



General Assembly

Seventieth session

60th plenary meeting
Friday, 20 November 2015, 3 p.m.
New York

Official Records

President: Mr. Lykketoft (Denmark)

*In the absence of the President, Mr. Zinsou (Benin),
Vice-President, took the Chair.*

The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 130 (continued)

Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin, with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The international community currently faces the largest refugee crisis since the Second World War, with more than 60 million refugees and internally displaced persons throughout the world. There are no prospects for resolving the protracted refugee problems in Afghanistan and East Africa, and the Mediterranean refugee and migrant crisis has been escalating. Some European countries have seen an increase in xenophobic sentiment against refugees and migrants, and the humanitarian relief work on the ground is buckling under the severe pressure. The sustained turmoil in many countries and regions, including Syria, Iraq and Somalia, and the ever-serious nontraditional security threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism have set off new waves of refugees and migrants.

The root causes of the current refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean region lie in regional instability and uneven development. The fundamental way out is to seek peace, achieve development and take an integrated approach to addressing both the root causes and the symptoms.

First, we need to step up efforts to achieve peace and stability in the Middle East and other regions. Wars and conflicts are major causes of refugee and migration flows. We should establish partnerships based on equality, consultation and mutual understanding, and create a fair and just security architecture that is built jointly and benefits all. Countries should uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and favour dialogue as the means for settling disputes, including resolving their differences through consultations and trying to avert conflicts. The United Nations and regional organizations should strengthen their good offices and peacekeeping efforts and improve conflict-prevention and settlement mechanisms. The international community should be guided by the principles of harmony, inclusiveness and respect for differences. It should treat all civilizations equally and with respect, and actively promote dialogue and exchange among civilizations, with the aim of turning all civilizations into a force for maintaining world peace.

In the face of the new round of terrorist threats, the leading role of the United Nations should be given full play. A united front against terrorism should be maintained, and there should be broad cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism experience sharing intelligence exchange, information verification and law enforcement.

Recently, the parties concerned held two meetings of foreign ministers on the question of Syria and reached important quite a few common understandings on achieving a comprehensive ceasefire, launching a

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political process, establishing a transitional governing mechanism and holding general elections. Going forward, it is essential to implement those common understandings so as to start the political process under the auspices of the United Nations and create favourable conditions for the return of Syrian refugees.

Secondly, we should help African countries and other developing countries achieve development. Development is the only way to provide decent jobs and good lives to the people of African countries and other developing countries and to safeguard their fundamental rights, so that the number of refugees and migrants can be reduced. The international community should seize the opportunity provided by the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) at the United Nations summit for that purpose and work together to find a path towards equitable, open, comprehensive and innovative development, thereby achieving common development.

We should help developing countries, including African countries, enhance their capacity for development and improve their international development environment. Countries should effectively implement the 2030 Agenda. Developed countries should honour their commitments and fulfil their obligations in a timely manner and increase their official development assistance to the countries of origin of refugees and migrants in Africa and the Middle East, so as to improve the level of development of those countries.

Full consideration should be given to the development needs resulting from the unique challenges facing the aforementioned countries, with priority attention given to livelihood issues, including poverty reduction, health care, education, employment and housing. Infrastructure-building in the areas of water and sanitation, energy and communication should be at the top of the agenda. At the same time, the international community should improve global economic governance system, accelerate governance reform in the international financial institutions and increase the development resources available to multilateral development institutions, with a view to creating an orderly, enabling external environment for developing countries.

Thirdly, we must adhere to the principle of shared responsibility and strengthen international cooperation on refugees and migrants. Developing countries are the

recipients of about 86 per cent of the world's refugees, and they have made important contributions to refugee settlement efforts. Countries of origin, transit and destination should strengthen solidarity and share responsibility. Countries involved in the current crisis should accept refugees and migrants with an open and inclusive mindset, respect and protect their human rights, eliminate exclusion and discrimination against them and help them adapt to their new environment as quickly as possible. Developed countries must continue to increase humanitarian financial assistance to the developing countries concerned and to international agencies, such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

China supports the United Nations and UNHCR in playing a leading and coordinating role in responding to the current refugee and migrant crisis and supports Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon's hosting of an international conference on refugees at an appropriate time next year. China agrees with the Secretary-General's proposal that increased humanitarian assistance should not come at the expense of reduced development funding. As a State party to the 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol, China has always earnestly fulfilled its duties and obligations under the Convention and actively contributed to global efforts to protect refugees.

China has always contributed to common development efforts. In September, President Xi Jinping announced a series of important initiatives aimed at achieving the common development of all countries at the United Nations summits, inter alia, that China would establish a South-South cooperation assistance fund to support the implementation by developing countries of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, that it would continue to increase its investment in least-developed countries, with the goal of achieving \$12 billion by 2030, that it would forgive the debt resulting from the outstanding intergovernmental interest-free loans due by the end of 2015 and owed by a number of countries in vulnerable situations, and that it would implement hundreds of projects in developing countries in the areas of poverty reduction, intercultural cooperation, trade facilitation assistance, ecological protection and climate change adaptation, medical facilities, education and training.

China continuously supports the development of African countries. We adhere to the concepts of sincerity, real results, affinity and good faith in our

African cooperation efforts and have actively helped African countries in infrastructure-building, health and agriculture, where we have provided assistance to the best of our capacity. In December, the summit of the Forum on China-Africa Cooperation will be held in Johannesburg, South Africa. It is the first time that the summit will be held on the African continent, which is of far-reaching significance. The summit will create a new plan with a new blueprint. It will inject new vitality into future cooperation efforts between China and Africa, thereby vigorously advancing our win-win cooperation and common development.

China has always promoted peace and stability. During the general debate at the current session of the General Assembly, President Xi Jinping announced that China would set up a 10-year, \$1 billion peace and development fund to support the work of the United Nations, join the new United Nations peacekeeping capability standby mechanism, set up a standby peacekeeping force of 8,000 troops and provide free military assistance to the African Union valued at \$100 million over the next five years, thus further contributing to the maintenance of international peace and security.

By taking an active part in international discussions on Middle East issues, including Syria, and by putting forward a series of ideas, China has positively contributed to advancing the political settlement of the questions concerned.

China has continuously promoted the protection of refugees. Since the outbreak of the Syrian crisis, China has provided funding in multiple forms humanitarian in-kind and cash assistance to the Syrian people and Syrian refugees abroad, totalling more than ¥230 million. In October, China again decided to provide humanitarian assistance in the amount of ¥100 million to Syria, Jordan and Lebanon. In the year 2015, the Chinese Government also donated \$800,000 to UNHCR. China will continue providing assistance to the countries concerned and to UNHCR.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): There are 42,500 people arriving every day — 3,500 people arriving during the two hours that we spent at lunch. Imagine that during the five minutes of my intervention, 150 people will march through the Hall — people who desperately need our help and assistance. That is why we must translate our recent words on the topic of migration into real action.

At the outset, let me express my deep sympathy and condolences to the families of the victims of the recent terrorist attacks in Beirut, Paris, the Sinai peninsula and, today, Bamako. The people and the Government of Slovakia stand in firm solidarity with any country and any innocent human being that has suffered from or faces a life-threatening environment. Violent terrorism and cowardly attacks are unfortunately becoming a part of our daily lives.

But we must not surrender. Neither must we allow individual attacks or violent actions to fuel general hatred against those that are truly in need, namely, the majority of migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons seeking assistance or simply safe shelter to survive conflict and extreme poverty, or those who are striving to live a decent life and raise and educate their children in peace.

The tragic events that happen almost on a daily basis remind us of the importance of international cooperation aimed at sustainable and inclusive growth, as well as peace, security and stability. Those are crucial prerequisites for a decent life for all.

There is no doubt that terrorism and migration are clearly interlinked. State fragility and internal strife and conflict provide a breeding ground for extremism and terrorism. Internal conflict, violence and terror are among the main factors producing desperate human beings and women and children searching for security and the prospect of better lives.

I would like to express my gratitude to the President of the General Assembly for highlighting this important and challenging issue and for raising global awareness of the tragedies of the irregular migrants in the Mediterranean Basin, with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers.

The current migration crisis is unprecedented, with many overlapping dimensions — humanitarian, social, political, economic and security. It also has a strong potential to stir emotions on all sides. It is one of the most complex challenges that we have to face and address jointly in cooperation and partnership among the countries of origin, transit and destination, including with the international organizations that play an irreplaceable role in those processes.

That crisis must be met with a coherent response. Without targeting the root causes of migration, we will never achieve lasting results, by which I mean

eradicating human suffering and ensuring full respect for human rights and clear prospects for return. There is no quick fix or magic panacea to solve the problem. We should therefore look for sustainable solutions, many of which were voiced today in discussions. Let me reiterate some of them.

First, we have to address and solve the violent causes of migration. Second, we have to address the core social and economic roots and causes. Third, we have to provide immediate help and show maximum solidarity with all those who are affected. Fourth, we have to demonstrate solidarity with the countries that provide refuge and facilities for refugees. Fifth, we need to support programmes that foster long-term security and development in the affected countries and regions of origin. Sixth, we must distinguish between economic migrants and refugees forced to flee to save their lives. Seventh, we must fully and consistently fight against organized crime and illegal trafficking in order to fight the criminal networks that profit from this human tragedy. Eighth, we need to improve coordination and coherence among all the relevant stakeholders and minimize overlapping competencies and the waste of resources.

The essential remedies against terrorism are in our hands. Prevention is one of the keys. We must address the causes of those crises — especially those brought on by violent conflicts — ideally, before they are fully manifested. At the centre of our efforts there must be respect for commitments under international law, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights, which are values that we should never sacrifice. That applies to both domestic and international counterterrorism efforts. We also need to further expand and deepen the international framework, with the United Nations at its centre. That needs to be accompanied by the involvement of regional stakeholders, local ownership and shared responsibility. Migration needs to be addressed within national development, but also with full international support. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) provides us with an exceptional tool to take collective action. It provides the opportunity to address the challenges that forced millions of people to leave their homes.

Slovakia is fully committed, materially and financially, to contributing to those efforts through all of the instruments at its disposal. To date, we have allocated €21 million to various United Nations and European Union agencies to help cope with the problem.

We also welcome, in that respect, the initiative of the Secretary-General that was announced today, and we look forward to the summit and the high-level meeting. We believe that all of us working and sitting in this Hall wish for and imagine a world where immigration is a choice and not a life-saving measure.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the President for having added this item on migrants and refugees to the agenda of the General Assembly in such a timely manner. It is essential to continue the international mobilization of the international community in line with the high-level meeting on migration and refugee flows chaired by the Secretary-General this past September.

Before addressing the refugee issue, I would like to warmly thank everyone who expressed friendship and support from around the world after the terrible attacks of 13 November. Seeing the colours of the French flag projected in so many places in countries around the world represented as many signs of solidarity and touched us all deeply. France is not the only country to have been attacked. Numerous other countries have also been struck by terrorism.

We are now an unprecedented challenge, with nearly 60 million uprooted people around the world, mostly owing to situations of conflict and violence. Millions of others are leaving their homes or their countries for a variety of reasons, including natural disasters and the effects of climate change. Those population movements affect all of us. The President of the French Republic clearly reminded us that Europe must welcome those who come with the right of asylum with dignity. After more than four years of conflict, Syrian refugees are fleeing from barbaric Daesh and the indiscriminate bombing by the regime and are living in conditions that are increasingly difficult. More than ever, in tandem with the fight against Daesh, a political solution to the Syrian crisis is needed. The Vienna talks have advanced in that direction. Within that framework, France is fully prepared to ensure that improving the humanitarian situation is a priority and has made specific proposals in that regard. We must urgently alleviate the suffering of the civilian populations there. Otherwise, the Syrian exile will continue. The international community must continue its efforts to quickly impose a ceasefire in Syria and establish a credible and inclusive transition process.

France is fully engaged on the issue of refugees. Along with Jordan, we hosted a conference in Paris in September on the issue of the victims of ethnic and religious violence in the Middle East, aimed at mobilizing States to strengthen their efforts to find humanitarian solutions to the crises in Syria and Iraq. France calls for a collective and united approach at the European Union level on the migration issues. Every party must shoulder its responsibility. France will reinforce its efforts to host refugees and asylum-seekers and will devote an additional €279 million to receiving and housing them. We must collectively give priority to the humanitarian emergency by providing protection and assistance to displaced and refugee populations. In that vein, I welcome the work of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and especially the commitment of the High Commissioner, Mr. António Guterres, who will soon be leaving office. His successor, Mr. Filippo Grandi, whom I would like to congratulate on his election by the General Assembly this past Wednesday, will face a crisis of unparalleled intensity. We wish him well in that difficult undertaking. I also want to pay tribute to the generosity of countries in the Middle East and Africa that are on the front line and have been receiving the highest number of refugees.

Faced with the exponential growth of the needs and the overloading of United Nations humanitarian agencies, we must strengthen our collective efforts. The mobilization must be broadened and strengthened. I welcome the fact that the Group of 20 sent a clear message to that effect on 15 and 16 November. France will play its full part in that collective effort. We have decided to provide a special contribution of €100 million — of which €50 million has already been disbursed in 2015 — to United Nations agencies, giving priority in its allotment to responding to the Syrian crisis. No country can face the challenges of migration alone. To that end, as representatives of the countries of origin, transit and destination, we must work together. Accordingly, I would like to commend the conclusions reached at the Valletta summit on migration last week, which brought together the European Union and African partners to establish a partnership, addressing most notably some of the structural crises stemming from migration. The Valletta summit aimed at finding sustainable responses to emigration and at responding to the despair of certain segments of the population by giving them the hope of a better future through development.

Combating the suffering of refugees and displaced persons also requires a determined fight against trafficking networks, by working in partnership with the countries of origin, transit and destination. We have a duty to fight the exploitation of migrants by smugglers and by trafficking networks. Solutions do exist, such as the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air. We call for the ratification by all States and for the effective implementation of those measures. The Security Council adopted resolution 2240 (2015) this past October, giving Member States of the European Union the legal assurances needed to fight against traffickers in the Mediterranean.

We must also fight against the deep-rooted causes of the displacement of persons, because without a sustainable solution to crises and conflicts, the populations will continue to be pushed into exile. France is working towards the stabilization of conflict areas and towards resolving political crises so as to prevent the causes of forced population displacement. That is also representative of the rationale behind our development policies, in particular regarding Africa. The latter aim at offering people the means to live in their homes with dignity in their countries, while bolstering efforts aimed at the economic and democratic transition of those countries hosting refugees.

When it comes to all of those issues, the first World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in May of next year, will provide an opportunity to find ways to effectively improve our response to the needs of populations affected by conflict and to render humanitarian activities more effective.

Mr. Sandoval Mendiola (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): Our thoughts and condolences go out to the relatives of the victims of those who died in the terrorist attacks that occurred today in Mali. My country robustly condemns such attacks.

Mexico is pleased that we have an opportunity to discuss one of the most complex issues that is of concern to all Member States. We are dealing here with an issue that has deeply moved world public opinion. Far from being considered as a mere issue of the movements of persons in a few regions, we are dealing with a global phenomenon that we need to tackle together, and by together I mean the countries of origin, transit, destination and return. We are not dealing with a passing trend or an anomaly, but rather

with a structural issue and one of the defining issues of our international reality.

For several decades, Mexico has often reiterated in this very forum that the international community, through the United Nations, needs to address that phenomenon in a comprehensive and holistic way. We note with concern that the national capacities of some countries to deal with the migration phenomenon have been overwhelmed and overstretched in the face of the sheer number of displaced persons who are fleeing armed conflict to save their lives, many of whom, regrettably, lose their lives in the attempt.

Migrants are vulnerable from the very moment that they decide to embark on their journey to seek a brighter future. When they decide to leave, they leave behind their own socioeconomic environment and their family. Throughout the journey, they are subject to a whole raft of abuses perpetrated against them by traffickers and criminals, who prey on them, benefiting from the gaps in international cooperation that should be there to protect their human rights. Sadly, many arrive at their destination after an extremely arduous journey only to end up being victimized and marginalized once again, despite the contributions that they could make to their new host country.

All Governments have an obligation to respect the human rights of displaced persons, irrespective of their immigration status. Security and respect for human rights are two sides of the same coin in the framework of the rule of law. We see with satisfaction that many States have that same understanding of the situation.

An international security perspective towards migrants is restrictive and curtails our understanding of that phenomenon. We should not see those who are crossing borders in the quest for security and opportunity as a threat but rather as agents for development, as they are duly described in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). Such acknowledgement of them as drivers of development should be translated into better protection of all their rights: the right to decent and well-remunerated work and access to education, health and justice.

Throughout history, migration flows have helped build up the economic, social and cultural fabric of the majority of nations. As far as Mexico is concerned, it is quite clear that the issues of migration and refugees are better addressed from a pro-human-rights perspective and a perspective that fosters the well-being of all.

There can be no escaping the fact that we need to agree on actions, public policies and legally binding and clearly defined commitments. To date, we do not have the requisite mechanisms to guarantee the upholding of the rights of migrants. Mexico believes that the United Nations is the ideal forum for the exchange of experiences, for sharing perspectives and for agreeing on comprehensive, forward-looking strategies. That was our firmly held conviction in 1990, when we worked hard to promote the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families. Today, that instrument is the benchmark that should be referred to by all countries. Today, in 2015, my country would like to reiterate that there is a need to recognize and acknowledge the contributions of migrants to the countries of origin, transit, destination and return.

We are alarmed to note that groups of migrants and refugees live in very risky situations and face rejection, stigmatization and abuse. Some countries even call into question the principle of non-return where refugees are concerned, and others criminalize migrants. Mexico rejects violence, incitement to hatred, radicalization and social division. Such expressions of intolerance have, in our view, no place in the twenty-first century. It is unacceptable that migrants and refugees are stigmatized and blamed for the pre-existing problems in places of destinations. They are not the threat, but rather the threatened.

Mexico has a holistic understanding of the migration phenomenon, given that we are a country of origin, transit, destination and return ourselves. We have huge challenges to meet as a country in the field of migration, but we tackle them decisively and responsibly.

Around the world, millions of migrants and refugees deserve an immediate, collective, humane and effective response to their needs and to their situation, and that response must come from the United Nations. The Global Forum on Migration and Development, held last month in Turkey, as well as the Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, adopted by the General Assembly in 2013, serve to underscore the need to strengthen the mechanisms for international dialogue and cooperation so as to better address the phenomena of migration, refugees and the needs of internationally displaced persons. I think we can all agree that we are not starting from scratch. We have a framework in place to build on.

Mexico welcomes the initiatives announced today by the Secretary-General, which will facilitate that task, and we commit to ongoing discussions on a pro-migrant basis.

Today, in the light of the reality that we are bearing witness to today in the Mediterranean basin, Mexico would like to reiterate its commitment to addressing those phenomena in a comprehensive way, as well as to strengthening our legal and operational framework, based on a respect for human rights, in order to ensure that international protection is accorded to migrants and asylum-seekers, who deserve such protection.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy) (*spoke in French*): Italy aligns itself with the statement made this morning by the observer of the European Union (see A/70/PV.59). I would like to make some additional remarks in our national capacity.

Echoing what many of the colleagues who have addressed the Assembly have said, I would like to convey my most sincere condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in terrorist attacks around the world over the past few weeks. I would also like to underscore the point that the subject of today's debate has nothing to do with terrorism. We should in particular avoid conflating terrorism, refugees and migrants and tarring them with the same brush. On the one hand, you have murderers, and on the other hand you have victims. As far as Italy is concerned, it is very important that we highlight that point and reality.

(*spoke in English*)

I proudly represent a country whose navy has committed itself to saving human lives each day at sea. We saved more than 100,000 lives last year, and this year we have continued to rescue over 50 per cent of the migrants heading towards the European coast. Children have been born on board our naval vessels. When one is facing a person drowning at sea, one does not ask him or her whether he or she is a migrant or a refugee. One saves that person and brings him or her to a safe haven. That is what we have been doing in recent years.

As a Mediterranean country on the front lines of migration and refugee flows, we have from the outset supported the Turkish initiative to raise this issue in the General Assembly. We commend the President of the General Assembly for today's meeting and for yesterday's dialogue with a broader team on how to address global refugee flows. This is not only a

European challenge, it is a global challenge. I take this opportunity to express our best wishes to and full support for the incoming United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Filippo Grandi, while paying a tribute to the departing Commissioner, Mr. António Guterres, for his outstanding work in such difficult times. We understand that there is not quick fix to this phenomenon; it can be approached only through an holistic and inclusive approach. We have therefore been urging such a course of action at the European level, so as to share that responsibility among European Member States. We must also tackle the issues from various angles.

First, we must address the root causes by making strides in development. The implementation and financing of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) are therefore of the utmost importance. Secondly, from a political perspective, we must find a diplomatic solution to the crisis and the political instability that causes record numbers of people to flee their countries. Thirdly, we must remain firm in our commitment to respecting international obligations and human rights. Fourthly, we must recognize the high degree of interdependence in addressing the common challenge, and therefore work in close cooperation with the first countries of asylum and the countries of origin wherever possible. Fifthly, we must fight the organized crime responsible for migrant smuggling and human trafficking by dismantling the business models of those networks that exploit migrants and refugees and by promoting regional dialogue. The Khartoum process, launched when Italy held the presidency of the European Union last year, is aimed at those objectives, which are also the basis of the Rabat process.

In the most recently held Valletta summit on migration between the European Union and the African Union, it was concluded that only an integrated approach and regional dialogue can promote a long-term solution. In that respect, from the start, Italy welcomed the Commission's initiative to establish the Valletta Trust Fund. As in the case of the Madad Trust Fund for Syria, we believe that the added value of such instruments will translate into action-oriented initiatives, which will lead to stronger collaboration with our African partners. Above all, the Trust Fund is a concrete way to address their expectations. Italy will contribute €10 million to the Fund and will consider further contributions in future. We believe that there is one specific area in which the Fund could be

particularly useful: resilience between emergency and development. That area must be strengthened, because it is crucial to create the stability needed to mitigate the factors that force people to migrate. The Trust Fund offers enormous potential to boost resilience through action aimed at promoting socioeconomic development and job opportunities and at generating income, with a special focus on youth, women and local communities. We fully support that approach.

Migrants and refugees are indeed persons with untapped potential. Most of them are highly motivated people whose dream of a better life has enabled them to endure long journeys, rough seas and crowded boats, putting their lives at risk in the hope of a better future. That is why Italy believes that migrants, refugees and aspirant communities are key to the development of countries of origin and of destination. Migration must therefore be given top priority among the new Sustainable Development Goals and their means of implementation. In that regard, Italy has been a forerunner in enhancing the role of remittances as crucial tools for the development of countries of origin and for the integration of migrant communities. Remittances can also be a vital tool for financing the new Sustainable Development Goals. Above all, we must realize that today more people are fleeing their homes than at any other time since the Second World War. That is why greater global efforts are needed to relieve the burden of the few countries that are faced with a massive influx of asylum-seekers and refugees. Italy is doing its part and working earnestly on their resettlement.

Mr. Roet (Israel): At the outset, I would like to express our sincere condolences and deepest sympathies to the French Republic and to the French people in the wake of the horrific attacks on Paris, the city of light, over the weekend. We are similarly horrified by the bombing of a Russian plane in Sinai, the bombing in Beirut and by the horrendous events today in Mali.

Terrorism has attacked Israel as well this week, but it is rarely — if ever — mentioned in the Assembly Hall. I would therefore like to pay tribute to the victims of terrorism. Yesterday, Palestinian terrorists killed five innocent civilians. Aharon Aviram and Reuven Yesayev were murdered on their way to prayers at their synagogue. Later, Yaakov Don, a father of four, Ezra Schwartz, an 18-year-old American volunteer, and Shadi Arafa, a young 26-year-old Muslim Palestinian, were shot to death by a Palestinian terrorist who, like all

terrorists around the world, did not distinguish between his victims in terms of nationality or religion. We must condemn all types of terrorism and make clear that terrorism is terrorism, regardless of where it attacks us and who the victims are.

Last year, a 9-year-old Syrian boy arrived at the children's ward of the Western Galilee Medical Centre, in northern Israel, with severe injuries. He told of atrocities that no boy should experience, of seeing his brother decapitated before his very eyes. Like that young child, there are hundreds of thousands of Syrian children who have witnessed atrocities that have shocked the conscience of the civilized world. We have all seen the horrific images of death and destruction in Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya. Hundreds of thousands of lives have already been lost and still the international community has yet to respond adequately to the ongoing crisis.

Today we are witnessing the consequences of years of unchallenged oppression in each one of the following failed States. One of the most devastating civil wars in modern history is taking place in Syria; Libya has witnessed the catastrophic collapse of State institutions; and in Yemen, sectarian conflict has taken the lives of thousands. And yet the global community is still grappling with the question of the origin of such atrocities. In fact, in 2010, even before the so-called Arab Spring, the respected non-governmental organization (NGO) Freedom House ranked Syria near the very bottom of their freedom scale as a country with no political rights and hardly any civil liberties. Fellow dictatorships Libya and Yemen joined Syria at the bottom of the list. The world looked on, mostly in silence, as those engines of autocracy and fundamentalism ruled their people through fear and violated human rights with impunity. If we remain indifferent to such calamities, we risk sacrificing the principles humankind holds dear. And in no place are those principles more in peril than in Syria.

In Syria, more than a quarter of a million people — men, women and children — have already been killed. A further 4 million have fled their homes for an unknown future and 8 million more are internally displaced. As we convene here today to find a solution for the millions of Syrian refugees, Al-Assad's regime continues to compete with Daesh in devising the most brutal ways to massacre innocent people. Of course, Al-Assad could not have committed so many atrocities without the help of his friends in Tehran. Not only is

Iran the world's leading State sponsor of terrorism, it is fuelling a conflict in which hundreds of thousands have already been killed. To those who hoped that Iran might be a part of the solution to the problem Daesh poses to all of us I say, sometimes the enemy of your enemy is your enemy.

When it comes to assisting refugees, humanitarian aid is crucial. We are grateful that the life-saving efforts of refugee-hosting countries and the impressive efforts by so many United Nations Member States, agencies and personnel. Humanitarian aid should know no borders, no religion, no race, no gender and no sexual orientation. IsraAID, an Israeli NGO, has helped thousands of Syrian refugees in Jordan and Eastern Europe, providing them with medical treatment and countless tons of food and training thousands of local humanitarian staff. Israel has also experienced massive waves of migration and refugees in the past. Having absorbed hundreds of thousands of Holocaust survivors and Jewish refugees from Arab countries, and after welcoming over 1 million Jews from the former Soviet Union and tens of thousands from Ethiopia, we are very familiar with the needs of refugees and immigrants. Our experience has taught us that only a united community can save the lives of those desperately seeking shelter.

The situation is dire, but it is not hopeless. In order to change the lives of the millions fleeing their homes, we must act. Human rights violations committed by autocratic regimes must not be left unanswered. When children are indoctrinated instead of educated, we can no longer sit on the fence. As the Secretary-General said earlier today, when women are subjugated and segregated from the rest of society, we can no longer remain passive. When corruption fills the vacuum created by failed leadership, we must confront it. When violent fundamentalist ideologies masquerade as legitimate religious beliefs, we must oppose them.

The millions fleeing their homes are telling their story in despair. They are tired of repression, of autocracy, of civil war, and they are tired of religious extremism. They simply dream of living a normal life in their homeland. Let us make that dream a reality.

Mr. Shearman (United Kingdom): Forced displacement is one of the most pressing issues facing the international community. This year, more than 819,000 refugees and migrants have entered Europe by crossing the Mediterranean, more than half of them from Syria. That is nearly four times the total number

who crossed during the whole of 2014. Sadly, around 4,000 have lost their lives in the Mediterranean in trying to do so.

The United Kingdom is committed to a comprehensive response to that tragedy. British vessels are helping to rescue thousands of people from the Mediterranean as part of the European response. But we must recognize that the vast majority of Syrians who have fled Syria have not crossed the Mediterranean. They are in neighbouring countries. Turkey is hosting more than 2 million people; Jordan, more than 600,000; Lebanon, more than 1 million, a quarter of that country's pre-crisis population. The United Kingdom pays tribute to the generous efforts that those countries have made, and we believe the international community must match them. We must provide better, longer-term support to the refugees in those countries and to the host countries themselves. That is essential if we are to tackle the drivers of irregular migration. Our priority must be to reduce the pressures that force people to risk their lives on the perilous journey across the Mediterranean.

The picture inside Syria today is unspeakably bleak. For more than four years, Syrians have been bombed, starved and driven from their homes. More than a quarter of a million have been killed, and 13.5 million, 6 million of whom are children, need humanitarian assistance. The United Kingdom has so far pledged more than \$1.7 billion in response, our largest-ever humanitarian response to a single crisis. The money has provided more than 20 million food rations and 2.5 million medical consultations. It has given a quarter of a million children access to education inside Syria and in neighbouring countries.

But that is clearly not enough. The United Nations Syria appeal for this year is not even halfway funded. We need to do more. In February of next year, the United Kingdom, along with the Governments of Germany, Norway and Kuwait and with the United Nations, will host a Syria donors conference in London. We will invite leaders from countries around the world from non-governmental organizations and civil society to come together to raise significant new funding to meet the needs of all those affected within Syria and in neighbouring countries. Together we must find long-term funding and solutions that move from relief to development. We must address longer-term needs by supporting job creation and education and giving hope for the future, so that those who have fled the

conflict are not driven to put their lives at the mercy of smugglers and criminal networks.

Beyond the Syria donors conference, we must also use the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held in Istanbul in May, to agree on better, more sustainable ways of meeting the needs of those displaced by protracted crises. We agree, of course, that for those whose needs cannot be met in the region, we must provide asylum. So far the United Kingdom has given sanctuary to more than 5,000 refugees from Syria, and we will resettle 20,000 more of the most vulnerable directly from the region.

However, neither resettlement nor better humanitarian action is the long-term solution. The conflict that is driving forced displacement from Syria requires a political solution. That is the only way to bring the conflict to an end. As many speakers have said today, we must all commit to working to achieve that solution, and to supporting the emergence of an inclusive, peaceful and prosperous Syria.

Mr. Andanje (Kenya): My delegation welcomes the President's initiative in holding today's debate. We believe it should have been convened much earlier, in view of the enormity and complexity of the problem. The delay has given rise to conspiracy theories and analysis of the issue, predictably characterized by omissions and distortions in the mainstream media, especially in Europe. My delegation is convinced that the tragedy of refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers is a global problem, not specific to any particular country or region. Migrants are abandoning the Middle East and Africa and migrating to Europe. Others leave Central America for the United States. This is a humanitarian crisis. Nevertheless, Kenya is ready to lend its weight constructively to the debate, focusing specifically on Syrian asylum-seekers.

My delegation notes that most of the discourse, whether on refugees, migrants or asylum-seekers, lacks a context in terms of the influx and the root causes of the problem. The dominant narrative increasingly determining Government policies in places that are the destinations of the migrants and asylum-seekers concentrates on their immediate problems, the barriers in their way and the Governments' difficulties in coping. The crisis has become less a product of political conflict and more a cultural battlefield. The trenches are dug along ethnic lines against the barbaric hordes of uncivilized brown-skinned invaders arriving as a

swarm, as they have been described in certain quarters. Others call it an avalanche that must be stopped immediately.

Most unfortunately, this is the position espoused vocally by the far right throughout Europe. That is depraved morality. Surely human beings cannot be depicted and treated in this way. That is not humanity. The refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers from Syria and elsewhere deserve to be treated with dignity, compassion and protection, in conformity with international standards. We must protect their rights. No one should reject all responsibility for the hundreds of thousands of migrants. That would lead to a humanitarian catastrophe. What is required is solidarity, not fences, deportations and amendments to national asylum laws.

As host to 605,364 persons of concern and as a victim of terrorist attacks, Kenya shares the concerns about national security. The recent terrorist attacks in Turkey, Lebanon and Paris and, more recently, in Nigeria and today in Mali serve to underscore the priority that each and every one of us here attaches to national security but must not be used to victimize people who are already victims. They include women, children and all those with special needs. They are innocent. The majority are fleeing war in Syria to seek safety. My delegation is convinced that restrictive measures such as fast-tracking, screening asylum-seekers without due process and sending them back to third countries or even detaining them, are no solution. We cannot pick the migrants we want while saying that we do not like others. What is needed is to consider long-term measures.

This is a problem that is not going away any time soon. I do not know whether that will reassure the Assembly or put some delegations on edge. Whether we like it or not, migrants and asylum-seekers from Syria will keep on coming until we can find a political settlement to the conflict in that country. That is the reality. We should therefore support all efforts aimed at finding a lasting political solution to that conflict.

My delegation believes that the efficiency of the asylum system will be key to addressing the problem of migrants and asylum-seekers in the Mediterranean basin, whether they are from Syria or from elsewhere. National asylum systems exist for determining which asylum-seekers actually qualify for international

protection. However, as I mentioned earlier, asylum-seekers and migrants are entitled to proper due process.

We must respond to the pleas of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for increased and improved support in the countries of first asylum, such as Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, which are now hosting more than 4 million Syrians. Kenya welcomes the change in approach to the humanitarian funding highlighted in UNHCR reports. We note that global humanitarian funding has not kept pace with accelerating needs. This is an area that we need to overhaul, ensuring that development actors become involved at every stage of displacement.

In that respect, the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2015-2016 for Syrian refugees, led by UNHCR and the United Nations Development Programme, can serve as a useful framework. However, we need to scale up the funding in view of the fact that the number of migrants and asylum-seekers has continued to increase.

Finally, my delegation is convinced that, to avoid the recurrence of situations such as that of the Syrian refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers, we need to think twice when determining our own interests and policies.

Mrs. Boura (Greece) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I would like to condemn the recent terrorist attacks and express, on behalf of Greece, our deep solidarity with and condolences to the families of the victims.

(*spoke in English*)

As a front-line and most-affected country, Greece welcomes the fact that today's exchange of views to raise global awareness about the tragic circumstances of refugees and irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin, with an emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers, is taking place in the most appropriate forum to deal with global challenges, namely, the United Nations.

Greece aligns itself with the statement (see A/70/PV.59) delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (EU), which is indeed a major destination for mixed migratory flows.

I would like to thank High Commissioner António Guterres for his comprehensive statement and to take this opportunity to express our gratitude for his leadership as United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees and for his valuable support and cooperation with the Greek authorities and Government.

The unprecedented migratory and refugee flows we are witnessing have shown a sharp increase in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Western Balkans, in parallel with a constant flow along the Central Mediterranean route. Situated on the outer fringe of the EU, Greece has been experiencing influxes for some time, but nothing compares with the migrant flows of the past few months. Since 1 January 2015, more than 600,000 people originating from Syria, Afghanistan and Iraq have crossed Greece's borders with Turkey on their way to European countries, most of them landing on Greek islands. The bulk of these people — 75 to 80 per cent — are refugees.

Although asymmetrically burdened in recent months, Greece nevertheless has done, and still does, its utmost to rescue refugees fleeing from war as they struggle in boats across the Aegean Sea. We have made tremendous efforts to save thousands of lives, including in search-and-rescue operations at sea, and to receive them in a humane way in our front-line islands, with the aid and mobilization of the local population.

As Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras stated at the high-level side event organized by the Secretary-General on 30 September, these migratory flows have a cause, namely, wars and conflicts that — no matter what their internal causes are — we as a global community have not managed to resolve effectively. Notwithstanding their complicated nature, these conflicts need to be addressed politically, with the full commitment of major and regional players. The fight against criminal networks of traffickers and smugglers that take advantage of people in need and in distress remains a priority, together with the suppression of other illegal activities — such as the illicit traffic of cultural objects — which provide financial resources for armed conflict.

The challenge that we will be facing in the years to come will be to deal with the underlying causes of migration, which in most cases are to be found in hardship and lack of opportunity, and to provide safe and stable environments where people can live without fear and thrive. In that context, we also agree that the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) must be a priority.

No person should have to flee because the situation in his or her own country has become so untenable that

it is impossible to live in dignity. This situation is what we, the United Nations, have a collective obligation to tackle. At the same time, we should strive to address the migration crisis. Addressing the migration and refugee crisis is a shared obligation that requires a comprehensive strategy and a determined effort over time; it must be undertaken in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility.

Greece considers the protection of the refugees and of human life in general to be a fundamental element of the European and international system of values and principles. It is our responsibility to respect international obligations and human rights. As European and African leaders declared at the Valletta summit, international protection has to be strengthened, and assistance, including its humanitarian dimension, has to be stepped up. Solidarity, responsibility, humanity and close cooperation should be guiding our actions in the days and months to come.

Today we face an international humanitarian crisis that calls for a collective response. The United Nations and the international community must step up efforts to resolve the conflicts in Syria and Libya, as well as to counter violent extremism. Extending support to the countries that host a large number of refugees and United Nations agencies, which do so much to alleviate human pain, should be one of our shared goals. Encouraging a more generous resettlement scheme whereby numerous countries from several regions, in a spirit of shared responsibility, would participate more actively is an approach that it may be timely to examine.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening today's important meeting to address the important and tragic issue of illegal migration, including Syrian migrants in the Mediterranean. I take this opportunity to thank Mr. Guterres for his sincere efforts as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and wish in particular to express our gratitude for his active role in addressing the issue of refugees around the world and in mobilizing humanitarian assistance for Syrian refugees. We would also like to congratulate Mr. Filippo Grandi, the new High Commissioner for Refugees, and wish to underscore the confidence that the General Assembly has in him. We wish him every success in his difficult task.

Yesterday's informal meeting provided an opportunity to listen to different views on tackling

the global humanitarian crisis. Today's meeting is focused on the same issue and underscores the need for the international community to find solutions to the conflicts that lie at the root of the problem. The figures we are seeing around the world in terms of refugees have exposed the socioeconomic impact of conflicts. There are currently more than 60 million refugees, displaced persons and asylum-seekers. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance has doubled over the past 10 years, which is a crisis without parallel since the Second World War. United Nations reports show that the humanitarian situation in Syria is on a larger scale and more serious than any other in the world. More than a quarter of a million people have been killed, and more than 10 million displaced, including many children who need assistance. More than half of the Syrian people have been forcibly displaced by a war that is now in its fifth year. That means that the total of Syrian refugees now exceeds 4 million, making it the largest refugee community in the world.

In that regard, we commend the generous efforts made by host countries, especially Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey, and also Iraq and the Arab Republic of Egypt, and the services they are rendering to the refugee community. The crisis has surpassed their capacity to respond, thereby negatively impacting their social services as well as their infrastructure and government resources. In addition, those countries face security threats because of the spillover of the conflict. We commend the efforts of the United Nations system and the specialized agencies to help the refugees, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, UNESCO, the World Health Organization and the World Food Programme, along with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and other international bodies working in the field.

The international community has been following the widespread media coverage of the arrival of Syrian refugees who cross the Mediterranean. The suffering of Syrians has made headlines around the world, especially with the shocking image of the Syrian child Aylan Kurdi on the shores of the Turkish city of Bodrum. We warned about the outcome of the fighting in Syria, which has caused the spillover of the humanitarian crisis. Since the inception of the crisis in Syria, we have supported the unity of the Security Council in its response, because it is the body tasked with maintaining international peace and security. Three resolutions on the Syrian crisis were adopted between February and December. They

were aimed at improving the humanitarian situation by opening borders in order to give access to humanitarian assistance and to ensure the free movement of food and assistance as well as the protection of humanitarian workers. However, non-cooperation on the part of the Syrian authorities undermined those efforts and exacerbated the tragedy.

We support the outcome of the Vienna meetings. We hope that there will be a political solution in the near future, based on the final communiqué (see A/69/522, annex) of the Geneva I Conference on Syria.

The State of Kuwait has spared no effort since the inception of the crisis to render humanitarian assistance to the Syrian people through its official and popular institutions. At the three donor conferences we hosted, in 2012, 2013 and 2014, to support the humanitarian situation in Syria, we succeeded in raising more than \$7 billion in pledges. Kuwait contributed \$1.3 billion, directing 90 per cent of its contribution to United Nations specialized agencies. We would like to reiterate that Kuwait is eager to honour the voluntary pledges made at international conferences. We understand the difficulties faced by United Nations agencies when they are underfunded. We commend the plans put forward and, although we are a small country, we spare no effort to support the Syrian people. We have hosted a large number of Syrians, equal to 11 per cent of the Kuwaiti population. We have provided them with a decent living, as well as health care, education and job opportunities. Those endeavours are part of our attempt to extend a helping hand to the Syrian people, who deserve to enjoy the rights enshrined in international law to ensure their decent living.

I am pleased to note that Kuwait, along with the United Kingdom and Norway, is helping to organize the conference to be held in London in 2016. We hope that that conference will mobilize the efforts of the international community to meet the needs of all people affected by the Syrian crisis and that there will be support for the neighbouring countries. We also hope that there will be solutions for long-term financing to cover the needs of 2016 and beyond.

Mr. Grima (Malta): I should like to begin by thanking the President for convening today's important meeting,

Malta aligns itself with the statement (see A/70/PV.59) delivered earlier today on behalf of the European Union.

There can be no doubt that Europe is witnessing a surge in migrants and refugees that is unparalleled in recent memory — a phenomenon that is not entirely new to a number of countries in Europe, especially those bordering the Mediterranean. As wave after wave of men, women and children make their way towards Europe from the South, and now also from the East, it has become increasingly clear that the magnitude of the migration challenge confronting Europe requires solutions that go beyond regional efforts. In our view, a broader international response will need to be considered.

Last week, Malta was pleased to host a summit meeting at which European and African leaders jointly discussed migration and the challenges and opportunities it brings for both continents. In many ways, that summit represents a clear recognition that the migration phenomenon can be addressed only through closer cooperation and partnership across different areas. Indeed, one of the summit's successes has been the ability of both European and African leaders to look at the refugee and migration crisis from different perspectives, taking into account the concerns of all the countries involved. We are pleased that an action plan was agreed. Funds have been allocated to it and time lines have been set. Now both sides will need to ensure that what was decided at the summit will be implemented. We view the Valletta summit as an important first step that we hope will take cooperation between Europe and Africa to a new level.

We all know that the solution to the migration and refugee crisis is complex and will require action on many levels. Insofar as our region is concerned, European countries are already engaged on an almost daily basis in search-and-rescue operations, saving the lives of thousands of people at sea. We recognize that better cooperation is needed between the countries of origin, transit and destination, including in border management and in taking on the ruthless smugglers and criminal networks. That will mean putting in place systems that will allow for the orderly processing of asylum-seekers, the acceptance of genuine refugees and the return of those who are not. That will require addressing the root causes of migration, including by empowering the countries of origin to be able to provide a more safe, secure and sustainable future for their citizens. It will require stability in Libya and an end to the conflict in Syria.

Since the outbreak of the civil war in Syria, in March 2011, an estimated 9 million Syrians have fled their homes, taking refuge in neighbouring countries or within Syria itself. The humanitarian crisis has escalated to unprecedented proportions. The World Food Programme figures indicate that 8.7 million people in Syria are in need of food assistance, and 13.5 million are in need of humanitarian assistance. Syria's funding requirements are the highest in the Middle East region, totalling \$177 million for this year alone. I am proud that Malta has played its part in humanitarian assistance to Syria through financial contributions to the World Food Programme and the third International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria and its 2015-2016 Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan.

Allow me to take this opportunity to briefly pay tribute to the outgoing United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. António Guterres, and to his successor, the outgoing Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, Mr. Filippo Grandi, for their leadership and dedication over many years in steering the work of their respective offices through increasingly challenging times. I wish them both every success in their future endeavours.

There is an increasing recognition of the need to combine refugee assistance with support for host communities. Jordan, Lebanon, Turkey and Tunisia are not only large refugee-hosting countries but are pillars of regional stability. Beyond humanitarian assistance to the refugees themselves, those countries need strong financial and other support to be able to cope with the pressures on their education and health systems. Governments and the private sector, according to their individual capacities, must continue to be encouraged to scale up their assistance so as to support affected countries in dealing with the crisis. It is also in that context that the link between humanitarian and development assistance becomes central. It is clear that no country or region can address the crisis in Syria on its own. At a time when the humanitarian system is under strain to keep up with growing needs and challenges, the need to comprehensively address the global humanitarian and refugee crisis becomes even greater.

We also feel it is important that development cooperation policies have a stronger link with human mobility questions. Cooperation between countries needs to focus more strongly on creating the opportunity

for people to have the possibility of a future in their own countries and to make migration a matter of choice, not of desperation.

Today's debate comes just a few days after the barbaric terrorist acts in Paris. Those attacks have also triggered a debate, both in Europe and farther afield, on the acceptance of refugees, particularly from Syria. It is all too easy to forget the reality of the desperate situations facing many refugees today. The only way we can manage migration is by working together and by turning our principles into actions. Our purpose must be to address the plight of vulnerable people in the Mediterranean, to reflect on our collective response to the global crisis, to agree to a joint approach and to take concrete steps so that migration becomes a positive exchange between our peoples and not a tragic loss for all. Today's meeting, we hope, will set us on that course.

Mr. Ben Sliman (Tunisia) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Mogens Lykketoft, President of the General Assembly, for convening this plenary meeting on global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin, with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers.

Tunisia values the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1). We place emphasis on the Sustainable Development Goals that call for facilitating the migration and mobility of people in a regulated, safe and responsible way. We believe that migration and development are correlated. Goals that promote international and regional development must include recognition of the opportunity that human mobility provides to address the challenges to countries of origin, transit and destination.

Tunisia is primarily a country of origin; one tenth of our population lives abroad. They make transfers estimated at 5 per cent of the gross national income and 30 per cent of our foreign reserves. The Tunisian Government is drafting a strategy to promote regulated migration among Tunisians and to improve their contribution to socioeconomic development. The purpose of the strategy is to protect the interests and rights of Tunisian migrants, prevent irregular migration and protect foreign migrants and asylum-seekers. In parallel, we continue to draft a domestic trafficking law. An estimated 80 per cent of our diaspora lives in Europe. We have assured our Mediterranean and

European partners of our belief in the need to attach more importance to the human dimension in our joint policies and to linkages between the coordinated management of migration, development and employment. We also believe in fighting irregular migration while respecting human rights, and in facilitating procedures in Europe that will serve our collective interests.

Over the past few years, Tunisia has received significant influxes of asylum-seekers and refugees fleeing from Libya, whom we have hosted. We are currently hosting over 1 million people as part of our obligation to show solidarity, despite the difficult domestic situation and changing regional situation. The protracted humanitarian crisis has had a negative impact on the national growth rates and the well-being of the host communities. We commend our friends and partners, both donors and international organizations, for their support in helping us to build democracy. That support is critical, as it enables us to focus on sustainable development and interventions relating to humanitarian development, and it will help us to build the capacity of our institutions and communities.

The influx of migrants has meant the collapse of all barriers among countries of origin, transit and destination. It has also led to thousands of people drowning in the Mediterranean Sea. These were people fleeing their homes in search of better opportunities in Europe. Some of them continue to cross the Mediterranean Sea, which warns us to expect still more loss of life unless we help them. In the current year, Tunisia has provided asylum for the thousands of migrants who arrive in dinghies on our shores, even though Tunisia is not a country of transit or destination for them. It has sought to help such people irrespective of their legal status, and it has preserved the dignity of the vulnerable. We reiterate how important it is for search operations to be conducted in the Mediterranean by the countries concerned. The knowledge that rafts overlaid with people are making their perilous way across the Mediterranean from Libya and Syria must prompt us to scale up our efforts simply from a humanitarian standpoint. Besides meeting their immediate needs, we must address the political, economic and social causes of their flight with a view to assisting the countries of origin, transit and destination.

We reiterate the need to find a political solution to the crises in Libya and Syria. We must address the humanitarian crises and make radical efforts to resolve the migration issue. It is important to find permanent

solutions for the refugees and migrants in our continent. We can do this by providing better reception facilities for them in host countries and by facilitating their resettlement, family reunions and voluntary returns.

For decades the African continent has experienced waves of forced displacement owing to conflict, wars, climate change, pandemics and so forth. It also hosts one third of all refugees worldwide despite economic difficulties and limited resources, which prevent us from providing all the assistance needed to fulfil their fundamental rights. We therefore need to receive the support of the international community in alleviating the burden on the African continent, whose countries and communities are hosting ever-increasing numbers of refugees. We should establish cooperative policies according to which financing is based on burden-sharing, respect for human rights and common but differentiated responsibilities. That approach constitutes the basis of all types of international cooperation whose aim is to guarantee sustainable development and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Mr. Menelaou (Cyprus): Cyprus aligns itself with the statement (see A/70/PV.59) delivered by the observer of the European Union (EU). I would like to make an additional statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to commend the President for convening this timely debate. The daily reports about people fleeing their homelands in a desperate search of a safe harbour are indeed appalling. The Mediterranean Sea is becoming a watery grave for hundreds of refugees in an odyssey with a tragic end.

Over the past few months we have had extensive discussions on the need to address the root causes of this humanitarian disaster. We all agree on the imperative of comprehensive political solutions to conflicts, the promotion of peace, stability and human rights, an unwavering adherence to the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, the creation of conditions of prosperity and development and the elimination of poverty, hunger and environmental degradation.

Cyprus is situated in the middle of an area of instability and turmoil. Our efforts in response to this crisis are primarily based on humanitarianism and our obligations under international law. Those people are not just a rabble of potential illegal immigrants, they are human beings entitled to humane and dignified

treatment. Most of them are already victims of hatred, fundamentalism, violations of their human rights and fundamental freedoms, religious and national discrimination and prosecution. They cannot be victimized for a second time on account of indifference, or through policies that overlook the humanitarian factor.

As a member State of the European Union, we are proud of the EU's leading humanitarian role in support of the countries in need. We also commend the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for International Migration, Mr. Peter Sutherland, for his work, as well as other United Nations agencies and other international organizations and non-governmental organizations for their efforts. The magnitude of the problem requires coordinated action and the mobilization of all available resources.

We recently established the Cyprus office of the International Organization for Migration (IOM). This came at an opportune time. We already cooperate with IOM on migration, particularly in relation to voluntary returns, the trafficking of persons and in the context of the European Migration Network.

Peace is a *sine qua non* for any effective response to the current challenge. None of us is immune from its devastating effects. Its perpetuation will be a humanitarian catastrophe with grave political, social and security repercussions. Given our proximity to ongoing wars, on several occasions we have voiced our deep concern about the looming danger of infiltration and spillover and their shattering effects. We are now experiencing the tragic proof of this fear. If the dynamics remains unchanged, we are very much afraid that the worst is yet to come.

The recent terrorist attacks underline in a tragic way the sense of urgency with which we should jointly tackle this formidable challenge.

Ms. Bird (Australia): The scale of the human tragedy requires the international community to maintain its focus on that issue. The cost of the conflict in Syria is borne by the hundreds of thousands who have lost their lives, the millions more displaced, and by a generation of children facing interrupted schooling, under-vaccination, malnutrition, injury, trauma and death. The need to help those suffering is evident, and so too is the need to address the root causes of the conflict. The conflict is now in its fifth year. A political solution is desperately needed. We hope that the International

Syria Support Group's talks in Vienna can pave the way to such a resolution.

For those who have been forced to flee, safe and legal migration pathways are required. The number of lives lost in the Mediterranean continues to grow. We recognize the tremendous efforts made by the countries neighbouring the conflict in Syria, particularly Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq and Egypt, in hosting millions of refugees. Australia will continue to play its part to support displaced populations and their host countries. We hope that more countries are able to provide safe pathways to resettle those people most in need. Earlier this week, the first refugees arrived in Australia to be resettled as part of the Government's commitment to resettle 12,000 refugees fleeing the conflict in Syria and Iraq. Those refugees are in addition to the 13,750 people resettled under Australia's humanitarian resettlement programme this year. Australia has a proud tradition of welcoming refugees, with over 825,000 coming to Australia since the end of the Second World War. Our society is a testament to the contribution that refugees make culturally and economically.

While on the Security Council, Australia was a strong advocate for action to alleviate suffering inside Syria through improved humanitarian access. We remain deeply concerned about the millions of people who have had limited or no access to life-saving aid, in many cases for over two years. In the face of those challenges, the international humanitarian and resettlement system is stretched to its limits. More must be done to support this. But addressing the causes of the conflict itself and achieving a political settlement are just as pressing. A joined-up international effort is required, bridging humanitarian, development, security and political agendas. We must provide safe, legal and orderly avenues for migration. Australia will continue to do its part to assist the international community in meeting that global challenge.

Mr. Drobnyak (Croatia): In the light of the recent terrorist attacks, let me at the outset express Croatia's deepest sympathy and condolences to the Governments and the families of all who were victims of terrorism.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/70/PV.59). I would like to make some additional remarks in my national capacity.

The migratory and refugee crisis is on a scale not seen in 70 years. It represents a new and unprecedented

challenge. Besides having a deep-rooted worldwide impact, it is directly and profoundly affecting many Member States, regardless of their size, development level or geographical location, thereby underscoring the truly global nature of this crisis. Since September this year, more than 423,000 migrants and refugees have come along the so-called Western-Balkans route, have entered the European Union via Croatia, and have proceeded on their way to Western and Northern Europe. On average 6,000 to 7,000 persons are still entering Croatia daily.

We have taken a number of measures to ease their plight and to assist them in any way possible. Let me briefly mention just a few. Croatia has established transit and reception centres that provide migrants and refugees with food, heated tents, clothing, sanitation, free wi-fi and medical care. The migrants are being registered, and special care for women, children and other vulnerable groups is provided. We remain dedicated to ensuring humane treatment and respect for the human rights of all refugees and migrants passing through Croatia.

This is, unfortunately, not a first refugee crisis for us. During the war in the 1990s, Croatia hosted and took care of more than half a million refugees and internally displaced persons. Many of our citizens, especially those living in the border area with Serbia — which is now a major crossing point for refugees — still remember their own experiences when they were forced to flee their homes. It is our moral and human obligation to save people's lives and assist them as much as we can. But we cannot do it alone. We firmly believe that the current crisis and its unprecedented challenges — in its humanitarian and security dimensions alike — can be addressed only in a comprehensive and coordinated way. In that regard, we strongly support an inclusive, effective approach on the bilateral, regional and global levels. In finding appropriate and operative solutions to the current crisis, all international actors must join forces and act together. In that regard, I would like to stress the following points.

Cooperation among the countries of origin, transit and destination is important, and we need to strengthen efforts in addressing and finding solutions to the root causes of the crisis. We must intensify diplomatic engagements to find lasting political solutions to the conflicts in Syria and Libya. The long-term stability and prosperity of Iraq and Afghanistan are also of the utmost importance. In that context, we welcome the

recent talks in Vienna, and express our strong support to the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria, Staffan de Mistura. We must strengthen our efforts in the fight against terrorism and extremist groups, especially the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant, as well as in countering radicalization and violent extremism.

We must also focus more on development efforts by supporting sustainable development and its mechanisms, consistent with the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), to improve conditions on the ground in order to better contain migration push factors. We urgently need to allocate appropriate resources and strengthen humanitarian assistance, with particular emphasis on support for the countries hosting the vast majority of Syrian refugees: Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon. We commend their efforts in that regard. We must also intensify the fight against organized crime, migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings. The United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air are of particular importance. People's hardship and misery are being ruthlessly exploited while traffickers are running multi-billion-dollar industries. We must have zero tolerance, especially towards the trafficking of children, which is becoming widespread along the Eastern Mediterranean-Western Balkans route.

Although the challenge of migration is not new, and refugees and migrants have been an inseparable part of human history, once again we are overwhelmed by the sheer scale of this crisis. All those millions of people have their own personal stories to tell and family futures to think of. We cannot remain oblivious to their suffering, even though we may be mindful of the security threats and other challenges this crisis imposes. And we must once again reiterate that no single Member State can solve the problem by acting alone.

In conclusion, we hope that this important and timely debate will strengthen our resolve to find decisive solutions through the use of all appropriate international instruments. The role of the United Nations and its agencies remains pivotal.

Mr. Jürgenson (Estonia): Estonia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union (see A/70/PV.59).

During the past year we have seen an unprecedented number of migrants and refugees around the world.

Devastating conflicts in Syria and parts of Iraq and poverty and unrest in Afghanistan, the Horn of Africa, West Africa and Libya have caused masses of people to flee their homes. Unfortunately, most of them have no prospect of returning to their homes in the near future.

This is a global crisis. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, a record of almost 60 million forcibly displaced persons around the world was reached by the end of 2014. Many of them are hosted by neighbouring countries, which often experience difficult situations themselves. An unprecedented number of refugees and migrants are also seeking protection in Europe. More than one million refugees and migrants have crossed the borders into Europe in 2015. As this is a global challenge, we need to address it together, in all its dimensions. We have to find common and sustainable solutions.

Estonia supports the European Union's efforts to respond to the crisis. The primary aim of our common action is to save lives and ensure the protection of those in need of it. Secondly, we are also committed to addressing the root causes of the migratory flows. Thirdly, we are fighting organized crime responsible for smuggling and illicit trafficking. Estonia will continue to support countries in crisis and to fight the root causes of migration, primarily through humanitarian aid and multilateral development cooperation. Estonia also fights organized crime by participating in the European Union operation mandated by Security Council resolution 2240 (2015).

Mr. Kickert (Austria): In recent months, irregular flows of refugees and migrants to Europe have reached an unprecedented level, posing a significant challenge. As both a transit and a destination country, Austria is one of the European countries most affected by that development. We are well aware that many countries outside Europe, in particular those adjacent to fragile States or the sites of protracted conflicts, continue to host larger communities of refugees, displaced persons and migrants, and we highly commend their enormous efforts in that regard. Since situations of protracted crisis, such as that in Syria, are increasingly becoming the norm, we see the need for strengthened cooperation between humanitarian and development actors. We should therefore look into the possibility of obtaining more funding from development instruments for countries and local communities that host refugees.

The use of weapons with indiscriminate effect on civilian populations, in flagrant violation of international humanitarian law, is one of the reasons people are forced to leave their homes. We therefore renew our call to the Security Council to take action in that regard and to refer the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court. Furthermore, cooperation at the international level is necessary to find durable solutions, enhance the protection capacities of host countries and create opportunities for displaced populations and host communities, including in areas such as income generation, employment and education.

While we recognize the potential benefits of migration and mobility between and within our continents, we have to bear in mind that only properly managed migration flows can ensure those benefits. That management must be guided by the principles of solidarity, partnership and shared responsibility; and it is in that regard that Austria welcomes the high-level initiatives announced this morning by the Secretary-General (see A/70/PV.59), in particular the resettlement-plus conference in March and the high-level summit in September 2016.

Forced displacement and irregular migration undermine the possibilities for well-managed migration and mobility. We need comprehensive approaches to tackle the root causes. Information campaigns to raise awareness about the high risk of irregular sea crossings, migrant smuggling and human trafficking and the dissemination of a more realistic picture of expected living conditions in transit and destination countries are of importance. As already mentioned in the statement made on behalf of the European Union (see A/70/PV.59), regular channels for migration and mobility can be advanced only if there are parallel effective measures to stem irregular migration flows. A joint action plan recently endorsed by African and European States at the Valletta summit can serve as a model for a comprehensive approach. Providing improved economic and social perspectives, supporting good governance and building resilience must be at the core of common actions. For that purpose, appropriate funding instruments, such as the European Union (EU) Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis and the newly established EU Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing the root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa, have to be made available. In addition to collective EU

contributions, Austria makes bilateral contributions to both of those funds.

Let me conclude by stressing the importance of a political solution to the Syrian conflict. To save lives and alleviate the suffering of millions of refugees and displaced persons, we need a swift, nationwide ceasefire and a solid political process. We hope that the Vienna talks are bringing us closer to such an outcome.

Ms. Al-Thani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to express our appreciation for the inclusion of this item in the agenda of this session. I would like to thank both the Secretary-General for his statement and the President for his opening remarks (see A/70/PV.59).

There have been a number of in-depth discussions recently on how to address the refugee and migrant crises; we respect all positions and views in that regard. However, the international challenge posed by the growing influx of refugees and migrants, which is the result of conflicts in many regions, in particular in the Middle East, requires an approach based on international humanitarian, refugee and human rights law. The distressing images of refugees, in particular those who have drowned at sea, are vivid reminders of the tragedies faced by those who flee conflict. The images highlight the desperation of refugees, their quest for protection, and their hope for a decent life, all of which lead them to brave formidable dangers. If it is to successfully address the refugee crisis, the international community must address its root causes, in addition to the reasons that drive people to flee their homes, and must invest every effort in protecting the lives of those fleeing violence in conflict areas and in ensuring that refugees and migrants are dealt with in a dignified manner.

Since the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the State of Qatar has spoken about its potential impact on the humanitarian situation and its ramifications for international peace and security. The delayed response to the crisis led to the situation's deterioration, prompting the displacement or escape of Syrians to both neighbouring and far-flung countries, including in Europe. In the absence of sustainable solutions, the international community needs to be vigilant and to develop plans to respond to the refugee crisis. We would like to express our appreciation to Syria's neighbouring countries, in particular Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, the capacities of which have been overstretched. We

appreciate the efforts made by European countries to accommodate Syrian refugees, provide them with protection and alleviate their suffering. It would be remiss of me if I did not also express my country's appreciation for the efforts made by Mr. António Guterres, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, and his Office, and by the United Nations agencies that have worked tirelessly to help migrants and refugees.

Qatar is committed to helping the Syrian people and has spared no effort to provide relief for displaced persons and refugees. We continue to offer our support through bilateral channels, including with host countries and through the United Nations. I would like to note here that the number of Syrians who have taken up residence in the State of Qatar since the beginning of the crisis now exceeds 54,000. In addition, Qatar attaches importance to the education of Syrian children and the prevention of their exploitation and has reached over 60,000 Syrian children since 2012. As part of the pledge made during the Third International Pledging Conference for Syria, Qatar, in collaboration with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, established a fund for the vocational training of Syrian refugees. I would like to commend the State of Kuwait for hosting the pledging conferences, which have contributed significantly to providing support to the Syrian people. We look forward to the next such conference, which will be held in the United Kingdom in February 2016.

The State of Qatar has continued to push forward international efforts towards a political solution that safeguards the rights of the Syrian people and preserves the regional integrity of Syria. We will continue to support all international and regional efforts that address the root causes of the crisis, as well as terrorism, and will spare no effort to collaborate with our partners to alleviate the suffering of refugees, migrants and displaced persons.

Mr. Elmajerbi (Libya) (*spoke in Arabic*): It gives me great pleasure, at the outset, to express my thanks to the President for organizing this important meeting to discuss the situation of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin. The past few years have witnessed an unprecedented increase in the number of refugees who have been forced to leave their homelands owing to armed conflicts. There has been a tragic increase in the number of people — men, women and children — who

risk their lives by embarking on treacherous journeys in worn-out boats across the Mediterranean and heading to Europe to flee the tragic insecurity in their countries.

Although we recognize the economic, social and security burden borne by the countries hosting those refugees, we must not ignore the positive role that can be played by refugees in the countries of origin and destination. We should also bear in mind that the international community has the moral obligation and the humanitarian duty to stand by the refugees, assist them and acknowledge their plight in the countries of origin. We should therefore welcome them, respect their rights and provide them with the necessary assistance to live a life of dignity in their destination countries.

We all know that the illegal migration phenomenon cannot be resolved with an approach that addresses security issues alone. Nor can it be resolved in a viable manner with an approach that addresses the problem in the countries of transit and destination alone. We must address the problem in the countries of origin and in the areas that are suffering from armed conflicts, natural disasters and poverty. Through concerted international efforts, we must support those countries by providing the assistance needed to help bring about social security and development.

We look forward to the day when the advanced countries, in particular the countries of the European Union, play a greater role in resolving those armed conflicts and providing development assistance to the countries of origin in consultation with the concerned countries and regional organizations. We must attempt to stop the influx of illegal migrants from Africa and Asia who are heading to Europe via the Mediterranean and the tragic increase in the number of those who are drowning in the Mediterranean. We must put an end to this humanitarian catastrophe. However, that effort must show respect for the principles of international law, in particular respect for State sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

In general, we would say that the international community cannot achieve any progress in this matter unless we help the countries concerned to overcome their problems and improve their economic conditions in a way that is reflected in the lives of their citizens and that allows them to achieve sustainable development. In that context, we welcome the outcome of the European-African Summit that was recently held in Malta. We

hope that the Summit and its outcomes will help to curb the influx of illegal migrants into Europe, especially following the establishment of a trust fund in the amount of €1.8 billion to assist African countries in combating illegal migration.

We would like to stress to the international community in general, and the European Union in particular, that it is still possible to keep illegal migration via the southern coast of the Mediterranean to a minimum and save lives without resorting to violence. That can be achieved through cooperation between the European Union and the Libyan Government to help the latter maintain full control over all of Libya. It cannot be achieved without arming the Libyan military, activating the police and disarming the militias to protect Libyan Government institutions from the hegemony of the criminal gangs that control the vessels used for smuggling.

The Libyan authorities are assuming their full role in protecting migrants and cooperating with the European Union to save lives in the Mediterranean. We believe that the stability and security of Libya will benefit other countries in the region from an economic and security perspective, since Libya, which is currently a transit country, could easily become a destination country again, once security prevails and its economy is revitalized. That will be possible once the country and its infrastructure have been rebuilt. Libya will then be able to return to being a destination country for African people who are seeking work.

Mr. Zehnder (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): We thank the President for organizing this meeting aimed at raising global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin, with specific emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers. We also thank him for the informal debate held yesterday, which was rich in information and proposals. The issues related to forced displacement and migration pose significant global challenges.

Like many other countries, Switzerland is deeply concerned about the scope of the problem and the complex challenges it poses to the international community, including with regard to upholding and respect for human rights. We would like to raise four points that we deem essential in any consideration of the international community's efforts.

First, respect for human rights, international humanitarian law and refugee law must remain at the centre of our concern.

Secondly, no State or organization can meet single-handed the complex challenges created by human mobility. Constructive approaches can be developed only through a spirit of cooperation among all actors: States; international, regional and national organizations; civil society; and the migrants themselves. The United Nations has a key role to play in that regard. In the same context, we welcome the political leadership shown by the Quartet and the road map presented this morning by the Secretary-General (see A/70/PV.59).

Thirdly, it is more important than ever that States adopt a comprehensive approach to migration that takes into account both its challenges and its benefits. That can be achieved only by forging links among migration-related actors in order to develop a more coherent migration policy.

Finally, we must go beyond immediate responses and take steps to prevent further human tragedies. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) offers us an opportunity by reminding us that mobility requires a long-term vision in which migration takes place in a safe and regulated environment — a vision in which migration is a choice and not a necessity.

Beyond its ongoing support for the efforts of the United Nations and the international community to find a political solution to the conflict in Syria, Switzerland is providing support through humanitarian and development programmes. Today's situations of displacement raise humanitarian and protection-related questions, together with questions concerning human rights, peacebuilding and development. In situations of armed conflict, respect for international law must be maintained and political solutions must be found in order to address the underlying causes of forced displacement. Switzerland has further expanded its involvement in the region of the Middle East through its protection-in-the-region programme, which aims to support the countries of first refuge in their efforts to protect refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations.

Switzerland is already engaged and, with all the actors present in this Hall today, is prepared to do more. Since 2011, we have provided more than 200 million Swiss francs in response to the crisis in Syria and admitted some 9,000 Syrians. Around 3,000 more

Syrians in need of protection will be admitted into Switzerland. This programme is part of the European resettlement and relocation programme that we are participating in. Other measures have been taken to combat human smugglers and traffickers, to support transit countries in the Balkans and to cooperate with the countries of origin, transit and destination in other regions of the world, including the Horn of Africa and North Africa.

In conclusion, we would also like to underscore the importance of the work of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants. The recommendations contained in his reports provide us with some important ideas for moving forward.

Ms. Lodhi (Pakistan): The carefully framed title of the item that we are discussing today illustrates the moral dilemmas and conflicting interests and responses evoked by the current tide of humankind flowing from the conflict zones of the Middle East and Africa to the envisioned safety of Europe. Increasingly, humanitarian suffering is pitted against political barriers and religious and ethnic prejudice. Human solidarity is eroded by tenuous legal distinctions between migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees. And now, unfortunately, after the horrific terrorist attacks in Paris, which we all unequivocally condemned, fear is being fanned by some to accentuate discrimination, blunt humanitarianism and spread hate and Islamophobia. Some have blatantly declared that they will not accept Muslim refugees or asylum-seekers. Compassion has no religion. The thousands of refugees flowing towards Europe are fleeing precisely the same terror, death and mayhem that visited Paris last Friday.

It is not out of place to recall the world's political and moral responsibility for the plight of those refugees and asylum-seekers. Yes, poverty is one driver of migration and conflicts. Misgovernance and oppression provide another set of factors. But let us acknowledge that the series of interlocking crises and conflicts raging across the Middle East and Africa have been precipitated by misguided military interventions in the internal affairs of several regional States. As history and current events attest, foreign intervention begets more chaos and violence, breaking down established structures of internal and external stability, destroying States and displacing people.

The refugee crisis has emerged as one of the defining humanitarian and political issues of our times. How it

is addressed will influence political and social trends within and among States for decades, either bridging or dividing cultures and civilizations. It poses an acid test of the values of human rights and humanitarianism, which have been so vigorously championed and propagated by us all. We hope that the discussion today will crystallize the urgency and immense strategic significance of the decisions to be taken by States and the world on the current human crisis. I hope that this discussion will yield clear recommendations for a clear, resolute and unified response to the crisis — a response that is timely, coherent, comprehensive and, above all, based on the principles of humanitarianism, human rights and national and global responsibility.

First, it is essential that the flow of humanity to European shores be met with humanity. We commend States neighbouring the conflict area for their accommodating response. We endorse the openness and generosity of those States that have kept their borders open and also kept their hearts open. But the current refugee crisis is truly beyond the capacity of a single country. It is epic in its dimensions and demands integrated regional and global responses. Obviously, the States where refugees are seeking sanctuary will need to share the burden equitably. Fixed ceilings on accepting people who are in need of urgent protection is unacceptable, legally and morally. What would happen to those who do not meet the criterion? Would they be asked to return? Is that consistent with international humanitarian law? Every refugee and asylum-seeker is entitled to protection and humane treatment. There is no room for discrimination on the basis of caste, colour or creed or any other consideration in international law. The moral compass of those who refuse refugees of any particular faith must be questioned. And attempts to discriminate between refugees and asylum-seekers on ethnic grounds are legally, politically and morally untenable.

Secondly, to stem the tide of the refugees to Europe, massive and urgent assistance is needed to care for the millions of refugees who are crowded into neighbouring countries — in Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon and elsewhere — from where most of those arriving in Europe originate. That also applies to the 3 million registered and unregistered Afghan refugees who still live in Pakistan. Around 20 per cent of the refugees arriving in Europe are Afghans. Unfortunately, international assistance to those refugees in neighbouring countries and the response to United

Nations appeals for resources to sustain them has been partial and ungenerous, to put it delicately.

Thirdly, conditions will have to be created to enable the refugees to return to their homes in dignity and peace. Political solutions have to be promoted in order to halt the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere. Compromises may be difficult, but they are essential. Fixed preconditions for peace and negotiations are a recipe for continuing conflict and chaos. The rights of majorities and minorities will have to be respected. Nor can the political hegemony of any Power or combination of Powers form the basis for durable peace in the region.

Finally, when history judges us collectively, let us make sure that we are not found wanting for lack of humanity. Let us join our strengths and combine our energies to overcome this humanitarian catastrophe. Together, I believe we can.

Mr. Mahmoud (Egypt): There are more than 7.5 million internally displaced persons and more than 4 million refugees. The death toll has reached almost 250,000, with many more wounded. Those are not mere figures and numbers. They are human beings who have lost their lives or lost their parents, sons or daughters, human beings who have fled their homes and lost their future. That is the impact of the protracted and cruellest human tragedy in recent history — the Syrian crisis.

Since the onset of the Syrian crisis in March 2011, countries of the region have been witnessing a massive flow of refugees who were forced to leave their homes. More than 300,000 Syrians have found their way to Egypt, with about 130,000 officially registered as refugees with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. Security Council resolutions 2139 (2014) and 2165 (2014) refer to Egypt as one of the top five countries for receiving refugees, along with Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq.

In spite of the already overburdened Egyptian economy and infrastructure, owing to recent developments in Egypt and the region during the past four years, our people and Government took a decision at the beginning of the crisis to provide our Syrian brothers with full and free access to the same public services rendered to Egyptians: the same health care, primary education and higher education services, which are massively subsidized and are often virtually free of charge. Consequently, among the host countries in the region and according to the Office of the United

Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Egypt has one of the highest school-enrolment rates of Syrian refugee children: 63 per cent for early childhood education, 85 per cent for primary education and 70 per cent for secondary education.

Unlike refugees in many countries hosting a sudden flow of refugees, Syrian refugees in Egypt live within the host communities. We have no refugee camps. That has made it more difficult to arrive at an accurate count of the exact number of refugees. The number of actual refugees could easily exceed the official one. That also makes it more difficult to have a clear assessment of their needs and those of the host community in Egypt. As an example of our preliminary assessment effort, and based on a minimum estimate of the numbers of Syrian refugees in Egypt, we established that the financial burden of the Syrian refugees' share of one item — subsidies — in Egypt's budget for 2014-2015 could reach almost 1 billion Egyptian pounds, or nearly \$140 million.

Saving the lives of Syrians fleeing the atrocities of war should be our number-one priority. So I would like to thank every host country for the help, assistance and shelter it is providing to our Syrian brothers. I would also like to thank every relief worker, organization and agency working in Syria or with Syrian refugees for the noble job they are doing, and every donor. While we welcome and encourage the resilient approach of the United Nations in dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis and the host communities' needs, we see that shortfalls in the funding for the international agencies and programmes concerned remain a big challenge that must be addressed by international partners and donors. We are all partners, living on the same planet. Dealing with the consequences of such a tragedy continues to be a heavy burden that must be shared by every Member State, and the most developed in particular. Ensuring adequate, predictable and effective funding for humanitarian action is a must, and the current levels of third-country resettlement should be increased.

Apart from our duty to deal with the current and future consequences of the refugee crisis and to find a solution to the tragedies witnessed by Syrians who have taken to the sea in order to escape conflict and who actually believe that the open sea is safer than their homelands, we have another major responsibility, which is tackling the root causes of the problem. That brings us to the political aspect of the matter at hand, and should make us all focus our efforts on finding

the only solution that can prevent Syrian mothers from voluntarily taking their children on a clearly life-threatening venture across the Mediterranean.

The past few years have shown that the conflict in Syria cannot and should not be resolved through military means or in favour of a specific party. More than ever, we urgently need a political solution to the crisis, and a long-awaited window of opportunity opened during the recent meetings in Vienna. We therefore strongly encourage the Vienna parties and the entire international community to adhere firmly to that process and keep in mind that every step forward and every compromise reached among the interested parties will save thousands and thousands of lives.

Mr. Minami (Japan): I would like to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation for the President's leadership in convening today's meeting. I would also like to express my appreciation to the Secretary-General for his statement identifying the five priority areas of the topic. I am also grateful to Mr. Guterres, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, for his insightful statement.

Owing to the protracted crisis in Syria, the international community, and especially Europe, is facing the greatest humanitarian and refugee crisis since the Second World War. In order to tackle the issue, we must address its root causes, as many speakers today have said. First, it goes without saying that political solutions to these crises are crucial. Regrettably, the Security Council, the international body primarily responsible for finding such solutions, has been unable to rise to the challenge during the past four years. Japan will join the Security Council next year, and we are ready to do all we can to ensure that we take on our share of that responsibility. We welcome the recent advances in Vienna.

Secondly, the issue of peace and security is closely linked to that of sustainable development. Recently, under the United Kingdom's presidency of the Security Council, an open debate was convened on the topic of peace, security and development (see S/PV.7561). We need a new way of thinking about the relationship between those issues and development. The agreement that Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1) should be the promotion of peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development is a remarkable achievement. We need integrated and inclusive ways of thinking about such

issues. In particular, we must consider how to maintain consistency and coherence among discussions in the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the boards of the Organization's funds and programmes, the Peacebuilding Commission and the Human Rights Council. In order to do so, we must get rid of the silo approach. To that end, the Security Council, which has the main responsibility for peace and security issues, must take a leading role, although the Assembly's responsibility in that area is also huge.

Thirdly, we must address the gap between humanitarian and development assistance, an issue that we have been discussing for more than two decades. Japan, as a strong advocate of human security, has emphasized the need for seamless assistance. I have noted with satisfaction that many United Nations agencies are now advocating that humanitarian and development actors should work together from the beginning. In that connection, Japan announced during the recent general debate (see A/70/PV.16) that it would contribute approximately \$810 million this year in assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons from Syria and Iraq. In addition, we will focus on increasing the links between our humanitarian and development assistance and on creating an environment conducive to close collaboration between donors and host communities, so that refugees can contribute to their host regions' economic growth. We hope that discussion will be further developed in the lead-up to the World Humanitarian Summit.

Fourthly, we have to promote reconciliation between religions. To do that, we must embody and foster a spirit of tolerance. It is also important to enhance dialogue between religions and religious sects. Japan has been contributing to the creation of mutual understanding and a spirit of tolerance by inviting Islamic stakeholders and exchanging views on dialogue between different religions and the development of a moderate Islamic society.

I would like to conclude by stressing Japan's commitment to working to solve this vital issue in a spirit of compassion, solidarity and cooperation. We are looking forward to working with other Member States, United Nations agencies and various stakeholders in preparation for the donors' conference in London in February, the World Humanitarian Summit and next year's September summit.

Ms. Frankinet (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium aligns itself with the statement delivered earlier today by the observer of the European Union (see A/70/PV.59), and I would like to add some remarks in my national capacity.

We cannot remain indifferent to the deaths of thousands of people, whether in the Mediterranean or elsewhere. Faced with an unprecedented crisis linked to asylum and migration that will undoubtedly be with us for a long time, we need a global response covering several areas. I would like to touch on four points: first, my country's response to the humanitarian crisis; secondly, the fight against traffickers; thirdly, our strategy for dealing with the underlying causes of migration; and, fourthly, the responsibility of host States and solidarity among them.

First of all, the current humanitarian crisis needs to be addressed responsibly. Like other countries, Belgium is participating in that effort. My country is hosting a large number of refugees, either in the context of the redistribution efforts at the European level or simply because they have already arrived on Belgian territory. Belgium has also supported international efforts to respond to the needs of millions of displaced Syrians, whether in their own country or in neighbouring ones. Belgium has released additional assistance in the amount of €37.5 million to address the emergency, which brings its total aid for 2015 to €51.7 million.

In addition to humanitarian assistance to bordering countries, we must also make plans to strengthen the capacity of host countries to receive and integrate mixed flows of migrants in the long term. Today my country, in cooperation with the International Organization for Migration, is holding a public-outreach event in Brussels, entitled "Exploring sustainable solutions to a pressing migration and refugee crisis", with the participation of the Belgian Minister for Development Cooperation, Mr. Alexander De Croo. The event will focus on the central question of how to strengthen the capacity of neighbouring States that are hosting mixed migration flows in order to ensure that they are able to provide the long-term protection and integration of migrants who arrive in the context of a forced migration.

I turn now to the pressing need to neutralize those who shamelessly enrich themselves on the misery and despair of millions of human beings. We need to take all necessary measures to combat traffickers and smugglers of all stripes. That is why Belgium recently

offered one of its frigates to European Union Operation Sophia, whose mission is to prevent refugees from drowning and fight traffickers in the Mediterranean.

Of course, there can be no lasting solution without tackling the root causes of the phenomenon of migration, whether they are political or economic in nature. We urgently need to find lasting political solutions to crises, particularly in Syria. We must continue our development efforts, not only as part of development cooperation, which is focused primarily on the poorest countries, but also by supporting economic development and good governance. In that regard, allow me to recall the outcome of the recent summit meeting that was held by the European Union and African countries in Valletta, to which a number of speakers have already referred. It was agreed that a trust fund would be established to promote stability and combat the root causes of irregular migration. The Belgian Government decided to make an initial contribution of €10 million to the fund.

Sustained dialogue between the countries of origin and those of transit is also essential, particularly when less developed countries are involved. My country has established a significant presence in a number of such countries and expects to maintain it in the years to come. Based on our strategic choice to collaborate with less developed countries, Belgium has decided to allocate at least 50 per cent of our official development assistance to least developed countries.

I would like to conclude with a call to vigilance. We must be wary of simplistic discourse that conflates different issues, particularly attempts to equate immigration with the scourge of terrorism. We will not solve the problem of migration with barbed wire and walls; we need instead to adopt fair, cohesive and humane policies. Asylum and migration policies are the responsibility of host States but also depend on solidarity among them. A great number of men, women and children have no other choice but to flee their regions of origin in order to escape war and persecution. They are entitled to international protection, and we must provide it to them by virtue of the international agreements that we have signed, which we are determined to uphold.

Finally, let us not lose sight, in this vast debate, of the fact that migration, if correctly managed, can have a positive impact on all involved, not only on host and destination countries but also, and above all, on the migrants themselves.

Mr. Al-Otoom (Jordan) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to express our thanks and appreciation to the President for convening this very important meeting aimed at raising global awareness of the issue of asylum and migration in general, especially with regard to the biggest asylum crisis since the Second World War — that of Syrian refugees.

First of all, we must increase awareness of the issues involved in migration and asylum at both the national and the governmental levels. At the governmental level, States must be aware of the grave challenges facing the Governments of host countries and communities, so that we can effectively implement the principle of burden-sharing. The enormous costs that some Governments are paying are no longer a secret, and we can all see that international humanitarian efforts are unable to keep pace with the tragic and rapid developments in the current crisis.

Traditional solutions are no longer able to contain the repercussions of today's multiple crises. It is vital to work effectively, without slogans and mere promises. United Nations agencies and the relevant humanitarian agencies must work effectively with Member States to raise awareness in cooperation with the Governments of host countries. We also call on donor countries and United Nations agencies and other relevant humanitarian agencies to adapt their strategies to the fact that we are facing a protracted crisis. There is a dire need to move from emergency relief programmes to resiliency programmes, which will enable refugees to live a life of dignity and will facilitate their return, once conditions permit.

At the national level, in the light of recent international and regional developments, especially the proliferation of terrorism and extremism, it is important to raise awareness of the true profile of the refugees. They are vulnerable people who have been forced to flee the atrocities of conflict and terrorism. It is therefore vital to work to avoid stereotypes that link refugees to terrorism and extremism and to raise awareness of the role of the Special Representatives of the Secretary-General, especially the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, as well as of the role of the Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect, which can assist in clarifying to all the suffering of the refugees, including the special needs of

all refugees, especially those who face the greatest risk of exploitation, namely, women and children.

Needless to say, Jordan and its generous people have opened their doors to refugees from across the region. We will continue to adopt that approach. However, the international community must provide the necessary support to host countries, which are disappointed by the absence of international support. In Jordan, for example, the contribution of the international community has not surpassed 35 per cent of the hosting costs that Jordan has borne since the start of the refugee crisis five years ago, which now represent one quarter of our national budget.

A comprehensive political solution is the only solution to this crisis. The world believes that such a solution must be based on the Geneva communiqué of 30 June 2012 (A/66/865, annex). That is indisputable. The solution must therefore be comprehensive and meet the aspirations of the Syrian people. It must be agreed on by all sections of the Syrian community and ensure a transition to a new political reality. It must enable us to counter terrorism in Syria, a purpose that we all agree on. It must lead to the restoration of stability and security in Syria in order to both enable displaced persons and refugees to voluntarily return to their homes and preserve Syria's political independence and territorial integrity.

Mr. Hetesy (Hungary): Hungary aligns itself fully with the statement delivered earlier by the observer of the European Union (see A/70/PV.59). We would like to add the following comments in our national capacity.

Almost two months ago, our Heads of State and Government came to New York to hold a high-level dialogue on migration and the refugee crisis. Since then, still more people have left their homes, fleeing persecution or seeking a better future. Lives are still being lost as thousands without hope or other options undertake the journey across the Mediterranean daily. Meanwhile, the vital systems of the countries affected are crumbling under the financial, logistical and security weight of the increased flows of refugees, asylum-seekers and irregular migrants.

We must respond decisively and together if we are to manage and, ultimately, end the migration and refugee crisis as a whole, and for that we must look beyond the Mediterranean. We need global and comprehensive action on the following fronts — tackling the root causes of the refugee crisis; addressing issues related

to global migration; providing humanitarian aid and development assistance to host countries and communities; and taking into consideration the importance of synergies and virtuous cycles, including by investing in sustainable development. The current mass migration has unprecedented dimensions and diverse causes. It requires global responses, but they must also be specific and varied.

Let us first address the issue of refugees. If we do not end the conflicts, there can be no solution to the refugee crisis. The Security Council has a special responsibility in that regard. Besides stopping conflict, it should also support more decisive mitigation measures. Efforts led by the European Union to intensify the fight against criminal networks on the Mediterranean Sea, and measures aimed at ensuring the protection of civilians and safe and unhindered humanitarian access to those in need, as well as calls for establishing criminal accountability, could all benefit from more decisive action on the part of the Council. The compassion of others cannot replace or rectify the Council's inaction.

Furthermore, whatever we do to make life easier for refugees does not change the fact that the international community has already failed them. Their human rights have already been violated so egregiously that they have been compelled to choose between death, torture, imprisonment and fleeing persecution. Their real human rights can be fully reinstated only in their homeland. Securing political solutions to conflicts is vital, and we are encouraged by the latest meeting of the International Syria Support Group in that regard. In the meantime, the international community must redouble its financial and material support to those in need and provide humanitarian aid and development assistance to host countries and communities. That will ease refugees' return to their homeland once the conflict is over and help curb the smuggling networks that exploit human desperation. My Government only recently pledged roughly €4 million for such purposes, and the European Union is already spearheading such efforts.

Apart from conflict, there are all kinds of other reasons for human mobility, and they affect people all over the world. Today's migration trends are symptoms resulting from complex underlying causes, such as economic hardship, environmental degradation, food and water scarcity and so on. In essence, all such causes are various forms of unsustainability, whether economic, social or environmental. Since

the Organization's adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1), we have set ourselves clear pathways to deal with such problems.

First, the Agenda addresses root causes with the aim of ensuring that migration does not have to occur and that people can prosper in their own countries. If fully implemented, such efforts will reduce tension in and among countries and ensure that situations that pose a threat to peace and security arise less frequently.

Secondly, the 2030 Agenda acknowledges the role of migration in development, taking into consideration the interests of countries of origin, transit and destination. In order to turn the current challenge of migration into opportunity, the Agenda calls for migration to be orderly, safe, regulated and responsible. It also calls for well-planned and managed migration policies, something very different from what we see today along with their immediate negative consequences. Observation of the problem at first hand shows why we cannot give up on the legitimate aspects of the 2030 Agenda for reasons of political expediency or for any other reason. Doing anything else would have serious ramifications for the Agenda and for the future of our children and our planet.

Finally, concerning virtuous cycles, if we are to find comprehensive solutions to complex problems, we need synergy. Resolving conflicts speedily will ensure that resources now being diverted for emergencies will be available later for funding sustainable development. Successful implementation of the 2030 Agenda, especially in post-conflict countries, will produce solutions that are longer-lasting and more robust, and it will lighten the burden on the Security Council. If conflict-prevention efforts can gain the upper hand, hard-won development achievements will not be swept away by conflicts. The fight against terrorism and violent extremism requires law-enforcement efforts and the effective use of all the instruments in the Council's toolbox, but that will never be successful without soft-power solutions, such as dialogue, understanding, inclusive development and the implementation of Goal 16 of the 2030 Agenda.

While we largely agree on these issues, we now have to transform our words into action. Only then can the tragedies in the Mediterranean and elsewhere be avoided. Only in that way can we give hope and options back to the people currently in need.

Mrs. Schwalger (New Zealand): New Zealand welcomes this timely and important discussion. As Under-Secretary-General and Emergency Relief Coordinator O'Brien said recently, forced displacement is one of the defining challenges of our time. Nowhere is the urgency and magnitude of that challenge more starkly illustrated than in the Middle East, where the ongoing regional crisis in Syria continues to shock and dismay the entire world. We must do more to address the root causes of forced displacement. Only a sustainable political solution can end the conflict in Syria and prevent continued large-scale population movement. New Zealand is encouraged by the recent momentum created by the Vienna process and the role that has been envisaged for the United Nations.

While we work on a political solution, the international community must continue to alleviate the suffering of people displaced from and within Syria. The magnitude of the crisis requires a collective and comprehensive response. The neighbours of Syria, in particular Turkey, Jordan and Lebanon, have borne the brunt of the crisis with enormous generosity. But this is a burden to be shared. The crisis in Syria highlights the need for new and innovative approaches in a number of important areas, including resilience-building. Addressing forced displacement will require long-term commitments, involving both humanitarian and development actors, migration agencies, and international and regional financial institutions. It will also require new and innovative approaches to closing the funding gap.

New Zealand welcomed European Union Vice-President Georgieva's recent summary of the work of the High-Level Panel on Humanitarian Financing, including the idea of what was referred to as a grand bargain. We look forward to the Panel's recommendations in the run-up to next year's World Humanitarian Summit.

New Zealand agrees that there is a need to do more to protect displaced people from abuse. The opportunistic criminal activity of migrant smugglers and human traffickers, who exploit the vulnerability of people escaping conflict, is simply appalling. We must galvanize efforts to dismantle the criminal networks that prey on the most vulnerable and work to identify pathways for regular and documented migration. Like many countries, New Zealand is implementing an emergency Syrian refugee resettlement programme and will welcome an additional 750 Syrian refugees.

We may be a long way from the Middle East, but we intend to play our part in helping give hope to those fleeing the conflict.

Finally, New Zealand would like to acknowledge and applaud High Commissioner Guterres for his 10 years of exceptional service to refugees and internally displaced people. We congratulate his successor, Filippo Grandi, on his appointment and pledge New Zealand's support as he leads us in tackling the enormous challenges that we must face together.

Mr. Pedersen (Norway): More than 60 million people have become displaced as a result of protracted conflicts, instability and human suffering. That underscores the need to intensify efforts to find political solutions to the conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Somalia, north-eastern Nigeria and elsewhere. We need to address the root causes of the refugee crisis and increase our efforts to reach political solutions. And we must increase our humanitarian and development assistance to refugees, to internally displaced persons and, of course, to the host communities. In that regard, Norway, in cooperation with the United Nations, the United Kingdom, Germany and Kuwait, has taken an initiative to host an international donor conference for Syria in London in February of next year.

In Europe, our focus now is on managing the dire refugee situation. We will give priority to providing protection to refugees, as well as to returning migrants without the right to asylum. The magnitude of the influx has resulted in a serious challenge to the management of European external borders. We need to overcome that situation, if we are to deal adequately with those in need of protection.

Migration can, of course, be a driver for development and growth. All societies need new ideas and knowledge. Many migrants are already contributing to our economies, our cultures and our societies in very positive ways. However, in order to take advantage of the opportunities that migration offers, we must understand the dynamics. We need to ensure that refugees are included in our societies and given opportunities. They must receive new homes, jobs and learn a new language. Furthermore, we need to bridge the gap between humanitarian and development assistance in fragile States. Fragile States must be stabilized. We need to invest more in prevention and engage development actors more extensively on that issue.

Migration is understandably high on our political agenda. Migration and human mobility feature in several of the new Sustainable Development Goals (resolution 70/1). The displacement of persons will be part of the discussions in the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris in December, and Norway has taken steps to strengthen our strategic cooperation with key partners, especially the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration.

This month, European and African countries met at the Valletta Summit on migration. The issue was how to address the root causes of migration and agree on a rapid common response to large-scale irregular migration. The action plan issued by the Summit provides a good starting point for further discussions on migration and human mobility. We also need a stronger United Nations presence in those discussions. Migration is an issue that is highly relevant to many United Nations agencies, and we welcome a stronger United Nations voice on the issue of migration. Norway stands ready to support and discuss how to find a more comprehensive approach to migration globally.

Let me conclude by stating that we believe that this meeting could contribute to strengthening the international cooperation on migration. We welcome the discussions that have already taken place today and, indeed, to their follow-up.

Mr. Manongi (Tanzania): Tanzania welcomes this timely debate on irregular migrants, as well as its focus on the Syrian refugee crisis, the worst humanitarian tragedy that we are witnessing today. In holding this discussion, we call attention to one of the key purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, namely, promoting cooperation in solving our collective problems. We wish to contribute to the discussion by highlighting the following points.

The number of refugees who are seeking protection worldwide is alarmingly high. The current wave of migrants and asylum-seekers entering Europe are in desperate need of such protection. It is imperative that they be treated humanely, in accordance with prevailing conventions, protocols and principles, including the principle of non-refoulement. As a refugee-hosting country, Tanzania knows only too well the enormous responsibilities that come with hosting refugees and asylum-seekers. We believe that the global refugee

problem is a collective responsibility. We therefore underline the validity and importance of the principles of international solidarity and burden-sharing. In that regard, we commend countries that have offered protection to the refugees and asylum-seekers from Syria and other troubled countries.

We are conscious that durable solutions, including resettlement and integration, are costly endeavours and can have several ramifications, including on the environment. That is why we subscribe to the urgency of addressing the funding shortages in the Syrian humanitarian intervention and others across the world. It is disgraceful, in our view, that the Syrian refugees in countries such as Lebanon receive less than half a dollar per day for food assistance. We therefore call for predictable, adequate and long-term funding for humanitarian action. Ad hoc measures are not sustainable and can only expose victims to great danger.

We look forward to the findings of the High-level Panel on Humanitarian Financing and hope that their recommendations will help frame discussion in the World Humanitarian Summit, to be held next year. We encourage the Panel to consider the recently adopted Addis Ababa Action Agenda (resolution 69/313), which provides the financing framework for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1, annex).

We wish to underscore the importance of respecting and upholding the human rights and freedoms of migrants and asylum-seekers, including their rights to life, adequate shelter, health and education. Most troubling is the plight of children who suffer from illnesses, malnutrition, exploitation and abuse owing to the ongoing crisis and the conditions in which they find themselves away from their homes. More than 2.2 million school-age children are not attending school. Their dreams of a brighter and secure future are very likely being shattered.

We need, therefore, to find durable solutions. The relevant Security Council resolutions must be implemented. The terror networks must be defeated, albeit not at the expense of the migrants and asylum-seekers. International cooperation must be strengthened to stop the criminal networks that are trafficking and smuggling migrants to Europe and other parts of the world. In addition, all diplomatic and political tools must be deployed to find a lasting and comprehensive political solution to the Syrian crisis. Tanzania recognizes the efforts being undertaken in that regard

by the Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for Syria. We are hopeful that the Vienna process will yield positive results for the Syrians, who continue to endure the consequences of the conflict.

In conclusion, we need to draw important lessons from the humanitarian crisis.

First, there is a need for greater acknowledgement that prevention is better than a cure. We should never allow conflicts to arise and escalate to unmanageable proportions. We must, therefore, invest adequately in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Secondly, the Security Council could have averted the crisis. The systemic handicaps facing the Council call for its long-overdue reform with a view to improving its effectiveness and preserving its legitimacy. Thirdly, we should appreciate and respond to the growing demand for humanitarian assistance and devise innovative, long-term and comprehensive measures, including financing, for addressing them. Fourthly, we must forge stronger cooperation and partnerships with regional actors, such as the African Union in the case of Africa, aimed at capacity-building, so as to deal better with current and future complex crises.

Finally, we need to respect and uphold the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations. Continued contempt for those principles has had serious repercussions for many people, especially in the developing countries. It is in our collective interest to uphold the ideals of the Charter.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): Under resolution 47/4, of 16 October 1992, I invite the observer of the International Organization for Migration to take the floor.

Mr. Nour (International Organization for Migration): I wish to thank the President for his leadership on this issue and for the opportunity to make a few remarks on behalf of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

First, I wish to emphasize that crisis-related migration hotspots are spreading around the world and that closing the doors is not a response or an answer, as the Secretary-General stated earlier today (see A/70/PV.59). Migration remains by and large a human reality that needs to be well-managed with the understanding that it cannot be stopped and knowing that it could be beneficial. I would like to make reference, in that regard, to target 10.7 of the new 2030 Agenda for

Sustainable Development (resolution 70/1, annex), which specifically addresses well-managed migration policies that can facilitate orderly, safe and humane migrations.

Secondly, I would like welcome the call for advancing a comprehensive response to the refugee and migration challenges that we face today, and I do so for two reasons. The first is to shift from the current crisis mode of response, which is short-term, partial and ad hoc, to more comprehensive, inclusive and durable approaches. The second reason is to develop long-term strategies that can help to keep migrants away from the hands of smugglers and human traffickers and put them back in the corridors of legal migration and the regular passages of cross-border interests.

Thirdly, I wish to express appreciation for the inclusion of migration-related targets and Goals in the new 2030 Agenda, which truly stands as a testimony to the Secretary-General's commitment to leave no one behind. Moreover, it breaks new ground for more effective engagement and cooperation between migration and development and creates a necessary space for migrants to be truly agents of development and for them to facilitate socioeconomic exchanges and benefits for the host, transit and originating countries.

Briefly, I would like to speak about the IOM response plan to the refugee and migrant crisis in the Mediterranean, which emphasizes a four-pronged approach: first, to save lives, enhance protection and respect rights; secondly, to facilitate orderly, safe and humane migration; thirdly, to address the root causes and the drivers of migration; and fourthly, to strengthen partnerships, solidarity and international cooperation.

In closing, let me assure the Assembly that we are available to work with the United Nations and Member States towards the new global compact of shared responsibility that the Secretary-General spoke about this morning. I will continue to engage with the Assembly and make our expertise available.

The Acting President (*spoke in French*): The representative of Turkey has asked to speak in exercise of the right of reply. May I remind him that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second intervention, and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Canay (Turkey): Unfortunately, I have to take the floor in response to the baseless allegations, which we categorically deny, made by the representative of the Syrian regime this morning (see A/70/PV.59). The allegations demonstrate the extent to which that regime, which has long since lost its legitimacy, is deluded.

Today, as the General Assembly holds a significant debate on one of the most serious humanitarian crises and tries to increase global awareness with regard to the current tragedy, we have witnessed yet another futile attempt to divert attention from the stark reality. As reflected by the statement made by our Deputy Foreign Minister this morning (see A/70/PV.59), Turkey's aim is to find a solution to the tragedies caused by irregular migration in the Mediterranean basin. In that regard, we did not, in our statement today, seek to explore the details of the Syrian crisis per se, but chose instead to focus on the dire situation of irregular migrants and refugees, and the possible ways forward. Now, however, I shall refer to some facts, rather than news articles, on the Syrian crisis.

Three hundred fifty thousand people have lost their lives in Syria. Approximately 12 million people have been displaced. More than 4 million Syrians have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. The regime kills its own people, employing all of the instruments of force and violence imaginable, including chemical weapons, barrel bombs, container bombs, ballistic missiles, targeted killings, arbitrary detention, torture, systematic abuse, starvation and forced displacement. The major cause of the death of Syrian civilians is still the indiscriminate use of aerial weapons by the regime's army. The bombardment of civilians in Turkmen villages near Jabal al-Turkman in the north-west of Syria is one recent example. The use of chlorine gas as a chemical weapon in Syria is an established fact documented by two independent bodies. The Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic stated that the Syrian authorities have conducted widespread attacks against its civilian population as a matter of policy.

The Syrian people are fleeing that brutality. The international community continues to have deep concerns about the enormous destruction and human suffering caused by the Syrian regime. Just yesterday, the Third Committee of the General Assembly again adopted, for the fifth year in a row and by an overwhelming majority, a draft resolution on the

situation of human rights in the Syrian Arab Republic (A/C.3/70/L.47).

I would also like to underline some facts about Turkey's efforts with regard to the Syrian crisis. While the Syrian regime kills its own people, Turkey is the biggest refugee-hosting country in the world today. We are hosting 2.2 million Syrians, 900,000 of whom are children, 200,000 of whom are enrolled in schools. The 260,000 Syrians living in 25 temporary protection centres in urban areas are provided with food, non-food items, health and education services, as well as psychological support, vocational training and social activities. Syrians living outside those centres are also under our protection and benefit from free medical services. In addition to providing zero-point assistance,

we also ensure cross-border humanitarian assistance to millions of people on the Syrian side of the border in dire need. We have spent close to \$8.5 billion on all those efforts. Since the beginning of 2015, the Turkish coast guard has rescued more than 75,000 migrants at sea and apprehended 142 migrant smugglers.

Those are facts, not unfounded or fabricated press reports. We should not waste any more time with such time-consuming allegations. We need to discuss viable responses and tangible solutions to the current crisis and strengthen our collective efforts through partnerships and solidarity. That is why we proposed the inclusion of today's item on the agenda of the seventieth session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 6.15 p.m.