

## **Global Compacts on migrants and refugees – Caritas vision and red lines**

On Human Rights Day, Caritas Internationalis, the humanitarian and development organisation of the Catholic Church, would like to share its vision and red-lines for the Global Compacts, namely the “Comprehensive refugee response framework” and the one on “safe, orderly and regular migration”, both an outcome of the Summit for Refugees and Migrants, which took place on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016 in New York.

Caritas Internationalis is aware that currently the modalities for developing the Global Compacts are being discussed and agreed upon. For this purpose we would like to underline the importance to be as inclusive as possible in the process, allowing Civil Society, Migrant Organisations, but also migrants and ordinary citizens themselves to contribute to the shaping of the Global Compacts. Moreover cities, that are showing solidarity, facing the day to day challenges of receiving migrants and refugees and many of them making huge efforts to provide a dignified welcome, should have a place at the negotiating table.<sup>1</sup>

The shaping of the Global Compacts is a unique opportunity for dialogue among different groups in society and for balancing diverging interests as well as for working towards global governance on migration. From a Christian standpoint, policies and agreements should have a positive impact on persons, and the imperative of for calling in the stranger<sup>2</sup> should be at the centre, so as for him/her to be able live a dignified life and enjoy his/her rights, use his/her talents and to contribute to the receiving community, in short being integrated.

### **1 Coherence between compacts and between declarations and reality**

- Caritas Internationalis believes that migration is more and more mixed and this makes it difficult to have a clear cut distinction between the two categories of migrants and refugees. Often their situation with regards to human needs is very similar if not the same. For this reason, Caritas strongly recommends coherence between the two Global Compacts. It is fundamental that the two compacts “speak” to each other and avoid creating different categories of migrants, one being considered more important than the other.
- Even if the New York declaration renews the commitment by the states to respect human rights for all migrants, Caritas Internationalis is worried about the gap between such declarations and current policies and practices on the ground. The Compacts and national policies must thrive to ensure the protection, safety and dignity of all migrants and refugees. Human rights should be respected for all migrants, independently of their status, ensuring access to basic social services and with a particular attention to children and women.

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<sup>1</sup> Refugees are our brothers and sisters. Summit of Mayors in the Vatican, called by the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 25:35

## **2 Red-lines for the Global Compacts**

- Some countries are currently shouldering a disproportional part of the responsibility associated with large movements of refugees and migrants. We call on the international community to show solidarity and to share the responsibility of providing protection to those fleeing from their homes.
- Any person on the move should have access to information, which allows him or her to claim and access their rights under the international laws.
- Any violation of human rights by public officials and through discriminating and xenophobic policies, acts and behaviours, inside the national territory and at its borders must be avoided and held accountable.
- National migration policies should not be mixed with national border control policies. These are two different types of policies.
- Even if migrants' and refugees' needs are often the same, the specific protection of refugees must be enforced, therefore the application of the 1951 Geneva Convention regarding the refugee status should be upheld. A full and effective application of the refugee status definition should be a concrete reality.
- Effective measures should be put in place to end all forms of violence, abuse, exploitation and trafficking of all migrants, not only the most vulnerable ones.
- Migrant children need special attention and protection. The best interest of the child should always come first. For this reason the practice of detaining children on the basis of their or their parent's migration status should be abolished.
- States should ban arbitrary and collective expulsions. The "non refoulement" principle should always be respected. The "non refoulement" principle is based on the individual situation of the person and not on the level of safeness of the country.
- For this reason Caritas Internationalis is opposed to making a list of safe countries to which migrants can be returned.
- Voluntary return\repatriation should be possible if those repatriated are prepared and informed and able to live in the community of origin as already outlined in the Global Compact for migrants and refugees.

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