

Mpho Parks Tau

**Migration in Africa and in the World –
Challenges and Perspectives**

21 November 2018

Dear Mayors, Colleagues and Friends,

Allow me to start by thanking you all for being here today, discussing what is indeed an important issue. Contrary to what one might think, migration has always shaped and transformed our world. Migration has been part of the equation in the evolution of all the civilizations we have known, and one might hope that it will shape the ones to come.

Dear colleagues,

I am not naïve about the challenges that population flows represent. I am not naïve about the responsibility that we need to undertake as local and regional governments. Migration needs to be embraced, but it also need to be managed, it needs to be orderly, and it needs to be tackled with the humanitarian principles and values of all the peoples at heart.

The globalization trend has allowed ideas, capitals, and commodities to move without restrictions throughout the world and, yet, we are seeing how human mobility is often not included in these flows. We are witnessing a world where barriers are being created for people, for their needs, and for their rights.

Dear friends, dear colleagues

Let us face it. These obstructions do not and will never stop migratory flows from occurring. People will continue seeking new opportunities, will continue seeking safety, and will continue to seek for a better life for themselves and for their children.

This will only increase the chances of ill-intended smugglers to profit from these rightful expectations and dreams, and at the same time a narrative of fears of migration is being developed everywhere.

Local and regional governments are key to change the narrative on the phenomenon of migration. We understand migration as a status, not as nature. The shift to the current narrative that local

governments can push- is that migrants are neighbours that live in our city, that work in our city and that use the same public services as any other citizen. In this sense, we do not believe that migration is, in itself, a negative phenomenon per se, but rather one that needs to be managed in a way that harnesses its full potential and enhances our communities.

It is our duty, also, to showcase how migrants can contribute to the development of our cities and neighborhoods. It is further our duty to demonstrate how migrants are vectors of local economic development, often filling the gaps of our economies but we must also stress, however, that this is not the only aspect in which migrants contribute to our economies, since they also bring their knowledges, their know-how, and their innovation. The role of the local fabric and administration is to support newcomers and enable them to contribute to the local development.

Indeed, local and regional authorities have a crucial role in supporting migrants' inclusion and removing barriers to their contribution to the local fabric. The

access to basic services is the starting point, but a strong coordination should be woven between all spheres of administration, in particular the national level, and the stakeholders at local, national and international level.

Migrants are numbers at national and international debates but they are neighbours in our streets and in our communities.

While national and regional policies need to be developed, local governments' roles and visions need to be part of the discussions.

As World Organization of United Cities and Local Governments, we have considered migration one of our strategic priorities. We have eagerly participated in the discussions towards the Global Compact on Migration, within the limited space provided to our constituency. We will continue trying to open space as we head towards its adoption here in a few weeks and most importantly towards its implementation.

Colleagues, we cannot be an afterthought in matters that are so close to our governance and we

must ensure that our constituency is represented in both the implementation and the follow-up of the Global Compact. Local and regional governments are not simply spheres that react to migration flows and implement measures adopted by other spheres of government

Global solutions require global frameworks that consider us partners and not simply implementers of measures bestowed upon us by national or supranational entities. Migration governance needs to build on the local sphere, and take into account our experiences and knowledge.

We are already contributing to the implementation of some of the measures that appear in the Global Compact.

We offer you an organized constituency that is ready to contribute. We are calling for acknowledgment as partners for development, and for our role in managing migration to be recognized.

It is our hope that the efforts that our constituency has made to get organized and to ensure a balanced

representation will be taken into account in future instruments.

We are ready to contribute with a new narrative and actions at the local and international levels.

Count on us

Thank you,