

OHCHR Intervention : summary panel of the first informal thematic session

Delivered by Craig Mokhiber

We have heard a strong rejection over these last two days of the failed approaches of securitization, bigotry, exclusion, detention and walls. We have heard a call to plot a course instead that is

- Human rights-based; recognising that all migrants are rights-holders, regardless of their status
- Rooted in international human rights, refugee, labour and humanitarian law
- UN-centred and embracing a whole-of-system approach, drawing on the expertise of the agencies with protection mandates, as well as that of the independent human rights mechanisms
- Inclusive of the voice and agency of migrants themselves

And one that ensures the integration of human rights throughout all tracks that the various phases of the compact might take.

We have heard a strong focus on changing the narrative.

The Durban Agenda calls on all of us to combat racism, xenophobia and related intolerance and the 2030 agenda calls for a shift into an approach based on evidence and on our values.

These are important reminders for our work in combatting the racist and xenophobic response often greeting migrants in today's world.

A world in which bigotry is becoming "regularized."

And, excellencies, respecting free speech does not mean tolerating hate speech.

In the face of hatred, silence is complicity.

As we have heard today, the migration narrative is all too often grounded in myth, fear, and prejudice, ignorant of facts, data and evidence, and deeply offensive to our shared values of human rights and equality.

When mass media stereotypes and stigmatizes migrants and minorities>>> they should be called out.

When opportunistic politicians fan the flames of discrimination>>>>> they should be called out.

When hate groups celebrate as their twisted fantasies are embraced in the mainstream>>>> it is time for them to be called out.

We know the ugly drumbeat all too well>>> migrants are criminals, terrorists, job stealers, social parasites, a fifth column.

Left without answer, these distortions metastasise. Words become policy, law, action, violence.

We must answer them to end them.

Practically, we should pool global capacities to make data and evidence on the positive reality of migrant contributions more widely available. We should share the stories of migrants with empathy and respect.

We should establish firewalls around justice mechanisms, community policing strategies, and accessible measures of migrant protection, for those targeted.

We should vet national laws and policies to reform those that tolerate or actually reinforce negative misperceptions.

And, in every case, in every forum, in every medium, we must actively answer prejudice, racism, islamophobia, xenophobia, and all related forms of intolerance with evidence, and with the values of human rights enshrined in our Charter.

Thank you.