

High-level meeting on global responsibility sharing through pathway for admission of Syrian refugees

Talking points of the Director General, International Organization for Migration
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Panel discussion on the high-level plenary meeting of the General Assembly on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants (19 September 2016)

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1. Setting the scene: the Syrian resettlement landscape

- Express appreciation for the upswing of Syrian admissions. Inform that since 2012, over 60,000 Syrian refugees have resettled to some 25 countries across the globe.
- While the number of vulnerable persons resettled annually is steadily increasing, it is disproportionate to the increase in needs worldwide.
 - Global resettlement needs were over one million in 2015: that is a 50% increase over the past three years and a 22% increase from 2014.
 - Resettlement as a durable solution is limited. In fact, only 1 in 10 refugees among those in need of resettlement is admitted to a third country.
- **Developing countries host 80% of refugees:**
 - Currently, over 4.5 million Syrian refugees alone are in these five countries: Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt.
 - Turkey hosts 2.5 million refugees from Syria, more than any other country worldwide.
 - In Lebanon, around one in five people in the country is a refugee.
 - There are nearly 1.1 million Syrian refugees registered with UNHCR of whom half are women and half children.
 - In Jordan, there are over 635,000 Syrian refugees registered which amounts to 10 per cent of the overall population.

2. Key lesson for the 19 September Summit: Resettlement continues to be a vital tool of international protection.

- **Resettlement is a compelling instrument and symbol of international solidarity and responsibility sharing.**
 - It is sometimes lifesaving; always life changing.
- **Resettlement and other forms of admission are critical to ensuring protection and solutions for the most vulnerable.**

- The development of these avenues also helps to provide safe legal alternatives to perilous irregular secondary movements by land and sea, which are currently affecting several countries around the Mediterranean and further afield.
- **Alternative forms of admission outside the realm of traditional resettlement are important.** These alternative forms may include but are not limited to: humanitarian admission programmes, humanitarian visas, family reunification, private and community-based sponsorship, and academic scholarship.
- **Potential role of private sponsorship** -- noting that these programmes can create bonds between refugees, community-based organizations, and receiving communities, and can take place alongside or in hybrid arrangements with government resettlement programmes. Private sponsorship can also enable refugees to reunite with extended family members who may not otherwise qualify under family reunification criteria.
- **Support refugees in situ irrespective of which durable solution may become available to them. Most refugees subsist in a state of limbo, and are too often dependent on others to find solutions to their plight.** Recognize that countries of origin, host countries and the international community are all implicated in the causes of protracted refugee situations. We need to move away from emergency aid and begin thinking of a more long term approach, one which includes closer collaboration with host countries and local communities.
- **Broaden partnerships beyond traditional partners.**

3. Are there silver linings to the EU's dark migrant cloud?

- All or most of the EU Member States could emerge from the present situation as official refugee re-settlement countries with "**respectable**" quotas;
- **Strengthened, more formal EU-Turkish ties**, an issue that has been debated since 1964 (stopping short, of course, of entering into the EU membership debate which would not be appropriate.)
- The 28 EU Member States would finally achieve that elusive objective of a common, **comprehensive, long-term migration and asylum policy** -- one that would:
 - a. address root causes;
 - b. prepare them for migratory waves of the future; and,
 - c. enable the EU to establish a practical linkage between humanitarian concern, on the one hand, and the development/labor market aspect, on the other -- bundled together in a policy that would serve both Europe's and migrants' interests.