



**THE HOLY SEE IN THE PREPARATORY PROCESSES OF
THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION
AND OF THE GLOBAL COMPACT ON REFUGEES**

**Secretariat of State
Meeting with the Diplomatic Corps residing in Rome
(Old Synod Hall, Vatican City State, 19 October 2018)**

**Opening Remarks of H.E. Archbishop Paul R. Gallagher
*Secretary for the Holy See's Relations with States***

Excellencies and friends, good morning and welcome.

During this brief meeting, which the Secretariat of State has convened also at the request of some Ambassadors, we would like to explain the activity and perspective of the Holy See with regard to the two Global Compacts on Migrants and Refugees. These demanding processes are the result of the efforts of the international community to define its approach toward a migratory situation that is increasingly difficult and that affects almost all the countries of the world.

We know the statistics of this multifaceted reality; here are just a few: since the year 2000, the over-all number of migrants has increased by 50 percent, reaching 258 million in 2017. During this same period, the number of refugees and asylum seekers has expanded from 16 to 26 million. Almost half of these are children, often unaccompanied. Another phenomenon, however, that affects countries in a different way, is that over 80% of forced migrants remain within the region, either in their country of origin or in neighbouring countries.

Although the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol form the basis of the legal framework for international protection for persons in this category, to date no such structure exists for migrants. Moreover, many of these, although forced to leave their homeland, are not technically considered refugees. Thus, they are not admitted to asylum application procedures or similar protection, even if they need it.

Confronted with this fact, along with the human tragedies of numerous deaths and horrible stories of people being abused and violated along their journey in search of protection and a truly human life, we are obliged all the more to understand and to confront this phenomenon. In the first place, it is necessary to seek sustainable and durable solutions and, where possible, to manage and address the causes, the paths of human mobility, its reality and all its weaknesses and consequences, as well as the ways for integrating migrants and the indispensable cooperation between governments and multilateral organizations.

In an attempt to respond to this global complexity, in November 2015, the UN Secretary General initiated a process of consultation and negotiation, which [was largely the fruit of the vision of the then Special Representative of the UN Secretary General on International Migration, Sir Peter Sutherland. This process] culminated on 19 September 2016 with a High-Level Meeting of the UN General Assembly on the topic of "Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants".

On that occasion, a political statement, known as the "New York Declaration", was adopted along with its two attachments: the "Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework" and "Towards a Global Compact for safe, regular and orderly migration". The New York Declaration, therefore, called for the adoption of two Global Compacts in 2018, respectively on refugees and migrations.

From the very beginning, the majority of governments agreed that the two Pacts would not be legally binding.

The preparation phase of the two Compacts followed completely different procedures, thus resulting in two distinct documents, which will foreseeably be accepted by the UN General Assembly. The Global Compact on Migration will be adopted at the Intergovernmental Conference in Marrakech this December, and the Global Compact on Refugees, together with the Report of the High Commissioner, will likely be approved in the near future.

Today, the Permanent Observers of the Holy See in New York and in Geneva will speak about these Compacts and will explain the position and active involvement of the Holy See during these important processes. The Reverend Fabio Baggio, Under-Secretary of the Migrants and Refugees Section of the Dicastery for the Promotion of Integral Human Development, will then present the Catholic Church's action in the world and the contribution it has offered - and continues to offer - through concrete initiatives and by raising awareness among civil society.

With this brief introduction, I am pleased to give the floor to His Excellency Archbishop Bernardito Auza, Permanent Observer of the Holy See at the United Nations in New York.
