

**Statement of H.E. Mr. Raimonds Vējonis, President of Latvia,
at the High-Level Plenary meeting of the General Assembly
on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants**

New York, 19 September, 2016

Mr. President,

I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere thanks to the Secretary General for convening this meeting.

I welcome the agreement reached on the “The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants”.

Mr. President,

The global migration and displacement crisis has reached unprecedented levels and continues to grow. The scale of the problem is of the highest humanitarian concern. Addressing this phenomenon, as it manifests worldwide, is an enormous task.

Political will and resources will be required from all – therefore shared global responsibility must be regarded as the underlying principle of our commitments today.

Our immediate attention must be focused on reinforcing our efforts to protect refugees, to support those hosting them and to develop safe and sustainable reception capacities close to their home countries. Latvia is working with other European Union member states to develop and implement a common EU policy on resettlement and humanitarian admission.

As Latvia participates in the EU schemes of relocation and resettlement, we are always mindful that countries cannot address migration challenges on their own.

These are global challenges that call for a global response. Latvia has and will continue to support efforts to strengthen the United Nations refugee response system.

One recent example is Latvia’s contribution to the assistance fund for the Syrian Regional Response Plan of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the World Food Programme.

It is our duty to ensure legal entry options for people who are in need of international protection. At the same time, states need adequate means to fight the abuse of existing systems and mechanisms. Furthermore, international border management cooperation as an important element of security of States is necessary.

Regular, safe and orderly migration can only be achieved through a comprehensive, coherent and long term policy framework that addresses the “drivers” behind migration but also ensures the right of each country to determine whom to admit. A humane and effective return and readmission policy is integral and essential for a functional, comprehensive and sustainable migration policy.

Mr. President,

The commitments undertaken today address mainly the consequences of migration flows from the Middle East and North Africa. However we must not forget the root causes and we must look further for long term solutions. 2030 Agenda adopted a year ago is a great tool at our disposal to create conditions for balanced, sustainable and inclusive development and contribute to resolution and prevention of conflicts.

Implementation of the 2030 Agenda is therefore crucial for tackling the root causes of large movements of migrants and refugees.

Latvia as a part of international community is contributing to the efforts in addressing the root causes of destabilisation, displacement and irregular migration by promoting economic and equal opportunities, security and development.

Mr. President,

Let me conclude by reiterating our commitment to work together with UN member states and other stakeholders to strengthen the governance of international migration. We are also certain that we must take this opportunity to create a more responsible, predictable system in order to respond effectively to large movements of refugees and migrants.

Thank you.