

JOINT PRESS RELEASE

The Gaziantep Declaration Calls for Transition From Emergency to Resilience Approach in Migration and Displacement Responses

More than 30 mayors from four continents adopted the Gaziantep Declaration at the International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement. The Declaration reflects good practices on the implementation of globally and regionally agreed principles on local solutions to migration and forced displacement.

Gaziantep, Turkey, 27 November 2019 - Mayors from 13 countries and 4 continents meeting with stakeholders from UN agencies, governments, municipalities, cities, international and local NGOs, the private sector and civil society, have adopted a Declaration underlining the importance of strengthening the existing local responses at the International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement, in Gaziantep, Turkey, on 26 and 27th November.

Only weeks ahead of the first ever Global Refugee Forum (GRF) co-convened by the Government of Turkey on 17-18 December 2019 in Geneva, the Gaziantep Declaration builds on the recognition of the role of municipalities and cities affirmed by the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Global Compact on Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM) both adopted in December 2018.

The Forum in Gaziantep highlighted the importance of approaches bridging humanitarian and development responses, such as the New Way of Working (NWOW) that calls on different actors to work collaboratively, based on their unique and respective mandates, towards collective outcomes.

Recognizing the fundamental importance of the New Urban Agenda (NUA) which was endorsed by the UN General Assembly in December 2016, the Gaziantep Declaration builds on the cooperation in response to the Syria crisis within the framework of the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan 2018-2019 (3RP). The Declaration also gives a strong reference to the Marrakech Mayors Declaration of December 2018, and the work of the Mayors Mechanism to translate these commitments into action through its Call to Local Action on Migration adopted earlier this month in Durban, South Africa.

The participants of the Forum commended the innovative and forward-looking leadership of the Government of Turkey and the localized action taken by Metropolitan Municipalities such as Gaziantep in the inclusion of refugees in national systems through harmonization lens. Turkey, hosting the largest number of refugees in the world since 2014, has demonstrated how resilience and development approaches can provide a critical added value complementing and building on humanitarian responses.

With the Gaziantep Declaration, the mayors and stakeholders commit to promote the efforts globally to transition from emergency to resilience approach in responding to complex refugee and migration situations. They also agreed on communicating the Declaration, with specific reference to SDGs 11 and 16 (on sustainable cities and strong institutions), to the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

The 2019 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July in New York also focused on refugee and migration issues. Mayors agreed to promote the principles of the Declaration as key components on subsequent HLPF annual reviews in strengthening responses to refugee situations and migration at the municipal level.

The Gaziantep Declaration highlights key aspects to a successful pathway of refugee and migration responses at the local level from emergency to resilience and development. Raising awareness on the localization of the SDGs (especially SDG 11 and SDG16), empowering city networks that support replication and scaling of exemplary local responses, job creation and partnerships with the private sector at the local level, protection and social protection as a key foundation for successful integration are among these key aspects.

The declaration also underlines the importance of multi-level governance, civil society, gender equality and social cohesion as an anchor for long-term success, as well as inclusive access to quality services and the crucial role of new technologies, innovation, and data management at the local level.

At the declaration the mayors and stakeholders pledge to highlight the importance of cities being at the centre of global efforts to secure safe, inclusive and sustainable living environments. The importance of working with international donors and other sources of finance is also highlighted, to support municipalities with resources to create innovative approaches to delivery of better services for refugee and migrant communities.

The declaration also promotes early integration of digital tools for communities affected by migration and displacement. The municipalities also pledge to contribute with their practical examples of successful approaches into the global discussions on migration, displacement and local development.

The declaration underlines the significance of working with media to highlight and promote examples of successful integration of refugee and migrant populations. The mayors pledge to work on city level partnerships and networks of relevant local development partners in responding to migration and displacement.

The International Forum on Local Solutions to Migration and Displacement on 26 and 27th of November was co-hosted by the Gaziantep Metropolitan Municipality (GMM) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), together with the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), the UN Migration Agency (IOM), the World Academy for Local Government and Democracy (WALD), the Union of Municipalities of Turkey (UMT), and the United Cities and Local Governments Middle East and West Asia Section (UCLG-MEWA).

As another outcome of the Forum, the UCLG-MEWA Committee on Social Inclusion will establish a Global Task Force on Migration. This Global Task Force will serve as a network to follow up on the commitments of the Gaziantep Declaration.

The Declaration will be communicated to the Global Refugee Forum (GRF), the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), its Mayors' Mechanism and the Global Mayoral Forum on Human Mobility, Migration and Development and UCLG Congress to feed in these respective discussions.

The Gaziantep Declaration can be found on: municipalforum2019.org

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