

National Statement of Finland

International Migration Review Forum

General Debate

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Statement by

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Mr/Ms Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

We are here because of a need to better address the adverse impacts of migration issues, globally as a joint effort, and to share best practices and positive experiences. The global compact on migration is a balanced result in the context of different interests and the variety of situations. It should be seen as a useful tool for international cooperation and can hopefully contribute to a sustainable and better-coordinated governance of migration. It should bring wide-based cooperation, including actors like the UN, AU and EU etc, in addition to national actions.

Let me highlight some Finnish achievements and present some of our practices, which can be useful and generally interesting.

First, on Ukraine and EU. The European Union has been very unified in its willingness to help Ukrainian refugees. The Temporary Protection Directive was rapidly activated for the first time. Finland decided to offer protection more extensively than was defined in the Council decision and grants temporary protection also to third-country nationals who have resided legally in Ukraine and cannot return to their home countries.

In the new security situation, the need for a comprehensive European migration policy is even greater than before. The reform of the European asylum system remains a priority for Finland. We urgently need a system that works well in all migration scenarios. This includes finding a credible response to efforts to instrumentalize migration. Finland looks for effective solutions at EU level, respecting human rights and access to asylum.

Then on complementary pathways of migration. It is crucial to guarantee the availability, accessibility and flexibility of legal pathways for regular migration. Finland has produced research on the topic of complementary study- and work-based pathways for people in need of international protection, that is available in English for all countries to utilize.

We believe that complementary pathway programmes have potential and they can be one way to respond to the needs of both people in need of protection and the receiving societies.

Resettlement is a safe and dignified way of offering protection to the most vulnerable refugees and Finland has been admitting refugees received in the UNHCR resettlement programme since the 1970s. The global needs for resettlement are higher than ever and Finland highlights the need to increase resettlement both within the EU and also worldwide. We welcome new countries to contribute to this important work.

During the past years, we have been able to gradually increase the size of our annual resettlement quota. Furthermore, as a response to the dire developments in Afghanistan, Finland increased its quota for 2022.

An important principle for Finland has been prioritizing the needs for resettlement of persons with serious protection concerns, such as women and girls at risk as well as children and adolescents at risk. Traditionally about ten per cent of the annual quota has been reserved for refugees resettled on an emergency or urgent basis.

[Human trafficking]

Russia's brutal attack on Ukraine and the resulting humanitarian crises will most likely have an effect in increasing risks of human trafficking. Finland welcomes EU's efforts to intensify

cooperation to tackle these risks, and to ensure adequate information to those fleeing the war. Particular attention must be paid to vulnerable people, especially children.

Finland is well prepared for these changing circumstances. Last year, the Finnish government adopted an ambitious action plan against trafficking in human beings, based on five strategic objectives and more than 50 concrete actions. Today, the action plan is even more important than we could ever imagine.

We must also step up action to combat racism. The Action Plan for Combating Racism and Promoting Good Relations between Population Groups, adopted by the Finnish Government last year, aims to dismantle structural inequalities in society, promote non-discrimination in the Finnish working life, strengthen the authorities' equality competence, raise awareness of racism and its various forms, and develop research and data collection related to racism.

Regarding the basic social security coverage, Finnish social security system is largely residence-based. Everyone who is resident and/or employed in Finland is covered in the social security system. From the perspective of migrants, the universal nature of the Finnish social security system is non-discriminatory and guarantees an access to social security benefits not only to workers but also to other migrants moving to Finland.

In Finland, confidentiality of health and social care, and the fact that there is no reporting duty on breaches of immigration regulations, enable both public and private sector to address the essential needs of migrants regardless of status.

For migrant workers, who return to their country of origin or move to another country, the portability of earned benefits is essential. All insured work accrues pension, regardless of the length of employment, and pensions earned in Finland, as well as pensions under accidents at work and occupational disease legislation, are paid to a person regardless of their country of residence or citizenship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Migration brings benefits and creates opportunities around the world. However, for some migration remains dangerous.

Accessible migration pathways and procedures that respect human rights and international obligations and guarantee protection and assistance for people who need it, are essential part of well-functioning governance of migration that enables migrants to seek prospects or protection in dignity.

The adverse impacts of migration are experienced especially by those in a vulnerable situation. To address vulnerabilities, protection and assistance measures need to adhere to the needs of separated or unaccompanied children, victims of traumatic experiences, women and girls, people with disabilities, the elderly, and those suffering from serious health conditions. The best interest of children and their right to family unity must be respected.

In our development cooperation, Finland seek to engage long-term with our partner countries and at the same time remain prepared to react quickly to urgent needs and unpredictable changes. The main objective of our development cooperation is to eradicate poverty and inequalities in the world. Broadly speaking, however, Finland's development interventions and humanitarian aid also aim to have an effect on the various, underlying factors, which cause forced displacement and

irregular migration. For example, increasing opportunities for decent work and livelihood addresses root causes of irregular migration, and is at the same time a key objective of our development policy. In addition, addressing the drivers behind irregular and forced migration requires a broad set of other instruments, including political dialogue, crises management, peace mediation as well as coordinated trade, energy and climate policies. Ensuring adherence to the principles of good governance and human rights is key in all actions.

Last but not least, climate change is increasingly driving displacement as extreme weather and climate events become more frequent and more intense. These events have particularly devastating impact on the lives of people already facing high vulnerabilities. In addition, climate change is exacerbating water scarcity in many parts of the world, which can lead to major displacement. It is important to take action before displacement and build up resilience of the communities facing climate related disasters. Early contribution to disaster risk reduction serve to save lives and mitigate displacement.

Finally, I would like to thank all participants of a constructive and fruitful review forum and, especially the organisers, the IOM, the UN Network for Migration and other colleagues for everything you have done for us during the past years. I believe that this cycle of International Migration Review Forums, Secretary General's reports and regional reviews, gives us the possibility but also the responsibility to work together towards more and more ambitious goals, and best possible migration governance worldwide, built on true dialogue and mutual respect.

Thank you.