

**Welcome address**  
**H.E. Feridun H. Sinirlioğlu**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, Chair of the GFMD**  
**(14 October 2015)**

Honorable Ministers, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all, to magnificent Istanbul, a megacity that unites peoples, cultures and continents in peace and harmony.

**Dear Colleagues,**

While the scenic backdrop to our meeting may be apt, the strategic overall setting that we find ourselves in, is unfortunately far from ideal.

As the rest of the world watches indifferently from afar; wrapped in a false sense of security that has no basis in our globalized world; war, armed conflict, brutal oppression and intra-communal strife, are ripping apart the broader Middle East as we know it.

With countless ungoverned spaces around us, the **state of chaos and instability** that has emerged is **breeding extremism, sectarianism and fundamentalism**, which fuel the dramatic growth of terrorism we are witnessing today. **If there is one lesson** to be learned from the reprehensible **terror attack in Ankara** just four days ago, it is that **no one is safe from such unjustifiable acts of terrorism**.

**Distinguished Guests,**

The pressing need to **address the plight of migrants** and what we must do, together, through enhancing international collaboration, **cannot be decoupled from this prevailing reality**.

That is why, as State actors, we also have an obligation to help **move the policy debates** in our capitals, and also at the international level, **towards devising effective policies that will genuinely address the root causes** that trigger the patterns of mass migration we observe today.

Until and unless we proactively **push for and support peace processes** to end ongoing conflicts; **address the humanitarian suffering** first and foremost where it is taking place; **establish and enforce safe zones** where we can protect civilians from indiscriminate acts of violence; and, aggressively and resolutely **take the**

**fight to the terrorists** wherever they are finding havens, we cannot prevent the kind of spontaneous mass migration that has taken us all by storm.

This is by no means an easy task, but a **combination of these four elements**, applied together and with the right kind of **international cooperation**, can at least help us keep the numbers from growing exponentially, and ensure that we can more effectively focus on the already existing challenges.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The number of people on the move has increased dramatically in recent years. With a staggering **230 million migrants** worldwide, and the image of toddler **Aylan Al Kurdi**, laying lifeless and all alone on a deserted beach etched in our hearts and minds, it is **time to bolster our collaboration** and take action to protect and assist migrants.

As a country that is at once an origin, transit and also target destination in terms of migration, **Turkey is not only seized of this issue**, we also know full well the ability of **migrants to enrich and contribute to the societies they live in, socially and economically**, and how they can also give back to their countries of origin.

Since its inception, **the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD)** has enhanced the dialogue on migration and development, by bringing together a range of the most crucial stakeholders in migration, including most notably, migrants themselves.

Following the adoption of the **2030 sustainable development agenda**, migration is officially **among our goals and targets**. Now we must **implement** these goals thoroughly, and achieve another **success story before 2030**.

This **8th GFMD Summit** is crucial, as it is the **first high-level international gathering after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda**. This is an opportunity we cannot squander.

As Chair, we look forward to taking the **concrete outcomes** of this Summit first to the **G20 Summit in Antalya** exactly one month from now, and later to the **World Humanitarian Summit**, which will also be held in Turkey in **2016**.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

At the beginning of my remarks, I mentioned **four elements** that are crucial to curtailing the growing flow of migrants from our region. Nowhere are those **elements more needed today than in Syria**.

Five years into a conflict precipitated by a murderous regime bent on self-preservation at all cost, Syria lies in ruins, with hundreds of thousands dead, and half of the population, roughly **12 million men, women and children, displaced**.

**Turkey now hosts the largest group of refugees in the world**, in excess of **2.2 million**. While the amount we spend for their care is heading towards on **eleven digit number in US Dollars**, the total contribution received from the international community is **less than half a million** Dollar. “**Burden-sharing**” has become an **empty catchphrase**.

Unfortunately, looking at developments to our South, it is not hard to predict that the number of Syrians and others that are seeking safety and refuge in Europe will only increase, and probably significantly.

What we have seen so far is likely just the tip of the iceberg. **With many millions internally displaced in Syria and now new militarily aggressive actors on the ground with no clear strategy, it is only a matter of time before one lonely spark triggers another mass exodus**. This is why we are advocating for a more **holistic approach** that addresses the **root causes** of conflicts not only its consequences.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Migration**, as a global challenge, is very much on the **international agenda**. The time is ripe to mobilize our efforts.

**Turkey** is determined to **spare no effort** to **protect human lives** through the strengthening of cooperation, and reinforcing the partnerships that enable human mobility for sustainable development.

I hope this 8th GFMD Summit seizes the opportunity and takes significant steps that directly help address all the issues surrounding migration and development.