

STATEMENT BY THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE
114th IOM COUNCIL

Madame Chairperson,
Madame Director General,
Excellencies,

At the outset, we congratulate you Madame 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, Madame Pope on your election as the Director General of IOM. It is particularly an important milestone for IOM to have a woman at the steering wheel. 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.

Excellencies,

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

We commend IOM's work in addressing emergencies and its efforts in various fields such as return and readmission, regular pathways, counter migrant smuggling and trafficking. Given the fact that human mobility deserves better understanding and governance, we would like to underline the importance in strengthening flexibility and operational agility of the Organization. They are essential parts of our responses to current challenges we face.

In this regard, let me extend our gratitude to IOM and donor countries for their support after the devastating earthquakes in our country last February. 528 tons of aid delivered by 14 cargo planes from IOM's warehouses in Accra, Manila, Nairobi, Lahore and New Delhi helped us provide timely support to those affected by the earthquake.

We also applaud the smart energy logger system designed at IOM's Resilience Innovation Facility in Gaziantep that provided clean water during the earthquakes.

Madame Director General,
Colleagues,

We would like to take this opportunity to draw your attention to another humanitarian catastrophe we have been witnessing since October 7th.

Without doubt, loss of civilian lives is unacceptable, be it in Israel or in Palestine. Striking hospitals, schools, residential areas, places of worship, refugee camps are also outrageous. There can be no justification for deprivation of 2.3 million Gazans of food, water, medicine, electricity and fuel. Given the unprecedented dire humanitarian situation, unhindered flow of humanitarian assistance into Gaza must be ensured.

It is the collective responsibility of the international community to put an end to the suffering in Gaza and send further humanitarian assistance.

Madame. Chairperson,

Indeed, IOM has been a valuable partner of Türkiye for nearly two decades. We have benefited and continue to benefit from the experience and expertise of the Organization. Our active contribution to the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) is a telltale sign of the importance we attach to our cooperation. We are also one of the active members of the Champion Countries initiative. Taking this opportunity, allow me reiterate our support to you Madame Director General as the Coordinator of the UN Network on Migration.

Excellencies,

Though migration is the mega trend, it is not news to us. For centuries, Türkiye, with its empathy and compassion culture, has been home to those who fled from oppression and instabilities, just like today.

While hosting the largest refugee population in the world; almost 4 million refugees and asylum seekers, we are also determined to continue our efforts to combat migrant smuggling and to manage irregular migration. We identified nearly 220 thousand irregular migrants and apprehended almost 9 thousand migrant smugglers only this year.

Today, over 3.2 million Syrians live in our country. There is no doubt that expecting Türkiye to shoulder this responsibility alone is neither sustainable nor realistic. We need to work together to find durable solutions for refugees. Focusing more on resettlement and voluntary returns can be significant first steps.

We believe that stabilization on the ground is necessary for the voluntary returns of Syrians. Türkiye strictly complies with the principle of non-refoulement and no one is forced to return. So far over 600 thousand Syrians have returned to the secured and stabilized areas that Türkiye freed from the hold of terrorism of PKK/YPG/SDG and DAESH. Further joint housing projects will further support the voluntary return of nearly 1 million people.

Madame Director General,
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.