

UN urges international cooperation to make migration safer in a world on the move

18 December 2017 – On International Migrants Day, the United Nations is appealing for cooperation in managing migration to ensure that its benefits are most widely distributed, and that human rights of all concerned are protected – as recognized by the [2030 Agenda](#) for Sustainable Development.

Evidence [overwhelmingly shows](#) that migrants generate economic, social and cultural benefits for societies everywhere, said [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres in his message commemorating the [International Day](#), marked annually on 18 December.

Yet, he continued, hostility towards migrants is unfortunately growing around the world. Solidarity with migrants has never been more urgent.

Climate change, instability and growing inequalities mean [migration] is here to stay, Mr. Guterres stated.

As such he called for effective international cooperation in managing migration to ensure that its benefits are most widely distributed and that human rights of all concerned are properly protected – as recognized by the UN 2030 Agenda.

For his part, the Director-General of the International Organization of Migration ([IOM](#)), William Lacy Swing, made an urgent call for safe migration in a world on the move, which is the theme of the 2017 edition of the International Day.

While we live at a time when [a privileged elite considers global mobility virtually its birth-right](#), it is denied to countless others trapped in hopelessly bad economic or conflict circumstances, he emphasized in an opinion piece.

Mr. Swing called migration a human reality to be managed, not a problem to be solved as he underscored the benefits of the [Global Compact for Migration](#) that is expected to be adopted by the end of 2018, once negotiations by UN Member States are concluded.

If we stop to think about the strict and mandatory rules which enable over 34.5 million flights per year that enable the equivalent of 44 per cent of the world's population to take off and land safely, it should be possible to find some common rules in order to allow many more to travel, migrate and return home freely and safely, he stressed.

He emphasized the need to assist migrants, saying if we don't come up

with solutions, the smugglers will do it for us, at great cost to human life and to the fabric of our societies.”

Calling migration “a global phenomenon driven by many forces,” Audrey Azoulay, Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)), meanwhile said in her message that “UNESCO is [acting to advance the migration-related commitments](#) of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development,” adding that the agency's work with UN partners in shaping a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

In parallel, UN human rights experts said: “States can play a significant role in [promoting positive perceptions about migrants](#) in the general public, by using and promoting a positive discourse, and by presenting facts and studies, including about the contribution of migrants to societies.”

“Migration itself is a natural part of human existence. It is not a crime and it is not a problem. This approach to migration governance shifts emphasis away from closing borders and keeping people out, and towards creating accessible, regular, safe and affordable migration channels, and promoting and celebrating diversity,” the stated.