

Intervention on the topic of refugees

Claudia Roth MdB

PNND Member

*Head of German Parliament Delegation to the
138th IPU Assembly in Geneva*

March 26, 2018

Ladies and gentlemen, Colleagues.

Few issues today are quite so urgent, yet ignored so broadly: How can the international community, how can we as Members of Parliament help ensure that fewer people are forced to flee their homes?

Worldwide, more than 65 million people are seeking protection for themselves and their families. These people are fleeing war, violence, discrimination and political persecution – including in quite a few IPU member states.

More and more often, they are also fleeing the consequences of the climate crisis and environmental degradation. Just last week, the World Bank published a highly alarming report.

In Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, In South Asia, more than 140 million people could lose their homes by 2050, as a result of water scarcity or crop failure, following storm surges or the rise in the sea level.

It means for millions of people around the globe the immeasurable loss of their homes.

It is therefore up to ALL of us to ask, how our actions; how the policies of our governments – with regard to fundamental human rights for all, to press freedom and freedom of expression, to corruption and development opportunities; how also our LACK of action are contributing to people being forced to leave their homes.

And as a representative of the German Bundestag, let me stress one more thing, however: If WE in the so-called industrialised countries genuinely want to ensure that fewer people are forced to flee their homes, rather than simply seeking to ensure that fewer people reach our shores, then we must also radically reform our OWN politics – in close cooperation and on equal terms with you all.

We must press for coherent international politics, which no longer tacitly accept that our exports, our growth, our consumption lead to poverty, to an overexploitation of natural resources, to a lack of perspective elsewhere.

And it is THIS broad approach of tackling the root causes of displacement that must also be reflected in the Global Compact For Migration.

This means structural reforms in areas such as trade, agriculture and fishing, foreign policy and climate action.

It means consistently implementing both the Paris Agreement and the SDGs - including in the area of civilian crisis prevention, by opening legal avenues for migration and safe alternatives to fleeing abroad, in taking steps to reduce the appalling scale of global injustice.

It means resolutely supporting developing countries and emerging economies in adapting to climate change – and to improve the protection for climate refugees, something that is currently literally non-existent.

So let us work together and take action – Let us tear down those walls together, and build bridges, rather than destroying them.

Last but not least, let us tackle the root causes of displacement and forced migration. For, as long as someone is forced to flee their home every three seconds on average, our work as parliamentarians in the world is not yet finished.

Thank you.