

(ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION)

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY

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OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

(To be delivered in the 1st Ministerial Session on 3rd November 2016)

Excellencies The Ministers,

Dear UN Special Representatives of the Secretary General,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is great pleasure for me to address to the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction. At the outset, I would like to thank to the Government of India for hosting this important UN Conference and excellent arrangement made for all the participants.

Distinguished Delegates,

Let me first mention one important issue;

On July 15, a rogue group within Turkey's military attempted to overthrow the democratically elected government, suspend the Constitution and impose martial law. Upon receiving news of the coup attempt and hearing the President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN's call to resist, millions of ordinary citizens demonstrated courage and commitment to protect their sovereign rights against these treacherous attacks. Thanks to their sacrifice and the resilience of Turkey's democratic institutions, the situation quickly de-escalated and the authorities launched a formal investigation to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators. As all you witnessed, Turkey's strong fundamentals made it possible for us to overcome this challenge with relative ease. I would like take this opportunity to thank all the countries that supported us on July 15 and onwards.

Distinguished Guests

This Conference underlines the progress that has been made and displays the commitment of our nations and people for disaster safety since the UN announcement of the International

Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction (IDNDR) in the 1990s. Our collective responsibility for our humanity as a whole has already been very well defined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030.

As we are on our way to implement Sendai Framework, now 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 and risk reduction. Also defining resilience in terms of physical, social, economic and environmental sustainability and emphasizing to determine links between disaster risk reduction and sustainable development are of the utmost importance.

Dear Colleagues,

For a long time, Turkey has, focused on risk management, which it deems as the key to sustainability. We implement our risk-focused approach with a system specifically adapted to our country's own risks. We are building the 'Turkey Disaster Management System, which prioritizes preventive measures, precaution and preparedness.

"Disaster management" policies were elaborated in the 10th Development Plan for the period of 2014-2018. Turkey's main goal in terms of disaster management is threefold;

- First; considering disaster risks in economic, social and spatial planning processes;
- Second; raising awareness and resilience against disasters;
- And last; building disaster-resilient and safe settlements.

Global documents constitute the primary source and reference of the Turkey Disaster Management System, which covers the time before, during and after a disaster. The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030 is the primary source we use in our system. Within the scope of this Framework Document, we are preparing the 'Turkey Disaster Risk Reduction Plan' –TARAP-, that will serve as our country's master plan in the field of disaster risk management. TARAP will serve as a road map document in the identification and overall reduction of all risks across the country.

We designed TARAP with at least a 15-year period for risk reduction in mind. Once the plan takes effect, all our existing risk reduction works will continue as part of a macro-level strategic approach. We are also continuing our efforts to put together a 'Province Risk Reduction Plan Guides' within the scope of the Turkey Disaster Risk Reduction Plan. With these guides, we plan to reduce disaster risks at a local level as well.

Dear Participants;

As you know, the first-ever World Humanitarian Summit was held in May 2016, in Istanbul, Turkey. The selection of Istanbul as the host city of the Summit has shown once again to the fact that framework of humanitarian aid is changing and that partnerships need to be thoroughly reconsidered to make humanitarian action more effective and inclusive. The outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit have clearly demonstrated the fact that the humanitarian system needs to be restructured both in terms of organization and 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 its geographical location, Turkey, through its history has been a haven for mass influxes driven by conflict situations in its periphery. Helping to all those who need humanitarian assistance is an important principle in our culture and faith.

As the World’s first donor country in terms of GDP per capita and the third in terms of volume in humanitarian aid, 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, solid public administration structure, economic development level have had an impact.

In recent years, we have been facing various humanitarian disasters.

Turkey is at the center of the direst humanitarian crisis since the Second World War. Approximately 5 million of the 21 million refugees in the world are Syrians, which means that one out of every four refugees in the world is Syrian. Turkey hosts three out of every five Syrian refugees in the world as asylum seekers. Due to this reason UNHCR (UN High Commissioner for Refugees) declared Turkey as the “Country Hosting Largest Number of Refugees in the World” and UNICEF declared Turkey as “The Country Hosting Largest Number of Child Refugees in the World”.

Turkey has shown utmost solidarity and hospitality toward the survivors of Syrian civil war: In April 2011, the Turkish government adopted the Open Door Policy with the instruction of our President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN to welcome the first group of Syrian refugees. H.E.

President ERDOĞAN authorized the Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD) with the coordination of Turkey's response to the humanitarian crisis. Within this coordination, AFAD established the first temporary receiving center for asylum seekers within only 24 hours and set up a mechanism in order to fulfill their needs. It is an important example to demonstrate the response reaction of AFAD in case of such events.

The country's humanitarian operation has been a remarkable success: Today, nearly 3 million Syrian and Iraqi nationals of diverse religious, ethnic and cultural backgrounds live in Turkey under the Temporary Protection status.

The relief effort came with a heavy price; which Turkey has received almost no external support. Since 2011, the Turkish government spent 12.5 billion USD, and the amount goes up to 25 billion USD if we include the relief from Turkish NGOs and municipalities, whereas the international community contributed only 512 million USD.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey supports not just only Syrians.

From Yemen to Myanmar, from Iraq to Chad, we try to reach every part of the World. In addition to humanitarian aid, AFAD (of Turkey) believes that regarding the Syrian Crises, one of the most effective risk mitigation activity could be the constitution of a "safety zone" within Syria and Iraq.

A safety zone within the Syria and Iraq must be supported not by just Turkey but also by international community. As AFAD we believe that benefit of safety zone will not be limited just for the people of Syria and Iraq. It could be a huge risk reduction activity for all of the countries including European Union.

In the sixth year of civil war, the time has come to have a serious discussion about what needs to be done. The position of Turkey, where is home to the world's largest refugee community, is clear: We expect the international community, especially from EU and other countries to step up and share the immense burden on Turkey.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We believe that there is a need for focused action within and across sectors by States at local, regional and global levels in the four priority areas of Sendai Framework. These priorities are as follows;

- understanding disaster risk,
- strengthening disaster risk governance to manage disaster risk,
- investing in disaster risk reduction for resilience,
- enhancing disaster preparedness for effective response, and to «Build Back Better» in recovery, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

I hope that this Asian Ministerial Conference will contribute this need in the regional level and adopt an ‘Asian Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework’.

In addition, I wish that this conference will contribute to the efforts for comprehensive disaster risk reduction for a safer world.

Mr. Chairman,

I express my gratitude once more to the host Country of India and its friendly people and also to the United Nations Office for Disaster Reduction for excellent preparations made for this Conference.

Thank you.