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Thank you for convening this meeting on an issue that has continued to make headlines over the last several months. Although much of the push for these deliberations comes from the more immediate impacts felt by the refugee crisis in certain parts of the world, these problems have been with us for a long time.

While the current plight of the refugees, be it from West Asia or parts of Africa, is a direct consequence of the armed conflict situations obtaining there; the discussion about migrants relates to the forces of the ongoing globalization. The two phenomena are very distinct. Migration is a voluntary process, while refugees flee their homeland due to war and destruction.

To put the issue of refugees in perspective, the number of people on the move globally is estimated at close to 250 million - one in every thirty persons. Refugees are currently estimated to be around 20 million - one of every twelve persons on the move. Three fourths of the refugees come from just 11 countries. Seven countries host more than half of all refugees. Almost 90% of all refugees are hosted in developing countries!

There is a long history of large communities seeking refuge in India going back several centuries. There have been several other instances too of large communities

migration of various ethnic groups over the past centuries. Migration has continued to expand, now aided by the integrating economies over the last few decades

Migration is a complex issue and means different things to different groups at different times. We in India are acutely aware of this complexity.

Migrants

We look forward to engaging with all partners beginning next year developing a Global Compact on ensuring a safe, orderly and regular migration that is in the interest