

**Joint Civil Society Message to the Member States at the Intergovernmental Conference to adopt the  
Global Compact for Safe, Orderly, and Regular Migration**

**Marrakesh, Morocco**

**December 10, 2018**

Thank you for giving us the floor, moderator.

This is a civil society collective message. We are connected and have organized in this process and throughout Migration Week: we are unified in our diversity to ensure the Global Compact fosters real change for migrants and their families.

The adoption of the Compact is a historic achievement, as it represents a comprehensive framework for multilateral cooperation on international migration. It has the real potential to make a positive impact on the lives of millions of our fellow human beings who move in search of a life of dignity and security for themselves and their families.

We would like to commend the overwhelming number of member states that commit to the adoption of the Compact. The Compact will not meet its potential—or make a difference on the ground—unless member states also commit to its implementation and acknowledge the positive contribution of migrants to society. We stand ready to partner with you in this endeavor and respectfully urge you to develop national action plans with full participation of other actors including civil society and migrants of today and tomorrow.

We are disappointed that some member states have chosen to withdraw from the Compact: multilateral cooperation is the best approach for humanely managing international migration in today's world.

As made clear in its preamble, the Compact does not in any way weaken international legal standards, which govern migration. We also view the Compact as not condoning deterrence policies, which can limit due process protections and can violate the principle of non-refoulement. We will monitor the actions of member states accordingly.

However, as we expressed in a joint civil society statement at the end of the negotiations in July, we have concerns with some of the language contained in the Compact. We therefore encourage member states to interpret the spirit and substance of the Compact as a floor, not a ceiling, as you implement its provisions.

That said, in our collective view, the Compact recommends, among others, the following policy goals, which we encourage you to robustly implement:

- Protect migrants in vulnerable situations consistent with international human rights law;
- Increase regular avenues for migration which ensure labor rights and family unity and create regularization programs for vulnerable populations;
- Facilitate safe access to services to all migrants;

- Work to end child detention; develop and expand community-based alternatives to detention and end the use of detention as a deterrence tactic;
- Uphold the principle of the best interest of the child at all times
- Invest in sustainable development so that no one has to migrate out of desperation.
- Tackle the drivers of forced migration, including climate change and environmental degradation.
- Apply due process, individual assessment, and effective remedy at borders and in return procedures and implement reintegration programs that are sustainable for returnees, families and their communities;
- Guarantee the core labour rights for all migrant workers regardless of status, with special attention on freedom of association and collective bargaining
- Ensure gender responsive policies; and promote the empowerment of women to realize their full potential;

In conclusion, as actors who work directly with migrants on the ground, we look forward to working with member states and other stakeholders to implement the Compact in a manner that guarantees the human rights of all migrants and upholds the rule of law.

We again congratulate you on this achievement and stand in solidarity with those that commit to make migration work for all.

Thank you.