

UNCTAD World Investment Forum 2018
Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees
Opening statement by UNCTAD

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AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am very pleased to welcome all of you at this session on Entrepreneurship for Migrants and Refugees.

On behalf of UNCTAD, I would like to start this event by thanking IOM and UNHCR for the precious collaboration that has been put in place during the past year, resulting in a joint policy guide focusing on the role of entrepreneurship in enhancing the positive effect of migration on development.

The Guide is a practical tool aimed at creating the humanitarian-development nexus urged by the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, signed at the 71st UN General Assembly in September 2016.

It is a joint, important effort to acknowledge the role of migrants and refugees as an integral part of a globalized world and to enhance their contribution to inclusive and sustainable development, thereby achieving SDG10 and meeting in particular target 10.7. *(Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people)*

The Guide shows that working as ONE UN is not only concretely possible, but it also creates important synergies among agencies that have complementary fields of expertise. In the case of UNCTAD, paragraph 76 of the Nairobi Maafikiano explicitly requests our organization to continue analyzing and strengthening the impact of migration on development and trade capacity, complementing the work of other organizations.

The Guide was developed by drawing on the knowledge and experience of IOM and UNHCR on migration and refugee issues and on UNCTAD's know-how on entrepreneurship development in the field - in particular, the UNCTAD Empretec programme.

It has a concise, overarching framework, following the structure and logic of UNCTAD's Entrepreneurship Policy Framework, as well as of the Policy Guide on Youth Entrepreneurship jointly developed by UNCTAD and the Commonwealth, and was further informed by IOM's Enterprise Development Model.

To be used as much as possible as a practical tool, the Guide provides a repository of policy measures, programmes and initiatives that have been implemented around the world to support migrant and refugee entrepreneurs and connect them to the broader entrepreneurship ecosystem.

Let me emphasize a few important aspects.

First of all, the Guide confirms that promoting entrepreneurship is increasingly viewed as an effective approach to overcoming some of the challenges of economic and social inclusion for migrants and refugees.

In particular, the case studies clearly show that efforts to support entrepreneurial activity by and for refugees and migrants are making meaningful contributions to the economic well-being of those populations, both directly to individuals and to the communities in which they reside or originate from, with broader positive social impacts. Secondly, the Guide emphasizes the importance of evolving entrepreneurship ecosystems to be inclusive of migrants and refugees rather than creating separate or parallel programmes tailored to these groups.

It does not advocate preferential support for migrant and refugee entrepreneurs but rather focuses on how policymakers can create a more level playing field through inclusive policies and equal opportunities.

It therefore highlights the role of migrant and refugee entrepreneurs in working alongside locals, and the multiple arenas in which cross-sector partnerships can be developed and the private sector can be involved to engage with migrant and refugee entrepreneurs.

Let me finally highlight the extreme timeliness of this joint endeavor. In a moment in which beliefs about international migration and refugee flows are rife with misconceptions, UNCTAD, IOM and UNHCR have put together their forces to provide a fact-based narrative, highlighting the positive social, cultural and economic contribution migrants and refugees make to their home and host countries.

Policies have an important role to play to support entrepreneurial activity by and for refugees and migrants, and to address the obvious barriers they face to engaging in

economic activity. Entrepreneurship has the power to create a win-win situation for all, but in order to make this happen, long-term solutions are needed to address the consequences of large movements of forcefully displaced people, in addition to the important measures that are put in place to cope with the immediate effects of humanitarian crises.

The creation of economic opportunities for all, with the purpose of leaving no one behind, is a priority of the 2030 Development Agenda. One mechanism to achieve this is through the promotion of entrepreneurship. We look forward moving ahead from policy formulation to policy implementation, and seeing the Guide being referred to and concretely adopted in the first pilot countries.

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I'm very much looking forward to hearing the insights of our speakers today. We will be hearing about some real on-the-ground experiences in designing and implementing entrepreneurship promotion initiatives by and for migrants and refugees. I hope that these concrete examples, and the many more cases that we have included in our joint policy guide, will inspire new initiatives around the world.

Thank you.