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Transcript

Turkey-Africa Relations

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Mustafa Gunay:

At TUSKON, we would like to thank Chatham House and IPC to organize this important seminar together with us.

I would like to extend my gratitude on behalf of Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists of Turkey, TUSKON. I am grateful for this opportunity which gives me the honor of sharing some of my thoughts on how we see Turkish-African economic and political cooperation from a global point of view and dwell on the parameters determining the current and potential influences of Turkey and TUSKON in the region and in the world.

Turkey has been going through an important transformation process. This has become a political transformation, social transformation, economic transformation. Turkey in 2002 versus Turkey in 2011 is almost like two different countries. When you compare the Country in Economic Crises in 2002 versus the Star of the Emerging World together with China and India in 2011, you do not need any other word to explain. As the 16th largest economy in the world, Turkey is a member of G20 which is the new management mechanism of the world economy. Turkey is the first elected chairman of Organization of Islamic Conference. IMF World Bank meeting were held in Turkey in 2009 with 15 thousand participants. UN Least Developed Countries Conference will be held in İstanbul next month. The European Union Accession process finally started after 40 years in 2004 and stability in the political era helped Turkey take bold steps towards being a regional power.

Proactive peace policies of Turkey in the region and towards to Africa especially to Sub Sahara together with the economic cooperation increased the regional stability and the world stability together with rising trade volume. These engagement policies have political dimension but the economic dimension is even more important. Turkish trade with its neighbours increased tenfold in last six years and the share of the neighbours increased from 8% to 26% of the total trade volume.

Turkish exports to Africa were only 3.6 billion in 2005, then increased to 9.3 billion dollars as of 2010. 2.3 billion of the exports are sent to Sub Saharan countries. Turkey imported 6 billion in 2005; it only reached to 6.4 billion as of 2010. These numbers do not reflect the huge potential between Turkey and Africa. We believe that we can change this trend and start an increasing pattern of mutual profitable and also balanced trade volume.

I believe there are enormous potential for Turkish companies operating in construction, construction materials, furniture, food, tourism, health services,

consumer goods, textile and garment manufacturing, iron and steel and mining industries. Turkish manufacturing experience and technology can be combined with experience of African companies for mutual investments in the fields of construction and contracting services, health services, wood processing, plastic manufacturing, food processing, agribusiness and mining. Also Turkish companies are eager to cooperate with European, American and even Chinese companies in Africa.

At this point, I would like to emphasize the importance of the civil society and initiative we take as TUSKON, during those years to strengthen the relations economically and politically with Turkey and Africa. TUSKON today, is an umbrella organization for 7 regional federations, 162 business associations with more than 30.000 business people members in Turkey.

At TUSKON, we constantly commit to serve our country and people. In a very short period of time, TUSKON succeeds in organizing 11 “Foreign Trade Bridge” Programs. The first foreign trade bridge program organized by TUSKON, “Turkey - Africa Foreign Trade Bridge -1”, was organized in Istanbul, on May 8-9, 2006 with a total of 500 business people from 35 different countries, and 1,000 businesspeople from Turkey. 40,000 bilateral business meetings were held between Turkish and African participants. TUSKON continued Africa trade bridges at 2007 with 800, at 2008 with 1.000, at 2009 and 2010 with 800 business people from Africa. Turkey’s trade with Africa increase three folds in the last five years thank to new Turkish government initiatives and the civic engagement that we provide as TUSKON. After we held the First African Trade Bridge in 2006, Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced to open 11 new embassies in Africa and Turkish Airlines started 5 new destinations to these countries.

TUSKON also organizes trade and investment delegations to potentially viable countries as a follow up to Trade Bridge Programs. Most of TUSKON delegations were led by the President of Turkey or relevant Turkish Cabinet Members. Some examples are Presidents’ Kenya, Tanzania, Democratic Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, Ghana and Gabon trips in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Minister of Foreign Trade’s South Africa, Ethiopia and Tanzania trips. Minister of Industry’s Morocco and Egypt trips. Minister of Agriculture’s Sudan trips. In addition to TUSKON delegations, our member federations and their associations organized more than 200 trade and investment delegations in the last 5 years towards to Africa.

As TUSKON, a major contributor to international affairs of Turkish companies TUSKON is offering the best of matchmaking services to any coming

individual business people to find the right and reliable partners with the trade bridge events.

TUSKON will keep its focus on Africa and organize more events in the coming years with more delegations.

I wish this seminar will be fruitful for all of us.

Thank you.