

Introductory remarks by Ms Esen Altuğ

GMG Briefing on “The Global Migration Group: Work, Priorities and Future Directions” 24 November 2014

Good afternoon to all of you, dear colleagues and partners in migration and development area.

It is a pleasure for me to deliver some opening remarks on behalf of the Turkish Chair of the Global Forum on Migration and Development for 2014-2015. Turkey will continue to chair the Global Forum for a period of 18 months, until the end of 2015.

We congratulate and are very grateful to the International Labour Organization, current Chair of the Global Migration Group, for taking this initiative to conduct an interactive briefing for governments on the work, priorities and future directions of the GMG.

Since the inception of the GFMD, the GMG has been a partner – collectively or through the individual efforts of its member agencies -- in providing expert support in the preparation of GFMD meetings. All GFMD meetings have benefitted from the papers and comments submitted by a number of GMG agencies.

In recent years, GMG member agencies have also lent support to the organization of GFMD thematic meetings and contributed to the meetings of the civil society, which were organized in conjunction with the government meeting.

The GMG chaired by the ILO has responded actively to the UN Secretary General’s call for greater collaboration and cooperation between the GFMD and the GMG. A number of activities have been realized by the GMG since the start of 2013, wherein the Turkish GFMD Chair was privileged to have co-organized or lent support in one way or another.

Last July, the GFMD and the GMG co-convened a side event on “Fair Migration and the Post-2015 UN Sustainable Development agenda.” The GMG Chair also supported the official launch of the Turkish Chairmanship of the GFMD last September at the margins of the UNGA 2014. Another event participated by the Turkish Chair was the High-level Discussion on “Realizing the Transformative Potential of Migration and Empowering Migrants” in New York on 20 October.

As the current GFMD Chair and a country which has a long history as a crossroads of international migration, Turkey is ready to share its experience in migration management in the new era of mobility. Its experience as a country of migrant origin is deep, with millions of its citizens living in Western Europe and contributing both to Turkey and to the development of their countries of residence. It is also, increasingly, a destination country for migrants of all types. Turkey provides temporary protection to more than 1.6 million Syrians.

Allow me to state at this point our expectations as a representative of the GFMD Chair.

As you all know, the GFMD 2014-2015 will be organized under the overarching theme, *“Strengthening Partnerships: Human Mobility for Sustainable Development.”*

This theme signals recognition that international migration cannot be managed effectively by any one country alone, or by states without the cooperation of other stakeholders—including international organizations, civil society, the private sector and migrants themselves. So we want to emphasize our partnership with key stakeholders, especially with the GMG.

Last October 21 and 22, the Turkish Chair convened the first preparatory meetings of the Global Forum in Geneva. I am proud to share that during these meetings, Turkey received a resounding support and very encouraging feedback concerning our proposed overarching theme and Roundtable session themes. We circulated a second draft of our concept note last week, copies made available in the room today. We hope that the positive comments we received from the GFMD Steering Group this morning will be echoed when we consult with the larger Friends of the Forum this afternoon.

I would like to inform you that the first GFMD thematic meeting on “Updating GFMD position on post-2015 Development Agenda” will be held on 5th February 2015.

Dear colleagues,

The UNHLD 2013 Declaration calls on both the GFMD and the GMG, within our respective mandates, to strengthen collaboration and cooperation to better and fully address the issue of international migration and development, in order to adopt a coherent, comprehensive and coordinated approach. The GFMD has a distinct advantage of not being bound by structures and formal procedures such as while being outside of the UN but closely linked to it through the office of the SRSG and the GMG.

Our common efforts have born fruits not only for the GFMD and the GMG processes, but more importantly, for many migrants in the world. We aim to make migrants as a driving force for development.

But international migration continues to pose challenges across the globe, even in the most developed societies. This is why we need to keep the momentum generated by the GFMD and the GMG in promoting dialogue, action and cooperation on migration and development issues to the interest of the world’s migrants.

Thank you very much for your attention.