

UNITED NATIONS



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THE DEPUTY SECRETARY-GENERAL

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**REMARKS AT CLOSING SESSION OF HIGH-LEVEL
PLENARY MEETING ON ADDRESSING LARGE MOVEMENTS
OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

New York, 19 September 2016

**Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

This has been an historic day.

On behalf of the Secretary-General, I congratulate Member States for adopting by consensus the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants. This shows that despite differing perspectives we can unite around common principles and around core commitments to refugees and migrants.

Large movements of refugees and migrants present some of the most challenging issues of our time. Individually, many Member States have demonstrated positive approaches to refugees and migrants. They have saved the lives of migrants at sea. They have treated migrants humanely. They have extended protection to refugees.

This is to be commended. However, no one State can deal with these transnational issues by acting alone.

We must work together, more than ever before. The situation today requires urgent attention and urgent action.

We have heard moving accounts this morning which brought to this room the stark reality of being a refugee or a migrant; the suffering in times of war, the unimaginable sexual violence and exploitation, the experience of alienation and discrimination in a new land. But they also told us about the rebuilding of their lives, their skills and capacities being used, and how the global community needs to act.

During both the Plenary and Round Tables, States have emphasised the centrality of human rights for migrants and refugees and reaffirmed their international obligations. They have committed to tackle the discrimination and gender-based violence that women and girls face everywhere

Many Member States have highlighted the negative consequences of irregular migration. They have called for greater cooperation to address the despicable human trafficking and smuggling of migrants and refugees.

Also, States have recognized the strain on countries that host large numbers of refugees. They have agreed to implement a comprehensive response to large refugee movements, not least in protracted crisis situations.

Today several Member States have shared plans to expand financial assistance, taking into account both humanitarian and development aspects. New financial mechanisms have been announced to increase support to host countries and host communities. We have heard concrete examples of the private sector creating jobs for refugees, and how Member States have supported such efforts.

It has been encouraging to hear that additional countries have joined in the efforts to provide resettlement space or alternative pathways for the admission of refugees.

We must also rally behind the call in the Declaration to ensure that all migrant and refugee girls and boys have access to education within a few months of their arrival. It was widely recognised that we must increase financial support for the education of refugee children and youth.

Development programmes are crucial and a key priority. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development recognized the contribution which migration makes to economic progress. We must harness that positive energy. To do so requires improved data on migration patterns and impacts, as many speakers have emphasised.

We also require a clear-headed and informed policy debate, one that avoids stigmatising refugees or migrants. The Secretary-General's launch this morning of a global campaign to combat xenophobia, "Together – Respect, Safety and Dignity for All", is receiving broad support and affirmation. We look forward to working with Member States and partners on this campaign.

Many Member States have today declared their intention to incorporate refugees and migrants in national development planning. This will foster more coherent planning, and break down the silos between humanitarian assistance and development work.

At the same time, we must ensure that commitments for Official Development Assistance are being met. Creating jobs and investing in youth are critical for making migration a choice, not a necessity.

In the area of peace and security, it is with great hope and anticipation that we have heard in this hall a strong call for prevention and resolution of armed conflicts. Violent conflicts are often the source of mass displacement. Acting early and with foresight must be a guiding principle for our work.

The shocking images we see, the human stories we hear, touch all of us around the world. We must look not only to Governments but also to others for action. Civil society and the private sector have shown engagement and innovative approaches when faced with the challenges of refugee and migrant movements.

We acknowledge the many steps and tasks on the road ahead, for example: agreeing on how to govern migration effectively; learning how to successfully integrate refugees and migrants; and how to increase cooperation to assist migrants in vulnerable situations.

Given the urgency of all these challenges, implementation of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants must begin now, at home and internationally.

Member States have set critical deadlines. By 2018 we aim to adopt a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. We also plan to achieve a more equitable sharing of the responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees by adopting a global compact on refugees in 2018.

The UN system will mobilize for a comprehensive follow-up process. We have taken an important step today by bringing the International Organization for Migration (IOM) into the UN system as a related organisation. By this, we recognise the unique and valuable contribution to the work of the UN on migration. This makes the UN system stronger as we rise to meet our new challenges and to seize opportunities.

The New York Declaration calls for ongoing follow-up of our commitments. It would be helpful to take stock a year from now to ensure that we are on track for meeting our objectives by 2018.

As one of our young refugee speakers reminded us this morning: Refugees are already taking actions; now is the time for the international community to act.

**Mr President,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Delegates,**

It will take determined and collective efforts to address large movements of refugees and migrants in the world.

We need to prevent and speedily resolve political crises. We need to respond to humanitarian crises. We need to engage in informed policy debate. We need to protect the human rights of all. We need to address root causes and ensure that no one is left behind. And we need to counter polarizing forces which aim to instill fear and divide us into Us and Them.

Some of the refugees and migrants who joined us today suffered terrible ordeals. They have demonstrated courage, resilience and offered a measure of hope.

We must respond by carrying out the New York Declaration in that same spirit.

Together, we can shape a new future, a future where migrants and refugees, host nations and host communities can live together in harmony, well-being and mutual respect.

Thank you.