

## **Partnerships and action for the protection of migrants in crises and in transit**

Date: 14 Oct 2015

Time: 16.45 - 18.30

Parallel Breakout session 1 (105 mins):

Moderator: **Mr. John Slocum**, Director of Migration, MacArthur Foundation

Rapporteur: **Ms. Sumitha Shaanthinni Kishna**, Co-Coordinator, Migration Working Group, Malaysia (Migrant Forum in Asia Delegation)

Panel speakers:

1. **Ms. Anne Richard**, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration, United States;
2. **Mr. Vasilios Papadopoulos**, Secretary General of Population and Social Cohesion, Greece;
3. **Ms. Jyoti Sanghera**, Chief, Human Rights and Economic and Social Issues Section, UN Office of High Commissioner for Human Rights;
4. **Ms. MaryJo Toll**, Chair NGO Committee on Migration, New York (a member of CoNGO);
5. **Dr. Carolina Jimenez Sandoval**, Deputy Director of Research, Amnesty International Americas; and
6. **Ms. Zeynep Gündüz**, Chief Executive Officer, RET International.

Summary of pertinent points:

1. Terminology of migrants and refugees are used interchangeably. However, the common principle derived from international human rights law dictates that all persons are entitled to protection regardless of their status. There should no differentiation or division between economic migrants and refugees. Instead countries of origin should address reasons why economic migrants are also taking the boats.
2. Governments need to look at the protection aspects of migrants in transit. Closing borders and building barriers heightens the vulnerability of migrants in transit eg to trafficking. There needs to be a more coherent response and better policies to put in place a more efficient reception system for boat arrivals.
3. Governments need to work with stakeholders to create more safe and legal channels for migrants to move in safety. There needs to be sustainable policies and strategic partnerships with international institutions, government and civil society organisations to prevent dangerous migrations.
4. Facilitating mobility of migrants is key as well as training law enforcement on human rights to treat migrants in transit with dignity as well as providing resources to foreign missions to better protect their nationals abroad.
5. Programmes designed for communities should address specific needs of migrants of all ages. Empowering mothers with adequate living skills will in turn assist their children.

Mothers would be able to provide education for their children and thus prevent child labour. Empowering young women against all forms of violence is also needed.

6. Cross border partnership in transnational justice is imperative for migrants in transit – migrants should be able to access justice anywhere.
7. Institutions have specific mandates and there are gaps on protection. Government should fill these gaps for better protection and enhancing service provided to migrants. Further, we may need to relook at these mandates.
8. A regional approach to urgently implement a contingency plan that could address the current migrant in crisis situation as well as future crisis situations.

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