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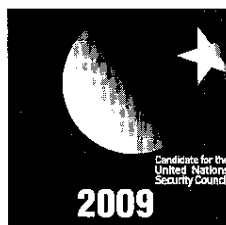
BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

**AT THE FIRST ROUNDTABLE ON
“AFRICA’S DEVELOPMENT NEEDS: STATE OF
IMPLEMENTATION OF VARIOUS COMMITMENTS, CHALLENGES
AND THE WAY FORWARD”**

(NEW YORK, 22 SEPTEMBER 2008)



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Distinguished Co-Chairs,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are here to renew our political will to invest in the future of Africa: a continent whose fate represents our common destiny.

It is true that there is an encouraging but yet insufficient progress in addressing the challenges faced by the African countries.

However, meeting Africa's development needs is certainly within reach.

I appreciate the bold initiatives taken by African countries which have already created a conducive environment in this direction.

Now we have to maintain this momentum through a global partnership.

The priority areas have already been clearly identified in NEPAD. They are development assistance, debt relief, Africa's access to global markets, foreign investment and contribution to peace and security.

Within this framework, health, education, agriculture, environment, infrastructure and capacity-building have emerged as strategic areas for us to take action.

Turkey strives to further enhance its relations with the African countries exactly on the basis of these priorities.

In fact, the Turkish-African Partnership has come a long way within the past 10 years.

Our two way trade, for instance, has doubled since 2004 and exceeded 12 billion US Dollars in 2007. Our target now is to reach 30 billion US dollars by the end of 2010.

Many Turkish firms are actively engaged in projects aimed at improving the infrastructure in various African countries.

In parallel, Turkey has also been stepping up energetically its efforts to provide humanitarian and development assistance to African countries.

The Turkish International Development and Cooperation Agency (TİKA) now successfully implements projects in 37 African countries out of its 3 regional offices in Addis Ababa, Khartoum and Dakar.

In this context, we achieved particular progress in enhancing cooperation between small and medium size enterprises, as well as in extending assistance to agriculture, health and education related projects.

Turkey also decided to open 15 new Embassies in African capitals, in addition to our already existing twelve Embassies.

The African Union's decision this year to declare Turkey as one of its three strategic partners has further enhanced Turkey's resolve to deepen our partnership.

Likewise, Turkey's recent membership in the African Development Bank is yet another important step that can open new areas of cooperation.

We have discussed ways and means to further expand our partnership with our African counterparts last month in Istanbul, during the first Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit where I had the honor of hosting fifty African leaders.

This was truly a historic meeting where we agreed on a renewed road map for our partnership. So I came here with a fresh commitment to continue along this path with even more effective programs and policies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey views Africa as central for our common future. Africa's success will be the success of all humanity.

We also know that our individual endeavors will be more effective if they are part of an integrated strategy. I hope that today's meeting and the declaration we shall adopt will be a crucial step in achieving this objective.

Turkey is committed to continue its active participation in this process and thus join our African and international partners in moving forward to a more peaceful, stable and prosperous Africa.

Thank you.