

Canada

Good afternoon, your Excellencies, honourable ministers, distinguished guests.

In adopting the New York Declaration today, Canada recognizes the need to develop more “Huamaine”, dignified, and gender-sensitive responses to large movements of refugees and migrants.

But collectively, we have much work to do to deliver on our commitment to “leave no one behind.”

It is UNacceptable that more than 50,000 individuals have died trying to cross international borders over the past two decades.

For those who survive these journeys, life is often an uphill battle. While they may physically arrive in countries of destination, they often remain on the outside.

- Detention.
- Physical, mental and gender-based violence.
- Stress and trauma.
- Inability to attend school or work legally.
- Health complications.

These are just some of the challenges that refugees and migrants experience on a daily basis.

As we know, women and unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable.

Women and girls face unique risks in transit, being forced into:

- Sexual slavery
- Forced labor ; OR
- Early marriage

We must do more to protect those who risk their lives to seek safety.

To do its part, Canada wants to do things differently.

First, we are targeting the root causes of these problems.

For example, in Central America, Canada is working to keep children safe and connected to their communities by preventing irregular migration. We are doing this through:

- Stronger child protection services and programs to prevent violence
- Job opportunities for at-risk youth

And as part of Canada's efforts, we also want to ensure that young people, especially girls whose voices are too often ignored, are actually part of the decision-making process

Second, we contribute to the protection of the human rights of migrants.

In Haiti, Canada is working with the International Organization for Migration to prevent human trafficking of women and children and to better protect them, especially in border areas.

We are doing this by:

- Strengthening the government's ability to better support women and children migrants, by improving reception centres to more effectively respond to their needs
- By supporting a total of 16 awareness campaigns, listening to women and young people to understand their perspectives and priorities,
- And by ensuring that those who return have essential services so that they start to rebuild their own lives

Third, we are working to protect the rights of migrant workers.

In Southeast Asia, we are collaborating with governments, the private sector, and civil society to reduce exploitation so that workers have:

- decent wages,
- improved working conditions, and
- access to social protection and employment.

Across all of its work, Canada will now focus on the rights of women and girls everywhere. This is not just because they are more vulnerable but because we believe they are also powerful agents of change and that they **MUST** be part of any solution.

I want to conclude my remarks by highlighting that human dignity must be at the center of our approach.

Whether individuals are on the move trying to find a better life for themselves and their families, or fleeing persecution and conflict, migrants deserve to be treated with **dignity** and **respect**.

When given the chance, migrants are positive and meaningful contributors to their host societies.

Thank you.