

Human Rights Council – 34th session  
Item 3 – General Debate

Speaker: Albert Hengelaar

Friday 10 March 2017



Mr. President,

The World Evangelical Alliance is one of the drafters of the 2013 *'Welcoming the Stranger, affirmations for faith leaders'* declaration produced under the auspices of the UNHCR. At the start of the initiative, the High Commissioner for Refugees stated: *"...all major religious value systems embrace humanity, caring and respect, and the tradition of granting protection to those in danger. The principles of modern refugee law have their oldest roots in these ancient texts and traditions."* The message is clear: migration is not a threat but welcoming the stranger is in actual fact at the core of practicing religion.

Recent arbitrary migration bans based on religious discrimination have forced our Alliance to reiterate on January 29 the core values that these convictions represent. For this reason, we welcome resolution 71/1 of the General Assembly to develop a global compact on refugees and migrants. This is long overdue. It is our hope that the compact will cover all aspects of migration, not least the human rights violations that force people to leave their home area. This should be seen in the context of Sustainable Development Goal 16 (SDG16) that seeks peaceful and stable governance. Without that, the migration institutions will be stressed for the wrong reasons forever. The rise in migration and the viral response to counter it by national governments is a sure sign of failed governance and failed rule of law. We welcome the inclusion of SDG16 in setting up the compact. It is the correct medicine for safe, orderly and regular migration, as the resolution seeks to promote. Law needs to be based on justice. As the High Commissioner for Refugees already indicated, religion is at the heart of this moral imperative.

We thank you Mr. President.