

SPEECH

BY

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Distinguished participants,

It is without any question that internal displacement is one of the great human tragedies of our time. Resources on the issue highlight that currently in 52 countries internal displacement is affecting more than twenty-five million people. It is a tragedy since people without having their consent, preparation, both physically and psychologically, and willingness are forced to move from their own settlements for an unknown but mostly unpleasant future.

Turkey is one of the countries where internal displacement took place due to both nature and man-made disasters, but mainly particularly due to the latter. Huge number of people had to leave their places and either moved to big metropolitan cities or the urban centers of the provinces that they were living. Not only the citizens but also the public organizations particularly in places where internal displacement is intense were not prepared for this. This fact is worth to emphasis since it can help us to elaborate the phases of the national response for internal displacement in the country.

Roughly, the national internal displacement policy responses can be elaborated in three categories: *the first phase*, which is distinguished with spontaneous responses of the local branches of the national government not well structured or holistic but with the idea of responding the needs of the internally displaced citizens in the scope of possible means; *the second phase*, where structured policy lines are developed and put into effect, i.e. Return to the Village

and Rehabilitation Project; and **third phase**, when national framework policy documents are prepared and ideas in these documents are put into implementation, i.e. the Strategy Document dated 2005 and the Law 5233 known as the Compensation Law.

For a better understanding of the evolution of these policy responses in the context of Turkey, I would like to highlight some milestones in the light of UN Guiding Principles.

- The Strategy Document of the Government of Turkey can be regarded as an adequate policy paper that recognizes and calls for the importance of protection of the internally displaced citizens as well as importance of voluntarism of these citizens whatever the preference they have. Though the Return to the Village and Rehabilitation Project has implications on the need for urban reintegration, its practice is mostly return to the village. Diagnose this feature, the Strategy Document highlights the importance of reintegration to the urban areas and required rehabilitation for living in the urban areas. It also encourages civil society organizations participation to policymaking and implementation.
- Another milestone is Law no 5233 known as the Compensation Law which aims to meet the losses of the citizens affected from internal displacement. The Government of Turkey adopts a dynamic approach in the implementation of the Compensation Law and through systematic assessments endeavor to minimize any of the complaints coming from the internally displaced citizens or the attorneys representing them.
- The third milestone is the Van Province Action Plan for the IDPs Service Delivery Model that was developed through multi-stakeholder consultation processes, that is by having the voices of different stakeholders, including the internally displaced citizens. The comprehensive and holistic approach is the innovative aspect of the Van Action Plan. Therefore, it provided an important and

adequate instrument to the issue of internal displacement in Turkey with a view to find durable solutions and create social cohesion. Furthermore, it focuses on the principle that IDPs can freely make their choices between return to their places of origin, local integration where they presently live, or resettlement to another part of the country, that is also one of the major points indicated in the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement. In that respect, the Plan accepts and cooperates with the IDPs as active citizens, rather than only passive beneficiaries. The Government of Turkey, in cooperation with the international community –in the case of Turkey this is UNDP- is working on the scale up of this bottom policymaking processes in the remaining thirteen provinces where the Return to the Village and Rehabilitation Project is implementing. The National Action Plan will be a policy document with its accompanying legislative framework to ensure its implementation without any delay.

Distinguished participants,

Today we are here for the 10th Anniversary of the UN Guiding Principles. These Principles are important by their emphasis on the need for the evolution of the policy responses according to the stages of internal displacement. These Principles are crucial to remind that under any circumstances the service delivery and policy response should be in line with the humanitarian law. It is a very good coincidence that 10th Anniversary of the Guiding Principles is in the 60th Anniversary of the Universal Human Rights Declaration. As I tried to emphasize at the beginning, internal displacement is a human tragedy that not only forces the citizens but also the service providers due to their unpreparation, capacity related problems and similar. These Principles should be regarded as the key reference to shape the responses of the countries to this unpleasant and unprepared phenomenon that each country can face. It is important to work in close cooperation with the Office of the Special Representative on the Human Rights of IDPs to reflect the points rose in the Principles. As a last point, I would like to congratulate to all those working for the development and full-fledged

implementation of the Principles for those who will never know their names or aware of their endeavors. I really hope that by common sense, durable solutions will be found for the internally displaced people.

With my sincerest regards.