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Statement
by
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Ambassador,
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to the United Nations

High-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of
refugees and migrants

United Nations

New York, 19 September 2016

Mr. President,

At the outset, I wish to express our wholehearted appreciation to you Mr. President, H.E. Mr. Peter Thomson, and to the President of the 70th session of the General Assembly H.E. Mr. Mogens Lykketoft for convening this important high-level Plenary Meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants, as per resolution A/70/539, which symbolizes the collective effort by the international community to secure commitments for assistance and to strengthen closer cooperation and more responsibility-sharing.

Mr. President,

Refugees, migrants and movement of people are not a new phenomenon. They have become an integral part of human history. Today's global trends of refugees and migrants have grown negative, and are day-by-day subject to discrimination, xenophobia, frustrated, and are often victims of emotional or psychological trauma. Responses to large movements of refugees and migrants have been little since we seem to be reluctant to address them, partly because of the diverse political interests.

I believe that the more we leave them to endure the sufferings and challenges, the more we bear the negative impact of the problems, as we can see the heart-breaking images in the media footage of the exodus of refugees and the rejection to receive them by States.

Every year we observe the International Migrants Day on 18 December, which indicates that the issues have become international. It is recognized that collective efforts are necessary, which involve Member States and all government and non-governmental partners.

Mr. President,

While we are pondering about the current outflow of refugees and migrants, we should look at the root causes of forced displacement of their countries of origins, including the countries in conflicts. Or else we will fail to address the problems permanently. In this context, political commitments should be at the forefront followed by the implementation of planned and well managed migration policies.

My delegation advocates the way forward as outlined in the Outcome Document to be adopted by Heads of States Government and High Representatives and in particular the inter-governmental negotiations which will begin in 2017. This would lay the good foundation to review today's comments. We have to ensure that we do not wind up this meeting with just commitments without the path laid down to realize our goals.

In this sense, my delegation is confident that the international cooperation is the only way forward. The outcome document or New York Declaration for refugees and migrants that we will adopt, here, today, would serve as a catalyst of our collective commitments translated into actions on the lines of basic principles of international refugee law, human rights law, humanitarian law and responsibility-sharing measures.

Mr. President,

Three decades ago, due to civil war, Cambodia encountered the outflow of refugees and in July 1979 the then UNSG convened an international Conference in Geneva on refugees and displaced persons in South East Asia, and the successful decision of the 1979 conference

averted the immediate crisis in what amounted to a 3-way agreement between the countries of origin; the countries of 1st asylum; and the countries of resettlement; while the ASEAN countries promised to uphold its commitment by establishing regional centers. We take this opportunity to thank the United Nations, the Member States and relevant organizations for assisting and resettling Cambodian refugees and their voluntary return to the country on the lines of an integration process. At the emerging trends of refugees and migrants, we can understand the sufferings and the refugees' needs for resettlement at their will.

Refugees and migrants do not always create problems in the countries they have found their sanctuary. They contribute to the development of economic and social impetus in the countries living in by contributing mostly to the labour work force.

My delegation notes with interest that Member States have come together to address the burning issues of refugees in a wide scale. We look forward to the implementation of the proposed comprehensive response framework, which would for solid basis to establish a more coordinated approach, more equitably address the enduring refugee crisis as well as future large-scale movements of refugees.

In a nutshell, refugees and migration issues should be taken care of through systematic expanded settlement schemes such as educational skills, ability skills, and capacity building opportunities, ob motility, family reunion and other pathways of integration to the society.

Mr. President,

For its part, the Royal Government of Cambodia is committed to strengthening global governance of migration. We therefore warmly welcome the agreement to bring the International Organization for Migration, (IOM) the global lead organization on migration, closer to the UN as a related organization. We look forward to the implementation of this agreement which will assist migrants, help member States to address migration issues more comprehensively and holistically and promote better coherence between migration and related policy domains.

Cambodia also requests the IOM to provide technical and secretariat support for the negotiations to develop the Global Compact for Safe, regular and Orderly Migration and the inter-governmental conference to adopt it in 2018. This includes appointing the IOM Director General as the Secretary General for the international conference in 2018.

Mr. President,

I wish to conclude by expressing our hope that refugees and migrants would receive better attention regardless of their causes for fleeing or of their origins, since they stand to suffer. This will definitely fall in line with our 2030 development agenda of which no one is left behind, including refugees and migrants.

Thank you