

## International Migration Review Forum (IMRF)

Side event:

“Upholding the human rights guiding principle in the Global Compact for Migration”

Thursday, 19 May 2022, 1.00-3.00 pm EDT / New York

Closing remarks

Mr. Felipe González Morales

UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Dear panellists, colleagues and friends,

I would like to first thank the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the co-Sponsors, namely, Bangladesh, Colombia, Luxemburg, Mexico and Morocco for organising and supporting this important event to highlight and deepen our understanding of the guiding principle on human rights of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

As the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, I followed the discussion with great interest and would like to congratulate our distinguished panellists, speakers and the moderator for this very rich and lively exchange.

Migration is a complex phenomenon that provides a source of opportunities and brings a series of challenges; in order for all stakeholders to enjoy migration, a human experience that exists throughout our history, the Global Compact, setting out our common understanding, shared responsibilities and unity of purpose regarding migration, was adopted to unite us all.

At the first International Migration Review Forum, a moment where we take stock and look forward, it is meaningful to revisit these cross-cutting guiding principles of the Global Compact and underline those that deserve heightened attention. Grater efforts are needed to advance the promise of the Global Compact for a human rights-based and people-centred approach to migration governance that will positively impact the lives of migrants and their communities.

As the High Commissioner mentioned in her opening remarks, the guiding principle on human rights, is central to the effective implementation of the Global Compact. A human rights-based approach to migration governance requires States to respect, protect and fulfil the human rights of migrants, regardless of their status, at all stages of migration. By recognising migrants as rights-holders, encouraging their meaningful participation, we can ultimately achieve better outcomes in global migration governance.

In my capacity as the UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants, I have been engaging with Member States, regional bodies and civil society partners to ensure a human rights based implementation of the Global Compact at all levels. I am glad to hear concrete examples of promising practices mentioned today.

Many of the challenges highlighted at today's event remain at the heart of my mandate. My previous report submitted to the 47<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council examined means to address the human rights impact of pushbacks of migrants on land and at sea. My next report to the 50<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council is dedicated to human rights violations at international borders; the forthcoming report to be submitted to the General Assembly will examine the impact of climate change and the protection of the human rights of migrants, and I plan to dedicate the 2023 report to the HRC to the regularization of migrants in irregular situations.

As stressed today, many migrants are unable to access rights and services (social protection, health care, housing or decent work) due to their migration status, while many others remain subject to discrimination and abuse (including sexual and gender-based violence) often without recourse to accountability or justice.

I am impressed by efforts made to promote regularization and legal pathways. These also include initiatives taken by States to diversify regular pathways and shorten regularization processes, especially for migrants with vulnerabilities. At its core, the GCM recognizes that safe, orderly and regular migration is only possible when migrants' rights and dignity are upheld, and when particular attention is paid to those in vulnerable situations

I concur that concrete actions are urgently needed to fulfil the commitment to eliminating all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia and intolerance, against migrants and their families. The pandemic has manifested globally the vital contributions migrants provide to local economies. Wide recognition of migrants' contribution could be an effective way to correct misleading narratives that generate negative perceptions of migrants and migration.

Climate change, an increasingly potent driver of migration, continues to compel millions of people to leave their homes every year. In view of the challenges posed by climate change, I have dedicated my forthcoming report to the 77<sup>th</sup> session of the General Assembly to the impact of climate change and the protection of the human rights of migrants, aiming to examine the human rights situation of migrants, particularly those in specific vulnerable situations, affected by the adverse effects of climate change.

I am encouraged to hear about the pledges made by the High Commissioner's office and I call on Member States and stakeholders to participate in the pledging initiative: make, join or support a pledge and contribute to the human-rights based implementation of the GCM in tangible ways.

On this note, I conclude my remarks and I thank you all for your attention.