the conditions for permit to stay.

When readmissions do not work, the public debate focuses on irregular migration in a narrow and predominantly negative way, which leaves little political space to guide the attention to broader issues and a fruitful discussion on issues like promoting work based legal migration. It is important that the Compact clearly recognizes the obligation of all States to duly receive and readmit all their own nationals, who no longer have the right to remain elsewhere.

Finland appreciates the role by IOM and UNHCR in matters related to migration and refugee situations. They will remain our key interlocutors as we continue the work at international level. But we all have a role to play at the national level and through bilateral cooperation as well. For instance, Finland has been a supporter and significant contributor to international resettlement programs. We have constantly resettled most vulnerable people from refugee camps to Finland as long as I have lived, namely from year 1979. And we will stay a friend and contributor of this manageable way of helping those in most vulnerable conditions.

We need to recognize that there is no quick fix for the challenges we address through the Compact. It is all about finding sustainable, rules based solutions. A good start for that would be that through the adoption of this resolution by the General Assembly of the United Nations, we all honestly and seriously recognize the important duties of all country groups: countries of origin, countries of transit and countries of destination. That is why we have gathered here in Marrakech and that is why the Global Compact on Migration matters.

Thank you.