

Opening Remarks by Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu
Special Adviser a.i. for follow-up to the Summit on Large Movements of
Refugees and Migrants
Thursday 16 February 2017

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished guests and colleagues,

In adopting the “New York Declaration” at the 19 September 2016 Summit, Member States have given us the opportunity to prove the United Nations is the global institution that is the best-placed to build an effective and principled response to those challenges. As the Secretary-General’s message said, we cannot afford to miss this opportunity.

The process described in the draft modalities resolution will culminate in an intergovernmental conference on a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in late 2018. If that resolution is adopted as written, and we hope it will be, we have to work together accomplish a great amount of complex work within about a year and a half:

- Six weeks from now, the Secretary-General is asked to prepare a note on the organization of work leading up to the intergovernmental conference.

- In May, the first of six informal thematic sessions is to take place in Geneva. Two more sessions will also take place in Geneva, followed by one in Vienna, and two more in New York – all between April and November of this year.
- In parallel, the regional economic commissions, in collaboration with other relevant entities of the United Nations system, particularly IOM, are requested to organize discussions to provide their perspectives to the preparatory process of the global compact;
- All of those consultations will provide inputs for a preparatory “stock taking” meeting to be hosted in Mexico in late November 2017. The results of that meeting will form the basis of the zero draft of the global compact.
- Next, by February 2018, the Secretary-General is requested to present a report that includes recommendations for their consideration in devising the global compact on safe orderly and regular migration.
- Shortly thereafter, intergovernmental negotiations on the global compact will begin here in New York in February 2018, just one year from now.
- At roughly the same time, between April 2017 and June 2018, the President of the General Assembly, as part of the preparatory process for the intergovernmental conference, is requested to organize and to preside over four days of informal interactive multi-stakeholder hearings representatives of non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, academic institutions, parliaments, diasporas, migrants, migrant organizations and the private sector will have opportunities to make significant contributions to the process.

To rise to these challenges, we have to, as the Secretary-General said, work more closely than ever before. At times, this will mean stepping up to enormous responsibilities and workloads. At other times, it will mean stepping back from the high-profile issues and contributing to the less glamorous work of making sure all gaps are covered.

Above all, we have to understand that success can only be achieved together and commit ourselves to developing something that will improve the lives of millions of people.