



Opening remarks
H.E. Ms. Inga Rhonda King
President of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)

Africa Dialogue Series:
“Towards Durable Solutions for Forcibly Displaced Persons in Africa”
21 May 2019, New York

Hon. Prime Minister of Mauritius
President of the 73rd Session of the General Assembly
President of the Security Council
Secretary-General of the United Nations
Chairperson of the African Union Commission,

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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I am pleased to join you this morning as we turn our attention to the plight of one of the most vulnerable segments of the population, forcibly displaced persons.

We are witnessing a rapid increase in the number of forcibly displaced persons across Africa. In March, cyclone Idai put three million people into a humanitarian crisis across Mozambique, Malawi and Zimbabwe, as was highlighted at the ECOSOC meeting on the cyclone last month. The migration crisis in parts of North Africa also reminds us of the need for urgent and durable solutions for internally displaced persons.

Climate change displacement is a reality. Global temperature rise is a threat multiplier, aggravating already fragile situations, leading to forced displacement and migration as well as contributing to social tension and conflict. This came out clearly at ECOSOC’s joint meeting with the Peacebuilding Commission in November. The meeting showed the deep impact of climate conditions on the Sahel, a region already faced with multifaceted challenges. In the Sahel, some 4.9 million people have been displaced this year, while 24 million people require humanitarian assistance throughout the region.

It is clear that we need policies that take into account the peace, security, humanitarian and development nexus.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development envisages a “just, equitable, tolerant, open and socially inclusive world in which the needs of the most vulnerable are met”. It makes specific reference to internally displaced persons. Likewise, I commend African leaders’ effort in addressing the challenges of IDPs within Agenda 2063, the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) Refugee Convention and the Kampala Convention, which are unique and exemplary frameworks in the world. We must implement these frameworks to strengthen resilience and prevent conflicts in Africa.

It is also vital to address basic needs of people at their places of origin. They need to have access to water and sanitation, energy, healthcare, quality education, technology and economic opportunities.

The promise of the recently ratified African Continental Free trade Area (AfCFTA) for the continent, in particular, its young people, is immense. It is expected to create 1.2 billion consumers and a combined GDP of US\$ 2.5 trillion, boosting intra-African trade by 52% by year 2022. The Free Trade Area is also expected to lead to a significant improvement in infrastructure, the creation of decent jobs, economic growth and social development. Fulfilling its objectives would contribute to the achievement of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the African Union Agenda 2063.

The African Continental Free trade Area (AfCFTA) could also mobilize significant resources to achieve the SDGs.

I recently attended the Africa Regional Break-out session during the ECOSOC Youth Forum, where I witnessed African youth robustly reaffirm their commitment to achieve the SDGs. They advocated for the concerns and priorities of migrants, refugees and the internally displaced to be integrated into policy-making to ensure integration and inclusivity.

I was happy when parliamentarians at the Africa Session pledged to enact laws to ensure that migrants and the forcibly displaced are guaranteed all their rights and to further domesticate the SDGs, the compact for migration and Agenda 2063 into national frameworks.

Lastly, the international community, including the United Nations system, must enhance their commitment to work together coherently to better support countries to put them on a path to a resilient and risk-informed 2030 Agenda and to ensure that no one is left behind in the Africa we all want.

Thank you.