

**Keynote Address by IOM Director General**  
**Opening Session, Abu Dhabi Dialogue's 5<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Consultation**  
*16 October 2019, Dubai, United Arab Emirates*

Hon. Ministers,  
Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

It is an honour and pleasure to deliver opening remarks at the 5th Ministerial Consultation of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, bringing together 18 States among countries of origin and destination in Asia, to address labour mobility and issues of common interest.

Please first allow me to congratulate the Government of Sri Lanka for its successful chairing of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue for the past two years and thank the incoming Chair, the United Arab Emirates, for hosting this important meeting on the eve of a new decade to set the Abu Dhabi Dialogue's agenda for the next two years. This is particularly timely, given that UAE will take over chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development at the end of this year.

The past decade has witnessed significant developments in global migration governance, and particularly over the past year. Thanks to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, a number of frameworks – such as the Guidelines to Protect Migrants in Countries Experiencing Conflict or Natural Disaster, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, and the New Urban Agenda — have been mainstreamed into various domains of governance, strengthening the situation of migrants, and particularly those in vulnerable situations.

But the adoption of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration has – through the establishment of a dedicated international framework for global cooperation on migration – created a landmark opportunity for the international community to come together on migration, including labour migration.

The key factors influencing mobility and migration are constantly evolving. It is most likely that the number and proportion of international migrants globally will continue to increase at a steady rate in line with existing trends. Over the next decade, the impacts of demographic change will be felt across the world leading to significant shifts in labour demand and supply, and migration will be increasingly important in the context of global competitiveness. Indeed, seasonal and short-term labour opportunities will remain important in the Asia-Pacific and Gulf regions, among others.

Labour markets themselves are also changing. Employers will need different skill profiles in 2030 than they did in 2010, as technology underpinning key sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, transport, finance and services rapidly develops. Future workers across the world will have to become more adaptable, more resilient and ready to take on several careers. *How* and *where* to learn will become as important as *what* to learn, though some skills will remain in short supply, notably in the health sector, but also in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

At the same time, some jobs will become mobile, notably those in the technology and the information and communications technology (ICT) sectors. This will offer those who can

acquire such skills with new opportunities to work remotely, particularly in developing countries, and new avenues for reducing brain drain through continuous skills development through work with the private sector and international financial institutions. How far countries can adapt to these changes will determine their future competitiveness and success in the global economy.

In this context multi-stakeholder partnerships are ever more essential to address the current migration patterns and challenges and the increasingly cross-regional nature of migration.

Inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration (ISCMs) – State-led ongoing policy dialogues at the regional, interregional or global level – have been critical contributors to the development of a common language of migration and mobility which, in turn, has built the foundations for states to find common ground within the Global Compact. Over the past three decades they have provided an informal, non-binding environment for States to develop a collaborative approach to migration governance. Many of them have shaped or developed regional policies and strategies and thus influenced the national policies of their constituent States.

Inter-State consultation mechanisms on migration by themselves are indispensable actors in migration governance. But they have also benefited from partnerships with political and economic unions such as the African Union, European Union, Mercosur, League of Arab States and others, to bolster the implementation and monitoring of regional policies, and global targets such as the Sustainable Development Goals.

These partnerships have promoted the translation of key recommendations into national policies and legislation. Some ISCMs have also established successful collaborations with non-State actors: academia, civil society or the private sector .

As implementation of the GCM becomes a priority for many states across the globe, inter-state consultation will continue to underpin migration governance. New forms of consultation and exchange will inevitably spring up in the next years, as states prepare to report on their progress. This should not be seen as competition or a threat to existing mechanisms. Rather, international cooperation is one of the global compact's guiding principles. Most of the actionable commitments foresee cooperation and partnerships especially those at the regional and global levels. In this regard, more exchange should be welcomed, and there is an opportunity for conversations such as this one to bring together a multitude of perspectives and experience. The key will be to ensure that such exchange is coherent and impactful. I'm sure we will discuss more about how to achieve this tomorrow.

IOM will continue to support regional consultative processes, interregional forums on migration and global processes on migration as part of its core work. But we will also do so in our new role as Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration. The Network has been tasked with ensuring coherent, system-wide support to the implementation of the Global Compact for Migration, with respect to building capacity through the Multi-Partner Trust Fund and broader capacity building mechanism, as well as follow-up and review.

I wish you a successful Meeting and an interactive and fruitful discussion, and I look forward to its outcomes.