



MIGRANTS  
REFUGEES

## **The Migrants & Refugee Section and the Global Compacts**

*Melbourne, 22 August 2018*

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Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to start by thanking the Australian Catholic Migrant and Refugee Office for inviting the Migrants & Refugees Section of the Dicastery for Promoting Integral Human Development to contribute to Eighth Bishop Joseph Grech Memorial Colloquium on Ethics and Migration.

Today's event offers me the pleasant opportunity to explain the reasons for the Holy See's commitment to the success of the processes that will lead to the adoption of the two Global Compacts - one on refugees and one for safe, orderly and regular migration - before the end of this year.

Under the direct guidance of Pope Francis, the Migrants & Refugees Section drafted the document titled '20 Action Points for the Global Compacts,' which was handed over to the persons in charge of the two processes for the United Nations in September 2017. The 20 Action Points advocate effective and proven measures which together constitute an integral response to the current migration challenges. In accordance with Pope Francis's teaching, the points are grouped under four headings: to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate. Each is an active verb and a call to action. Starting from what is currently possible, their ultimate goal is the building of an inclusive and sustainable common home for all.

Looking at the present scenario, welcoming means offering broader options for migrants and refugees to enter destination countries safely and legally. Protecting translates into concrete measures to uphold the rights and dignity of migrants and refugees, with particular attention to the most vulnerable ones. Promoting corresponds to ensuring that all migrants and refugees - as well as the communities which welcome them - are empowered to achieve their integral human development. Integrating means engaging locals and foreigners in intercultural processes towards mutual enrichment and active citizenship.

It was deemed appropriate to prepare a single document for the two Global Compacts based on the acknowledgment that migration is increasingly composed of mixed flows and that migrants and refugees, before being such, are persons inherently possessed of fundamental human rights and inalienable dignity. Furthermore, this decision intends to underline the importance of harmonizing the two Global Pacts as much as possible, so as to respond more adequately to the challenges of a very complex global migration scenario.

The document presents a series of practical considerations based on the experience of local Churches and Catholic organizations at the grassroots level. It suggests various best practices already in place which can be easily replicated in other geographical areas.

After a long process of consultations and negotiations, on 11 July 2018 the final draft of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration has been released. The Migrants and Refugees Section gladly acknowledges that many guiding principles, objectives and commitments stated in the draft are in line with the recommendations expressed by the Holy See.

The Section fully share the enthusiastic statement issued by the Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York, few weeks ago: "This first-ever comprehensive framework on migration will serve as the international reference point for best practices and international cooperation in the global management of migration, not only for Governments, but also for non-governmental entities among which are the faith-based organizations, who are truly the hands and feet on the ground to assist migrants in difficulty."<sup>1</sup>

The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration constitutes a favourable and timely opportunity to initiate an open and sincere dialogue among government leaders, "a dialogue that takes into account people's actual experiences, sufferings and aspirations, in order to remind everyone once more of his or her responsibilities" aiming at setting "free those who today are oppressed, rejected and enslaved."<sup>2</sup>

The Migrant & Refugee Section is looking 'forward' to the adoption of the Global Compacts, but it is also looking 'beyond' the Compacts. Together with its partners, the Section is committed to ensuring that, "as a sign of shared global responsibility, concrete engagement follows from the words that will be codified in the aforementioned two agreements."<sup>3</sup> As we all know, the Compacts can only provide a suitable framework for a better understanding of the complex phenomenon of

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<sup>1</sup> Bernardito Auza, *Statement on the Concluding session of the intergovernmental negotiations on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration*, 13 July 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Pope Francis, *Address to the Members of the Plenary Council of the International Catholic Migration Commission (ICMC)*, 8 March 2018.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibidem*.

migration in its multiple facets and for formulating effective responses to its different challenges. The real action will be up to the individual States in necessary collaboration with other stakeholders. As Pope Francis said in February 2017, to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees requires “the efforts of all actors, among which, you may be assured will always be the Church.”<sup>4</sup>

Now it’s time for action. The Migrants & Refugees Section is committed to urge the Bishops’ Conferences all over the world to explain the Compacts and the 20 Action Points to their parishes and Church organizations, with the hope of fostering more effective solidarity with migrants and refugees. Moreover the Section encourages all Bishops’ Conferences to engage in a constructive dialogue with their Governments aiming at fostering the difficult translation of the Global Compacts into policies and programmes.

Many religious congregations and Catholic organizations have joined the Bishops Conferences in the dissemination and promotion of the 20 Action Points at the national and local levels. Their valuable engagement would be instrumental also for the development and launching of new programmes, in cooperation with all the other stakeholders, within the framework the Global Compacts.

I would like to conclude by quoting the homily that Pope Francis delivered on the fifth anniversary of his visit to Lampedusa: “Before the challenges of contemporary movements of migration, the only reasonable response is one of solidarity and mercy. A response less concerned with calculations, than with the need for an equitable distribution of responsibilities, an honest and sincere assessment of the alternatives and a prudent management. A just policy is one at the service of the person, of every person involved; a policy that provides for solutions that can ensure security, respect for the rights and dignity of all; a policy concerned for the good of one’s own country, while taking into account that of others in an ever more interconnected world.”<sup>5</sup>

Thank you!

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<sup>4</sup> Pope Francis, Address to the Participants of the International Forum on “Migration and Peace”, 21 February 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Pope Francis, *Homily during the Holy Mass for Migrants, Saint Peter’s Basilica*, 6 July 2018.