

**STATEMENT BY
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**HIGH LEVEL SIDE EVENT
STRENGTHENING COOPERATION ON MIGRATION AND REFUGEE
MOVEMENTS IN THE ERA OF SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
70TH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

(30 SEPTEMBER 2015, NEW YORK)

Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished colleagues,

I thank Secretary General for convening this meeting on such a sensitive and important topic.

We are now witnessing the largest humanitarian crisis since World War II.

As Syrian conflict entered its fifth year, 300 thousand lives have been lost, 4 million people have sought shelter in the neighboring countries and more than 7 million people have been internally displaced.

The total number of Syrians in Turkey reached over 2 million. In camps, we are hosting close to 260 thousand Syrians.

Let me give you a striking example to demonstrate how tremendous the situation is:

Since the arrival of the first group of Syrians, close to 66 thousand babies have been born in Turkey. Overall, we host 960 thousand Syrian children.

As announced by the UNHCR, Turkey is now the biggest refugee hosting country in the world.

The cost of this huge undertaking for Turkey has so far been around 7,6 billion US Dollars. The contribution that we have received from the international community, only 417 million US Dollars.

Despite all challenges, we still continue our "open door" policy for Syrians fleeing from the violence in their country, without any discrimination with regard to religious or ethnic origin.

Yet, we reiterate once again that burden sharing is urgently needed.

It is neither possible nor just to expect from Turkey or the neighboring countries, to face the migratory pressures, the risks and threats alone.

With this understanding, we pioneered the inclusion of the item "Global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin with a specific emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers" to the Agenda of the UN General Assembly.

The item will be instrumental also in remembering that sustainable solution to migration can only be attained if the “root causes” such as wars and conflicts, human rights violations and economic deprivation in many of the origin countries are prevented.

We should not let short-term security considerations to distract our attention away from addressing the core problems.

Mr. Secretary General,
Distinguished guests,

At this critical juncture, Turkey chairs the Global Forum on Migration and Development for the period of eighteen months from July 2014 to December 2015.

As the Turkish Chairmanship, we have put forced migration and development on the agenda in the light of the dramatic events in the Mediterranean, the Bay of Bengal, the Gulf of Aden and the Western Balkans.

It is clear that migrants need more than emergency response. They also need a prospect for the future where their rights are respected and where they are able both to benefit from and contribute to development.

Thus, in our efforts within the Forum, 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.

We have to make every effort to improve human security and human development.

That’s why, we have picked the theme “Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development” for our Chairmanship.

This theme signals our recognition that international migration cannot be managed effectively by any one country alone, or by states without the cooperation of other stakeholders, including international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

Dear colleagues,

We will host the Global Forum on Migration and Development Summit on 14-16 October 2015.

As the Turkish Chairmanship, we will have the opportunity to follow up the results of the Summit at various other international fora.

Development is also at the core of the Turkish Presidency of the G-20.

Throughout the work carried out so far, we have stressed upon the link between migration and sustainable development goals.

We will make sure that it will be on the agenda of the G20 leaders, when they will meet in Antalya, Turkey this November.

Another important event that will surely touch upon migration is the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit, which we will host next year on May 23-24 in Istanbul.

Mr. Secretary-General,
Distinguished guests,

To conclude, I would like to state that the Syrian crisis is a challenging litmus-test for all of us.

The time has come for us to act together on migration.

Turkey stands ready to work in concert with our partners to address this humanitarian catastrophe.

No one is immune from its challenges. Therefore, we need to share responsibility for our own future.

After all, migrants and asylum-seekers are primarily human-beings and they deserve to be treated as such.

Thank you.