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at the September Summit and signing of the IOM-UN Agreement
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INTRODUCTION.

The signature of this historic agreement brings the leading global migration agency, International Organization for Migration (IOM) -- into the United Nations -- the culmination of a 65-year relationship. For the very first time in 71 years, the UN now has a "UN Migration Agency". This is a singular honor for our Organization -- and a genuine success for migrants and Member States and this Summit.

On behalf of IOM's 10,000 colleagues in some 500 duty stations on all five continents, I wish to thank the Secretary-General, the Deputy Secretary-General, the Presidents of the 71st and 70th UN General Assemblies, as well as IOM's 165 Member States and the 193 Member States of the United Nations assembled here today -- Thank you for this bold and visionary decision.

Three developments have brought us to this landmark moment today. (Global migration trends; fortuitous timing and trust built on a half-century of cooperation)

I. MIGRATION AS A "MEGA-TREND"

Migration is, today, a global issue -- a priority for all Governments.

- We live in a world on the move -- in a period of unprecedented human mobility. One billion of our seven billion world are migrants; one in every seven of us is a migrant. Were the 244 million international migrants to form themselves into a country, they would constitute the sixth-largest nation in the world, slightly smaller than the population of Indonesia and larger than that of Brazil. Migrants' annual remittances equal the GDP of a small to medium size European country and far exceed all foreign aid.
- Driving migration are demography; disasters; the digital revolution; distance-shrinking technology; north-south disparities; and environmental degradation.
- Unfortunately, as a result of these driving forces, a record number of people are uprooted, forced to move -- refugees, internally displaced persons, victims of



trafficking, unaccompanied minors. Climate change threatens a further 75 million living only 1 m above sea level.

- The world faces an unprecedented series of simultaneous, complex and protracted crises and humanitarian emergencies in an "arc of instability", stretching from the Western bulge of Africa to the Himalayas.
- Worse still, there is little prospect to resolve any of these crises in the short to medium term. Widespread, growing anti-migrant sentiment and policies have led to the cruel irony that those fleeing terror and armed conflict are themselves accused of terrorism and criminality.
- Besides the challenge of disasters, the world faces the demographic challenge of a Global North in demographic deficit and in need of workers, and a Global South with a turgid rate of job creation facing demographic surplus.
- IOM's thesis, therefore, is that migration is inevitable owing to these drivers; necessary if our economies and societies are to flourish; and desirable if our migration policies are responsible and humane.

-- To do so will require (a) changing the toxic migration narrative and (b) learning to manage cultural, ethnic and religious diversity.

II. AN EVOLVING MIGRATORY LANDSCAPE. (Timing)

- The timing for such an agreement proved to be fortuitous. That is, global migration concerns, especially in Europe, led to a series of major agreements in 2015 -- a truly watershed year -- agreements that give the United Nations, for the first time, an explicit, official migration mandate and, as a non-UN member, made a more formal IOM Association with the UN in the interest of both.
- These agreements are: (a) the Sendai Disaster Risk Reduction Framework in March; (b) the Sustainable Development Goals/Agenda 2030 in September; and (c) the Paris Climate Change accord in December 2015.
- Migration also had a prominent place on the agenda of the World Humanitarian Summit in May at Istanbul.
- In addition, we are gathered here today for an historic Summit -- the first ever to assemble Heads of State from around the world to address the question of refugees and migrants.



- Timing, therefore, became a critical element in IOM's decision to seek formal Association with the United Nations. In other words, if IOM is to fulfill its mandate to assist and protect migrants, we have to be in these new processes, and this is most effectively done by entering the UN system.

III. FORMALIZING AN OLD RELATIONSHIP. (TRUST).

This agreement also reflects the trust that IOM and the United Nations have built up over 65 years. IOM was born, together with UNHCR, in 1951 to bring Europeans ravaged by the Second World War to safe shores and new lives. Since then, we have collaborated so closely that many have assumed all along that IOM is a UN organization.

Throughout our negotiations, trust ensured an atmosphere of openness conducive to arriving at an arrangement that would be in the interest of both organizations. Similarly, we were careful to keep our Member States -- through the aegis of their "Working Group" -- closely and regularly informed about the status of our negotiations with the UN Secretariat.

IOM will continue to keep our Member States fully and regularly informed on this new, official stage of our relations with the UN -- preserving our cost-effective business model, operational ability and agility, and quick delivery -- the same sort of openness and regular consultations that facilitated a Member State consensus on the agreement.

In the same spirit of partnership, we will base our relations with all agencies in the UN system on full transparency and cooperation.

CONCLUSION.

In sum, these three elements made this agreement possible -- global trends, decade-long trust and fortuitous timing.

In conclusion, the positive nature of this agreement underscores that migration is not so much an issue to be addressed or a crisis to be solved as it is a human reality to be managed. If we accept this reality, the summit and the process leading to a Global Compact can be a "defining moment" for human mobility.