

Address by

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to the

**REGIONAL REVIEW CONFERENCE ON THE GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE,
ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION IN THE ARAB REGION**

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Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished participants,

It is an honour to address this important Regional Review Conference on the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in the Arab Region.

We have all worked tirelessly towards ensuring that migrants are included in universal health coverage and protected from health emergencies, and that their overall health is improved. Universal health coverage continues to be our entry point in ensuring that migrants have access to health services and that their health needs are met at a cost they can afford. To achieve this, we must strengthen access to essential health services at the primary health care level as well as finding feasible and sustainable ways to cover costs. Reducing health inequities among migrants is crucial because health is a fundamental human right and its progressive realization provides the opportunity to enjoy life and pursue one's life plans.

Ladies and gentlemen,

In the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has taken a serious toll on health systems and populations in this Region. But migrants have risen to the challenge, contributing tirelessly as essential workers in many countries of the Region to keep services running. The pandemic has exposed huge inequities, but also offers many useful lessons learned. In most of the Region, the pandemic response has been universal, with testing and treatment being provided to everyone, regardless of their nationality, residency or migratory status, and many governments are now adapting their policies to be more inclusive.

Countries around the world have understood that we all stand together in the fight against this pandemic. We must build on this realization. The pandemic has demonstrated how important it is to include migrants in all national health policies and plans, so that we can progress towards universal health coverage and are well prepared for future emergencies.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Article 15 of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration calls on every Member State to incorporate the health needs of migrants into national and local health care policies and plans. This commitment is reinforced by the WHO Framework of Priorities and Guiding Principles to Promote the Health of Refugees and Migrants.

It is therefore crucial that migrants are included in all measures taken to control and manage the COVID-19 pandemic. Failing to do so will jeopardize efforts to curtail the spread of the outbreak. Furthermore, the COVID-19 vaccine should be treated as global public good; it must be made available free of charge or at an affordable price, and administered in a non-discriminatory manner, equitably across all populations – including migrants.

To sum up, we must all come together to ensure that no one is left behind, to meet the objectives of the Global Compact on Migration, achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and realize our vision of Health for All by All in the Eastern Mediterranean Region.