

World leaders must step up efforts to conclude robust & principled deal for refugees and migrants

The UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants, this 19th September, has been called to tackle one of the greatest global challenges of our age: to protect and assist millions of people on the move in search of safety and dignity.

More than 20 million men, women and children have been forced across international borders by conflict, violence and persecution.

Alongside them, millions of people are also forced to move for lack of livelihood, food, water or security at home, increasingly by climate change and environmental disaster too. Many are vulnerable on the move, drowning at sea, dying or being brutalized and exploited. And even if migrants and refugees manage to move or arrive safely they are often met with fear, xenophobia, violence and criminalization, suffering gross violations of their human rights including ill-treatment by state officials, arbitrary detention, and denial of access to basic services. At the same time, many countries, in particular middle and low income countries have welcomed millions of refugees fleeing violence and across the world there are countless acts of solidarity and support for people on the move.

The international community has taken up their responsibility to protect people before, and needs to do it again now.

In the past, the world stepped up to cooperate on concrete solutions.

The 28th of July marks 65 years since the 1951 Refugee Convention was adopted to protect refugees after the Second World War.

The world needs more, not less cooperation and solutions, for all people on the move.

The Summit is a chance for the world to find effective and lasting solutions. This week, negotiations for the Summit outcome documents are taking place and world leaders must seize this unique opportunity to show principled leadership and agree an outcome document worthy of this cause.

Tens of thousands of people around the world want their governments to do that and all major religions embrace the tradition of granting protection to those in danger. 80% of respondents to Amnesty International's Refugees Welcome Index said they would accept people fleeing war or persecution in their country. Many thousands have joined Oxfam's call for governments to share responsibility fairly, in a world in which developing countries host 86% of the world's refugees, and Save the Children's call for a new deal for refugees, in particular that no child refugee should be without an education for more than one month.

Solutions are possible, both for refugees and migrants as well as for their societies. The world must step up with responsibility sharing, not responsibility shifting.

We, the undersigned NGOs, believe that the Summit for Refugees and Migrants can deliver vital changes for the millions of people and societies who need them. However we are deeply concerned that leaders are not showing the political will required.

The test of success is whether the governments' final Outcome Document:

- 1 Promotes and implements existing refugee and human rights law and standards regarding the protection of all people on the move with particular attention to specific needs and vulnerabilities of children, and the human rights of internally displaced

people, refugees and migrants regardless of their status and, in the case of children, also regardless of the migration status of their parents.

- 2 Commits to developing a global system that ensures governments share responsibility for welcoming, protecting and assisting refugees, a fair share of such admissions for each country and outlines concrete actions for achieving this and commits to putting them into practice.
- 3 Endorses the development of principles and guidelines for essential protection and assistance to migrants who are vulnerable, on the move and at borders.
- 4 Explicitly recognizes obligations under international and regional human rights treaties to protect the best interests of the child and to ending the practice of detaining children on the basis of their or their parents' migration status.
- 5 Sets out a clear roadmap, for an inclusive process, to develop a norms-based framework on safe, orderly and regular migration to be adopted in 2018, including expanded channels for labour migration at all skill levels, family reunification, education, and regularization programmes.

Civil society organizations, too, must rise further to the challenge of this unprecedented movement of people - in partnership with governments as well as with refugees, migrants and societies everywhere. That is what we are seeking to do.

An outcome that does no more than repeat existing commitments—or worse, diminishes them—cannot be considered a success. We urge member states to seize this unprecedented opportunity.

Signatories:

Alianza Americas
Amnesty International
Asylum Access
Care International
Caritas Internationalis
Center for Migration Studies
Church World Service
Danish Refugee Council
HIAS, Global Jewish Organisation for Refugees
Human Rights Watch
International Catholic Migration Commission
International Detention Coalition
International Rescue Committee
Kids in Need of Defense
National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights
NGO Committee on Migration
Norwegian Refugee Council
Oxfam
Save the Children
Scalabrini International Migration Network
SOS Children's Village
The Lutheran World Federation