

**SPEECH OF MR. LEVENT ELER,
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TO THE UNITED NATIONS IN NEW YORK**

**At the High-level Discussion on “Realizing the Transformative Potential
of Migration and Empowering Migrants”
20 October 2014, New York**

On behalf of the Turkish Chairmanship of the Global Forum on Migration and Development (GFMD), allow me to start by thanking you for attending this discussion organized by Sweden, Turkey and International Organization for Migration (IOM) on the theme “Realizing the Transformative Potential of Migration and Empowering Migrants”.

Turkey will serve as GFMD Chair-in-Office for 18 months, until the end of December 2015. As the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Çavuşoğlu pointed out, at the event we hosted in the Turkish Center on 22 September Turkey will spare no effort to strengthen the role of the GFMD as an arena in which policies to enhance the development benefits of migration can be generated, discussed and shared.

We attach importance to strengthening the influence of the GFMD process within the UN system, and we will work to build on the Declaration of last year’s High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development, which acknowledged that the United Nations system can benefit from the discussions and outcomes of the GFMD.

We will build on the pioneering initiatives of the Swedish Chair to promote a more development-focused, more dynamic and more durable Global Forum. GFMD remains to be the largest forum for a state-led, multi-stakeholder discussion and cooperation on migration and development.

According to estimates, today there are around 230 million international migrants all around the world. They contribute to economic, social and cultural life in the host countries by filling the gap in labour markets, alleviating adverse effects of aging populations and enriching the cultural life in the host societies. This calls for strengthened efforts and action to promote migrants’ well-being and prosperity. However, migrants will not be the only beneficiaries of this approach: experience has shown us that migrants whose human rights are secured, who are able to exercise their talents and energy in productive work, and who are well integrated in the countries they live in, are able to contribute greatly to the development of their countries of origin and destination, as well as to the well-being of their families and communities.

In this regard, the Turkish Chairmanship work plan will be implemented under the overarching theme, “**Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development.**” This theme signals recognition that international migration cannot be managed effectively by any country alone, or by states without the cooperation of other stakeholders—including international organizations, civil society, the private sector and migrants themselves. It also emphasizes that human mobility within the right policy framework is a positive factor for development.

During our Chairmanship, Turkey will be guided by the following objectives:

- *First*, we believe in the importance of **protecting the human and labor rights of migrants** –now a universal principle, thanks in large part to GFMD discussions. However, there is still a lot of room for the improvement of migrants’ well-being. To this end, we would like to bring to light pragmatic partnerships between countries of origin and countries of destination, transit countries where appropriate, as well as non-governmental partners, which aim to ensure respect for migrants' rights and reduce the human and financial costs of migration.
- *Second*, we would like to further explore the development **impact of migration on public policies**, particularly at the sectorial level, both in countries of origin and destination. We would like the global community to recognize migration as a real and tangible factor of development. To this end, we aim to examine ways on how to **make migration work beyond the Post-2015 process**.
- *Third*, we would like to strengthen the linkages between migration and development by taking the results of the GFMD into other **regional and international agenda-setting processes** in which Turkey is playing a key role. Turkey will assume the presidency of the G-20 in 2015, and will host the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016. Additionally, in 2015, Turkey will join with other UN member states to negotiate the final shape of the post-2015 development agenda.

Our discussion today focuses particularly on migration and Post-2015 development agenda. As you will remember, many delegations and groups from almost all regions supported inclusion of migration in the SDGs. In that sense, migration attracted considerable attention, thereby making its way more into development issues.

The report of the OWG on SDGs touched upon migration and directly related issues under several goals and targets:

- Under Goal 10: “Reduce inequality within and among countries” target 10.7 proposes facilitation of orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies. As I explained before, mobility is a key topic for Turkey as it is part of the overarching theme of our GFMD chairmanship.
- Target 10.c proposes “reducing to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminating remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent, by 2030”. This is a means of implementation.
- Under Goal 8: “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” . Target 8.8 proposes protection of labour rights and promotion of safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment. We cannot agree more with such a target as protection of rights of migrants is a priority for us.

- And under Goal 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels”.Target 16.2 proposes “Ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children”. Trafficking of human beings in this context is directly relevant to migration issues.

These are the main areas that the OWG report on SDGs covered migration. As the Chair of the GFMD, we will be supportive of inclusion of migration in the SDGs during the intergovernmental process in the 69th session of the General Assembly. Alongside the political support extended by governments, intellectual and public support to this effort will also be welcome.

One last thing I would like to mention here is the importance of combating racism, xenophobia, discrimination on the basis of religion and belief, and all stereotypes against migrants and their families. Racism, xenophobia and discrimination are scourges of modern societies. Discrimination in all its forms against migrants must be fought with all available legal means. We all should be aware that only a tolerant climate can attract highly skilled foreigners and help unleash the potential migration can offer. So, reducing crime, violence, discrimination against migrants and ensuring a tolerant climate for all should be aimed.

Distinguished participants,

In concluding, I would like to emphasize once more that Turkey will spare no effort in its commitment to strengthen international cooperation with a view to better managing migration and protecting human lives.

Thank you for your kind attention.