**Informal thematic session of the global compact on safe, regular and orderly migration: Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crises, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution**

**OHCHR intervention**

The precarious movement of migrants that we are witnessing today is rarely entirely ‘voluntary’ in the true sense of that term.

In addition to persecution and conflict, the reasons for ‘non-voluntary movement’ include poverty; discrimination; lack of access to fundamental human rights such as education, health, food, water and decent work; violence; gender discrimination; separation from family; and the wide-ranging consequences of natural disaster, climate change and environmental degradation.

Poverty itself constitutes an urgent human rights concern and is at the same time a manifestation, a cause, and a consequence of human rights violations. The relationship between poverty and migration is complex, but it is evident that poverty can operate as a powerful driver for movement.

Viewed through a human rights lens, poverty is not solely a question of income or economics. Rather it is a multidimensional phenomenon characterized equally by an absence of the choices, capabilities, freedom, and power necessary to ensure an adequate standard of living and other civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, as well as the right to development.

Thus, those compelled to flee such circumstances in search of their fundamental human rights are not merely “economic migrants.” They are, in the truest sense, human rights migrants.

We also know that people may be compelled to move by repeated risks created by extreme weather events, droughts, and disruptions to livelihoods caused by land degradation and loss of biodiversity.

While the human rights implications for those who move as a result of extreme weather events may be apparent, this tends not to be the case for those who move as a result of more gradual patterns of change – which can mean that their human rights, the compulsions that make them move, and the vulnerabilities that accompany their journey are overlooked. For this reason, OHCHR is currently undertaking a study on the human rights implications of cross-border movement resulting from the slow-onset effects of climate change.

Our research highlights that migrants who move out of necessity rather than free choice are at greater risk of human rights violations throughout their journey and at destination. They are less likely to be able to formulate exit strategies when their migration does not go to plan, and they are more likely to move in conditions that do not respect the dignity of the human being.

At the same time, we must recognize that a focus on returning migrants without due attention to such drivers of perilous movement will merely result in repeated cycles of precarious migration and a perpetuation of the human rights violations and abuses to which migrants are exposed. Such unsustainable returns must be avoided.

This consultation is a key moment for us to understand and address the drivers of unsafe migration from a perspective that is rooted in human rights, rather than an unrealistic desire to stop all movement at its source. Such a perspective will be critical to ensuring migration with dignity.

To assist States and other in this endeavour, the GMG, in an initiative led by OHCHR, is currently finalising a set of *principles and guidelines on human rights protection of migrants and vulnerable situations.*

We hope they will be embraced, and brought forward, by this process.

Thank you.