



Intervention of His Eminence Cardinal Pietro Parolin,
Secretary of State of His Holiness Pope Francis and Head of the Delegation of the Holy See
during the General Debate of the Intergovernmental Conference to
Adopt the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Marrakech, Morocco, 10 December 2018

Mr. Secretary-General, Madame President of the General Assembly, Madame Secretary-General of the Conference,

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, Mr. President,

I am pleased to offer the warm greetings of His Holiness, Pope Francis and, on his behalf, I welcome the formal adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration. At the same time, I also wish to express gratitude to His Majesty the King, Mohammed VI, King of Morocco for graciously inviting and hosting our delegation here today and to congratulate the Secretary-General of the Conference, Madame Louise Arbour, and the Delegations of the Permanent Missions of Mexico and Switzerland to the United Nations for their leadership in ushering this intergovernmental process to its successful conclusion.

Mr. President,

The adoption of the Global Compact on Migration comes at a critical moment in history. Migration has always been a natural response to crises and to the innate desire for greater opportunities, for a fuller life with greater freedom, peace and security. More people are on the move than ever before. While the majority of migration remains regular, ever more people are being constrained by adverse factors to leave their homes. This often leads to involuntary, unsafe, and irregular journeys that place migrants and their families in vulnerable situations, presenting significant challenges for countries of origin, transit, and destination.

As we have seen in recent years, when these challenges are not managed well, crises can form, rhetoric can eclipse reason, and migrants can be seen more as threats than as brothers and sisters in need of solidarity and basic services. The Global Compact on Migration attempts to assist the international community to prevent crises and tragedies. At the same time, it also seeks to improve the governance of migration, which is bound to increase as the international community grows more economically, socially and politically interconnected.

To achieve these goals, the Global Compact for Migration, although not legally binding, includes a comprehensive framework of best practices and policy instruments to increase international cooperation and sharing of responsibility in the governance of migration in all of its dimensions. It does this while giving countries the space to respond to their national circumstances and priorities, in full respect of international law and of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their status. Its implementation will help all Governments, as well

as non-governmental entities, including faith-based organizations, collectively to manage migration in a more safe, orderly and regular manner, something no State can achieve alone.

Mr. President,

Pope Francis has dedicated much of his pontificate to raising awareness about the plight of migrants, as well as the moral urgency to care for those who have been displaced and to respond to the root causes of their displacement. In particular, he has focused on the situation of those in the most vulnerable situations, including migrant children and youth. His vision for international migration can be summarized by the four verbs: to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate, four actions that we find pervading the best practices and commitments that comprise the Global Compact on Migration.

He has also underlined that a dignified response to migration must be reasonable, with Governments prudently determining their actual capacity for meaningful integration. Integration is a two-way process in which migrants should respect the local laws, culture and customs of the country receiving them, while host countries should respect the traditions and cultures of migrants. Through mutual welcoming and prudence, rising xenophobia and racism can be effectively addressed.

Pope Francis has also emphasized that, while migration is a natural phenomenon, there is the prior right to live in dignity and safety in the country of origin. The Holy See appeals to Governments and the international community as a whole, to foster those conditions that might allow communities and individuals to live in safety and dignity in their own countries.

The right not to migrate can only be enjoyed if the adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin are effectively controlled and minimized. Conflicts, wars, climate change, extreme poverty and its train of miseries will inevitably compel many people into unsafe, disorderly and irregular migration, making it not a choice but an act of desperation. By finding sustainable solutions to conflicts and underdevelopment, we would greatly diminish forced, unsafe, disorderly and irregular migration.

Mr. President,

The Holy See has already launched the process to find the most effective ways with which institutions of the Catholic Church and Catholic-inspired organizations throughout the world can make use of the Global Compact's compendium of best practices and recommendations that exemplify welcoming, protecting, promoting and integrating migrants. In this sense, it is worth recognizing the role and the contributions that religions and faith-based organizations offer in this context, giving support to efforts of the international community, as expressed in the Global Compact on Migration, while receiving the due respect for their autonomy as religious institutions.

While some States have decided not to participate in the process or in this Intergovernmental Conference, the Holy See is convinced that the enormous challenges that migration poses are best faced through multilateral processes rather than isolationist policies.

The Holy See, while voting in conformity with its nature and particular mission for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, will present its reservations in due

time, specifically on those documents in the Compact that contain terminology, principles and guidelines that are not agreed language, including certain ideological interpretations of human rights that do not recognize the inherent value and dignity of human life at every stage of its beginning, development and end.

Mr. President,

Through its prudent, “360-degree” approach, considering all of the factors involved in migration governance, the Global Compact, without ignoring the many challenges and opportunities that every State and migrants face in their shared journey, gives States the opportunity to improve their respective migration policies and, together, the international management of migration.

For these reasons, the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is an significant advance in the international community’s shared responsibility to act in solidarity with people on the move, especially those who find themselves in very precarious situations.

I thank you.