

Humanitarian Response in Africa: The Urgency to Act

Informal Meeting of the General Assembly

As Delivered by Permanent Observer Ashraf El Nour

United Nations Headquarters | 8 April 2016

Thank you Madam Chair.

And on behalf of IOM I would like to make three points:

The first point is that Africa continues to be at the centre of humanitarian attention and that the conflicts and other challenges that are facing the continent are complex, protracted and recurrent. They are ranging from governance crises, to conflicts, to natural disasters, all which generate displacement within the continent and across borders.

The second concern that we have is that the humanitarian response in many parts of Africa is either unfunded or neglected, and as a result is turning the camps for refugees or IDPs into recruitment grounds for human smuggling or trafficking.

The third concern that we have in many places in Africa is that protracted displacement situations are continuing the dependency on humanitarian aid that has made many people live for many years – the average being 17 years or more – in such dependency situations. Many camps in Africa became home for second-generation inhabitants who were born and grew up there, and saw nothing beyond the camp fence.

My second point is a call for action. To address the migration dimension of crises upfront and not later on, and only after a situation gets out of hand, by including migration in the crisis analysis, the scenario building and the response strategies – so that migrants and migration will be taken as a priority and receive the necessary support and funding for IOM and others to do the needful.

Secondly is to prioritize funding to neglected humanitarian situations in order to reduce tendencies of people who are desperate and who have lost hope to fall into the hands of human smugglers and traffickers. The point just made by the Emergency Relief Coordinator, that Chad is now receiving very low levels of funds, is very much ringing the alarm bell; very much is needed to be done and done now, as alternatives to that are to see more outflows traveling around the route that is covered by the Rabat Process and the Khartoum Process.

The third action that we call for, urge for, is to close the gap between relief and development – this is exactly where the revolving door exists, where many people go back and through this door only to find that there's nothing for them in their places of origin and choice, and the other alternative for them would be to be to recycle themselves out and be part of new movements again.

The third point is to share some of the best practices that we have. First, we have the IOM Migration Crisis Framework – this was developed after the North Africa Migrants crisis and it is meant to provide a strategic tool that would activate 15 sectors of assistance and synchronize them with the Cluster Support System. There's also the state-led initiative – this is the Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) Initiative, led by the Philippine Government and the U.S. Government, among others. The purpose is to come up with best practices and non-binding guidelines that will be used to provide responses which are more systematic and not ad hoc in countries where migrants become stranded. The last example is our data tracking matrix system, which is used to track displacement within the countries affected by crisis and provide information that the humanitarian workers will need to develop and plan their work.

I thank you for your attention.