

PHILIPPINE STATEMENT

High Level Plenary Meeting on Large Movements of Refugees & Migrants
14 July 2016, 10am, CR 6, UNHQ

Good morning, Co-Facilitators.

The Philippines thanks you for the revised text of the zero draft and for taking on board our comments and inputs.

As we only received this last night, we are still awaiting specific comments from our capital and would like to reserve our comments for the next informals scheduled on Monday, 18 July.

We offer the following preliminary, general comments for today's discussions:

1. We welcome the improved structure of the Declaration, particularly the placing of the "Commitments to for migrants and refugees jointly" section prior to the separate commitments for refugees and migrants. There may be a need however, to consider alignment of the structure with the title of the High Level Plenary meeting, which is on "Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants."
2. We would like further refinement of the title of the 1st section, as the title "Defining the Challenge" does not capture the positive contribution of migration to development. This is an integral part of the current context that we have today.
3. In this regard, we believe that the starting point for the consideration of migrants and migration is their positive contribution to development and to society. When we start from this perspective, then we can logically segue into the respect for their human rights and avoidance of xenophobia. As such, Paragraph 1.5 should be moved and placed as Paragraph 1.2.

The second sentence of Paragraph 1.5 should also include the word "positive" in relation to the contribution of migrant to development.

We would also like to point out that there should be consistency in the text of the Declaration in referring to 2030 Agenda language. The correct order is “safe, orderly and regular migration”, as provided for in Paragraph 29 of the 2030 Agenda. We should not include any other modifier, such as “responsible” in Paragraph 3.1.

4. We do think that there is further need to refine and come to an agreed definition and understanding of the concept of “large movements.” While we appreciate the attempt to add language stating that “large movements” “would not, for example, cover regular flows of migrants from one country to another,” this is still a “listing of examples” approach and a description of elements, rather than a definition. It is an indication of the ambiguity of the concept and a lack of common understanding of it. As we have said in our previous discussions, we want to understand what situations can be defined as large movements of migrants that would prompt international concern and cooperation to respond to or address. In this regard, we would like to reiterate our question from the previous informals, which was not quite addressed: Can you give concrete, actual examples of large movements of refugees and large movements of migrants?
5. We welcome reference to the 1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and members of their Families in Paragraph 3.7.
6. For Paragraph 3.8, the reference to “global governance for migration” should be strengthened. It should be couched not in aspirational terms, or “wish” as is currently in the text, but rather should be action-oriented: “We will strengthen global governance for migration.”
7. We express thanks and welcome the reference in paragraph 3.9 to the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative and Guidelines, as well as the reference to the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the context of Disasters and Climate Change emanating from the Nansen Initiative. We think that the updated and correct reference to the Nansen Initiative is the “Platform on Disaster Displacement.”

We reiterate the importance of these initiatives and contribution as possible building blocks for the Global Compact on Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration.

8. We welcome the use of the term “migrants in vulnerable situations” in Paragraph 3.10, in lieu of “vulnerable migrants.” The vulnerability of migrants is not because they are migrants per se and hence, by nature, helpless.
9. We also welcome the reference in Paragraph 3.13 to the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD). The success of the GFMD lies in it being a state-led, voluntary, non-binding and inclusive process of information sharing and mutual assistance by and of states in matters related to migration and development.
10. On Paragraphs 3.16 to 3.18, we appreciate the effort to clarify the process for the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly Migration. We do believe that two (2) years is too long for such a process. Given that we have acknowledged in Paragraph 1.4 that “migrants are present in all countries in the world” and that “In 2015 their number surpassed 244 million, growing at a rate faster than the world’s population”, and given that there is no defined comprehensive global framework for the governance of migration and protection of migrants, we believe that the Global Compact on Migration is equally a priority as the Global Compact on Refugees.
11. Finally, we would like to reiterate that this High Level Meeting is not the appropriate venue for discussing internally displaced persons (IDPs), because the mandate of this High Level Meeting is on large movements of refugees and migrants across international borders, and not within national borders.

Thank you and we will submit our comments in writing to the Secretariat.