



STATEMENT BY TURKEY
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to the UN

Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration
Preparatory meeting
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Mr. Moderator,

Turkey appreciates the work of the co-facilitators and the Secretary-General of the Conference Ms/Arbours in ably steering the process on the Global Compact so far. We thank the Government of Mexico for its generosity in hosting this meeting.

As we conclude an important milestone, I would like to underline the following points, to complement the position of Turkey in the Phase I and II of the process to adopt the GCM.

First, GCM provides the international community with the opportunity to create a more coherent, comprehensive and better coordinated approach to migration. It can also act as a spring board for strengthening international cooperation among all stakeholders.

Through recognizing the strong link between migration and development, GCM should equip the international community with practical implementation tools in harnessing the potential of migrants to contribute to the development efforts as part of the 2030 Agenda.

Second, GCM should underpin the basic premise that the dignity and well-being of migrants depend on international responsibility-sharing and cooperation among all stakeholders. The issue of migration needs a far more comprehensive, human-rights based approach. It is essential to instill the idea that migrants are not viewed as plain commodities or factors of production, but human beings with rights.

In this respect GCM could have the potential to make a real difference to the lives of some of the world's most vulnerable people. The Compact should underscore our collective commitment to eliminate religious and ethnic discrimination, racism, xenophobia, and our pledge to curb migrant smuggling and eliminating human trafficking and create an atmosphere of tolerance.

Third, through GCM, we should aim for a step change in migration through a "whole of government" approach and a "whole of society" concept. Moreover, through GCM we should be able to set guidelines on gathering and using data on migration, to achieve sound analysis and policies.

Last but not least, another aspect of the GCM should be about addressing the "root causes" of irregular migration. It is of utmost importance to support peace processes and promote peaceful settlement of disputes in conflict-affected areas. Stepping up humanitarian aid and development assistance in the countries of transit and origin is also more than necessary.

Mr. Moderator,

Let me dwell on Turkey's experience with regard to protecting the rights of migrants and more effective of migration policy at the national level.

Within the framework of strengthening human rights protection, including migrants' rights, we have achieved a lot in the legislative field during the last decade. We have amended our Constitution, established the National Human Rights Institution and Ombudsman's Institution, and

have taken necessary steps to put the new legal and institutional framework into practice. We have organized various training programs for civil servants and realized awareness raising activities.

In 2013 we have enacted a landmark legislation, “The Law on Foreigners and International Protection” following a transparent and participatory process together with all national and international stakeholders, including the IOM and the UNHCR.

The Law sets the basis for the establishment of the Directorate General for Migration Management, as well as ensuring the legal basis for the principle of non-refoulement that has already been abided by Turkey.

It also defines humanitarian residence permit, subsidiary protection mechanism and temporary protection. Now, we are aiming to strengthen our efforts in migration management and we hold regular meetings of the Migration Policy Board with the high-level participation from all government institutions.

Indeed, Turkish society is an amalgamation of individuals from various backgrounds, who have found their home in this land throughout centuries. Turkey is hosting the largest refugee population in the world and today there are more than 3.3 million Syrians in Turkey. We not only provide Syrians with food, non-food items, medical and education services, but also enable them to contribute legally to our economy.

Furthermore, in order to prevent loss of lives in the Aegean, break the migrant smuggling networks and replace irregular migration with legal migration, our cooperation with the EU culminated in the 18 March Agreement. Today, we witness that our endeavors have borne fruit. Since October 2016, daily average of irregular crossings decreased from 7.000 to around 75.

While protecting the lives and rights of migrants as a host country, Turkey also exerts every effort to safeguard the dignity and well-being of over 6 million Turks living as migrant workers mainly in Europe, but also in many other countries of the world. To this end, we have signed bilateral social security agreements with 31 countries. We believe that portability of earned social benefits is a matter of fairness for migrants.

Furthermore, in the international fora, Turkey leads various initiatives those help better manage migration. In this regard, Turkey assumed the Chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD) in 2014-2015 and holds the chairmanship of the Budapest Process. We believe that international cooperation on migration issues is a *sine qua non*. In this respect, we advocate for a stronger dialogue.

We also advocate for social cohesion based on rights and duties, as well as equal treatment, and also integration policies strongly counteracting discrimination, racism and xenophobia. It is our common responsibility to provide the necessary atmosphere for migrant workers to access the core institutions of the society, the labour market, the education system, housing, health and many more.

In this regard, the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers represents an adequate and comprehensive framework. 27 years on from its adoption, it is simply

disappointing to see that it has only 51 States parties. GCM should provide an impetus for more states to adhere to this Convention.

Moreover, we promote efforts towards lowering the costs of remittances, enhancing the financial literacy, ensuring the portability of social benefits and recognition of skills at all levels.

Mr. Moderator,

As underscored by the Secretary-General of the Conference Ms. Arbour, we all need to push for a more forward-looking and positive understanding of migration and mixed flows.

Protecting the human rights, dignity and well-being of migrants is directly linked with their capacity to take active part in economic and social life that they newly embarked on.

Unfortunately, in an age of uncertainty, we see a rising trend of discrimination of all sorts, xenophobic nationalism and racism. We observe that migrants and refugees become scapegoats.

In the upcoming phase, we should be aware that the anti-migrant rhetoric and acts present a huge challenge to democracies everywhere. Fear and rejection of migrants and refugees are precisely the wrong answer to security threats.

This is not a time for creating new fortresses around our borders and isolating ourselves from a global discussion. It is time for strong multilateral action within the UN framework. And IOM should play a leading role in the implementation.

Mr. Moderator,

In view of the above, Turkey stands ready to continue its constructive engagement in the upcoming negotiations to reach a Global Compact for safe, orderly and regular migration.

Thank you.