

Concluding Remarks: Revd Rachel Carnegie

Honoured guests, distinguished speakers, ladies and gentlemen.

My profound thanks to the **organisers** of this conference. It is an honour to be invited to offer some concluding remarks at this significant **event** – on the question of how we **achieve effective international cooperation** and **shared responsibility** to alleviate the **suffering** and build **hope** for millions of refugees and migrants?

In bringing **interfaith perspectives** to the on-going discussions on **the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration** and **the Global Compact on Refugees**, this conference will, I believe, give **renewed impetus** to the way faith communities **have** offered and **can** offer **accompaniment** to Member States in supporting migrants and refugees.

The panel has voiced a **joint moral imperative** to respond to refugees and migrants. It has demonstrated how religious communities not only seek to **engage Member States** but also themselves embrace **shared responsibility** – upholding the **rights** and **dignity** of all and bringing **hope** to migrants and refugees by building **welcoming, inclusive societies** – a whole society approach which tackles **xenophobia** and fosters a **positive narrative** on migration.

Thank you to our **sister and brothers - Moustafa, Alicia and Teofilo** - for your courage in sharing the story of your journey – to bring a **human face** to the statistics of migration. Thank you for **accompanying** us on our journey. We also want to acknowledge **all** that migrants **contribute** to their new societies. It is vital that your **voices** are heard in these discussions.

From our eminent religious leaders, it has been deeply **encouraging** to hear the messages of **shared commitment**. This was not a series of statements on what **others** can do – but on what we can do **together**. What moved me most was the **coherence of vision** – how voices from different faiths around the world affirmed this **common ground**.

*It was evident that stories – **human experiences** of migration and refugee flight - are **woven** into the various faith **traditions** – along with **authoritative faith injunctions** that host communities must care for the vulnerable, welcome the stranger or sojourner, protect those at risk. (And across the various faiths we have also heard the **theological** insight that in serving the vulnerable stranger the **believer** serves **God**.)*

*The speakers gave **compelling accounts** of how religious communities not only speak out in **prophetic advocacy** but also engage creatively in providing **practical support** to meet the immediate needs of migrants and refugees. The speakers also highlighted the **root causes** of human movement, and the need for **sustainable, integral human development**.*

*The commitment of the SDG 2030 vision that **no one is left behind** is pertinent here in seeking **coherence** between the two Global Compacts, to ensure that **categorisation** of migrants and refugees does not inadvertently allow some – the **most vulnerable** - to fall, **unprotected**, ‘in between’ the Compacts.*

*The response will need to include access to **essential services** for all and expanding **legal pathways** for migrants and refugees, including **resettlement**, humanitarian **corridors**, **labour mobility**, family **reunification** and so on, to ensure they can move in **safety and dignity**, protected from **smugglers** and **traffickers**.*

But in addition to these **common threads**, I would also like to highlight **specific insights** and **recommendations** from each speaker:

In his opening remarks, **His Excellency Archbishop Auza** ...

In setting the scene, **His Eminence Cardinal Tagle** reflected on the **guiding principles** set out by His Holiness Pope Francis – the four verbs that articulate our shared responsibility – to **welcome, protect, promote and integrate** migrants and refugees at **all stages** of their journey. The Cardinal reminded us of the importance of a **culture** of **personal encounter** with migrants, refugees and other marginalised people – individuals with **human stories and dreams**. In sharing his **personal story**, the Cardinal reminded us that we all likely have **migrant DNA**. Certainly it is there in my family history.

Rabbi David Rosen spoke about the **duty** of a society to its own **citizens**, alongside its **obligation** to maximise **human dignity** and freedom for all – preventing **exploitation**, and enabling **safe and secure passage** for people on the move - as well as ensuring **decent living and social conditions** for refugees and migrants. In a powerful image he reminded us **that ‘to turn one’s back on another in need... is to turn one’s back on God’**.

The Hon. Judge Sheikh Abou Zeid raised the significant point from **Islamic teaching** that migration is a **justified choice** for those who are under **threat**, or **being persecuted**, or **oppressed**. He also described how Islam encourages Muslims to be **welcoming** and helpful towards immigrants in a **practical way** by providing support.

His Eminence Metropolitan Emmanuel Adamakis spoke of the need to **re-humanise** the **other**, reflecting in particular on the **responsibility** to care for **young people** on the move seeking **safer lives, better opportunities, futures of hope**. (Children too need **special protection** not least from **detention and deportation**.)

The Venerable Gijun Sugitani highlighted the **crucial importance** of **accountability** – the question of who will assume **responsibilities** regarding the global compacts, signalling the role of religious leaders in **upholding policy recommendations** as well as playing their part in the **response**. Nobody, he said, is allowed to be a **‘bystander’** – to ensure that **policy** moves to **concrete implementation**.

As we have heard from our speakers, we all share stories of migration in our communities and faith traditions. Recognising this can surely transform our perspective.

I want to conclude with an appeal – to keep the image of a migrant or refugee known personally to us actively present in our minds as the discussions move forward.

This is less about subtle negotiations of words and phrases, and more fully about real people’s lives - embracing with great vision this once-in-a generation opportunity to shape cooperative action among States and other stakeholders in response to the mass movements of peoples.

The journey for the negotiations is not over. The journey for migrants and refugees is far from over. As religious communities we are committed to continue sharing the journey.

And so in the spirit of our shared humanity, there are four key challenges for us all - as we travel forward:

- 1) How can we make the Global Compacts a vision of hope, of humanity and our common good?
- 2) How can we make them stronger in upholding the dignity of migrants and refugees?
- 3) How can we overcome our internal barriers and become inclusive societies in an interconnected world?
- 4) How can we renew our commitment for peace, solidarity and justice?

Thank you