

**Statement by H.E. Yun Byung- Se
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea
High-level plenary meeting on addressing large movements of
refugees and migrants
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Mr. President,

Last year, at the high-level meeting on refugees and migration, I cited the remarks of Antonio Guterres, former UN High Commissioner for Refugees, that the refugee issue is not a mere crisis of numbers but a crisis of responsibility and values. Yet we still cannot afford to breathe a sigh of relief. In fact, the sense of crisis has deepened. The footage of the five-year old Omran Daqneesh in Syria, bloodied and covered in dust, was a stark call to reality, reminding us of the tragic death of Aylan Kurdi last year.

The issue of refugees and migrants is not something new. However, what alarms us is the unprecedented magnitude of their movements and complexity behind their causes. The number of refugees has reached its highest since World War II. At the same time, forced displacement is inextricably linked to various push factors including conflicts, violence, terrorism, and

crushing poverty. Moreover, prolonged conflicts have further connected refugees and migrants, as those who flee for safety may as well become migrants journeying for a better life.

The twin crises of refugees and migrants are a multifaceted issue in which peace and security, development and human rights are intertwined. It therefore requires a comprehensive and holistic approach by the international community as agreed at the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit this May held at the initiative of Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.

To deal with this unprecedented challenge of large movements of refugees and migrants, it is crucial that we coordinate immediate and longer term efforts in a systematic way with the UN at the center.

In the short-term, we should strengthen protection and humanitarian assistance to those in need, regardless of their status. During this process, the principles of non-refoulement, fair legal processes, and the protection of human rights must be ensured. In this regard, we welcome the New York Declaration adopted today as an outcome of this meeting.

The Republic of Korea, the first in Asia to enact the Refugee Act, has continued to improve its refugee status determination process and facilitated better treatment for asylum-seekers. Last year, the Korean Government also launched a resettlement pilot project to actively join in the international community's burden sharing efforts.

To resolve the refugee crisis in a sustainable manner in the longer term, development cooperation should come hand in hand with humanitarian assistance. As refugee crises continue on, there is a growing need to provide capacity building to help refugees to stand on their own feet again. The most vulnerable group, particularly women and children, deserve more dedicated attention.

In addition, my government has expanded financial assistance for refugees tenfold over the past five years. We are also linking humanitarian assistance and development through the provision of education, health and vocational training to refugees. Through the "Better Life for Girls" initiative put forth by President Park Geun-hye at the UN Sustainable Development Summit last September, the Republic of Korea is particularly focusing on women empowerment.

Mr. Chairman,

Along with the high-level meeting on Syrian refugees and the World Humanitarian Summit in February and May respectively, I believe that today's high-level meeting marks the third main milestone in our search for a sustainable solution to the refugee and migrant crises.

I sincerely hope that today's meeting will effectively garner the political will necessary to tackle the most pressing challenge we face together as humanity. Thank you. /end/