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**The Fourth Global Mayoral Forum on Mobility, Migration and Development, Berlin
26-27 June 2017¹**

Closing Session

**Talking Points for Dr. David Malone, Rector UN University
2017 GMG Chair
(Check against delivery)**

Context

- The theme of this year's Global Mayoral Forum, "Mayors as Humanitarian and Development Actors: Preparing, Welcoming and Integrating", is particularly apt and the central role of Mayors has been underscored by the interventions made over the past two days;
- Before proceeding further, it may be worth saying a few words, for those of you who do not know it, about the GMG. The GMG is an inter-agency group bringing together 22 UN entities to promote the wider application of all relevant international and regional instruments and norms relating to migration, and to encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approaches to the issue of international migration. The GMG is particularly concerned with improving the overall effectiveness of its members and other stakeholders in capitalizing upon the opportunities and responding to the challenges presented by international migration.
- Despite the prevailing negative and increasingly politicized rhetoric, migration is an overwhelmingly positive global phenomenon, with an estimated 244 million migrants in the world, with half of these being women. It is also true that we are in the midst of the largest wave of human displacement since World War II. Of those on the move across all regions, 65 million people, including 21 million refugees, are living in displacement;
- Ours is an increasingly urbanised world. As the UN-DESA 2016 data notebook reports an estimated 54.5 per cent of the world's population live in urban settlements. They note that by 2030 urban areas are projected to house 60 per cent of people globally and one in every three people will live in cities with at least half a million inhabitants;

Challenges and opportunities

- Historically, urban expansion and migration have been twin, mutually dependent processes, as migrants have made important contributions to the social and cultural fabric of cities;

¹ See event programme:

http://migration4development.org/sites/default/files/programme_berlin_forum_26april_external.pdf

- The majority of migrants now live in urban areas and 60% of refugees worldwide are in urban settings, as well as 80% of IDPs;
- The fast rate of urbanisation, and rising migration to cities and towns, brings with it both challenges and opportunities for the migrants, their host communities and the local governments concerned.
- Inadequate planning for the arrival of refugees and migrants, which puts pressure on local services, the environment and resources – including through increased pollution and congestion – should not be reasons to put up walls to keep out migrants and refugees. Such a response coupled with the lack of opportunities for integration adds to the risk of creating a poverty trap and losing the potential of an entire generation.
- As emphasized by the New York Declaration, States should promote and protect more effectively the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migration status, especially those of women and children, and provide protection to all migrants, including from illegal or violent acts;
- Cities, and the Mayors and local authorities who lead them, together with local actors, play key roles in responding to complex humanitarian-developmental-political crises at the local level, including those that relate to the reception of migrants, refugees and IDPs.
- The New York Declaration recognises local authorities as key first receivers of migrants and recognises their particular needs – they play a critical role being in close proximity to concrete questions of migrant inclusion and integration, including providing migrants access to basic services, regardless of gender and migratory status, and ensuring social cohesion.
- The commitment of Mayors and city leaders who count many migrants among their populace, their work to address their needs, with our shared humanity at the core of the response, is heartening.
- Migrants make key contributions to cities socially, culturally and economically – they play a key role in processes of sustainable urban development. For many cities, diversity is acknowledged as a strength. Ensuring inclusion, protecting rights, promoting gender equality and women’s empowerment and valuing the contributions of all migrants are essential aspects of building cohesive, safe and gender-inclusive societies.
- In order for the benefits to be better harnessed and challenges minimized, migration needs to be both safe and orderly. Migration also occurs along a continuum from forced to voluntary, and it is vital to reduce pressures that cause forced migration to ensure that migration is choice, not a necessity.

International Context

- The New Urban Agenda, adopted in Quito in October 2016, highlights a ‘concept of cities for all’, envisaging ‘cities and human settlements that are inclusive and free from all forms of discrimination and violence’ and considers the specific needs of vulnerable groups, such as women, youth and marginalised groups. It also reminds us our commitment to sustainable territorial development as a critical step for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals in an integrated and coordinated manner at the global, regional, national, and local levels – with the participation of all relevant actors, cities and local authorities included.

- Last year’s World Humanitarian Summit also acknowledged the need to respect the leading role of local actors and called for the reinforcement of local leadership and ownership when addressing humanitarian need, risk and vulnerability.

Response

- Partners at the urban and local level are often closest to issues such as labour needs, the ability of health, educational, food security and nutrition as well as other social systems to respond to newcomers, and the ways in which migrants can best be integrated into their new communities. They are also key partners in promoting the conditions for migrants’ ability to contribute towards the development of both their origin communities and new communities of residence.
- There are a number of good practices for migrant inclusion at the urban level which have been highlighted in your discussions. Of importance is the need to involve not only local authorities but also migrants themselves, including women migrants, civil society, and the private sector.
- The synergies created at this Forum, particularly with the Global Forum on Migration and Development which will take place over the next three days, are an important contribution to the ongoing dialogue on international migration, in particular to the current intergovernmental consultations on the global compact on migration.
- The GMG is pleased to play its part in those consultations, including through supporting the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, Ms. Louise Arbour, in preparing issue briefs and other support for the six informal thematic sessions mandated by Member States to take place this year.

Conclusion

- The importance of cooperation with local authorities in terms of information sharing, resources, funding, in order to support them in addressing the many challenges they address locally is clear.
- This Forum and our deliberations here are an important contribution towards people-centred, human rights-based and gender-responsive global compacts on migration and refugees as well as to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. As acknowledged by Agenda 2030: “Regional and sub-regional frameworks can facilitate the effective translation of sustainable development policies into concrete action at national level”.
- We in the GMG stand ready to support this important work.

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