

Statement by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania

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at the UN General Assembly High-Level Plenary Meeting on Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants

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Mr. President, Your Excellences, ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important meeting. I also thank Permanent Representatives of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and Ireland for their tremendous work facilitating the preparation of New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants that we adopted today. It is important that this Declaration provides a pragmatic and realistic basis to our collective action in tackling this pressing phenomenon.

Mr. President,

We face the biggest refugee and migration crisis ever known in our modern history. No country or region is able to respond to it on its own. Only through collective responsibility sharing we can provide adequate assistance to people in immediate need. Our response must be global, holistic and comprehensive.

Saving lives must be a priority. Decisive actions are needed to destroy smuggling networks, to break their business models in order to put an end to their criminal activities.

Lithuania's border guards are actively engaged in the EU FRONTEX joint operations as well as the Rapid Intervention Team deployed on the Greek islands. Lithuanian police officers are working together with their European colleagues in managing migration flows. We have supplied humanitarian aid via EU civil protection mechanism.

Mr. President,

Despite our effort and good will, this phenomenon will not be eradicated without responsibly addressing the root causes of displacement. Conflict prevention, promotion of good governance, the rule of law and accountability, respect for human rights, job creation and economic opportunities must be at the core of all action.

In particular, there is a great urgency to address armed conflicts and insecurity that send people fleeing their homes. The international community should redouble its efforts on conflict prevention and mediation alongside peacekeeping. Lithuania remains committed to continue its contribution to this effect.

Mr. President,

Refugees and migrants don't need our charity. When given right opportunities they will make a positive contribution to host nations. More investment on social cohesion and full integration of migrants can have higher societal and economic benefits for development. We need to foster this

drive with initiatives especially focused on women and youth, in order to offer them the opportunities they need to fulfil their potential.

In conclusion, Mr. President, let me express the hope that 2016 will stand out as a year when we stepped up with responsibility sharing, not responsibility shifting. We hope that this High-level meeting will offer historic opportunities to improve the lives of millions of people. We must not fail them.

Furthermore, we are looking forward to our commitment to develop „global compacts“ by 2018 as an another important milestone in developing a clear framework for global response and enhanced international cooperation.

Thank you.