MR. CHAIRMAN,
MR SECRETARY-GENERAL,
DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS OF DELEGATIONS,
DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS,

It is a pleasure for me to address this high level meeting on “unsafe mixed migration by sea”. On behalf of the Turkish delegation, I would like to thank the Secretary General of IMO for hosting this important event.

International migration continues to pose challenges across the globe, even in the most developed societies. According to the UN, in 2014 we had the largest number of people displaced by conflict in the world since the Second World War - for the first time, more than 50 million people. This is why we need to keep the momentum to promote dialogue, action and cooperation on migration issues to the interest of international community and the migrants themselves.

Due to the situation in Syria and Iraq, Turkey has encountered huge flow of people seeking refuge and is now hosting the biggest number of Syrians.

Today, Turkey provides shelter for nearly 2 million Syrians and Iraqis. All their needs, including food, non-food items, health and education services as well as psychological assistance and vocational training are provided by the Turkish Government. The financial burden on Turkey is currently more than 5 billion US Dollars, whereas the international contribution so far stands at 300 million US Dollars. This is not sustainable.

In spite of all these difficulties and challenges, Turkey has recently undertaken significant steps that allow for better migration management. We have set-up a new legal and institutional framework that provides us with the necessary policy tools.

Nevertheless, the movement of migrants by dangerous, even fatal means across the Mediterranean Sea towards Europe continues to cost many human lives.

Mitigating these flows is a joint responsibility of all countries along these routes.

In this respect, Turkish Maritime Authority has been exerting every effort in order to eliminate illegal migration cases by increasing the number of port and flag state controls as well as intensifying its inspections with regards to compliance of the ports to ISPS code.

The Turkish Coast Guard has increased the coast guard units in risky areas to monitor more closely all commercial ships in the region with automatic identification system (AIS).

On the other hand, Turkey continues to spend efforts on making migrants as a driving force for development.
With this understanding, Turkey has assumed the Chairmanship of Global Forum for Migration and Development which was established following the UN General Assembly first High Level Dialogue on International Migration and Development in 2006. Turkey has decided to take on this challenging task not only because of its increasing significance in the area of migration, but also because of our commitment to humanitarian issues.

Furthermore, we shall have the opportunity to reflect the results of GFMD deliberations into other global agenda setting meetings, as Turkey will host the first World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 where the topic of migration will be addressed as a cross-cutting issue.

We would like to reiterate once more that Turkey will continue its determined fight against migrant smuggling and ready to cooperate with all relevant parties to this end.

Now I will leave it to my colleague to present the tremendous efforts of Turkish authorities on this issue.

This meeting will hopefully contribute to increasing awareness with regard to the situation of irregular migrants and threats and challenges we commonly face. We further hope that such gatherings will foster international burden sharing, solidarity and cooperation.

Thank you for your attention.