Istanbul Statement on Migration and Refugees

1. We, the leaders and representatives of 39 political parties from Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Georgia, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kazakhstan, Republic of Korea, Lebanon, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestinian National Authority, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Turkey gathered here in Istanbul, Turkey for the ICAPP (International Conference of Asian Political Parties) Special Conference on Migration and Refugees. The Special Conference was hosted by the Justice and Development Party (*AK Parti*) of Turkey during November 4-6, 2016.

2. We noted with gravest concern that a record-breaking 65 million people are forcibly displaced and currently on the move worldwide, fleeing wars, political repression and extreme poverty, including over 21 million refugees competing too few resettlement opportunities, and, in particular, fatality rates have risen in recent years among refugees and migrants attempting the dangerous border and sea crossing.

In this regard, we declared our profound solidarity with, and support for, the millions of people in different parts of the world who, for reasons beyond their control, or forced to uproot themselves and their families from their homes.

3. We noted with great sympathy the enormous burden on the government and people of Turkey created by the growing number of refugees which has reached around 3 million in recent years. We also appreciated the role of other countries which, despite their difficulties, continue to host a large number of refugees.

In this regard, we stressed that no country can afford to turn its back on the refugee and migrant crises. No one country is immune from the consequences of the crises, or can manage such movements on its own either. And these global phenomena call for global approaches and global solutions. No space for nationalistic and xenophobic forces should, therefore, be allowed to show their face again in human history.

We also called upon all relevant stakeholders to help refugees and migrants by protecting and promoting their fundamental human rights and providing necessary shelters, and also by creating the necessary atmosphere to address the root causes of large movements of refugees and migrants and the conducive conditions for the displaced persons to return to their homelands.

4. We welcomed the "New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants," adopted at the first-ever U.N. Summit on Refugees and Migrants which was held on September 19, 2016 during the 71st session of the U.N. General Assembly. We also endorsed the global campaign against xenophobia launched by U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to seek to "turn fear into hope," at a time when welcoming refugees and migrants has become a divisive issue.

We also welcomed the contributions made by the World Humanitarian Summit which was held in Istanbul during May 23-24, 2016 to reaffirming commitment to humanity and humanitarian principles, initiating actions which will enable countries to respond more appropriately and timely to refugee and migrant crises, and sharing best practises which help save lives and alleviate human suffering.

We particularly expressed our hope that the commitments made by the world leaders at these summits will be fully implemented to start negotiations leading to an international conference and the adoption of a global compact for safe, orderly and regular migration in the near future, to develop guidelines on the treatment of refugees and migrants in vulnerable situations, and to achieve a more equitable sharing of the burden and responsibility for hosting and supporting refugees and migrants.

5. We called for increased international cooperation to eliminate root causes of large movements of refugees and migrants through alleviation of poverty, elimination of discrimination, improvement of education, prevention of armed conflicts, protection and promotion of human rights, and promotion of the rule of law at the national and international levels, among others.

In particular, we stressed that the full implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which, we hope, would leave no one left behind, will make positive contributions to reinforcing efforts by refugees and migrants for their own sustainable development and addressing many of the root causes of forced displacement, particularly in countries of origin. And we pointed out that abject poverty which in most cases is passed down from generation to generation is one of the most serious challenges we still face in our region, and called upon all relevant stakeholders to have more sincere coordination of policy priorities for inclusive growth that works for all defeating economic and social inequality.

6. We reaffirmed that any kind of discrimination should be strictly prohibited which is based on race, colour, sex, age, religion, political orientation, national origin, property, or other status. In particular, we emphasized that we should not associate any specific religion or civilization with large movements of refugees and migrants. We expressed our deep concern that, in many countries, we are still witnessing lingering xenophobic and racist responses to refugees and migrants.

In this regard, we urged all relevant stakeholders to take a wide range of steps to counter any kind of discrimination, in particular, such attitudes and behaviour as hate crimes, hate speech, racial violence and the stereotypes often applied to refugees and migrants, which profoundly offend them against the values of dignity and equality for every human being.

7. Finally, we expressed our most sincere gratitude to the people and the government of Turkey, for their warm hospitality. We also thanked our gracious host, the *AK Parti* of Turkey, for their excellent arrangements to make the special conference a resounding success. Our special thanks went to H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and H.E. Prime Minister Binali Yildirim of Turkey, for their initiative and support for this historic gathering.

We also expressed our gratitude to the representatives of political parties and institutions from various countries outside Asia, including the Council of African Political Parties (CAPP) and the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists in Europe (ACRE), who participated in the conference as observers, for their cooperation and solidarity.

We also extended our special thanks to the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Organization for Migration (IOM), the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), the Directorate General of Migration

Management and the Red Crescent Society of Turkey, for their substantive contributions to our successful deliberations on the topic by sharing their expertise and experiences.

Adopted unanimously on this 6th day of November, 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey