

**Regional Forum on  
INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN THE AREA OF MIGRATION AND EMERGENCY  
PREPAREDNESS  
Ashgabat, Turkmenistan**

**Welcome remarks  
Ms. Renate Held  
Regional Director  
International Organization for Migration (IOM)  
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Your Excellency, Mr. HAJIEV, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan

Your Excellency, Mr. BAYRAMON, Head of State Migration Services of Turkmenistan

Your Excellences, distinguished delegates,

IOM is honored to be a co-organizer of this important regional event with our generous host, the Government of Turkmenistan and is pleased with the high level participation from the countries of Central Asia and Afghanistan.

I would like to congratulate the Government of Turkmenistan and its people on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the status of neutrality, which was recognized by the UN member-states through the UN General Assembly Resolution 50/80 of the 12<sup>th</sup> of December 1995 and, as a great achievement, the adoption of the UN General Assembly Resolution on “Permanent neutrality of Turkmenistan” dated 3 June 2015.

Turkmenistan has become a full-fledged member of the IOM in November 2013, although the history of IOM’s cooperation with Turkmenistan dates back to 1997.

Throughout the years, IOM supported the Government of Turkmenistan by means of development programs as well as services to migrants and people in need of international assistance, bringing expertise to the country and providing hands-on support; creating an avenue for the country to contribute to the regional and international efforts in addressing the issues of migration.

IOM works closely with all the countries of the region, which are here with us today, and provides support through its country offices, through its IOM sub-regional office for Central Asia in Astana, as well as through its Regional Office in Vienna, Austria.

The current event, today, on “International cooperation in the area of migration and emergency preparedness” is the second regional event organized by IOM within the project “Addressing mixed migration flows through capacity building in Central Asia” in support of the “Almaty Process” funded by the US government. The Almaty Process is already almost four (4) years old and currently the Government of Kazakhstan holds the Chairmanship.

All the countries in the region share the vision that peace and stability is of great importance to the security and prosperity of not only Eurasia, but also for the entire international community. IOM understands the growing concerns in the region such as radicalization and extremism, drugs and arms trafficking, trafficking in persons, the use of water and energy

resources, and the prevalence of natural disasters and environmental degradation. IOM also concurs with the view that effective durable solutions have to be found to address such problems as a means to promote peace, stability and economic growth.

Given the fact that this is a natural disasters prone region, also with political challenges, **the migration-related aspects of natural disasters or other crises need be addressed.** This includes supporting the governments and communities in dealing with causes and consequences of possible mass internal or cross-border flows of people triggered by a crisis. It also means assisting international migrants caught in a crisis, assisting displaced populations and the affected communities in urban areas, and taking into account the risks of human trafficking among crisis-affected populations. What would also need to be considered is how best to tackle the emerging issue of environmental migration.

IOM has experience in dealing with all these and other migration-related consequences of crises around the globe. However, in the midst of a complex migration crisis, many of these problems and complex ramifications which require systematic and consistent institutional response can easily be overlooked to the detriment of the individuals, communities as well the society in general.

IOM has been working on improving the planning and preparation in order for all aspects of an emergency situation to be identified and addressed in the midst of a crisis situation. The outcome of this work we would like to share with all of you.

Based on its rich operational experience and recognizing the need for a complex view of human mobility in the crisis context, IOM has developed a *Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF)*.

This tool allows a better understanding of complex mobility patterns related to crises, increases the level of preparedness, and enables a more effective operational response to crises.

The MCOF is based on the following fundamentals:

- **Firstly, the MCOF combines IOM humanitarian activities and migration management services.** Migration management activities are not traditionally part of humanitarian responses, but can help tackle migration aspects of a crisis more effectively
- **Secondly, the MCOF is based on international humanitarian and human rights law and humanitarian principles.** Through the MCOF, IOM supports states – as needed - to fulfil their responsibilities, at the request of member states.
- **Thirdly, the MCOF complements existing international systems;** specifically, it is designed to fit with the Cluster Approach of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee and the international refugee protection regime. It also identifies opportunities and challenges related to migration in preparedness and resilience-building, peace-building, security sector reform, and in transition from post-crisis recovery to longer-term development

In November 2012, all IOM Member States, including those present here today, approved this framework by consensus, as an instrument to prepare and more effectively address the mobility aspects of potential crisis situations.

The MCOF was implemented in practice in several crises, for example in Haiti, in Libya, in the Horn of Africa, in Pakistan, and most recently in Nepal. The Migration Crisis Operational Framework is a tool to bring IOM's expertise into a stronger partnership with you, to ensure we are collectively able to assess and build better capacity to manage migration during crisis. IOM, together with the Member States who have endorsed the MCOF, utilize this tool to assist in planning for and responding to migration crises. The MCOF allows states to improve and systematize the way in which they respond to the assistance and protection needs of crisis-affected populations.

This brings me to the next key point, the need to ensure adequate protection of the human rights of all migrants – also within the complexities and turmoil of crisis situations. Our collective responsibility requires paying particular attention to those made vulnerable by a myriad of circumstances and conditions. Trafficked persons, unaccompanied minors, refugees, asylum seekers, stateless persons or returning migrants require our assistance to ensure that their needs are properly identified and that they are provided with appropriate support and protection during any crisis or emergency situation. The MCOF is instrumental in this.

Last but not least, I would like to mention something related to IOM's efforts in establishing the MCOF: the upcoming World Humanitarian Summit, which will be held in May 2016 in Istanbul. The WHS aims to set the agenda for a more inclusive and diverse humanitarian system by bringing all key stakeholders together to share best practices and find innovative ways to make humanitarian action more effective.

IOM is committed to supporting the World Humanitarian Summit with the objective of contributing to a more effective and efficient humanitarian system, and has been involved in various preparatory events and thematic consultations around the globe. IOM has formulated five main policy objectives/recommendations for the Summit:

- 1. Firstly, the protection of the human rights of all migrants,**
- 2. Secondly, ensuring all migrants in a situation of vulnerability have access to humanitarian assistance**
- 3. Thirdly, expanding partnerships within the humanitarian response to include affected populations, national civil society and the private sector,**
- 4. Objective four is to increase focus on disaster risk reduction for resilience, and finally,**
- 5. Point five the promotion of coherence between humanitarian action and development planning.**

Close regional cooperation and collaboration on migration matters in general, and on complex issues such as the MCOF, WHS... is beneficial and, in fact, essential for achieving results. This is what our gathering is about today. I am confident that significant progress can be made and that the results of the deliberations can feed into more global deliberations on migration management – be it in crises or not.

We look forward working with all the states in the region to advance regional dialogue and cooperation on migration issues.

Thank you.