

***Remarks by Ambassador Samantha Power, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations, at a UN High-Level Event on Strengthening Cooperation on Migration and Refugee Movements, September 30, 2015***

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Secretary-General, and thank everybody here for coming to this important event. It's a privilege to have the chance to express the commitment of President Obama to meet the global refugee and migration crisis.

The United States has a strong tradition of welcoming the “huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” Many have fled unspeakable horrors and persecution. All have learned firsthand the generous spirit that greets them here in this country. The “lost boy” from southern Sudan...The young man or woman born an ethnic Rohingya in Myanmar...And now, increasingly, the Syrian families fleeing persecution. It's very important to us to stress that the presence of these people who flee their homelands makes our country more diverse, our culture richer, and our national character stronger.

The images of desperate families fleeing indiscriminate violence and young children rescued – or not rescued – at sea after days without food are devastating and remind us that those with the least power need the most protection.

The United States has provided \$4.5 billion in humanitarian aid just to those affected by the conflict in Syria and more than \$478 million for displaced Iraqis. We're by far the world's largest donor of humanitarian assistance, and the President has just announced that we will accept 85,000 refugees this coming year from around the world, and 100,000 the following year. But let us be clear, whatever we are doing is demonstrably not enough; we have not yet figured out how to mobilize sufficiently foundations, the private sector, and individuals. The United States has now just launched a website, [aidrefugees.gov](http://aidrefugees.gov), and we're going to try to channel the generous spirit of those who see those images and want to help but don't know quite what to do, again, to the appropriate partner organizations.

We also need new countries that have traditionally not been safe havens for those fleeing refugees – those that might be further afield – to do their share. And all of us who are already contributing need to do more. Above all, we need political solutions to conflicts that are just not ending. And that applies, of course, to the Syrian conflict, where 12 million people have been displaced, and needs to be priority number one.

I just want to close by quoting Pope Francis, who urged us to “avoid a common temptation,” which he described was, “to discard whatever proves troublesome.” He seemed to be alluding, I think, to domestic politics, which have not really come up here overtly today. And one cannot underestimate the challenge of managing this issue. But while it is extremely challenging, it also cannot be avoided. And I again come back to the Pope who said, “we must not be taken aback by their numbers, but rather view them as persons, seeing their faces and listening to their stories, trying to respond as best we can to their situation.” For him, it was the golden rule. For all of us, it must be the same: what would we do, what would we wish if we were in that position. Do unto others as you would have done unto you. Politics are tough, but again, imagine yourself as a parent making the tough decision of what to do for your kids in impossible situations. Thank you.