Record numbers of people have been forced to flee their homes and are displaced within and across borders as a result of (often predictable) conflicts, human rights violations as well as natural disasters and climate change. An increasing percentage of displaced people are also caught in protracted refugee and internal displacement, sometimes for several decades in the absence of durable solutions. It looks as if mankind never learns from its own mistakes.

Patterns of displacement are changing with over half of the 19.5 million refugees and 38 million internally displaced persons now residing outside camps, in cities or informal settlements. Increasing numbers of migrants are crossing international borders in search of protection and a better life and this number is likely to continue to rise. In a near future, cross-border displacements due to natural disasters and climate change will equally grow.

Children pay a disproportionate price to war, unrest and disasters. They are often the direct targets of acts of violence intended to cause maximum civilian casualties as well as to threaten entire communities or they may be exploited in violations of their fundamental rights, including the right to education. In 2014 children constituted 51% of the refugee population, the highest percentage in more than a decade. All in all, children are often unseen, unheard and unaccounted for.

The international community addresses these tragedies with passiveness and a lack of vision and political will, while it has the capacity to act much more effectively and in a preventive way. For all these reasons Terre des Hommes welcomes the World Humanitarian Summit as an opportunity to rethink the international aid architecture and to unite the efforts of the different humanitarian actors under a common vision and shared frameworks for action. Terre des Hommes is part of the humanitarian community and is keen to collaborate with relevant actors to ensure a respectful and human rights based treatment of displacement and migration flows and reduce risks and vulnerability within a child focus.

Terre des Hommes also sees the World Humanitarian Summit as one of the milestones in a chain of major UN and international events set up to address the challenges of 21st century. It calls on the international community to build each of these events on the results and commitments achieved at the preceding ones. It also strongly recalls the principle of “leaving no one behind” which is at the core of the 2030 Agenda.

Terre des Hommes runs the Destination Unknown Campaign to protect children on the move and acts at all levels of the displacement chain, from countries of origin to transit and destination. Terre des Hommes has run this campaign for several years and has collected the view and opinion of children and youth on the move. It is now well informed about the root causes which cause displacements, including forced displacements, as well as the motivations and aspirations of children and young people who are on the move.

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1 One humanity: shared responsibility – Report of the Secretary-General for the World Humanitarian Summit
International human rights and humanitarian law specify the rights of adults and children who are entitled to international protection and the duties of the States where they are located, they form the framework for action for a respectful treatment of displacement, including forced displacement. Key principles are:

- States have a duty to respect the principle of non-refoulement;
- States have a duty to ensure that children are identified accurately, including unaccompanied and separated children, to allow them to benefit from any of the special protection measures to which they are entitled, either as children, or because they are in a category of children entitled to special protection;
- No child seeking asylum at the border can be rejected. An adequate and individualized analysis is requested;
- All unaccompanied or separated children must be the subject of a best interests determination, with due guarantees;
- No detention of children on the basis of their legal status be it irregular migration status or without identification papers;
- Returns or repatriation to be safe, voluntary and (in the case of unaccompanied children) accompanied.

In view of all the above and with regards to the key recommendations for the World Humanitarian Summit, Terre des Hommes adheres to the NGO recommendations developed under the coordination of ICVA regarding a commitment to address forced displacement. They call for:

- A new approach to addressing forced displacement which meets both immediate needs, reduces vulnerability and improves resilience, self-reliance and protection of refugees and IDPs;
- Safe, dignified and durable solutions for refugees and IDPs, working towards a 50% reduction in internal displacement by 2030;
- Stronger support to countries and communities hosting displaced populations;
- Collective efforts towards a Global Compact in responsibility-sharing for refugees;
- Upholding the institution of asylum and the principle of non-refoulement with stronger implementation of national, regional and international laws and policy frameworks to improve the protection of refugees and IDPs.

Terre des Hommes is also taking several core commitments in the framework of the World Humanitarian Summit.