

**Remarks of the Director of DIPS, Elizabeth Tan**  
**At 96th meeting of the Standing Committee, 16–18 June 2026**  
**Agenda item 2 (c) – Route-based approach: Strengthening protection**  
**and solutions in the context of mixed and onward movements**

**Excellencies,  
Distinguished delegates,  
Colleagues,**

The route-based approach offers a practical framework for more coherent, coordinated and protection-focused responses to mixed and onward movements across countries of origin, asylum, transit and destination.

It reflects the cumulative and transnational nature of protection risks along these routes and requires three decisive shifts:

- From a narrow focus on borders to addressing the full journey of refugees and migrants;
- From fragmented to comprehensive responses across six mutually reinforcing pillars for action;
- From transactional arrangements to strategic cooperation, recognising that no State can address these challenges alone.

The objectives of the route-based approach are equally clear:

- To save lives and reduce harm;
- To support States to strengthen asylum systems and better respond to mixed movements; and
- To expand alternatives to dangerous journeys.

Across routes, refugees and migrants continue to face severe and overlapping protection risks, including death and disappearance at sea, trafficking, exploitation, violence, detention, family separation, and barriers to asylum procedures and basic services. Too often, these risks drive onward movement. They can and must be reduced through earlier identification, targeted referrals, and more protection-sensitive responses at key points along the route.

We are already seeing tangible progress across regions.

In February, UNHCR launched Routes Monitor, which consolidates data on key mixed movement routes worldwide to strengthen analysis of trends, protection risks, available services and opportunities for solutions. A dashboard is also mapping protection and assistance services along the West Africa Atlantic route, helping to identify gaps and strengthen referrals.

In Bulgaria, Ethiopia, Mauritania, Morocco and Niger, Multi-Purpose Hubs are strengthening protection and assistance through integrated services and referrals.

Where refugees and stateless persons have documentation and access to education, health care, livelihoods and national services, they are better able to make informed decisions about their futures. In Chad, efforts to integrate refugees into the national identification system and expand access to tertiary education show how route-based responses can advance inclusion and self-reliance.

These advances are supported by stronger partnerships. UNHCR works closely with IOM and a wide range of actors, including UN entities, national human rights institutions, civil society, academia and refugee-led organisations, each bringing complementary expertise.

Yet progress remains uneven.

In many contexts, asylum systems continue to face significant strain. People remain exposed to serious protection risks along routes, and safe and regular pathways are still far too limited.

More sustained and structured cooperation among States across the full route is therefore essential: to align national policies, build a shared understanding of evolving dynamics, and convert commitments into coordinated action.

This also requires clearer roles and responsibilities, and stronger partnerships across humanitarian, development and other actors.

UNHCR will continue to work with States, IOM and other partners, including refugees and refugee-led organisations, to translate the route-based approach into practical action. But progress will depend on sustained commitment to protection across the full route, stronger asylum systems,

and greater investment in safe and regular pathways. Without that commitment, people will remain exposed to avoidable risks and dangerous journeys.

**Thank you.**