

THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

GLOBAL DISPLACEMENT AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR REFUGEES

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THE HONORABLE SAM BROWNBACK
The United States Senate (R-Kansas)

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United Nations

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PROCEEDINGS

CARLOS PASCUAL: (in progress) -- was elected to the U.S. Senate. He serves on the Appropriations, Judiciary, and Joint Economic Committees. He also serves in the Helsinki Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and is very active in the Human Rights Caucus. He's actively engaged in a number of issues including stopping genocide in Darfur, incentivizing drug companies to find cures to infectious diseases throughout the world, and spreading democracy and human rights in Iran and North Korea.

We thought it was very appropriate to ask Senator Brownback to introduce this session and he will then introduce High Commissioner Guterres. Again welcome, we're glad you're here and looking forward to an exciting dialogue.

Thank you.

SENATOR BROWNBACK: Thank you very much, I appreciate that. Pleasure to be here with you. It's a beautiful spring day in Washington. I'm delighted you're willing to share with us and I think we're going to have a nice dialogue with the High Commissioner who I've had the pleasure being able to work with over a number of years.

I'm not the, you have a number of great spokesmen for the High Commissioners office that are move stars, I'm not that. I wish I were,

but I'm not and I'm glad you're using them in that capacity. That's wonderful and they're great spokesmen on refugee issues.

This is a crying issue of our day. I don't think it gets near enough visibility or publicity, but when you meet with the individuals on it that are involved in it you're going this is something that we got to deal with and we need to deal with. We need to be aggressive and intentional about dealing with it.

I've got a hold on a nominee of the Administration, because I don't think we're doing near enough with what's taking place in North Korea and the North Korean refugee crisis that's coming out of there. And the number of people that are being persecuted, slaughtered, trafficked, because I don't think we're intentional enough about recognizing what's happening to poor individuals that are refugees from that country.

You've got now a situation where China's coming forward with the Olympics and bringing forward this idea with great fanfare and yet in many respects China, I believe, is the great enabler of human rights abuses around the world, in their country and many other places. And then we need to highlight and to shine a light on that. Always factual, clear, direct but talking about it nonetheless.

I want the Olympics to go on. I want them to be great games. I want the United States to do well. I am always impressed and

entertained by the Olympics. But in this move up towards it I think what our discussion should be about is about human rights, about refugees, about people persecuted. Whether that's in Tibet or Burmese or North Koreans not allowed to pass through China or in other places around the world. And I think we should take every opportunity we have to talk about the plight of those who don't have a voice and give them voice and organize and to push and to be active.

You have here the leading voice for refugees in a sense for as far as an international organization that's most organized, that has been given the mantle of being able to carry this voice for people in displaced populations around the world in the High Commission on Refugees out of the UN. I push and goad them at times saying I don't think you're doing enough on some of the topics I feel are strong. I think we ought to push and goad, at the same time I want them there pushing and delivering and helping refugees as much as we possibly can in as many far flung places around the world as there are. I think we should help here in anyway we can in the United States. I think the UN High Commissioner needs to highlight places that are evolving in these situations.

One that we've been looking at more lately is Eastern Congo and where a number of the organized militias and armies have pulled

back, but yet the fighting continues. People are continuing to be displaced out of their villages and out of their homes and much of it seems to be centered around militia groups that are taking the mineral resources and using terror in their area to create refugees and to be able to mine then coltan or other minerals. Some things that we hope to highlight in legislation and bring forward as well.

I look forward to the further discussion we have the leading figure in the world that's here to talk about this the UN High Commissioner on Refugees Antonio Guterres. He is an individual that has worked on these topics for a long time, carries a strong portfolio, carries an enormous personal interest, is deserving of our help and support and backing and deserving of our encouragement, and I hope what can take place today, Mr. Commissioner, is a good dialogue here. Comments from the Commissioner and then what we all can do to be more effective for people that don't have voice, that in many cases will suffer or die if we aren't active for their purposes and their causes. So I would ask you if you would to join me in a strong welcome for the High Commissioner on Refugees Mr. Guterres.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: Thank you very much Senator Brownback for your so nice words and thank you very much to the Brookings Institute for this invitation.

The 21st Century is becoming more and more a century of people on the move. In a simplistic vision we would say that many move because they want, they want a better life, they want better opportunities for their children, they are economic migrants, they move because they are forced to move because of war or persecution, they are refugees. Now the problem is that more and more when one looks at what's happening in the world, we see mixed flows of population. When a boat arrives in the Kennedy Islands or Lampedusa, when a boat is drowned in the Gulf of Aden, when people move into a island of the Caribbean probably the majority of them will be economic migrants in search of a better life but some of them are in need of protection because they are refugees or asylum seekers. Because they are women, victims of trafficking, because they are unaccompanied minors that require that protection.

And what it is becoming more and more difficult in today's world is to distinguish among them. Traffickers and smugglers dominant these flows of population and so traffickers and smugglers it's essential to mix things. It's essential not to allow people to be distinguished. They tell everybody to destroy their documents. And it's extremely difficult to detect those that are in need of protection according to international law and those that being economic migrants, have human rights to be respected,

but of course, have not the same kind of commitment by the international community to grant them this kind of protection that the '51 Convention for instance allows them to receive.

Now the truth is that these distinctions being more and more difficult, it's important to analyze all we can preserve, protection or we can preserve asylum in these complex movements of population. And how we can make sure that those in fact in need of protection are granted access, physical access mainly to asylum procedures, fair treatment of their claims, and that responsible of bodies of managements that states have the right to do is done in a protection minded way allowing for those that require that protection to have access to it.

Now it's important to recognize that in today's world where you have 10 million refugees which we have about 200 million migrants, it's important to recognize that globalization has been asymmetric. Money moves freely everywhere, goods tend to move more and more freely and we all hope that Doha Round of Negotiations will reach a positive outcome. But for people there are still huge obstacles for their movement.

And being globalization is asymmetric it's also true that we are moving more and more in to a global labor market. And in all markets and even when I was a young Socialist I had to learn it, markets work. All markets work. And if you are having a global labor market that market will

also tend to work. And supply will meet demand; legally if possible, but illegally if necessary.

And one of the key questions in today's world is how to be able to look into these migration flows at the light of the problems of the 21st Century and that the light of the globalized world we are living in. I'd say first of all much of the migration flows are inside the same countries and they are taking place in the context of growing urbanization, especially in the developing worlds which creates a huge amount of other problems that I will not refer today.

Second that migration is becoming not only a South-North movement, but also more and more and South-South movement, Bangladesh is moving into India, people from Central Africa moving into South Africa. It's no longer only poor people going to rich country. It's people moving into some place where they find they can have better opportunities and at the same time I think it's important to recognize that the only way to make sure that we can control and avoid irregular migration is with the creation of meaningful opportunities of legal migration.

And this is a debate that is been very difficult in today's world. And I do believe that in the context where meaningful opportunities of legal migration will be offered, it will be much more easy and this is

particularly true for an area like Europe. It will be much more easy for protection to be granted to those in fact in need of protection in the present world.

Now to make it even more difficult, what we are witnessing now is that these categories: refugees, economic migrants are also becoming more and more difficult to fit in the present movement of people. And there is a certain number of new patterns of forced displacement in this 21st Century. We see war and conflict linked with extreme deprivation and linked with environmental degradation and effects of climate change. And these things are more and more interconnected. When you have the Janjaweed attacking a village in Darfur, it's true you have a political problem. You have allies of the government of Khartoum that are destroying, burning a village that belongs to an African tribe that probably is seen by them as being supportive of one of the rebel movements in Darfur.

But it's also true that you have groups of herders chasing out, kicking out farmers from a village to make sure that their herds have access to water points in an area where population has been growing in the past few years and where water resources have been dwindling in those past few years. And there will be no solution for Darfur, it's beyond a political solution. You won't find also a solution for this problem of

access to water to make sure the communities can live together again in the future.

And environmental degradation generates war and conflict and war and conflict generate displacement. But the environmental degradation with drought for instance, in some areas of the world look at de Sao, generates for itself forced displacement. People move because they have no longer living conditions in the areas where they were traditionally, where their communities would traditionally live.

And the same with extreme deprivation. We are now witnessing in today's world the impact of rising food prices. Now this impact of rising food prices in a society like ours, in Washington, in Lisbon, or in Geneva is of course something that is felt and I'm sorry that having been a politician for 30 years I know that when inflation goes up governments are in trouble. And probably government parties might lose the elections because this inflation is indeed one of the key factors in mobilizing the wheel of the electorate.

But if this is true, it's not dramatic. Governments lose, oppositions win. Life goes on. In countries that are young democracies and countries that have emerged from conflicts, when these things happen it's the sustainability of democracy, it's sustainability of peace that can be at stake. And if you look today at what's happening around the

world, you see that there are riots in many places and many of those riots are threatening the stability, namely of young democracies.

I was recently, for instance, with the President of Liberia and she told me how worried she is with this impact on her own population and on the sustainability of this wonderful democratic process that she has been living in Liberia, it's very important that the international community is able to respond to that. We are not here to discuss food prices, but just to say rising food prices will increase the problems of extreme deprivation.

The urban poor and the displaced are the most vulnerable to these situations and extreme deprivation is a factor of displacement and extreme deprivation is a factor that triggers conflict and conflict triggers displacement. And it's more and more difficult to distinguish whose who in this complex pattern of movements of population. They're not speaking about forced displacement, not economic migration in the traditional sense.

And one of the key challenges for the international communities, how to give an adequate response to this phenomenon? If you are a victim of persecution, if you are a North Korean that fled to China you are supposed to receive the protection of the international community. China has the obligation to do so, if China doesn't the international community should be putting on the pressure to make sure it

happens.

If you are a victim of a rebel group or of the army, sometimes it's even the army like a country like DRC and you fled to Tanzania, you are supposed to receive the protection of the authorities of Tanzania and the international community is supposed to support you in your endeavor. But if you are fleeing your country because there is no longer water to support your farming activity in your area or if you are fleeing your country because you are hungry and you have no way to solve your problem in your country, what kind of instrument is available to grant you protection?

Some people will argue, well the solution is probably to take the '51 Convention and to grant refugee status to all these victims of different forms of forced displacement. I would not really be supportive of this idea. And one of the reasons is because when one looks at the '51 Convention it is a very powerful instrument. And it's an extremely powerful instrument in making sure that states assume a responsibility and that the international community has the capacity to monitor what states do namely through my organization.

I'm not sure if we would be drafting the '51 Convention today we would get enough consensus to create such a powerful instrument. As I'm not sure if you would be drafting today the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, we would be doing such a wonderful document as it was

done after the Second World War.

That is why I would not favor to touch the '51 Convention. And I would not favor to touch the high level of protection that is granted to refugees that are victims of persecution or victims of war and conflict around the world. But we need to find answers to all the others that are also victims of forced displacement. One possibility to say okay we have enough instruments in human rights law and humanitarian law, we just need to combine the international community efforts, international organizations and states to make sure that adequate answers are given to them.

And it's the approach that on an ad hoc basis we are now having, but some might say that we probably would need some kind of new instrument that would grant temporary protection for people, victims for this kind mechanism that forced them to flee their own country.

This is a debate that I believe is necessary today in the international community and the result of this debate, I hope, will be translated in the creation of forms of action in which the international community will be able to cope with this increasing challenge in today's world. Because this kind of forced movements of population will tend to increase dramatically in the decades to come.

But not everybody crosses the border of a state. Many

people move and remain within the borders of their own state and this is particularly the situation of those in the DRC, in North Kivu that have been fleeing recent conflicts in that territory. The large majority of the internally displaced inside the Democratic Republic of Congo are displaced in North Kivu where recent events have been so traumatic as you all recognize. And probably the worst violations of human rights, namely of women, the worst percent of rapes taking place in a society are to be seen in that area so dramatically affected by conflict and by different forms of unbelievable violation of the rights of people. But they remain within the borders of their own country.

In many circumstances countries are ready to cooperate with the international community in granting protection to them and in providing assistance to them and in trying to find, afterwards solutions for their plight. In other circumstances we deal with countries that have not the capacity to do so. I have no reasons to believe that the government of the Democratic Republic of Congo would not be willing to protect their people, but they have not the capacity to do so. And their army because they are no properly paid, because they have lots of problems are sometimes one of the instruments of violation of the rights of the people. Not only the rebel groups that also exist and that create mechanisms of forced recruitment of children or violate dramatically the rights of the women that

are victims of their violence.

In these circumstances the international community needs to be able to respond and to respond in a very robust way. And let's be honest this is sometimes true when the highlights of the media are around, but it is much more difficult to mobilize when these crisis are forgotten. And the DRC is probably a good example of a forgotten crisis in today's world.

If you look at the people that die in DRC because of war, because of diseases, because of other forms and that should not die, we have a tsunami every six months but we are far from mobilizing the attention of the international community for the DRC with the same intensity we did for the tsunami every six months. We have never done it.

But in some circumstances it's even worse. The government of the country is part of the problem, is in itself a factor of persecution of its people. Is in itself an obstacle for these people to be protected and to be properly assisted and for a solution to be found one day for their plight.

And here we are facing today a dramatic problem in the world. In the '90s in the period of optimism that we had in the international community, I remember being in government at that time. I remember that we all tended to believe that globalization would solve many problems around the world that everybody would benefit from it in the end. I

remember that after the Cold War we thought that well, peace could be taken for granted. And I remember Kosovo, Bosnia, East Timor and the period in which the international community assumed, at the time the time we did not call it the Responsibility to Protect we called it the Right of Humanitarian Intervention, and assumed the possibility to go and to protect people that were not being protected by their states because their states were willing to do so or were factors of oppression of their own populations.

Now the problem is that in today's world these things are not so obvious. It is true that in between there was an important effort to create a solid doctrine on these. The Responsibility to Protect concept was created. The idea that there should be a balance between the sovereignty of the state and the sovereignty of the human being that it's part of the state sovereignty, the concept that the state should be responsible for the security and for the protection of their own people. And if the state is not willing or not able to do so that there is a responsibility that emerges for the international community and this was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations.

But the fact is that today there is a reemergence of the concept of national sovereignty and because of this reemergence of the concept of national sovereignty it has been very difficult for the

Responsibility to Protect to be effectively implemented by the international community. Let's look at Darfur, it's the best example in today's world to demonstrate that it's not as easy as people will think for the international community to assume its responsibilities. And many will say, even democracies in the Third World, I have experience of meeting with people in democratic countries like India, like South Africa, like Brazil will come and say, well, it's very beautiful but let's not forget this can be a pretext for others to intervene in the affairs of countries or to have hidden agendas or whatever.

And I'm very happy that at the present moment the African Union is developing work to produce an African convention on internal displacement because I think it will be the first if it is successful, the first binding legal instrument of international nature in relation to internal displacement. But this is another key question in today's world. How can we make sure that we generate a global consensus for the responsibility to protect to become an effective instrument for the protection of people victims of oppression and dramatic violations of their rights in many of the situations we know around the world.

And it's not only the question of military intervention, it's the responsibility to prevent and let's be honest prevention is something the international community it not very strong in doing. It's the responsibility to

rebuild when after a crisis the country emerges from that crisis and needs the support of international community to be able to provide to their population normal conditions of living in a democracy and living in a prosperity and it's also the responsibility to react in many other circumstances in which not a military intervention is not required but other forms of reacting, like for instance the use of international legal instruments or judicial instruments is possible. There are many ways to implement this responsibility to protect that are now being put so much in jeopardy into this world.

Everything I said has one objective which is to raise awareness for the problems of delivering refugee protection into those worlds because the situations are more and more blurred. Plus many of the people who need the protection do not cross the border. They remain within the borders of their own country and cannot be protected based on the instruments of refugee protection defined in international law.

And because many people are forced to flee, are forced to leave their countries, but they do not fit in the mechanisms that were defined in the '51 convention and they do not benefit from refugee protection in the international community but some solution must be found for the international community to cope with this growing challenge. We live in a world and in a century of people on the move, but it's more and

more difficult to distinguish the different reasons why people move and the different circumstances in which people move.

And we need a lot of openness in analyzing these problems in discussing them and in trying to provide solutions. The only thing I know is that we doubt lively debates and that an open debate on these issues, and I believe the U.S. is a country in which these debates are much easier than sometimes than areas like mine in Europe where these problems tend to be forgotten or hidden because sometimes politicians are afraid to discuss them in public. I think in an open society like the U.S. this is the kind of debate that is timely and is necessary at the present moment.

Thank you very much.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you. Thank you both for an extremely stimulating and provocative presentations and I think it's going to lead to an extraordinarily good discussion here.

Senator I know you have time constraints so if at some point you do run into a time constraint we will understand that and I'm just saying that not because I don't want you to be here but in case you do run into those constraints.

SENATOR BROWNBACK: Okay. We have a five o'clock vote so –

MR. PASCUAL: I'm going to – if I might, I might just begin with you because there is a point that's interconnected between both of your presentations and one piece of it has to do with as the High Commissioner was pointing out the critical underlying factors behind internal conflicts and tensions. Darfur was the example that you raised of issues of water and if you can't address the questions and issues of water maybe you might get some interim agreement in Darfur but will be back at it again. I was in the Foreign Service; my first assignment was in Sudan. I spent a lot of time in the west, this was in 1983 and the big issue that we had in 1983 was the tensions between settled farmers and transients over land and water in Darfur and Kurdufan. You know, this is an issue that has repeated itself for a long period of time.

One of the difficulties that we have in the realities of the budgetary world and I know you have been one the people who have been trying to address this Senator, has been the difficulty in being able to raise resources for those kinds of underlying issues and so one of the ironies that we get into is that we can get funds appropriated for emergency and humanitarian assistance and for food aid and to some extent for peacekeeping. But then when it comes to then dealing with some of those underlying problems it's a lot harder to get the resources and the funds don't always necessarily transfer.

So let's say if we can provide a billion or a billion and a half dollars for food aid and for peacekeeping and we move to a stage where we're at a point where we really need to address the underlying problems and put the resources on dealing those kinds of water issues that are critical for the long term solution, it's a lot harder to get resources for that.

I wonder if you could use that as a jumping off point to identify what some of the difficulties and the tensions are, the struggles that you have in being able to help get resources to be able to deal with those kinds of underlying issue and what are some of the problems that we might be able to focus more attention on here domestically to take greater account as Commissioner Guterres has said to some of those underlying issues?

SENATOR BROWNBACK: It's a good questions and I think underlined by the fundamental politics in the country. If I take you out to my state and we have a crowd like this somewhere and I ask people how much do you think we put into foreign aid, the average response will be 20 percent of the U.S. budget goes into foreign aid. And it will go as high as 50 percent, I've done this in audiences and I mean, they think most of it is just going down a rat hole. That it's going into some dictators pockets somewhere around the world. They don't see what takes place with it. They think it's walking around money for the President when he

goes places so it would be better off if he'd stay here than going to other places.

I think the answer to it is to not have generalized programs if you're wanting to address a topic, it's to go at a specific issue. I think we're likely to put in and we have put in thus far more than any place around the world on global AIDS treatment. The President sent out a specific initiative on PEPFAR looking at increasing that substantially. We can show these people are alive today because of this and the money is there. We're doing that now more on malaria. We're doing it on neglected diseases in the future. I think we would need to do it on a specific conflict.

Like if this were the issue that could help resolve Darfur on some sort of delineation or development of water resources, I think we've got a good shot of getting that. If it's for generalized development I don't think that's going to take place. That's number one.

Number two I've approached former Secretary Albright about this. I think our AID Budget is far too diffuse. It seems to me that we ought to try to focus it in on fewer areas and say take half of the budget and put it in one of four categories: food - agriculture, water, health care, education and say half of the budget has got to hit one of these four categories rather than going into so many broad areas.

Dick Durbin and I went to Congo and met with some of our

officials there, our AID officials there and they gave us eight pages of projects we were doing. And they were fine projects, I don't have any particular dispute with them but it seemed like what they really needed here was we need people to be able to provide some food. We need some clean water. We've got to get some health care and just some real basic issues to start building it and we were in soup to nuts and we should have concentrated more.

MR. PASCUAL: So the specificity of the issue to be able to make the case around a specific set of circumstances--

SENATOR BROWNBACK: Absolutely.

MR. PASCUAL: -- you think is the key way to make the linkage with the politics?

SENATOR BROWNBACK: I really do.

MR. PASCUAL: Commissioner we were speaking a little bit earlier about the situation in Iraq and you've been in Washington now for what? A day and a half or so, so I'm sure you've been discussing Iraq with just about every single stop that you've been in.

Yesterday there was an Op Ed in the *New York Times* that focused a lot of attention on it, although I think the numbers that they had 1.5 million refugees was probably an understatement and it didn't focus on the internally displaced which you very rightly focused attention on. Most

of those refugees have been in Syria and Jordan and because those countries have done what in many ways is a very logical and rational thing to, in fact, try to address the plight of the refugees through their existing structures through their health care and social welfare systems and so forth rather than separating out the individuals. In a sense the problem has not been as noticed but in other ways has maybe pushed those countries to a breaking point.

And I wonder if you can comment on the capacity of those countries to actually continue to sustain the load that they have. What kind of, whether the support that they're getting from the international community to actually sustain this is really adequate and whether there needs to be much more attention, more resources specifically focused on that problem? Especially given that is the problem that is so directly associated with the conflict internally with Iraq which obviously the United States has had a critical role in.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: Well I do believe that when one looks at both Syria and Jordan, Syria with more refugees and I would say the poorest are in Syria. Jordan with a smaller number, but Jordan with much less absorption capacity and with some critical problems in infrastructure, mainly water for instance. Jordan has very, very dramatic problems of water supply.

These two countries have been extremely generous. They are not parties to the '51 Convention. They do not even call the Iraqis refugees. But they have been guaranteeing and respecting that guarantee that they wouldn't send any Iraqis back against their will into the country at the present moment. And at the same time they have been suffering a huge impact in their economies and in their societies. And to be honest without support from the international community both in relation to Syria and in relation to Jordan, that is very far from really coping with the dimension of the challenge they face.

In this visit to Washington we concentrated a lot on something that in my opinion is key to address this problem in an effective way by the international community and that is the responsibility of the Iraqi government. It is in my opinion and I've been in Baghdad and discussed at length with all the Iraqi officials from the President to the Prime Minister to the Speaker of Parliament to the different members of the government, it's absolutely essential that the Iraqi government assumes clearly a responsibility to reach out to these communities abroad and to effectively support them.

We had a conference in Geneva last year in which they have promised \$25 million. Not all of the \$25 million have been disbursed but this is a drop of water in the ocean of the needs. And at the same time

when visiting refugee communities in Syria and Jordan, I had several meetings with large groups of refugees in both countries; there is a lot of frustration in relation to their own government. They have the perception that the government has a meaningful volume of resources, billions of dollars that the government is not able to spend from the budget. And that they are having a very dramatic economic situation, namely now that prices are rising and that they have no support from their own country.

To convince the Iraqi government and many people in Iraq are fully determined to do so, but there has not been yet a consensus and a capacity to mobilize the system to produce these results. To convince the Iraqi government that it needs to reach out to these communities and to deliver a meaningful support to the Iraqi communities in Syria and Jordan in my opinion is crucial.

First of all crucial for the national reconciliation, crucial for the success of return in the future, but also crucial for many countries in the international community not to have the pretext that they use time and time again. I had this response in many countries in the Gulf or in Europe. They say but look, why should we be giving money to the Iraqi refugees if the Iraqi government has a lot of resources that are available is not doing their part of the job.

And this is something in which I believe the U.S. Administration is fully on board and they have been trying to help as much as possible. And I believe this is one of the key aspects of the solution of being able to deliver meaningful supports to the Iraqis themselves and to the host countries and to sustain the effort of these countries to protect them. At the same time being a crucial element for the success of the future return of these people to their own country voluntarily when conditions will be met for that to be possible.

SENATOR BROWNBACK: Carlos, I'm going to have to slip on out to -- I got to get back up to the Hill. I want to thank you. I want to thank Brookings for holding this, for you folks coming out. You really are the folks to help carry this on forward. And it just takes an intentionality that we're going to deal with this.

We're going to keep pushing it and we're going to continue to push it. And I appreciate so much the commissioner's work on it as well. And I want to keep pushing you about North Korean refugees in China and other places as well. They have a really tough task and we need to stand behind them and keep working as much as we can. Thank you very much.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you for taking the time.

SENATOR BROWNBACK: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: Thank you very much.

SENATOR BROWNBACK: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: All the best and my best wishes for everything you're doing.

MR. PASCUAL: I'm going to turn to the audience for questions. And this is an unusual lighting situation as there are very bright lights in the back. And so, I can sort of see silhouettes out here. So, I'll try to do my best to identify your hands, but don't be embarrassed about flailing them because it will help me considerably in figuring out who has a question. So, please.

I think I see a hand right over here. If you could identify yourself and make sure to end your question with a question.

MR. LOUBULLA: Yes. My name is Loubulla from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, especially the place where the trouble is taking place right now. I was following -- I'm sorry that the senator had to leave. I had a question for him too, but I guess the people in here can forward to their own senators.

The United States has been assisting the country of Rwanda, which has been in the genocide in '94. And that country has been supporting a terrorist who is in my country who is actually causing all the displacement. And for the last years pretty much -- I mean the whole -

- over a decade, the country has been under an embargo, an arms embargo, meaning the military did not have the right to purchase anything to exercise their right to defend the country.

So, the question to the senator who has left unfortunately was why the United States lately asked the Democratic Republic of the Congo to negotiate with the terrorist, while we know that the United States policies is to never negotiate with a terrorist. There is a government there, but the government was forced to negotiate with that man and tried to give him -- to break him a deal somehow.

MR. PASCUAL: Wow.

MR. : The other question was to the commissioner actually. He said earlier that there was a rape -- I mean, there were rapes and all kinds of trouble in the Eastern Congo. Just in parenthesis, we don't call it rape anymore because it's an extermination of women. What they do is make sure they destroy their reproductive system of women. They don't kill them. They just destroy their capability to reproduce the population.

When they displace people, they don't -- they make sure that actually no more people can reoccupy the land by terminating the possibility of women to reproduce. There was a parenthesis twin to this. The United Nations has been there. It hasn't done much as far as

defending the population. And you know very well that the same United Nations is the one that imposed the embargo. While we have an embargo we cannot defend our people. And at the same time, we have refugees that you have to deal with. You can take that burden off your back by letting the army deal with it.

I'm not going to be too long. I'm sorry.

MR. PASCUAL: Well, thank you very much. And I would let you go on at length because it is an extraordinarily important situation to give attention to the situation in Congo. There are very serious issues of both reconciliation and protection of people who are there.

Commissioner, part of that relates to your responsibilities. Part of it is a bigger UN issue. Do you want to comment some aspects of that?

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: First of all, I would like to underline what you have referred. Indeed, the violation of human rights in relation to particularly women in that part of the RC is extremely dramatic. And I had the experience, which I will never forget, together with Ann Fennerman of UNICEF and Jean Morris of the World Food Program in my first visit to Soweto, to have an interview, a separate interview with several women that wanted to tell us their story.

And I -- this is a moment I will never forget. The stories are unbelievable of terrible things that have happened to them. And I can only underline what you said and to say how terrible it is that really the international community has not been able to fully -- to fully engage in making sure that these things end.

And one of the key issues in our discussions with Monoke with the E1 force there, which is not -- it is the biggest UN force in the world today, but 60,000 men, if I'm correct, something of this sort. You need to compare it to 13,000 in Liberia. Liberia is three million people and a very small country, and this is a huge country with lots of problems.

But one of the key issues is the need for the international force to be much more effective and I can understand how difficult it is for them but to be much more effective in making sure that these kinds of violations ends.

Now, I have not the capacity to comment on the resolutions of the Security Council and things of the sort which are far beyond my own mandate on the country. I am supposed not to comment those issues in my functions. But I would like to say that a key -- a key question in the Great Lakes is to make sure that there is effective reconciliation, effective reconciliation within the communities of each country and each region but also effective reconciliation between the countries in the region.

And I do believe that a concerted effort needs to be made to make sure that countries like Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and the RC can find a way to solve their problems and can find a way to coexist in respecting each other and creating a community of interest in that part of the world in which there is a huge amount of richness but unfortunately the conditions for looting are there but the conditions to make the richness of the country be put to the service of the population unfortunately is not yet there.

And I think a huge effort must be made, not only with the RC but with the neighbors to make sure that there is full respect of the severity of each country and that there is indeed a common action for reconciliation to be successful.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you. Why don't I go over in the back over here?

MR. : Mr. Commissioner, before Senator Brownback left, you know, he mentioned about North Korean situation. And you, in your address, you talked about, you know, the concept of the sovereignty and what the UN, you know, high commissioner for refugees could do in China as regards to, you know, the North Korean defectors there, refugees there, just numbering about like, you know, 100,000, out of which about 70 percent are women.

And you know, those women for example, like, you know, 70,000 sold before they cross over the border, like, you know, \$50, you know, within North Korea and then they were sold throughout, you know, China at the price of from \$600 to, you know, \$700. and you know, some are caught by the Chinese law enforcement police and then, you know, sent back to Korea or North Korea. Then, they became political prisoners and then, you know, sent to a prison, and then there, they have forced labor.

And I'm wondering what the UN, you know, high commissioner there for refugees could do, you know, for those, you know, dire situations, you know, North Korean defectors.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: Well, as a matter of fact, I've been extremely active in that area. Our representative in Washington today, Michel Garbodon has been our representative in China. I was with him some time ago. And we have been putting a lot of pressure to make - - our key objective is -- has been to stop any deportation back to North Korea.

The Chinese authorities can argue that many of the North Koreans that have crossed the border are not refugees, that they crossed the border because they were hungry or because they have economic hardship or whatever. But the truth is because of the fact that if they are

sent back, they will very probably face persecution and face very difficult circumstances.

If they would be or if they are forced back, they become refugee surplus and we can see that they cannot be sent back, that there cannot be deportations to North Korea. And this was something that was crucial in our -- has been crucial in our dialogue with the Chinese, both in private and in public as a matter of fact.

There has been some improvement in that respect in relation to the figures we know. And we have no access to the border areas, but some entities have access to the border area. And the information we have received is that there has been some improvement in that aspect. And at the same time, we have been acting discretely within China in order to make sure that some channels are open for North Koreans in China, as in Mongolia or in Thailand or in other countries, find a way into South Korea and some into the West.

And this has happened. It has happened recently. We are not making a lot of publicity on these issues because obviously if we make publicity on this issues, we are causing problems to the people, namely to the people that is there under our protection. So, this is an area of great interest for us, great commitment for us and indeed, one of the tragedies in today's world that needs the support of the international community.

MR. PASCUAL: Let's come right here.

MR. : Your other comments about the situation in Iraq and with the question of the intersection between internally displaced populations and those that the threat are becoming refugees. What is UNHCR's thinking at the moment regarding religious minorities who are trying to hang on some place in Iraq but faced with the need to go across international border? I'm thinking specifically of some of the religious minorities that have not yet sought resettlement in the West, such as the Armenian Christians.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: As a matter of fact, we have a program in Armenia in which we have been very active in helping the reintegration of Armenia of Armenian refugees from Iraq or Iraq Armenians that went back to their country. But this is an area where I believe we need to have a double track approach that we are trying to pursue.

First of all, we have in Iraq refugees coming from all communities. We have Arab Shias. We have Arab Sunnis. We have Christians of different denominations. We have Mandian, Subians, et cetera. And all of them have protection requirements. It is true that those minorities that are not predominant in any part of the territory in Iraq have a particular vulnerability.

And in relation to it, as I said, we have a double track approach. First, to put as much pressure as possible to the government and to the different actors inside Iraq for these communities to be protected inside Iraq. And this is absolutely essential. I must say I would feel extremely unhappy as a citizen of the world to see these communities, namely for instance, Christian communities are found in Iraq much before they came to my part of the world to be wiped out. And I think that to protect them and to allow them to go on enjoying the full rights of citizenship and human rights inside Iraq should be a key objective of the international community and the Iraqi authorities.

At the same time, we have to recognize their vulnerability and include them in the priority vulnerable cases that require international assistance for a settlement. And many have been resettled to different countries around the world together with other communities. Naturally we are not going to have a resettlement program for just one specific group of people. But we need to recognize that they have a specific aspect of vulnerability that needs to be considered.

MR. PASCUAL: Commissioner, if I can ask you one question that goes back to one of the points that you raised earlier. You talked about the challenges presented by globalization and that in effect, there's an interrelationship among problems as well, where you have

relationship between internal conflict, environmental degradation, impacts of climate change, impacts of food, the impact that that has on displacement, the ways in which that affects people move across borders.

And in effect, there's an interrelationship here among issues that are global in nature and scale, the climate change dimensions, the impact of conflict and how it can spread over borders, but also the very specific realities of individual country situations that in the end require negotiations over access to land and water in terms of figuring out who has access to those resources.

And the complexity of even just thinking -- the complexity of these issues, the interrelationships is enormous. Trying to figure out how to help and what the roles are also has be phenomenally difficult. And I wonder if you can talk to us a little bit about how you've been trying to deal with these kinds of challenges and do we need to rethink the way that the international system begins to operate and function on these problems because they are so interrelated.

Do we need to in fact, you know, just reconceptualize what we do or is there a way to make the current system work, where you have constant interaction between yourselves and UNHCR and WFP and OCHA and UNDP? I mean, one can end up in incredibly complex

bureaucratic interrelationships trying to deal with these kinds of problems and to be able to address them effectively.

And so, I hate to sort of bring issues that are so poignant back to a bureaucratic question, but at the same time, it actually -- there is a bureaucratic reality here of how do we create the capacity in this transnational world where these issues are so interrelated. How do we create the capacity to be able to respond effectively.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: That's a difficult question. But first of all, not all the relations are bureaucratic.

MR. PASCUAL: And if you successfully answer, we'll give you a Nobel Prize.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: Not all the relations are bureaucratic. We have -- for instance with World Food Program, we have remarkable cooperation everywhere we operate. You'll see in the most remote locations, you'll see UNHCR and you'll see the World Food Program and we are working together. And there's no duplication. There is clearly a convergence of efforts. And this is not bureaucracy at all. This is really acting together to solve the problems of human beings that are global. Each person has a certain number of problems. We cannot separate the different areas. We need to act together to make sure that all the problems are faced.

So, there are lots of very positive forms of cooperation. In other circumstances, we have things that are moving forward but probably not as effective as I would like. For instance, integration between internal displacement where there is no mandates for the international community, there is a mechanism of coordination that was established together with the UN system, the NGO movement, and the Red Cross movement called the so-called cluster approach in which the different agencies are supposed to work together with a division of responsibilities. This has been work. It's much better than in the past, but it has been heavy and sometimes a little bit bureaucratic to be honest. And there are improvements that can be made.

There is a very important forum where all these entities can discuss humanitarian action. It's the Global Humanitarian Platform that gathers all these entities. We have here one of the pioneers of the Global Humanitarian Platform and permanent animator of the debates inside the group to see how we can work together to better face these questions.

But the problem is not only humanitarian. That is, I think, your key question. My -- I would say that two things that are very frustrating in today's international community is that first, the international community does not know how to prevent. We all react; we do not prevent. And we do not spend some million dollars to prevent a situation,

but we are able to spend some billion dollars then to try to remedy the same situation.

MR. PASCUAL: I was struck the other day that DPA had a press release saying they created a new prevention capacity. They hired two people and they had contracts with three others. But this was conflict prevention.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: And to be honest, money follows television. And there is no television in prevention. There is television when people start to kill each other. There is no television in prevention. And so, money is not there. And there is no attention in international -- no attention in international systems, no attention in international communities.

And this is a key question. And it's very difficult to answer to this. I believe regional organizations can play a very important role on this, and I hope that will be the case. If the European Union has been able in doing something, it's to prevent conflict in Europe. And we all recognize that. look at the Balkans and look at what happened there, and again, prevention was not exactly the thing we did better.

So, this is one key question. The second thing in the international community is lots of difficulties to be effective in sustaining post conflict situations. When we look at countries that emerged from

conflict, first of all, there is normally poor governments locally and it's inevitable to a certain extent.

And second, international community is very dysfunctional in supporting these countries in this transition. And because of that dysfunctionality together with the local poor governments, the truth is that there are many circumstances the sustainability of peace, of democracy in these countries becomes (inaudible). And this is again something that the international community has not been able to be effective.

Yesterday, I was visiting the World Bank and discussing with Bob Zoellick, and I do believe that there was now the peace building commission that was created but only active in two countries, Sierra Leone and Burundi and even the peace building commission is a very heavy mechanism and you need to be very practical in making sure that international financial organizations, UN agencies, and key donors are able to work together and to work together with the local authorities, at least the part of it that has the capacity to deliver in order to achieve some quick wins for the people to understand that indeed there is a democratic dividend, that indeed there is a benefit in their daily lives from the fact that the countries have solved their political problems or have established peace.

And it's not always the case in the present circumstances, especially for instance, with the rising food prices. I'm particularly worried with the vulnerability of these countries and with the vulnerability they have in relation to the reemergence of conflict or the reemergence of this tension within their societies. These are two -- two main concerns. And obviously, how to address these things is not easy.

The other point you made and I would like to underline is that usually the international community comes to a situation and the key concern is to establish a peace agreement and then to have elections. And when elections take place, people tend to believe that the problem is solved. Well, when elections take place, the problem -- sometimes the problems begin. And we need to make sure -- democracy is not only a question of having elections. It's a question of an institutional buildup. It's a question of the rule of law. It's many other things, so people tend to -- not to pay enough attention to those things.

And then, the underlying questions that you referred. We were speaking about the Great Lakes Region. It's true for North Kivu. It's true for Burundi. It's true for Kenya. The questions of lands property or access to land -- it's not necessarily property in the same sense that might exist in the west, but the question is an absolutely crucial problem that without being solved, will not allow for the stabilization of situations.

The questions of access to water, I do believe that the worst wars in the 21st century will be about water as they have been probably about a while in recent past. Look at the Middle East and water problems of the Middle East. Look at relations between for instance Turkey and its neighbors. Look at Central Asia and discussions on water in Central Asia. Look at the risk of desertification in many areas of Africa.

And all the models existing show that there will be a huge tendency for drought, not only in the Sahara but in the bulk of Eastern Africa. Southern Europe will be dramatically affected by drought also in decades to come. Of course, the countries in Europe have a better capacity to deal with these issues. But, water will be a key problem in the 21st century. And as a matter of fact, we are -- there is no global international framework to deal with these issues.

MR. PASCUAL: Right.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: And well, I must say if we want to have a global systemic approach to do everything at the same time, I don't think we will be successful. I think we need to look into these areas and to try to make progress taking profit of the opportunities. And sometimes the opportunities unfortunately come only when there is a crisis. What we would need to be is to take profit of the crisis not only to

solve the crisis but to launch the process to solve the underlying problems that have originated the crisis. Probably that's the only way.

And then of course, although we can't discuss all the questions of UN reform and the Security Council reform --

MR. PASCUAL: Right.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: -- but these are questions that are not easy, as you know.

MR. PASCUAL: No, they aren't.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: And I do believe that one of the ways is strengthening regional organizations. I mentioned it a few minutes ago, strengthening regional organizations and helping regional organizations to cope with the challenges, these kind of challenges within the framework of a treaty.

MR. PASCUAL: I think we should give some credit to the African Union because I think the AU has probably operated far, far above the capacities relative to the resources that they have available to them. And as an American, I think the United States should commend what the European Union has done in support of the African Union because the EU is providing about 300 million euros in support to the AU, which the United States hasn't even begun to think in those terms. So, it's a -- I think you're right to remind us of this issue.

Let me come back to the audience. Over here, please.

MR. YOUNG: My name is Johnny Young. I'm the executive director of the Migration and Refugee Services of the US Conference of Catholic Bishops. And I'd first of all like to thank you commissioner for all of the good work that you and your professionals do in the field. We work very closely with the UN and they do a terrific job.

I'd like to hear from you what you're doing in terms of assistance to women and children among the displaced and the refugees in Iraq.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: We have -- there are the aspects of I'd say general support in relation to food support, to cash grants to vulnerable families and things of the sort, which of course, benefit women and children more than anyone else. But I think you referred to the specific actions targeting women and children.

We have launched a very ambitious program in relation to the prevention and support for women that are victims of both sexual and gender based violence when they were in Iraq and come into Syria or Jordan and victims of so-called survival sex in the host countries, sometimes driven into prostitution by their own families. And these are the kind of problems that request a strategy reaching out to the community.

We have a group of Iraqi women working for us, all women reaching out to the communities and trying to detect situations of vulnerability of women within the community. We have created together with the several NGO organizations and namely Catholic organizations, namely in Syria, mechanisms of support with residences for women that have been victims of these kinds of situations to allow them to recover. And there is a lot of work to be done in the psychological support and capacity to help them to find resettlement opportunities adequate to their situations. And this has been indeed a crucial aspect of our action where we believe we need to do much more. And it is a key element of our concern.

The same applies in a different context in relation to children affected. There our main priority has been in relations to integration in the educational systems. We have done a meaningful progress both in Syria and Jordan last year in school enrollment of children. But, our target is to be able in 2009 to make sure that all Iraqi children in Syria and Jordan have an effective access to first primary education and also to secondary education.

We are also discussing with several institutions how to support people in superior education. But we believe that the crucial

aspect there is indeed in relations to the integration of the educational system.

MR. PASCUAL: Thank you. Marjorie?

MS. : Could you please comment on the dimensions and prospects of the Afghan refugee situation, which dates back of course, more than 25 years? If I -- I'm shaky on numbers, but my recollection is that in the mid to late eighties, there were thought to be one to two million in Iran and perhaps twice as many in Pakistan. And recently there have been press reports that the Pakistanis are closing some or perhaps intending to close all the camps remaining in Pakistan.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: Well, the number of Afghan refugees was over six million at a certain moment. We have now about 900,000 recognized refugees in Iran and about 2 million people of concern of UNHCR. They are not necessarily all refugees in Pakistan, but they are people of concern for UNHCR.

We are still supporting people that want to return voluntarily, but our opinion is that the situation in Afghanistan is complex. The security situation namely is complex. And we are doing our best to introduce a meaningful discussion with the host countries about the prospects of local integration. This has been a kind of a taboo in the area, as you probably know. But I do believe that more and more the three

countries need to get together and to discuss this situation of the residual caseloads in the prospective, which also combined with the prospective of migration movements in the area.

For Pashtuns, the border is not something that they have recognized. They have lived in both sides of the border living together for centuries. And many of the people that are in Pakistan today will probably be better if it is possible to consider their integration into Pakistani society and the same applies on the other side of the border. But of course, this also requires a lot of support from international community and we are far from getting that support for that purpose.

With the Pakistani authorities, we have agreed in the closure of four camps for security reasons. And it's one of the key questions, of course, to preserve the humanitarian and civilian nature of these camps. One of the camps have been closed. The second camp is being closed. There was always a commitment that people should be offered an opportunity of relocation inside Pakistan and only going back to Afghanistan if they would be willing to do so with our support.

There are two other camps that we are -- that are still not closed. And again, we are trying to discuss with the local authorities and hope to discuss with the government of Pakistan as soon as things settle down a new approach on these issues because we believe that this is not

a moment in which it makes sense to be encouraging many people to go back to that area of Afghanistan. But this is a complex discussion to take in the area, as you know, because looking at the question you have asked, it is clear to me that you are quite aware of the difficulties and challenges of the problem and how difficult it is to discuss it in the region.

MR. PASCUAL: Commissioner, maybe I might close with a question which combines your current job with your previous career as a prime minister in Europe. And it's a question of Islam and migration and receptivity to migrants. And obviously, there have been a lot of issues and tensions with the integration of Muslims in Europe.

It's become an even more complicated question in the integration of Turkey with Europe and the prospect of its application for membership in the future. In many countries, the issues of Islam and migrants have become very severe political issues in part because of perception of competition for jobs. In part, it may be because of prejudices that exist internally within the populations.

And I wonder is this and issue that is part of your current agenda at UNHCR and what are the kinds of things that are going to be necessary to be able to develop a greater understanding and appreciation for how migrants from Muslim countries or Muslim majority countries might

be more readily accepted and how to deal with some of those tensions that have developed within the European countries.

COMMISSIONER GUTERRES: One of our key activities in Europe in advocacy has been campaign for tolerance. Based on an analysis is that society is, whether people like it or not, will become more and more multiethnic, multireligious, and multicultural. And it's better for people to learn to live with each other and to respect each other because there is no way out of this.

I don't know the exact figure, but today there are some tens of millions of Muslims in Europe and they will not be going out. And they will be part of European society. And even some European countries, like Bosnia, had Muslim communities in the past in Albania. And so, this is -- the idea that Europe is a continent for Christians is a concept that doesn't make sense anymore.

And what I believe is extremely important is to create the conditions for people to be able to live with each other and to respect each other. And this is a crucial objective, and I believe politicians need to assume it.

The debate about migration in Europe is sometimes not an open debate. And many people, if asked do you want to have more children, then will say no. do you want to work in the restaurant next door,

they will say no. do you want to have more migrants, they will also say no. and this doesn't make sense. It's -- there is no solution for this equation.

With the fertility rates in Europe that in many countries are around 1.3 or 1.5, it is obvious that migration will be -- will happen and it's essential to preserve these societies and to preserve its benefits. And Europe needs to face this. And in my opinion, it is inevitable with the development of migration that people will come from different parts of the world, but people will come also from the Muslim world.

When I was involved in Portuguese politics, I was very strongly in favor of Turkey's succession to the European Union, respecting of course the so-called Copenhagen criteria, which means that Turkey needs to respect a certain number of conditions, namely in human rights and namely in the solidity of its democracy.

But I don't think it's acceptable that the European Union would say that Turkey can not exceed the European Union even if respecting those criteria. This, in my opinion, is worse -- well, now as high commissioner, I can't have a position on these issues. But in my previous capacity, I was always very strong in saying that in my opinion it would be a huge strategic mistake for Europe to exclude Turkey just because Turkey is in the opinion of some in Europe different. I don't think it is the case.

I think Europe -- Turkey has been part of European history and it is important for the European Union and for its future to have with Turkey a relation based on the engagements that were made in the past. And those engagements were very clear. If Turkey will abide by the Copenhagen criteria, Turkey will have the possibility to exceed the European Union.

And of course, this attitude is also linked to the others and it has to do with a vision. That is in my opinion, the only possible vision. We can close our eyes and pretend things are not what they are, but I do believe things are what they are.

MR. PASCUAL: Commissioner, you have been extraordinarily generous with your time and extremely eloquent in your answers covering the world from various parts of Africa to the Middle East to Europe to North Korea. And it reflects the kind of challenges that you face today, ones that are very much transnational in nature, but in the end, they come back to human beings. And we commend you for the way that you think about the global issue but also the humanity that you maintain in focusing on the individual. Thank you very much.