

**MR. NEVEN MIMICA**  
**EU COMMISSIONER**  
**SPEECH**

Dear President of the 71<sup>st</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly,

Dear Deputy Secretary-General,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am happy to be with you today, and not only because we have an important subject to discuss. When we travel a long distance, to meet with colleagues from all over the world, we see our own problems in a new light. We remember that our view of the world is one of many. And we regain a sense of perspective.

Today, Europe faces its greatest refugee crisis since the Second World War. This crisis is testing our values, and it is testing our will. It is reminding us that solidarity is not only a moral virtue but an essential part of our European Union values. A European Union whose original mission – to promote peace and to promote prosperity – is as relevant and as necessary as ever.

One thing we have learned is that when over one million refugees arrive on our shores, the only response available is common and it is shared. No country can manage the task alone. No country can say it is not concerned. And, as we have seen time and again, unilateral action does not work.

In this context, and while standing here in the United Nations building, I think it is more than appropriate to recall the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which indeed previous speakers have already done. The inclusion of migration considerations into this global framework confirms and reinforces the important links that exist

between migration and development, and that migration can be a powerful development enabler.

With the inclusion in the 2030 Agenda, with its overall objective of leaving no-one behind, migrants and refugees are finally mainstreamed into our development goals. It also provides a testament of the importance of development cooperation in addressing migration and forced displacement.

Finally it is a call for action to all of us to ensure that our development policy, our programmes and our concrete development cooperation must address both the challenges and the opportunities of migration.

While the urgency and the pressure to save lives and to address the reasons for people to feel forced to leave their countries is currently increasing, none of this is of course new to any of us. Many countries and many organisations have been addressing migration and refugee concerns in a development context for years, including the European Union.

But under current circumstances, we need to do more and we need to do better. For the part of the European Union, we have drawn lessons and learned from our earlier responses and interventions on migration.

It has become quite clear to us that we need to engage in a different manner with our partners and we need to ensure that this engagement is comprehensive.

Following the launch of the European Agenda on Migration in 2015, we therefore stepped up our ambitions and our efforts. The Valletta Summit on migration with our African partner countries is one example of this deepened engagement. Another example, linked to this, was the launch of the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa, with the objective of addressing both the root causes of forced displacement and irregular migration as well as improving the overall governance of migration and refugee flows in our African partner countries.

The added value of the Trust Fund approach is that funding can be pooled together from different sources and different

actors, and most importantly that concrete assistance can be launched in a more tailor-made, flexible and rapid way than was previously possible.

I believe that the strong partnership approach established through the Valletta Declaration, coupled with a comprehensive, balanced and effective implementation on the ground, through the Valletta Action Plan, is the right way forward. Needless to say, to be successful, all of this must be undertaken in genuine partnership and with the full commitment, ownership and responsibility of all partners involved. Both sides have to get closer to each other's needs.

The partnerships must take the interest of all concerned parties into account, and must focus on the challenges as well as the opportunities and positive aspects of migration.

While we all agree on the need to continue to fight against trafficking in human beings and migrant smugglers, and while we need to ensure that borders are properly managed, we cannot simply stop there.

For example, we all know that remittances sent by migrants and refugees to their families at home represent a crucial contribution for development. And also the direct involvement of diaspora and migrant communities abroad has a huge positive impact on the origin communities, for example through the transfer of skills and through investments. We need to provide more support to these areas.

Also, we need to invest more in helping build up alternatives to irregular migration, for instance through ensuring appropriate legal migration opportunities between our countries. The European Union is currently developing new and improved proposals for how this can become a reality.

In short, we need to make migration work for development, and development work for migration. We need to pay much more attention to the drivers of forced displacement and migration, or if you wish, its root causes.

This is exactly what the EU is aiming to do through our latest policy proposal on migration. We will further strengthen the European Union's support to our partner countries on

migration and refugee issues through new and strengthened partnership frameworks.

These will be results-oriented and tailor-made, adapted to each country and each context. Support will be delivered through coordinated use of all our available instruments and policies, including development cooperation.

It will consist of short-term actions - to address the most pressing needs in our partner countries – and long-term actions – aiming to engage in sustainable cooperation with our partners to address the underlying reasons for forced displacement and irregular migration.

In addition, the European Commission will propose in autumn an ambitious External Investment Plan, whereby 3.1 billion euro could be made available to mobilise up to 31 billion euro for public and private investments, in particular in Africa.

We are now working on the best ways to provide guarantees and reduce risks for financial institutions and privates who really want to help concrete progress in the least developed countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The current unprecedented refugee and migration situation is a global challenge, which needs a global response. All countries and all stakeholders must join forces in ensuring we can live up to our commitments as expressed in the 2030 Agenda - to leave no-one behind.

Meetings like the one we are having today, and the upcoming summit in New York in September, will be key benchmarks for how the international community will step up to the challenge. The European Union is ready to play its part in this endeavour.

Thank you.