

## 5. EAGÜ KONFERANSI HAZIRLIKLARI KAPSAMINDA AFRİKA BÖLGESEL GÖZDEN GEÇİRME TOPLANTISI AÇILIŞ OTURUMU HİTABI (22 Şubat 2021, Ankara)

H.E. President Dr. Çakvera,  
The Right Honorable Vice President Dr. Çilima,  
Madam High Representative,  
Dear Colleagues,

-I am happy to be part of the **Africa Review Meeting**.

-A decade ago, with **the Istanbul Program of Action** we put forward an ambitious vision for the LDCs.

-Since then, the LDCs have achieved progress in **bringing their peoples out of poverty**.

-However, **only 3 countries have graduated** from the LDC category in the last decade (*Samoa, Equat. Guinea, Vanuatu*).

-So, there is **still much to be done**, particularly at a time when we are facing additional challenges due to Covid-19.

-**The African continent**, with its **33 LDCs**, is in need of solid leadership and support from its development partners.

-This support is particularly essential in key areas, such as **economic growth, social progress, women and youth empowerment**.

**Dear Colleagues,**

-As the Co-Chair of the Group of Friends of the LDCs, we will continue to do our best to reach these objectives.

**Allow me to briefly share** what we have been doing:

**First**, we continue to increase our presence in Africa. Number of our diplomatic representations rose from 12 in 2002 to **42**. We will soon open Embassies in Togo and Guinea Bissau.

Our development agency **TIKA** and education foundation **Maarif** have also increased their presence in the region.

**Second**, we increased Official Development Assistance in line with the **Addis Ababa Action Agenda** commitments.

-Between 2009 and 2019, we provided **2,5 billion Dollars** of such assistance to LDCs. This amounts to **1,15 percent of our GNI.**, ~~which is above the 0,7 percent commitment.~~

**Third**, we continue our support to the **UN Technology Bank for LDCs**, which we host in Gebze, to help its efforts in bridging the **digital divide**.

-The establishment of **the Bank** was a commitment President Erdoğan made at the 4<sup>th</sup> conference.

-I invite development partners and the LDCs to **contribute to the Bank**, which relies on voluntary donations.

-We are also in consultations with the UN Conference on Trade and Development to set up an **International Science, Technology and Innovation Center** for LDCs.

**Fourth**, we **increased our efforts to assist the LDCs** in their fight against Covid-19.

-We **responded to the medical equipment requests** of 157 countries, many of which were LDCs, as well as 12 international organizations.

-Affordable and equitable supply of **vaccines** is also vital.

-We also support the **Technology Access Partnership Initiative** led by the Technology Bank to increase the local production of essential medical technologies in the LDCs.

**Fifth**, considering the fact that the financial pressure on the LDCs rose due to Covid-19, we supported the “**G20 Debt Service Suspension Initiative**”.

**Sixth**, through joint projects with the **UNDP** such as the "Partnership in Development Program", we are working to increase the **private sector's role** in development and its engagement through South-South cooperation.

## **Excellencies,**

- The **5<sup>th</sup> Conference** will present us an opportunity to redesign the parameters for a renewed partnership.
- Turkey has provided **1 million Dollars** to support the preparatory meetings and will continue to **cooperate with Qatar** for a successful conference.
- I commend the efforts of Ambassador **Volkan Bozkır**, President of the 75<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly for prioritizing the LDCs in the UN General Assembly's work.
- In the **next Program of Action**, we need to focus our efforts on **building production capacities** and **promoting structural transformation** in the LDCs.
- Mobilizing domestic resources** and **creating a positive environment for private investment** will be crucial.
- As a Bureau member of the Preparatory Committee and Co-chair of the Group of Friends, **we will do our best** for an action-oriented conference.

Thank you.