

**Statement by Manuel Jordao, UNHCR Representative
at launch of *Not Just Numbers* asylum/migration school kit
EU Commission, 26 March 2009**

***Minister, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Our special guests from Castleknock Community College:***

Thank you being with us today to launch *Not Just Numbers*, a school kit on asylum and migration in Europe which was jointly produced by IOM and UNHCR and funded by the European Union.

One of the fundamental ways we often tend to look at migration issues is through the lens of numbers. Our daily headlines speak of 40 million migrants in the EU making up 8% of the population; 200,000 thousand asylum-seekers in Europe, and worldwide some 32 million people (including more than 11 million refugees) looking for some form of international protection.

This kit is part of an effort to raise awareness among the younger members of our European societies that behind each anonymous statistic related to migration and asylum there is a human face, a personal story, a reason for solidarity.

We believe the toolkit will be a valuable resource for teachers who are committed to raising awareness of the many reasons people leave their own countries, whether as migrant workers or as people displaced from their homes fleeing persecution or gross human rights violations.

We believe that learning about the world that has prompted the decision of a family to leave their country of origin to settle in Europe, will help promote in the classroom, or in the workplace, greater acceptance of the positive role that diverse communities do play in our societies when they are given the chance to fully participate in the construction of our common future.

Indeed, these issues have grown steadily more important in Ireland over the past two decades and will continue to be important for many generations to come.

We hope that our future decision-makers, like the students from Castleknock here today, will take up the challenge to learn about the difficult issues at the heart of modern-day migration, and engage in a debate that is important for all our futures.

Can I finish by briefly thanking the EU Commission's representation here in Dublin for its support in helping to launch this pack. Thank you.