

'Multilateralism in action' says UN chief, ahead of expected agreement on migration compact

With the General Assembly set to agree a new global compact on migration, the United Nations chief on Thursday highlighted its "immense potential" to harness the benefits of orderly migration and lower the risks facing millions on the move without documentation.

"Migration is a positive global phenomenon," [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) told a press conference at UN Headquarters, with negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration expected to conclude on Friday in New York, for formal adoption in December in Marrakesh.

"Migrants are a remarkable engine for growth," Mr. Guterres stressed, noting that they number more than 250 million around the world, making up 3 per cent of the global population and contributing 10 per cent of the overall global gross domestic product.

Yet more than 60,000 people on the move have died since 2000 – at sea, in the desert and elsewhere, he warned. And often, migrants and refugees are "demonized and attacked".

Migrants are a remarkable engine for growth – *Guterres*

The UN chief said the Compact has three important objectives.

First, to reorient national development policies and international development cooperation to take migration into account, and create opportunities for people to work and live in dignity at home.

Second, he said, it was vital to strengthen international cooperation against smugglers and human traffickers, and to protect their victims. "Smuggling and trafficking are criminal activities; migration is not", said the UN chief.

Third, he called for more opportunities on the part of nations worldwide, to broaden legal migration.

Mr. Guterres said that many aging developed countries need migrants to fill crucial gaps in labour markets. Climate change and other factors, "including simple human aspiration, will continue to lead people to seek opportunity far from their homes".

"If migration is inevitable, it needs to be better organized through effective international cooperation among countries of origin, transit and destination, so that we do not leave control of movements of people in the

hands of smugglers,” he said.

Turning to consultations on a Global Compact on Refugees, which were concluded last week for consideration by the General Assembly at the end of the year, Mr. Guterres said that the vast majority of the world’s refugees are hosted in developing countries that themselves face constraints.

“This responsibility must be shared globally,” he said.

The two global compacts are being developed, following the UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants in 2016, in which 193 Member States adopted the so-called New York Declaration – an overarching plan to manage large movements of refugees and migrants.

“The two Global Compacts were the product of intense and inclusive consultations bringing together a wide range of actors, including migrants and refugees themselves,” Mr. Guterres said. “These agreements show multilateralism in action and give us a strong platform for progress.”

Zero tolerance on sexual harassment

At the press conference on Thursday, the Secretary-General also gave an update on UN action to tackle sexual harassment in-house.

He said he has created a specialized team within the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) to focus on sexual harassment investigations, with six new investigator posts approved.

Measures undertaken also include fast-tracked and streamlined procedures to receive, process and address complaints on sexual harassment, a 24-hour “Speak Up” hotline, a first-of-its-kind Secretariat staff survey to be launched, and revamped mandatory training on sexual harassment.

All sexual harassment reports are now considered Category 1, which means they will all be investigated by OIOS, not using any of the intermediate areas of investigation that in the past were possible, he added.

“But all of that is not enough. Since the challenge is system-wide our action must be as well,” he said, noting that he encouraged agencies throughout the UN family to adopt similar measures.