



Restoring Dignity, Inspiring Change.

World Humanitarian Summit
Protection and assistance needs of vulnerable migrants
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Realigning Humanitarian Space

Humanitarian action has over the past decades grown to deliver an impressive picture of global solidarity positively responding in ever broadening scales to emergency needs, moving important resources and impacting on the lives of millions. It is part of civil society's DNA 'to leave no one behind', now more than ever also clearly understood as an international responsibility.

We discover great hope in the language of the UN Secretary General's report for the September 19th meeting "Addressing large Movements of Refugees and Migrants"; we commend the initiative to recover "the IOM birth certificate" to become a UN agency and we welcome the unanimous central commitment of states in the central theme of the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals "to leave no one behind", including migrants and refugees.

In moving from what is today considered a breaking point to make it a turning point we may wish to realign humanitarian space. Allow me three logics in doing this:

1. A first logic builds upon the fact that international concerns have always been developed in a close or direct relationship with national realities. This should bring us again to question how the integration of international responsibilities - including humanitarian action - can proactively be furthered within and starting from the national environment.

The "classic" way of doing this goes through mandates given to intergovernmental entities and through the provision of the necessary financial means to these bodies. On the whole this has worked fairly well but the system remains limited mainly because it builds on an ad hoc responsive project-based financing system. The inevitable consequence is the ever repeated call for more funding whereby we have all witnessed how at times the gap between pledges and actual payments is growing.

The concept of "shared responsibility" builds on the responsibility of each nation. In terms of a realigned humanitarian space it means that in addition to the action over the mandated bodies there is a clear further responsibility for the states themselves to pro-actively develop flexibility and a potential to host and integrate refugees and migrants within and

starting from the respective national management structures. Without such preparation, the required 10% resettlement of the total refugee population will never be reached.

2. A second logic starts from the idea that humanitarian action cannot be disconnected from the quality and durability of the solutions provided. However, it seems somewhat contradictory to look for durability in a humanitarian process which today is essentially reactive. This contradiction is even more compelling when it becomes clear that existing response levels - and in particular their limits - are part of the causes of protraction.

Here again we point at the need to develop integration patterns and models well ahead of any crisis and built upon the existing management organizational structures of the nations. Humanitarian action has too long been considered as a support of those on their way out of the crisis and restoring the past... but the present crises, the protracted situations and the increasing numbers prove how much there is a need to give more focus on the way into a different future. After all, the humanitarian effort is as much about a future as it is about rescue.

That clearly changes the perspective and enlarges again the national and intergovernmental responsibilities. Solutions then need to be developed pro-actively or said differently: the humanitarian space should be of continuous concern, well integrated in both national and international budgets, mechanisms and developments rather than awaking with every humanitarian crisis.

3. A third logic starts from the perspective of the actors involved, whereby I want to highlight the importance of local authorities and the considerable action of civil society. In building a network of cities and organizations ICMC learned how much the exchange on effective practices in resettlement and integration is needed and promising. Cities and municipalities are major actors who are, with civil society and the private sector, often best at building mechanisms that are durable, adequate, flexible and able to be extended in emergency situations. We strongly believe - and past experiences have given evidence - that beyond decisions on access to the territory which remain proper to national prerogatives, the next steps are best served by involving local authorities, civil society and the private sector.

4. These durable, adequate and flexible models exist: (5 examples)

- A number of assistance models have proven successful in the past. The assistance to Hungarians, the boat people, the East Germans focused not only on the protection but on mechanisms to promote integration in communities, labor markets and societies. It may be said they are examples with an undeniable success record.
- The labor markets of many countries already include growing numbers of non-nationals. The need for labor force - undeniable in aging societies - invites to organize and monitor the integration of more (in many sectors, such as construction, care and the Hotel/restaurant sectors as much as in highly specialized professions).
- Resettlement is a major model, yet insufficiently used, often taking too long a process and not really close to its potential. We suggest resettlement to be increased in numbers and to become part of the core annual budget of all member states to contribute to an international roster of resettlement places, annually defined.

- **Student visas** can be offered to many more. Offering these visas to a greater number of eligible candidates among the uprooted will positively contribute to their lives and the communities to be rebuilt. On top of these visas national educational planning may include higher numbers of minors.

Family reunification is essential in any integration process because families are often key to greater stability and responsibilities being taken up.

5. New additional models can be developed:

- New **development projects including the diaspora and the use of remittances** to serve in building productive links between development and humanitarian action. These already prove to be essential and transformative in protracted situations.
- Creation of **a flexible space for integration** whereby the assistance offered in host countries is e.g. temporarily paired with work in the various civil services and with existing labor force in the private sector.
- The creation of **an international fund to serve national needs in building new models**. Instead of paying a receiving country to hold the refugees we suggest to support nations in **pro-actively developing models of response** within their own boundaries.

To conclude:

The humanitarian space has grown to include broader levels of responsibility, new logics, more actors and the implementation of models consistent with and embedded in the existing national mechanisms. We sincerely hope the necessary political courage will be found to contribute to the change and the future of the humanitarian space.