



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

UNHCR Statement

IOM International Dialogue on Migration Panel 2: Identifying migrant vulnerabilities – structural and situational factors of vulnerability

15:00-16:30 18 July 2017

UNHCR agrees that a holistic approach to identifying and responding to the vulnerabilities of all persons on the move is essential.

To this end, we have developed a number of tools to ensure that the immediate and specific needs of all persons are met, regardless of their status, and to assist states, international partners and intergovernmental organizations in their efforts to identify and assist vulnerable people on the move.

Among the tools developed is UNHCR's Vulnerability Screening Tool. This was developed in light of the severe operational exigencies which can limit interview time, such as when individuals are in detention or where UNHCR is forced to work remotely. UNHCR has also developed a Heightened Risk Identification Tool to enhance our efforts to identify refugees at risk by linking community based assessments with individual assessment methodologies. And for children, UNHCR's rapid best interest's assessment form is used as soon as a child is identified as separated, unaccompanied or otherwise at risk, to gather brief information spanning current care arrangements, protection and psychosocial needs, education, health and security issues. These resources and more, are included in UNHCR's recently updated 10-Point Plan in Action on refugee protection and mixed migration. We stand ready to provide further examples of how to identify migrant and refugee vulnerabilities in diverse and challenging contexts.

UNHCR reiterates the importance of distinguishing between identifying and responding to those specific needs which migrants and refugees may share because they are in a vulnerable situation, either because of situational or individual factors, and the need for international protection. As already mentioned, persons in need of international protection – such as refugees, are entitled to protection against refoulement and require permission to remain because of a serious threat to their life, physical integrity, or freedom as a result of persecution, armed conflict, violence, or serious public disorder, against which their country is unwilling or unable to protect them.

Making a distinction between a need for international protection, and responding to the specific needs of migrants in vulnerable situations, helps ensure that responses are targeted to each individual. UNHCR looks forward to continuing to work with IOM and other actors to identify vulnerabilities and meet the specific needs of all persons on the move, and to continuing to contribute this expertise throughout the process of preparation for the global compact on safe, orderly and regular migration.

UNHCR would like to thank IOM for the invitation to take part in this International Dialogue on Migration, and welcomes the timely focus on understanding migrant vulnerabilities.

UNHCR takes a special interest in this issue, and in this context, we wish to offer our perspective on who a migrant in vulnerable situation is, in order to contribute to reflections in this morning's

session. At the outset though, if I may, it is important to underline first that refugees are not a subset of migrants, but a group of people forced to flee situations of conflict, violence and persecution. A solid international legal framework exists both at the global and regional levels, at the center of which is the 1951 Convention and the customary international law principle of non-refoulement.