

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great honor for me to speak today as a youth representative from Turkey. The drive of the Turkish youth to express our vocal concerns in front of this august body is a manifestation of our determination to be recognized as equal partners in decision making process for policies, regarding the welfare of society as a whole, and youth, in particular.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first address the most pressing issue at hand: Climate change and global warming.

In the last 100 years, thanks to technological advancement the world has witnessed unparalleled economic development and welfare. However, harm inflicted on environment has also been in unparalleled levels in human history. There is a consensus among scientific community that the most recent period of climate change is influenced by human-made factors. As a result of that, over the past 50 years, the average global temperature has increased at fastest rate for the recorded history. As we all know, climate change is one of the biggest threats ever to humankind and it is the clearest example of where young and future generations' needs are compromised by current and previous generations.

I would like to give you some examples from my country, in order to illustrate effects of climate change and global warming. The ice formation on the top of the Turkey's highest mountain, namely Ağrı Mountain, melted 5 meters in the last 20 years. The water level in Lake Van, the biggest lake of Turkey, decreased 3 meters over the last 12 years. Last month, Istanbul was hit by a terrible flooding which was the heaviest rain for many decades. As a consequence of this flood more than 30 people lost their lives and many industrial sites were destroyed.

In this respect, Turkish youth, would like to add its voice to global call to take concrete action on climate change and wishes to see a successful outcome of the negotiations on climate change in Copenhagen.

Mr. Chairman,

Secondly, I would like to draw your attention to another important issue: Current global financial and economic crisis and Millennium Development Goals.

Consequences of current global financial and economic crisis are felt in all parts of the world. All segments of our societies are affected from the crisis. However, I wish to urge all countries to take necessary measures to address and ameliorate effects of the crisis particularly on youth, elderly and disabled people.

In the context of ongoing financial and economic crisis, I wish to also emphasize the importance of Millennium Development Goals and reiterate the commitment of Turkish youth to MDG's. Millennium Declaration provides a strong framework for sustainable development for all. I am pleased to inform you that Turkey's first national report on MDG's was released in 2005.

Mr Chairman,

Thirdly I would like to underline the commitment of Turkish youth to democracy and human rights. Youth can only fulfill its full potential in a vibrant democratic society where human rights are fully protected and promoted. Turkey, which has a multi party democratic system over half a century, has been going through an intense political reform process during the last decade. Along with other segments of our society, Turkish youth has been playing an important role in this process. These reforms, which ultimately aim to improve the living standards of Turkish citizens, enabled Turkey to start its accession negotiations with the European Union in 2005.

Mr. Chairman,

Lastly I wish to focus on the Alliance of Civilizations initiative of Turkey and Spain.

Level of globalization and interdependence that the world experience today, has significantly increased mobility of capital, goods, services and individuals. This mobile world, which mostly identified by many as information age, also necessitates a better understanding of other cultures and civilizations. After the terror attack of the 9/11 in the USA, the requirement for better understanding among different civilizations further increased.

Turkey, along with Spain has been co-sponsor of the Alliance of Civilizations initiative. More than 80 countries and international organizations are member of group of friends of the

Initiative. Turkish youth fully supports this Initiative which is in line with the purpose and spirit of the United Nations. If we fail to overcome lack of understanding among each other, there is a risk that this lack might be filled with prejudices and misperceptions. Turkish youth is ready to work with the youth of other countries for a better understanding among different cultures and civilizations.

Mr. Chairman,

Let me conclude by underlying the understanding of the Turkish youth that we, all nations, are sailing in the same boat facing common global challenges and multilateral diplomacy and the United Nations is the platform where we are destined to address those common global challenges in cooperation with each other.

Thank you.