

PGA70

REMARKS AT OPENING SESSION OF HIGH-LEVEL PLENARY MEETING TO ADDRESS LARGE  
MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS

New York, 19 September 2016

Distinguished heads of State and government,  
President Thomson, Secretary General Ban-ki Moon,  
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

As we meet, millions of people across our world are on  
the move.

Far too many are fleeing indiscriminate attacks, conflict  
and violence, while others are driven by persecution or  
lack of opportunity.

It is a challenge- the scale of which we have never seen  
before.

The desperation and suffering of people in flight- tugs  
at our collective conscience, and compels us all to act  
compassionately to forge a global response to what is  
clearly a global challenge.

Regrettably, some countries are disproportionately  
carrying the weight of this shared responsibility.

And despite the generosity of some, we have not been  
able to fill the persistent humanitarian funding gap.

We **must** fill that gap. That is why we are here today.

2016 has been a transformative year in redefining and focusing international cooperation on one of the most critical challenges of our time.

I congratulate the facilitators and all Member States on their efforts during the 70<sup>th</sup> session leading to the New York Declaration to be adopted later today.

The Declaration reflects the collective commitment of the international community:

- to protect the human rights of all people regardless of their migration status;
- to strengthen support to countries most affected by the crisis;
- to increase both the volume of and access to humanitarian assistance;
- to recognise the positive contribution of migrants;  
**and**
- to enhance international cooperation on migration.

I call on you to ensure that these important commitments are fulfilled without delay.

I also call on all partners – civil society, international financial institutions, and the private sector – to support the implementation of commitments, and strengthen coherence of our efforts.

I warmly welcome the Secretary-General's new campaign to counter xenophobia and intolerance.

In the face of a changing world, it is vital that we do not give in to fear, but that we strive to maintain our principles and our common humanity.

The lives of so many depend on it.