

**ADDRESS BY H.E. PRIME MINISTER AHMET DAVUTOĞLU AT THE
GLOBAL FORUM ON MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT**

14 OCTOBER 2015 / ISTANBUL

Distinguished Participants,

Welcome to the city of Istanbul, a city that owes its cultural richness to the people who arrived here throughout history from this different parts of the world. Istanbul is a city of migration, but also a global capital. We are pleased to welcome you to this beautiful city where east meets the west, north meets the south, civilizations interact and cultures blend.

When founded, Istanbul became the new capital for the Roman Empire after the Empire disintegrated and its people had to migrate. The capital migrated from Rome to Istanbul making Istanbul an imperial capital. Therefore, this ancient city has a symbolic importance in terms of the significant role that migration has played in the course of history and civilization.

Cities personify the essence, wealth and history of civilizations. Historic cities such as Rome, Beijing, Istanbul, Baghdad and, more recently, cities like New York in the last few centuries have all been established, enriched and developed as a result of migration.

In fact, the history of civilizations and cities disproves the notion that migration is destructive. The 15th century Ottoman historian Aşıkpaşazade speaks of a slowdown of economic activity in Istanbul due to a population decrease prior to the Ottoman sovereignty over the city and laments the loss of the city's old grandeur. He adds that the new rulers of the city encouraged migration to Istanbul in order to restore it. And so it was that not only Muslims, but also Christians, not only Turks but also tribes from the Balkans and the Caucasus and the Middle East poured into Istanbul. To note that the first Armenian Patriarchate was established in Istanbul by the Armenians who arrived in the city after Istanbul was conquered is a good example of how enriching migration has been for the city.

In the same way, migration from all parts of Anatolia created a great harmony in Istanbul. Still today, some of the district names in Istanbul are identical with the names of cities from Anatolia.

I migrated from Konya to Istanbul when I was very young and I spent the first years of my life in childhood, youth, school and academic life here. I developed a sense of history and of humanity in this imperial capital city and its streets. As I said many times before, we have a number of scholars, but the

greatest scholar is the city of Istanbul. What I learned from Istanbul and from the cultural diversity I experienced in Istanbul have had a profound impact on me during my academic and political career.

Cities talk to us, lecture and teach us. One cannot dominate cities; we can only be their students. This is the context in which we should consider migration. Istanbul has constantly received migration and seen significant subsequent development making it one of the largest cities in the world and a truly modern global city.

In this respect, Istanbul is a clear example of the link between migration and development. Today, industrialization which is the basis for development is directly related to urbanization. Modern cities were born when rural communities migrated in great numbers to the cities paving the way for industrial and technological prowess.

Although there were many challenges in the process of urbanization, as depicted in *Les Misérables* by Victor Hugo, they were not inherently related to migration or urbanization because mankind continued to urbanize and resolved these challenges through democratization and freedoms. In this context, managing migration properly is of key importance because migration is not a phenomenon that must be prevented, but one that must be managed properly.

Migration is as old as the history of man and has contributed to political, economic, social and cultural developments. It would not be wrong to say that civilizations have been shaped by migration. The dynamics of migration had an important role to play in the rise and fall of civilizations. When managed properly, migration contributed to the rise of civilizations, but the opposite was true when it was not managed properly. In this context, exclusion, lack of tolerance for differences and isolation make it very difficult to manage or benefit from migration.

The Ottoman Empire with Istanbul as its capital sets a good example for managing migration. The Ottoman State was established by migrants and the Ottoman Empire, instead of fighting the waves of migration in Anatolia at that time, managed them well to establish a strong and effective political system on this land. Different religious and ethnic groups lived in peace for centuries in Ottoman society which was constantly supported and sustained by migratory movements. Today, evidence of this diversity can be seen even in Turkish cuisine which features traces of different geographies.

Another example of the great role that migration and migrants have played in the development of a country is the United States which has an

extraordinary culture of mutual coexistence resulting from big migration movements in the last four hundred years.

For centuries, Turkey has been home to migrants from the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East due to war, conflict and other humanitarian crises. I would like to emphasize that these migrants made significant contributions to the development of our country and that the founder of our Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, is also a migrant from the Balkans. Therefore, migrants do not only bring some challenges for the regions and countries they go to, they can also bring about major progress.

The great thinker and my idol Rumi who fled the Mongol oppression to Anatolia and who hails from my own hometown reminds us that oppression does not create prosperity and that opening our hearts and doors to the plight of the oppressed is a most profound value for humankind. When Rumi migrated from Balkh in Afghanistan, he took his deep knowledge from Asia to Anatolia thereby enriching Anatolia with his philosophy. The example of Rumi who had a deep impact on Ottoman statesmen and civilizations is a case in point showing that migration can make contributions in the short and the long term to mankind and civilizations.

For centuries, Turkey has been a safe harbor for people from many nations. We are proud of the fact that our country hosted historical personalities from countries such as Hungary, Germany, Poland and Sweden and welcomed the Jews fleeing the Inquisition from Andalusia. Today, this historical background adds to the strength of our relations with these countries.

On the other hand, there are also countries that have exhausted their power by fighting migration and migrants. History is witness to the fact that the walls erected to stop migration have failed to fulfill their purpose. In light of these observations, it is of utmost importance to steer the dynamics of migration in the right direction.

Distinguished Participants, Distinguished Guests,

As I stated above, Istanbul is a city that receives migration and prospers with migration. In this context, I believe that it is very important to discuss the inter-linked issues of migration and development on the occasion of this Global Forum on Development and Migration at a time when migration occupies a prominent place on the international agenda.

Since its establishment in 2007 upon the initiative of the Secretary General of the United Nations, this forum has served as an effective platform

convening states and has contributed significantly to the dialogue on migration and development.

In my capacity as the Chair of this Forum, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the previous Chairs and wish success to the next Chairs of this Forum.

As you know, the sustainable development agenda for 2030 was adopted at the United Nations last month and migration became one of the important goals on its agenda. We must now act as the international community to achieve these goals to create a success story by 2030.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all stakeholders, states, international organizations and civil society individually for their great efforts in ensuring the inclusion of migration in the development agenda.

Migration is a very complex phenomenon and recently became an important item on the international agenda. Migration affects places around the world in different ways and it is sure to remain on our agenda in the coming years and perhaps decades.

We must realize that significant progress in migration and development can only be achieved through sustainable and common strategies as well as comprehensive dialogue. It is not possible to manage migration properly without dialogue and cooperation.

In this context, the Global Forum on Migration and Development emerges as a unique and inclusive platform bringing together countries from different geographies to discuss various aspects of migration and development.

You represent the international community here today and you will be the pioneers shaping the way in which the international community responds to migration. That the 8. Forum is the first international gathering after the adoption of the sustainable development agenda adds to the importance of this meeting.

Distinguished Guests,

Migration or, in simpler terms, mobility is in the nature of human beings. People move to live, think, earn and learn. Ontologically, these words with their

positive connotations point progress in life and are indispensable. Migration is an unavoidable path that mankind embarks upon despite great challenges when they feel restricted in one place or when that place falls short of meeting their needs or potential.

People migrate to flee death and oppression, to be able to think and live freely or to earn or learn more. An important element of globalization and development is, no doubt, the ability of people to move more rapidly and easier. If the mobility of people, i.e. of labor, falls behind the mobility of goods and capital, this will have an adverse impact on global growth. Therefore, migration and development are two inseparable phenomena that constantly interact with each other.

If migration is managed properly it can contribute to sustainable development. However, if not managed properly, it can get out of control and may lead to adverse developments. We must make sure that people live in prosperity and stability in their homeland in order to prevent an uncontrollable situation in migration.

Migrants make significant contributions to the development of the host countries. Countries are able to acquire new capabilities that they lack through the contributions made by people coming from other countries. For example, many of our citizens who migrated from Turkey to Germany in the 1960s made significant contributions to the development of Germany. As an academician, I can say that the same is true for Turkey because the Jewish scientists and academicians who fled Hitler's oppression in the 1940s and migrated to Turkey made significant contributions to science in Turkey and we remember them with great respect. Those who migrate from one country to another and reinforce the ties and friendships between countries make significant contributions to the common heritage of mankind.

Distinguished Guests,

We all know the strong link between development and peace and security. I always say that four major earthquakes took place on a global scale after the Cold War. The first one was the geopolitical earthquake after the fall of the Soviet Union. As a result, major changes occurred in the Balkans, Caucasus, the Middle East and the Black Sea leading to greater mobility in conflict areas. In this context, I would like to remind you of the major flow of refugees to Turkey during the Bosnian and Kosovo crises. The most recent crisis in Ukraine stands before us as an aftershock of that geopolitical shift. Migration from the Caucasus and the Balkans to Anatolia was a major issue on our agenda in the 1990s as a consequence of this earthquake.

The second earthquake was the one on security that occurred with the 9/11 attacks in 2001. This earthquake put terrorism on the map for the international community and led to greater concern in societies. As a result, stricter visa regimes had a negative impact on the mobility of people. On the other hand, the threat of terrorism has, since then, been an important reason for migration.

The third earthquake was the 2008 financial crisis. We observed large scale migration after this financial crisis because of unemployment and masses moved from one country to another to find work. This shows that economic and political upheavals lead to waves of migration.

The fourth earthquake is the one we live in today; this is the political and security earthquake in Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East. Unfortunately, this earthquake is taking place before the eyes of the international community every day and is a source for perhaps one of the biggest waves of migration in the last century. It would not be wrong to say that there is a deep humanitarian earthquake affecting Europe now.

The crisis regarding the asylum-seekers came about when the earthquake in politics and security coincided with the earthquake in finance and geopolitics. In fact, we have been facing, living and trying to resolve this crisis for more than 4 years.

In this context, we might say that the asylum-seekers crisis is a fifth earthquake that emerged from the combination of these four fault lines. It was for this reason that Turkey ensured the inclusion of an item on the agenda of the 70th United Nations General Assembly last September about “the global awareness of the tragedies of irregular migrants in the Mediterranean basin with a specific emphasis on Syrian asylum-seekers”.

In addition, our country will continue to discuss these issues in 2016 at the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul. I would like to invite you all to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in May. At that summit, we shall have extensive debate about these issues from a humanitarian perspective.

As the international system failed to find solutions to the political and security issues in Syria, Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan, these crises led to the internal displacement of people and caused people to migrate from these countries to seek asylum elsewhere. The international community suffered a humanitarian shock with the images of 3-year-old Aylan Kürdi’s lifeless body. I ask you all to remember the image of the body of that 3-year-old boy. I would

like to underline that the best way to resolve a situation where migration has become a necessity is to work together to find international solutions in order to ensure that people are happy in their home country.

The time has come to jointly come up with solutions based on common humanitarian values to resolve these tragedies rather than to turn a blind eye to them. This is not a matter for a single country or a group of countries, but a matter for all mankind. The only way to find solutions is to work together as mankind.

I stressed this point in my address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York about 10 days ago. Two weeks earlier, I had made a promise to the representatives of the large masses waiting in Edirne to cross into Europe that I would express their thoughts to the rest of the world. I fulfilled that promise at the United Nations General Assembly before the leaders of the world and I repeat it here today. The representatives of the thousands of Syrians who began to march towards Europe for humanitarian reasons told me; “Prime Minister, do not for a moment think that we are protesting against Turkey. We would like our voices to be heard around the world. We are grateful to Turkey.” One of them told me that his wife had given birth in Istanbul two weeks ago and that he had gone to a private hospital, but that he was worried because he had no money. He told me that they were met at the hospital, had the baby and that when they were leaving, he was worried about payment. Instead, he found that a taxi was already arranged for them. The hospital told him that he was their guest and that they were not going to charge him any money. They wished him all the best for the baby and sent them home in a taxi they had arranged for. He was very grateful to Turkey.

Distinguished Participants,

I am proud to stand before you today as the Prime Minister of a country that welcomed 2 million refugees without a single act of racism or extremism. Our people opened their hearts and shared their food with them. As we meet here today in very comfortable circumstances, we should not forget that hundreds of thousands of Syrian refugees reside in camps in Turkey and in other neighboring countries under very difficult circumstances. Currently, the population of Syrians refugees is 54% in one of our cities called Kilis and has exceeded the local population.

This is now our common issue. We must see Aylan Kürdi’s eyes when we look at our own children. When we look at our grandchildren, we must see the hundreds of thousands of babies born in Turkey and in various camps. Yes, as I stated before, 66.000 babies were born in camps in Turkey. These are

66.000 babies who do not know their own country, city or street. Believe me when I say that they are no different to me than my grandchild born at around the same time. We do the same for the future of the Syrian babies as we do for our own.

Our call to humanity is the following: Let us see the light in the eyes of the refugees despite the fear in their hearts and let that light illuminate our path in trying to help them with their future. Let us not break their hearts with racist demonstrations or by excluding them from our discourse or through radical attitudes. They, too, would have preferred living in peace in their own homes. It was not on their own initiative that they had to leave their homes. They had to leave because of the barrel bombs and chemical weapons of a cruel regime. They had to leave because of the savage massacres perpetrated by a barbarian terrorist organization. Our collective responsibility is to make sure that the light in their eyes remains lit and a new understanding of humanity emerges from this tragedy.

Distinguished Participants,

The crisis in Syria has become the most significant and largest humanitarian tragedy in the world since the Second World War. Due to this crisis, 12 million men, women and children who make up half of the population of Syria have been displaced. More than 4 million became asylum-seekers in neighboring countries while the remaining 7.6 million Syrians are internally displaced. I bring this to your attention because if no measures are taken, they will come to our borders as refugees. If we do not wish to be confronted with a much larger wave of refugees, we must find a way to stop the oppression in Syria.

Turkey has been implementing an open door policy without making any discrimination whatsoever based on religion or ethnic origin since the beginning of the crisis in Syria and is hosting close to 2.5 million people from Syria and Iraq, 2.2 million of whom are from Syria. According to the figures of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Turkey is the country hosting the highest number of refugees in the world. I would like to take this opportunity to thank my dear friend the High Commissioner for Refugees Mr. Guterres for his contributions. His humanitarian response to the refugees when we went together to visit the camps in Turkey was another indication of the significant contributions he has made for the refugees in his capacity as High Commissioner.

Turkey strictly adhered to the principle of non-refoulement and protected humanitarian law in this way. I would like to share with you some striking

numbers. All food and non-food needs of the 260.000 Syrians in camps are met by Turkey. We provide our Syrian guests health and education services, psychological support, vocational training and opportunities for social activities. In addition, close to 2 million Syrians who live outside the camps benefit from temporary protection and free of charge health services. A total of 280.000 surgical operations were performed for the Syrians in our country; in other words, 280.000 operations were performed without asking for any fees. The total number of medical examinations is 9 million. You can imagine the magnitude of these figures when converted into monetary terms in a national budget. The number of Syrian babies born since the beginning of the crisis is, as I mentioned before, 66.000. May Allah grant them a good life. These babies should know that Turkey, the country where they were born, is a free and democratic country that will keep them safe and not leave them at the mercy of oppressors, a fact proven by our track record spanning many centuries.

The number of school age Syrian children in our country is 600.000. 230.000 of them continue with their education. The amount spent for the Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey has almost reached 8 billion dollars. However, total support from the international community has been only around 417 million dollars making up less than 5% of the total.

Turkey's efforts in the last 4 years for the Syrian and Iraqi asylum-seekers constitute an example for the rest of the globe. Please do not forget that we host the Syrians in our country on your behalf, on behalf of the international community. I would like to reiterate that we expect the international community to show necessary solidarity and act with greater sensitivity with respect to burden-sharing.

We all know that geographical proximity does not mean responsibility for the asylum-seekers. In this sense, geographical proximity cannot be considered as burden. The responsibility for the refugees stems not from geographical proximity, but from a conscientious responsibility and humanitarian values which are a manifestation of our collective conscience. Therefore, the European Union countries who are affected by the flow of migrants and the international community as a whole must implement more comprehensive and coherent strategies beyond financial assistance to the Syrians and other asylum-seekers.

It is absolutely necessary to establish a safe zone in Syria in order to prevent new waves of migration. In addition, the tragedy of the Syrians who try to cross the sea to go to Europe is further aggravated with the deaths at sea. Since the beginning of 2015, our coast guard saved about 65.000 migrants at sea and this figure is higher than the total of the last 5 years. The monthly cost of the

Coast Guard Command is 5 million Euros. Furthermore, we must also consider increased terrorist activity and other side effects of the crisis.

We put all this before the international community, but unfortunately, our warnings fell on deaf ears. We proposed the establishment of a safe zone in Syria for the people who had to flee the Assad regime and the massacres of DEASH. If the safe zone had been established 3 years ago, millions of Syrians would not have left Syria. If a zone protected against DEASH and the air campaigns of the Syrian regime had been established last year, we would have been discussing this situation in a very different way today.

We have called on the international community to take necessary action in this regard and we shall continue to appeal to and warn the international community. The responsible members of the international community must show every effort to alleviate the human tragedy suffered by the asylum-seekers and fulfill their humanitarian responsibility at such a critical time.

On the other hand, some countries discuss the issue of asylum-seekers only in the context of their sovereignty. However, in this day and age, cooperation is the only way by which we can practice sovereignty on humanitarian issues. Citing one's borders and sovereignty as a reason to refuse entry to refugees cannot be the right approach in terms of humanitarian or international law. We cannot deal with humanitarian crises by building walls or by fanning the flames of fear. To divide up continents, societies, seas and regions by saying, for example, that this or that continent solely belongs to Christians or Muslims is a crime against humanity. As Europeans, we must respond to the recently rising racist tendencies and exclusionary approaches in Europe with a culture of tolerance.

Those who win in such crises are the human traffickers, smugglers and dictators while those who lose are the oppressed, the weak, the defenseless and children. Distinguished representatives of the international community such as Mr. Guterres have stated on every occasion that this is a refugee crisis and that the asylum-seekers coming from areas of conflict cannot be treated as economic migrants.

I would like to once again call the international community to action from the beautiful city of Istanbul that has a rich heritage due to migration to prevent a repetition of the tragedies which deeply affected all of us in the coming cold winter months when conditions will deteriorate.

It is the international community that needs to find solutions to global challenges such as climate change, natural disasters, fighting international crime,

cyber security and pandemics. The Syrian crisis is at the center of these series of problems.

Distinguished Participants,

I believe that the 8th Global Forum on Migration and Development is a great opportunity to discuss migration and its relationship to development at a time when migration occupies a prominent place on the international agenda.

In this framework, it is very timely and appropriate that current issues on our migration and development agenda will be actively discussed for three days in Istanbul with the participation of the representatives from international organizations, civil society and the private sector.

I also would like to take this opportunity to wish you success in your deliberations in the meetings to be held at the summit and once again express my gratitude to those who worked hard to organize this event.

Here, you represent the conscience of mankind and our future, but most importantly, you respond to the voice of the Syrian refugees and refugees around the world who seek compassion from you and the international community.

I would like to once again thank you for being in Turkey and in Istanbul on the occasion of such a morally important meeting serving a sacred cause and welcome you all. I hope that your work will shed light to the global community and I wish you success.

I greet you all with respect.