

23rd June 2017

UGANDA SOLIDARITY SUMMIT ON REFUGEES

**Statement on behalf of the Government of Turkey
by H.E. Sedef Yavuzalp, Ambassador of Turkey in Uganda**

- I have the honor to participate in the “Uganda Solidarity Summit on Refugees” on behalf of the Government of Turkey. I am pleased to be here together with the Turkish officials representing Disaster and Emergency Management (AFAD), Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA) of the Turkish Prime Ministry and Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay).
- Today, the scale of global displacement is profound. Some move of their own will but millions of people move to escape armed conflict, poverty, food and water insecurity, persecution, terrorism, or natural disasters.
- There are around 250 million migrants in the world. The total number of forcibly displaced persons worldwide exceeds 65 million, including over 21 million refugees and 3 million asylum-seekers.
- As the conflicts continue in various regions and the security situation deteriorates further around the world, there is no doubt that human mobility and displacement will continue.
- The conflicts in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia, South Sudan, Lake Chad Basin and in the Horn and East Africa, as well as protracted situations like the issue of Palestinian refugees remain a source of continuous concern.
- The Horn and East Africa region hosts nearly two-thirds of the world’s refugees. Uganda is the biggest refugee hosting country in Africa. The total number of refugees in Uganda has reached appx. 1,3 million.
- We appreciate Uganda for its generosity in providing international protection to refugees in spite of its own socio-economic, national security and environmental challenges.
- We need to recognize that the region faces new challenges, such as the drought and food insecurity, gripping the region, threatening with starvation and death.

- That is why time is of the essence and resolute action by humanitarian actors, strongly supported by the international community, is required.
- We definitely need a comprehensive regional approach for the Horn and East Africa and support peace and stability in these regions with all our joint capacities to deliver durable solutions for refugees, whilst promoting sustainable reintegration of returnees in their homelands.
- Hereby, I would like to underline that we attach great importance and actively contribute to the UN supported efforts. The 19 September Summit (2016) and the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants demonstrated the international community's concrete commitments and the political will to address the needs of migrants and refugees, as well as attested to the importance of responsibility and burden sharing.
- The need for an improved global response to the refugee and migrant crises, the efforts for development of global compacts on migration and refugees by 2018 and implementation of the "comprehensive refugee response framework (CRRF)" are encouraging steps that have our full support, in this regard.
- We are pleased that CRRF is being successfully implemented in Uganda, as one of the pilot countries.
- These efforts should definitely take into consideration the long-term needs of both refugees and those who host them.
- Today, Turkey keeps its position of hosting the largest refugee population in the world, as the number of refugees hosted by Turkey reached 3.3 million, including more than 3 million Syrians.
- The situation in Syria and the Syrian refugees are the most imminent challenge we are facing today. We maintain our "open door" policy for Syrians who had to flee their country.
- Syrians are under the protection regime of our Government. We have accepted millions of Syrians without any discrimination based on religion, culture or ethnicity. Turkey merely acts in line with humanitarian considerations. Turkey's policy towards Syrians sets an example for the whole world.
- Let me shortly dwell on our efforts with regard to Syrians in our country. Syrians are not forced or restrained to live in camps. Less than 10 percent of Syrians are

accommodated in temporary protection centers and the rest live in urban areas across the country.

- We believe that opening our doors is not enough. Therefore, we exert every effort, exploit every means to improve the living conditions of Syrians. We provide language courses, as well as education and vocational training. Syrians in Turkey have free of charge access to health services. Last year, we completed the necessary legislation for their access to our labor market.

- Allow me to share some figures to draw the picture of our efforts more concretely. Over the past 6 years, more than 25 million polyclinic services have been provided to Syrians and more than 950 thousand surgeries were carried out. Syrian babies that have been born in Turkey since the beginning of the Syrian crisis just recently exceeded 224 thousand.

- Today, there are approximately 835 thousand school-age Syrian children in Turkey and 508 thousand of them can attend school. Schooling ratio has increased twofold and reached to 60 % in 2017, comparing to the previous year.

- You will concur with me that the education of Syrian children is of crucial importance since they will be the ones to rebuild their country and contribute to the peace and stability of the region.

- In spite of our intensive efforts, we are aware of the fact that much more needs to be done especially in the field of education. The establishment of new schools, at least 26 thousand additional classrooms and employment of new teachers are urgently needed to enable all of the Syrian children to fully access education.

- For all these efforts, Turkey has spent almost 26 billion US Dollars (including municipalities and NGOs), whereas the total contribution we received from the international community is far from meeting expectations (526 million USD). Of course our means and capabilities are not endless.

- We have similarities with Uganda in this respect and believe that neighboring countries should not be left alone in carrying burden and responsibility.

- Although Turkey is carrying an immense burden on her shoulders concerning the maintenance of especially Syrians in Turkey, we are again trying to do our best for Uganda in terms of humanitarian and development assistance.

- Turkey has successfully realized totally 55 projects worth of 9,5 million Dollars till today in Uganda through TIKA alone

-**Sixthly**, it is certain that Uganda has the **potential** with its abundant resources to achieve any goal for its development and refugee management if it adopts careful planning, effective resource management, patriotic attitudes, and reduces bureaucracy in policy implementation.

- **Last but not least**, we have to fill the gap between humanitarian and development assistance. We have discussed this at the World Humanitarian Summit that we hosted last year in Istanbul. Today, we cannot ignore the fact that this is not business as usual. We have to find innovative approaches to bridge our efforts for a brighter future. Therefore, a shift towards a more development and resilience-oriented approach is necessary.

- Once the TIKA Coordination Office could be opened in Uganda, the number of its projects will increase. TIKA carries out its work by putting ethics, human rights and human development in the forefront of its humanitarian and development assistance without any conditionality. Turkey does not use the carrot and stick model.

- Our deeds are a full reflection of our conscience, humanitarian values and responsibility. Therefore, our pledges should turn into commitments at least to save the lives and keep the dignity of refugees. It is now high time for all of us to act together. Turkey has been standing and continues to stand ready to work with the international community to address challenges.

- We are ready to welcome any Ugandan official delegation to pay a working visit to Turkey in order to benefit from our experience in humanitarian responses to humanitarian crises and its risk management model.

Thank you.