

NOTE TO CORRESPONDENTS:
Message to the Opening Plenary of the UN Summit on Refugees & Migrants
by Mr. Peter D. Sutherland, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for
Migration
New York, 19 September 2016

We are here today to take action together on one of the great issues of the 21st century: international migration.

It is an issue fraught with peril, but also full of promise. Migrants and refugees are some of the world's bravest people, but also among the most vulnerable.

Their success or failure is our success or failure. Our ability to protect refugees and to integrate migrants is a barometer of the health of our institutions, starting with the rule of law.

A year ago, UN member states committed themselves to facilitate safe, orderly, regular and responsible migration.

If we have foresight, if we implement smart policies, migration will save lives and strengthen our communities.

If, instead, we turn against each other, if we pursue selfish policies, then we will empower the proponents of fear in our societies.

Unfortunately, in crisis we have often passed on our responsibility for refugees, not to those best able to give them refuge, but to those closest to the crisis. Proximity, however, does not define responsibility.

We have failed to unite around principles which should govern us. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost.

Let today be the turning point.

I will soon publish a report on how we can manage migration better, by working together.

I will suggest policies and initiatives that will:

- □ □ □ □ respond to movements caused by crisis, and protect vulnerable migrants;
- □ □ □ □ give people the chance to migrate in an orderly, safe and regular way;
- □ □ □ □ reduce the human and financial costs of migration;
- □ □ □ □ and strengthen the UN's capacity to manage this phenomenon.

We have today taken an important step in this direction by welcoming and incorporating the IOM into the UN family. This means an important strengthening of the UN's work on migration.

By the time we reach an international conference in 2018, I trust that we will have a Global Compact on Migration that is not just ink on paper, but a new set of agreements on how states can work together to manage migration.

For that to happen, Member States should start working now. I am already in touch with States and other stakeholders willing to act. I encourage you to join them. Determined actors can now be pioneers on these crucial issues.

