

Marika Palosari
Programme Coordinator
UN Environment Programme



UN Environment

Statement at the Plenary session of the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Marrakech, Morocco 10-11 December 2018

Distinguished delegates, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen.

Firstly, allow me to express UN Environment Programme's sincere gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco as the host government of this conference.

Thank you also to the Co-facilitators of the conference and to the Special Representative of the Secretary General for International Migration as well as her team for their instrumental support to the Global compact on Migration.

I would like to congratulate the states on their commitment to cooperate on migration and well managed human mobility, and to adopt the Global Compact on Migration.

Migration decisions are the result of complex processes and human decision-making. **At first glance, environmental degradation and climate change are often hidden** drivers of migration as in many cases the ultimate reason for migration is an acute political or economic crisis. But worsening environmental conditions that affect livelihood opportunities are increasingly **the actual root causes of the problems.**

Each year, millions of people are forced to move as result of natural hazards and environmental degradation.

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration recognizes that there is a need to better **map, understand and address these migration**

movements. It also calls for adaptation and resilience strategies and mechanisms for **addressing vulnerabilities of persons affected by climate and environmental changes.**

This meeting, together with the ongoing Conference of the parties of the Convention on Climate change, shall mark a **new beginning** for addressing adverse effects of climate change and environmental degradation as drivers of migration. Today we acknowledge that failure to address slow onset events such as sea level rise, desertification, land and forest degradation and loss of biodiversity, could lead to distress migration, and result in substantial implications for development - in both source and receiving countries.

In this context, it is **crucial to implement existing frameworks** in relation to environment, climate change and disaster risk reduction. I would like to take this opportunity to **thank those many nations** who are, as we speak, undertaking **considerable efforts in putting into action the climate convention, the convention on biological diversity** and the convention to combat desertification as well as other environmental agreements that are key to building resilience and sustainable development.

UN Environment is **firmly committed to further engage with States** and other partners to further build our understanding of the ways in which environmental and climate change can impact migration movements and identify approaches required to address these profound drivers of migration. Besides further mapping and analyzing the dynamic and multi-causality of the phenomenon, we are keen to take forward community-led nature-based solutions, such as vegetation regeneration, watershed restoration or constructed wetlands, to

combat environmental threats that undermine community resilience and drive irregular migration in vulnerable regions.

We look forward to contributing actively to improving national and international initiatives, including as part of the UN Migration Network.

Indeed, the Migration Network offers a critical opportunity to step up collective and coordinated action among to UN agencies and other stakeholders, such as the Platform on Disaster Displacement. **The key policy processes** - the migration agenda, the Sustainable Development Goals agenda and the climate change agenda, including the Secretary General Summit on Climate Change scheduled for September 2019 - **need to be orchestrated in harmony**. And most importantly, the policies then need to be matched with joint action by governments, the private sector and civil society as well as international organizations.

Distinguished delegates, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, today we recognize that **both climate change and migration are our common future**. We also know that climate change stresses natural resources essential for livelihoods, particularly in fragile contexts. At UN Environment we have witnessed these impacts in our work in crisis-affected countries across the world. However, **we also understand, that cooperating over shared resources or common environmental challenges can rebuild trust and resilience among divided communities**. Early action and support to enable communities to adapt in place can significantly reduce distress migration. **So there is reason for optimism – but** this means long-term work. I would like to conclude by highlighting that it is **time to shift focus from a crisis**



management approach to proactively supporting communities to be more resilient in the long-term.

Thank you.

Contact person: Marika Palosaari, UN Environment