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UNITED NATIONS BRIEFING ON THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION: REPORT OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL

16 February 2022

Statement by H.E. Dr Fiona Webster, Chargé d'affaires Australian Mission to the United Nations

Thank you Mr President for giving me the floor.

At the outset, I would like to express my appreciation to the Secretary General for his report. The Secretary General rightly highlights the importance of international migration in our economies and our societies. Managed migration has been, and remains, a catalyst for Australia's economic prosperity, our diversity and our social vibrancy.

We support the Secretary-General's recommendations on the three areas of overarching and common importance which would benefit from further consideration by Member States at the International Migration Review Forum.

First, promoting inclusive societies, and including migrants in COVID-19 response and recovery, is a priority for all Member States. Effective management of our migration and citizenship programs will continue to strengthen Australia's social cohesion and resilience to divisive intolerance.

Secondly, promoting safe and regular migration will be vital in addressing critical labour shortages, driving sustainable population growth and boosting productivity to support Australia's economy.

Thirdly, preventing loss of life and other tragedies that occur as a result of irregular migration demands policy coherence and clear implementation in order to break the business model of people smugglers.

We would also welcome time being set aside during the IMRF to discuss the challenge of integrating health security with border controls to support States manage human mobility during global pandemics. Member States should work together to agree a set of overarching principles for the maintenance of safe, predictable and sustainable international travel.

Mr President,

Australia looks forward to participating actively in negotiation of the progress declaration. The progress declaration should reaffirm our commitment to ensuring safe, orderly and regular migration, as well as to ending the impunity of transnational criminal networks that seek to profit from irregular movement and taking action to stop migrants from falling prey to this insidious criminal activity. In considering the GCM, we need to recall that the activities listed under each objective in the Compact are merely illustrative of possible State practice.

In closing, I would like to commend the UN Network on Migration, under the able stewardship of IOM, for bringing increased cohesion to the UN's efforts to promote safe, orderly and regular migration, both at headquarters and in the field.

Thank you.

Word Count: 365