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SRI LANKA



**Intergovernmental Conference to Adopt the
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM)
Marrakech-Morocco , 10-11 December 2018
General Debate
Statement of the Government of Sri Lanka**

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Mr. President,
Excellencies, Distinguished delegates,

Sri Lanka extends its warmest greetings and best wishes to the Government of Morocco as the Presidency of this landmark conference. This event marks the culmination of a two-years' long efforts to bring up a global framework on international migration governance, firmly anchored to the realization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development commitments. The adoption of the Migration compact in our view marks the beginning of a new journey, a collective journey-consciously departing from the path of negative and toxic narrative of migration and migrants, aiming at safe, regular and orderly migration, and adding real value and dignity to human mobility.

As the international community celebrates the 70th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), we believe the adoption of the Migration Compact here in Marrakesh is a fitting momentum to reiterate the importance of the 10 cross-cutting guiding principles agreed in the GCM- ranging from being people-centered, human rights based, gender responsive, to child sensitive. As all these aspects require solid national ownership, Sri Lanka wishes to emphasize that the success of the next stage of the Compact –the implementation, follow-up and review will depend on how it will provide flexibility and space for Governments to decide and lead the processes forward according to their national priorities. How best Governments could fit the action agenda stipulated in the GCM into their national policies, in the short, medium and long term. The nexus between migration and developmental impacts to countries of origin, destination and to individual migrants being a well established reality will undoubtedly make it a compelling case for Governments to act early. However, as no country can address the train of challenges and opportunities of migration on its own, the Compact has rightly pinned down the importance of partnerships, be it south-south or north-south, as a critical enabler. We call for firm commitment to the capacity building and development mechanism proposed in the Compact, and for making it a practical reality.

Mr. President,

As this is also a moment to reflect on what we as Governments could do to take the Compact forward, allow me to share some thoughts on Sri Lanka's own national experience as a country of origin as well as our perspectives as the Chair of two important Regional Consultative Processes, namely as the immediate past Chair of the Colombo Process and the current Chair of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue. We hope these inputs will help guide our deliberations in this general debate.

Sri Lanka has already initiated work to identify the priority areas and the respective GCM objectives with regard to international migration, in areas such as Inward Migration, Outward Migration, Border Control, Migration Crisis, and Migration Data. In some of these areas

much work has already been undertaken successfully. In respect of others, it may take time to incorporate the relevant objectives into the system and to take action. This work involves national consultation underpinning the importance of 'whole of government' approach. Being primarily a labour originating country, Sri Lanka has developed an extensive policy framework for regulating and protecting migrant workers' rights with regard to outward migration. This is achieved by regulating international labour migration through standardization of recruitment process, pre-departure training and information, access to social protection and grievance redress.

Sri Lanka places high importance on inclusivity, particularly the active engagement with the business and private sector involved in labour migration. A Code of Ethical Conduct for Licensed Foreign Employment Agents has been introduced since 2013 with the objective of strengthening professionalism, and business capacities of the Licensed Foreign Employment Agencies (LFEAs) and of promoting best practices in the process of recruiting Sri Lankans for overseas employment. This approach is expected to ensure the benefits of such policies reaching the migrant workers, and their family members, while contributing to the countries' economy and the overall foreign employment industry. The 'Integrated Border Management (IBM) Strategy' launched this year, the multi-stakeholder National Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force, and the dedicated focus given to rights of the migrants in the National Human Rights Action Plan (2017-2021) are some other key policy steps taken by the Government.

Mr. President,

As most active Regional Consultative Processes (RCPs), the Colombo Process and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue (ADD) provide a useful platform for its Members to share views and experiences on labour migration. It has helped to understand issues, and to build collaborative approaches through thematic area working groups. Also in partnership with the receiving countries in the ADD several pilot projects on skills development, ethical recruitment and information management have been undertaken. ADD and CP were among the RCPs that provided inputs through consultative process for the GCM's final outcome. In that respect, we are pleased to note that the role of RCPs has been recognized in the final outcome as mechanisms that can play a constructive role in the implementation, follow up and review. However, we do not foresee any supervisory role for the RCPs on Member States in going forward to the next steps. Consensus building, collaboration and capacity development support will be the way to keep the momentum generated in the GCM process.

In conclusion Mr. President, Sri Lanka wishes to express its continued support to all the partnering Agencies and to IOM. We wish Director General Vitorino very well as IOM under his visionary leadership takes up a new role as the coordinator of the Global Migration Network. Also, at this historic moment we also salute those who drove the global process passionately, and strove hard to bring it to its logical end. This includes, among several others, the SRSG on International Migration Madam Arbour, the two co-chairs from Mexico and Switzerland, and the former IOM Director General Mr. William Swing and late Mr. Peter Sutherland.

I thank you all.