

High-Level Meeting on Refugees and Migrants

Opening remarks

19 September, 8.30-9.30 am

by H.E. Mr Peter Thomson,

President of the 71st Session of the General Assembly

Distinguished Heads of State and Government, Secretary-General

Ben Ki Moon, Secretary-General, President of the Seventieth

Session, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen

suffering the compounding effects of physical insecurity, multiple forms of discrimination, and a lack of access to basic services.

I have been horrified that so many desperate people in search of refuge, security and opportunity, have been met by hostility and hateful rhetoric. Hopefully, the Secretary-General's new campaign to counter xenophobia will help to overcome this negativity.

I urge all people to recognise the positive contribution that migrants make to countries in which they settle.

Today's adoption of the New York Declaration marks an important step forward, and reflects our collective commitment to

address this global challenge.

The principle objective of the 71st Session of the General Assembly is a universal push towards implementing all 17 of the

Sustainable Development Goals,

Implemented effectively, the 2030 Agenda will eliminate extreme poverty, sustain peace, increase local opportunity, combat climate change and address many of the root causes driving people from their homes.

During the 71st Session, I will take forward the commitment of the membership under the New York Declaration to begin a process leading to a Global Compact on Migration, as well as a Global Compact on Refugees.

I will also begin to engage with you all on preparations for a

Global Compact on International