

**Norway statement at the Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, Marrakech, 10-
11 December 2018**

Mr President, excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

Migration must be safe, orderly and regular.

This Global Compact is a step forward and in the right direction. We acknowledge that the facilitators have taken many of our concerns into account.

The final text is carefully balanced between those that want the Compact to be a tool for development, and those that want a tool for migration management.

In view of the complexity of diverging interests, it is quite possibly the best achievable compromise.

However, as recent political deliberations in various European countries have shown, not all destination countries agree that this Global Compact will serve their interests.

Recently, there has been growing public interest and political debate in Norway about the Global Compact.

As a response to this interest, our Foreign Minister will inform our Parliament about the main elements of the Global Compact before it is presented to the General Assembly in New York.

We have heard claims that the Global Compact will limit freedom of the press and that it is aiming for a skewed representation of migration.

We should make absolutely clear that freedom of expression and freedom of the press are the foundation of a democratic society.

We are therefore pleased to note that the final text includes a recognition of the freedom of expression, freedom of the press and the need for open and free debate on all aspects of migration.

This has been an important issue for Norway throughout the negotiations.

Mr President,

Norway will join the Global Compact for Migration, but due to the ambiguity of the text, we find it necessary to clarify our position on certain points in the Compact.

- The Global Compact for migration is not legally binding nor does it seek to establish international customary law.
- The Global Compact reaffirms the sovereign right of States to determine their national migration policy and their prerogative to govern migration within their jurisdiction in conformity with international law. In this regard, they have the authority to distinguish between regular and irregular migration status. Furthermore, effective border management is crucial for the security of States, communities and migrants to fight human trafficking and smuggling.
- All migrants, as human beings, have certain fundamental rights that must be fully respected. However, the Global Compact does not create any new legal categories nor establishes a human right to migrate. Moreover, it

allows countries to reserve certain rights and welfare benefits for regular migrants.

- Norway's position is that Norwegian legislation and associated schemes are well functioning and do not call for any changes based on the Global Compact. It is therefore our understanding that the objective to enhance regular migration pathways cannot be interpreted as an obligation to further expand Norwegian legislation nor practice regarding labour migration, education opportunities and family immigration, as these are already in accordance with international law.
- The Global Compact recognises that countries must be able to enforce migration legislation. Norway's position is that the detention of foreign nationals may be necessary in some cases, also for minors, but then only as a last resort and for the shortest possible period of time.
- The Global Compact is based on the obligation of all countries under international law to readmit their own nationals who have been staying illegally in other countries, whether they return of their own volition or not, and all countries' obligation to commit themselves to cooperate on readmission. Norway will actively seek to enter readmission agreements and to fully implement these in order to achieve the objective of improved cooperation on return and readmission.
- In many countries, migrants have very limited social security entitlements and benefits, and there are strict rules for their portability. Norway does not interpret the Global Compact to require a revision of the portability of Norwegian benefits for migrants.

- The Global Compact recognises the value of a free press and Norway acknowledges that there is nothing in the Global Compact limiting free and fact-based reporting on migration.

Mr President,

Norway has decided to provide IOM with un-earmarked core support in addition to project financing.

This will enable IOM to strengthen core features such as administrative functions, policymaking and analysis, to facilitate the implementation of the Global Compact.

Based on our clarifications, Norway will take part in the implementation of the Global Compact, in particular with a view of improving migration management and stemming irregular migration.

We must work together, bilaterally, regionally and globally, to achieve safe, orderly and regular migration.