



**National Statement
of
St. Kitts and Nevis**

**delivered at the
Intergovernmental Conference**

**to adopt the
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

10th to 11th December 2018

Marrakech, Morocco

Please check against delivery.

Mister President, Madam Secretary General of the Conference, distinguished delegates, excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my honour and my privilege, on behalf of the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis, to join other delegations present in the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. At the outset, we wish to thank the Kingdom of Morocco for the successful hosting of this conference and for the warm hospitality extended to my delegation. Similarly, we thank the permanent representatives of Mexico and Switzerland for leading us successfully through to this Compact, as the outcome of extensive and productive negotiations, building on the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

Mister President,

The Global Compact is an indication of the international community's attempts to reinforce the benefits of international migration and confront its related challenges.

As articulated by the UN Secretary General in his report, *Making Migration Work for All*, St. Kitts and Nevis believes that despite its real problems, migration is beneficial for both migrants and host communities in economic and social terms. We agree that international migration continues to be a defining feature of our globalized world, connecting societies within and across regions and rendering our borders porous. We must therefore combine our efforts internationally to harness the benefits and address the challenges that meet our shores. St. Kitts and Nevis is a friendly nation and a welcoming destination. However, we maintain that migration must be safe, orderly and regular, in a manner that is consistent with our national laws.

Mister President, I am proud to indicate that St. Kitts and Nevis has been improving and advancing its legislative architecture to address the new realities in a more comprehensive way that at the same time, caters to our fundamental priority of protecting our borders. This has also been the effect of our attempts to combat security issues including trafficking in persons.

Mister President, of particular interest to my country is the ground-breaking consensus of climate change as a driver of migration. We note that climate change is likely to exacerbate economic, environmental and social pressures to migrate over the next few decades. As outlined in Objective 2 of this Compact, we are pleased that the international community has committed to minimizing this and other adverse drivers and structural factors that compel people to leave their country of origin. In the aftermath of Hurricanes Irma and Maria last year, St. Kitts and Nevis received an influx of citizens from neighboring countries affected by these disasters.

As a small island developing state with extreme vulnerability to the adverse impacts of climate change, we also advocate for the integration of displacement considerations in disaster preparedness strategies and cooperation with regional neighbours.

In short, we will champion the development of coherent approaches to address the challenges of migration movements in the context of sudden-onset and slow-onset natural disasters and we call on our partners to do the same.

Mister President,

St. Kitts and Nevis advocates for the empowerment of the diaspora as a catalyst to sustainable development and welcomes the Compact's dedicated objective on this issue. The importance we place on the diaspora was manifested earlier this year when we hosted an inaugural diaspora conference, under the theme "Building Partnerships Towards Sustainable Development". We are proud to indicate that as an outcome of this dedicated forum, the government has crafted a National Diaspora Policy, which articulates, inter alia, the role of the diaspora in bolstering our national, sustainable development goals.

Similarly, Mister President, St. Kitts and Nevis continues to echo the call as outlined in this Compact for the reduction in the transaction costs of remittances.

We have seen the statistics that indicate that remittances, including "dollars wrapped with love", as articulated by a famous economist, enable the diaspora to assist their country of origin to integrate and assimilate into the dynamic global economy and contribute to sustainable economic growth and development.

Mister President

The government of St. Kitts and Nevis has vigorously fostered an environment of inclusion and social cohesion throughout which regular migrants can thrive and effectively contribute to nation building. As we witness an increase in the communities of migrants from neighbouring countries such as the Dominican Republic, Venezuela and Cuba, we promote mutual respect for their culture by incorporating festivals into our national entertainment calendar. Additionally, the government has decided to form a national committee to address the concerns of the Hispanic Community in the Federation.

The government believes that shaping the public discourse on perceptions of migrants is vital, if we are to continue to harness the benefits of migration.

Further, Mister President St. Kitts and Nevis does not prohibit access to social services for regularized migrants within our borders. In fact, we encourage migrants to pay taxes, subscribe to social security, regularize their status and abide by the laws of our land. We acknowledge that maximizing the benefits of international migration will be difficult to achieve without a constructive approach towards irregular migration.

Mister President,

As explicitly stated in this Global Compact, no one country can achieve any of these commitments and ultimately address international migration on its own. For small island developing states, such as St. Kitts and Nevis, with limited resources and particular economic and environmental vulnerabilities, we welcome the commitment to strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships in order to achieve the objectives contained within this Compact.

Many of the objectives would require official development and technical assistance as well as capacity building support if we are to achieve what we agree to do here today. For commitments regarding data collection, provision of relevant information and documentation, coordinating migration procedures as well as the provision of the wide range of social services for migrants amongst others, international cooperation is crucial.

Therefore, we welcome objective twenty-three and the call to increase regional and international cooperation to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda particularly in areas where irregular migration systematically originates.

In conclusion, Mister President, St. Kitts and Nevis reiterates its commitment to the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration and will fulfil its role as a responsible participant of this multilateral framework to ensure that the implementation, follow up and review of these objectives are achieved.

I thank you, Mister President.