



**PERMANENT DELEGATION
OF NORWAY TO THE OSCE**

**STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO THE ADDRESS BY THE UNITED NATION
HIGH COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES, H.E. ANTÓNIO GUTERRES**

As delivered by Ambassador Robert Kvile
to the Permanent Council,
Vienna, 20 February 2014

Mr Chairman, Mr High Commissioner,

The issue of forced displacement of persons has always been given a special emphasis in Norway's international outlook. Indeed, a sense of commitment for refugees has long been a guiding principle in my country's engagement with the world. This tradition is in many ways embodied in one of our most prominent citizens, Fridtjof Nansen, who was the first High Commissioner for Refugees.

The work of Mr. Nansen still holds valuable lessons today: firstly his fundamental visions about international solidarity and human dignity, and secondly his more practical realization that the forced displacement of people may have multiple causes.

Mr Chairman,

Forced displacement has historically been the result of conflict and related human rights violations. Tragically, this still holds true today, particularly in relation to the crisis in Syria. Norway would like to commend the UNHCR for consistently bringing the impact of the Syrian crisis to the attention of the international community.

What is more, we applaud the solidarity shown by the neighbouring states in accommodating the ever increasing number of Syrian refugees.

Recognizing the heavy burden these acts of solidarity place on the relevant countries, we remain committed to provide funds to the regional response initiatives, in addition to our contributions to the UNHCR.

Mr Chairman,

The Syrian crisis also reveals another truth about forced displacement, namely that it does not have to involve the crossing of borders. Internal displacement remains one of the most serious humanitarian challenges in the world today.

Additionally, the issue of displacement is intrinsically linked to conflict resolution. Addressing displacement and supporting return and reintegration in the aftermath of conflict is essential to the stability and legitimacy of a post-conflict order. Unaddressed, protracted displacement becomes an impediment to reconciliation.

The OSCE should place extra emphasis on this last insight; displacement remains widespread in the OSCE area and is more often than not directly linked to a protracted conflict. Consequently, we reiterate our support for the OSCE Ministerial Decision on Elements of the Conflict Cycle which recognizes the need to protect the rights of displaced persons.

Moreover, we welcome the adoption of the protection checklist as an important measure to implement this Ministerial Decision. The checklist underlines the importance of finding durable solutions for displaced persons.

Norway contributes directly towards this end through our financial support to the regional housing program for IDPs and refugees in the Western Balkans.

Mr Chairman,

Traditional causes of displacement, such as conflict and related human rights violations, tend to occupy the focus in discussions on the issue of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons. However, over the past decades the number of people reported to be displaced as a result of natural disasters has in fact far exceeded those displaced by conflict.

Alarmingly, evidence suggests that forced displacement due to natural disaster and climate change is bound to increase. We lack a proper understanding of the situation, not least the way it unfolds in its local and regional context.

The international community must therefore develop a systemic approach which enhances our preparedness and allows us to respond properly to disaster induced displacement.

Mr Chairman,

We commend the OSCE, UNHCR and the Office of the Special Representative for IDPs for having developed the Protection Checklist in an inclusive and consultative process. This is a good example of the mutual advantages of co-operation between organizations in an area where we are working towards a common goal.

Thank you.