

STATEMENT BY TURKEY
110th 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.

On behalf of my government, let me also take this opportunity to welcome the Lebanese Republic as the newest member of IOM as well as the International Commission on Missing Persons (ICMP) as the new observer. Their participation will strengthen the organization.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we witness an unprecedented scale of global displacement today, international cooperation and responsibility sharing have utmost importance.

As the leading UN organization in migration, IOM's expertise and endeavors for the benefit of all migrants as well as the countries of origin, transit and destination are of importance more than ever.

IOM's timely involvement and support to migrants and migrant-hosting countries has become more vital in face of the protracting and newly emerging crises.

Effective migration governance is crucial not only in addressing the challenges related to migration flows but also in enhancing the positive impact of migration for the benefit of social and economic development.

We believe that the timely launching IOM's Strategic Vision and recent reform process will further increase IOM's efficiency and strengthen its role in migration management.

On this opportunity, we also would like to commend the success of the International Dialogue on Migration sessions, which focused on youth and migration this year. As a reflection of the importance we attach to IDM, Our Deputy Minister of Family, Labor and Social Services addressed at the session held in October Geneva as well.

We would like to propose that during the next sessions of the Council, the outcomes of the IDM deliberations could be briefly shared by the IOM Secretariat to contribute to the visibility of the main findings and advocacy of the IDM discussions.

Mr. Chairperson,

Turkey continues to host the highest number of refugees in the world, with almost 3.7 million Syrians in addition to over 365.000 from other nationalities.

In collaboration with IOM and other relevant UN Agencies, we are exerting every effort to make their lives better.

We adopted a comprehensive policy, which targets the areas of social cohesion, employment, education, housing, healthcare, labor rights and municipal services.

Some figures are so impressive that they might give you a better picture. Since the beginning of the crisis, more than 474.000 Syrian babies are born in Turkey. Number of Syrians receiving in-patient treatment reached 2 million. ~~Syrians who are referred to hospitals are over 58 million.~~ 1.8 million surgeries have been conducted and millions of medical drugs have been distributed.

We do also facilitate their integration into the labor market. Over 105.000 work permits were issued for Syrians. We are working on increasing the permits.

Currently we have 1 million school age Syrian children. 684.000 of them are currently enrolled to public schools. In addition, some 21 thousand Syrians are pursuing higher education in our universities. The number of Syrian academicians employed in the universities of our country is over four hundred.

In line with the UN's "no lost generation principle" we have given a special attention to the education of Syrians, as they will be the ones who will rebuild their country.

Mr. Chairperson,

We believe that it is high time for the international community to work on preparing the necessary conditions that would facilitate safe and voluntary returns of Syrians.

In the meanwhile, Turkey fully respects the principle of "non-refoulement". We believe that returns should be safe, voluntary and dignified and conducted in full cooperation with UN agencies.

Mr. Chairperson,

As we have actively taken part in the GCM process, we will continue to contribute to the realization of the provisions of the Compact in collaboration with the UN Migration Network.

Turkey's collaboration with IOM covers many areas such as migration management, assisted voluntary returns, counter trafficking and migrant smuggling, integration, humanitarian assistance, migrant protection.

We work on strengthening the capacities of our law enforcement units through technical cooperation projects with IOM.

We also value IOM's support to our public institutions by projects and multi-service community centers.

Due to our endeavors, illegal crossings in the Aegean is reduced by 94%.

In order to sustainably manage irregular migration, international community should focus on addressing the "root causes" triggering these movements in the first place.

Concluding my remarks, I would like to reiterate Turkey's support for IOM. We look forward to continuing our comprehensive cooperation.