

Summary of Remarks by Mr. Richard Towle, Deputy Director UNHCR Office in New York

As we look at the challenges faced through the strong headwinds of climate change as well as the food, energy and security crises exacerbated by supply chains from the Ukraine and the Russian conflict, the situation for already marginalized and vulnerable people has become considerably worse.

First of all, we are facing a perfect storm of elements that are conspiring to create even more human and security than there was before the Ukraine crisis erupted. This is sapping human capital and draining human dignity.

For refugees already facing the prospect of months, sometimes years from their lands and homes,

The voices of women in active participation, not in lip service terms, so that they can shape their destinies and directions of strategies and plans. It is extremely important to harness the power that they will always bring to these kinds of endeavors.

The second point is to make sure that displaced people are also brought into that. We cannot afford to have 100 million people around the planet cast to the margins of society.

This is extremely corrosive to their own sense of community survival, but it is also extremely corrosive and damaging to state and national security.

Large numbers of human insecure people on border areas and within societies destabilizes societies.

These are problems that we can no longer afford to ignore. Social protection, health, education, work are meaningful for livelihoods.

It is very important that displaced people are brought into participation and included in whatever national or other endeavors being undertaken.

And last but not least, the tapping into the community strength. The answers of resilience lie in the communities themselves.

Too often in the past we've designed programs. We've raised funds that take for granted that beneficiaries know and should be grateful for what is being received.

We need to hire the human capital that resides in the communities to make sure that they are the destined master of their own destiny, and that their capital is released in its own small way. UNHCR is trying to address these things.

For example, in Cameroon and Ethiopia we've got some very active reforestation programs.

We're investing in solar energy, precisely at the community level to uplift human capital by providing income generation, and also to hold and bring communities together so that they have a meaningful sense of social cohesion within their communities.

Without that they can become prey to other disintegrating forces, and can become exploited by others, including the rise of extremism in parts of the world which is deeply disturbing.

The challenge is ahead of us. Integration and participation must remain at the center of everything that we do, and we hope that we count on the support of these tremendously vital regional institutions to provide leadership on how to make sure that the world's most disadvantaged to disenfranchise people remain at the center and deeply included in our endeavors.

