

Global Compact on Refugees

Statement of Turkey to the First Thematic Discussion: “Past and current burden and responsibility sharing arrangements”

(Geneva, 10 July 2017)

Intervention (3 min.)

Turkey welcomes this first thematic discussion, I’m pleased to share some experiences of my country and lessons drawn by Turkey. The situation on the ground requires a mentality shift within the international community. We definitely need a comprehensive approach to support refugees and host countries and to deliver durable solutions.

Hereby, I would like to underline that Turkey attaches great importance and actively contribute to the UN supported efforts. The need for an improved global response to the refugee crises, the efforts for development of global compacts on refugees by 2018 and implementation of “comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF)” are encouraging steps that have Turkey’s full support, in this regard. We are glad that UNHCR continues to assume guidance regarding “Global Compact on Refugees” process and tries to realize an effective cooperation with states and relevant stakeholders.

Turkey hosts 3.3 million people that had to flee from war, violence and desperate conditions in their homelands. The number of Syrians in Turkey exceeded 3 million, which is a record high number. As a neighbor to Syria, Turkey is deeply affected by this tragedy. Our first and foremost priority is to help Syrians who fled from war and violence in their homeland to save their lives.

Every single Syrian who sought shelter in our country is under the protection regime of our Government. I would like to underline that Syrians are not forced or restrained to live in camps. Hence, less than 10 percent of Syrians are accommodated in temporary protection centers and the rest lives in urban areas across the country.

Turkey exerts every effort, exploits every means to improve the living conditions of Syrians. We provide language courses, as well as education and vocational training. Syrians in Turkey have free of charge access to health services. Last year, we completed the necessary legislation for their access to our labor market. We have issued nearly 20 thousand work permits for Syrians.

Today, there are approximately 835 thousand school-age Syrian children in Turkey and 508 thousand of them can attend school. In order to increase the schooling ratio of Syrian kids, 422 temporary education centers have been created by Turkey. Schooling ratio has increased twofold and reached to 60 % in 2017 comparing to the previous year, due to an aggressive campaign that has been launched to bring children back to school.

In spite of our intensive efforts, we are aware of the fact that much more to be done especially in the field of education. The establishment of new schools, at least 26 thousand additional classrooms and employment of new teachers are urgently needed to enable all of the Syrian children to fully access education. International community should do more in this regard to ease the pressure on host countries, as it is our joint responsibility to prevent Syrian children and youth from becoming a lost generation.

In order to realize these efforts Turkey has spent so far almost 30 billion US Dollars (including municipalities and NGOs). Hence, Turkey and neighboring countries are in fact the biggest donors for Syrian people and its future. However, I regret to mention that Turkey, received only 526 million USD, excluding EU's financial assistance on a bilateral basis, so far from the international community.

On the other hand, regarding Somalia, I would like to point out that Horn and East Africa region hosts nearly two-thirds of world's refugees. Turkey's efforts, as one of the key development partners, are in line with international community's objectives and commitments. We continue to support Somalia in the international fora. Turkey is one of the leading donor in Somalia and we will continue to do our part in the process of reconstruction of Somalia. Turkey's contributions to Somalia's state building and development efforts have surpassed 600 million US Dollars. We continue intensive humanitarian assistance through the Turkish Red Crescent, TIKA and Turkish NGO's.

I would like to underscore five points that we deem necessary in addressing the needs and ending the sufferings of millions of Syrians and other refugees.

Firstly, the international community should address the root causes of crisis to eliminate further "push factors". **Secondly**, we all should share the responsibility and burden. As the Syrian humanitarian crisis is a global phenomenon, neighboring countries cannot be left alone to bear the brunt of this crisis. Equitable and meaningful burden and responsibility sharing is necessary. **Thirdly**, humanitarian aid and assistance should be a long-term investment into our collective security. This is crucial to increase resilience of host countries and communities. While host countries that are exposed to the negative impact of the Syrian crisis mobilize all their capabilities to overcome the consequences of the refugee influx, at the same time, they spare no effort to create adequate conditions at home for Syrians to live. This dual burden we all assumed as host countries requires long-term resilience that should be supported with a wide range of issues.

Another important point is to fill the gap between humanitarian and development assistance. We have discussed this at the World Humanitarian Summit that we hosted last year in Istanbul. Today, we cannot ignore the fact that this is not business as usual. We have to find innovative approaches to bridge our efforts for a brighter future. Therefore, a shift towards a more development and resilience-oriented approach is necessary. In this respect, we believe that the **3RP constitutes the backbone** of this approach due to its inclusive nature with resilience and refugee pillars as well as humanitarian and development dimensions. We expect that commitments foreseen for Turkey concerning the "3RP for 2017-2018" will be fully operational and realized.

Lastly, I would like to mention to the another supportive tool for resilience, which is resettlement. More meaningful resettlement quotas are another way of sharing the burden and responsibility.

Thank you.