

UN WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT

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Excellency the UN Secretary General

Excellencies Heads of States and Ministers

UN Special Representatives of the Secretary General

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is an honor for me to address the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. This Third Conference since the UN announcement of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in the 1990s underlines the progress that has been made since then and displays the commitment of our nations and people for disaster safety. Our collective responsibility for our countries and humanity as a whole has already been very well defined in the Strategic Goals and Priority Actions of the Hyogo Framework for Action in 2005.

Now, as we move forward to HFA 2, we are more informed, we have more data, knowledge and experience to understand risks in a much wider scope, covering both existing, new and potential risks, to consider risk reduction not only in anticipation of disasters, but also in preparedness for effective response, as well as for sustainable recovery and reconstruction, and to define resilience in terms of physical, social, economic and environmental sustainability, emphasizing to determine links between disaster risk reduction and sustainable development.

Distinguished Guests,

Comprehensive disaster risk reduction is even more important for rapidly developing countries like Turkey, where more human, social, and economic assets are exposed to natural hazards in the course of rapid urbanization, economic growth, and to potential hazards related to the adverse impacts of climate change. As we have experienced through our own history, disasters lead to severe setbacks in the social and economic development of countries; meanwhile unsustainable development initiatives result in new risks. Our experience once again

emphasizes that the developmental considerations must be linked to all aspects of disaster management and humanitarian action as well.

In this respect, as the world is changing, its priorities in understanding from “Crisis Management” to “Risk Management”, countries are attaching considerable importance to disaster risk reduction in all fields of daily life, and in all processes of disaster management.

Dear Colleagues,

Turkey is in a unique position in terms of disaster management, as our country shares common characteristics with both developed and

developing countries. As the World's third largest and most generous (in terms of percentage of national income) donor country, Turkey is trying to do more than its share in alleviating the suffering of affected people. In this unique position, factors such as Turkey's comprehensive reforms in the recent decade, sound public administration structure, the European Union accession process, economic development level, social, cultural, and demographic characteristics have had an impact.

Currently, Turkey is in a process of strengthening her disaster management system. The new system is being refigured by integrating

disaster risks and risk management issues in national development plans, ensuring the cooperation of civil society organizations, requiring disaster risk reduction measures in investment projects, occupational safety and health requirements, institutionalization of disaster insurance and last but not least improving communication and information network.

Distinguished participants,

The first-ever World Humanitarian Summit is to be held in May 2016, in Istanbul, Turkey. The selection of Istanbul as the host city of the Summit points once again to the fact that the humanitarian landscape

is changing and that partnerships need to be thoroughly reconsidered to make humanitarian action more effective and inclusive. As we move forward to the World Humanitarian Summit, consultative processes have clearly demonstrated the fact that the humanitarian system needs to be redesigned both organizationally and, perhaps more importantly, in essence.

Now it is time to reestablish the definition to extending assistance “to people in need”, so that it facilitates a better understanding of the relationship and interdependency between the humanitarian system, reducing vulnerabilities, and sustainable development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given her geographical location, bridging two continents, Turkey, through her history has been a heaven for mass influxes driven by conflict situations in her periphery. Extending a helping hand to all those who need humanitarian assistance is an important principle in our culture and faith. Indeed, it is this culture of tolerance towards and sharing with the other which rendered the Ottoman Empire an abode in medieval times.

History is repeating itself and now we are faced with another humanitarian disaster which made around 2 million Syrians and Iraqis leave their homes and seek protection in Turkey.

DAESH or ISIS is a merciless terror organization which commits crimes against humanity. Yet we should not lose sight on the fact that DAESH is a by-product of the oppressive regime in Syria. The humanitarian disaster that we are faced with can not be rolled back unless the international community intervenes for a political solution to the Syrian imbroglio.

In this context, let me emphasize that 25 camps have been established in ten provinces with an overall capacity of 325,000 people. 180,000 children attend schools. Yet this is not enough. There are around 550,000 school age children. We have sent roughly 1,000 humanitarian aid trucks to Iraq. Over thousands of trucks have been directed to Kobane in Syria. Overall, around 3,000 truck loads of humanitarian aid have ended in Syria. 7.5 million people have undergone medical treatment in Turkey. In addition to that over 250,000 people have had surgeries. Just to end with a positive tone, I will limit myself

by saying that we have had 50.000 new born in camps. This explicitly shows the immensity of the challenge.

We have thus for pursued an open door policy for all Syrians and Iraqis who had to flee their countries in the past 4 years, in conformity with our international obligations. We have mobilized all our resources and capabilities to provide for the needs of those people, in a sense of responsibility as a member of the international community.

The amount of resources the Government has disbursed for its humanitarian response has exceeded 5.5 billion US Dollars, whereas

total bilateral and multilateral support to Turkey-related appeals has remained at merely 300 million US Dollars.

I'm sure nobody will deny that such efforts deserve adequate international support. But today, humanitarian action in conflict areas are, unfortunately, most of the time overshadowed by the differences among countries, especially among permanent members of the UN Security Council.

Syria's neighboring countries, including Turkey, have so far received an unfair share of the humanitarian burden of the Syrian conflict. We should not be left alone.

A more intensive partnership must be developed. This partnership should not only focus on addressing the present needs of displaced Syrians, but also burden-sharing through resettlement and future needs of the Syrians society in the post-conflict phase.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I wish that this conference will be a new milestone for worldwide efforts for comprehensive disaster risk reduction for a safer world. I

express my gratitude to the host nation Japan and host organization the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR).

Thank you.