Joint Communiqué between the African Union Commission at their TURKEY-AFRICA ECONOMIC AND BUSINESS FORUM

İstanbul 3 November 2016,

Today, the African Union (AU) Commission and the Government of Turkey through the Ministry of Economy held the first Africa-Turkey Economic and Business Forum meeting in Istanbul, Turkey. It was hosted by the Turkey Government, under the patronage of H.E Tayeb Erdogan, president of the Republic of Turkey and H.E Dlamini Zuma, Chairperson of the African Union Commission.

In the spirit of closer relations between Turkey and African countries, and considering the substantial momentum in Turkey-Africa relations particularly since the declaration of Turkey as a strategic partner of the Continent by the African Union in January 2008 and the First Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit held in İstanbul between 18-21 August 2008, it was agreed that it is prime to advance the African-Turkey cooperation and build on what has been accomplished thus far. During the meeting, discussions touched upon issues related to the following themes:

- “Business in Africa: Opportunities and Challenges”
- Financing of Investment Projects in Africa: Infrastructure, Transportation, Energy

The Forum discussed and deliberated the above issues and noted With satisfaction that the Turkey-Africa Partnership is growing, deepening and getting diversified and the readiness of the Turkish side to further strengthen the economic and commercial ties with African countries,

The Forum underlined the role of the RECs in promoting regional cooperation, consolidation of peace and stability in their region and supporting enhancement of political and economic relations with other regional and international organization,

It therefore expressed satisfaction about the establishment of the institutional relations between Turkey and the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and with the African Development Bank,

The Forum noted of the increased cooperation in several fields envisaged by the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit of 2008 which, among others, included:

- Increase in trade volume (16.8 billion USD in 2008; 19.5 billion USD in 2015),
- Increase in direct flights by Turkish Airlines to African destinations (10 in 2008; 48 in 2015),
- Increase in the number of Turkish diplomatic representation in Africa (12 in 2008; 39 in 2015),
- Increase in the number of African diplomatic representation in Turkey (10 in 2008; 32 in 2015),
- Increase in the number of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) offices in Africa (3 in 2008; 15 in 2015),
With a view of enhancing lasting partnership between Turkey and Africa for development and economic integration;

1. The Forum decided to continue strengthening the current platform for collective dialogue, consolidate Africa-Turkey traditional friendship, deepen strategic collaboration and enhance the mechanism of practical cooperation between Turkey and Africa.

2. Committed to implement workable solutions that will increase resilience, sustain growth and decrease disparity, while improving the welfare of the people in Africa.

Trade

3. The Forum underlined the importance of trade as the one of the key engine of the economic growth and a strong private sector would be a driving force in this respect. In this vein, the Forum agreed to seek to enhance market access opportunities for trade and promoting closer business to business relations through regular business forums, trade exhibitions and missions etc.

4. With a view to further enhancing commercial and economic cooperation between Turkey and African countries, the PForum reiterated their strong intention to initiate joint action to examine possibilities of removing tariffs and other obstacles to trade through potentially concluding Trade and Economic Partnership Agreements that would be based on asymmetrical model enabling African countries to protect their sensitive sectors.

5. Taking into consideration that Turkey has shown remarkable performance with its steady growth over the last decade and is a major economic power in the region, the Turkish Side expressed its readiness to share its development experience and gains in different fields with African counterparts in order to broaden and strengthen the cooperation and trade relations among themselves.

Regional Economic Communities (RECs)

6. In cognizant of the fact that fostering and deepening economic integration will make the African Continent more resilient against the effects of internal and external economic shocks; the Turkish Side expressed its readiness to deepen and institutionalize its relations with RECs through concluding cooperation agreements and its willingness to strengthen the RECs through capacity building efforts such as training programs and technical assistance.

Private Sector

7. The Forum underlined the critical role of the private sector in economic growth and development by generating employment in order to create greater opportunities for all, reduce inequalities, raise basic standards of living and assure environmental protection. In this regard, it affirmed the necessity of
supporting the private sectors activities in Turkey and the African countries in order to foster mutual investment and trade in each other’s countries.

**Infrastructure**

8. The Forum agreed to prioritize infrastructure cooperation within the Turkey–Africa Partnership and strengthen cooperation in transport, electricity, energy and other areas of infrastructure of development.

9. To support Africa in reducing energy costs and increasing access to electricity, decreasing transport costs and boosting intra-African trade, ensuring water and food security, and increasing global connectivity, Turkey and African Union will work towards establishing a cooperative partnership in design, inspection, financing and management of projects under the Program for Infrastructure Development in Africa (PIDA) and The Presidential Infrastructure Champion Initiative (PICI), and strengthen relevant dialogue and exchanges.

10. The Forum agreed to take necessary measures and give priority to encourage capable Turkish enterprises and financial institutions to expand investment and participate in infrastructure projects through various means, such as Public-Private Partnership (PPP) and Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT).

**Investments**

11. The Forum stressed the importance of sufficient legal protection for investors and their investments in host countries. They called upon the countries to conclude agreements on reciprocal promotion and protection of investment as well as avoidance of double taxation.

12. Recognizing the importance of investments in strengthening multilateral economic relations and realizing its increasing role in developing their economies, the Parties decided to encourage their related business associations to work closely.

13. The Forum agreed to encourage and support the establishment of special economic zones/logistics centers by Turkish enterprises in Africa, and encourage Turkish enterprises to engage in processing and manufacturing in Africa, ensuring local employment, technology transfers and human capacity development. In this vein, the Turkish side expressed its willingness to explore possibilities to invest in agriculture, electricity production, transmission and delivery facilities and services, aviation, maritime, education and health as priority areas, especially in small and medium scale enterprises development.

**Financing**

14. The Forum agreed to encourage and support Turkish and African financial institutions to strengthen cooperation, including opening more branches in respective countries and enhancing exchanges and cooperation ensuring mutual benefit.
15. The Forum welcome with appreciation the ongoing cooperation between Turkey and the African Development Bank, and call upon business people of Turkey and African Countries to use more its projects financing programs.

16. The Forum expressed their satisfaction on the achievements of mutual beneficial results by the Forum and agreed to hold the next Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum in 2018 in Africa, as a side event to the next Africa-Turkey Summit.

Acknowledgment

17. The Forum expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for the warm hospitality extended during the Forum.

18. - Finally, the forum praised the partnership between the African Union Commission and the Ministry of Economy in Turkey for successfully organizing this important event.

Done in İstanbul on 3rd of November, 2016.