

High Level Meeting of the UNGA to address large movements of refugees and migrants

Informal Negotiation Session on Outcome Document

June 09, 2016

Intervention by Mr. Amit Narang, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations

Thank you **Mr. Co-Facilitator**.

Let me also start by thanking you for your non-paper which we found to be very useful. I think you have managed to compile most of the ideas we have heard so far and in that sense it's certainly a good starting point for our discussions.

We support the comments made by several delegations earlier this morning - Philippines, Bangladesh, Egypt, China and others. Indeed there have been several important comments made across the room which were very interesting and useful.

We support your idea of working towards a concise political declaration as the outcome of the September 19 meeting.

At this stage, allow me to make 7 points as our initial reflection on the non-paper that you have presented.

First of all, we would like to stress that at this stage nothing is pre-determined. Our substantive discussions are only just beginning. We need a comprehensive discussion to understand what we have in front of us.

Several ideas have been proposed which could be of far-reaching consequences. They touch upon complex issues, relate as they do to international law and global regimes. We are therefore, at this stage not in a position to commit to any pre-determined outcome of our discussions.

Indeed, our initial discussions should not pre-judge the final outcome of these discussions. I say this in particular in the context of so-called Global Compact on refugees. We would need some more time to better understand the *content* and *form* of this so-called Global Compact. Are we talking about an international agreement, a convention, a treaty, a joint statement? We need to understand these issues and till we do that, we should not treat the outcome as a foregone conclusion.

Secondly, as was said by the distinguished delegate of Philippines, we are eager also to understand the relationship of this so-called Global Compact with existing international law and also what exactly is meant by the concept of the 'responsibility sharing'. We do take note of the report of the Secretary-General which made some excellent proposals but then we feel

that this report was meant as an *input* to our discussions and not meant to be simply endorsed as is.

Thirdly, Mr. Co-Facilitator, we need to maintain conceptual clarity between refugees and migrants. At the risk of repetition, UNHCR has stressed and I quote "*The two terms have distinct and different meanings and confusing them leads to problems for both populations*". In our view, in terms of their motivations, causality and impact, there are important differences between the two concepts and the outcome document should not seek to obfuscate these differences.

At the same time - and this point was also echoed by several delegations - both refugees and migrants broadly pertain to the area of human mobility. There are, in other words, important inter-linkages between them. We therefore, find the remarks of some delegations about some form of parallelism between these two so-called Global Compacts to be valid.

Fourth, on migration, Mr. Co-Facilitator, our approach must be rooted in the letter and spirit of the 2030 Agenda. This is based on our understanding that human mobility is fundamental to modern civilization; that migration is an essential component of globalization; and that well-managed migration is fundamentally in the interest of both sending and receiving countries.

At the same time, our approach on migration should be able to distinguish between regular and irregular migration. The latter could and often does have negative consequences – socio-political as well as security related.

Fifth, our approach to migration should be one which is predicated on development. Eradication of poverty, enabling a life of dignity to all, ensuring economic opportunities for a better future and achieving sustainable development are the bedrocks which should underpin our response to human mobility.

Sixth, the missing link in migration is indeed - as others have pointed out - the lack of a global governance structure and we do strongly favor working towards a Global Compact on migration. We thank the Permanent Representative of Bangladesh for delineating earlier today some of the possible elements of such a Global Compact. We also found some other ideas mentioned across the room to be useful, e.g. the one mentioned by the United States on enhancing the legal pathways for regular migration.

Seventh, there needs to be more clarity on this concept of 'large movements'. We do note that this was a part of the General Assembly's Decision. But we are not entirely convinced with the logic which seeks to frame what is currently happening as a 'migration crisis' and the phrase 'large movements' tends to go in that direction.

Finally Mr. Co-Facilitator from a very practical point of view, I note that we have little over six weeks left to complete our work. We would therefore, advise *precision* and *focus* in our work.

We would respectfully caution against expanding the scope of our discussions. When we do speak of human mobility, there can indeed be several facets to it. But then we would not be realistically able to address all of them in the time frame that we have with us.

We should therefore, try to work towards a strong outcome by way of focusing our discussions on the *two* issues which have been identified by the GA decision and we should do so by enhancing mutual conceptual understanding on several issues that we have in front of us.

We trust in your leadership, **Mr. Co-Facilitator** and we are confident that you will lead us ashore in time - well within July!

Thank you.
