

INTERNATIONAL PRESENTATION ASSOCIATION

CONTRIBUTION TO THE HIGH LEVEL SUMMIT ON MIGRATION ON 19 SEPTEMBER.

International Presentation Association is a Non-Governmental Organization with Special accreditation to the ECOSOC at the United Nations and has members in 23 countries. As a global congregation, we recognize the significance of our insights coming from our local work on the ground with migrants and refugees. IPA members are actively addressing the root causes and advocate for systemic justice for migrants and refugees in eight countries and others are involved in “hands on” aid and assistance. Members are especially involved with human rights challenges for migrants, their basic human needs and human trafficking networks.

In anticipation of the General Assembly’s Summit on Refugees and Migrants, IPA wishes to confirm our commitment to the many displaced persons worldwide who have been forced to flee from their homes due to intolerable conditions. IPA believes that the following issues are significant and must be addressed in order to meet the sustainable development goals set by the United Nations vis-à-vis migrants, and in order to alleviate the suffering of millions of desperate human beings.

The United Nations in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development acknowledges the right of contemporary human mobility, and identifies contemporary human mobility as a key factor for sustainable development. IPA agrees with the UN, but also recognizes that the irregular movement of refugees and migrants now occurring throughout the world has reached global proportions. In every part of the planet, desperate people driven from their homes by poverty, war, oppression and violence, risking all in the hope of finding a better life has reached staggering proportions and shows no sign of abating.

We agree with United Nations’ Concept Paper on Strengthening Cooperation on Migration and Refugee Movements (9/30/15) that long-term strategies, commitments and action across a wide range of policy areas are required in order to achieve the goal of sustainable development vis-à-vis migration. But only an understanding of the root causes underlying the departure of refugees and migrants from their homes and a firm commitment to address these will enable society to formulate policies to correct practices that result in the creation of reasons which contributed to the creation of intolerable environments.

Some of the root causes which underlie migratory surges include:

- Conflict, war and political policies which result in a destabilization of a region. The current outpouring of refugees from Syria and Afghanistan can be attributed to an extent to such a root cause. In 2015, more than 500,000 refugees, the majority fleeing war-torn homelands, crossed the Mediterranean into Europe.¹
- Growth oriented economic policies and unregulated exploitation and extraction of natural resources by external actors, which rob the inhabitants of a region of their

¹ UNHCR, *Refugee Sea Arrivals in Greece This Year Approach 400,000* (<http://www.unhcr.org/560e63626.html>).

livelihood resulting in disastrous consequences such as displacement, drought, deforestation and climate change.

- Objectification of people for economic gains resulting in International criminal activity such as human and sex trafficking, and arms smuggling, constitutes yet another root cause as well as result in irregular migratory movement. Since 2012, an estimated 150,000 refugees fleeing persecution in Myanmar-mostly Rohingya Muslims-have been trafficked by sea to jungle refugee camps in Thailand and Malaysia.²

These statistics underscore the need for enhanced cooperation among all nations in order to achieve the **creation of channels for orderly, safe and regular migration**, humanitarian admission of refugees, and an improvement of cooperation between all entities aimed at combating human trafficking. The United Nations is in the best position to facilitate this discourse, and should host local, regional and international forums where members of the international community can work towards a deeper understanding and a better policy for the future.

The international community must **respect the rights of refugees and migrants**. The violation of the basic human rights of refugees and migrants can and does take place at many different points of their voyage. It is essential that abuses and violations of international laws be recognized and addressed by all persons, regions, and nations. In addition to abuses endured at the hands of traffickers while fleeing, refugees are often subjected to deplorable conditions and adverse treatment by border patrol and while in detention. At the U.S./Mexican border, migrants routinely suffer a broad range of abuses and inhumane conditions in detention facilities. Family members apprehended together are frequently separated during deportation. Deportation usually occurs at night. This results in dangerous conditions where security is compromised and criminal activity flourishes. The dangers are particularly acute for those children who become separated from their families.³

IPA is concerned that children in detention are frequently exposed to adverse conditions and human rights violations which will threaten their physical, emotional and psychological well-being. For this reason, we call upon countries of origin, transit and destination to formally recognize and adopt the Convention on the Rights of the Child and its Protocols. The rights of a child in detention include the right to education and right to security. We encourage the United Nations to work towards ensuring that this need is addressed.

We are aware that the education of the youngest refugees presents unique challenges which must be addressed in order to provide a positive environment. Refugee children go without formal education for extended periods of time. When finally integrated into a classroom, they may be

² The Guardian, *The Boat Crisis Won't End Until the Burmese Stop Persecuting the Rohingya*, July 20, 2015 (<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2015/jul/20/rohingya-crisis-burma-thailand>).

³ Danielson, Michael-Our Values on the Line: Migrant Abuse and Family Separation at the Border. Jesuit Conference of Canada and United States, September 2015

years behind, unable to read, and behind in all skills. The International Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Minimum Standards provides a framework for education in crisis settings such as those encountered by refugee children. Emphasis is placed on the need for teachers to create “a safe and inclusive learner-friendly environment”, “an appropriate context-specific curriculum that is comprehensible and culturally, linguistically, and socially relevant”. Research has shown that refugee teachers, as opposed to national teachers, are more successful at creating an appropriate learning environment and communicating with refugee children.⁴

As articulated in A/RES/69/229, a focus on the contributions of migrants to development in countries of destination will facilitate the design of “evidenced-based policymaking and decision-making in all relevant aspects of sustainable development”. The global community must be enlightened so as to develop an awareness and understanding of the many benefits which migration brings to the global community.

In light of the above, we recommend the following:

- International collaboration in identifying and addressing the root causes of irregular and forced migration. The United Nations take a lead role in organizing symposiums involving the international community, and in publishing and disseminating results.
- The United Nations call on all member States to commit to international cooperation in order to develop a humane and morally sustainable solution to the migrant crisis.
- The United Nations develop a system of protocols and standards to be implemented at border crossings in order to ensure that the basic human rights of migrants and refugees are not violated.
- Guarantee safe and appropriate environment for refugee children including quality education. Regular monitoring by United Nations’ observers of all detention centers and communities housing refugee children to ensure that educational and cultural needs of children in detention are being met.
- Encourage the employment of refugees with appropriate education and skills such as teachers within the refugee community, in such settings as detention centers and refugee schools.
- Educate people on the many contributions migrants make to local communities and host countries by disseminating articles and stories (via all available channels including media, internet, leaflets, church bulletin) about the many benefits which migrants bring to the global community.
- Recognize the contributions of faith based organizations and Civil society as actors on the ground in addressing the refugee migrant crisis and ensure their participation in all stages of planning, implementation, monitoring of the policies and practices in addressing the situation.

⁴ Dryden-Peterson, Sarah and Adelman, Elizabeth-Inside Syrian Refugee Schools: Teachers Struggle to Create Conditions for Learning. Brookings Institute, February 10, 2016. www.brookings.edu/blogs/education-plus-development/posts/2016/02/09-syrian-refugee-schools