

STATEMENT BY TURKEY
109th IOM COUNCIL

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director General,
Excellencies,

At the outset, we congratulate you Mr. Chairperson on your election and convey our gratitude to your distinguished predecessor for his valuable guidance during the year. We are confident that we will achieve a substantial progress this year as well.

We also like to congratulate you, Mr. Vitorino on your election as the Director General of IOM. We once again wish you success in this important and equally challenging position. It is our firm belief that under your leadership, IOM will successfully continue to contribute to the global efforts in the area of migration.

We welcome the Republic of Uzbekistan as the newest member of IOM. This clearly means that IOM's global outreach and universality are reinforced. We are confident that Uzbekistan will bring added value to the work of IOM.

Mr. Chairperson,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today, we are at a critical juncture. We have a consolidated Global Compact on Migration (GCM) that will pave the way for better coordinated policies on migration and can make a real difference on more than 258 million migrants' lives. It will no doubt guide us in our efforts and avail the international community to strengthen cooperation.

First of its kind, GCM will constitute an excellent basis for rethinking our migration policies internationally. While doing so, it will also provide an opportunity to fight against racism, discrimination and xenophobia. These trends fuelled by domestic political interests are the most dangerous scourges of our time. We believe that culture of understanding and tolerance should prevail in our societies. We should keep in mind that without an atmosphere of harmony, we are destined to fail in our endeavors.

In this regard, Turkey welcomes that IOM undertakes an essential role in the implementation of the Compact by assuming the secretariat and coordination of the UN Migration Network. We are convinced that IOM will thoroughly accomplish its new responsibilities and will consistently move forward in the period ahead.

Excellencies,

We thank the Director General for his comprehensive report and reiterate our support to the work and efforts of IOM under his able leadership.

We commend IOM's work in addressing emergencies and its efforts in fields of preparedness, response and recovery. We reiterate our support to Migration Governance Framework (MiGoF). We also commend IOM's work on migrant health. We would also like to underline the importance of International Dialogue on Migration and commend the success of the workshops on migration governance this year.

Let me also underscore the close and effective cooperation between Turkey and IOM. We collaborate in migration management, countering migrant smuggling and human trafficking, labour migration, integration, humanitarian assistance, resettlement, voluntary return and many more. As the Chair of the Budapest Process, we also commend IOM's contribution to this platform.

We are pleased that updated Host Country Agreement that has been signed after IOM joined UN, has been ratified by Turkey and put into force this year.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Though migration is the mega trend of 20. and 21. centuries, it is not news to us. For centuries, Turkey, with its empathy and compassion culture, has been home to those who fled from oppression and instabilities, just like today. Over 3.5 million Syrians and hundreds of thousands of migrants from various nationalities live in our country in harmony and more importantly without any discrimination.

Today, as hosting the world's largest refugee population in our country, we are exerting every effort to make their lives better. Our Government with Municipalities and NGOs, has spent more than 33 billion US Dollars for their needs. We provide shelter, food, non-food items, health care, education and psycho-social support to them. Moreover, Syrians have the right to legally work and also blend in our society. Most of them live in various cities of Turkey peacefully.

This is a token of our belief that everyone is free and equal and also deserves to live in dignity. With this understanding, we will continue to provide a welcoming home to the ones in need.

Excellencies,

Migration is the human story and an integral aspect of our lives. We should continue to further our efforts in addressing migration related issues by strengthening our cooperation globally. In this respect, we deem IOM, UN Migration Agency, as an indispensable partner.

Thank you.