

Delegation from the Republic of France
Position Paper for the United Nations Security Council

The issues before the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) are: *Environmental Migration as a Concern for Peace and Security*, *Preventing Violence Towards Refugees and IDPs*, and *Partnerships Between the United Nations and Relevant Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping Operations*. As our Ambassador to the United Nations, Mr. François Delattre said, “[t]he insecurity and massive violations of human rights that fuel conflicts, as well as the impunity that accompanies them, are the primary causes of displacement, which in turn destabilizes States.” The Republic of France therefore looks forward to tackling these issues to provide more safety for people in destabilized regions.

I. Environmental Migration as a Concern for Peace and Security

Environmental migration is the negative consequence of a combination of two of the most imminent and extensive crises we witness today: extreme climate and the displacement of millions of people. According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), about 22.5 million people have been displaced by climate or weather-related events since 2008. Areas of increased vulnerability to environmental threats include habitats in drylands, mountain regions and coastal zones. For example, at the end of 2018, several earthquakes and tsunamis have devastated Indonesia and the Philippines, leading to more than 2,000 casualties and ten thousands of displaced persons. It is of utmost importance to secure the homes of millions of people in areas affected by extreme climate that would otherwise have to resort to migration.

According to the 1951 *Convention Relating the Status of Refugees*, no state “shall expel or return” a refugee to their original state if their life would be threatened as a consequence. While this comprises threats due to political or religious persecution, the Convention lacks linkage to environmental factors. *A/RES 63/281* (2009) invited UN member states to increase efforts to approach climate change as an issue of international peace and security. In 2015, the *Paris Agreement* summoned to establish a task force to develop integrated approaches to “avert, minimize and address displacement related to the adverse impacts of climate change.” Also, *A/RES/71/1* (2016) acknowledged environmental factors as root causes of migration. Being a pioneer in environmentalism and a key player in managing global migration, France strongly supports these measures. However, further linkage between climate and migration and extensive action is needed.

Therefore, France calls upon all UN members to recognize the urgency of climate crises and their implications to migration. To reduce harmful effects by environmental hazards, the *United Nations Program for Adaption to Environmental Threats (UNPAET)* shall be established. *UNPAET* aims to provide consultation and funding to living areas with increased exposure to environmental threats in order to initiate restructuring measurements. It shall be financed by and established within the framework of United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and accordingly have its headquarter in Nairobi. Personnel of 400 is needed to cooperate with local governments, climate institutes and UNHCR, if necessary. *UNPAET* shall be approached by the regions in need.

II. Preventing Violence Towards Refugees and IDPs

Refugees and internationally displaced persons (IDPs) flee because of violence, but they also become subjects to violence during their flight, during their stay in refugee camps and host countries, and at their return. According to UNHCR, children make up 52% of all refugees and it goes without saying that children remain especially vulnerable to violence in the context of flight. Therefore, violence against children poses major problems in the security of refugees and IDPs. Especially children who travel on their own or become separated from their family witness direct violence, detention, smuggling and sexual abuse. The risks are even higher for female child refugees. At the same time, there is a fundamental lack of shelter and ports of call for child refugees witnessing violence. France has been highly engaged in managing Europe’s migration flows. Being a strong advocate of human rights and safety for children and refugees, France deems that violence against children must be addressed at the crime scene. The acuteness of such violence requires immediate on-site efforts.

As UN’s refugee agency, UNHCR is mandated to provide international protection to refugees. UNICEF is responsible for the safety of children worldwide. In collaboration with states, UNHCR and UNICEF thus share the responsibility for ensuring that children find safety during their flight. Children underlie the legal protection of the 1989 *Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)*. It forces countries to report to the

United Nations Committee on the situation of children in their responsibility and their actions to secure the children's rights. France deems these agreements to be of high value for individual safety but not specific enough in terms of concrete measures for violence against child refugees. In their *Agenda for Action*, UNICEF calls upon governments to protect children on the move from violence, abuse and exploitation by providing more safe and legal channels for children to migrate and to seek refuge. While France supports these remarks, they are clearly not sufficient as children need safety also during their stay in refugee camps.

Refugees are on the move and violence against them is therefore hard to quantify and address. However, refugee camps, in many cases, constitute places of longer stay. France therefore proposes to establish facilities in refugee-camps with >5.000 inhabitants, in which children can report violence and receive both shelter and medical help. These facilities shall run under the name of *United Nations Shelter for Child Refugees (UNSCR)*. UNSCR shall be financed by and set up within the framework of UNHCR to provide immediate help to children witnessing violence and gather information to extend our sparse knowledge about violence against refugees and IDPs. Therefore, each facility shall be provided with medical staff and reporters (both 4 per 1,000 inhabitants). Quarterly reports, published on the UNHCR website, shall summarize the current state of violence against child refugees and IDPs. As subunit of UNHCR, it shall have its head quarter in Geneva. Focus must be put on encouraging children to report any violence committed against them.

III. Partnerships Between the United Nations and Relevant Regional Organizations in Peacekeeping Operations

The quadrupling of peacekeeping missions since the Cold War has strained the UN's resources and capacity. At the same time, intra-state conflicts, terrorism and interdependencies make today's operations considerably more complex and demanding. Consequently, cooperation of the UN with regional peacekeeping endeavors became increasingly attractive. But in their previous implementation, such cooperation was characterized by slow, unresponsive service delivery, inadequate resource management, a lack of transparency and accountability, and cases of sexual assault. Being the second-largest deployer of peacekeeping troops (940 worldwide), the fifth-largest donor to UN peacekeeping (6,31% of total budget), and the only country to provide national forces in support of regional peacekeeping, France aims to reform cooperation between UN and regional peacekeeping actions.

Article 24, Chapter V of the *UN-Charter* clearly vests the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security to the UNSC. However, Article 52(1), Chapter VIII allows also for the existence of regional peace arrangements or agencies. In *An Agenda for Peace* (1992), the Secretary-General recommended a greater role for regional organizations in peace-related activities. Additionally, the *Supplements to An Agenda for Peace* from 1995 outlined effective forms of cooperation between the UN and regional peacekeeping organizations, such as consultation, diplomatic support, operational support, co-deployment and even joint operations. Both reports were very much welcomed by the French Republic. To respond to mentioned challenges, the Secretary-General in 2017 launched *Action for Peacekeeping (A4P)* to renew mutual political commitment to peacekeeping operations. Strongly supporting *A4P*, France aims to contribute to the peacekeeping reform by (re-)creating stable and effective cooperation between UN peacekeeping and regional peacekeeping endeavors.

The SC must strive to reform peacekeeping to enable meeting modern challenges of international peace and security. In this context, both dynamic communication between UN and regional peacekeeping and extensive performance assessment is needed. To guarantee all this, the *United Nations Consultation and Assessment System for Peacekeeping (UNCASP)* shall be established. *UNCASP* shall be part of the *A4P* initiative and integrated into UN peacekeeping in order to supervise and optimize cooperative missions. For this purpose, *UNCASP* shall a) arrange periodic (at least virtual) meetings between UN peacekeeping and regional operations, b) quantify supply and demand of peacekeeping forces, equipment and training facilities, and c) write summarizing reports to inform the UN Secretary General and the Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations. For this purpose, a maximum of 50 personnel per cooperative mission is needed to gather this data and integrate it into optimizations of peacekeeping strategy.