



AUSTRALIA



AUSTRALIAN MISSION TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

19 December 2018

Australian Explanation of Vote on the final draft of the Global Compact for Migration

Explanation of Vote by H.E. Gillian Bird, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

(Check against delivery)

Madam/Mr Chair, your Excellencies,

Mr President, Australia is a nation built on migration. We are a global leader in providing safe, orderly and regular migration opportunities. Our success has been underpinned by sovereign control of our borders, our managed permanent and temporary migration programs and a humanitarian resettlement scheme of 18,750 permanent places – among the world's most generous.

Australia also recognises the importance of international cooperation to providing lawful migration pathways and deterring irregular migration, particularly in the Indo-Pacific. Australia and Indonesia established and co-chair the successful Bali Process on People Smuggling, Trafficking in Persons and Related Transnational Crime. Australia and Pacific Island countries have established temporary migration pathways that fill labour shortages in Australia and provide income to the citizens of our close neighbours.

Australia's constructive engagement in the Compact negotiations reflected our experience. We advocated policies and actions that encouraged safe and regular migration pathways, responsibility sharing between Member States,

commitments on return and efforts to address the adverse drivers of irregular migration. We advocated the right of states to determine the border security and migration policies that best suit their social and economic circumstances.

Regrettably, the Compact falls well short. The Compact unnecessarily constrains states' control over their borders, their right to distinguish between lawful and unlawful migrants, and their efforts to stem the crimes of people smuggling and trafficking in persons. Far from encouraging safe and orderly migration as intended, the Compact risks fostering irregular and unlawful migration.

Mr President, given the depth of our concerns, Australia did not adopt the Compact and has abstained from this vote. Australia will nonetheless continue to play its part, as it has for decades, in promoting safe, orderly and regular migration.

Thank you.