

**Remarks by Mr. António Vitorino, Director General, International Organization for Migration
As Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration**

**High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
Townhall meeting, Tuesday, 5 July 2022, 10.00am – 1.00pm
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Virtual intervention**

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Mr. President of the Economic and Social Council,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,

First, allow me to express my appreciation to you, Ambassador Collen Vixen Kelapile, for inviting me, in my capacity as Coordinator of the United Nations Network on Migration, to participate in this event.

COVID-19 has slowed progress in achieving the SDGs. It hit our communities with unprecedented economic and social impact, touching communities unevenly.

The pandemic highlighted – and exacerbated – vulnerabilities faced by migrants: labour market discrimination; unequal access to vaccines and healthcare; the risk of being stranded or forcibly returned; the inability to cross borders; and, the absence of life-saving assistance to those in need.

Amidst this, migrant women continue to be disproportionately affected whether by discrimination, violence and harassment at work, wage theft and gender-based violence along migratory routes.

Yet, we also saw countries reaffirm how essential migrants are to our economies and societies, providing us with a blueprint of innovative solutions, consistent with the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration. These lessons can help us both build back from the pandemic and better respond to existing and future crises.

The first International Migration Review Forum, held barely two months ago, provided a clear message: we will not achieve the Sustainable Development Goals without attaining safe, orderly and regular migration.

Many of the good practices developed during the pandemic emphasized this with examples of inclusive vaccination programmes, access to documentation, practical alternatives to immigration detention, enhanced consular services and diaspora engagement, and lifting barriers to skills recognition and remittance transfers.

We should incorporate these and other good practices in our migration policies, particularly as we face multiple and overlapping crises.

Climate and environmental change continue to affect millions around the world. Land degradation and the deterioration of ocean ecosystems are creating high levels of food instability. Conflict, too, is affecting the price of basic commodities, further ramping up pressure on communities less equipped to withstand it.

These factors also affect migrants' ability to move in a safe and regular fashion, recognizing that migration should not be seen as flight but rather, in many instances, as a highly effective strategy of adaptation.

The Progress Declaration, adopted by consensus at the International Migration Review Forum, entrenched the Global Compact as our common guidance on international migration governance and provides a roadmap for the coming years.

It strengthened the link between our actions to implement the Global Compact and the Agenda 2030 and requests the Secretary-General to propose a limited set of indicators to support Member States in their reviews of progress in implementing the Compact.

In closing, let me assure you that the United Nations Network on Migration is committed to work with you all in taking forward this vital work.



As we strive to facilitate safe, orderly and regular migration, we are seized by the urgency of the situation, particularly for the most vulnerable. But we are also buoyed by the examples we see of how much can be done for the full inclusion of migrants in our societies where the commitment to cooperation, and to upholding our universal rights, stands tall above all else.

Thank you.