

## **UNDESA 14th Coordination Meeting**

**26 February 2016**

### **Speech Delivered by Ambassador Mehmet Samsar**

#### **Linkages between refugees and migration: Lessons from the 2015 GFMD Chair**

Distinguished participants,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the 14th Coordination Meeting on International Migration.

Today, I would like to share with you our experiences as the previous GFMD Chair and try to highlight the achievements of the Turkish Chairmanship.

The 2015 GFMD Forum came at a time when the world's attention has been focused on migration more intensely than at any time in a generation. Worldwide displacement is at the highest level ever recorded: almost 60 million.

This is a global problem and we need solidarity, cooperation and humanitarian responsibility more than ever. With its informal character, the GFMD is a forum in which states and other actors can come together to discuss the most pressing issues of the day, and we should seize this opportunity to work toward new and innovative forms of cooperation among all legitimate actors.

For the first time, the Turkish Chair made the decision to put forced migration and development on the GFMD agenda. We take pride in initiating a discussion on the protection of migrants who are forcibly displaced by wars, conflict, violence, hunger, and other push factors. Despite initial reservations from some countries and organizations, the Turkish Chair insisted on this topic because of the urgent need to promote a sense of global responsibility for forcibly displaced people.

Given our own national challenges and experiences at hosting millions of refugees from Syrian and other neighbouring countries, it was imperative for the Turkish Government to rally the international community to consider development-oriented solutions to this humanitarian problem.

We believe in the necessity of finding a **sustainable solution** that requires a **shared responsibility**. International cooperation is needed to ensure **safe, orderly and regular migration** involving the **humane treatment** of migrants, refugees and displaced persons.

In the light of the migration crisis in the Mediterranean, the Bay of Bengal, the Gulf of Aden and the Western Balkans, I hope you will agree that this topic is urgently in need of action through the kind of partnerships that the GFMD can foster. In the same spirit, we held a special ad hoc thematic meeting in July in response to the increasing global focus on the Mediterranean crossings. During our recent Chairmanship, we tried to encourage a broader focus on the Mediterranean challenge beyond the humanitarian and law enforcement and border protection frameworks by taking into account the potential development benefits of facilitating migrants' entry in a safe, legal, and orderly way.

Turkey, as a host to more than 2,6 million Syrians, feels very acutely the need for international solidarity on this issue. Our aim is not only to save the lives and provide a safe harbor for the Syrian asylum-seekers but also to improve their living conditions as far as possible. Most recently, Syrians were also allowed to access the labour market in Turkey as of 15 January.

It is clear that migrants need more than emergency response. Long term solutions on livelihoods such as access to education and health services are vital.

So our efforts and our work within the GFMD and other dialogues become ever more important. We should work harder to address the link between migration and development, and make sure that migrants are fully integrated in the plans for implementation of the post-2015 development agenda--not only through the few explicit references to migration in the targets and indicators of the SDGs but through all efforts to improve human security and human development.

The inter-governmental process on the post-2015 development agenda, as well as the Financing for Development process, provided a backdrop to the Turkish GFMD Chairmanship. In addition, the GFMD Chairmanship coincided with the Turkish Presidency of the G-20 and the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit process.

Seizing these opportunities to link migration with relevant processes, the Turkish GFMD Chair organized its thematic agenda and work plan under three key objectives: (1) enhancing migrant-focused migration, (2) recognizing the development impact of migration in public policies and (3) engaging relevant stakeholders in strengthening the linkages between migration and development.

The **8th Summit Meeting of the GFMD**, held in Istanbul on 14-16 October 2015, gathered over 1000 participants from 150 countries and representatives from 35 international organizations, the civil society and the private sector.

In the GFMD Summit, the participants agreed to go forward on the following:

- promoting the integration of migration in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
- strengthening the protection mechanisms for unaccompanied minors, women migrants and other vulnerable migrants;
- improving public perceptions about migrants and migration;
- exploring development-oriented solutions to the challenges of forced migration.

Going forward, migration has to be embedded in national, regional and global development plans in order to achieve a sustainable development agenda that leaves no one behind. One of the recommendations of our Roundtable discussions in Istanbul was for the Global Forum to play a role in the implementation, review and follow up of migration-specific and migration-relevant goals and targets, and in promoting a sharing of good practices at the national, bilateral, regional and global levels in this regard. This task is now being spearheaded by the current Chair, with the creation of an ad hoc Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals.

GFMD 2014-2015 also advanced the discussions on lowering the costs of migration, including remittances transfer costs and the financial and social costs of unethical recruitment. Another important and new focus for the GFMD in Istanbul was the issue of mobilizing the diaspora and migrant entrepreneurs in development efforts, especially in the context of the new 2030 agenda for sustainable development.

In addition, the Turkish Chair engaged the support of the G-20 Presidency through a joint event held in Izmir on 3 June 2015, which discussed how to leverage migration, remittances and diaspora for sustainable development.

We hope that some of the policy and practical recommendations and suggestions will be followed up at the national, regional and global levels.

On our part, we will take some of the outcomes of the Turkish GFMD Chairmanship to the World Humanitarian Summit that we will host in May. Our sincere expectation is to launch a new process with this Summit, which will unite us on a common vision to better respond to humanitarian crises.

As the outgoing Chair, Turkey is grateful for the opportunity to lead the Global Forum process and maintain its place as the largest and constantly evolving platform for information sharing, confidence building and cooperation among states and other stakeholders.

Turkey will remain active as a member of the GFMD 2016 Troika, alongside Bangladesh, GFMD 2016 Chair-in-Office, and future GFMD 2017-2018 Chairs, Morocco and Germany. Together we will continue to build upon GFMD's record of accomplishments to create lasting partnerships that can unlock the benefits of migration and human mobility for the sustainable development of all.

Distinguished participants,

As we look forward to the High-Level Plenary meeting on addressing large movements of refugees and migrants on 19 September, let me remind you that the Turkish GFMD Chair made the effort to increase global awareness of the hundreds of thousands of irregular migrants and refugees on the move in our region and beyond by proposing the inclusion of this issue as an agenda item in the 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the UN General Assembly last November.

This proposal was well received by the General Assembly. And the meeting in November 2015, provided the venue for the Secretary-General to share his road

map for the 2016 and constituted a starting point for the UN series of activities on migration crisis.

Thus, it is important to reflect on the following points:

- Reiterating that it is a moral and legal responsibility to provide assistance and protection to refugees.
- Recognizing that migration and refugee flows are not limited to Europe and thus require a global response.
- Understanding that women and children, who make up the majority of those displaced have special needs that require to be addressed.
- Being mindful of the fact that to tackle the root causes behind displacement, implementation of the 2030 Agenda is essential.
- And finally bearing mind that the World Humanitarian Summit provides an important opportunity to define and strengthen new and existing models of assistance to those who are displaced due to crises.

We believe that solution to migration and refugee crisis can only be attained if the push factors such as wars and conflicts, human rights violations and economic deprivation in many of the origin countries are prevented.

Turkey is ready to make a substantial contribution in the upcoming High-Level meeting on September 19.

Thank you for your attention.