Background

The links between human mobility, health and migration management have never been more important when considering universal health coverage, global health security, public health, human rights, gender, equity, and human and sustainable development. Unprecedented migration flows and globalization have brought new challenges to addressing the health needs of migrants and refugees, particularly in large movements, which require innovative solutions and new partnerships. Refugees and migrants should have equitable access to health and other social services, essential assistance and protection in a participatory manner. These should be delivered in a manner that respects the principle of non-discrimination; is appropriate to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of the affected population including with respect to age, gender and diversity and takes into account the needs of the affected local communities.

It is recognized that migrants and refugees contribute positively and significantly to sustainable development. Although health is a prerequisite to sustainable development and inclusive growth, the health of migrants and refugees has not been extensively included in debates outside the health sector and within the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Both migrants and refugees have human rights which should be respected, protected, and fulfilled. The right to health has been well stipulated within the WHO Constitution since 1948.

Despite existing and ratified international human rights standards and conventions, including the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol, many migrants and refugees lack access to health services and the financial protection to allow them to access health care for themselves and their families. Migrants in irregular situations, particularly, suffer from inhumane migration policies and have little or no access to health and social services, although they are exposed to many health risks, including exploitation, dangerous working and substandard living conditions. Lack of universal health coverage can lead to excessive costs for migrants and refugees, many of whom pay out of pocket for health services. This prevents many from accessing the necessary health services, which exacerbates health conditions that could otherwise have been prevented, often at reduced costs, if services had been available sooner.

This side event aims to raise awareness and bring attention to the urgent question of the health of migrants and refugees, which has, up to now, been insufficiently addressed in multi-sector platforms. The event will also facilitate the sharing of current perspectives and good practices, as well as emphasize the shared responsibility of promoting the health of migrants and refugees. This is necessary for achieving universal health coverage for all, regardless of status, the management of safe, orderly and regular migration and the provision of asylum. These achievements are in line with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, in particular goals 3.8 and 10.7 to ensure healthy lives for all and to leave no-one behind.

Properly addressing the health needs of migrants and refugees improves their health, protects global public health, facilitates integration and contributes to social and economic development in the host country. Ensuring equitable access to essential health services and financial protection can be effective tools for promoting health equity in today’s diverse societies.
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| 08.00 – 08.15 | **Opening remarks**  
  - Permanent Mission of Italy - Dr Ranieri Guerra  
    *Director General of Preventive Health and Chief Medical Officer, Ministry of Health, Italy*  
  - Permanent Mission of Sri Lanka - Dr. H.S.R.P de Silva  
    *Director of Organization and Development and the National Focal Point for Migration Health and Development, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka* |
| 08.15 – 08.20 | Video: Personal stories from the frontline of migration and health                   |
|            | **Panel: The health of migrants and refugees involved in large population movements: leaving no one behind** |
| 08.20 – 09.00 | **WHO**  
  - Dr Peter Salama, Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme  
  **UNHCR**  
  - Mr Volker Turk, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, UNHCR  
  **IOM**  
  - Ms Laura Thompson, Deputy Director General, IOM  
  **World Bank**  
  - Mr Ernest Massiah, Practice Manager, Health Nutrition and Population, MENA Region, World Bank  
  **Johns Hopkins University**  
  - Dr Paul Spiegel, Director of the Johns Hopkins Center for Refugee and Disaster Response, John Hopkins University  
  **ICMC**  
  - Msgr. Robert Vitillo, Executive Director, ICMC  
  The distinguished panel will assist in responding to questions such as:  
  - What recommendations could be included in the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration as well as the Global Compact for Refugees, in order to improve the health of migrants and refugees at all phases of the migration and forced displacement cycle?  
  - How can we achieve universal health coverage for all, regardless of legal status? What needs to be in place?  
  - How can Member States with limited health system resources and consequent challenges in addressing their nationals' health needs, meet the health needs of refugees and migrants? |
| 09.00 – 09.25 | Discussion and Q&A                                                                 |
| 09.25 – 09.30 | Closing remarks                                                                     |

**Chair:** Dr Edward Kelley, Director WHO Service Delivery and Safety department  
**Moderator for panel discussion:** Richard Horton, Chief Editor The Lancet