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THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

15 January 2016

Excellency,

I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the constructive discussions we had on the telephone on 29 December 2015 regarding the continuing large-scale movement of men, women and children towards Europe, fleeing war, persecution and poverty.

I wish to thank you for the information shared by His Excellency Mr. Ib Petersen, Permanent Representative of Denmark to the United Nations, following our telephone discussion, on the support provided by Denmark to refugees and asylum seekers, as well as on the main features of the bill presented by your Government to Parliament, which includes a number of initiatives on asylum policy. In addition, Ambassador Petersen also sent relevant excerpts on the migration and refugee situation from your New Year's address, which I read with great interest.

I commend Denmark for being among the recipients of asylum seekers, including those from Syria, in the European Union. I also acknowledge the numerous challenges faced by your Government in responding to the increased number of arrivals and in ensuring social cohesion. In particular, I appreciate the support demonstrated publicly by ordinary Danes, local communities and civil society for the humane reception and speedy integration of refugees.

At the same time, it is with concern that I note that Denmark, along with a number of other European countries, is adopting increasingly restrictive policies and measures, which will result in decreased support to those in need of protection and will limit the movement of people. I am particularly discouraged to learn that the draft bill that would introduce restrictive measures is likely to be discussed and approved soon by the Danish Parliament.

His Excellency
Mr. Lars Løkke Rasmussen
Prime Minister of Denmark
Copenhagen

Above all, due care should be taken not to place an excessive burden on individuals who are already in a vulnerable position. I understand that the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees has submitted comments, which I fully endorse, on the draft legislation before the Danish Parliament, I trust that they will be given due consideration.

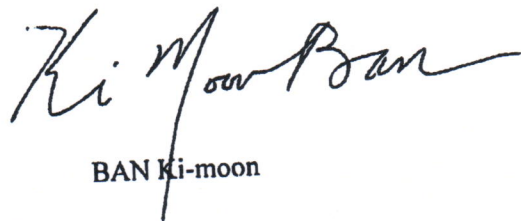
It is my firm belief that all Member States must do their utmost individually and also work together to address the plight of vulnerable asylum seekers and migrants. As you are aware, with a view to advancing responsibility sharing on human mobility, the General Assembly has called a summit meeting in New York in September this year. I have also been calling for the full respect of human rights and obligations under international and regional conventions and instruments in that regard.

We must continue to tackle the immediate issues at hand, find better ways to provide for large groups of refugees and migrants, and protect their rights, while the international community collectively addresses the underlying causes of these precarious movements.

I count on the noble commitment of the Danish people and the Government in receiving vulnerable men, women and children fleeing war, persecution and human rights violations, which is critical to strengthening and revitalizing international solidarity and compassion, values for which Denmark has consistently stood.

I am confident that, under your leadership, the Government of Denmark will demonstrate its strong commitment to the work and principles of the United Nations.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Ban Ki-moon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ban" being the most prominent.

BAN Ki-moon