

## The Republic of Turkey

### Positions for the UN Human Settlements Programme Governing Council (UN-Habitat)

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#### **I. Addressing the Economic Challenges from Rapid Rural to Urban Migration**

The Republic of Turkey believes that it is essential to solve the economic challenges facing Member States undergoing rapid urban migration. We believe that in order to effectively address this issue it is important to first understand the phenomenon of global migration which is causing many Member States to face challenges associated with rural to urban migration. Global migrants currently comprise around one-seventh of the world's population.<sup>1</sup> The Republic of Turkey is very aware of the recent mass influx of international migrants as since 2013 we have become home to more refugees and immigrants than any other Member State. This includes millions from Syria and Iraq, the number of which peaked at 3.5 million people at the end of 2017.<sup>2</sup> Global, as well as internal, migration from more rural areas to urbanized cities has led to the population of urban cities expanding faster than Member States, ability to update their infrastructure, which is leading to stress on their resources as well as their economies.

Turkey is especially well-positioned to help find a solution to this problem as we have been a world leader in regards to showing how to successfully transition citizens, as well as migrants, into a predominantly urban society while mitigating economic stressors. As of 2016, the percentage of Turkey's total population residing in cities and district centers increased to 92.1 percent from 91.8 the previous year, with President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan encouraging more population growth.<sup>3</sup> Fewer than 8 percent of Syrian refugees (about 235,000) live in camps, while the rest are scattered across the country, mostly in urban centers, living side-by-side with the local population, as well. Istanbul, home to more than 522,000 registered Syrian refugees, has the largest number of refugees out of the other 80 Turkish provinces.<sup>4</sup> Turkey has been able to accomplish this while also keeping the national poverty rate under 10%.<sup>5</sup> Turkey's economy has slowly been on the rise since the turn of the century as we have urbanized most of our major cities and towns by prioritizing industrialization. In Turkey a large portion of the responsibility for dealing with migration and migration-related challenges has been left to each province's local government, as they are more intimately aware of the factors that affect towns and cities, while the national government provides overarching guidelines for how immigrants are to be integrated into Turkish society.

The Republic of Turkey believes that while individual Member States are best suited to deal with the challenges that rapid migration causes, some of the burden can be offset with help from willing Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) as well as Non-Government Organizations (NGO's). One IGO in particular is the International Organization For Migration (IOM) which has been operating within our borders since 1991. They assist Member States in building frameworks for migration management and policies, managing borders, labor migration and human development, as well as facilitating refugee resettlements within Member States.<sup>6</sup> Turkey also believes that it would be beneficial for UN-Habitat and Human Settlement Foundation (UNHHSF) sponsored programs such as the African Urban Agenda Programme (AUA), whose focus it is to raise the profile of urbanization as a force for the structural transformation of Africa, to be adopted on a more universal scale which can serve to help Member States in regions with high urbanization and migration rates such as Africa and Asia to better solve these economic challenges.<sup>7</sup> However as the definition of "urban" areas differs across the globe, we hope to create a framework that is flexible enough that it can be applied to all 232 currently recognized urban areas as well as the exponential number that will come into existence in the coming years. We look forward to working collaboratively with many other Member States to create a comprehensive framework that will be beneficial to everyone.

#### **II. Creating and Expanding Infrastructure for Public Mobility Systems**

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<sup>1</sup>*Migration and Its Impact on Cities*, World Economic Forum report.

<sup>2</sup><https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2019/03/mena-countries-in-the-middle-east-have-the-highest-proportion-of-refugees-in-the-world/>

<sup>3</sup>[www.dailysabah.com](http://www.dailysabah.com). "Turkey's Population Expanding, Istanbul Still Most Crowded City." DailySabah. [www.dailysabah.com](http://www.dailysabah.com),

<sup>4</sup>Erdoğan, M. Murat. "Thinking Outside the Camp: Syrian Refugees in Istanbul." [migrationpolicy.org](http://migrationpolicy.org), n.d.

<https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/thinking-outside-camp-syrian-refugees-istanbul>.

<sup>5</sup>"Turkey Poverty Rate 1987-2019." MacroTrends, n.d. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/TUR/turkey/poverty-rate>.

<sup>6</sup>"Turkey." International Organization for Migration, n.d. <https://www.iom.int/countries/turkey>.

<sup>7</sup>"Africa Urban Agenda Programme," United Nations.

The Republic of Turkey strongly supports the prospect of constructing and expanding transportation infrastructure to match exponential population growth in Member States' urban centers. At the present date, 55 percent of the world's population lives in cities. That percentage is set to grow by 13 percent, up to 68 percent, by 2050, with approximately two-thirds of the world's population living in urban areas in 30 years. The effects of this trend are to be felt especially in developing Member States, making the need for sustainable transportation policies pertinent with each passing year.<sup>8</sup> The Republic of Turkey is set to have upwards of 85 percent of its population located in urban centers by 2050.<sup>9</sup> This is one of many prominent reasons as to why Turkey has taken steps to fall in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including but not limited to Goals 9, 11, and 12, by forming a Sustainable Urban Development Network between a number of Turkish municipalities<sup>10</sup> and the embedding of the 2030 Agenda in Turkey's 11th National Development Plan (NDP).<sup>11</sup> The effect of such plans is to encourage economic growth across multiple regions in the Republic of Turkey. Under the 11th NDP, Turkey plans to increase its gross domestic product (GDP) to \$1.08 trillion by 2023.<sup>12</sup> Achievement of this level of growth is contingent on the utilization of a number of economic initiatives, though one particular facet Turkey would like to emphasize is the role of sustainable urbanization in the 11th NDP. Traffic congestion is a massive hindrance to growth in the long-run, putting a strain on lower-income residents of urban centers. By expanding public transportation infrastructure, including but not limited to rapid transit construction and expansion of bus services, the detrimental effects of severe traffic congestion are alleviated.<sup>13</sup> The implementation of sustainable transportation infrastructure in developing urban areas is also an immense boon for long-term economic growth, hence the importance of modelling transportation infrastructure initiatives on forecasted economic and population growth in correlation with commute time and rates of industrial growth in developing sections of an urban area.

The Republic of Turkey has had great success in transportation construction initiatives and advises Member States to model a global sustainable public transportation development framework on what is similarly found in Turkey. Turkey follows a strict hierarchical system whereby general plans are organized into four categories, based on a number of criteria including but not limited to physical and socioeconomic factors, and ranging from local to statewide in scope.<sup>14</sup> When designing and implementing improvements to public mobility systems or constructing new public works, a general planning framework as described above promotes efficiency and practicality in urban planning. The funding of such public works is an important facet of the development of public mobility systems, one that should not be discounted in the formulation and implementation of transportation initiatives. Turkey advocates for Member States to develop Public-Private Partnerships in the funding of public works relating to transportation.<sup>15</sup> By utilizing the profit incentives of the private sector in public works development, Member States have the opportunity to fund large-scale improvements to their existing public mobility systems. Turkey recommends the use of public corporations or State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs) in the construction and expansion of public mobility systems. SOEs are immensely beneficial in the revenue-seeking phase in the financing of public works, providing a method of paying back debts owed as well as providing revenue for the financing of other transportation initiatives. Turkey is looking forward to discussing the ideas put forth by the body and coming to a consensus the most efficient and effective way to create and expand public mobility systems.

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<sup>8</sup>“Two-Thirds of Global Population Will Live in Cities by 2050, UN Says.” n.d. Accessed October 27, 2019. <https://www.cnn.com/2018/05/17/two-thirds-of-global-population-will-live-in-cities-by-2050-un-says.html>.

<sup>9</sup>“World Urbanization Prospects - Population Division - United Nations.” n.d. Accessed October 27, 2019. <https://population.un.org/wup/Country-Profiles/>.

<sup>10</sup> “A First In Turkey: ‘Sustainable Urban Development Network’ Of 20 Municipalities.” n.d. UNDP. Accessed October 27, 2019. <https://www.tr.undp.org/content/turkey/en/home/presscenter/articles/2019/08/surdurulebilir-kentler-gelisim-ag.html>.

<sup>11</sup>“Turkey :: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform.” n.d. Accessed October 27, 2019. <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/memberstates/turkey>.

<sup>12</sup>“Turkish Parliament Ratifies 11th Development Plan - Latest News.” n.d. Hürriyet Daily News. Accessed October 27, 2019. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-parliament-ratifies-11th-development-plan-145074>.

<sup>13</sup>“Turkey’s Congestion Problem: Why New Roads Aren’t the Answer |.” 2015. *TheCityFix* (blog). August 6, 2015. <https://thecityfix.com/blog/turkeys-congestion-problem-why-new-roads-arent-answer-pinar-kose/>.

<sup>14</sup>Dede, Okan Murat. 2016. “The Analysis of Turkish Urban Planning Process Regarding Sustainable Urban Development.” *Sustainable Urbanization*, September. <https://doi.org/10.5772/63271>.

<sup>15</sup>“Public-Private Partnership Accomplishes 242 Projects Worth Nearly \$64 Billion.” n.d. DailySabah. Accessed October 27, 2019. <https://www.dailysabah.com/economy/2019/06/03/public-private-partnership-accomplishes-242-projects-worth-nearly-64-billion>.