

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Marrakech, 10-11 December 2018

DRAFT NATIONAL STATEMENT - IRELAND

We are gathered here in Marrakech to affirm our commitment to working together to address the large-scale movement of people across international borders, one of the most important shared challenges for which the world must show leadership.

We remember a fellow Irishman, the late Peter Sutherland, the former Special Representative of the UN Secretary General for International Migration, who with other pioneers demonstrated the leadership needed to firmly place the need for better collective management of migration at the centre of the global agenda.

Ireland was proud to co-facilitate, with our Jordanian friends, the New York Declaration in 2016 that led to the Global Compacts on Migration and on Refugees - and we are proud to stand with you today as we together set out to ensure that migration is safer and better managed.

At the heart of what we celebrate today is a simple fact - *migration is a global issue requiring global solutions.*

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, though non-binding and respectful of national sovereignty, provides us all with a strong framework for cooperation as we together strive to address challenges and ensure that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is advanced.

In doing so, let us not forget those places which have seen a higher increase in migration across borders than any other parts of the world. Today I would like to acknowledge the great efforts by countries such as Ethiopia, Kenya and Uganda, and also Jordan, Lebanon, Bangladesh and Turkey, each of which are generously hosting large displaced populations. Their solidarity and simple humanity is an example to us all. I also wish to acknowledge the work of multilateral agencies, including UNHCR and IOM, in providing assistance and support to displaced populations in need.

My country, Ireland, has a long history of migration. This gives us a responsibility to play our part in ensuring that the vision set out in the Global Compact – of common understanding, shared responsibilities, and unity of purpose – is advanced.

17% of Irish citizens are currently living abroad. These join with the 70 million or so people of Irish descent worldwide, descendants of those Irish forced to seek livelihoods elsewhere over centuries of political and economic uncertainty.

More recently, we have been a country of inward migration. Today, more than one in six of our residents were born abroad, and our workforce is the third most international in Europe. For ours is a *global island*, and one which we are proud to position at the centre of the world.

Today we are benefiting from the contribution - economically, socially, culturally - of the new Irish and those who have made Ireland their home. We have also provided succour to those in need of protection, those who have been forced to flee their own homes.

In this way, we together will be able to harness the positive impact of migration. We will also be better able to prevent irregular migration in all its guises, particularly trafficking in persons, through stronger cooperation between countries of origin, transit and destination.

Ireland also joins the call for a gender-responsive implementation of the Global Compact that contributes to achieving gender equality and the empowerment of all migrant women and girls, who face particular vulnerabilities.

We are pleased to see the establishment by the UN Secretary General of a UN Network on Migration, with IOM at the centre and each UN agency playing its part in a strongly coordinated manner.

As 73 per cent of migrants are migrant workers, the role of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) is important in addressing challenges such as the lack of social protection, inequalities in the labour market, exploitation and human trafficking. Ireland, as a full member of the ILO Governing Body, supports these efforts and intends to ratify the Protocol to the ILO Forced Labour Convention shortly.

Finally, I wish to express my appreciation to the UN Secretary General and Deputy Secretary General for your leadership on this issue, and to Louise Arbour, Special Representative for International Migration, for your inspiring role in making this Global Compact a reality.

Thank you.