



PERMANENT MISSION OF AFGHANISTAN

**INTERVENTION**

By the Acting Permanent Representative, Mr. Naeem Poyesh

GLOBAL COMPACT FOR MIGRATION  
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*PANEL 1: SMUGGLING OF MIGRANTS*

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Thank you, Mr. Moderator, for giving me the floor!

Firstly, let me thank all panelists for their insightful presentations and commend the Co-Facilitators and the UNODC Secretariat for their excellent work.

Dear colleagues,

- According to the latest UNOCHA report, released on 29 August 2017, more than 200,000 Afghan citizens fled their homes due to conflict in 2017. We also know that more than seven million Afghan citizens live abroad, the vast majority of whom in Iran and Pakistan. Furthermore, there are huge numbers of Internally Displaced Persons.
- At the same time, millions of Afghans have returned to their home country over the past fifteen years, with the country's absorption capacities strained. Last year, 600,000 Afghan citizens returned from Pakistan alone. For almost four decades, Afghanistan has been a victim of foreign aggression, wars and international crime and terrorism.
- Afghanistan remains committed to meet all obligations under international law in the area of migration and works hard to fight against the transnational smuggling networks, which form part of the menace of international organized crime. However, it is acknowledged that not all cases of smuggling of migrants are facilitated by criminal smuggling networks. We therefore support all initiatives to effectively

prevent smuggling of migrants, a criminal act on which also terrorist groups more and more rely – along with illicit drug trafficking – as a source of funding. Links to other crimes such as corruption, trafficking of human beings, counterfeiting of documents, money laundering and violent extremism must be exposed and crushed, too. We endorse all proposals towards more efficient investigation and prosecution of members of the criminal smuggling networks, the fastest growing criminal market in many regions over the past two years.

- At the same time, Afghanistan advocates for the full protection of the human rights of all migrants, regardless of their status. We should not criminalize the victims of the smuggling business. As has been acknowledged in the UN General Assembly Resolution 71/1, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, we share a responsibility in managing large movements of refugees and migrants in a humane, sensitive, compassionate and people-centered manner. The Government of Afghanistan will always and unconditionally safeguard the dignity of all of its citizens. The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations of Afghanistan collaborates closely with UNHCR, IOM and other organizations working in this area, with a view to ensuring safe and dignified repatriation of Afghan refugees.
- We encourage enhanced national, regional and international coordination and cooperation – including with regional and international organizations, civil society organizations and the private sector – with a view to better addressing all related pressing and complex challenges, including education for migrants; hate speech, aggression and gender-based violence; financial and technical support to host countries; capacity-building in countries of origin and transit; the rights of children and minors; involvement of civil society organizations and the private sector; raising awareness; enable positive contributions by migrants in the host countries; research and data collection and sharing; resettlement and safe pathways for humane, orderly and regular migration; as well as swift asylum procedures.
- Furthermore, it will be crucial to be up to date with recent trends – including the phenomenon of mixed migration and the extensive use of social media by organized crime organizations, in order to effectively disrupt the criminal migrant smuggling networks.
- Finally, let me state that Afghanistan is in the process of rebuilding the country, fostering stability and cherishing our young democracy. In doing so, we need our young and educated people inside the country. Let me therefore conclude with a quote by President Ashraf Ghani: *“When they go, when highly educated people go, and become manual laborers abroad — it breaks my heart. There is a country to build here.”*

Thank you, Mr. Moderator!