

Türkiye-Colombia Business Council RoundTable Meeting

20 May 2022, 09.00

President of Colombia Mr. Iván Duque Márquez (*İvan Duke Marke*),

Minister of Trade, Industry and Tourism of Colombia Mrs. Maria Ximena Lombana (*Mariya Simena Lomana*),

Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development Mr. Carlos Correa (*Karlos Korrea*),

Minister of Health and Social Protection Dr. Fernando Ruiz (*Fernando Ruiz*),

Turkish Ambassador to Bogota Mrs. Ece Öztürk Çil,

Colombian Ambassador to Ankara Mrs. Julio Aníbal Riaño (*Hulio Anibal Riyano*)

President of ProColombia Mrs. Flavia Santoro Trujillo (*Flaviya Santoro Trohiyyo*),

Dear Guests,

I would like to greet you all on behalf of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Türkiye – DEİK.

It is an honor for me to be with one of our key trading partners in Latin America. And I hope we are going to take important steps for our economic relations today.

I realized that Türkiye and Colombia are getting closer lately. Vice President and Foreign Minister of Colombia Mrs. Marta Lucia Ramirez has visited Ankara to hold a couple of business meetings on 1 April 2022. After a while, the Foreign Minister of Türkiye Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu visited Colombia on 26-27 April 2022 to hold meetings within the scope of his Latin America trip. Agreements were signed in the fields of education and sports.

These are important developments for our economic relations between Türkiye and Colombia.

Let me continue with a brief introduction of DEİK to get more familiar.

Foreign Economic Relations Board, DEİK, is a business platform that has been continuing its activities for 37 years in order to enhance all economic relations, between Türkiye and the other countries. We continue our activities with an understanding of “business diplomacy”.

As part of this “business diplomacy” perspective, I firmly believe that today is a good chance to consider our bilateral economic relations of the two friend countries.

There are 148 Business Councils in DEİK, 140 of those are country based Business Councils. We have a strong structure of Business Councils in the world; 45 in Africa, 37 in Europe, 19 in Asia-Pacific, 13 in the Middle East, 13 in Eurasia and 14 in the Americas. Also, we just set

up a business council called “Digital Technologies” under Sectoral Business Councils.

I mean, it is a unique business platform with such a large network. I hope that the Colombian business world will also benefit from this network.

The trade volume between the two countries is more than 2 \$ billion. However, we should reach 5 \$ billion trade volume target in a balanced way. Here the main part of the responsibility belongs to business representatives. We should increase mutual investments and further develop our cooperation with Colombia. Also Ambassadors, the General Consuls, Ministers and Commercial Counsellors are here together with us for support. With this motivation, we should work harder.

I believe that Colombia will be an important economic and trade partner for our country, with its rising economy and infrastructure needs in port, highway, hospital. Also we should increase our cooperation in the fields of defense industry, health, tourism, agriculture and sports.

I would like to finish my speech from Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez known as “Gabo”. Gabo says, **“It is not true that people stop pursuing dreams because they grow old, they grow old because they stop pursuing dreams.”**

I wish we will always pursue our dreams and grow together as business representatives from Türkiye and Colombia.

Thank you for your attention.

Nail OLPAK

President of DEİK