



**Statement delivered by Moreen Gorial, as the Migrant Voice Speaker, at the opening of the Multi-Stakeholder Hearing of the IMRF**

Thank you for the floor and thank you to the Office of the President of the General Assembly and the UN Network on Migration for this important opportunity to voice some of the concerns and priorities of the diverse migrant community.

The Migration Youth and Children Platform was created in response to the GCM negotiations in 2018, so it is an honour and a privilege to be here today. In our preparations for the IMRF, we held consultations with over 381 young migrant leaders as well as youth-led and focused organizations that represent over 556,000 young people across 36 countries. However, we want to highlight that the migrant community is not just one entity, but a rich and diverse collection of workers, students, communities, civil society leaders, mayors, entrepreneurs, parents, children, and people living across different global contexts. In recognition of this, we have shaped these points in collaboration with as many representatives as possible, and I speak to you today with the collective voice of civil society and migrant communities.

COVID-19 has in many ways shifted the focus of governments and civil society away from the GCM in its crucial first years. But the situation of migrants has become even more urgent, and many of the vulnerabilities and injustices faced before have only been exacerbated. With every month that GCM implementation is not prioritized, we see grave consequences and massive long-term impacts on migrant and diaspora ability to effectively contribute to their communities and the SDGs.

Current GCM implementation is not enough. But people are fighting for progress on the ground and developing innovative approaches that can be used at a larger scale. These are led by local governments, national governments, civil society, and businesses, many within them also youth.

Thus, we urge you to utilize this Stakeholder Hearing to really listen with only the goal of safe, orderly and regular migration for all in mind. We urge you to take away both these policy actions directly from frontliners, as well as the on-ground accounts of progress, and take this collaborative approach forward into bilateral and multilateral agreements, and open, action-oriented discussions. Stakeholders should be meaningfully included throughout the IMRF. This Hearing is a good first step but it is not enough for a true WHOLE OF SOCIETY



## APPROACH.

As a Canadian Immigrant from an Iraqi minority, I grew up sentient of the blessings and privileges I've been given and how different my life would have been, had my family been denied the opportunity to migrate from their homeland.

Migration has been proven throughout history to be a net positive for both origin and destination countries. It can be a driver for resilience, create opportunities for personal growth and advancement, create jobs and import crucial skills and investment. However, exclusionary policies ensure it remains a double-edged sword for all on the move.

We call on governments to promote evidence-based public discourse and fight discrimination and xenophobia. State actors should also promote the social mobility and participation of migrants in public life, with specific attention to vulnerable communities such as unaccompanied children, differently-abled persons, LGBTQI+, women and girls.

Migrants must have equal access to services, to education and gainful employment opportunities: being migrants must not prevent us from accessing basic human rights. The only difference between migrants and host communities is that they are born in a country where they do not enjoy the same safety, freedoms, and opportunities - this must not be criminalized.

We urge governments to implement more pathways to obtain legal residency and status to enable migrants, including undocumented migrants, to access employment opportunities and contribute to the development of their host society. We also urge them to take immediate action in obtaining justice and compensation for all migrant workers who still suffer from wage theft.

Furthermore, we must have anti-racism policies that are direct and progressive, that address the structural nature of racism, eliminate racial profiling and ensure equal access to asylum and displaced persons protection as all human beings on this Earth.

Standing on indigenous ground, we must always remember, appreciate and reconcile with the indigenous peoples not just here but everywhere. Our indigenous peoples must be upheld as experts of our lands and an important intersectional community within migrants and diaspora.



Migrants as leaders and agents of change and development, we are experts in migration issues, and we should be treated as such.

To fully realize the Global Compact for Migration, migrants, including the youth among us, must have the freedom and capacity to self-organize, to assemble, to associate, and self-represent. This must be recognised and upheld. Only through the creation of an enabling civic space for migrant groups to operate, can migrants truly be safe and meaningfully engage in decision-making into the policies that affect them. Investing in us is investing in long term sustainable development.

We need – now more than ever – a unified approach to today’s biggest challenges. We have a prime opportunity as we recover from the COVID-19 pandemic, to shape our world and this IMRF to achieve the GCM.

Migration is not just a migrant issue, it’s fundamental to the future of society. Thank you.