

(ASIAN MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON DISASTER RISK REDUCTION)

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OFFICIAL STATEMENT BY

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REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

PRIME MINISTRY DISASTER AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY

(AFAD)

Excellencies The Ministers,

Dear UN Special Representatives of the Secretary General,

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world has witnessed movements that began from the depths of Asia and even changed the far west of Europe almost in all periods of history. For example, Mongolia, the country playing host to all of us, today. Conquests of Genghis Khan and his followers was the greatest event that affected the world demography after the Migration of Tribes. An overwhelming majority of the population in my country has settled on Turkey's soil as a result of the migration that started from Asia centuries ago. Wars kept their place in our agenda as the number one factor that triggers migration, and it seems that this will go on. We continue to study the relationship between wars and migration in 2018 according to the same motivations we examined this relationship in 1220s. Because, man can change his own era but cannot change nature. Unfortunately, wars will exist in every place that human kind exists and migratory movements will take place in every war zone.

Distinguished Representatives,

The Republic of Turkey has witnessed wars and movements of migration in many periods throughout its deep rooted history. In 1864, hundreds of thousands of Caucasians escaping from Czarist Russia and in 1912 millions of our cognates from Southeast of Europe that we call Balkans took refuge in Turkey in the aftermath of the Balkan wars.

Approximately 600 thousand Kurds fleeing the cruelty of Saddam Hussein during the 1991 Gulf War again sought refuge in our country. Our successive governments never rejected our

neighbors regardless of their origin, country. Our traditions still continue to brighten our future like a glittering torch.

Since 2011, we are playing host to 3 million 570 thousand 352 oppressed Syrians escaping from the civil war in Syria. 219 thousand Syrians found shelter in temporary refuge centers which in the past were under the control AFAD that I chaired and now have been transferred to the control of the Ministry of Interior. All refugees are benefiting from all kinds of services and benefits as do our own citizens. 612 thousand Syrian children are receiving education and training in Turkish schools. By 2018, 302 thousand Syrian babies opened their eyes to the world in Turkey. 1 million 188 thousand refugees had surgeries and 34 million 501 thousand of them received health services in polyclinics. We have offered vocational training to 87 thousand 168 adults.

Many Syrians especially women earn their own money without needing anyone and bring home bread by using what they have learned in vocational courses.

Esteemed Ministers,

As a result of the security issue that emerged in the aftermath of the civil war in Syria, Turkey has been facing the threat of terrorism at its borders. Due to this reason, we launched Operation Euphrates Shield against the ISIS terror organization in 2016. In the aftermath of this operation, more than 130 thousand people have returned to their home country. There are 193 thousand people living in camps. 189 million Turkish Lira worth of humanitarian aid has been delivered to these people from the Çobanbey warehouse till today. We are offering education services to 154 thousand students. There are three hospitals offering health services, three more are under construction and tenders for the construction of two hospitals are opened.

The security threat against Turkey is not only limited with ISIS. PKK and its extension YPG/PYD terror organizations have created a fait accompli in our southern border. We did not keep silent, we made our move. We cleansed the Afrin region as a result of Operation Olive Branch. We have distributed humanitarian aid packages in 328 points till now to the people of then region who were oppressed due to clashes. Among these packages were 115 thousand 850

food baskets, hot meal to one million 72 thousand people, bread to 3 million 675 thousand people and 851 tons of flour.

Esteemed guests,

In the aftermath of the massacre that the Myanmar army staged in the August of 2017 against the Arakan Muslims, we launched a massive humanitarian aid operation in the region. We have spent 23 and a half million liras for Arakan since 2012. We have completed the constructions of 815 bamboo houses; we are aiming at building one thousand and 65 homes in total. An example neighborhood was formed in the area where our authority built bamboo homes. We have completed the constructions of 815 bamboo homes, 44 toilets and 44 bathrooms.

A total of 100 toilets and 100 bathrooms will be built in total for 1065 bamboo homes. Our Ministry of Health has established a field hospital in the region. There are 32 health staff working in this hospital. This field hospital had offered health services to more than 60 thousand people till now. We distributed 1500 toys to Arakan refugee children living at the Bangladesh-Myanmar border on the occasion of Turkey's April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day. We distributed 2 thousand food baskets during Ramadan. We opened 5 water wells in total. This was one of the basic needs in the region. An exemplary neighborhood was established in the area where our authority built bamboo homes. Today, annually approximately 200 billion dollars are spent in the world for cosmetics while money spent for humanitarian aid is only around 20-30 billion. Humanitarian aid is our label, this is not something that we market, and for us it is a value.

Distinguished guests,

After giving brief information about our humanitarian aid activities, I also would like to mention disaster recovery activities of AFAD that I chair. Many institutions in Turkey are carrying out joint projects regarding disasters. AFAD is working with Turkey's Disaster Response Plan (TAMP) component institutions and offices. For example; we have signed a protocol about permanent disaster homes with the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization. We have been fulfilling our obligations as a part of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk

Reduction agreed internationally in 2015. We hosted then European Disaster Risk Reduction Forum in İstanbul in 2017. We have participated in the World Disaster Risk Reduction Forum held in Cancun, Mexico.

AFAD's prior objective is to enhance risk reduction activities and decrease all kinds of dangers during the times of emergencies and disasters to a minimum. Within this context, we have completed majority of Turkey's Disaster Risk Reduction Plan (TARAP) and we are planning to start its implementation in the next term. Apart from all these, we are working in an effort to make AFAD a reference institution in the world and a coordinator institution. We are already well known and recognized in the world. We would like to expand even more.

Mr. Chairman,

I express my gratitude once more to the host Country of Mongolia and its friendly people and also to the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction for excellent preparations made for this Conference. I wish that this conference will contribute to the efforts for comprehensive disaster risk reduction for a safer World. I would like to thank you all for listening and convey my affection and respects.