

Statement delivered by the Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the United Nations during informal consultations on the revised zero draft declaration of the high-level plenary meeting to address large movement of refugees and migrants  
(14 July 2016)

Mister/Madame co-facilitator,

We thank you both for the current revision of the draft outcome document. Like other delegations we will need more time to review the revised text in greater depth and plan to send further comments in writing.

We have only a few preliminary comments to make at this juncture.

First, we welcome the broadened reference to the goals and targets of the 2030 Agenda in paragraph 1.13, and the specific references to trafficking and the exploitation of children, however we would suggest reorganizing the listing to read “the elimination of trafficking and the exploitation of children” as written in their respective targets. We also believe that additional language is needed on the prevention of human trafficking, which we will provide in writing.

Second, we welcome the new formulation of “unaccompanied children and those separated from their families” in paragraph 2.9 but would still like to emphasize the need to ensure their access to health, education, and psychosocial level services. The current formulation could be strengthened in this respect. We would also welcome stronger language that emphasizes alternatives to detention purposes of documentation and their protection.

Third, we were very pleased to see the language that our delegation proposed regarding the right of all persons to remain in their homelands in peace and

employ, in the first instance, every means to ensure that individuals and communities remain in their homelands and enjoy the fundamental right to live in peace and security.” We believe it is the right to live in peace and security which ensures that all persons are able to remain in their homelands and would like to see stronger language in this regard. We also believe that this is not just the right of migrants, but also of refugees.

Fourth, as we have mentioned before, we thank the drafters for the addressing the situation of IDPs in the draft and emphasize that while refugees are those whose forced displacement have led them to cross borders, IDPs are those that have been forced from their own homes within borders and are not able of leaving their country in search of the stability they and their families deserve. This distinction does not justify turning our back their plight, which is often the result of the same root causes of other large movements. Like others we also call for stronger language on protection and assistance to IDPs.

More generally, we would ask not only for greater emphasis on the positive contribution of migrants, but also for language, as suggested by others, that addresses the international investment required in the capacity of receiving countries to meet not only the basic needs of immigrant communities but also for their integration.

In addition, we also believe that migrants and refugees have the right to migrate and should be protected in their movements, and not simply have the right to be rescued or to be treated with dignity after the fact. We welcome the revised reference to “migrants in vulnerable situations” but like others, would ask you to avoid the inclusion of terms that do not share international consensus or recognition. That said, we emphasize that need for a strong, general paragraph against discrimination and xenophobia as well as for the protection and promotion of the human rights of migrants and refugees.