****

**PHILIPPINE STATEMENT**

**MR. REYNALDO A. CATAPANG**

**Assistant Secretary for Migrant Workers Affairs**

**Department of Foreign Affairs**

**2nd Round of Negotiations: Session 1** (Differentiation between Irregular and Regular)

**Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

Trusteeship Council Chamber, UN Headquarters, New York, 12 March 2018, 10 a.m.

**Thank you, Co-Facilitators.**

**Since the adoption of the New York Declaration in 2016, we have journeyed together on an exhaustive preparatory process, to discuss the major issues that a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration should address.**

**We thank you for all your hard work and reaffirm our support for these negotiations. We also acknowledge the presence of SRSG Louise Arbour.**

**In particular, the Philippines recalls the 6th Thematic Session of the consultation phase, in which delegations expressed their views on the topic of “Irregular migration and regular pathways, including decent work, labor mobility, recognition of skills and qualifications and other relevant measures.” The issue brief and co-facilitators’ summary provide in-depth analyses and capture the views of states and stakeholders.**

**In his report, “Making migration work for all,” Secretary General Antonio Guterres synthesized the discussions and inputs received over this two-year preparatory process and strongly cautioned against the temptation of making “a binary division between regular and irregular migrants.”**

**He adds: “regular migrants range from individuals on short-term work or student visas to permanent residents of foreign countries, and those who acquire a new citizenship. Likewise, there is a spectrum of irregular migration, from overstaying a visa to deliberate efforts to undermine border controls … There is no one single answer, just as there is not one singular problem to solve.”**

**We therefore welcomed the zero draft for its nuanced approach to the issue and its recognition that people are -- and must be -- at the center of the Global Compact. In this light, we find that this structure of discussions, on “differentiation between regular and irregular” creates a false and dangerous dichotomy that falls into the trap the Secretary General warned us against.**

**Our message is simple: all migrants must be treated with dignity, regardless of their migration status.**

**In the New York Declaration, we committed to ensure safe, orderly and regular migration involving full respect for human rights and the humane treatment of migrants, regardless of migration status. We underlined the need to ensure respect for the dignity of migrants and the protection of their rights under applicable international law, including the principle of non-discrimination. The Global Compact can do no less. It is meant to go forward, not back; to weave a wider pattern of stronger protection, not unravel what the world community already agreed upon.**

**This commitment does not arise out of a vacuum, or out of the self-interest of sending states. The United Nations was founded for purpose of protecting humanity, and on the assumption that a state would abhor its citizens abusing strangers as much as strangers fear being abused. As the UN Charter eloquently proclaims, the peoples of the United Nations came together determined “to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.” This is upheld by the Universal Declaration on Human Rights and all the core human rights treaties.**

**Ensuring full respect for human rights of migrants does not mean mere recognition of these rights. It also means providing them access to basic social services that those rights necessarily entail. As much as the vulnerable from anywhere are entitled to it, so humanity is obliged to extend it to them.**

**Let us recall that the first guiding principle of this Global Compact is that it must be “people centered.” We are talking about lives here. So the primary focus must be on the people themselves, not on processes. It seeks, not to organize misery, but relieve it.**

**We also recall that the purpose of the Global Compact is to address vulnerabilities of migrants in irregular situations, and expand regular pathways to minimize these vulnerabilities.**

**For the Philippines, the protection of our migrants, particularly our domestic workers, is one of our highest priorities. In the context of abuses faced by our migrants, we are at a period of policy reflection on our labor migration.**

**In closing, we say again: in the crafting of this Global Compact we are setting a moral standard for the world—not just in the purposes we achieve but in the sincerity and civility with which we attain them. We realize our humanity when we uphold the rights and dignity of every migrant. Thank you.**