

**Fifteenth Coordination Meeting on International Migration**  
**Remarks by H.E. Mr. Tomas Christensen**

USG Wu,  
Director General Swing,  
Special Advisor Nakamitsu,  
Rector Malone,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to join you today and deliver the message of the President of the General Assembly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is self-apparent that the phenomenon of migration is not a new one. It has been a feature of humanity since the early ages of history.

However, in a world of seven to nine billion people, demographic pressures mean we must now bring order to the process, so that migration takes place in a way that upholds the dignity, well-being and fundamental human rights of migrants.

This challenge requires all of us to work collaboratively and compassionately.

Long before borders existed, or maps looked the way they currently do – people have been on the move, searching for peace, security, prosperity and opportunity. To the places in which they settled, migrants have brought new skills, new energy, new perspectives and experiences. Migrants have helped to drive economic growth, and have enriched the cultural tapestry of their new communities.

For countries of origin, migrants have – through remittances – bolstered economies, and helped to build social and cultural bonds between nations. While the global story of migration has been largely a positive one, the experiences of migrants themselves have never been straightforward.

For most migrants, the decision to move away from families, communities and familiar surrounds is not an easy one. And once embarked, far too many

migrants experience exploitation, have their rights and protections overlooked, and find that their differences with local populations are politicized to drive fear and xenophobia.

For all of these hurdles and disincentives, the global movement of people is occurring in our times in an unprecedented scale. And migration between developing countries is occurring in ever increasing numbers.

We must consider how best to manage migration – to address root causes, to protect the rights of migrants, and to establish global ground-rules for the movement of people.

As part of our collective efforts to better, and more humanely, manage the global movement of people, an important step was taken by the UN General Assembly last September with the adoption of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

Beginning with the straight-forward acknowledgement that “since earliest times, humanity has been on the move,” the New York Declaration expresses the international community’s political will to save the lives, and protect the rights, of both refugees and migrants. It reflects our agreement to collectively share responsibility for managing large movements of people across our world, and acknowledges the need for a comprehensive global approach to be adopted.

On the specific issue of migrants, the New York Declaration includes two parts of equal importance.

The first part sets out a range of commitments that Member States have made - to be implemented immediately - to protect the safety, dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants. It sets out to provide support to migrant communities; to increase educational opportunities for migrant children, and to address drivers of large movements.

We call on all Member States to implement these commitments without delay.

The second part sets out the commitment of Member States to launch an intergovernmental process leading to the adoption in 2018 of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, in addition to a separate global compact on refugees.

Ambitions for the migration compact are high.

The timeline for reaching an ambitious and comprehensive outcome for the migration compact is tight. Thus, driving the process forward is one of the PGA's key priorities for this General Assembly Session. We have a solid consensus text for the modalities resolution that provides for an inclusive, transparent and comprehensive process.

As we are to start the consultation phase which the Member States are requesting the PGA to lead on, we will work closely with all concerned, particularly the Secretariat, IOM, and the Global Migration Group on this task.

With 6 thematic sessions, between April and October, 2 in New York, 3 in Geneva and 1 in Vienna, we will have ample time to debate our common understanding and shared approach to the broad migration agenda.

I cannot stress enough the importance of the constructive and active engagement of all concerned.

It goes without saying that the expertise and knowledge of Member States and other key stakeholders, including civil society, the private sector, academia, diaspora communities, and migrant organizations is key for this process.

Their contribution will assist the realization of an outcome that is informed by realities and the needs of migrant communities, countries of origin, and receiving communities alike.

Excellencies,

Each and every Member State here today has at some time served as a country of origin, transit, and/or settlement. To address the challenges before us, we must therefore work together – to step up to our responsibilities, strengthen our cooperation, and move towards a global agreement on the management of international migration.

We are, at this stage, advancing well.

Now we must move to implement the commitments we made under the New York Declaration. But most critically of all, we must put our shoulders to the wheel for an ambitious and comprehensive global compact on migration in 2018.

Thank you.