

**Speech Minister for Migration of the Netherlands
Marrakesh - Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and
Regular Migration**

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Excellencies,

First of all, I would like to thank our Moroccan hosts for organizing this important conference, as well as a very successful meeting of the Global Forum for Migration and Development. Both events are shining examples of the famous Moroccan hospitality.

The Netherlands has been a long-standing supporter of multilateralism and human rights for seventy years to the day. The Netherlands has also been a steady and reliable provider of development aid and humanitarian assistance. In a similar vein, the Netherlands believes that all of us need each other to MAKE MIGRATION WORK. Clearly, cross-border problems such as irregular migration need cross-border solutions.

With the Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration we have, for the first time, identified common goals and guidelines on migration management globally. The GCM encourages us to take the right measures at the national level while strengthening cooperation at the international level. It aims to improve migration management systems within countries. And it aims to facilitate a real dialogue between countries of origin, transit and destination.

With respect to our policies and measures on the national level, the key areas of the GCM already are well-integrated in the migration policies of the Dutch government.

The GCM and the Global Compact on Refugees are fully in line with the Dutch Government's integrated agenda on migration. We are convinced that migration can only be properly managed along the whole migratory route.

The Netherlands is a strong international partner in development, and will continue to be so. Over the next few years, the Netherlands will devote even more resources on cooperation with its partners to address root causes of migration and to strengthen national migration management systems.

With regard to regular migration, the Netherlands provides for a number of different opportunities, including for employment, purposes, study and family reunification. As a member of the European Union, the Netherlands is also part of a well-established framework that facilitates regional migration.

At home, we have further intensified our efforts to promote integration of regular migrants, prevent irregular stay and combat exploitation, smuggling and trafficking in persons.

Of course, return and reintegration are also an important part of this agenda. The Netherlands therefore welcomes the opportunity provided by the GCM to improve co-operation on

this important issue. Like other countries of destination, the Netherlands faces an increasing problem of irregular migrants misusing the asylum system - after exhausting legal remedies - who have no more right to stay in our country, yet cannot be returned. There's nothing positive about not being able to return to your home country.

Ladies and gentlemen, we all know that safe, orderly and regular migration is the ONLY way for a global migration system to function. Therefore, it is crucial that all states recognize their obligation to readmit their own nationals. In the spirit of the GCM, the Netherlands will continue to work with all countries to ensure swift, safe and dignified returns.

In the same spirit of co-operation, the Netherlands will make use of the opportunity in the General Assembly to deliver a joint explanation of position in order to prevent misunderstandings. Together with other European states we will present our assessment of the GCM as a legally non-binding instrument. At the core of this assessment is the recognition of the sovereignty of states to develop national migration policies, including the right to distinguish between legal and illegal migrants. Equally important, we will underline the need to respect the human rights of all migrants as set out in existing Treaties.

Your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, in conclusion, the Netherlands is committed to make the Global Compact on Migration an effective tool for international co-operation. We should all seize the opportunity to strengthen migration management to the benefit of all.

Finally, as we didn't have the opportunity to do so earlier, I want to extend my compliments to all those who have worked so hard to make this process a success - in particular Special Representative Louise Arbour, Ambassador Gomez Camacho and Ambassador Lauber as well as their teams. Thank you very much for your wisdom and patience, steering us towards this achievement during the past two years.

Thank you.