



Karen AbuZayd

Special Adviser on the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants

Biography



On 5 January 2016 UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon appointed Karen AbuZayd of the United States as Special Adviser on the Summit on Addressing Large Movements of Refugees and Migrants, to be held in the General Assembly in September 2016.

The Special Adviser will work with United Nations entities and undertake consultations with Member States and other relevant stakeholders in the lead up to the Summit. This will include overseeing the Secretary-General's report on large movements of refugees and migrants, to be submitted to the General Assembly in May 2016.

Ms. AbuZayd has extensive United Nations experience in humanitarian and human rights work in numerous countries. Since 2011, she has served as a Commissioner on the Independent Inquiry Commission on Syria. In 2005, Ms. AbuZayd was appointed Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) and served in that position until 2010.

Ms. AbuZayd worked for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for 19 years, including as Chief of Mission in Sarajevo during the Bosnian war, as well as positions in Sudan, Namibia and Sierra Leone. She also served in UNHCR's Geneva headquarters, as Chef de Cabinet to the High Commissioner and as Regional Representative for the United States and the Caribbean.

Before joining UNHCR, Ms. AbuZayd lectured in political science and Islamic studies at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, and at Juba University in southern Sudan. She earned her Bachelor of Science at DePauw University in the United States and her Master of Arts in Islamic Studies at McGill University in Canada.