

Remarks at signing of Memorandum of Understanding with UN-Habitat

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7 November 2017, Beirut, Lebanon

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Just two weeks ago, we hosted the second Vienna Migration Conference discussing a new approach to partnerships.

It is my immense pleasure today to walk the talk and consolidate a partnership that has been many years in the making.

Less than a decade ago, the nation state had hegemony over global and migration-related policy agendas. Top-down approaches predominated over any local-level engagement and cities were mostly seen as agents for implementation of nation strategies.

In a visionary move, and mindful of the potential impact increasing globalisation, urbanisation, and decentralisation would have on the landscape of migration, ICMPD and UN-Habitat joined up to devise a way to bring the role of cities to the fore in the field of migration. UCLG was then co-opted as a natural partner.

After much planning, deliberation, consultation the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration concept came into existence.

Today the landscape is starkly different than it was then. Migration has been acknowledged for its multi-faceted dimension, requiring still the key involvement of national governments but also, to achieve long-term success, that of key players in its stake.

In this regard, cities today are recognised not only as first respondents to migratory flows, but also as agents of innovation, growth and development. The unrefuted fact is that by mid-century – not long from now – two-third of the world's population will live in urban areas. This is a reality to be reckoned with.

The New Urban Agenda passed in Quito in 2016 signified a pivotal moment. Cities are now seen as recognised stakeholders helping drive the global agenda for development and sustainable growth forward.

But the devil is in the details, and with implementation begins the hard work. This is why ICMPD is proud to consolidate its partnership with UN-Habitat at this moment in time, when the history of the Urban Agenda implementation is in the making.

By strengthening our partnership, joining forces, and alongside with key allies such as UCLG, ICMPD and UN-Habitat can make the whole greater than the sum of its parts. Together we can breathe life into the global urban migration and development agenda, ultimately helping to improve the lives of all city residents across the globe.