
STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE DATO' SAIFUDDIN ABDULLAH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIR...

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STATEMENT BY THE HONOURABLE DATO' SAIFUDDIN ABDULLAH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF MALAYSIA GLOBAL COMPACT FOR REFUGEES HIGH-LEVEL SIDE EVENT: A MODEL FOR GREATER SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION NEW YORK, 24 SEPTEMBER 2018

His Excellency Filippo Grandi

UN High Commissioner for Refugees

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

First and foremost, I would like to commend the initiative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in organizing this High Level Event to galvanize UN member states' commitments towards strengthening the international response to the large movement of refugees through the Global Compact for Refugees.

Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

2. Refugees and migration are inherently regional and global issues that require concerted efforts, mutual understanding and respect; hence the reason why Malaysia attaches great importance to regional and international cooperation in addressing refugees and migration issues as well as their challenges.

3. To this end, Malaysia believes that the benefits of globalisation have to be equally shouldered between governments of countries from where the refugees originate and the receiving countries. It cannot and should not be the responsibility of solely just one side. In this respect, policies and measures at the global level must meet the needs of all parties as well as be formulated and implemented with effective participation from all sides.

4. Furthermore, as the issue of refugees and migration can tantamount to a security threat, the Malaysian Government will continue to undertake efforts to improve its migration governance, while at the same time ensuring its sovereignty, integrity and security concerns are not compromised.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Malaysia had actively participated in the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) process and will continue to protect its interests. At the same time, Malaysia will also ensure that it is not left behind in terms of addressing refugees and migration challenges in a broader spectrum.

6. Thus, Malaysia welcomes the momentum in developing and concretizing the GCR. As the GCR progresses, we believe the international community must fully operationalize the principle of burden and responsibility sharing in addressing this complex issue of protection of refugees.

7. We also note that the GCR, while legally non-binding, contains many positive elements to provide a comprehensive support system for both refugees and host communities.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. As of 31 August 2018, Malaysia is hosting approximately 161,146 Persons of Concern, comprising asylum seekers and refugees from 59 countries.

9. Furthermore, Malaysia continues to render humanitarian assistance to Persons of Concern. We provide refugees with access to medical treatment at government healthcare services across Malaysia, while those who carry certain communicable diseases are exempt from being charged treatment fees at government facilities. Education services are extended to refugees in Malaysia both through UNHCR as well as NGOs and refugee communities.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. Malaysia believes that a wholesome approach is essential in ensuring that the welfare of refugees, especially those in protracted situations, is addressed. Primarily, governments have the main responsibility, but very often, governments cannot act alone. Therefore, Malaysia is cognizant that the protection of refugees and their welfare require a multifaceted approach, whereby the active participation of civil society and private sectors are important elements.

11. In conclusion, I would like to assure that Malaysia would not neglect its international obligations and commitments in addressing migration induced by war, natural calamities, political unrest and armed conflicts.

I thank you.