Mr. Chairman, Mr. ~~Secretary~~ Director General

Dear Ladies and Gentleman,

Distinguished

I am here on behalf of the World YMCA - a global ecumenical Movement reaching 58 million people in 119 countries worldwide. Founded in 1855, the World YMCA is the oldest and largest Movement for youth in the world.

As we are working for social justice for all youth, regardless of religion, race, gender or culture, the work with all kinds of displaced persons is an integral and important part of our mission. Historically YMCA was famous due to services for prisoners of world wars and the victims of post war migration waves. In all continents YMCA was helping those who were escaping from dictatorships and for political reasons. Here in Geneva people still remember local YMCA support for Hungarian refugees after the Soviet military intervention in communist Hungary in 1956.

Now when the world is challenged with a 'refugee crisis' of a dramatic scale, the World YMCA is returning to own roots in assisting displaced persons. More than 30 national movements of the World YMCA are successfully working with migrants and refugees – examples include medical assistance by the YMCA of Lebanon for refugees from Palestine and Syria, adaptation programmes for newcomers of the YMCA of the USA and YMCA Spain, school for Afghan children run by YMCA Pakistan, psychological assistance for children displaced from Crimea and Eastern Ukraine provided by YMCA Ukraine. And one month ago, the World YMCA opened its Field Office for Refugee Assistance in Thessaloniki, Greece – starting the co-ordination of all YMCA support efforts and providing concrete support for refugees temporarily living in Greece, on islands, on the borders and in the residential camps on the peninsula.

We hope for very fruitful co-operation with the International Organization for Migration and its partner organizations, we can learn a lot from you and we believe that we can contribute to your respected work with our worldwide network and experience in youth empowerment and community services.