

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



STATEMENT
BY
TURKEY

**HIGH-LEVEL MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY ON
THE APPRAISAL OF UN GLOBAL PLAN OF ACTION TO COMBAT
TRAFFICKING IN PERSONS
GENERAL DEBATE**

27 SEPTEMBER 2017, NEW YORK

Mr. President of the General Assembly,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Mr. Under Secretary General,
Madame Special Rapporteur,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the outset, we would like to thank the President of the General Assembly for organizing this meeting and Mr. Secretary-General and the distinguished briefers for their powerful statements. We believe that our deliberations here today will further strengthen our collective efforts to eradicate this heinous crime.

Indeed, human trafficking constitutes a clear violation of human rights. It is a serious offence to dignity and integrity of persons. It is rightly described as modern day slavery. This transnational organized crime bears immense costs on social and economic fabric of our societies.

It is a global problem and requires comprehensive responses. Although it is countered by sophisticated measures, efforts to prevent trafficking and protect trafficked persons remain a challenge. Therefore, we should address four pillars, namely prevention, prosecution, protection and partnerships. In order to be relevant, trusted and responsive, we have to develop inclusive, human rights based and human centered approaches, including legislative and criminal measures. Our efforts should also aim at taking all the measures in our countries in line with the UN Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol on combating trafficking in human beings.

While doing this, we should not lose sight that human trafficking cannot be prevented by governments acting individually. We should re-calibrate and coordinate our ongoing efforts. We have the necessary international instruments in force. Moreover, the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants clearly mandates us to do so. Besides, you will all recall that we have pledged to take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking in the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, Goal 8.7.

In this vein, we would like to reiterate our commitment regarding the full implementation of the UN Global Plan of Action to Combat Trafficking in Persons. We believe that it is a solid ground for us to reinforce legal obligations and a comprehensive guideline to our actions. It is also instrumental in promoting coordinated and consistent responses at the national, regional and international levels to counter human trafficking.

Distinguished Colleagues,

We all know that due to the inability of the existing international humanitarian system to respond properly to the needs of the people affected by catastrophes and emergencies, criminal networks find fertile ground to exploit the vulnerabilities of migrants by smuggling and trafficking them. We unfortunately witness how human trafficking has become a very profitable business for terrorist organizations, such as DAESH, PYD/YPG and PKK. For example, human trafficking activities of PKK terrorist organization was underlined in the US 2017 Human Trafficking Report. As the biggest refugee hosting country in the world, with over 3.1 million Syrians, Turkey is resolved to undertake necessary measures to prevent human trafficking, forced labour and slavery of those who had already fled the horrors of conflicts.

On the other hand, given the complex nature of human trafficking, in combating this organized crime we need a “whole of society” approach. It is imperative that private sector and civil society also join countries’ endeavours. With this understanding, we successfully ensured a seat for the private sector during our Chairmanship of the GFMD in 2014-2015.

In this vein, we also would like stress the fact that with a view to effectively combating human trafficking, legal pathways for migrants seeking a decent life must be strengthened. We should exert every effort to provide necessary conditions for tearing down the barriers standing in front of safe, regular and orderly migration. Let me once again underline that Turkey supports the work towards two Global Compacts on migration and for refugees. We are actively taking part in these processes since their inception. We are confident that under able leaderships of SRSG Madame Arbour and High Commissioner Mr. Grandi, we will achieve a lot.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey remains strongly committed to eradicating human trafficking by implementing a progressive approach. With this understanding, we introduced administrative and legal measures in combating this phenomenon through prevention, protection, prosecution and cooperation. Our efforts are focused on enhancing our legislation and improving the implementation of our obligations. In this regard, with the enforcement of the Law on Foreigners and International Protection” “The National Task Force on Fight against Human Trafficking” is replaced with “Coordination Commission Against Human Trafficking”. The Commission decided to develop and put into practice an updated “National Action Plan on Fight against Human Trafficking” in the coming period. Furthermore, initiatives such as multilingual, toll-free 157 Helpline, Victim Support Programme, as well as Voluntary and Safe Return Programme were put into practice.

We are party to the relevant international and regional instruments, including Palermo Convention and its supplementing Protocols and Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. We actively participate in the work of OSCE, Council of Europe and other regional platforms. As the Chair of the Budapest Process, we take up this issue in our work as well.

All of the challenges we face will take time to be resolved and it will require collaborative but decisive action to advance in our efforts. We need to recognize the different needs of our countries while also ensuring mutual benefits and joint success.

Thank you.