

**ÜST DÜZEYLİ HAZIRLIK TOPLANTISININ AÇILIŞINDA SAYIN MAÇY
TARAFINDAN YARARLANILABİLECEK KONUŞMA NOTU
(15 ARALIK 2011)**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

First of all, I would like to state that it is a distinct pleasure for us to host African delegations in Istanbul.

Turkey has traditionally maintained excellent relations with the African countries and brotherly people of the Continent.

In the context of our policy of opening up to Africa initiated in 1998, we have exerted considerable efforts for the development of the relations and cooperation with the African countries in the political, economic, commercial and cultural fields.

These endeavors of Turkey have reached to a new phase with the declaration of Turkey as the strategic partner by the African Union and the successful organization of the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit, in Istanbul in 2008. “The Istanbul Declaration on Turkey-Africa Partnership” and its annex “Framework of Cooperation for Turkey-Africa Partnership” documents were adopted in this Summit.

According to the follow-up mechanism defined at the said documents, First High Level Officials Meeting of Turkey-Africa Cooperation was held in Istanbul in December 2010. “2010-2014 Turkey-Africa Partnership Joint Implementation Plan” was adopted at the meeting. These initiatives have given a considerable momentum to our opening-up to Africa policy, on the basis of above mentioned concrete and long-termed endeavors.

Today we are very pleased to monitor that the will and determination of Turkey to further develop its cooperation with the Continent is not one sided. We are honoured that African countries would also like to diversify and deepen the partnership in all fields possible.

In this context, since May 2009 we have opened 15 new Embassies in Africa. Turkey currently has 27 Embassies in the Continent of which 22 are in Sub-Saharan Africa. Most recently our Embassies in Mogadishu and Banjul have been operational.

We plan to have in total 33 Embassies in the African continent in 2012, and we hope to open an Embassy in every African capital in the coming years.

On the other hand, we are pleased to note that there are currently 10 countries from Sub-Saharan Africa that have established Embassies in Ankara. In addition the Angolan Ambassador recently arrived in Ankara.

It is expected that the number of Embassies from Sub-Saharan African countries will increase to 20 in the coming period.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We attach particular importance to ensuring peace and stability in Africa. Turkey is currently providing personnel and contributing financially to five of the existing six UN missions in Africa.

As a contribution to peace and stability in the Continent, we hosted the “Istanbul Somalia Conference”, organized within the UN framework. A second Conference for Somalia is being planned to be organized in 2012.

We co-chaired with Egypt an “International Donor’s Conference for the Reconstruction and Development of Darfur” in Cairo in 2010.

Humanitarian aspect of Turkish foreign policy towards Africa constitutes a significant dimension of our vision. Turkish health teams including doctors and dentists travel regularly to African countries carrying out health checks and minor surgeries. For instance, since 2008, they performed 53 thousand cataract and dental operations.

Most recently, Turkey hosted the Emergency Ministerial Meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation’s Executive Committee on Somalia in Istanbul on 17 August 2011, following the recent humanitarian crisis in the country. We initiated a big campaign of humanitarian assistance to Somalia. ✓

In this regard, Turkish government and Turkish NGOs spare no effort to help the people in Somalia and in the Horn of Africa. The donations of the Turkish people to Somalia have reached to around 300 million Dollars.

Our economic and commercial relations with African countries are also steadily developing in recent years. The trade volume with the African continent was 9 billion Dollars in 2005. This volume reached to 14.1 billion Dollars in 2010. We aim to reach the level of 50 billion Dollars in our trade volume with the continent by the end of 2015. ✓

On the other hand, the trade volume with Sub-Saharan Africa in the year 2000 was 742 million Dollars. This figure was 4 billion Dollars in 2010. In 2011, the said figure is expected to accede 6.5 billion Dollars.

We are proud of the level that we reached in our cooperation in all fields in recent years. But we don't consider that this level is sufficient. We are aware that Turkey and the African continent have the capacity and will to further develop the relations.

We believe that in order to diversify and further improve our cooperation, we should strengthen the legal basis of our relations and encourage high level and technical bilateral visits between our countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding my speech here, I would like to state that we received the list of the priority projects of African Union, emanate from the "2010-2014 Turkey-Africa Partnership Joint Implementation Plan" within the last week. These projects require the comprehensive and detailed study of relevant Turkish institutions.

In this context, last week, we urgently sent these projects to the related institutions, but ~~as it could be understood by your side,~~ unfortunately ^{because} ~~we had faced~~ the problem of time limitation. ~~Because of this,~~ until right now, we could not get enough reaction from our institutions. However, I ^{should} ~~would like to~~ emphasize that Turkey has ^{the} ~~necessary~~ will to further cooperate with African Union on these concrete projects. ~~In this vein,~~ I propose that we could communicate through our Embassy in Addis Ababa regarding the modalities and the methods on how Turkey could contribute to these projects in the forthcoming period.

On the other hand, I would like to underline that we attach utmost importance to the success of “First Ministerial Review Conference of Turkey-African Partnership” which will be held tomorrow. Therefore, today at this High Level Preparatory Meeting, we should join our efforts for the successful conduct of the Ministerial Conference.

According to the programme of the Ministerial Conference, the Joint Communiqué is planned to be adopted tomorrow in the afternoon session.

We have co-prepared the draft text of the Joint Communiqué with the African Union Commission and thereafter distributed it to our Embassies in the Continent in order to be conveyed to each of the African countries. As far as I know, African Union Commission also distributed the draft to its members.

Today we convened here in this Preparatory Meeting to consider the views and opinions of the delegations concerning the draft text. As you know, we should finalize the consultations on this Joint Communiqué today and it should be ready for the adoption by our Ministers and Heads of Delegations in the Ministerial Review Conference.

I am sure that today evening we will successfully conclude this Preparatory Meeting and according to programme celebrate this success with the happy welcome reception at 19:30.

Thank you.