

UNITED NATIONS



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**THE SECRETARY-GENERAL**

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**MESSAGE TO COORDINATION MEETING ON INTERNATIONAL  
MIGRATION  
New York, 16 February 2017**

*Delivered by Mr. Wu Hongbo, Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs*

I am pleased to send greetings to this 15<sup>th</sup> Coordination Meeting on International Migration. You gather at a crucial time, with hundreds of millions of people affected by the issues at stake. We cannot fail them; we must work closely than ever before.

Migration is a pressing global issue that should not be viewed solely as a problem but rather as a potential solution to many of the challenges we face today. In the current atmosphere of rising xenophobia, it is essential to have a clearheaded understanding of the facts. Most of today's 244 million international migrants travel in a safe and orderly fashion with the requisite documents. Migrants often perform critical jobs and send remittances to their families in what amounts to a major contribution to development.

At the same time, millions of people on the move suffer hardship. Thousands of migrants perish each year in the search for basic human security. Many risk their lives in dangerous journeys only to suffer discrimination and even abuse in new lands.

States have a right to control their borders and a duty to protect their citizens – both their physical safety and their ability to earn a decent living. States must also protect and assist migrants in vulnerable situations, ensure basic rights for all, and provide a safe haven for refugees.

The international community should focus on addressing the root causes of displacement and making prevention a priority. Human rights, humanitarian law and refugee law must guide all our work. Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should be a top priority.

We must forcefully reject discrimination, which only feeds the narrative of violent extremists. It is important to respond to misrepresentations with truth and replace fear with hope. That is the aim of our TOGETHER campaign, which deserves wide support.

We have reached a critical juncture at the United Nations last September, with Member States agreeing on a consensual pathway for developing the global migration compact. The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants provides an ambitious agenda and an opportunity to make a real difference in the lives of all women and men who have left their homes in search of a better life.

Now is the time to act. If the draft modalities resolution currently under consideration is adopted, we will have to meet tight timelines to forge the building blocks of what will become the Global compact.

This meeting brings together international organizations, governments, civil society and academics. Together, we can mark a new departure in efforts to forge global approaches to international migration.