This is a high-level event convened in the margins of the ECOSOC Humanitarian Affairs Segment. The event is in support of the ECOSOC theme: *The future of humanitarian affairs: towards greater inclusiveness, coordination, interoperability and effectiveness.*

**Background and objectives**

At a time when one in seven people around the world are on the move, unprecedented numbers are risking their lives and those of their families in search of protection, assistance, or a more secure future. Mixed migration flows comprised of refugees, asylum seekers, economic migrants, trafficked persons, and unaccompanied minors make these journeys in an attempt to escape conflict, violence, or extreme hardship.

North Africa and the Mediterranean are home to some of the world’s busiest, and by far the world’s deadliest, migratory routes. The humanitarian and protection dimensions of irregular migration in this region are shaped by the profiles, vulnerabilities, and the sheer numbers of people who resort to making these journeys in extremely unsafe conditions, and at the mercy of smugglers or traffickers, often as a result of complex political, social or economic factors in countries of origin.

Against this backdrop, the objective of this high-level event will be to highlight the current humanitarian assistance and protection needs of those on the move in this region. It will highlight conditions in countries of origin, first asylum or transit that give rise to humanitarian assistance and protection needs of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. This event will also highlight some of the responses by the United Nations and international organizations and civil society actors in assisting and protecting these groups.

This high-level event, co-sponsored by the Tunisia, Norway and Italy will bring together panelists from Member States, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to identify the humanitarian assistance and protection needs and vulnerabilities of people moving as part of mixed migration flows; discuss cooperation required amongst countries of origin, transit, and destination and humanitarian actors; look at the root causes of these movements; and discuss the link between development and humanitarian action, including around challenges facing countries of origin.

Participants at the event will include representatives of Member States and senior representatives from United Nations agencies, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academia, private sector and civil society. The format will be as follows:

**Moderator:**
• Ms. Kyung-wha Kang, *Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*

Panelists:
• Mr. M. Belgacem Sabri, *State Secretary, Migration Affairs and Social Integration, Tunisia*
• Mr. Bård Glad Pedersen, *State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway*
• Mr. William Lacy Swing, *Director-General, International Organization for Migration*
• Mr. Volker Türk, *Assistant High Commissioner for Protection, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees*