

DELEGATION OF TURKEY

4 October 2006

**HUMAN DIMENSION IMPLEMENTATION MEETING
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Working Session 5: Humanitarian Issues and Other Commitments

WRITTEN CONTRIBUTION

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs) IN TURKEY

- The root cause of internal displacement in Turkey has been the scourge of terrorism, from which Turkey suffered for two decades.
- The Turkish Government attaches great importance to the successful return of her displaced citizens on a voluntary basis. In this regard, the "Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project" (RVRP) has been launched in 1994. As of July 2006, in the framework of the RVRP, around 137,000 people, constituting more than one third of the total amount of displaced persons, have returned to their villages.
- It is a truism that internal displacement in Turkey shows different and more complex characteristics when compared to other countries or regions of the world. It is difficult to distinguish between internal displacement due to various reasons and migration due solely to socio-economic reasons. All these factors combine to make an accurate estimate of the number of Turkey's internally displaced somewhat difficult.
- Turkey's sole priority is not to come up with a figure of IDPs, but rather to correctly identify them and devise policies to remedy the problems of these people. Furthermore, we believe that a holistic approach should be taken towards the issue. Therefore, whether the IDPs wish to return to their original areas or settlement or to remain in their current locations, all their social, economic and cultural needs should be comprehensively addressed.
- In this regard, the Institute of Population Studies (IPS) of Hacettepe University has completed its survey entitled "Migration and Internally Displaced Population Study in Turkey (MIDPST)". This survey aims not only to identify the IDPs and their needs, but also to shed light on the possible measures to be taken to alleviate their situation. The conduct of MIDPST continues under full transparency and cooperation with

international organizations and the results are expected to be announced soon.

- Following arduous efforts by an inter-agency commission made up of representatives of all the stakeholders in Turkey, a document entitled "Measures on the Issue of Internally Displaced Persons and the Return to Village and Rehabilitation Project in Turkey" has been finalized in September 2005. It is worth mentioning that the UN Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement provide the basis for this document. According to the document, endorsed by the Turkish Cabinet, a new unit within the Ministry of Interior is entrusted with the task of implementing and coordinating the integrated Turkish strategy towards the IDPs.
- The Turkish Government is determined to ensure the effective implementation of the "Law on the Compensation of Losses Resulting from Terrorist Acts and the Measures Taken Against Terrorism" which entered into force on 27 July 2004. To this end, "Damage Assessment Commissions" are working hard to process the compensation claims. So far, around 179 thousand applications have been received, 16 thousand of which have been processed.
- ECtHR's judgment on 17 January 2006, on the "Aydın İçyer Case" declaring his application inadmissible, clearly confirmed the efficiency and operability of the Turkish domestic legal procedures. This judgment of the ECtHR applies to all similar cases pending before the court. Furthermore, we gladly observed that, during his visit to Turkey on 16-23 February 2006, Mr. Martin Scheinin, UN Human Rights Commission's special rapporteur on human rights and counter terrorism praised the efficiency of this Law.
- The Turkish Government is resolved to effectively address the issue of IDPs in Turkey in a spirit of cooperation with international organizations and NGOs, with transparency and goodwill. In this regard, parallel to MIDPST, a project entitled "Support to the Development of an IDP Programme in Turkey" is being undertaken in cooperation with the UNDP Office in Turkey.
- Moreover, as an indication of Turkey's commitment to international cooperation, Prof. Walter Kälin, Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on the Human Rights of IDPs, has visited Turkey twice in less than a year, in May 2005 and February 2006. With these two visits, he had the chance to meet the representatives of the relevant public institutions, a wide range of Turkish NGOs, as well as Governors and Deputy Governors of the East and Southeast regions.
- During and after these visits, Prof. Kälin announced that he was pleased about the steps that are being taken as well as the overall approach of our government vis-à-vis the IDPs. He further reiterated his satisfaction for the open-minded efforts of the Turkish Government leading to concrete results.