

**Informal thematic session on Human rights of all migrants, social inclusion, cohesion, and all forms of discrimination, including racism, xenophobia, and intolerance (8-9 May 2017) for the UN Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, statement by Finland**

We are at a critical moment when the UN embarks on negotiations on an instrument on migration. The New York Declaration is an important milestone. It outlines a commitment to protect the human rights of all migrants and it includes over 100 references to human rights that need to be implemented. This is a critical moment when tens of thousands of people are leaving their homes daily to migrate to other countries. A participatory, open and inclusive process will be a key for the success of the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

While we highlight the importance of ensuring respect for and protection of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, we must pay particular attention to addressing the differentiated and specific needs and rights of migrants in vulnerable situation, in particular women, children, who are unaccompanied or separated from their families, persons with disabilities, persons who face discrimination on grounds such as their sexual and gender identity, victims of violence, victims of trafficking. Migrants have the same universal and indivisible human rights as everybody else and ensuring their human dignity should be at the center of our endeavors.

Promoting gender equality is a long-standing priority for Finland. Women and children are disproportionately affected when caught in large, uncontrolled migratory movements. Too many are subjected to violence and crimes such as human trafficking. It's important that all actions are gender and age responsive, ensuring that the rights of women and children are respected in all settings.

Promoting equality and non-discrimination requires mainstreaming a gender perspective into all our actions; including identifying and addressing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against migrant women and girls, combatting all forms of violence, including trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation and sexual and gender-based violence against women, men, girls and boys as well as meeting their gender-specific psychosocial, health, and other needs. Finland remains committed to the promotion, protection and fulfilment of all human rights of women including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This matters in the context of migration, because without access to reproductive health services, women may face a risk of life-threatening complications. Without access to family planning and safe contraceptives, women and youth are exposed to unwanted pregnancies in perilous conditions, HIV and other infections, as well as vulnerable to sexual violence and exploitation. We reaffirm our commitment to respect, protect and fulfil the right of every individual to have full control over, and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence.

Also UN Women has made a number of recommendations for addressing women's human rights in the global compact for safe orderly and regular migration. We hope that these recommendations receive due consideration in the preparatory and negotiation process.

Addressing present migration flows is not enough. We must urgently move beyond managing the flows and deal with root-causes of uncontrolled population movements. Among other things, this implies increasing our efforts to prevent and address above all hunger, poverty and violations of rights and insecurity that drive persons to the move. Sustainable solutions can only be found if such efforts are inclusive and particularly ensure women's participation and agency in the spirit of the Security Council resolution 1325 and the numerous related resolutions. We need sustainable peace, economic growth, inclusive development and prospects for people in their home countries. A core issue is the promotion of human rights, rule of law and good governance. Human rights are a central element in our endeavors to ensure peace and promote sustainable and inclusive development. Finland therefore wishes to underline the important work of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the implementation of Agenda 2030.

In the spirit of "leave no one behind", Finland highlights particularly the inclusion of persons with disabilities into development and humanitarian action. A recent step is "The Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action", launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. Finland spearheaded the initiative and encourages all stakeholders to endorse it. Migrants with disabilities have an equal right to assistance and protection. Specific attention should be paid to the situation of women and girls with disabilities.

Promotion of human rights must be central in managing migration related challenges. A central challenge is ensuring that children on the move have access to preventive and protection services. Child migrants are particularly vulnerable when in the hands of smugglers, and can become victims of human trafficking, including for sexual, exploitation, as well as other forms of exploitation. We must ensure that the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration in all actions concerning children, including unaccompanied children and those separated from their families, in accordance with the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Optional Protocols. This entails/ (We should strive to) providing migrant children with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities, including access to basic services such as healthcare, sanitation and education, as well as targeted support to children with specific needs, such as children with disabilities. This child rights approach also requires us to promote non-discriminatory access to child protection to protect migrant children from all forms of violence and exploitation (such as child labour, child early and forced marriage) and from child trafficking. The widespread phenomenon of missing migrant children, especially unaccompanied children, requires our immediate attention. We need to ensure that our processes are child rights based, putting the best interest of the child at the center and also ensuring the child's right to be heard in all matters concerning her or himself.

In this regard, we underline that children should not be subject to arbitrary arrest or detention based solely on their migration status and that the deprivation of the liberty of migrant children should be a measure of last resort, for the shortest possible period of time, under conditions that respect the human rights of each child and in a manner that takes into account, as a primary consideration, the best interests of the child.

Finland fully supports the UN lead initiatives and leadership to change perceptions and attitudes towards refugees and migrants, including the "Together" campaign , which promotes respect, safety and dignity for everyone forced to flee their homes in search of a better life. It is important to racism, xenophobia and intolerance. There is a strong commitment among the UN member

states to do this. We also appreciate greatly the dedication and expertise of agencies, like UNHCR and IOM, in the current crises.