

**OUTCOME DOCUMENT FOR 19 SEPTEMBER 2016 HIGH-LEVEL MEETING TO ADDRESS LARGE MOVEMENTS OF REFUGEES AND MIGRANTS**

We, the Heads of State and Government and High Representatives, meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 19 September 2016 to address the question of large movements of refugees and migrants, have adopted the following Political Declaration.

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 Since earliest times, humanity has been on the move. Some people move in search of new economic opportunities and horizons. Others move to escape armed conflict, poverty, food insecurity, persecution, terrorism, or human rights violations and abuses. Still others do so in response to the adverse effects of climate change, natural disasters (some of which may be linked to climate change) or other environmental factors. Many move, indeed, for a combination of these reasons.
- 1.2 We have considered today how best the international community should respond to the growing global phenomenon of large movements of refugees and migrants.
- 1.3 We are witnessing in today's world an unprecedented level of human mobility. More people than ever before live in a country other than the one where they were born. Migrants are present in all countries in the world. Most of them move without incident. In 2015 their number surpassed 244 million, growing at a rate faster than the world's population. However, there are roughly 65 million forcibly displaced persons, including over 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum-seekers and over 40 million internally displaced persons.
- 1.4 In adopting a year ago the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we recognized clearly the positive contribution made by migrants for inclusive growth and sustainable development. Our world is a better place for that contribution. The benefits and opportunities of safe, orderly, and regular migration are substantial and are often underestimated. Forced displacement and irregular migration in large movements, on the other hand, often present complex challenges.
- 1.5 We reaffirm the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter. We reaffirm also the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and recall the core international human rights treaties. We reaffirm, and will fully protect, the human rights of all refugees and migrants, regardless of status; all are rights holders. Our response will demonstrate full respect for international law and international human rights law, and, where applicable, international refugee law and international humanitarian law.
- 1.6 Though their treatment is governed by separate legal frameworks, refugees and migrants have the same universal human rights and fundamental freedoms. They also face many common challenges and have similar vulnerabilities, including in the context of large movements. "Large movements" may be understood to reflect a number of considerations, including: the number of people arriving; the economic, social and geographical context; the capacity of a receiving State to respond; and the impact of a movement which is sudden or prolonged. The term does not, for example, cover regular flows of migrants from one country to another. "Large movements" may involve mixed flows of people, whether refugees or migrants, who move for different reasons but who may use similar routes.
- 1.7 Large movements of refugees and migrants have political, economic, social, developmental, humanitarian and human rights ramifications which cross all borders. These are global phenomena which call for global approaches and global solutions. No one State can manage such movements on its own. Neighbouring or transit countries, mostly developing countries, are disproportionately affected. Their capacities have been severely stretched in many cases, impacting on their own social and economic cohesion and development. In addition, protracted refugee crises are now commonplace, with long-term repercussions for those

involved and also for their host countries and communities. Greater international cooperation is needed to assist host countries and communities.

- 1.8 We declare our profound solidarity with, and support for, the millions of people in different parts of the world who, for reasons beyond their control, are forced to uproot themselves and their families from their homes.
- 1.9 Refugees and migrants in large movements often face a desperate ordeal. Many take great risks, embarking on perilous journeys which many may not survive. Some feel compelled to employ the services of criminal groups, including smugglers, and others may fall prey to such groups or become victims of trafficking. Even if they reach their destination, they face an uncertain reception and a precarious future.
- 1.10 We are determined to save lives. Our challenge is above all moral and humanitarian. Equally, we are determined to find long-term and sustainable solutions. We will combat with all the means at our disposal the abuses and exploitation suffered by countless refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations.
- 1.11 We acknowledge a shared responsibility to manage large movements of refugees and migrants in a humane, sensitive, compassionate and people-centred manner. We will do so through international cooperation, while recognizing that there are varying capacities and resources to respond to these movements. International cooperation, and in particular cooperation among countries of origin or nationality, transit and destination, has never been more important; “win-win” cooperation in this area has profound benefits for humanity. Refugees and migrants who are in large movements must have comprehensive policy support, assistance and protection consistent with States’ obligations under international law. We also recall our obligations to respect their human rights and fundamental freedoms fully, and we stress their need to live their lives in safety and dignity. We pledge our support to those affected today as well as to those who will be part of future large movements.
- 1.12 We are determined to address the root causes of large movements of refugees and migrants, including through increased efforts aimed at early prevention of crisis situations based on preventive diplomacy. We will address them also through the prevention and peaceful resolution of conflict, greater coordination of humanitarian, development and peacebuilding efforts, promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels, and protection of human rights. Equally, we will address movements caused by poverty, instability, marginalization and exclusion, and lack of development and economic opportunities, with particular reference to the most vulnerable populations. We will work with countries of origin to strengthen their capacities.
- 1.13 All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law. We recall that our obligations under international law prohibit discrimination of any kind on the basis of race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Yet in many parts of the world we are witnessing, with great concern, increasingly xenophobic and racist responses to refugees and migrants.
- 1.14 We strongly condemn acts and manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance against refugees and migrants, and the stereotypes often applied to them, including on the basis of religion or belief. Diversity enriches every society and contributes to social cohesion. Demonising refugees or migrants offends profoundly against the values of dignity and equality for every human being to which we have committed ourselves. Gathered today at the United Nations, the birthplace and custodian of these universal values, we deplore all manifestations of xenophobia, racial discrimination and intolerance. We will take a range of steps to counter such attitudes and behaviour, in particular hate crimes, hate speech and racial violence. We welcome the global campaign proposed by the Secretary General to counter xenophobia, and we will implement it in cooperation with the United Nations and all relevant stakeholders, in accordance with international law. This campaign will emphasize, inter alia, direct personal contact

between host communities and refugees and migrants and will highlight the positive contributions made by the latter as well as our common humanity.

- 1.15 We invite the private sector and civil society, including refugee and migrant organizations, to participate in multi-stakeholder alliances to support efforts to implement the commitments we are making today.
- 1.16 In the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we pledged that “no one will be left behind”. We declared that we wished to see the new goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. We said also that we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first. We reaffirm today our commitments which relate to the specific needs of migrants or refugees. The Agenda makes clear, inter alia, that we will “facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies”. The needs of refugees, internally displaced persons and migrants are explicitly recognized.
- 1.17 Implementation of all relevant provisions of the Agenda will enable the positive contribution which migrants are making to sustainable development to be reinforced. At the same time, it will address many of the root causes of forced displacement, helping to create more favourable conditions in countries of origin. Meeting today a year after our adoption of the 2030 Agenda, we are determined to realize the full potential of that Agenda for refugees and migrants.
- 1.18 We recall the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction and its recommendations concerning measures to mitigate risks associated with disasters. States who have signed and ratified the Paris Agreement on Climate Change welcome that agreement and are committed to its implementation. We reaffirm the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, including its provisions which are applicable to refugees and migrants.
- 1.19 We take note of the report from the Secretary-General, entitled “In Safety and Dignity: Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants”, which was published in May 2016 (pursuant to GA Decision A/70/L.34) in preparation for this High Level Meeting. While recognizing that these conferences either did not have an intergovernmentally agreed outcome or were regional in scope, we take note of the World Humanitarian Summit (May 2016), the High Level Meeting on Global Responsibility Sharing through Pathways for Admission of Syrian Refugees (March 2016), the London Conference on Supporting Syria and the Region (February 2016), and the Ministerial Pledging Conference on Somali Refugees (October 2015). While recognizing that these are regional in nature and apply only to those countries participating in them, we take note of regional initiatives such as the Bali Process, the EU-Horn of Africa Migration Route Initiative (the Khartoum Process), the Rabat Process, the Valletta Action Plan, the Brazil Declaration and Plan of Action, and the African Union-Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants.
- 1.20 We recognize the very large number of people who are displaced within national borders, and the potential for such persons to seek protection and assistance in other countries as refugees or migrants. We note the need for reflection on effective strategies to ensure adequate protection and assistance for internally displaced persons, and to prevent and reduce such displacement.

## 2. **Commitments**

We have endorsed today a set of commitments which apply to both refugees and migrants and also sets of commitments for refugees and migrants respectively. We do so taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities. We reaffirm our commitment to international law and emphasize that this Declaration and its Annexes are to be implemented in a manner that is consistent with the rights and obligations of States under international law. While some commitments are mainly applicable to one group, they may also be applicable to the other. Furthermore, while they are all framed in the context of the large movements we are considering today, many may be applicable also to regular migration. In addition, Annex I to this Declaration contains a

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework and outlines steps toward the achievement of a Global Compact on refugees in 2018, while Annex II sets out steps towards the achievement of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018.

### **Commitments which apply to both refugees and migrants**

- 2.1 Underlining the importance of a comprehensive approach to the issues involved, we will ensure a people-centred, sensitive, humane, dignified, gender-responsive and prompt reception for all persons arriving in our countries, and particularly those in large movements, whether refugees or migrants. We will also ensure full respect and protection for their human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- 2.2 We recognize, and will address in accordance with our obligations under international law, the special needs of all people in vulnerable situations who are travelling within large movements of refugees and migrants, including women at risk; children (especially those who are unaccompanied or separated from their families); members of ethnic and religious minorities; victims of violence; older persons; persons with disabilities; persons who are discriminated against on any basis; indigenous peoples; victims of human trafficking; and victims of exploitation and abuse in the context of migrant smuggling.
- 2.3 Recognizing that States have rights and responsibilities to manage and control their borders, we will implement border control procedures in conformity with applicable obligations under international law, including international human rights law and international refugee law. We will promote international cooperation on border control and management as an important element of security for States, including issues relating to battling transnational organised crime, terrorism and illicit trade. We will ensure that public officials and law enforcement officers who work in border areas are trained to uphold the human rights of all persons crossing, or seeking to cross, international borders. We will strengthen international border management cooperation, including in relation to training and the exchange of best practices. We will intensify support in this area and help to build capacity as appropriate. We reaffirm that, in line with the principle of non-refoulement, individuals must not be returned at borders. We acknowledge also that, while upholding these obligations and principles, States are entitled to take measures to prevent irregular border crossings.
- 2.4 We will make efforts to collect accurate information regarding large movements of refugees and migrants. We will also take measures to identify correctly their nationalities, as well as their reasons for movement. We will take measures to identify those who are seeking international protection as refugees.
- 2.5 We will continue to protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all persons in transit and after arrival. We stress the importance of the immediate needs of persons, who have been exposed to physical or psychological abuse while in transit, being addressed upon their arrival, without discrimination and without regard to legal or migratory status or means of transportation. For this purpose, we will consider appropriate support to strengthen, at their request, capacity-building for countries which receive large movements of refugees and migrants.
- 2.6 We are determined to address unsafe movements, with particular reference to irregular movements. We will do so without prejudice to the right to seek asylum. We will combat the exploitation, abuse and discrimination suffered by many refugees and migrants.
- 2.7 We express our profound concern at the large number of people who have lost their lives in transit. We commend the efforts already made to rescue people in distress at sea. We commit to intensifying international cooperation on the strengthening of search and rescue mechanisms. We will also work to improve the availability of accurate data on the whereabouts of people and vessels who are stranded at sea. And we will strengthen support for rescue efforts over land along dangerous or isolated routes. We will draw attention to the risks involved in the use of such routes in the first instance.

- 2.8 We recognize, and will take steps to address, the particular vulnerabilities of women and children during the journey from country of origin to country of arrival. This includes their potential exposure to discrimination and exploitation, as well as to sexual, physical and psychological abuse, violence, human trafficking and contemporary forms of slavery.
- 2.9 We encourage States to address the vulnerabilities to HIV and the specific healthcare needs experienced by migrant and mobile populations, as well as by refugees and crisis-affected populations, and to take steps to reduce stigma, discrimination and violence, as well as to review policies related to restrictions of entry based on HIV status with a view to eliminating such restrictions and the return of people on the basis of their HIV status, and to support their access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.
- 2.10 We will ensure that our responses to large movements of refugees and migrants mainstream a gender perspective, promote gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls, and fully respect and protect the human rights of women and girls. We will combat sexual and gender-based violence to the greatest extent possible. We will provide access to sexual and reproductive health-care services. We will tackle the multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination against refugee and migrant women and girls. And at the same time, recognizing the significant contribution and leadership of women in refugee and migrant communities, we will work to ensure their full, equal and meaningful participation in the development of local solutions and opportunities. We will take into consideration the different needs, vulnerabilities and capacities of women, girls, boys, and men.
- 2.11 We will protect the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all refugee and migrant children, regardless of their status, and giving primary consideration at all times to the best interests of the child. This will apply particularly to unaccompanied children and those separated from their families; we will refer their care to the relevant national child protection authorities and other relevant authorities. We will comply with our obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We will work to provide for basic health, education, and psychosocial development and for the registration of all births on our territories. We are determined to ensure that all children are in education within a few months of arrival, and we will prioritize budgetary provision to facilitate this, including support for host countries as required. We will strive to provide refugee and migrant children with a nurturing environment for the full realization of their rights and capabilities.
- 2.12 Reaffirming that all individuals who have crossed, or are seeking to cross, international borders are entitled to due process in the assessment of their legal status, entry and stay, we will consider reviewing policies that criminalize cross-border movements. We will also pursue alternatives to detention while these assessments are underway. Furthermore, recognizing that detention for the purposes of determining migration status is seldom, if ever, in the best interest of the child, we will use it only as a measure of last resort, in the least restrictive setting, for the shortest possible period of time, under conditions that respect their human rights and in a manner that takes into account, as a primary consideration, the best interest of the child, and we will work towards the ending of this practice.
- 2.13 Reaffirming the importance of the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the two relevant Protocols thereto, we encourage ratification of, accession to and implementation of relevant international instruments on preventing and combatting trafficking in persons and the smuggling of migrants.
- 2.14 We recognize that refugees and migrants in large movements are at greater risk of being trafficked and of being subjected to forced labour. We will, with full respect for our obligations under international law, vigorously combat human trafficking and migrant smuggling with a view to their elimination, including through targeted measures to identify victims of human trafficking or those at risk of trafficking. We will provide support for the victims of human trafficking. We will work to prevent human trafficking among those affected by displacement.

- 2.15 With a view to disrupting and eliminating the criminal networks involved, we will review our national legislation to ensure conformity with our obligations under international law on migrant smuggling, human trafficking and maritime safety. We will implement the United Nations Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking In Persons. We will establish or upgrade, as appropriate, national and regional anti-human trafficking policies. We note regional initiatives such as the African Union Horn of Africa Initiative on Human Trafficking and Smuggling of Migrants, the ASEAN Plan of Action Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, the EU Strategy toward the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings, and the Work Plans against Trafficking in Persons in the Western Hemisphere. We welcome reinforced technical cooperation, on a regional and bilateral basis, between countries of origin, transit and destination on the prevention of human trafficking and migrant smuggling and the prosecution of traffickers and smugglers.
- 2.16 We favour an approach to addressing drivers and root causes of large movements of refugees and migrants, including forced displacement and protracted crises which would inter alia reduce vulnerability, combat poverty, improve self-reliance and resilience, ensure a strengthened humanitarian-development nexus, and improve coordination with peacebuilding efforts. This will involve coordinated prioritized responses based on joint and impartial needs assessment and facilitating cooperation across institutional mandates.
- 2.17 We will take measures to provide, on the basis of bilateral, regional and international cooperation, humanitarian financing which is adequate, flexible, predictable and consistent to enable host countries and communities to respond both to the immediate humanitarian needs and to their longer-term development needs. There is a need to address gaps in humanitarian funding, considering additional resources as appropriate. We look forward to close cooperation in this regard among Member States, UN agencies and other actors and between the UN and international financial institutions such as the World Bank, where appropriate. We envisage innovative financing responses, risk financing for affected communities, and implementation of other efficiencies (reducing management costs, improving transparency, increasing use of national responders, expanding use of cash assistance, reducing duplication, increasing engagement with beneficiaries, diminishing earmarked funding, and harmonizing reporting) so as to ensure a more effective use of existing resources.
- 2.18 We commit to combatting xenophobia, racism and discrimination in our societies against refugees and migrants. We will take measures to improve their integration and inclusion, as appropriate, and with particular reference to access to education, healthcare, access to justice and language training. We recognize that these measures will reduce the risks of marginalization and radicalization. National policies relating to integration and inclusion will be developed, as appropriate, in conjunction with relevant civil society organizations (including faith-based organizations), the private sector, employers' and workers' organizations and other stakeholders. We also note the obligation on refugees and migrants to observe the laws and regulations of their host countries.
- 2.19 We recognize the importance of improved data collection, particularly by national authorities, and will enhance international cooperation to this end, including through capacity-building, financial support and technical assistance. Such data should be disaggregated by sex and age and include information on regular and irregular flows, the economic impacts of migration and refugee movements, human trafficking, the needs of refugees, migrants and host communities and other issues. We will do so consistent with our national legislation on data protection, if applicable, and our international obligations related to privacy, as applicable.

### 3. **Commitments for migrants**

- 3.1 We are committed to protecting the safety, dignity and human rights and fundamental freedoms of all migrants, regardless of their migratory status at all times. We will cooperate closely with each other to facilitate and ensure safe, orderly, and regular migration, including return and readmission, taking into account national legislation.

- 3.2 We commit to safeguarding the rights of, protecting the interests of, and assisting our migrant communities abroad, including through consular protection, assistance and cooperation, in accordance with relevant international law. We reaffirm that everyone has the right to leave any country, including his or her own, and to return to his or her country. We recall at the same time that each State has a sovereign right to determine who to admit to its territory, subject to that State's international obligations. We recall also that States must readmit their returning nationals and ensure that they are duly received without undue delay, following confirmation of their nationalities in accordance with national legislation. We will take measures to inform migrants about the various processes relating to their arrival and stay in countries of transit, destination and return.
- 3.3 We commit to addressing the drivers that create, or exacerbate, large movements. We will analyse and respond to the factors, including in countries of origin, which lead to, or contribute to, large movements. We will cooperate to create conditions that allow communities and individuals to live in peace and prosperity in their homelands. Migration should be a choice, not a necessity. We will take measures, inter alia, to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, whose objectives include eradicating extreme poverty and inequality; revitalizing the global partnership for sustainable development; promoting peaceful and inclusive societies based on international human rights and rule of law; creating conditions for balanced, sustainable and inclusive economic growth and employment; combatting environmental degradation; and ensuring effective responses to natural disasters and the adverse impacts of climate change.
- 3.4 Recognizing that lack of educational opportunities is often a push factor for migration, particularly of young people, we commit to strengthening capacities in countries of origin, including in educational institutions. We commit also to enhancing employment opportunities, particularly for young people, in countries of origin. We acknowledge also the impact of migration on human capital in countries of origin.
- 3.5 We will consider reviewing our migration policies with a view to examining their possible unintended negative consequences.
- 3.6 We also recognise that international migration is a multidimensional reality of major relevance for the development of countries of origin, transit and destination which requires coherent and comprehensive responses. Migrants can make positive and profound contributions to economic and social development in their host societies and to global wealth creation. They can help to respond to demographic trends, labour shortages and other challenges in host societies, and add fresh skills and dynamism to the latter's economies. We recognize the development benefits of migration to countries of origin, including through the involvement of diasporas in economic development and reconstruction. We will commit to reducing the costs of labour migration and promote ethical recruitment policies and practices between sending and receiving countries. We will promote faster, cheaper and safer transfer of migrant remittances in both source and recipient countries, including through a reduction of transaction costs, as well as the facilitation of interaction between diasporas and their countries of origin. We would like these contributions to be more widely recognized and, indeed, strengthened in the context of implementation of the 2030 Agenda.
- 3.7 We will ensure that all aspects of migration are integrated in global, regional and national sustainable development plans and in humanitarian, peacebuilding and human rights policies and programmes.
- 3.8 We call upon States that have not done so to consider ratifying, or acceding to, the 1990 Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. We call also on States that have not done so to consider acceding to relevant International Labour Organization conventions, as appropriate. We note, in addition, that migrants enjoy rights and protection under various provisions of international law.
- 3.9 We commit to strengthening global governance of migration. We therefore warmly support and welcome the agreement to bring the International Organization for Migration, an organization regarded by its Member

States as the global lead agency on migration, into a closer legal and working relationship with the United Nations as a related organization. We look forward to the implementation of this agreement which will assist and protect migrants more comprehensively, help States to address migration issues and promote better coherence between migration and related policy domains.

- 3.10 We will assist, impartially and on the basis of needs, migrants in countries which are experiencing conflicts or natural disasters, working, as applicable, in coordination with the relevant national authorities. While recognizing that not all States are participating in them, we note in this regard the “Migrants in Countries in Crisis” initiative and the Agenda for the Protection of Cross-Border Displaced Persons in the Context of Disasters and Climate Change resulting from the Nansen Initiative.
- 3.11 We take note of the work done by the Global Migration Group to develop principles and practical guidance on the protection of the human rights of migrants in vulnerable situations.
- 3.12 We will consider developing non-binding guiding principles and voluntary guidelines, consistent with international law, on the treatment of migrants in vulnerable situations (especially unaccompanied and separated children) who do not qualify for international protection as refugees and who may need assistance. These guiding principles and guidelines will be developed using a State-led process with the involvement of all relevant stakeholders and with input from the Special Representative of the Secretary General on International Migration, the International Organization for Migration, OHCHR, UNHCR and other relevant UN entities. These would complement national efforts to protect and assist migrants.
- 3.13 We welcome the willingness of some States to provide temporary protection against return to migrants who do not qualify for refugee status and who are unable to return home due to conditions in their countries.
- 3.14 We will build on existing bilateral, regional and global cooperation and partnership mechanisms, in accordance with international law, for facilitating migration in line with the 2030 Agenda. We will strengthen cooperation to this end among countries of origin, transit and destination (including through regional consultative processes), international organizations, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, regional economic organizations, and local government authorities, as well as with relevant private sector recruiters and employers, labour unions, civil society and migrant and diaspora groups. We recognize the particular needs of local authorities who are the first receivers of migrants.
- 3.15 We recognise the progress made on international migration and development issues within the United Nations system, including the first and second High-Level Dialogues on International Migration and Development. We will support enhanced global and regional dialogue and deepened collaboration on migration, particularly through exchanges of best practice and mutual learning and the development of national or regional initiatives. We note in this regard the valuable contribution of the Global Forum on Migration and Development and acknowledge the importance of multi-stakeholder dialogues on migration and development.
- 3.16 We affirm that children should not be criminalized or subject to punitive measures because of their or their parents’ migration status.
- 3.17 We will consider facilitating opportunities for safe, orderly, and regular migration, including, as appropriate, employment creation, labour mobility at all skills levels, circular migration, family reunification and education-related opportunities. We will pay particular attention to the application of minimum labour standards for migrant workers regardless of their status, as well as to recruitment and other migration-related costs, remittance flows, transfers of skills and knowledge and the creation of employment opportunities for young people.
- 3.18 We strongly encourage cooperation among countries of origin or nationality, countries of transit, countries of destination and other relevant countries in ensuring that migrants who do not have permission to stay in



the country of destination can return, in accordance with international obligations of all States, to their country of origin or nationality in a safe, orderly and dignified manner, preferably on a voluntary basis, taking into account national legislation in line with international law. We note that cooperation on return and readmission forms an important element of international cooperation on migration. Such cooperation would include ensuring proper identification and provision of relevant travel documents. Any type of return, whether voluntary or otherwise, must be consistent with our obligations under international human rights law and in compliance with the principle of non-refoulement. It should also respect the rules of international law and must in addition be conducted in keeping with the best interests of the child and with due process. While recognizing that these apply only to States that have entered into them, existing readmission agreements should be fully implemented. We support enhanced reception and reintegration assistance for those who are returned. Particular attention should be paid to the needs of migrants in vulnerable situations who return, such as children, older persons, persons with disabilities, and victims of trafficking.

- 3.19 We reaffirm our commitment to protect the human rights of migrant children, given their vulnerability, particularly unaccompanied migrant children, and to provide access to basic health, education and psychosocial services, ensuring that the best interests of the child is a primary consideration in all relevant policies.
- 3.20 We recognize the need to address the special situation and vulnerability of migrant women and girls by, inter alia, incorporating a gender perspective into migration policies and strengthening national laws, institutions and programmes to combat gender-based violence, including trafficking in persons and discrimination against women and girls.
- 3.21 While recognizing the contribution of civil society, including non-governmental organizations, to promoting the well-being of migrants and their integration into societies, especially at times of extreme vulnerable conditions, and the support of the international community to the efforts of such organizations, we encourage deeper interaction between Governments and civil society to find responses to the challenges and the opportunities posed by international migration.
- 3.22 We note that the Special Representative of the Secretary General on International Migration, Peter Sutherland, will be providing before the end of the year a report which will propose ways of strengthening international cooperation and the engagement of the United Nations on migration.
- 3.23 We commit to launch this year a process of intergovernmental negotiations leading to the adoption of a Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration in 2018 at an intergovernmental conference. We invite the President of the General Assembly to make arrangements for determination of the modalities, timeline and other practicalities relating to the negotiation process. Further details regarding this process are set out in Annex 2 to this Declaration.

#### 4. **Commitments for refugees**

- 4.1 Recognizing that armed conflict, persecution, violence and other reasons, including terrorism, are among the factors which give rise to large refugee movements, we will work to address the root causes of such crisis situations and to prevent or resolve conflict by peaceful means. We will work in every way possible for the peaceful settlement of disputes, the prevention of conflict and the achievement of the long-term political solutions required. Preventive diplomacy and early response to conflict on the part of States and the UN are critical. The promotion of human rights is also critical. In addition, we will also promote good governance, the rule of law, effective, accountable and inclusive institutions, and sustainable development at the international, regional, national and local levels. Recognizing that displacement could be reduced if international humanitarian law were respected by all parties to armed conflict, we renew our commitment to uphold humanitarian principles and international humanitarian law. We confirm also our respect for the rules which safeguard civilians in conflict.

- 4.2 We reaffirm the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol thereto as the foundation of the international refugee protection regime. We recognize the importance of their full and effective application by States parties and the values they embody. We note with satisfaction that 148 States are now parties to one or both instruments. We encourage States not parties to consider acceding to those instruments and States parties with reservations to give consideration to withdrawing them. We recognize also that a number of States not parties to the international refugee instruments have shown a generous approach to hosting refugees.
- 4.3 We reaffirm that international refugee law, international human rights law and international humanitarian law provide the legal framework to strengthen the protection of refugees. We will ensure, in this context, protection for all who need it. We note regional refugee instruments, such as the OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa and the Cartagena Declaration on Refugees.
- 4.4 We reaffirm respect for the institution of asylum and the right to seek asylum. We reaffirm also respect for, and adherence to, the fundamental principle of non-refoulement in accordance with international refugee law.
- 4.5 We underline the centrality of international cooperation to the refugee protection regime. We recognize the burdens that large movements of refugees place on national resources, especially in the case of developing countries. To address the needs of refugees and receiving States, we commit to a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting the world's refugees, while taking account of existing contributions and the differing capacities and resources among States.
- 4.6 We believe that a comprehensive refugee response should be developed and initiated by UNHCR in close coordination with relevant States, including host countries, and involving other relevant UN entities, for each situation involving large movements of refugees. This should involve a multi-stakeholder approach spanning national and local authorities, international organizations, international financial institutions, civil society partners (including faith-based organisations, diaspora organizations and academia), the private sector, the media and refugees themselves. A comprehensive framework of this kind is annexed to this Declaration.
- 4.7 We will ensure that refugee admission policies or arrangements are in line with our obligations under international law. We wish to see administrative barriers eased with a view to accelerating refugee admission procedures to the extent possible. We will, where appropriate, assist States to conduct early and effective registration and documentation of refugees. We will also promote access for children to child-appropriate procedures. At the same time, we recognize that refugees' ability to lodge asylum claims in the country of their choice may be regulated, subject to the safeguard that they will have access to, and enjoyment of, protection elsewhere.
- 4.8 We encourage the adoption of measures which would facilitate access to civil registration and documentation for refugees. We recognize in this regard the importance of early and effective registration and documentation, as a protection tool and to facilitate the provision of humanitarian assistance.
- 4.9 We recognize that statelessness can be a root cause of forced displacement; in turn, forced displacement can lead to statelessness. We take note of UNHCR's campaign to end statelessness within a decade and we encourage States to consider actions they could take to reduce the incidence of statelessness. We encourage those States who have not yet acceded to the two conventions for the prevention and reduction of statelessness to consider doing so.
- 4.10 We recognise that refugee camps should be the exception and, to the extent possible, a temporary measure in response to an emergency. We note that 60% of refugees worldwide are in urban settings and only a minority are in camps; we will ensure that the delivery of assistance to refugees and host communities is adapted to the relevant context. We underline that host States have the primary responsibility to ensure the

civilian and humanitarian character of refugee camps and settlements. We will work to ensure that this character is not compromised by the presence or activities of armed elements and to ensure that camps are not used for purposes that are incompatible with their civilian character. We will work to strengthen security in refugee camps and surrounding local communities, at the request and with the consent of the host country.

- 4.11 Welcoming the extraordinarily generous contribution made to date by countries which host large refugee populations, we will work to increase the support for these countries and we call for pledges made at relevant conferences to be disbursed promptly.
- 4.12 We commit to working towards solutions from the outset of a refugee situation. We will actively promote durable solutions, particularly in protracted refugee situations, with a focus on sustainable and timely return in safety and dignity. Such return encompasses repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. We encourage States and other relevant actors to provide support through, inter alia, the allocation of funds.
- 4.13 We reaffirm that voluntary repatriation should not necessarily be conditioned on the accomplishment of political solutions in the country of origin.
- 4.14 We intend to expand the number and range of legal pathways available for refugees to be admitted to, or resettled in, third countries. In addition to easing the plight of refugees, this has benefits for countries who host large refugee populations and for third countries who receive refugees.
- 4.15 We urge States who have not yet established resettlement programmes to consider doing so at the earliest opportunity; those who have already done so are encouraged to consider increases in the size of their programmes. It is our aim to provide resettlement places and other legal pathways for admission on a scale which would enable the annual resettlement needs identified by UNHCR to be met.
- 4.16 We will consider developing measures such as the expansion of existing humanitarian admission programmes; possible temporary evacuation programmes (including evacuation for medical reasons); flexible arrangements to assist family reunification; private sponsorship for individual refugees; and labour mobility opportunities for refugees (including through private-sector partnerships) and for education (e.g. scholarships and student visas).
- 4.17 We are committed to providing humanitarian assistance to refugees so as to ensure essential support in key life-saving sectors, e.g. healthcare, shelter, food, water and sanitation. We commit to supporting host countries and communities in this regard, including by using locally available knowledge and capacities. We will support community-based development programmes that benefit both refugees and host communities.
- 4.18 We are determined to provide quality primary and secondary education in safe learning environments for all refugee children, and to do so within a few months of the initial displacement. We commit to providing host countries with support in this regard. Access to quality education, including for host communities, gives fundamental protection to children and youth in displacement contexts, particularly in situations of conflict and crisis.
- 4.19 We will support early childhood education for refugee children. We will also promote tertiary education, skills training and vocational education. In conflict and crisis situations, higher education serves as a powerful driver for change, shelters and protects a critical group of young men and women by maintaining their hopes for the future, fosters inclusion and non-discrimination, and acts as a catalyst for the recovery and rebuilding of post-conflict countries.
- 4.20 We will work to ensure that the basic health needs of refugee communities are met, and that women and girls have access to essential healthcare services. We commit to providing host countries with support in this

regard. We will also develop national strategies for the protection of refugees within the framework of national social protection systems, as appropriate.

- 4.21 Welcoming the positive steps taken by individual States, we encourage host governments to consider opening their labour markets to refugees. We will work to strengthen host countries' and communities' resilience, assisting them, for example, with employment creation and income generation schemes. In this regard, we recognize the potential of young people and will work to create conditions for growth, employment and education which allow them to be the drivers of development.
- 4.22 To meet the challenge posed by large movements of refugees, close coordination will be required between a range of humanitarian and development actors. We commit to putting those most affected at the centre of planning and action. Host Governments and communities may need support from relevant UN agencies, local authorities, international financial institutions, regional development banks, bilateral donors, the private sector and civil society. We strongly encourage joined-up responses involving all such players which would strengthen the nexus between humanitarian and development actors, facilitate cooperation across institutional mandates and, by helping to build self-reliance and resilience, lay a basis for sustainable solutions. In addition to meeting direct humanitarian and development needs, we will work to support environmental, social and infrastructural rehabilitation in areas affected by large movements of refugees.
- 4.23 We note with concern a significant gap between the needs of refugees and the available resources. We encourage support from a broader range of donors and we will take measures to make humanitarian financing more flexible and predictable, with diminished earmarking and increased multi-year funding, in order to close this gap. UN agencies such as UNHCR and UNRWA and other relevant organizations require sufficient funding to be able to carry out their activities effectively and in a predictable manner. We welcome the increasing engagement of the World Bank and multilateral development banks and improvements in access to concessional development financing for affected communities. It is clear, furthermore, that private sector investment in support of refugee communities and host countries will be of critical importance over the coming years. Civil society is also a key partner in every region of the world in responding to the needs of refugees.
- 4.24 We note the high-level meeting on refugees which the United States, Canada, Ethiopia, Germany, Jordan, Mexico, Sweden and the Secretary General will host on 20 September 2016.

## 5. **Follow-up and review of our commitments**

- 5.1 We recognize that arrangements are needed to ensure systematic follow-up and review of the range of commitments we are making today. Accordingly, we request the Secretary General to ensure that the progress made by Member States and the UN in implementing the commitments made at today's High Level Meeting will be the subject of periodic assessments provided to the General Assembly with reference, as appropriate, to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- 5.2 In addition, a role in reviewing relevant aspects should be envisaged for the periodic High Level Dialogues on International Migration and Development and for the annual report of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to the General Assembly.
- 5.3 In recognition of the need for significant financial and programme support to host countries and communities affected by large movements of refugees and migrants, we request the Secretary General to report to the General Assembly during its 71<sup>st</sup> session on ways of achieving greater efficiency, operational effectiveness and system-wide coherence, as well as ways of strengthening the engagement of the United Nations with International Financial Institutions and the private sector, with a view to fully implementing the commitments outlined in this Declaration.