



International Organization for Migration (IOM)

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The UN Migration Agency

**STATEMENT BY IOM AT THE UNHCR EXCOM  
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COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIPS DEPARTMENT**

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It is an honour for the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to take the floor in this meeting in a critically important year for our partnerships with UNHCR, with our Member States and – most importantly – with the people we serve.

In his Opening Statement, the High Commissioner has spoken eloquently and movingly about the refugee crises the world is confronted with in virtually all continents of the world. And in so doing he has highlighted one of the greatest paradoxes of our times.

We live in a world characterized by unprecedented human mobility – which should be a reason for rejoicing or, at the very least cause for satisfaction.

But our world is, sadly, also a world of forced displacement, stemming from an unprecedented number of humanitarian crises; a world in which millions of refugees are seeking safety and protection on all continents. They are the most vulnerable of all the displaced, yet they often remain the ones most in need of protection.

I very much agree therefore, that this is a moment that calls for what the High Commissioner has referred to as “deep reflection”. He was referring, of course, to UNHCR and its need to transform itself to meet the challenges it is confronted with, but I believe that the admonition holds equally true for IOM and, arguably, for the manner in which our two organizations should work together.

Our relationship goes back a long way, right back to 1951 when we were created to work together to find solutions for the very large numbers of refugees and displaced persons whose lives had been torn apart by the Second World War. We now have the opportunity to renew and strengthen that relationship; not only because of the magnitude of the need, not only because of its urgency, but also because the international community has given our two organizations two important, kindred assignments.

Our partnership now extends to achieving the dual aims of the New York Declaration, which are to secure and strengthen the refugee regime through a Global Compact on Refugees and to develop a Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration.

Neither the foundations nor the processes for the two compacts are identical, but it is helpful to remember that both exercises have their origin in the New York Declaration of 19 September 2016.

Indeed, the Declaration is a reminder of the shared humanity of refugees and migrants, through its affirmation of its resolve “to fully protect the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status”, through its determination “to save lives”, and through its unequivocal

“condemnation of acts and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia against refugees and migrants”.

We are now at the midway point in developing the two compacts and fulfilling the promises they can bring to both constituencies. We will continue to work closely with SRSO Arbour, the Ambassadors of Mexico and Switzerland co-facilitating the GCM process and UNHCR to ensure that there is both coherence of purpose and congruence of operation between the two compacts.

The issue of mixed asylum/migration situations flagged by the High Commissioner is, indeed, very much a demonstration – if one were needed – of the necessity for our two organizations to address such areas of converging concern and responsibility through communication and cooperation.

While doing so, we will, of course, continue to rely on the goodwill and collaboration of our multiple partners.

We have listened with keen interest to the panelists from host countries, donor countries, members of civil society and the private sector, as they have outlined the great strides that have been made in bringing the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) to life.

We applaud the willingness, creativity and the leadership of the CRRF roll out countries in committing themselves to this effort. They are playing an indispensable role in helping the international community forge a new path and way of working. IOM stands ready to partner in this.

IOM whole-heartedly endorses the pillars and objectives of this Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, as set forth in Annex 1, in its entirety.

IOM also supports strongly UNHCR’s efforts towards the development of complementary pathways and non-traditional solutions, such as humanitarian visas and private sponsorship.

In conclusion, both IOM and UNHCR have grown and evolved since our early common roots, but we have never lost sight of our close relationship and complementarity.

By working closely together to fulfill the promise of the New York Declaration, I believe we can not only make a difference to the lives of refugees and migrants but also restore public confidence in the dynamism, diversity and richness that refugees and migrants bring to our societies.