Country Statement - TURKEY

Excellencies,

Distinguished Participants,

On behalf of the Government of Turkey, I would like to extend my thanks to UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) for organizing this very important event despite the pandemic.
More than 2 years have passed since adoption of the Global Compact for Migration (GCM) in the UN General Assembly. Turkey has actively contributed to the preparation of the Compact and highly supports its humanitarian approach and emphasis on Sustainable Development Goals. We believe that now it is high time to strengthen our commitments in actualizing the goals of the Compact that we have agreed upon.

Turkey has been the largest refugee country in the world for the last 6 years. Due to our geographical location at the epi-center of mixed migratory
routes between Asia and Europe, we were home to millions of migrants throughout history.

We make sure that migrants and refugees have access to all the basic services including health, education and legal support. We are committed to implement the GCM objectives in various fields. We look at migration as a topic not to be feared but managed. Thanks to the guidance of the IOM, last year we have submitted our first national report briefly touching upon our achievements so far in terms of GCM’s implementation. We will continue to build on those achievements. We are also pleased with the establishment of national United Nations Migration Network (UNMN) in
Turkey. Without a doubt, this mechanism will further strengthen our cooperation with the UN entities and other member states.

Irregular migration, transnational crimes including migrant smuggling and human trafficking are among our common concerns. However, we cannot truly tackle with these issues with desperate, shortsighted measures such as pushing back or ill-treating migrants and encouraging anti-migrant discourses. Migration management should be based on three main pillars:

- First is to address the root causes triggering mixed migratory flows. This can only happen by supporting source countries to overcome their political,
social and economic instabilities and enhancing their sectoral capacity for employment creation and education. This support should be delivered hand in hand with transit countries. COVID-19 adds on the current challenges source countries are facing. If we fail to extend our support to them now, new migratory crises will be the least of our worries.

In this regard, Turkey continues to extend a helping hand to countries in their struggle against the pandemic. Since the beginning of the pandemic, we have assisted 157 countries.
Embassy of Turkey

-Second is to open up legal pathways for regular migration. GCM highly emphasizes this aspect. Given the opportunity, people will not risk their lives to embark on dangerous journeys.

-Finally, to maintain our humanitarian approach at all costs. Human rights and international law are universal and inalienable. There can be no grounds to violate the fundamental rights of migrants and leave them to die at the high sea or territorial waters. Our efforts under the umbrella of GCM must be built on this vital principle.
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What we need the most are responsibility and burden-sharing at the regional and global levels. Despite our burden, we make utmost effort to uphold these pillars and support the meticulous work of IOM and UN Migration Network. We cannot achieve tangible results with the efforts of few countries. There has to be unity and cohesion. I invite all the member states and stakeholders to think beyond the daily political interests and work together for our common future.

Thank you.