



Citizens, Immigrants, Refugees, Tourists, Travellers: The global compact for migration and a better world

Honourable Chris Alexander

Former Minister of Citizenship and Immigration

January 18, 2019

9:00am – 4:30pm

Summary

It is simply not tenable to advocate global trade and investment — where aid, capital, goods and services flow to where they are most needed, as justified by expected returns — without arguing for an improved global regime to manage growing volumes of travel by human beings as we all choose to study, vacation, explore, do business, volunteer or improve our lives by visiting different parts of the world. In fact, the failure of the UN to date to devise an effective set of standards for migration in all its forms must rank as one of that institution's greatest failures of vision from 1945 until very recently. The Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, which enshrines so many principles championed by Canada throughout its history, is an attempt to rectify this historic oversight, as was the Global Compact on Refugees put forward only a few years ago. Progress on these issues is one of humanity's greatest modern tests: if we cannot agree on and implement basic rules that allow people to move voluntarily for economic, educational and humanitarian reasons — to escape persecution and to seek opportunity — we will be sowing the seeds of economic failure and undercutting the potential for global cooperation.

In fact, one can argue that our failure to address these issues properly since 1989 — when global trade and investment were literally exploding — set the stage for the current waves of populism, xenophobia and intolerance that are still washing over most parts of the world. Social media, the 2008-09 financial crisis, failed invasion of Iraq and weak, cowardly and ineffective political leadership have only exacerbated these challenges. Migration needs to be safe, orderly and regular, precisely because the opposite scenario leads to deep disenchantment and often to extremism. Refugees must be welcomed by those countries best equipped to offer them a better life precisely because our duty to help the most vulnerable on this planet of ours has never been more starkly stated — nor more often ignored by populists, isolationists and demagogues of all stripes.

Canada's reforms to its asylum, citizenship, immigration, refugee, study and visitor visa programmes, have arguably sought to achieve all this and more, starting in the late 1950s. We have been trailblazers in opening our doors to global talent and to the most vulnerable, using objective measures of education, skill and humanitarian need at every turn. But today our own system stands at a crossroads. Will we sustain and perpetuate this proud record of accomplishment? Or will we lapse back into mismanagement or populist reaction in some particularly Canadian form?

On January 18th, join Honourable Chris Alexander to discuss these many very important questions.





Outline

Morning Session I (9:30am to 11:00 am)

Economic Migration: Global Imperatives and Current Realities

Morning Session II (11:00am to 12:00 pm)

Refugees, Asylum Seekers, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons: Syria's Catastrophic Toll

Lunch (12:00pm-1:30pm)

Afternoon Session I (1:30pm to 3:00pm)

The Uses & Abuses of Migration: Powering Economies, Educating Generations, Shattering Democracies, Building Walls & Barriers

Afternoon Session II (3:00pm to 4:30 pm)

The Global Compacts * the Way Forward for Canada & the World

Required Readings

Important resources to familiarize yourself with the topic:

“Charter of the United Nations and Statute of the International Court of Justice”. *United Nations*.

<http://www.un.org/en/charter-united-nations/>

“The 17 Goals”. *The Global Goals for Sustainable Development*. <https://www.globalgoals.org>

“The 1951 Refugee Convention”. *The United Nations High Commission for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/1951-refugee-convention.html>

“Universal Declaration of Human Rights”. *United Nations*. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

“The Global Compact on Refugees: Final Draft”. *The United Nations High Commission for Refugees*. <https://www.unhcr.org/events/conferences/5b3295167/official-version-final-draft-global-compact-refugees.html>

“Global Compact for Migration”. *The United Nations High Commission for Refugees*. <https://refugeesmigrants.un.org/migration-compact>

“OECD High Level Policy Forum on Migration 2017”. *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)*. <http://www.oecd.org/migration-forum/>

Additional Resources

Lists of suggested books:

de Léon, Concepción. 2018. “Making Sense of the Syrian Civil War”. *New York Times*, April 12.

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/12/books/syrian-civil-war.html>

Shaheen, Kareem. 2018. “12 Books about Syria to Help you Learn about the Ongoing Conflict”. *BookRiot*, April

18. <https://bookriot.com/2018/04/18/books-about-syria/>

Other important sources of information:

Chaire Raoul-Dandurand en Études Stratégiques et Diplomatiques at UQAM – specifically, their work on borders, walls and violence: <https://dandurand.uqam.ca/>

Desloges, Chantal, Cathryn Sawicki, Lynn Fournier-Ruggles. 2018. *Canadian Immigration and Refugee Law: A Practitioner's Handbook*. Toronto: Emond Publishing.

For a sample chapter, see: <https://emond.ca/downloads/cirl2-10.pdf>

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