

**Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP
Minister of State
Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office**

Global Compact on Migration Talk

**Opening statement: Migration and adaptation in the context of
climate change: a pragmatic approach towards removing barriers
and enhancing opportunities**

**Mayhew Theatre, King Charles Street
7 September 2023, 2:30pm**

Good afternoon everyone. Thank you all for being here to participate in this timely discussion around migration, climate change and adaptation.

I extend particular thanks to those speaking later on this afternoon and to our friends at the International Organisation for Migration for their support in the preparations for today.

It is a real pleasure to be speaking today. As the FCDO Minister with responsibility for both climate change and migration, I am acutely aware of how pertinent this issue is.

The connection between climate change and migration is no longer hypothetical, but a reality. A reality that is only going to get worse, with the World Bank estimating that up to 216 million people could be forced to migrate within their own regions by 2015.

The Global Compact for Migration provides us with an important framework for working towards safe, regular and orderly migration, in line with the SDGs. Objective 2 of the GCM recognises the need to minimize the adverse drivers of migration, including climate change.

Better adaptation to climate change will lead to fewer people having to leave their homes. Which is why at COP27, the UK committed to triple funding for climate adaptation, from £500 million to £1.5 billion.

Today's conversation will reflect on the fact that migration can be a form of adaptation in and of itself.

And it is vital that countries and multilateral institutions work together to make sure these movements are safe, orderly and regular, in line with the principles of the Global Compact for Migration. Through championing safe and orderly migration, we also aim to help to reduce the incidence and negative impact of irregular migration – a key priority for this government.

In conversations around climate change, migration is too often seen through the lens of loss and damage, or through its implications for refugee policy.

In my view, this is too narrow a focus. It frames migration as inherently a threat instead of encouraging a conversation about the broader implications of climate migration, which should be part of the discussion on adaptation and inclusive development.

This challenge does not occur in a silo and therefore stronger links need to be built between partners working on climate, issues, humanitarian need, development and migration.

And there is no better time to be having this conversation.

The international community will be meeting in New York the week after next to mark the midway point of the Sustainable Development Goals and then again in Dubai for COP28.

So far climate migration has sat on the sidelines of these conversations. It's time to bring it into the main debate.

In my recent speech at Chatham House, I launched the UK's new development platform, UKDev. This is a new vision for UK development to both reduce poverty and address climate change. Migration is a core issue in both these challenges.

This year the UK government will also be publishing a white paper on international development. This will set out our approach to international development to 2030. This event is a critical opportunity to provide key insights into our future plans.

And while, with regret, I am unable to stay for the entirety of this important conversation, I leave you in the safe hands of Jonathan Prentice, Head of the UN Network on Migration. I wish you all an informative and productive discussion.

Thank you.