Promoting Human Security & Supporting Mobility Options:
Addressing Drivers of Forced Migration in the Global Compact and Other Complementary Processes and Frameworks

Today's second thematic consultation ostensibly addresses "drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crisis, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution." This phrasing is unfortunate, because it is not drivers of *migration* but drivers of undesired migration--*forced* migration and risky and dangerous forms of irregular migration—that need to be addressed. These pose great risks, dangers and hardship on migrants as well as their families and often communities. And it is not the number of people who move, but the number who are *forced to move* or are *forced to move irregularly* because they lack rights-respecting regular migration opportunities. In fact, providing rights-respecting regular migration opportunities is one of the most important ways to address drivers that make livelihoods precarious and unsustainable.

That said, we urge that the Global Compact process replace this negative framing around drivers with a positive one:

Forced migration is the product of human insecurity—*insecure livelihoods, often caused or exacerbated by climate change; lack of decent work; food insecurity; and lack of physical security and safety due to conflict and violence; as we know, these often interact with one another.*

*Rather than "addressing drivers" we urge that attention be focused on **promoting human security and safety**. Second, to effectively promote human security and safety, we emphasize the importance of an approach that is both holistic and practical, one that incorporates **support for mobility options as adaptive strategies** into existing relevant policy frameworks. Third, these mobility options should be **rights-based opportunities for decent work.***

The thematic session panel on climate change notes the need to link to existing policy frameworks to ensure complementarity and coherence. We strongly agree and note that this applies not only with respect to climate change but with respect to *all* drivers. The Global Compact alone cannot address drivers or promote human security; whether we are talking about the nexus between migration and poverty eradication, or prevention and responses to disasters, or climate change, examples of good practices that begin to tackle some small piece of the puzzle are useful but insufficient. But over the next year and a half, states and stakeholders can develop mechanisms to more comprehensively integrate mobility into complementary policy frameworks and processes, most importantly those related to the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement.

One of the most important means of achieving complementarity and coherence will be to take a more systematic approach to addressing the intersection of human mobility with the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda as well as with the Paris Agreement. In the Global Compact context, discussion of the SDGs has been almost exclusively limited to target 10.7, "Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and

responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies" (sometimes also mentioning 8.8, occasionally a few others). But addressing migration governance in a comprehensive way—rather than just repeatedly trying to respond to crisis situations—will require a more integrated, comprehensive approach.

In A/RES/70/1 adopting the SDGs, states emphasized implementation, recognizing the need for a revitalized Global Partnership for Development and committing to "work in a spirit of global solidarity, in particular solidarity with the poorest and with people in vulnerable situations" (Para 39). Global solidarity is needed, as is the "enabling institutional environment" for financing for development outlined in the Addis Ababa Action Agenda (AAAA).

The commitment to sustainable development in the SDGs is far deeper and more transformative than the development in the "migration and development" paradigm. If we look just at Goal 10, Reducing Inequality Within and Among Countries, the picture is quite different from looking at 10.7 in isolation. Goal 10 reflects the spirit of global solidarity and the need to address a wide range of causes of inequality within and among countries. There is an emphasis on countering discrimination and reforming institutions to foster greater equality, and inequalities understood as including but not limited to income inequalities.

Many—even most—of the 17 Goals relate to migrants and/or migration. In addition to the specific mentions in relation to decent work; safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration; and including migratory status in data collection, there are particularly important intersections with targets in Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, and 17. We note that our member organization, Global Migration Policy Associates, has identified 44 Goals across 15 of the 17 SDGs that relate directly to causes and consequences of or decisions driving human mobility.

Poverty: Although the poorest are often subject to forced *immobility*, lacking even the resources to migrate, poverty and food insecurity will remain a driver of forced, exploitative migration without attention to reducing inequalities within and between countries. Sustainable development must mean that the rights of workers everywhere are respected and protected; this includes facilitating the creation of decent work opportunities in developing countries. While the benefits of remittances— including millions upon millions of remittances from irregular migrants—can be useful to development, the expectation that remittances—and migrants—can bear this burden in countries of origin is misplaced as long as most working relationships in the lower skilled sectors remain exploitative.

Conflict: States need to become more sincerely involved in conflict *prevention* rather than in interventions aimed at "resolving" conflicts; this would entail a collective commitment to drastically reducing arms exports, and to promoting peacebuilding initiatives, rather than exploiting regional conflicts for geopolitical gains. Foreign policy needs to follow human rights norms, rather than profit maximization objectives. States should also commit to true responsibility sharing for hosting displaced persons through fair and predictable resettlement quotas, rather than continuing to outsource this to countries neighboring those people have fled.

Climate Change: While it will be important to support all frameworks and initiatives for mitigating climate change, migration *per se* should not be seen as a failure of adaptation; migration for work is a key household adaptive strategy to mitigate risk. Expanding rights-based regular labor migration opportunities will enable people from affected states to build sustainable lives whether by migrating for a period of time or permanently.[1]

States have asked stakeholders for practical recommendations for the compact. As a coalition of mainly migrant and migrant led organizations, taking a rights-based and migrant-centered perspective, our strong recommendation is to mainstream human mobility into efforts to achieve the many relevant goals and targets comprising the SDG agenda. If we focus on mainstreaming human mobility needs and strategies into the SDGs and Paris Agreement, we will have addressed drivers of forced migration. More positively, we will have made progress toward improving human security and safety for millions of people while aiming to leave no one behind.

The Global Coalition on Migration (GCM) is a multi-sectoral coalition of large regional networks of migrant and migrant-led organizations in Europe, Africa, Asia and the Americas, together with labor, policy, and faith-based organizations. The Coalition serves to bridge its members' work at national and regional levels with global governance processes.

---

[1] See Michele Leighton and Meredith Byrne, "With Millions Displaced by Climate Change or Extreme Weather, Is There a Role for Labor Migration Pathways?" available at http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/millions-displaced-climate-change-or-extreme-weather-there-role-labor-migration-pathways.