



**Global Migration Group (GMG) multi-stakeholder meeting to prepare for the High-Level Plenary Meeting on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants
25 April 2016, UNHQ CR-7, 10:00 – 13:00 hrs.**

Opening by H.E. Karel J.G. van Oosterom, Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the United Nations

Ms. Puri, thank you for your remarks.

Your Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

[Interaction with audience]

The Kingdom of the Netherlands is honored to co-chair, together with the Kingdom of Thailand, this first preparatory meeting for the High-Level Plenary on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants to be held on 19 September 2016. Thank you very much to the Global Group on Migration and especially DESA, IOM and UNHCR for organizing this first of a series important and, what promises to be, very informative meetings. I encourage all present in the room, representatives of Members States, international organizations and civil society, to actively engage in the discussion that we are about to have.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Understanding the challenge that we face when it comes to large movements of refugees and migrants is the aim of today's meeting. Many knowledgeable panellists stand ready to assist us in this, so I will keep my opening remarks short. I would like to briefly touch upon three elements that, in our view, should be addressed in the run-up to and during the High-Level Plenary. They are root causes, vulnerable persons and partnerships. Hopefully these elements will also provide some food for the discussion today.

1. Root causes of migration

Let me begin with root causes.

[Reference to Netherlands UN youth representative Jilt van Schayik and his bicycle tour from Amsterdam to Capetown]

There are many forces driving migration, varying from conflict and human rights violations to social and economic disparity and climate change. We will hear more about this in the first panel. It is important to tackle these root causes of migration on a serious scale. Investing in education and decent job opportunities for youth in the developing world is imperative in this regard. For indeed, an ever expanding young population without a job or even prospect to one, is likely to move on in search for better opportunities.



Addressing root causes also means assisting developing countries in hosting large refugee communities. The Kingdom of the Netherlands is strongly committed to this. We are, for example, leading the development of the so-called EU Regional Development and Protection Programme for refugees and host communities in the Horn of Africa. Together with the governments of Sudan, Ethiopia, Kenya, Uganda and Somalia, but also civil society and the private sector, we invest in strengthening self-reliance, as well as improving education and livelihood opportunities for both refugees and their host communities.

2. Vulnerable persons

Then the second important element: vulnerable persons. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognizes forced displacement as one of the key factors that threatens to reverse development progress made in recent decades. We should recognize that persons on the move are extra vulnerable. And within this group women and girls, LGBTI and handicapped persons are even more vulnerable and require our special attention, because they are in a particularly challenging situation. Let us in this regard be guided by our pledge in the 2030 Agenda: no one will be left behind.

3. Partnerships

Then, finally, partnerships. One of the main outcomes of the High-Level Plenary should be a well-managed and well-governed approach to the different forms of human mobility and displacement with shared responsibilities of countries of origin, transit and destination. We need safe, regular and orderly migration, as is also mentioned in the 2030 Agenda. But let us be clear: no country can achieve this on its own. We need to work together and we need partnerships: between governments, but also with civil society, academia and the private sector. That is also one of the reasons why the EU-Africa Summit was held in Valletta, Malta in November 2015. As a follow-up to this Summit, minister Koenders, in his capacity as EU president, last week established partnerships in the field of migration between the EU and the governments of Mali, Ghana and Ivory Coast. Through these partnerships the EU and Mali, Ghana and Ivory Coast agreed to team up to address the irregular and often perilous migration from Western Africa to Europe. As such, the partnerships are for the benefit of migrants, refugees and their host communities and for both African countries and EU member states. We will now together start working out these partnerships. The good practices that we will establish by doing so, could be used to come to a balanced approach to large movements of refugees and migrants on the global level.



4. Conclusion

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude by underscoring the importance of an effective UN response to large movements of refugees and migrants. Achieving this is the main challenge for the High-Level Plenary in September. From our point of view it requires addressing the three elements I mentioned before, but there can be many more. But, before we further dive into the solutions, let us start at the beginning.

I look forward to the contributions of the experts in the panels and a fruitful, and also interactive discussion.

Thank you very much.