

Side event organized on the occasion of the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF):

“Upholding the human rights guiding principle in the Global Compact for Migration”

Thursday, 19 May 2022 (19:00-21:00)

Moderated panel discussion (19:30 – 20:15)

Statement of H.E. Mr. Omar Zniber, Ambassador Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Morocco to the UN Office in Geneva

- At the outset, I would like to thank the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) for organizing this important Side-Event, as well as the co-sponsors for their generous support.
- The Global Compact for Migration (GCM) represents a major contribution of multilateralism and a collective commitment to address the challenges and harness the opportunities of international migration and human mobility, through a comprehensive cooperative framework anchored in its vision and guiding principles.
- Grounded in international law, the Marrakech Compact on Migration calls for full respect for human rights and the humane treatment and protection of migrants regardless of their migratory status, as firmly enshrined in the 2030 Agenda. It also calls for enhancing cooperation to eliminate the adverse drivers and structural factors that cause irregular migration, and compel people to leave their country of origin.
- On the other hand, we note the tendency of increased practices incompatible with the international law, such as pushbacks, denial of asylum applications and refusal to rescue at sea and land borders, which violate humanitarian standards and abuse asylum systems.
- Dramatic incidents involving migrants are growing in intensity, with an alarming death toll of people perishing at sea (example of Eastern migratory route, Central and Western Mediterranean), while the vulnerability of many migrants and their precarious conditions have reached unprecedented levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact.
- In addition, discriminatory legislations in host countries as well as biased and politicized public narrative contribute to aggravate the vulnerability of migrants.
- While we recall the shared responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination in promoting, protecting and respecting the human rights of all migrants, we express our concern at the global trends of xenophobia, racism, and discrimination experienced by migrants.
- In this framework, we believe that a multidimensional approach is fundamental to address the phenomenon of mixed movement, not only from the security dimension at the borders, particularly fighting smugglers and human traffickers, but also through the humanitarian perspective, such as providing assistance to victims and vulnerable people, especially within the context the operation of search and rescue at sea.
- In December 2014, Morocco adopted the National Immigration and Asylum Strategy (SNIA), which is enshrined in the founding principles of human rights and humanitarian standards, with an objective to offer the persons of concern the protection guaranteed to them, in accordance with the Kingdom's international commitments.

- The Strategy permitted regularizing the situation of thousands of people, by providing them with access to the labour market, benefit from the schooling of their children, have access to vocational training, enjoy the right to create associations and cooperatives, as well as access to public healthcare services.
- Furthermore, Morocco has a wide experience on preventing and combatting human trafficking, including the establishment of a national referral mechanism for victims of trafficking in person, and the program of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights concerning the strengthening of capacities of Moroccan law-enforcement officers at the borders on human rights issues.
- Throughout the course of history, Morocco has always refused the use of immigration detention as a migration management tool, taking into account that the Kingdom is not only a country of origin, but also a transit and a destination country.
- These significant results demonstrate Morocco's major contribution in terms of regional security as it assumes full responsibility of solidarity-based migration management and works with its partners to anchor concretely the principle of shared responsibility.
- In advancing the Global Compact promise of a people-centred approach to migration governance, Morocco supported the establishment of the African Observatory of Migration, in line with the first objective of the GCM that calls on "the dissemination of accurate and disaggregated data".
- Hosted in Rabat, the African Observatory of Migration develops credible and accurate data of migration movements in the continent and provides technical guidance, allowing African States to establish effective policies and strategies on migration governance.
- In support of the first International Migration Review Forum (IMRF), Morocco organized a Ministerial meeting of the GCM Champions, on 25 March 2022, which was an opportunity to coordinate common efforts and strengthen concrete measures for GCM implementation, including through the adoption of the "Rabat Declaration".
- I thank you for your kind attention.