

Statement attributable to the Spokesman for the Secretary-General

on the Recent European Union measures to address situation of refugees and migrants arriving in Europe

The Secretary-General welcomes the decision of the European Council to inject much needed funds, worth some 1 billion euros, into the UN humanitarian response in countries dealing with the Syrian refugee crisis, including Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey. He also welcomes the decision to relocate an additional 120,000 people within the European Union from Greece and Italy over the next two years. While this is a step in the right direction, he stresses that efforts are still required to assist those in need of protection. Greater efforts are also needed to resolve the crises and conflicts that cause people to flee, including in Syria. Only peace and safety will allow refugees to return to their homes and communities.

The Secretary-General calls on European leaders to do more to ensure dignified and humane reception and claim processing of the thousands of men, women and children seeking protection in Europe. He recalls that refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have inalienable rights that must be respected, including the right to claim asylum, and that States must abide by their international obligations, especially the principle of non-refoulement.

The Secretary-General welcomes the EU's efforts to fight trafficking and smuggling of refugees and migrants, and calls on the EU to consider increasing legal and safe pathways into Europe for them, so that they are not left in the hands of criminal networks and embark on perilous journeys.

The Secretary-General emphasizes our common humanity and reminds everyone of their shared responsibility. He stresses that Europe and countries beyond must make available many more relocation places to provide the many refugees who are in camps or living under temporary arrangements with a viable long term solution, when safe return is not possible.

New York, 24 September 2015