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UN Summit for Refugees and Migrants
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INDIA STATEMENT
Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs
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Thank you for convening this meeting on an issue that has continued to make headlines over the last several months. Although much of the push for these deliberations comes from the more immediate impacts felt by a refugee crisis in certain parts of the world, the problems itself has been with us for a long time.

It is as old as war. The first consequence of war is death, the second is refugees.

There is another kind of person seeking a new haven. The migrant driven by a second cruelty, hunger, or economic aspiration. Both phenomenon is invisible in the present crisis.

To put the issue of refugees in perspective, the number of people on the move globally is estimated at close to 250 million - one in every thirty persons. Refugees are currently estimated to be around 20 million - one of every twelve persons on the move. Three fourths of the refugees come from just 11 countries. Seven countries host more than half of all refugees. Almost 90% of all refugees are hosted in emerging countries! That may not be a widespread impression, but it is the truth.

There is a long history of large communities seeking refuge in India. Are we prepared? I recall vividly the time when our neighbour Bangladesh was fighting for independence, more than 1.2 million people took refuge in India from the genocide they were faced with. We have long experience of this and We have developed situation-specific responses in each such instance. People seeking shelter in our country have never been turned back. Our record in this context is actually unique. There is a point I want to make however. It is assumed that only host nations do not want refugees, I ask, do refugees also want to become refugees. They don't. We must understand this and underline it and therefore find out what drives them towards seeking refuge. Prevention is better than cure, or perhaps prevention is the only cure.

Preventing armed conflicts, countering terrorism, building and sustaining peace through facilitating sustainable development and governance will help prevent people being forced to leave their homelands.

India engages regularly with the UNHCR. India also has partnered the UN Relief and Works Agency UNRWA for the Palestine Refugees in the Near East since long in the significant work being done by them.

Mr. President,

In a way, all of us are migrants for one reason or the other, but perhaps principally economic, human race having originated from Africa.

More recently most of our nation states and societies have been built upon waves of migration of various ethnic groups of the past centuries. This has been in many ways a positive development. Migration has continued to expand, now aided by the integrated economies over the last few decades.

Nationalism is the contemporary architecture of stability, and we understand its importance. The intersection of human needs in refugee crisis and national imperatives make this a complex issue. India has been both the destination and a transit country for the large number of migrants. Our own historical memories recall great migrations in the 19th century because of haman and because of colonial powers of the time wanted another form of labour after they abolished slavery called indentured labour. Co-incidentally this year 2016 will mark a 100 years of Mahatma Gandhi's seminal contribution to this crisis when he rescued the problem of refugees and indentured labors in South Africa and abolished this practice all together. In fact, in many senses India's liberation and freedom movement begins with the elimination of indentured labour.

Our Indian civilization has witnessed ebb and flow which has been built on successive waves of migration throughout history comprising traders, soldiers, missionaries, communities escaping persecution, artists and academics and artisans seeking better opportunities. Indian traders and missionaries have also settled on distant shores along the spice routes. In more recent times, Indian migrants, including a broad cross section of professionals, small entrepreneurs, skilled and less skilled workers have migrated to various countries around the world and offered a positive contribution to the diaspora.

Our government focuses on the entire range of issues relating to Indian emigrants, especially those with lesser skills.

India engages actively for the facilitation of the mobility of professionals under WTO's GATS mode IV and issues relating to equivalence of educational and professional qualifications to taxation.

We look forward to engaging with all partners beginning next year in developing a Global Compact on ensuring a safe, orderly and regular migration that is in the interest of all. But it is important to stress that today the geopolitics of the crisis points and proves that terrorism is the principal cause of refugee movements. Can we ignore this fact? We cannot. We do so at our peril.

Terrorism is an existential threat. Hypocrisy towards this crisis will not do. There is no good terrorism or bad terrorism and if we do not know answer to this question, all you have to do is to ask the refugees if he considers any terrorism to be good or bad.

Mr. President, I do want to stress that terrorism is the biggest danger to human rights. Ultimately, large movements of people across borders serve as reminders that our world become a global village. We can only prosper or perish together. It is best that we learn to live in peace, prosperity and amity.

Thank You.
