

**Statement by Mr. António Vitorino, Director General,  
International Organization for Migration  
As Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration**

**International Migration Review Forum - Multistakeholder Hearing**

**Monday, 16 May 2022**

**Conference Room 4, United Nations Headquarters, New York**

**Opening Remarks**

Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly,

Madame Deputy Secretary-General,

Excellencies, partners and distinguished guests,

It is an honour to be here with all of you today at this informal multistakeholder hearing of the first International Migration Review Forum.

I think it is fitting that the first ever global review of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration is preceded with this gathering, as a strong testament to the partnerships we have developed and continue to develop to improve migration for the benefit of all and to the recognition of your central role – operationally, intellectually, ethically – in providing direction to these efforts.

Our work together espouses many of the guiding principles of the Compact: to strengthen the whole of society approach, to work towards the effective respect for and protection and fulfilment of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, to be gender-responsive and child-sensitive, to be people-centred and to put migrants and communities at the centre of all that we do.

Since the Global Compact was adopted, the United Nations Network on Migration has worked in close collaboration with stakeholders – many of whom are

members of the Network – in developing tools and guidance through our various working groups and workstreams, at global, regional and country levels.

This is in addition to your efforts in mobilising broader and deeper support for the Compact and its goals, including through the regional reviews, engagement with the Champions, raising awareness, and participating in the governance of the Migration MPTF Steering Committee or supporting the Migration Network Hub.

Indeed, a number among you have even provided support for the travel to this meeting of others among you. A true act of solidarity.

We face numerous challenges: political sensitivities around migration and the Global Compact linger; continuing xenophobia and discrimination against migrants remains rife; discourse too often veers from fact; at times we witness incomprehensible hostility towards life-saving support for migrants. And, of course, we have experienced the pandemic.

You also face the challenge, in some instances, of shrinking civic space. Multilateralism contains both frustration and reward. Frustration at the pace of progress. Reward that such progress brings with the broadest possible support.

Change can be slow, but when it comes it can be profound. And this is the value I see in the Forum and the ones to come. As you work to ensure your voices are heard; and your engagement truly meaningful, you can count on our fullest support.

As we hold this hearing today and the IMRF this week, we also look towards the adoption of the Progress Declaration. I thank the Ambassadors of Bangladesh and Luxembourg, co-facilitators of the Progress Declaration negotiations, for the inclusive approach they committed to – and realised – in bringing us to this stage. And I thank, too, you all for your immense efforts in sharing insights, reflections and ideas in support of their efforts; I know these were not wasted.

We know that the framers of the Compact did not envisage a static process in the pursuit of migration that is at once both safe, orderly and regular. As we embark

on this first Forum, we must use the opportunity to build on the work we have done and the lessons we have learned, to chart the way ahead.

Whether in preparing for the just, equitable and safe governance of international migration in the event of future pandemics; or coming to terms with the impact on migration of the effects of climate change; or confronting the scourge of bigotry; or saving migrant lives, we have immense work to do.

Not only must we leave no-one behind, we must aspire to a world in which migrants can be free from labels others place upon them and allowed – as are we – simply to be with full respect for their human rights regardless of national origin or migratory status.

Thank you.