

TALKING POINTS

High-level event on Migration and Integration

“Mutual Contributions and Benefits: Integrating Migrants in Host Societies”

30 November 2017, 1-3 p.m.

Room XVII, Palais des Nations (Geneva)

Speaker: Carol Batchelor, DIP Director

Time allotted: 7 minutes

Key Messages

- Safe, orderly and regular avenues for migration maximize opportunities and benefits for migrants, States, and the communities they enter, while mitigating the physical and security risks faced by those who move using irregular means. These managed avenues for migration also, and importantly, seek to reduce and prevent resorting to hazardous journeys and associated risks such as smuggling, trafficking, physical violence, exploitation or abduction.
- A holistic approach to address mixed movements requires that we focus on solutions that can benefit refugees, migrants and host communities alike:
- Integration and inclusion, as appropriate, would enable refugees and migrants to become part of the host communities thus contributing to alleviate tension as well as xenophobic and often racist behaviour and reduce the risks of marginalization and radicalization.
- In the refugee context, integration is essentially about enabling refugees’ access to the same opportunities and rights as those they live among, enabling them to contribute to the communities that have welcomed them. Refugees have skills, talents and a determination to re-build their lives when they flee violence, conflict and persecution. But, unlike those they live among, they face particular barriers to exercising their rights and using this determination to succeed.
- We have seen how supporting refugee integration has benefits in the short term and long term, both for displaced communities and for those that host them. It also builds cohesion and stability that benefits everyone and ensures inclusiveness and representation of all groups within the community, including those with specific needs and the most marginalized.
- The principle of inclusion is central to integration and, as a first step, it requires that refugees are counted in the first place. The work needed to achieve integration takes time and should start from the early stages of displacement.
- Working with communities and understanding their priorities and perspectives and the challenges they face is crucial for a successful integration. The most important partners in promoting integration of forcibly displaced persons, are the displaced persons themselves, along with the communities they live in.
- Promoting peaceful coexistence between displaced and local communities is one of UNHCR’s Global Strategic Priorities. Community-based approaches to protection provide opportunities for displaced and local communities to work together and to jointly identify concerns, design and implement activities to respond to them.

- Integration requires the involvement of many actors. In countries of displacement, national and local governments, as well as civil society, play a key role in creating welcoming, inclusive societies and supporting social cohesion and refugee integration in host communities.
 - We need to place **local administrations** at the centre of coordination and action, reinforce local governance actors and strengthen capacity on governance and rule of law, take a comprehensive approach to **development aid** and expanding partnerships and collaboration with i.e. the **private sector, faith-based organizations**.
- Experiences from resettlement countries have also shown that private and community engagement have not only expanded protection and solutions for refugees, but have contributed to foster public support for resettled refugees and welcoming communities.
- It is important that we continue to learn from all these initiatives, and to take the time, as we are at today's event, to reflect on the advances we are making towards furthering integration for refugees and migrants and overcoming the most pressing challenges towards achieving sustainable solutions for refugees in a spirit of global solidarity, international cooperation and more equitable responsibility sharing.