

Intervention of Ambassador Jorge Lomónaco, Permanent Representative of Mexico to the United Nations and other International Organizations in Geneva at the Enhanced Interactive Dialogue: “The human rights of migrants in the context of large movements” during the 34th session of the Human Rights Council

Genève, March 10, 2017

Venue: Room XX

Time: 9am-12pm

“Every nation has the sovereign right to protect its borders!”

We hear statements like this so often and from some many countries that we do not even pause to reflect on their implications. For such statements are often followed by the announcement or justification of horrible measures, sometimes in disregard for the rule of law and international obligations. And we all forget that this is about humans, and their families and often entire communities, and their rights and their future. Beyond legal considerations or sovereign rights, what we are witnessing on a daily basis in many parts of the world are human tragedies. So the conversation should also be about distinguishing good from wrong.

In recent years, we have witnessed a surge in the large movements of people across the world. This trend will most certainly continue and possibly increase, as a result of violent conflict, poverty, inequalities or climate change.

Thousands of women, men and children have lost their lives while looking for a better future. Millions are living in precarious conditions, without any form of protection of their most fundamental human rights. Still, migrants are considered a security threat in some receiving societies; they face rejection, discrimination and are subject to all sorts of abuse.

The Special Rapporteur on migration has noted that State’s responses to the so-called “migration crisis” have led to friction among States, creating an atmosphere of chaos and disorganization that implants fear in the hearts of the citizens of destination countries, and feed stereotypes, myths, threats and fantasies that national populist movements insist in exploiting.

When we talk about migration, it is not the threat that creates the fear, but the fear that creates the threat.

Mister President,

This Council has recognized on many occasions the need to promote and protect effectively the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their status. We have also

affirmed the need to address international migration through international, regional or bilateral cooperation and dialogue in a comprehensive and balanced fashion, while avoiding approaches that might aggravate their vulnerability.

Since the establishment of this Council, Mexico has sought to contribute to the systematization, coherence and incorporation of international provisions that recognize the particular situation of migrants.

Last June, the Council adopted the resolution 32/14 with the aim to promote and protect the human rights of all migrants in large movements of people, putting human beings at the center of all migration policies. This initiative has a global, comprehensive and holistic approach that is relevant to all countries and regions.

This decision exemplifies that the Council is in a position to contribute to the recognition of the human rights of migrants and should complement the ongoing discussions on international migration.

The process towards a Global Compact on safe, orderly and regular migration, gives HRC an opportunity to advance principles and commitments with a human rights based approach, with regard to international migration in all its dimensions. In doing so, the HRC can also contribute to other relevant processes, such as the implementation of the SDGs.

As you know, Member States will be called to engage in the preparatory process of the global compact through a series of informal thematic sessions.

In this context, the session on “Human rights of all migrants, social inclusion, cohesion, and all forms of discrimination, including racism xenophobia and intolerance” will be held in Geneva in May.

Mister President,

Migration issues are today at the center of public debates worldwide. We have a collective obligation to combat policies of fearmongering, profiling, stigmatization and defamation, as they go counter basic principles that we all spouse. We ought to raise our voice to denounce when migrants are used as scapegoats or when ill-conceived unilateral actions in the name of security tear families apart. And we need to be prepared to demand full respect of due process.

Last but not least we have to start talking more about the benefits of migration in receiving countries and less on the benefits on sending countries. Unless and until we shift the focus, change the narrative, we will remain in the defensive. It is time to go on the offensive and claim left and right that migration is a natural and, when properly managed, a welcomed consequence of history but also progress, integration,

modernity, mobility, trade, hipercommunication; in other words, of the world that we have built together and that the vast majority of us have so handsomely benefitted from. Let us invest our energy and political capital in smart policies rather than in stigmatizing migration and migrants, or vilifying nationalities and religions.

Thank you very much.