

**Business Luncheon with President of the African Union Commission  
Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat**

**1 October 2021, 14.00**

**President of the African Union Commission Mr. Moussa Faki  
Mahamat,**

**Turkish Ambassador to Ethiopia Mrs. Yaprak Alp,**

**Turkey – Africa Partnership Summit Coordinator Mr. Can İncesu,**

**Dear Participants,**

On behalf of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey - DEİK, I am delighted to be with your Excellence Mr. Faki Mahamat in your first official visit to Turkey and a delegation who care as deeply as we do about the ties between Turkey and African Countries. And I wish a healthy day to all of us.

First of all, I would like to congratulate the first designated female Prime Minister of Tunisia Najla Bouden Romdhan (*Necla Buden Ramadan*). This is very important news both for African countries and the Arab world.

And then, I'm grateful to hear some news from our Minister of Foreign Affairs' press conference with you yesterday.

-To reach 49 Embassy number in 54 African countries,

-To support some African countries with vaccine as Turkey,

-And to decide to cooperate in infrastructure and transportation sectors as Turkey and Africa

are very important steps towards our sustainable partnership.

During the last two decades, political trust between Turkey and African countries has been strengthening and Turkey has been establishing a powerful partnership, which was upgraded to a strategic partnership of mutual benefit and common development. Within this regard, Turkey also sees African diaspora a key to the Continent's development and thus gives importance to cooperation on trading and exchanging experience on economic trends, business opportunities and development priorities for Africa.

Let me start with a brief introduction of DEİK for whom who may not have enough information before.

Foreign Economic Relations Board, DEİK, is a business platform that has been continuing its activities for 36 years in order to enhance all economic relations, between Turkey and the other countries. We continue our works with an understanding of “business diplomacy” together with our 147 country to country based business councils all over the world including African Business Councils. You know, there are 54 countries in Africa and we have 45 Business Council there, I think this is quite valuable.

With our Turkey-Africa Business Councils, we have been preparing an endeavor named “**African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Impact thereof on the Turkish Enterprises**” aiming to provide information to the business world about the potential effects of the African Continental

Free Trade Area on Turkish companies, communicate the foresights of the countries and provide ideas for new strategies.

Our online negotiations and discussions with the African Union continue for the purpose of establishing the “Turkey-Africa Investment and Trade Platform”. Moreover, we have been counseling regarding the mutual representation.

On this occasion, I would like to thank all our Ambassadors working in Africa, especially to Mrs. Nur Sağman the General Manager of Africa at our Ministry of Foreign Affairs the focal point of our coordination with the African continent.

Also personally, I had intense relations with South Africa doing business there in the past so, I am aware of the possibilities and capabilities of South Africa that is one of the important countries in Africa.

Now, let me talk about the figures. Bilateral trade volume between Turkey and Africa is more than \$25 billion as our Minister of Foreign Affairs said yesterday. Turkey’s export to Africa in 2020 is \$ 15.2 billion that is %8,3 less than 2019 because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Turkey's import from Africa in 2020 is \$7.3 billion.

Also, according to the data for the first 8 months of 2021, Turkey's exports to Africa increased by 36% on an annual basis, and Turkey's imports from Africa increased by 6%.

But I believe that these figures are not enough for us. We should increase more with the support of our Presidents, Ministers, Ambassadors, Commercial Counsellors and business representatives.

I'll try to touch on some points which I believe that help our business relations and increase the numbers.

- We would like to establish a new model of cooperation with the African continent based on equal partnership. We can find solutions by running joint investment models and public-private sector cooperation mechanisms.

We should develop our cooperation in these specific sectors:

- Consumer goods and industrial products,
- Contracting and infrastructure
- Agricultural, agro-industry production and organic farming,
- Textile,
- Mining,
- Energy,
- Wastewater treatment
- Industrial know-how sharing,
- And also, we support the continent to industrialize its resources into value-added products through joint production and marketing them to third countries,

Before I end my speech, I would like to inform you with our two important events.

Firstly, we'll visit Angola, Nigeria and Togo with our President of Turkey H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan on 17-20 October. It will be a good chance to improve our friendships and business relations.

Second, we'll organize Turkey-Africa III. Economic and Business Forum (TABEF) on 21 – 22 October in İstanbul. The Forum will be an excellent opportunity to update the current relations among the business people of participating countries and set new targets for the further development of our economic, commercial and business partnerships. I'm pleased to invite all of you our important organization.

I would like to finish my speech with an African proverb: **“Tomorrow belongs to people who prepare for it today.”**

As Turkish and African business representatives, I believe that we'll prepare our future together with increasing our economic relations to higher levels.

Thank you.

**Nail OLPAK**

**President of DEİK**