

Global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration

Second Informal Thematic Session: *Addressing drivers of migration, including adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters and human-made crisis, through protection and assistance, sustainable development, poverty eradication, conflict prevention and resolution*

22-23 May 2017

ECOSOC Chamber UN HQ

1. Panel 2: *Human-made crises as drivers of migration*

UNHCR oral intervention

- I would like to thank the co-chairs, the SRSG, the moderator and the panellists for the opportunity to make an intervention during this panel and particularly for the issues brief which clearly breaks down the many drivers that lead people to move.
- As recognized by many of the speakers today, conflict and generalized violence are the main human made drivers. They are at the heart of the refugee crisis we face today where over 20 million persons have fled their countries in search of safety elsewhere.
- It is a reality that prolonged conflict, and the accompanying demolition of vital infrastructure turns sudden movements, into ones of sustained flight and prolonged displacement. And while the international refugee protection regime addresses the needs of refugees in exile, it is no substitute for effective means of preventing conflict and sustaining peace.
- Ending conflict and generalized violence is an essentially political process. Yet there is a role for a wide range of stakeholders in in efforts to prevent conflict, avoid further displacement and sustain peace.
- As we look to the global compact on migration and the global compact on refugees we need to draw on good practice in this regard. Here I would like to mention just a few, echoing the views of others today, all of which are based on comprehensive approaches:
 - We need to meet the needs of persons where they are initially displaced so as to lessen the incentive for irregular and dangerous onward movement;
 - In doing so, we need to ensure those interventions are designed in a manner that also addresses the needs of the communities that host them;
 - We must invest in capacities of persons who are displaced (education, livelihoods) so that they can contribute to the rebuilding of their communities when return in safety and dignity is permitted;
 - We need to engage them (and particularly woman and youth) in peace building efforts; and
 - Finally, work on our compacts should look concretely at means to sustain investment in countries emerging from war and conflict. This is vital to support the rebuilding of institutions and infra-

structures to provide a real in-country future for their youth, who otherwise may be desperate to leave.

2. Panel 3: *Adverse effects of climate change and natural disasters as drivers of migration*

UNHCR written intervention

- UNHCR very much welcomes the discussion on the impact of climate change and disasters on human mobility. While much has been done over the past years to address this issue, much more is required given the magnitude of the challenge before us.
- As recognized by Member States in the New York Declaration, environmental degradation, disasters and climate change can, in combination with other factors, be a driver of migration and a root cause of displacement. Our response to these movements must be rights-based and must meet the immediate and longer-term needs of those on the move.
- The majority of climate-induced displacement is internal, with those affected remaining within their national borders. Their rights are recognized under international human rights law, the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement and regional conventions, such as the AU Kampala Convention. It is incumbent upon host States to ensure that these rights are respected and on the international community to support States in doing so.
- Many individuals, however, will be forced to move across borders to find safety and relief. Some of them may be refugees. Those fleeing conflict and famine or drought in Somalia and South Sudan, for example, are refugees and entitled to protection on that basis.
- The majority of those displaced, however, will not be considered refugees, and will be confronted once they cross a border with obstacles to overcome. They will need documentation, permission to enter and remain, protection from premature return, and much more, but with no international framework in place to provide it. UNHCR fully supports inclusion of the Nansen Protection Agenda, endorsed by 109 states, and its follow up mechanism, the Platform for Disaster Displacement, which has developed a coherent protection framework to meet the needs of these individuals. UNHCR considers Nansen Protection Agenda to be relevant in the follow up to the NY Declaration and within both global compacts.
- Our efforts in this area, however, must be equally focused on prevention and adaptation. UNHCR supports, and has contributed to, efforts to strengthen disaster risk reduction policies and to promote climate change adaptation at the national level, including through voluntary migration. Implementation of international instruments, such as the UNFCCC Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework on Disaster Risk Reduction, are essential in this regard.
- Finally, there is a critical need for reliable data. Without reliable data on the causes and consequences of climate change and disaster-related movements, we will not be in a position to fashion the necessary responses. Similarly, we must base our policies on concrete and successful practices on the ground, to ensure our responses are meaningful and practical.

- The global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration affords an important opportunity to address these issues. Given the linkages with refugee movements and displacement, we should also consider how the global compact on refugees can serve as a vehicle for our collective response in this important area.