

## DEİK-WEBINAR

### Multilateral Response to Covid-19: Africa-Turkey Partnership

12 May 2020, 16.00

**Distinguished Panelists,**

**Dear Participants,**

It's my honor to meet you all in another DEİK Webinar.

In these challenging times, we are all navigating through uncertainty for ourselves, our loved ones and our community. I hope you are all staying healthy and safe.

Therefore, first of all, I request prayers to be made for the families of those who lost their lives all around the globe. Second, I want to pay a heartfelt tribute to all Doctors, Nurses, Scientists and Researchers, working tirelessly, on defeating Coronavirus pandemic.

Despite of everything and despite the necessity to close our offices, we as DEİK remain open for communication and try to continue being a vital resource for information, support, guidance and coordination of business development activities.

On behalf of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey (DEİK), let me begin by thanking our partners: African Development Bank (AfDB), African Union, African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Trade & Development Bank (TDB), Turkish Ministry of Trade and The Africa Report not just for joining us altogether here at this event, but also for their continued cooperation in promoting Turkey-African partnership and

supporting Turkish and African private sector for investments, trade, joint ventures and project development throughout Africa.

And I appreciate the support of Turkish satellite company, TURKSAT to make this event available for watching online on your TV in West Africa.

I also want to welcome our counterparts and ambassadors from all across Africa, I know they are all watching us now; they have a profound commitment to expand opportunities and deepen the relationships in the continent.

Most importantly, I want to thank all of you the business leaders, entrepreneurs and investors who are working very hard to create jobs and to grow economies and to lift up our brother and sisters in the African continent.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are here because, Africa is essential to our progress. Africa's rise is not just important to Africa, it's important to the entire world. And Turkey is the strategic partner, international promoter and supporter of integration of Africa.

Allow me give you a brief information about us. DEiK is a business diplomacy organization, conducting the foreign economic relations of the Turkish private sector in particular with respect to foreign trade, international investments, services, contracting and logistics.

And it is a unique platform with 146 Country to Country Business Councils, with more than 3.500 members, representing Turkey's business community and its leading entrepreneurs, contributing to the functioning of the institution on a 'voluntary basis'.

DEiK plays a catalytic role to strengthen Turkey-Africa trade, economic and cultural ties through its bilateral business Council

mechanism linked with 50 counterpart organisations in 45 African countries, since we have 45 country to country Business Councils in Africa.

DEiK has also cooperation agreements with African Union, COMESA and ECOWAS.

In line with Turkey's win-win policy in Africa: A policy of mutual empowerment based on equality, transparency and sustainability, Turkey-Africa Business Councils create platforms for private sector and relevant shareholders for new partnerships. And, the Councils emphasize the importance of enhancing business relation with strategic partners and African diaspora in African market.

During the last 18 years, the political trust between Turkey and African countries has been continuously strengthened, and Turkey has established a powerful partnership, which has been upgraded to a strategic partnership of mutual-benefit and common development.

Turkey has been granted observer country status in African Union (AU) and has been accepted as a non-regional member of African Development Bank.

Turkey and Africa has enjoyed rapid growth in trade and economic cooperation, which benefited both side:

- Turkey's bilateral trade volume with Africa increased fourfold from 2002 to a level of 22 billion \$.
- Turkish direct investments in Africa exceeded 6 billion \$ in 2019, while it was only 100 million \$ and now have created over 100.000 jobs.
- The volume of projects (PPP & BOT or direct tender) taken by Turkish contracting companies in Africa increased up to 55 billion \$.
- Turkish Airlines flying to 60 destinations in 40 countries in the continent. And, it provides air-cargo services even between some African countries.

- Over 5.000 students from 52 African countries were given scholarship by Turkish institutions. There are currently 2.850 graduates in Africa. Turkish Maarif Foundation has currently 21 schools with more than 9.000 students in Africa.
- Human traffic between Turkey and Africa has also increased, the total number of foreigners coming from Turkey has doubled, while the number of Africans from Africa to Turkey has increased fourfold.

### Dear Participants

During this global health crisis, Turkey has continued providing all assistance needed not just only by the Government but also by Turkish private sector resident in Africa. Turkish companies have started to produce mask and protective coveralls in their manufacturing facilities in Africa; they have made donations for national funds in African countries as well as food and medical supplies.

Unlike developed countries, Turkey has been successful in controlling its cases and growing its recovery rate and, this has been achieved with Turkey's strong health system and experience. We expect to survive this pandemic with minimal damage.

Investment in health systems and domestic production are more important than ever. And we are ready to transfer of our experience to build a strong health care system in Africa.

One of the lessons that we as a global community have learnt from the challenges recently posed by COVID-19 is that we need to develop our internal capacities. This is why, as an organization, we will continue supporting the integration efforts of the continent. African Continental Free Trade Area AfCFTA has come at an ideal moment for the continent to

integrate and increase its economic capacity. Currently, our organization is in the final stages of completing a report on the potential impacts of African Continental Free Trade Area AfCFTA on Turkish businesses and enterprises trading with Africa.

Africa has the fastest-growing economies in the world and wherever I've gone in Africa from North to South, from East to West, Africans want to do business and grow businesses, and create value and companies that will last and that will help to build a great future for the continent.

We have so much more work that can be done and will be done. So there's still so much untapped potential.

In this regard, if all restrictions would be lifted, we would be organizing the third session of Turkey-Africa Economic and Business Forum in cooperation with African Union and Turkish Ministry of Trade late this year in Istanbul.

I wish to see you all in Istanbul in best health and economic condition.

Thank you very much for your kind attention.

**Nail OLPAK**

**President of DEİK**