



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
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The Church's commitment towards the Global Compacts

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The present gathering offers me the pleasant opportunity to explain the reasons for the Catholic Church's commitment to the processes that culminate in the adoption of the two Global Compacts we are discussing today.

Under the direct guidance of [Pope Francis](#), the Migrants & Refugees Section drafted the document titled *20 Action Points for the Global Compacts*, which in 2017 the Holy See officially submitted as its contribution to the two United Nations processes. The *20 Action Points* advocate effective and proven measures, which together constitute an integral response to the current migration challenges.^[1]

In accordance with [Pope Francis](#)' teaching, the points are grouped under four headings: to welcome, to protect, to promote, and to integrate.^[2] 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 those in vulnerable situations. Promoting corresponds to ensuring that all migrants and refugees – as well as the communities that welcome them – are empowered to achieve their integral human development. The promotion of migrants and their families begins with their communities of origin. That is where such promotion should be guaranteed, together with the right to migrate, as well as the right to not be forced to migrate.^[3] Integrating means engaging local populations and foreigners in intercultural processes towards mutual enrichment and active citizenship.

Although the processes towards the Global Compacts were separate, distinct and independent, it seemed appropriate to prepare a single document for two reasons: migration is increasingly composed of mixed flows; and migrants and refugees, before being such, are persons inherently possessed of fundamental human rights and inalienable dignity. Furthermore, this decision underlines the importance of harmonizing the two Global Pacts as much as possible, so as to respond more adequately and seamlessly to the needs of each vulnerable person on the move.

The document's practical considerations are based on the experience of local Churches and Catholic organizations at the grassroots level. These best practices are already in place and can easily be replicated in other locations.

Over the past 18 months, the [Holy Father](#) has repeatedly underlined the important potential of the Global Compacts to foster global engagement and cooperation to welcome, protect, promote and integrate migrants and refugees. In his [address to the Latin American Parliament \(Parlatino\)](#), reflecting on the realities and commitments towards the Global Compacts (9 June 2017), Pope Francis stated: "Local governments and the international community should be provided with all the elements needed to draw up the best agreements for the good of many, especially those suffering in the most vulnerable areas of our planet."^[4] The Holy Father dedicated his [Message for the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#) to the four verbs, stressing their relevance for the Global Compacts, which are to be understood as "a unique opportunity to advocate and support the concrete actions which I have described with four verbs."^[5] In his [address for the 2017 World Food Day](#), [Pope Francis](#) invited the international community to take into consideration the vulnerability of migrants and refugees in the development of the Global Compacts.^[6] In [November 2017](#), the Holy Father encouraged Catholic Universities to engage in the processes towards the Global Compacts.^[7] In his [Message for the 2018 World Day of Peace](#), Pope Francis emphasized that the Global Compacts "need to be inspired by compassion, foresight and courage, so as to take advantage of every opportunity to advance the peace-building process."^[8] On [14 June 2018](#) the Holy Father, referring directly to the Global Compacts, encouraged the "efforts to ground responsibility for the shared global management of international migration in the values of justice, solidarity and compassion."^[9] A few days later, [during the Angelus](#), Pope Francis expressed his hope "that the states involved in these processes may reach an agreement to ensure, with responsibility and humanity, assistance and protection to those who are forced to leave their own country."^[10]

Since drawing up the *20 Action Points*, the Migrants & Refugees Section has proactively engaged with the Secretariat of State and the Permanent Missions of the Holy See in New York, Geneva and Vienna, contributing to the presentation of this input to representatives of Member States in consultations, negotiations, side-events and direct meetings.

The Section has also encouraged all the Bishops' Conferences to use the *20 Action Points* for information and awareness campaigns, to share them with Catholic NGOs and other civil society groups in their country, and to enter into dialogue with their country's government officials responsible for the negotiations towards the Global Compacts. Several Bishops Conferences were able to carry out the various suggested actions. Thanks to such advocacy, programmes inspired by the *20 Action Points*, were envisioned, initiated or implemented, such as new humanitarian corridors, special visas for vulnerable migrants, community sponsorship schemes, and the recognition of academic credentials and vocational qualifications of migrants and refugees.

Responding to a general appeal of the Migrants & Refugees Section, 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. They have frequently joined forces with other relevant religious and civil-society actors to advance reflection and more coordinated action to the benefit of migrants, refugees and hosting communities.

The Migrant & Refugee Section is already looking beyond the Compacts. Together with its partners, it 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."^[11] The real effects and benefits will be up to each State in partnerships with other States and 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."^[12]

Now it really is time for action. The Migrants & Refugees Section will encourage 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 will encourage the Bishops to dialogue constructively with their Governments in order to help translate the Global Compacts into public awareness, appropriate policies and generous programmes. At the same time, religious congregations and Catholic organizations, in cooperation with other stakeholders, will certainly continue to develop and implement the sorts of effective responses and programmes, many of which have been occurring for a long time, as a reflection of God's call toward the most needy of our brothers and sisters, and which also the Global Compacts propose and facilitate.

The homily that Pope Francis delivered on the fifth anniversary of his visit to Lampedusa serves as a fitting conclusion:

"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."^[13]

Thank you for your attention.

[1] See <https://migrants-refugees.va/20-action-points-migrants/>.

[2] See Pope Francis, [Address to the Participants of the International Forum on "Migration and Peace," 21 February 2017](#).

[3] See Pope Benedict XVI, [Message for the World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 12 October 2012](#).

[4] Pope Francis, [Message to the President of the Latin American Parliament \(Parlatino\) on the Occasion of the 33rd General Assembly, 9-10 June 2017](#).

[5] Pope Francis, [Message for the 2018 World Day of Migrants and Refugees, 15 August 2017](#).

[6] See Pope Francis, [Address for the World Food Day, 16 October 2017](#).

[7] See Pope Francis, [Address to Members of the International Federation of Catholic Universities, 4 November 2017](#).

[8] Pope Francis, [Message for the 2018 World Day of Peace, 13 November 2017](#).

[9] Pope Francis, [Message for the "Second Holy See-Mexico Conference On International Migration," 14 June 2018](#).

[10] Pope Francis, [Angelus, 17 June 2018](#).

[11] [Ibidem](#).

[12] Pope Francis, [Address to the Participants of the International Forum on "Migration and Peace," 21 February 2017](#).

[13] Pope Francis, [Homily during the Holy Mass for Migrants, Saint Peter's Basilica, 6 July 2018](#).