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**Intervenção do Primeiro-Ministro na Conferência
Intergovernamental para adotar o Pacto Global sobre
Migrações**

Marraxe, 10 de dezembro

Your Majesty, King Mohammed VI,

Madam President of the United Nations General
Assembly, Ambassador Maria Fernanda Espinosa,

Mister Secretary-General of the United Nations,
António Guterres,

Madam Special Representative for International
Migration, Louise Arbour,

Mister Director General of the International
Organization for Migrations, António Vitorino

Your Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,



Throughout history, human mobility has been one of the most powerful forces shaping social and economic development, as well as contact between societies.

Thousands of years before the age of mass transportation, men and women have walked and sailed huge distances in search of a brighter future.

In the XXIst century, divergences in demographic trends and levels of economic development, as well as ease of transportation and broad diffusion of knowledge, will continue to make migration an unavoidable reality.

Whatever the motivation, from economic need to personal aspiration, individuals will continue to pursue new challenges and opportunities across borders.

We should make the best use of that energy and direct it to the creation of more developed and inclusive societies: reducing the root causes that lead some to migrate simply because they feel there is no other choice; and creating legal pathways to those who seek new opportunities in a different country.



At the same time, we must tackle its root causes through the implementation of a positive agenda to fight poverty, promote development and foster cooperation between countries and continents. The Africa-Europe Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs, in which Portugal is deeply involved, will be a key instrument to achieve these goals.

Hopefully, today marks the beginning of a new period in the global governance of migrations, guided by the promotion of peace and security, tolerance, respect for human rights and sustainable development.

The *Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, whose adoption we warmly salute, in this year when we celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, is first and foremost a political commitment focused on people that puts migrants at the heart of international cooperation.

The Compact is not contrary to national sovereignty. Each states retains the right to define its own national policy on migration and to protect and secure its own borders.



The Portuguese have long roamed the world. This is why we are good at establishing ties with different cultures, different traditions and different religions.

Shaping our view of migration is also the existence of long-established and well-integrated Portuguese diaspora, totalling more than 5 million people and present in all continents.

In our own country, different communities give an important contribution to our economy and to the cultural diversity of our society.

If managed wisely, migration can favour economic growth and help us face the growing imbalances in demographic trends across regions and continents. If left totally unregulated, it can lead to tensions, as we witness today.

Thus, migration is both a challenge and an opportunity. It should be addressed jointly and globally, through the promotion and strengthening of mechanisms of a multilateral nature, involving countries of origin, of transit and of destination.



What it does is to create a comprehensive framework that offers both state and non-state actors guiding principles for cooperating and sharing responsibility on migration.

Portugal supports its objectives, as well as the concrete measures to implement them, including the cross-cutting references to upholding human rights in every circumstance and especially for those particularly vulnerable.

These are principles that we try to make good in our own country.

We have consistently advocated the full integration of migrants in host societies. In Portugal, they have unrestricted access to the National Health Service, just as Portuguese nationals do, and all migrant children, including irregular migrants, have access to the public education system.

The International Organisation for Migration has a key role to play in coordinating the implementation of the Global Compact.



This is why I will conclude by quoting from the vision statement of its new Director-General, António Vitorino: “no strategy, policy or instrument intended to govern migration can be effective as long as we ignore that migrations have a face, that migrants are highly vulnerable human beings, particularly migrant women and children, and are frequently victims of international crime. An effective approach to migration thus requires renewed and reinforced integration strategies and policies.”

Thank you.