

**STATEMENT BY TURKEY
GENERAL DEBATE
69TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
UNHCR**

**Madam Chairperson,
Mr. High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,**

I would like to begin by thanking High Commissioner Filippo Grandi and Ms. Kristalina Georgieva, Chief Executive Officer of the World Bank for their opening remarks, the day before.

We are yet in another year of record high levels of displacement. This is a stark reality, not only for those who left their homes and for the communities hosting them, but also for the international community as a whole. This is a global issue, which needs to be addressed at a global level.

Madam Chair,

Both the thematic and formal consultations on the Global Compact on Refugees have demonstrated the common understanding of the international community on the immediate need to find ways to address more effectively mass levels of displacement, whether they are new, or protracted.

We appreciate the leading role of UNHCR in successfully conducting these consultations, and we trust that UNHCR will play a prominent role in the effective implementation of the GCR.

We welcome the increase in the number of countries applying the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework, with Afghanistan becoming the 15th country. We hope that the financial challenges of the CRRF programs will be overcome with the spirit of burden sharing and international solidarity.

Madam Chair,

As for our part of global responsibility, we have provided shelter to everyone seeking international protection within our territories without considering ethnic, religious or sectarian differences.

Currently, Turkey is sheltering over 4 million refugees, 3,5 million of them being Syrians.

In addition to our ongoing efforts for a political solution to the conflict in Syria, we mobilized all our resources in order to ameliorate the living conditions and alleviate the sufferings of the people who left their homes behind.

We provide education, health and psychological services to individuals who need them. We encourage them to join the labor market.

Syrians are not forced or restrained to live in camps. Less than 10 percent are accommodated in temporary protection centers and the rest live in urban areas across the country.

We hope to share our experiences on the benefits and challenges of hosting refugees in urban settings during the High Commissioner's Dialogue meeting in December.

The implementation of all these projects and efforts is by no means easy for Turkey or any other country for that matter.

According to the UN criteria, we spent more than 32 billion USD from our own financial sources.

Unfortunately, the heavy burden of the humanitarian consequences of the Syrian crisis still lies on Turkey's shoulders.

Even so, we continue to pursue a humanitarian approach. We have demonstrated such an attitude with our preventive diplomacy efforts in the latest Idlib crisis.

President Erdoğan and President Putin's meeting in Sochi prevented a huge humanitarian tragedy and reduced a new migratory flow to Turkey and the EU countries from Syria.

We hope that the latest agreement will give a positive push to the efforts for a political solution in Syria.

Madam Chair,

The displacement numbers are devastating.

At a time when so many vulnerable people are in need of protection, there should be no room for those who attempt to exploit the refugee protection regime.

In this regard, we call the UNHCR as well as the member states party to the 1951 convention, to abide by the principles and standards for granting refugee status and avoid providing a safe haven for criminals or even worse, terrorists.

Madam Chair,

Certainly, closing borders and building fences are not the right way forward to tackle the issue of forced displacement.

We trust that, by continuing the spirit of international solidarity reached in the New Declaration, the international community will be able to develop effective burden and responsibility sharing mechanisms and find sustainable solutions to refugee crises.

In this regard, the efforts and the leading role of the UNHCR is significant.

We welcome the Global Compact on Refugees as a positive and concrete step and look forward to its effective implementation.

We support the Compact as a reference text for further burden and responsibility sharing and hope that the document will constitute a basis for concrete steps in this field.

Building on the GRC, we hope to see more encouraging commitments on allocating further financial assistance to host countries.

Similarly, as a concrete way to sharing responsibility for refugees, we hope to see an increase in resettlement quotas and opening of complementary legal pathways for forcibly displaced people.

We continue to rely on and support UNHCR's leadership and trust that we, the Member States will act with *pacta sunt servanda*.

Turkey will closely follow-up the full implementation of the Compact, after its adoption.

Thank you.