



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

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Remarks by Mr. José Riera
Senior Adviser
Division of International Protection

Director General Swing, Distinguished Chairperson and Participants,

At the very outset, UNHCR would like to stress the importance of the close partnership between IOM and UNHCR. The Heads of both agencies meet at least once a year with senior staff to take stock of the state of cooperation and how it can be further enhanced. In July of this year, we had a very productive meeting which, for example, took stock of our cooperation in response to the complex and delicate situation presented in Libya and neighbouring countries in 2011, explored opportunities for close cooperation on assisted voluntary returns, as a means to preserve and build asylum space, as well as cooperation in building protection-sensitive border management systems. We also resolved to pursue closer cooperation and synergies in our work to better understand and address climate change as a driver of both migration and displacement.

Proof of the importance that both Principals attach to our cooperation is that these annual meetings are followed by a jointly signed letter to the staff of both organizations, emphasizing that strong cooperation must be the norm and the importance of all staff working towards this goal. Further proof can be found in the close and fruitful cooperation between IOM and UNHCR in responding to the Libya crisis. This provided a good case study and lens through which we can assess the new Migration Crisis Operational Framework, to which I shall turn in a moment.

Thanks to strong leadership at the head of agency level, IOM and UNHCR demonstrated how both agencies can achieve complementarity of interventions, with the aim not only of attending to the needs of migrants stranded by the events in Libya and in surrounding countries, but also how this cooperation could work to enhance protection for persons of concern to UNHCR.

The panel discussion on the Libya operation during this Council was a welcome opportunity to take stock of what went well and areas for improvement in future. It is important to recognize, however, that every new mega-crisis brings with it unique challenges and opportunities for closer cooperation. UNHCR and IOM have already demonstrated their mutual interest for the protection-sensitive management of migration through their long partnership on UNHCR's 10 Point Plan on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration. We will

continue to ensure that asylum-seekers, refugees, victims of human trafficking and others in need of protection can be identified effectively.

Let me now take the opportunity to say a few remarks about the Migration Crisis Operational Framework adopted by the Council yesterday afternoon. We have examined it asking ourselves the question, “How can UNHCR and IOM enhance cooperation to preserve safety and human dignity in the kind of mega-crisis that the Framework contemplates?”

First, we welcome the goal of strengthening of IOM’s response through a strategy document. References therein to UNHCR’s mandate for refugees and to the work undertaken in relation to mixed migratory movements through the 10 Point Plan of Action on Refugee Protection and Mixed Migration are helpful. We equally support the assertion that the Operational Framework is intended to *complement and not supplant existing response systems*, including the Cluster Approach, the refugee protection regime, peace-building and development frameworks in crisis and post-crisis settings, as well as in addressing mixed flows. This point is made by the Council in the last preambular paragraph of its resolution.

It is, however, not entirely clear to us exactly which new categories of persons on the move would be covered by the Operational Framework. We have noted, for example, that the terms ‘migration’ and ‘migrants’ are used to describe all population movements. Little distinction is made between forced displacement and voluntary migration, externally and internally displaced persons, asylum-seekers and refugees and the like. This could have the effect of diluting the important distinction between forced and voluntary movements and can create some confusion from a refugee and forced displacement perspective.

While the Annex to the Operational Framework does identify the ‘types of migrants in need’ for each type of crisis scenario and the actors who would be involved, the terminology might benefit from further elaboration and sharpening during the implementation phase.

Our last point relates to the distinction drawn between ‘migration management approaches and tools’ and ‘humanitarian responses’. It would be important to clarify the line between both. Since the scope of the Operational Framework is extremely broad, extending well beyond addressing the needs of persons on the move as a result of crises, to cover peace, security and longer-term development issues, additional clarification would be useful and welcome as IOM moves forward with implementation. We trust that the close cooperation and dialogue we maintain with IOM will assist us in clarifying these points as we move ahead, and hope that the Operational Framework will enable us to engage even more effectively in addressing today’s and tomorrow’s increasingly complex population flows.