



***Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants: Critical Challenges for Sustainable
Urbanization
18 May 2016
ECOSOC Chamber, UN HQ, New York***

Honourable Deputy-Secretary-General Eliasson,
Excellencies,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

I am pleased to deliver this statement on behalf of the Global Migration Group (GMG), chaired by UN Women in 2016. The GMG is comprised of 18 entities that work together to promote the application of all relevant instruments and norms relating to migration, and encourage the adoption of more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approaches to international migration.

The GMG is particularly concerned with capitalizing upon the opportunities and responding to the challenges presented by international migration, including for urbanization.

Cities are the main entry points for refugees and migrants, and they are at the forefront of integrating new arrivals. Urban areas benefit from the presence of immigrants that bring new dynamism, create new businesses, and establish trade links with countries of origin.

Cities face two predominant challenges that pertain to the physical and psychological barriers to diversity and integration: correcting urban planning and urban design that keeps people out, and addressing resistance to social change in the hearts and minds in the receiving communities so as to welcome new arrivals in.

The way cities are designed is an important piece of the urban diversity puzzle, and can be a major obstacle to the active inclusion of new arrivals. The effective integration of migrants and refugees in cities will be the key to achieving Goal 11 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. The inclusion of migrants and refugees is also a cornerstone for the implementation of the New Urban Agenda to be adopted in October 2016 in Quito by the Habitat III Conference.

Effective disaster risk reduction to reduce the exposure of the most vulnerable, including refugees and migrants, will also be a key determinant for the achievement of Goal 11 and the New Urban Agenda.

Of the 244 million international migrants in the world, almost half are women. Similarly, women and girls constitute almost half of refugee, internally displaced or stateless populations. Despite this reality, policy making at all levels of government tends to neglect a gender perspective and a focus on the specific needs of the most vulnerable categories, including women and children, in migration policies and in urban planning. This omission can create or exacerbate

tensions within receiving communities but also within the migrant and refugee communities, and it impedes the maximization of contributions by refugees and migrants to sustainable development in the receiving cities. This also leaves refugees and migrants vulnerable to a range of human rights and labour rights violations.

Safe, regular and orderly migration that is firmly entrenched in a human rights and gender equality framework can be an enabler of equitable, inclusive and sustainable social and economic development. The GMG stands ready to support Member States in their preparation for the 19 September Summit which is a significant opportunity to strengthen collective action and international cooperation to ensure safety and dignity for all men and women on the move.

Thank you.