**Enhanced interactive dialogue on the human rights of migrants in the context of large movements**

9am, 10 March, Palais des Nations, Room XX

**Statement by: Carol Batchelor, Director, Division of International Protection, UNHCR**

UNHCR appreciates the opportunity to be here at this enhanced interactive dialogue on the human rights of migrants in the context of large movements. Large movements of refugees and migrants have rightly and perhaps finally captured global attention. While displacement and migratory movements are not new phenomena, we are now seeing unprecedented levels of complex population movements that represent challenges to response capacities and to resources.

Tragically, with an increase in large movements, we have seen a commensurate increase in human rights violations en route. Moreover, over 7500 refugees and migrants were reported dead or went missing in transit last year alone, according to IOM’s missing migrants project, the majority losing their lives as they crossed the Mediterranean.

Refugees and migrants are, in certain fundamental respects, in different situations. Refugees have lost national protection and cannot return home as a result of persecution, conflict or other severe human rights violations. But when migrants and refugees voyage in unseaworthy boats, fall prey to human traffickers, are faced with detention, or are victims to racism and xenophobia, children are taken from parents, and sexual and gender based violence is perpetrated against women and men, boys and girls, the distinction between them is secondary - their immediate needs are the same. The human rights of all persons on the move must be protected.

We therefore welcome this opportunity to discuss the human rights challenges faced by migrants, particularly when they travel in large movements, with a view to informing the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration, and ultimately achieving meaningful improvements in the lives of migrants, including those in vulnerable situations. International cooperation to develop stronger systems for protecting the human rights of all migrants can only be beneficial to the international protection system and to people of concern to UNHCR, including refugees, asylum-seekers, and stateless people on the move, who typically have little choice but to flee, and are directly affected by migration-management policies and processes.

This Dialogue is part of an important ongoing conversation. In this regard, we are pleased to be contributing towards the development of draft principles and guidelines on the human rights protection of migrants in vulnerable situations within large and/or mixed movements, as part of the Global Migration Group Working Group on Human Rights and Gender, co-chaired by OHCHR and UN Women.

We are also working through the Global Migration Group to contribute to the informal thematic sessions in preparation for the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration. As requested by States in the New York Declaration, we look forward to contributing our protection and operational expertise to the migration compact process more broadly, which rightly has a strong human rights focus. Though the global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration and the global compact on refugees are separate, distinct and independent, we are working closely with IOM and other partners to ensure coherence and complementarity between the two.

Saving lives and ensuring human rights protection for all people must be a priority. I would strongly advocate that in addition to agreement and commitment, we need action based on the rule of law to combat xenophobia, protect women and children, prevent sexual and gender based violence, and ensure an identity for all persons, whatever their situation. We therefore thank you for the invitation to participate in today’s enhanced interactive dialogue. I look forward to the discussion, as well as to continuing to work with states, IOM, OHCHR, civil society, and other relevant stakeholders on this extremely important topic.