**13 July 2018**

**Draft Statement by Comoros on behalf of the African Group at the conclusion of the Intergovernmental Negotiations on the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration**

***Co-Facilitators,***

***Mr. President of the General Assembly***

***Madam Deputy Secretary General,***

***Madam Special Representative of the SG on Migration,***

Almost two years ago, Member States concluded the negotiations on the New York Declaration in this same building. This landmark document paved the way to the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which we are to adopt.

Throughout these two years, we discussed a myriad of issues related to migration. We exchanged views, shared experiences and best practices, negotiated extensively in an open and constructive spirit and through a dynamic and inclusive process, and here we are today, reaching the moment of truth, where we just agreed on the text of the very first UN document offering a 360 degrees vision of Migration with whole of Government and whole of society approach, which constitutes the first internationally agreed normative and regulatory framework in the field of migration governance.

Allow me at this stage to express the African Group’s sincere and profound gratitude to the co-facilitators of this process. Thanks to your vision, expertise, dedication, stewardship and your particular sense of practicality and of win-win solutions, we have concluded today this process with an encouraging result.

***Co-Facilitators,***

The African Group participated constructively throughout the course of the negotiations. The Group made several proposals, based on the Common African Position on the GCM adopted by our Heads of State and Government, which aims at building a new global migration governance architecture that allows for reacting decisively, managing collectively and responsibly migratory issues in a holistic manner and based on the principle of international solidarity.

Africa is a place where most of its States are countries of origin, transit and destination at the same time, thus its narrative on migration issues is one of balance, open mindedness and comprehensiveness. We have several success stories in the continent and through intra-regional cooperation, as well as robust cooperation frameworks with regional and cross regional partners.

The African Group is pleased that a considerable number of its proposals were taken on board in the final text of the GCM. Among these proposals the Group would like to highlight in particular objective 23 on international cooperation, a specific sub-objective on disaster and climate induced migration, the clear distinction in the text between migrants and refugees, stressing the importance of providing safe and legal migration pathways, a commitment to address socioeconomic root causes and driving factors including through international cooperation, an obligation to ensure protection and promotion of human rights for migrants at all times and in all settings, and a renewed will to combat all forms of racism and discrimination against migrants. The positive contribution of migrants and diasporas to sustainable development, the recognition of their skills, the promotion of knowledge and skills transfer and diasporas mapping as means to maintain the link including cultural link with their countries of origin and the differentiation between remittances and the Official development assistance (ODA).

However, the African Group regrets that a number of its proposals were not taken into consideration and were left unattended in the final text:

- First and foremost, the Group is of the view that the reference to the non-legally binding nature of the GCM was unnecessary in the text, and may be perceived as invitation for lack of compliance.

-The Group regrets that the final text of the GCM does not call for absolute prohibition of “migration holding camps and shelters” and “disembarkation platforms”, “processing centers” or other similar *de facto* migrant detention centers, as they may lead to serious violations and abuses to the human rights of migrants.

-Similarly, the group is concerned about the situation of migrant children, as the text did not uphold the call for an immediate and absolute ending of the child detention as it is in clear contravention with the principle of the best interest of the child and States’ obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child “CRC”, and explore alternatives to detention such as access to education and healthcare and their right to family life and family unity for children.

- The group is not satisfied with the language used for issues that are detrimental to the protection of migrants and their wellbeing, such as the safe and sustainable nature of return of migrants into their country of origin. We remain concerned that the reference to assisted voluntary return, as highlighted in the Valetta Joint Plan of Action, was disregarded.

- the final draft identifies a number of measures to address the root causes for migration, however we note with concern that regularization of migrants into the countries they find themselves in, is not well addressed in the current draft.

As recognized in the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and various framework documents on climate change, adaptation and mitigation actions are interlinked and complementary, and jointly implemented in addressing the impacts of climate change, the Group is thus concerned that the reference to adaptation in the country of origin in the final draft of the GCM under Objective 2(i) is not linked to mitigation and the necessary financing, technological support and capacity building assistance.

The establishment of a robust follow-up and review mechanism has been of utmost importance to us throughout these six rounds of negotiation of the GCM. In this regard, The Group will continue to push beyond this last round, for such a robust follow-up and review mechanism which with a possibility of senior experts meeting every two years that will evaluate the implementation of the GCM and inform envisaged the International Migration

As well as the establishment of an implementation matrix, for voluntary use, to assist countries to implement the GCM, including policy frameworks needed at national, regional and international levels.

- Finally, the African group aspired for a stronger and more vigilant language on eradicating hate crimes, racial profiling and incitement to hatred, discrimination and violence under objective 17. We are of the view that the pursuit of promotion, protection and fulfillment of human rights and fundamental freedoms for migrants overlaps on many occasions with the obligation to eliminate racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and other forms of related intolerance, specially at a time when races, ethnicities, religions and migratory statuses are vilified online and offline to achieve political and electoral accomplishments. The African group stresses that all the relevant obligations and standards in this regard including under the Durban Declaration and Program for Action “DDPA” and relevant UNGA and Human Rights Council resolutions are vitally applicable in this respect.

- The group believes that the issues were not sufficiently addressed in the current draft and could have benefitted from a stronger language.

**Co-Facilitators,**

The African Group recognizes the efforts you have made to strike a delicate balance between divergent views. The African Group understands that this process is a multilateral negotiation, where compromise is instrumental and necessary. The African Group further believes that the GCM is only a step towards building a stronger global architecture on migration governance. Africa will continue to pursue and promote its priorities and concerns at the bilateral, regional and international fora including through the processes dedicated to implementation, follow up and review.

For all these reasons, the African Group joins the consensus on the final text of the GCM.

**Co-Facilitators,**

At this stage, the African Group would like adopt a forward-looking approach, focusing on the next steps.

There is first “the Marrakech Conference” in December. The Group would like to make an appeal to the international community to work together to make this Conference a remarkable success.

Second, there is the day after Marrakech. In this regard, we need to focus on the follow-up and implementation of the GCM. In this regard, the Group underlines the need to strengthen international cooperation for the implementation of all commitments of the GCM. In the same vein, it is of paramount importance building effective partnerships governed by mutual accountability, leading not only to a proactive migration governance architecture but also through means of implementation to be timely and adequately provided.

The Group believes that we must concentrate our efforts on finalizing the modalities of the Review Forum, as well as on the expeditious and effective operationalization of the capacity building mechanism.

Finally, the African Group would like to recall that the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants remains a key reference to our future work. Furthermore, the sustainable development Goals as contained in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda remains as the globally shared vision for the future we want.

**I thank you.**