

STATEMENT BY THE TURKISH DELEGATION

Mr. Chairman,

We are at one with the Government and the people of Ukraine in their commemoration of a humanitarian disaster and tragic episode in their history. Regarding the humanitarian impact of this tragedy, no participating State could exempt itself from the statement made by Ukraine. There can be no question of a lack of sympathy or insensitivity towards such an event.

It appears though that the Ukrainian authorities would seek to complement the humanitarian significance of this sad event with a desire for political recognition. And it is precisely this feature which distinguishes the present Ukrainian statement from the UNESCO resolution dated 1 November 2007. Such distinction is almost unavoidable, due essentially to the political nature of our Organization. I must recall that when it comes to addressing such an issue in a political context, the overarching and unchangeable principle of Turkish policy is that "judgment on historical events must remain the sole purview of historians".

Let me close by reiterating the expression of our sympathy for the victims of this tragic event and hope that our sincere sentiments will be conveyed to the people of Ukraine.

May I request that this text be attached to the Journal of the Day.

Thank you.