



Communique on World Refugee Day

We, the members and Friends of Faith to Action Network;

Gathered here in Geneva Switzerland attending the International Conference entitled 'Welcoming the Stranger and Shaping the Future' ;

Acknowledging and celebrating the important World Refugee Day observed on the 20th of June annually;

Concerned, by the ever-increasing number of displaced people worldwide with latest statistics from the UNHCR reporting that at least a 100 million people have been forced to flee their homes due to various push factors such as war;

Committed to the 1951 refugee Convention and its 1967 protocol, particularly the principle of non-refoulement;

We as faith leaders therefore make the following statement:

We are gathered here in Geneva on this special occasion of the World Refugee Day after having done some important consultations in Southern, Eastern and Northern Africa to understand the issues that confront migrants, refugees and returnees and how the faith community has responded to them. Our consultations revealed that the Faith Community plays a very Critical role in "Welcoming the Stranger" (Consultations Report) through guidance by the Holy scriptures.

This is evidenced by the faith community's work with migrants, internally displaced people and refugees in responding to xenophobia, floods and other natural disasters, people fleeing conflict and unrest. Our consultations affirmed that the trust communities have placed on us and our embeddedness in communities places us at a great leverage to reach out to and support migrants, refugees and returnees in our capacity as first responders.

Whilst context differ, our consultations revealed that we provide; "humanitarian aid, protection, education, psycho-social support, economic empowerment, spiritual support, peace building, social cohesion and legal assistance while undertaking advocacy informed by research,". During the consultations, we discovered that our scriptures largely align with the letter and spirit of the 1951 Refugee convention and its 1967 Protocol.

Our Position

1. As we observe this day, we call upon governments to develop a strengthened framework and practice of integration of migrants, refugees and returnees, into host communities while respecting equal opportunity, employment, dignity, due process, and human rights.
2. We reiterate that as people arrive in host countries albeit as refugees or returnees; their human rights still hold and must be observed as such; this equally applies to Internally Displaced People (IDPs).
3. We continue to call for the recognition and support to faith actors (they are the first to respond when a crisis starts, remain responding during and after crisis is over). They need technical and financial support systems that build resilience to communities' response to migrants, refugees and returnees.
4. We call for increased political will to resolve conflict and stop war and man-made crises that cause people to flee their countries.
5. We call upon the International Community to increase funding support for migrants, refugees and returnees. No victim should be further victimised.