

Fifth Informal Thematic Session of the Global Compact for Safe, Regular and Orderly
Migration

Vienna, Austria, September 4-5, 2017

Statement delivered by Ms. Monica Ferro
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PANEL 3: Appropriate identification, protection, and assistance to migrants and trafficking victims

Mr. Co-Chair,

UNFPA is pleased to join in this discussion and notes that migration occurs along a continuum from forced to voluntary, and that global efforts should be focused on reducing pressures that cause forced migration, and ensure that migration is a choice and not a necessity. Though presenting both opportunities and challenges for countries of origin, transit and destination, migration needs to be safe and orderly, in order that the benefits can be better harnessed and the challenges minimized. However, human trafficking including for purposes of sexual exploitation, forced labour, servitude and slavery and related exploitative practices is a crime and the perpetrators should be punished. On the other hand, the rights of the victims should be protected and assistance extended to ensure the survivors' full rehabilitation and reintegration into society. In this context, the Global Compact should include among the range of assistance to victims of trafficking and smuggling, access to health care and services, including the sexual and reproductive health services, which is in keeping with the right of all persons to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

Migrants, as well as victims of trafficking and smuggling face many challenges in accessing health services in both countries of transit and destination, and this situation is even more acute for women and girls. This risk increases as access to protection and health services decline, including in countries of transit. In emergency situations, the risks of pregnancy intensifies – heightening risks of complications or even miscarriage due to a decreased access to health services combined, increased lack of health professional and facilities. When sexual and reproductive health services are provided and health systems are strengthened we help to save lives, build better futures for migrants and victims of smuggling and trafficking, and enhance the capacity to address gender-based violence. Services should encompass access to quality family planning, prenatal and postnatal care, and education and information on sexual and reproductive health.

Women and girls constitute a large volume of persons smuggled and trafficked persons, and it is critical that their rights be promoted, protected and respected, irrespective of their migration status, throughout the migration process. The Global Compact should therefore include provisions for the enactment, enforcement and upholding of laws and policies to protect women and girls from gender based violence and harmful practices such as child, early and forced marriage, including among migrant and smuggled children, and protect those at risk, to ensure that marriage is entered into only with the informed, free and full consent of the intending spouses and to amend relevant laws and policies to remove any provisions that enable perpetrators of rape, sexual abuse abduction or

any violence to escape prosecution and punishment by marrying their victims. In a similar manner, attention should also be focused on the inclusion of measures within the Global Compact to end other harmful practices that negatively impact the health of women and girls such as female genital mutilation.

It would be remiss of me, Mr. Co-Chair, if I failed to underscore the greater need for improved collection and the disaggregation of data on migrants, smuggled, trafficked persons, and persons who have been subjected to contemporary forms of slavery. This data would inform cases of discrimination, abuse and access to services amongst others.

Health, including the health of all women and girls is key to achieving sustainable development and ensuring that no one is left behind. The Global Compact could be a useful tool in guaranteeing safe, orderly and regular migration and thus needs to include all migrants, trafficked persons and persons subjected to contemporary forms of slavery irrespective of gender or migration status.

I thank you.