



**Inaugural Meeting of the “Friends of Migration” Group  
13 May 2016 (10.00-11.30am)  
New York  
UN Secretariat, Conference Room 9**

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

UN Women as Chair of the Global Migration Group in 2016 thanks the “Friends of Migration” for inviting us to address this inaugural meeting. I would like to recognize and thank in particular the co-chairs:

1. H. E. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN;
2. H. E. Jean-Francis Regis Zinsou, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Benin to the UN;
3. H. E. Juan José Gómez Camacho, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Mexico to the UN; and
4. H. E. Olof Skoog, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Sweden to the UN,

The objectives of the GMG in 2016 resonate with the two main objectives of the Friends of Migration group stated in your invitation letter: “the group aims to support concrete and positive results for the upcoming High Level Meeting on 19 September 2016 to address large movements of refugees and migrants

and promote positive and forward-looking discussions that advance the migration agenda at the United Nations”.

The first objective of the GMG for 2016 is “ensuring that both men and women are impacted positively by the work of the GMG, and elevating the focus on women in the migration debate”. The integration of a strong human rights and gender perspective in the agreed outcome of the 19 September Meeting would be a key step towards achieving this objective and a positive result for the 19 September Meeting.

The Secretary General’s Report entitled “In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants”, elaborated in preparation for the High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on 19 September, contains a set of recommendations for new global commitments in the context of large movements of refugees and migrants.

Among the key recommendations, we would like to stress that a Global Compact for safe, regular and orderly migration must take into account the specific needs of women and girls at all stages of the migration cycle.

Equally, a Global Compact on Refugees must address the special needs and vulnerabilities of women and girl refugees and to also seek to empower and harness their voice, participation and leadership in asylum policy formulation and implementation. In particular, it is crucial that:

- Gender-based violence against women may be recognized as a form of persecution within the meaning of Geneva Convention;
- Gender-responsive reception procedures and support services for asylum-seekers as well as gender guidelines and gender-sensitive asylum procedures are in place, including for refugee status determination

The Secretary General's Report also urges Member States to build on the principles and practical guidance on the protection of migrants in large movements currently being developed by the Global Migration Group to initiate a State-led, consultative process to improve protection and assistance for migrants in vulnerable situations, with the participation of experts and civil society.

The GMG is organizing a series of interactive, multi-stakeholder meetings on substantive issues covered by the report of the Secretary-General prepared for the high-level event.

On 25 April 2016, we organized the first of these meetings which focused on "Understanding Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants". I take the opportunity to thank the co-chairs (the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Kingdom of Thailand) as well as the co-organizers of the first meeting (DESA, IOM and UNHCR) and all panellists for the excellent quality of their interventions.

The concept note and calendar for the next meetings will be shared with Missions, together with a short report on the first meeting held on 25 April 2016.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a critical framework for the advancement of the migration agenda. A gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is essential for its successful achievement, leaving no one behind – including migrant women, men, girls, and boys.

In addition to target 10.7 - To facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility – it is important to look at all targets through a human

rights-based, gender-responsive migration perspective. The GMG has identified five key targets related to migration, and 22 targets which are relevant to migration and development and should be engendered.

In particular, the GMG underlines the importance of target 17.18 that calls for enhancing capacity building support to developing countries to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data to be disaggregated by sex, age and migratory status, as key to delivering on the 2030 Agenda. Only disaggregated data collection can enable the assessment of progress on the promotion and protection of human rights of vulnerable groups in all areas of the SDGs, including migrants' access to health, education and decent work.

In addition to integrating a gender perspective into migration debates, UN Women as GMG Chair 2016 is also working towards integrating a stronger migration perspective into gender debates. Migrant women and girls will be key to achieving Goal 5 on gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls.

The GMG is not alone in these efforts and I take the opportunity to thank H. E. Masud Bin Momen, Ambassador & Permanent Representative of Bangladesh to the UN, for his excellent statement at the CSW side event co-organized by Bangladesh, Italy and the Global Migration Group on "Policies Empowering Migrant Women and Girls in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development". Equally the GFMD has now integrated gender equality and women's empowerment dimension in its Concept Paper under the Chairmanship of Bangladesh on the social, economic and governance dimensions of migration and development.

The Agreed Conclusions of this 60<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW60) directly link women migrant workers to sustainable development. In the conclusions, Member States:

- “Acknowledge the positive contribution of migrant women workers for inclusive growth and sustainable development” (paragraph 10).
- “Recognize the contribution of migrants, including women migrant workers to sustainable development, acknowledge the need to eliminate violence and discrimination against women migrant workers, and to promote their empowerment including through international, regional or bilateral cooperation among all stakeholders, in countries of origin, transit and destination” (paragraph 23(i)).
- Also on refugee women the Agreed Conclusions of CSW-60 AC states the following: “The Commission stresses the need to ensure that no one is left behind in implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and in this regard recognizes the challenges faced by refugee women and girls and the need to protect and empower them, including in countries in conflict and post-conflict situations and the need to strengthen the resilience of communities hosting refugees, and underscores the importance of development support for those communities, particularly in developing countries.” (paragraph 13)

I would like to conclude by highlighting the importance of promoting a human rights-based and gender responsive approach to addressing large movements of refugees and migrants which rests on two key pillars.

First, a different discourse on migrant women and men which sees them as rights-holders and agents of development rather than as security threats. The Global Migration Group promotes a deeper understanding of the contribution of migrant women and men to sustainable development, one that counters prevailing negative stereotypes and demonization of refugees and migrants.

It is critical that migration policy debates focusing on border controls do not lead to a dehumanization of migrants and migration policies. Promoting and protecting the labour and human rights of all men and women on the move, including their right to seek and obtain asylum, should be the basis upon which migration and asylum policies are founded.

Second, it is crucial to highlight and address the specific challenges and risks for women in migration, including migrant women and girls as well as those left behind. Migrant women, in addition to the discrimination they face as migrants, face gender-based discrimination as women. Such gender-based discrimination limits women's decision-making and agency in the household and in the labour market, as well as their mobility – within and outside their countries of origin.

We are very much looking forward to working with you towards a successful High-Level Meeting on 19 September that will launch these Global Compacts on Migrants and Refugees respectively and in that context to make sure that these compacts equally promote and protect the rights and empowerment of women and girls.

Thank you very much.