

President Erdoğan Addresses Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum

Delivering a speech at the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum, President Erdoğan underscored the importance Turkey attaches to African countries, and said: “On international platforms, we give priority to issues related to countries that are on the road to development, African countries being in the first place. We hosted in 2011 the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Turkey provided to Sub-Saharan African countries over 600 million dollars in developmental aid between the years of 2011-2014.”

President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan addressed the opening session of the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum, which was jointly organized by the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Turkey, the African Union Commission, Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) and Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM).

“WE ARE GOING THROUGH A PROCESS BY WHICH OUR WORLD HAS TURNED INTO A LARGE VILLAGE”

Describing the Forum as a step towards strengthening trade and economic relations between Turkey and African continent and as a means to forge new partnerships and launch new projects, President Erdoğan underscored that the close cooperation between Turkey and the African continent as well as the African Union paved the way for the Forum.

“We are going through a process by which our world has turned into a large village,” the President stressed, pointing out that this process has been drawing in all countries like a swirl, with the cultural, social and personal effects of globalization being visible in every field of life both negatively and positively.

“FETO POSES A MAJOR THREAT NOT ONLY TO TURKEY, BUT TO ALL COUNTRIES IT IS PRESENT IN”

Recalling that the Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO), which has infiltrated into state institutions under the disguise and cover of such concepts as education, humanitarian aid and dialogue, attempted a bloody coup on the night of July 15 by means of its militants within the armed forces, President Erdoğan warned: “This organization, which caused the depravation of the young generations and robotized them by exploiting religious concepts, poses a major threat not only to Turkey, but to all countries it is present in.”

Some African countries started to take measures in an attempt to put an end to FETO’s activities inside their borders following the July 15 coup attempt, President Erdoğan noted, describing the incidents that took place on the night of July 15 as a crucial warning both for Turkey and all other countries where the FETO is active.

“INTERNATIONAL SOLIDARITY IS IMPERATIVE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INTERNATIONAL TERROR”

Asking African countries to increasingly continue their support for Turkey's fight against FETO, President Erdoğan said: "Anti-FETO fight is our common cause. International solidarity is imperative in the fight against international terror. Unless we can ensure solidarity today, this threat becomes much greater tomorrow. While you are helping us in this fight, we will cooperate with you to prevent any possible gap. We will exert every effort to protect our children studying at FETO-linked schools and their parents from any victimization."

"WE GIVE PRIORITY TO ISSUES RELATED TO COUNTRIES THAT ARE ON THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT, AFRICAN COUNTRIES BEING IN THE FIRST PLACE"

Underlining economic and commercial relations as one of the main components of Turkey's comprehensive approach to the African continent, President Erdoğan stated that Turkey has established joint economic commissions, having signed trade and economic cooperation agreements with 40 African countries so far. Pointing to the large number of agreements and the Business Councils formed with 33 African Countries under the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK), President Erdoğan stressed that most of these agreements were already put into force.

Turkey-Africa trade volume climbed from 6.8 billion dollars in 2005 to 17.5 billion dollars in 2015, and Turkey's trade volume with Sub-Saharan African countries rose from 2.7 billion dollars in 2005 to 6.6 billion dollars in 2015, the President noted, and he went on to say: "On international platforms, we give priority to issues related to countries that are on the road to development, African countries being in the first place. We hosted in 2011 the United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries. Turkey provided to Sub-Saharan African countries over 600 million dollars in developmental aid between the years of 2011-2014."

Citing the African proverb 'Go alone if you want to go fast; go together if you want to go far,' President Erdoğan said "We will manage the upcoming process hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder," and concluded his address by expressing his wish for the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum to serve as one of the landmarks of a lasting cooperation between Turkey and African countries.

Turkey-Africa Economic Business Forum To Boost Trade Ties November 6, 2016 Nezaket Yalman Turkey Latest News

Turkey looks forward to working more closely with our African friends and allies in a range of areas: Erdogan

"Over the next days, Turkey's political and business leaders will embark on a historic visit to Uganda, Kenya and Somalia. We will seek to promote closer cooperation with our regional allies, develop solutions to shared challenges and explore mutually beneficial opportunities," said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in an article in Al-Jazeera.

President also said on Wednesday that Africa's priorities were Turkey's as well. Erdogan spoke at the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum in Istanbul, which highlights

Turkey's strategy to enhance bilateral trade with the African continent, reported Anadolu Agency.

"We share a common fate. We consider the priority of the African continent as our priority. There is a nice African proverb that says one day's rain cannot get deep into the soil. We would like to remain friends forever," he said.

First an observer country (2005) then a strategic partner (2008) of the African Union, Turkey has also been accepted as a non-regional member of the African Development Bank (2008).

The Turkish president stressed that the Western world was still furthering its colonial agenda by using globalization.

"In the name of globalization, one growth model has been dictated to different countries," he said. "If you want to grow your economy, you need to find the IMF, the World Bank or an interest rate hike. [...] You must obey the definition of democracy. In order to be part of the global system, you have to obey the current system unconditionally."

"The culture of our African brothers is not taken into consideration. The contemporary globalization is a new form of colonialism, of modern slavery," Erdogan added.

Erdogan warns African nations about FETO

The Turkish president also stressed terrorism's role in damaging economic growth and asked African nations to support his country in its fight against the Fetullah Terrorist Organization's (FETO).

"The international fight against terrorism needs international solidarity, otherwise we will fail," he said.

During the July 15 coup attempt, 246 people were martyred and 2,194 others injured, leading to a nationwide probe in Turkey to eliminate Fetullah Terrorist Organization (FETO) sleeper cells which had infiltrated state institutions such as the judiciary and the army.

Fethullah Gulen, who has lived in Pennsylvania since 1999, is accused of being the FETO ringleader and mastermind behind the coup attempt.

The president said that Turkey's Ministry of Education had started taking over schools related to FETO in many countries, and asked African leaders to cooperate with Turkey on the issue.

"This organization is very active on the continent. This terrorist organization is in 170 countries. The African continent is abused by this FETO organization. [...] It is my duty to warn you," he said.

Erdogan said that Turkey would seek to increase its diplomatic representations on the continent, from the current 39.

“We are going to establish an embassy in every country of the African continent,” he said. “Turkey’s foreign direct investments in the continent has reached \$3.9 billion. The trade volume between Turkey and the continent increased to \$17.5 billion in 2015 from \$7 billion in 2005.”

Erdogan also said that Turkish investors have shown interest in the continent in recent years.

“If you want to go fast, you go alone,” he said. “If you want to go far, we will go together, hand in hand, shoulder to shoulder and side by side,” he concluded.

International business leaders met in Istanbul on Wednesday at the two-day Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum.

The forum, jointly organized by the Turkish Ministry of Economy, the African Union Commission, the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) and the Turkish Exporters Assembly (TIM), aims to provide a platform for the business circles of Turkey and African countries to create a long-lasting cooperation, according to the forum’s official webpage.

Turkey-Africa business forum vows to boost trade ties

Construction, food, healthcare and energy are some sectors where cooperation can be enhanced between Turkey and African countries, head of Turkey’s Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK) said Wednesday.

Speaking at the Turkey-Africa Business and Economic Forum in Istanbul, Omer Cihad Vardan highlighted the wide range of opportunities available on both sides.

“We see that there are hundreds of projects that we can undertake jointly as we get to know each other’s sources. Construction services, food, healthcare and energy sectors are some of the areas that we can make investments in,” Vardan said.

There are 134 business councils from around the world linked to the DEIK, 34 of which operate with African nations to develop businesses there, he said.

“Now, we know our African friends better, and they know us better as well. We understand better our countries’ needs and how to meet these needs. We are doing our best to further relations between Turkey and Africa,” he added.

Solomon Afework, president of the Pan-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said: “Africa, the second-most populated continent of the world, is a real gateway to different areas with its very ideal geographic location.

“The African governments believe that the private sector is an engine of the economy and they are constantly improving the legal framework to support the sector.

“Turkish trade and investments are growing rapidly in Africa due to the continent’s fast economic growth... My message to the Turkish business community is that Africa is ready to business.”

Anthony Mothae Maruping, economic affairs commissioner at the African Union Commission, emphasized the role of Istanbul in acting as a bridge with African countries.

He said Africa wanted a more diversified and, therefore, more resilient economies. “This requires a transformative growth. Turkey has certainly been doing just that for years,” Maruping said.

“Africa and Turkey have developed a win-win strategic partnership that creates a framework for cooperation at various levels and on several fronts. [Both sides should] share experiences and exchange ideas. Make Turkey-Africa partnership vibrant. Nurture it,” he added.

Turkey’s efforts in Africa

Since 2002, the government of Turkey has been working hard to help African nations to discover their potential and take steps in the right direction.

In an effort to reinvigorate our long-neglected ties with the continent, Turkey in 2005 launched an African initiative to cooperate more closely with our friends and allies in the region.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, or TIKA, remains active across the continent and implements hundreds of humanitarian and development projects to provide better healthcare, promote agriculture, protect the environment and facilitate commerce.

Meanwhile, more than 4,500 African students continue their education in Turkey’s prestigious universities on government and NGO scholarships. What sets the Turkish development and humanitarian aid model is our focus on mutual respect.

Turkey declared enemy of Al-Qaeda affiliate

Ahmed Umar Abu Ubaidah released a 45-minute audio speech on July 12, his first communique since being appointed head of the al-Qaeda affiliate “Al-Shabab” following his predecessor’s death in a U.S. drone strike. Speaking in Somali, Abu Ubaidah said: “The nation of Turkey is the enemy of our nation. Our economy is in turmoil because of the ‘interference’ by Turkey in our affairs; they have control of [our] economy and their actions will leave us in poverty.”

The speech comes a month after Turkish leader, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, opened a large embassy in war-torn Somalia during an African tour.

In March this year, al-Shabaab militants opened fire on vehicles carrying doctors, killing two Turkish and three Somali medics.

The day before Erdogan visited Somalia in June, the militants blew up a vehicle near a hotel where Turkish delegates were meeting to finalize details of the president's visit; two people were killed.

In 2013 al-Shabaab militants drove a vehicle loaded with explosives into a business premises housing the Turkish embassy staff; the attack – which was claimed by the rebel group – left three people dead.

Turkey's role in Somalia

Somalia which has been home to the world's worst humanitarian crisis since civil war broke out in the early 1990's has received little help from world nations, though Turkey, in 2011, donated \$350 million in humanitarian assistance.

Turkey's involvement in Somalia started in 2011 when it sent emergency humanitarian aid following deaths caused by drought and famine in the country.

Since then, Turkey has played an intensive role in taking Somalia out of isolation by modernizing the region and rebuilding the country's main airport in Mogadishu.

Turkey to Open a Military Training Base in Somalia

More details about Turkey's first military facility in Somalia emerged on October 13 with the construction firm behind the project confirming the base will be able to train hundreds of local soldiers, according to Anadolu Agency. Istanbul Mogadishu General Construction Company Director Ebubekir Sahin told Anadolu Agency the \$50-million base will open near the Somali capital Mogadishu in January 2017.

Turkey's bilateral relations with African nations

In recent years, Turkey's bilateral relations with African nations have improved. A record number of official visits by Turkish and African leaders helped to build stronger ties with the continent, promote partnerships of equals and serve the interests of both parties.

Since assuming the Turkish presidency in August 2014, President Erdogan visited nine African countries and hosted a large number of African leaders on the occasion of bilateral visits and international summits.

The Turkish cooperation with Africa has not been limited to official visits. Over the past decade, Turkey signed a number of treaties and launched joint projects across the continent to challenge the traditional hierarchy between the exploiter and the exploited.

Africa's priorities are Turkey's too: Turkish president (Kayhan Özer - Anadolu Agency)

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Wednesday that Africa's priorities were Turkey's as well.

Erdogan spoke at the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum in Istanbul, which highlights Turkey's strategy to enhance bilateral trade with the African continent.

"We share a common fate. We consider the priority of the African continent as our priority. There is a nice African proverb that says one day's rain cannot get deep into the soil. We would like to remain friends forever," he said.

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The Turkish president stressed that the Western world was still furthering its colonial agenda by using globalization.

"In the name of globalization, one growth model has been dictated to different countries," he said. "If you want to grow your economy, you need to find the IMF, the World Bank or an interest rate hike. [...] You must obey the definition of democracy. In order to be part of the global system, you have to obey the current system unconditionally."

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Turkey: Africa's friend, compatriot and partner

Turkey looks forward to working more closely with our African friends and allies in a range of areas.

Over the next days, Turkey's political and business leaders will embark on a historic visit to Uganda, Kenya and Somalia. We will seek to promote closer cooperation with our regional allies, develop solutions to shared challenges and explore mutually beneficial opportunities.

Many people in the world associate the African continent with extreme poverty, violent conflict and a general state of hopelessness. The people of Turkey have a different view. We believe that Africa deserves better.

Somalia drought: Tens of thousands in need of food
Africa has three core advantages

First, the continent has a young and vibrant population at a time when Europe and other parts of the world are rapidly ageing. If the world cooperates with local and national governments in the region, we can create avenues for young people to make a positive impact on their communities. African women, likewise, have the potential to become more active players in economic and social life.

Moreover, Africa is a continent blessed with vast natural resources. Uganda and Kenya, among others, have not only large oil reserves but also plenty of fertile land and regular rainfall.

To be clear, the rest of Africa is no different, even though years of colonial rule and exploitation stripped local communities of what rightfully belongs to them. If the world stops acting out of greed and focuses on helping the African people to help themselves, the continent could become an economic powerhouse.

Finally, the people of Africa have an entrepreneurial spirit that could potentially turn the continent around. Despite decades of exploitation and various challenges, the continent has always found a way to survive through innovation. As Africa assumes a more prominent role in the international arena, this spirit of entrepreneurialism will help to build a safer future for the next generation.

Turkey's efforts

Since 2002, the government of Turkey has been working hard to help African nations to discover their potential and take steps in the right direction.

In an effort to reinvigorate our long-neglected ties with the continent, Turkey in 2005 launched an African initiative to cooperate more closely with our friends and allies in the region.

Over the next years, we proceeded to hold two Turkey-Africa partnership summits in Istanbul, Turkey and Malabo, Equatorial Guinea. The events were not only our way of thanking the people of Africa for their warm welcome but also reiterating our commitment to a long-term partnership. Indeed, the summits marked a turning point in Turkey's relations with Africa.

The growing cooperation between Turkey and Africa shows a lot can be accomplished by engaging our partners genuinely and finding solutions that serve the interests of both sides. It also sends a strong message about Africa's true potential in the world.

At the same time, Turkish officials and non-governmental organisations have been working with local communities to address pressing problems. Over the years, Turkey's development-centred humanitarian aid model helped millions of people, including thousands in drought-struck Somalia, to get back on their feet.

Since 2011, Somalia has been one of the top three recipients of Turkey's development aid. Our efforts continued with the completion of the Turkish-Somalian Education and Research Hospital, East Africa's largest medical facility, last year.

As a sign of Turkey's continued commitment to the future of Somalia, I will inaugurate the new Turkish embassy in Mogadishu, which is Turkey's largest diplomatic mission, during my forthcoming visit.

The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency, or TIKA, remains active across the continent and implements hundreds of humanitarian and development projects to provide better healthcare, promote agriculture, protect the environment and facilitate commerce.

Meanwhile, more than 4,500 African students continue their education in Turkey's prestigious universities on government and NGO scholarships. What sets the Turkish development and humanitarian aid model is our focus on mutual respect.

Deeper partnership

In recent years, Turkey's bilateral relations with African nations have also been improving. A record number of official visits by Turkish and African leaders helped us to build stronger ties with the continent, promote partnerships of equals and serve the interests of both parties.

Since assuming the Turkish presidency in August 2014, I had the pleasure of visiting nine African countries and hosting a large number of African leaders on the occasion of bilateral visits and international summits.

In this 2011 photo Erdogan, right, and Somalia's former President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed stand in front of their countries' national flags as they listen to the national anthems after Erdogan arrived in Mogadishu. [Reuters]

Our cooperation with Africa has not been limited to official visits. Over the past decade, Turkey signed a number of treaties and launched joint projects across the continent to challenge the traditional hierarchy between the exploiter and the exploited.

As a sign of our faith in Africa, Turkish Airlines took a bold decision to enter the African market and quickly expanded its network to 48 destinations in 32 countries.

Since 2000, Turkey's trade with Sub-Saharan Africa grew eightfold to reach \$6bn as the number of Turkish embassies across the continent reached 34 - a fivefold increase.

Turkey's cooperation with Africa isn't limited to diplomacy and trade either. In the international arena, we are committed to furthering the interests of African nations.

OPINION: World Humanitarian Summit and Turkey

Having hosted the Fourth United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries in 2011, Istanbul set the stage for the first ever World Humanitarian Summit last week.

As representatives from 173 countries, including 32 Sub-Saharan nations, joined forces to reform the international humanitarian system along with NGOs, volunteers and survivors of humanitarian crises, the summit gave hope to millions of people in Africa and elsewhere.

Compatriot of Africa

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Many African nations, including Uganda, Kenya and Somalia, remain on the frontlines in the war against human suffering as Western nations devote their resources to building taller walls, ramping up security and tightening travel restrictions.

OPINION: Erdogan - The hero of Somalia

Having spent more than \$10bn to provide humanitarian relief to three million Syrians within our borders, the Turkish government will continue raising awareness about the efforts of African nations.

The people of Turkey and Africa are also united in their experiences with terrorism. As a country facing crucial challenges including terrorism, regional instability and the refugee crisis, we can relate to the predicament in which our partners such as Uganda and Kenya find themselves. Moving forward, we pledge to work with our African allies and friends more closely on counterterrorism, among other issues.

Finally, Turkey will take necessary steps to promote entrepreneurialism, which has had a positive influence on the Turkish economy over the past decade.

The African Handicraft Market and Culture House, which was launched in the Turkish capital of Ankara with the support of Turkey's First Lady Emine Erdogan, represents a concrete step to generate income for Africa's female entrepreneurs. Moving forward, we hope to share our entrepreneurial experiences with the people of Africa.

The growing cooperation between Turkey and Africa shows that a lot can be accomplished by engaging our partners genuinely and finding solutions that serve the interests of both sides. It also sends a strong message about Africa's true potential to the world.

One of my favourite African proverbs goes: True poverty is the lack of friends. Today and for ever, Turkey will be a friend, a compatriot and a partner of Africa.

Recep Tayyip Erdogan is the President of Turkey.

The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect Al Jazeera's editorial policy.

Source: Al Jazeera

ECONOMICS

Turkey voices strong economic, trade interest in Africa

Turkish officials have expressed strong interest in boosting economic and trade relations with Africa at a key joint forum in Istanbul, where their African counterparts welcomed the call.

“We have always regarded our African friends as our brothers. Our policy of opening up to Africa is not just the reflection of a transient political and economic expectation. On the contrary, it is the product of a process with strong historical and cultural aspects,” Turkish Economy Minister Nihat Zeybekci said Nov. 2 at the Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum.

The conference, which began Nov. 2, will end on Nov. 3.

“One of the main constituents of our comprehensive interest in Africa is composed of economic and trade relations. In this vein, we signed trade and economic cooperation agreements and created mixed economic commission mechanisms with a total of 40 African countries so far. We have embassies in 39 African countries, but this is not enough for us. Our desire is to open embassies across the whole continent,” said Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan at the meeting.

The forum, jointly organized by Turkey’s Economy Ministry, the African Union Commission, Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) and Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), is expected to provide a unique platform for business circles of Turkey and African countries to create long-lasting cooperation.

Erdoğan said Turkey had signed agreements with 19 African countries to mutually encourage and preserve investments, free trade deals with four countries and other agreements to prevent double taxation with nine countries.

He also noted that business councils had been established in 33 African countries under DEİK’s leadership.

“While our trade with Africa was around \$7 billion in 2005, this figure surged to \$17.5 billion in 2015. Our trade volume with sub-Saharan Africa soared to \$6.6 billion in 2015 from around \$2.7 billion in 2005. I should also mention our investors’ strong interest in Africa,” Erdoğan said, adding that Turkey had given significant priority to all issues regarding African countries in all international platforms.

Let’s turn 2017 into ‘free trade year’

Zeybekci said Ankara started an expansion into Africa to strengthen cooperation 12 years ago, while also calling for African countries to make 2017 a year of free trade.

“Taking and then leaving has never been our policy. What we do in Africa is to build together, produce together, sell what’s produced together and share the profit,” he added.

“Also we are opening a gateway to Africa as Turkish Airlines flies to the highest number of destinations in Africa,” said the minister.

Zeybekci noted that Turkey would provide numerous opportunities to African countries through its economy and its position linking Asia and Europe.

“The Turkish economy is the 18th largest in the world, seventh largest in Europe and a member of the G-20. We have free-trade agreements with 23 countries around the world. We would like to share our abilities with our African brothers because we believe in Africa,” he said.

Zeybekci said the world economy had been in recession for almost 10 years, but suggested there could be a win-win deal for all. “It is not just about selling to Africa, it is also about buying from Africa. I am inviting you to turn 2017 into a free-trade year. Let’s start this campaign immediately,” he added.

DEİK President Ömer Cihad Vardan called for African officials and businesspeople not to work with any business organizations that are connected to the Gülen movement, which is the main suspect in the July 15 coup attempt in Turkey.

“They will cause harm rather than bringing in any benefit,” he said, adding that DEİK was ready to offer any assistance and help to African businesspeople as Turkey’s authorized organization to run the Turkish private sector’s foreign economic relations.

Vardan also said 34 of DEİK’s 134 business councils were located in Africa.

Africa ‘ready’ to boost relations

African officials noted that countries on the continent were ready to boost ties with Turkey.

“African countries believe that the private sector is the motor force of the economy and are improving their legal and administrative frameworks. As investment-friendly countries, we have been developing our energy, infrastructure and communications infrastructures. My message to Turkish companies is as follows: ‘Africa is ready to make business with Turkey. Both African countries and businesses are ready to take the required steps,’” said the head of the Pan-African Chambers of Commerce and the president of the Ethiopian Chamber of Commerce, Solomon Afework.

Antony Mothae Maruping, the commissioner for Economic of the African Union Commission, said Istanbul was a strategically key bridge that connects Turkey and Africa, adding that the trade volume between Turkey and Africa had surged to \$20 billion in volume in the last decade from just around \$4 billion.

“Africa has been improving its investment climate in line with its accelerated, stable and inclusive growth target, which has been envisioned in our Africa 2063 Agenda. The boosting Turkish-African cooperation is also compatible with our key agenda,” he added.

Over 1,500 African businesspeople attended the forum, according to officials. They and their Turkish counterparts are expected to hold bilateral meetings at 900 desks, which were set out as part of the forum.

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