

*Human Rights Council – 32st session
Item 3 – Promotion and protection of all human rights,
civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights,
including the right to development
General Debate*



Speaker: Arie de Pater

Monday, 20 June 2016

Mr. President,

In his opening statement last week, the High Commissioner for Human Rights took us on quite a depressing tour around the world. Millions of people have been uprooted due to violent conflicts, natural disasters, and serious violations of human rights. The exodus of refugees is not limited to the Middle East. It also includes people from North Korea, Eritrea, Yemen, Nigeria and many other countries. We acknowledge the efforts made to address human rights violations but it has not been enough.

In the midst of this darkness, however, there are always little sparks of hope. Motivated by their religion or belief, their commitment to humanity, people are reaching out to those in need. Yesterday, and next week, many churches will observe Refugee Sunday in solidarity with and in support of refugees, people like you and me who had to leave everything behind. They call on our sense of humanity and on our respect for human dignity.

Local leaders and lay people reach out in love, share what they have, reconcile people, stop the bloodshed. Saving one life, they save the whole world. These efforts require a lot of courage as we have seen in the Central African Republic, but it is worth it. Strikingly the High Commissioner noted positive developments in that country.

These courageous people of all faith or none, deserve our support and our protection. We call on the international community to identify these glimmers of hope and to grow their capacity.

“The values which bind us together are buckling,” said the High Commissioner. The World Evangelical Alliance calls on you to prove him false.

We thank you Mr. President.