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**Keynote Address by Louise Arbour
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International Migration**

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**GFMD Dialogue on the GCM Implementation
Implications, Challenges and Opportunities for the GFMD**

Geneva, 4 September 2018

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you to the co-chairs of the GFMD, Morocco and Germany, for inviting me to this Dialogue.

This is the first global gathering of migration stakeholders since the historic July 13 agreement on the text of the Global Compact for Migration, after some 18 months of consultations and negotiations in which most of you were intimately involved.

Although I know that you are very familiar with the content of the GCM, I think it's useful to recall some of its salient features.

First, it is a comprehensive text, that deals with all aspects and phases of the migratory process.

Second, it is anchored in the fundamental interlinkage between state sovereignty and state interdependence and therefore fosters state cooperation as its key organizing principle.

And third, it seeks to maximize the benefits of migration for all – migrants, communities and states - while reducing the negative aspects of migration, particularly those linked to irregular, chaotic and dangerous practices.

Not surprisingly, the GCM recognizes at the outset - in fact already in the third paragraph of the preamble - the contributions of the GFMD to the process leading to the adoption of the Compact. The GFMD has indeed served as one of the key venues in which professional expertise as well as political goodwill were developed over a decade, one marked, I should add, by the remarkable leadership of Peter Sutherland, creating the environment in which this issue could finally find a proper home in the UN system.

In light of that, it is therefore fitting that the GCM expressly invites the GFMD to engage in the implementation of its objectives through its tested working methods, namely to provide a platform to exchange experiences on implementation, share good practices on policies and cooperation, promote innovative approaches, and foster multi-stakeholder partnerships around specific policy issues. The GCM also refers specifically to the GFMD's Business Mechanism in relation to Objective 18 on skills development.

That being said, the GCM is not entirely prescriptive when it comes to implementation, follow up and review, and therefore leaves this Forum with ample room to decide how best it will harvest its capacities and contribute to the common project of CGM implementation.

As much as we should resist getting bogged down in institutional design and process, we need to recognize that some complex terrain lies ahead which will require attentive navigation from us all. By this I mean that the interplay between relevant institutions and processes – some currently existing, others envisaged in the GCM and elsewhere - is not automatically self-evident. Amongst these are the capacity building mechanism established by the GCM, the UN Migration Network launched by the Secretary-General, including his biennial report to the UN General Assembly, the UN International Migration Review Forum, and the already existing state-led processes including some important regional mechanisms and, of course, the GFMD.

In that context, the GFMD presents several advantages: state participation is broad and varied; business and civil society have a space within the Forum; its working methods are less formal and seem popular with its membership; and it has the flexibility to develop and adapt to the new environment created by the GCM. A proof of this is the recently proposed GFMD Mayoral Mechanism.

I would suggest two issues that the GFMD may want to consider as it begins to operate in this new environment: the first is procedural, or institutional, the other more substantive.

On the institutional side, the GFMD's historic link to the UN has been through the SRSG. My own mandate was very focused on supporting the negotiations of the Compact and, of course, on the organization the Marrakesh Conference.

Going forward I would suggest that a strong link be formed between the GFMD and the UN Migration Network.

While the Network is in the process of defining and organizing itself, the intentions of the Secretary-General are clear, and his decision is welcomed in the Compact itself. With IOM operating as the coordinator and secretariat of the Network, the UN will position itself to support Member States in the implementation of the GCM. This is not meant to be business as usual within the many UN entities which have a mandate, expertise and capacities related to migration. To an unprecedented extent, Member States, including the GFMD will have a central point of entry into the UN system in their efforts to implement the GCM.

On the more substantive side, I think the GFMD may want to develop a GCM implementation support strategy which could take different forms: it could either attempt to cover the whole spectrum of GCM objectives or select a few to prioritize over a defined period - say 2 or 3 years. This would maximize the chances of progress, particularly in the fields where short-term, measurable advances could be achieved either globally or in some regions; the GFMD's contributions to skills development initiatives, for instance, is already explicitly recognized in Objective 18 of the GCM.

In the same way, initiatives could be launched to support bilateral agreements on portability of benefits, more global efforts of reducing the cost of transfer of remittances, on returns, on the production of identification documents, to name a few areas where the level of trust and cooperation developed in the GFMD could best produce results in the not too distant future.

These are just examples of the many opportunities that this Forum presents. It will be for you, Member States, to design over time the practices, methods of work, venues and strategies that will be best suited to the implementation of the ambitious agenda that the GCM provides.

The GFMD was instrumental in situating the migration agenda within the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. It played a critical role in developing the interest, expertise and trust which have been essential to the adoption of the GCM. The GCM now provides us with a broad and stand-alone migration agenda for the first time. And the GFMD continues to stand as a tested, well-functioning, flexible and ever evolving platform for global dialogue on migration.

While this will evolve over time, we have an immediate task at hand, on which all energies should be focused, and that is the preparation for the Marrakesh Conference. The Intergovernmental Conference next December must signal a collective seriousness of purpose not only in the adoption but also in the implementation of the GCM.

The highest levels of government will gather to tackle some of the defining issues of our time. They will launch an unprecedented process of cooperation to harvest the benefits of human mobility and reduce the human and economic costs of poorly managed, chaotic and disorderly international migration. As we work to make institutions and processes fit for purpose, we should not lose sight of what has been entrusted to us all.

Roles and mandates will need to be clarified, resources need to be allocated, but most importantly, we must make the GCM come to life by generating ideas, projects and actions to bring to Marrakesh and beyond.

I'm delighted to have had the opportunity to participate in this conversation today and I look forward to your comments and questions as well as to your continued engagement in this hugely important project.