

**Statement by H.E. the President
of the Arab Republic of Egypt
The United Nations General Assembly High Level Plenary
Meeting
Addressing the large movements of refugees and migrants
New York, 19 September 2016**

H.E. the Secretary General of the United Nations,

Ladies and gentlemen heads of States and Governments and heads of delegations,

Allow me at the outset to express my gratitude to the Secretary General of the United Nations for holding this meeting and to commend the remarkable effort in preparing for the important outcomes that will result from today's meeting in relation to addressing the issue of the large and unprecedented flows of migration and asylum seeking as well as the relevant challenges posed on our societies in this regard.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am keen to highlight the national efforts of Egypt to maximize the benefits of migration and combating the smuggling of migrants, as the Government of Egypt has set the improving of the relevant legislative frameworks at the top of the priorities of its national strategy to punish those charged with the relevant crimes and providing redress and reparations for the victims. The law on combating trafficking in persons was enacted in 2010 and the law on combating illegal migration is being currently finalized.

In addition, Egypt has enhanced its efforts to raise awareness of the risks associated with the illegal migration of young people, and has taken steps to provide rehabilitation services for young people seeking to

migrate and addressing the challenges that they face. These steps come along with the efforts exerted by the law enforcement officials and armed forces in securing the land and sea borders, preventing any attempt to smuggle migrants and arresting the criminal groups in order to subject them to the applicable due process.

We strongly believe in the importance of collective work and cooperation in addressing the root causes of this crisis; to this effect we are consistently keen to actively engage in the relevant international and regional fora at the Arab, African and European levels as well as within the framework of the relevant international organizations such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), where we constantly reiterate the vitality of the developmental dimension, the need to depart from borders-closure policy and the essential need to respect the human rights of migrants and ensuring their protection in accordance with the relevant international obligations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Emanating from its constant commitment towards the sense of responsibility; Egypt, since the emergence of the current situation, has shouldered the burden of hosting huge numbers of refugees and migrants from different nationalities, amounting to approximately five million registered and unregistered refugees. We strive to provide them with the means necessary for an adequate standard of living without isolating them in camps or shelters. In spite of the substantial pressures on the State's resources, many of those refugees enjoy a treatment equal to Egyptian citizens in matters of education, health, housing and benefiting from the subsidies to the food products.

I am certain that we can all agree that prevention and combating of illegal migration should be at the helm of our international priorities, and that we can agree also that we would never succeed in putting an end to

the flows of illegal migration without addressing its main root causes and opening more channels for legal migration, including through developing new forms and patterns for it, in addition to reaching political solutions for the crises witnessed by the countries of our region; and not through security solutions and closure of borders in clear contravention of the 1951 Refugees Convention and international human rights law.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good and sound governance of migration ensures that the benefits are shared among the countries of origin, transit and destination, as it contributes to responding to the needs of the labor market and in stimulating development, availing investment opportunities and opening new markets. Nevertheless, we follow with growing concern the increasing alarming manifestations of xenophobia and racial discrimination against refugees and migrants in several places around the world. This pattern is developing into negative and violent practices either through policies of confiscation of property by some Governments, or at the public level through targeting of refugees and migrant children and minors by extremist groups as well as the increasing societal rejection for receiving refugees and integrating them into the host communities as well as failure to provide them with the basic care and services.

Mr. Secretary General,

We sincerely appreciate your efforts to mobilize the current international momentum in addressing issues of migration and asylum-seeking.

Egypt welcomes the current efforts aimed at the elaboration and endorsement of two international instruments on refugees and migration, and invites more efforts seeking to enhance joint work and cooperation, encourage dialogue among States on issues of migration, development and burden and responsibility sharing and developing a unified vision and

strong stance in relation to providing an adequate standard of living for the refugees and migrants and respecting their rights and human dignity as well as addressing the key reasons that drive individuals to migrate or seek asylum in a manner that render them vulnerable to networks of organize crime. In this connection, time has come to coordinate international efforts especially as I can notice the genuine will to benefit from the current momentum and to further build on it.

In conclusion, I reiterate Egypt's commitment to support the efforts aimed at addressing the issues of migration and asylum seeking, and I invite you all to enhance your cooperation in supporting economic development as well as arriving at political solutions to the conflicts in the region; so as people would not have to be displaced off their homes searching for safety or in pursuit of their inalienable right to life.

I thank you.

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