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Arab NGO Network for Development
شبكة المنظمات العربية غير الحكومية للتنمية

ANND Statement on the Migration Partnership Framework

“On September 21st, a boat sank at Egypt’s Mediterranean coast, with around 600 people on board”.

This is unfortunately not surprising news anymore, but one of the routines of the current refugee and migration crisis the world faces. Nevertheless, it is very important to consider that this occurred only 2 days after the UN Summit on refugee and migration. The words in paper, particularly on ‘shared responsibility’ remained standstill, while lives of hundreds continue to be lost. In reality, when the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon’s proposal to resettle 10 percent of world’s refugees annually was rejected earlier in August, it actually became an indication that the UN high-level summit that took place on September 19th, would not meet the expectations. The scorecard¹ developed by civil society organizations showed that the outcome of the Summit, the New York Declaration could not pass the test for success. Thus, we are still in need of immediate actions that turn words into action, particularly with regard to responsibility-sharing, given that ‘little was proposed to put this into practice or make new commitments’².

In this regard the speech of High Representative Mogherini at the Summit needs attention. During her speech, she stressed that the "the European Union is finally turning words into action"³. Accordingly she referred to new European approach and tools, namely Migration Partnership Framework (MPF) and the European External Investment Plan (EEIP).

ANND supports the emphasis of High Representative Mogherini on ‘partnerships’ to address the crisis situation but takes this statement as an occasion to raise concerns on the proposed tools and approach.

1. **Priorities set within the MPF are based on Euro-centric security concerns rather than a rights-based approach:** The priorities listed within the framework are saving lives at sea, increasing returns, enabling migrants and refugees to stay closer to home and, in the long term, helping third countries' development in order to address root causes of irregular migration⁴. In fact, around 5 million Syrian refugees are in neighboring countries now close to 6 years. This obviously constitutes a significant development challenge in these countries but lead to human rights violations for refugees as well. Thus, we note that EU’s choice of prioritizing refugees to stay closer to home, is not an act of burden-sharing but mere burden-transferring to neighboring countries. We believe EU’s security concerns are high at-stake in this approach, yet we remind EU’s legal obligations under the international human rights law, being state party to related UN treaties and commitments made under the Agenda 2030 to sustainable development goals.
2. **EU’s prioritization on addressing the root causes of irregular migration through helping third’ countries development derives from a misleading approach, limiting the causes of migration to lack of livelihoods mainly and providing solutions through**

¹ <http://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/statement-and-scorecard-for-un-summit-for-refugees-migrants.pdf>

² <http://www.icmc.net/sites/default/files/documents/statement-and-scorecard-for-un-summit-for-refugees-migrants.pdf>

³ https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/10090/mogherini-calls-for-global-compact-to-meet-challenge-of-migration_en

⁴ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2072_en.htm



investments (mainly private) in these countries. EU bases the MPF on a limited approach in which creating opportunities through investments should help tackle root causes of migration⁵. On the contrary, what we need is a comprehensive and rights-based revision of EU policies principally foreign, security and economic policies alongside development policy. EU should acknowledge that peoples of the region do not only leave their homes to have better access to livelihoods or facilities, but because of the widespread, deep-rooted long-lasting conflict in the region. In most countries of the region, the state is weak, rule of law, democracy, human rights are violated and the state fail to meet the basic needs of its people. However, the focus should not be on providing access to livelihoods and infrastructure only, but on addressing inequalities in achieving peaceful societies. In this regard, the EU, as partner concerned with stabilizing the neighborhood, has a key role to play in achieving sustainable peace and stability in the region and ensuring justice.

3. **ODA should be about addressing inequalities and development challenges and the EU should escape using its ODA in more security-related expenditure and as a tool to pursue its own security agenda.** Indeed, given the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) High Level Meeting in February 2016, the change introduced in ODA-eligibility remains a key concern for Southern partners. Considering security, defense, humanitarian and integration of the migrants' expenditures as eligible part of ODA would hamper means of implementation for sustainable development and the Agenda 2030.
4. **The framework suggests positive and negative incentives to be integrated in the EU's development policy, for cooperation in managing the flows of irregular migration and with consequences for those who do not cooperate on readmission and return.** We believe conditionalities set in the MPF would only be counter-productive. This will also threaten the policy space of the partner countries and violate their right to development. Indeed, referring to commitments made in Rome, Paris, Accra and Busan we recall that any conditionality put on development aid would hamper effective development cooperation.
5. **The newly announced European External Investment Plan (EEIP) for the Neighborhood and Africa is referred in the MPF as an ambitious plan to tackle the root causes of the migration; once again the misleading linkage between lack of investments and migration is promoted by the EU.** The EEIP is expected to mobilize total investments of up to EUR 44 billion, based on EUR 3.35 billion contribution from the EU budget and the European Development Fund. The Plan aims to boost the potential of the European private sector to invest in the partner countries, yet without any commitment for private sector transparency and guarantee for accountability. Furthermore the plan envisages dialogue on public-private partnerships, thus has a strong push on implementation of the neo-liberal economic model in partner countries. ANND notes that this model has long been followed by the Arab countries, resulting in inequalities and injustices at several levels. This model favored crony capitalism increasing concentration of wealth in the hands of few leaving the majority behind. Moreover, with regard to PPPs promotion, country cases reveal that most PPPs fail to achieve their goals as well as preserving citizens' rights due to lack of competent and efficient public institutional framework. The governments lack of competence to negotiate with private sector. Thus they don't provide necessary conditions to tackle migration, but rather result in rights violations that make people migrate.

⁵ http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-16-2072_en.htm



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6. **We note the lack of transparency and respect to inclusive partnership and democratic ownership principles in finalization of the compacts with partner countries under the MPF, as no information on the content has been made public.** MPF states that *“these compacts will set out comprehensive packages which combine different policy elements towards the same objective, both within EU competence (trade, mobility, energy, security, etc.) and within national competence. ...In case of Lebanon, it states that ‘those consist upgrade of basic services (waste management, water, education and health), as well as increased economic opportunities in Lebanon for both the Syrian refugees and the most vulnerable Lebanese communities. In exchange, the Lebanese government should make efforts on the social and economic inclusion of Syrian refugees in order to improve their living conditions and legal residence status.’”* We remain highly concerned as the discussions are held behind the doors, without any consultation and inclusion of civil society. Although it is clear that an effective response to address migration and refugee crisis would require all development actors to work in coordination and collaboration. These compacts should be adopted ensuring full transparency and as tools for genuine partnership and cooperation with partner countries. They should not be replications of the Turkey-deal on migration; as the latter is not a positive step. The deal overwhelms the surrounding countries with huge number of refugees in which they are without any protection and vulnerable to human rights violations. Moreover, the deal is criticized as it is a reflection of the EU undermining its moral and legal obligations.

Finally, in addition to these concerns, we believe the consultation launched on the revision of European Consensus on Development within the framework of Agenda 2030 stands at a critical point. We remain in alert as the revision can actually make development policy turn into a tool to support the same limited approach adopted in MPF and EEIP. This would mean that the Development Policy is an additional tool to secure EU borders, and to further secure private investments and interests under development cooperation rather than being an effective tool to ensure EU’s commitments under the Agenda 2030 to leaving none behind.