

Speech, General Debate: First Deputy Speaker, Ms Ewa Thalén Finné, Sweden
- 138 IPU Assembly, Geneva

“Strengthening the global regime for migrants and refugees: the need for evidence-based policy solutions”

Mr/Ms President,
Members of Parliament,

As we are facing one of the most complex challenges of our time, I am glad that the Inter-Parliamentary Union is focusing on our contribution to the strengthening of a global regime regarding migrants and refugees.

And, I would like to emphasise, the even more important issue of how we can best contribute to the implementation of concrete actions – and - how to follow up and evaluate our measures and commitments.

Today, the number of migrants is growing at an alarming rate. Roughly, there are 65 million forcibly displaced persons, including over 21 million refugees, 3 million asylum-seekers, 10 million stateless persons and over 40 million internally displaced persons. These are the hard figures, specified in the New York declaration, and they tell us that action must be taken.

It is obvious why people become refugees from war, conflict, persecution or disasters. But it is also heartbreaking to see people leaving their homes searching for a better future, searching for hope. They are economic migrants, just like the more than one million Swedes that left Sweden – most of them from the mid nineteenth-century onwards - hoping to leave poverty and despair behind them.

Less than a hundred years later, people are moving in the opposite direction, coming to Sweden instead of leaving it. This shows us that change can be accomplished.

I will now focus on three aspects, each of them crucial to the implementation of a strengthened global regime for refugees and migrants.

First, Gender Equality. We must guarantee the human rights of women when they seek asylum and their applications are scrutinised. We must also emphasise the protection of women and children who are the most vulnerable in the already vulnerable group of refugees and migrants. We know that they, among other things, often suffer violence and sexual abuse and are in danger of being forced into marriages or recruited as child soldiers.

Second, Human Rights for refugees and migrants. I would like to stress the need for implementing and upholding human rights for refugees and migrants. This is an especially important aspect for us as parliamentarians and legislators. The Swedish delegation would especially like to highlight the importance of protecting stateless persons whose suffering is given too little attention.

Third, sharing burdens. The New York declaration states that there is not one single country in the world where no migrants are present. This is indeed a challenge we all have in common.

Agenda 2030 addresses the need to *facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the*

implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. Sweden helped to make this a part of the Agenda and I am glad we succeeded in doing so.

As politicians, we carry a great responsibility, not only for receiving refugees and migrants, but also for helping them become part of our societies and thus enabling them to contribute to our societies.

For a long time, Sweden has been taking its share of the burden and responsibility. But we need stronger cooperation at both EU and global level. We have the SDGs and the New York Declaration. The two Global Compacts on migration and refugees are to be adopted later this year. I believe we have to be firmly committed if we now are going to take the important step from merely talking about the problems to taking action and actually implementing the Global Compacts.

We have to take concrete measures both internationally and within our countries. We ALL have to contribute and to cooperate. Furthermore, we need to ensure that we have mechanisms for monitoring and following up - mechanisms strong enough to keep us on a steady course.

Because, as already stated, it is not what is being said here that will determine whether we are to succeed, but what is actually being done.

Mr/Ms President,
Fellow parliamentarians,

We all have an important job ahead of us when we return to our national parliaments and address this crucial challenge.

Thank you for your attention.

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