

20 December 2017

## Key messages

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- **Message 1:** Europe and Central Asia can play a leading role in welcoming, protecting, and supporting refugees and migrants at home and abroad.
  - It is possible for Europe and Central Asia to have a simple, cost-effective system that guarantees the rights of refugees and migrants and to optimize the benefits of diversity in society.
  - This includes engaging globally in efforts to find political solutions to conflicts that keep forcing people from their homes, while taking actions to protect, assist, and find solutions for refugees and migrants at home and abroad.
- **Message 2:** Learning from the refugee situation in Europe and the past years we can restore trust by building a common, better managed and orderly system that works for refugees and migrants, communities and States alike.
  - In 2015, Europe didn't experience a refugee/migrant crisis, but rather a crisis of solidarity between States and towards refugees and migrants.
  - It is possible to learn from 2015 and have a common approach to deal with refugees and migrants.
  - Past lessons can pave the way towards increased trust among States and by its citizens and provide protection to refugees and migrants.
- **Message 3:** UN is proposing practical solutions for an EU and other countries in Europe and Central Asia that protects and integrates refugees and migrants at home, is prepared to manage arrivals, and is engaged globally to tackle forced displacement.
  - A way forward begins with a well-managed common asylum system, and through successful integration, preparedness to deal with future arrivals and efforts to address global forced displacement.
  - We propose an approach that: includes a common registration system, enhanced security, and simplified procedures; brings families together early on; and supports States with large arrivals.
  - UN also proposes to increase support for the integration of refugees and migrants into the communities that have welcomed them.

- **Message 4:** Protect refugee and migrant children from exploitation and violence, end child detention for migration related reasons, give children legal status and make sure they can go to school and stay healthy
  - UN calls for increasing safe and legal channels for children to migrate and to seek refuge. Practical alternatives to immigration detention for all children need to be identified. Unaccompanied and separated children should be placed under guardianship and in foster care, supervised independent living, or other family- or community-based living arrangements.
  - Stronger policies are needed to prevent children from being separated from their parents and other family members in transit, as well as faster procedures to reunite children with their families, including in destination countries.
  - All children need a legal identity, should be registered at birth and should be provided with access to education and health services, and to adequate accommodation, care and protection, shelter, nutrition, water and sanitation.
  
- **Message 5:** Protect refugee and migrant women and girls from gender based violence and other forms of exploitation and abuse, end detention of pregnant and lactating women, ensure that women have access to gender-responsive services and are involved in policy making on refugees and migrants.
  - The UN calls for increasing safe and legal channels for women to migrate and to redouble efforts to put an end to trafficking and smuggling. Measures to end sexual and gender based violence in transit, refugee/migration centers and detention need to be prioritized.
  - Gender based persecution should be recognized as an asylum ground. Capacity to identify survivors of gender based persecution upon their entry into a country should be increased. Adequate gender sensitive services, accommodation, information, legal aid should be made available to migrants and asylum seekers, as well as female translators, adjudicators and medical staff.
  - Practical alternatives to immigration detention for all women, especially those who are pregnant and lactating, need to be identified. Where women are detained, their safety and access to services needs to be guaranteed.
  - Women refugees, and those from host communities, should be included in planning and policy making on refugee response measures including humanitarian, protection, and empowerment related.

- **Message 6:** Comprehensive responses with inter-disciplinary partnerships at multiple levels are needed to address migration and displacement in a durable manner. To achieve this, longer term development solutions are required within the 2030 Agenda in line with the commitment to leave no one behind.
  - Refugees and migrants bring significant development gains both for host countries and countries of origin; providing solid evidence contribute to avoiding further polarization of the debate, stigmatization, intolerance, xenophobia and ignorance with regards the complexities behind people's decisions to move.
  - Strong local government capacities and resilience is a prerequisite for ensuring access to basic services, rule of law and security for all. Local authorities are the backbone for harnessing the potential of migration and for the integration of displaced people into host communities.
  - UN can offer expertise tools and modalities for cooperation to shift local responses from reactive to preventive actions, tackling the root causes and from short-term emergency related to development-centered interventions.
- **Message 7:** Ultimately migration is not just a political challenge. It is also a development challenge and, critically, an environmental management challenge. Environmental degradation and mismanagement are at the root of many of the political, economic and social drivers of migration and displacement. The scale of possible future displacement under even moderate climate change scenarios means that environment, humanitarian and displacement-focused actors must work together.

It is also important to remember that displacement itself can have environmental impacts, causing environmental degradation that can worsen or prolong the humanitarian emergency. Rapid urbanization or poorly managed refugee camps and IDPs settlements can put pressure on scarce water, energy and food resources, lead to uncontrolled waste disposal, and put refugees and migrants in direct competition with local communities. We need to better understand, and mitigate, those complex factors. In terms of actionable commitments this may involve:

- A focus on building resilience in source countries of migration and areas of possible displacement.
- Support for countries hosting large numbers of forced migrants or displaced people in terms of addressing the added demands on their own ecosystem services.
- Large-scale regeneration programmes in environmentally compromised areas
- Consideration of international temporary labour migration as a win-win development intervention in areas hit by natural disasters.

UN can help to build the understanding of the ecological drivers of displacement; strengthening the capacity of communities and countries to withstand shocks and environmental change; and helping to plan the relocation of communities that stand to be displaced by unavoidable environmental change