

Statement of Turkey by Mr. Hasan IPEK,
General Director of The Prime Ministry Emergency Management Agency.
(Special Session on Tsunami Affected Countries
Kobe HYOGO on 20 January 2005)

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Representing a country not immune to natural disasters, let me first convey the condolences of the Government and the people of the Republic of Turkey to the governments and the people of the countries affected by the terrible disaster in South Asia. Our sympathy and condolences also go to countries whose citizens lost their lives in this tragedy.

We have witnessed an unprecedented disaster with devastating effects in terms of human losses and material damage. The Family of Nations would certainly have preferred to remember the tremendous power of the nature in an easier way. Multi-dimensional and multi-faceted lessons will be learned by the international community from this catastrophe. But our priority now is to join our efforts to address the huge humanitarian challenges ahead of us.

It is with this understanding and perception that my government allocated 5.million USD in cash. This amount was and will be transferred either bilaterally or through UN-OCHA to Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, Somalia and the Seychelles in order to contribute to international relief efforts.

Two military planes have been dispatched to transport medical equipment, medicine, family food rations and water purification equipment to the two most affected countries, Indonesia and Sri Lanka. The value of this operation reached about 1.2 million USD.

A public campaign for fund raising is underway. As far as today the donations exceeded 7 million USD. Turkish private sector is also raising donations.

A 31 strong medical team has dispatched to Aceh in order to establish and run two health care units. A Turkish Red Crescent relief team has been dispatched to provide nutrition and sanitation services to

2500 families in the affected region. Seven Turkish NGOs are also engaged in humanitarian relief operations.

So far the total donation from Turkey has reached up to approximately 15 million dollars together with the total number of 88 personnel currently in the area under the coordination of the Prime Ministry Emergency Management Agency.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. Gül, in his capacity as the current Chairman of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers of the OIC, has sent a message to his colleagues from 56 OIC member countries, supporting the appeal by the OIC Secretary General, for aid and relief efforts to the affected countries.

The Prime Minister of Turkey will pay a visit to the affected countries in order to get in touch with the peoples of the affected countries to express Turkey's solidarity and to make a further assessment for considering an additional relief package.

These modest efforts by the Government and the people of the Republic of Turkey will continue with the awareness that collective efforts by all members of the family of nations are required to meet the huge challenges faced by the mankind in healing the wounds caused by this catastrophe. *we fully support the outcome of this tsunami lesson*

Tsunami disaster emphasized the importance of disaster prevention and preparedness. That is why we, the family of nations, should combine our efforts for global and regional early warning mechanisms for all kind of disasters.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to the Japanese Government for organizing this special session.

Thank you.