

1st INTERNATIONAL TURKISH–AFRICAN CONGRESS FINAL REPORT

PREPARED BY

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PRESENTATION

It was obviously comprehended through last year that declaration of 2005 as “the Year of Turkey's Opening to Africa” is a very well decision. Increasing relations and cooperation of the African countries with the EU; with international organizations such as the OIC and G8; with great states that play effective role in world politics, such as USA, France, UK, Russia and China; and with Turkey who is increasing its power and position as a regional actor are recognized as milestone for Africa.

The expansion of the Ottoman Empire through Asia, Europe and Africa, and foundation of its local administrations in these continents contributed to the establishment of many modern states of the present world. On the other hand, Turkey's membership process to the EU arrived to the final phase of its long process.

While Turkey improves its relations with Asian countries, government's initiative of establishing close relations with the African states is regarded as a very crucial issue and a considerable development for Turkey. Therefore, Turkey aims to become a new, reliable, stable and hopeful bridge among the continents of Asia, Europe and Africa.

Africa has been generally involved and mentioned in the world agenda with very negative and miserable image and lots of realities about Africa have been undervalued. Although many successes and gains have been attained by the Africans and international organizations which cooperate with the African states, these achievements are not put on the agenda and taken into account. The recent activities of regional integration schemes such as NEPAD and CEN-SAD under leadership of the African Union involving 53 states make us hopeful and optimistic about the future of Africa.

I think that positive relations between Turkey and Africa have been achieved in the recent years through quite number of top-level Turkish bureaucrats' visit to the African states and increasing industrial and commercial investments of the Turkish private entrepreneurs in the African countries. Our country has gained a lot of economic advantages from investment opportunities, which have started in North Africa and then prevailed over the continent since 1970.

In the present days, Sub-Saharan states become focus of the world politics because generally Africa means such Sub-African region involving about 40 states. Struggle for creation of national identity of these states founded after the colonial era has not been completed yet. But in the long term, if struggles and initiatives for transition of the African Union into the United States of Africa produce positive and constructive results, an African identity and citizenship will develop.

Africa is not an old continent, but fatigue, and in the words of Africans, it is a “young” continent. With its rich resources, economic potential and investment opportunities Africa is an attractive continent for big companies and entrepreneurs of the world.

“The First International Turkish-African Congress” was organized in cooperation with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), the Scientific & Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) and Fly Air under coordination of TACSS with the aim of emphasizing historical relations between Turkey and Africa and contributing creation and development of new political, economic and socio-cultural relations in the future. I thank and congratulate the TACSS staff for their contributions and sacrifices in planning, organization and execution of the congress.

Our country hosted many lecturers and experts about Africa, history, civilization, economy, international relations, politics, security, sociology and culture in the congress organized on 23-24 November 2005. Also, Turkish experts, diplomats and politicians participated in the congress. Furthermore, eight African embassies in Ankara paid close attention to the congress.

The African Union whose headquarters is in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, which develops as Brussels of Africa was represented at chairman level. Alpha Oumar KONARE, Chairman of the African Union Commission and Prof. Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU, Secretary General of OIC, participated to the congress and presented keynote speeches. In the keynote speech, Assoc. Prof. Abdullah GÜL, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, emphasized that “Humanity has obligation for Africa”. I think the congress organized by TACSS is an important step for undertaking and enforcement of such obligation. Africa will not wait for us, and we will not wait for Africa, because bridges were already established for the future and walking on these bridges is our duty. TACSS, that considers “2005, the Year of Opening up to Africa” as departure point for the future, aims at to continue its activities within extensive spectrum and strategies forming synergy for Africa and Turkey.

Bearing in mind the historical relations between Turkey and Africa, I hope that results of the congress will contribute to construction and development of a new future for the Turkish-African relations.

Süleyman ŞENSOY
Chairman of TACSS

1. SUBJECT

First International Turkish African Congress

2. COORDINATOR

Coordinator of the congress is Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TACSS).

Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TACSS) is one of the specialized institution which unites the entrepreneurs, scholars and researchers, who understand the significance of the strategic research and who aim at meeting our country's needs on this issue.

Objective of TACSS is to initiate and provide decision-makers with realistic, dynamic, creative, and effective solutions and decision options through scientific research, studies, analysis, and evaluations related to Turkey and the surrounding region's historical, cultural, political, economic, legal, sociological, and geopolitical structure; its bilateral, regional, and multilateral international relations; and its political, economic, and socio-cultural issues.

TACSS is a private and independent center which serves Turkish and foreign private and public institutions in studies about different issues and finances its activities by sponsorships and payments deriving from such services.

3. SPONSORS

The congress was organized with cooperation of Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), the Scientific & Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK) and Fly Air.

4. VENUE

Grand Cevahir Congress Center
Darülaceze Street, OKMEYDANI SISLI / ISTANBUL
Tel: 0 212 314 42 42
Fax: 0 212 314 42 44

5. DATE

23-24 November 2005

6. PARTICIPATION

Approximately 270-300 people including Alpha Omar Konare, Chairman of the African Union Commission, Prof. Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU, Secretary General of OIC, Assoc. Prof. Abdullah GÜL, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, African states' diplomatic representatives in Turkey, businessmen and representatives from private sector, academicians, university students, representatives from non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and media participated to the congress.

7. PROGRAMME OF THE CONGRESS

Keynote Speeches

Süleyman ŞENSOY, Chairman of TACSS

Prof. Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU, Secretary General of OIC

Assoc. Prof. Abdullah GÜL, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister

Alpha Oumar KONARE, Chairman of the African Union Commission

1st Session: A General View on the History of Africa

Heads of the Session:

Prof. Abdurrahman ÇAYCI, Hacettepe University, Ankara

M. Hasan Ahmed EL-HAC, Ambassador of Sudan

1. Pre-Ottoman Africa

Prof. Abdurrahman ÇAYCI, Hacettepe University, Ankara

2. Africa in the Ottoman Era

Prof. Tayeb CHENNTOUF, University of Es-Seina, Oran, Algeria

Prof. Jillali EI ADNANI, Agadir University, Morocco

3. Africa in the Colonial Era

Assoc. Prof. Ahmet KAVAS, TACSS Africa Project Manager

2nd Session: Africa in the 21st Century

Heads of the Session:

L.M. Sobizana MNGQIKANA, Ambassador of Republic of South Africa

1. A General View on the Contemporary Africa

Hıfzı TOPUZ, UNESCO, Journalist

2. Africa in International Relations

Assoc. Prof. Bülent ARAS, TACSS Project Manager

3. Africa's Economic Potential and Investment Opportunities

Sedat Aybar, Ph. D., Kadir Has University, Istanbul

4. The Role and Efficiency of Foreign Aid in Africa's Development (Problems and Recommendations)

Zahra NURU, Director and Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary-General, UN-OHRLS
Prof. Seithy CHACHAGE, University of Dar es Salam, Tanzania

5. Security Issues in Africa, Their Reflections to Europe and Recommendations

Assist. Prof. Kenan DAĞCI, Kocaeli University, Turkey

3rd Session: Relations between Turkey and Africa

Heads of the Session:

Prof. Hasret ÇOMAK, Dean of Faculty of Communication, Head of the Department of International Relations, Kocaeli University, Turkey

1. Political Relations

Can ALTAN, Ambassador, Turkey

Prof. Yusuf FADL, Head of the Department of Turkish Studies, University of Khartum, Sudan

2. Cooperation for Development

Ret. Senior Marine Colonel Ali ÇANKAYA, Head of Strategy Developing, Planning and Coordination Department of TİKA

3. Economic Relations

Cem TOPBAŞ, Foreign Trade Consultant

4. Sociocultural Relations

Prof. Muhammed BAKARI, Fatih University

5. Africans in Turkey

Prof. Orhan KURAL, Istanbul Technical University, Benin Honorary Consul

8. KEYNOTE SPEECHES

In the congress, Süleyman ŞENSOY, Chairman of TACSS, Prof. Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU, Secretary General of OIC, Assoc. Prof. Abdullah GÜL, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, Alpha Oumar KONARE, Chairman of the African Union Commission presented keynote speeches.

In keynote speeches of First International Turkish-African Congress, Süleyman ŞENSOY, Chairman of TACSS, emphasized increasing importance of Turkey in international relations and explained study groups established within TACSS about the European Union, Asia and Africa:

“... We have ten study groups such as the EU Study Group, Global and Regional Power Centers Study Group, Africa Study Group and the Caucasus - Central Asia - the Middle East Study Group. We conduct studies about Turkey’s domestic problems and Turkey in the current international conjuncture. . .”

Also, Süleyman ŞENSOY pointed that “Nowadays, the West, especially EU and USA, concentrates their studies on Africa and Asia, because the future of the world and most of natural resources in the world are in these two continents...”

He declared that, in the near future, TACSS will transform its Africa Study Group into Institute of Africa Studies.

Prof. Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU participated in the congress in the name of 57 Islamic countries, stated that 27 of the 57 members of OIC are African countries. He emphasized that the African countries, that had determinative position in OIC, would also play important roles in the future of Africa and World.

He also expressed that developing countries including member countries of OIC should find ways for improving their economic condition in order to protect and continue their existence within the global environment that is determined by intensive international competition, globalization and liberalization. For this purpose, one of the policies that can be enforced is to increase economic cooperation among such countries. Prof. Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU stated that, “I believe that First Turkish-African Congress organized by TACSS will provide pragmatic and applicable policies in order to improve economic and commercial relations between Turkey and Africa.”

On the other hand, Assoc. Prof. Abdullah GÜL, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, in his keynote speech, explained that “relations between Turkey and Africa traces back

to the Ottoman era. Turks established good and friendly relations with the continent. So, deep cultural, political, humane and moral relations were constructed between Turkish and African people. Furthermore, he stressed that “Turkey recognized declaration of independence of African states in the 1960s and started diplomatic relations with them. Today, we have 12 embassies and more than 20 honorary consulates general in the continent.” Minister Abdullah GÜL, who pointed Turkey’s relations with Africa improves continuously, thanked Alpha Oumar KONARE for admission of Turkey as an observer in the African Union on 12 April 2005.

Alpha Oumar KONARE, Chairman of the African Union Commission, who gave the last keynote speech and expressed his gladness at being as the first chairman of African Union visiting Turkey since its foundation in 1963. He explained that “Africa has an area of 30 million km² which can enclose China, India, European countries, North American countries and Argentina. The African Union with its 57 members constitutes thirty percent of the UN member states and has a determinative power in decision making process within the UN. Videos and news in world media on AIDS, poverty, starvation, misery, domestic and civil wars and chaos such as in Rwanda, Algeria, Sudan and wars among neighbor states generally form image of Africa in the world public opinion. They are undeniable realities of Africa. However, the Africans are not the only responsible for these bad issues. They derive from the colonial era and developed states’ policies that strive for exploiting agriculture, resources and mines of African countries. Africa can overcome all of them, since we will become the third biggest human power in the world in 2025 with its area and population, which will be 1 billion 400 million.” Moreover, Chairman Alpha Oumar KONARE emphasized that Turkey will be the most important bridge and mediator among the EU, Asia and Africa in the near future.

9. EVALUATION OF THE CONGRESS

First International Turkish-African Congress was organized by Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TACSS) on 23-24 November 2005 in Istanbul. Alpha Omar Konare, Chairman of the African Union Commission comprised 53 African states, Prof. Ekmeleddin İHSANOĞLU, Secretary General of OIC comprised 57 Islamic states, Assoc. Prof. Abdullah GÜL, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Prime Minister, accepted our invitation and participated in the congress. Distinguished scientist from Turkey and foreign countries, diplomats, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, TİKA and TUBITAK that conduct effective projects on the international level contributed to the congress.

Preparations for the First International Turkish-African Congress started approximately one year ago. Because Republic of Turkey declared 2005 as “Year of Turkey’s Opening up to Africa”, the government supports and encourages studies and projects which contribute to the “Policy of Opening up Africa” in various fields. In this regard, TACSS established the Africa Study Group, in addition to the nine study groups such as the European Union, Caucasus and Middle

East study groups. During this year, we published books and articles, commentaries in our website, and organized conferences and seminars about Africa, which is generally neglected in Turkey. Coincidence of the First International Turkish-African Congress and Turkey's policy about "Opening up to Africa" in 2005 makes a great contribution to this field.

In the evaluation of these presentations and discussion in the congress, we can say that First International Turkish-African Congress comprehended, explained and emphasized undeniable importance of Africa that has always been an important continent in the world history. Great states founded in Africa which hosted great civilizations in history affected the other continents. Turkish peoples' emergence and existence in the continent began in 9th century. Until the beginning of 20th century, Turks and native African peoples lived and constructed together a magnificent history in the continent. The economic, political, cultural, military and administrative relations and a common history covering more than one thousand year between Turkey and Africa and the continent's relations with outside world were weakened dramatically because of the European colonialism that founded colonies over the continent. We almost forgot the Africans, so the Africans did. Since its foundation, modern Republic of Turkey has become a model for the African countries and people who struggled for independence. Modern Turkish Republic became one of the states that recognized and supported newly founded independent African states in the second half of 20th century.

In the first session of First International Turkish-African Congress, a general view on the African history was presented and discussed. Especially, the Ottoman era and Turkish existence in Africa was emphasized. Importance and meaning of the Ottoman existence and era, that covered four centuries from the beginning of 1500s to the beginning of 1900s, for the African people was pointed. The Ottoman Empire's role in delay of the colonialism, which damaged greatly the continent, about four century in Africa, was expressed. In the light of the past experiences, it was comprehended that important and serious policies could and should be implemented for the future of Africa.

In the second session of First International Turkish-African Congress, the process of independence of the African countries in the 1950s was emphasized. Also, problems and slow economic development of the African countries in the second half of 20th century was discussed. Especially, detailed information were presented and explained about integration schemes in Africa, the African Union and the other African organizations, and their goals and activities. In addition to these, contemporary international relations of the African states, investment opportunities in the continent, economic potential of the African countries, role and importance of foreign aids in economic development of the continent, security issue and recommendations about current problems were discussed and explained.

In the last session of the congress, political, economic and socio-cultural relations between Turkey and the African countries are examined and discussed.

As a result, we can say that, First International Turkish-African Congress attained its objective: Thanks to the congress, Turkey’s past experience about Africa was explained; importance and requirement of new, serious, useful and applicable policies and strategies for the future of Africa was emphasized. We believe that TACSS, by organizing First International Turkish-African Congress, contributed and served to both Turkey, that declared 2005 “the Year of Opening up to Africa”, and the African countries in planning and producing new policies and strategies for the future of Africa. This congress is the first congress about Africa in Turkey. We aim and desire to organize better and more comprehensive congresses about Africa in the future. Results and recommendation derived from the congress are as follows;

10. RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. We have already planned to restructure “Africa Study Group” as “Institution of Africa Studies” within TACSS and to organize International Turkish-African Congress every year in December. We will organize the Second International Turkish-African Congress on 13-14 December 2006. For this purpose, we want to cooperate with Turkish ministries, other official institutions and private entrepreneurs and representatives from private sector and civil society initiatives.
2. Among 53 African states, Turkey has embassies only in 12 African states and honorary consulates general in about 20 states. Diplomatic relations with the other African states are conducted through such existent embassies and consulates. China, South and North Korea and several European states have minimum 40 embassies in the continent. Thus, Turkey should increase number of embassies and consulates over the continent. The congress especially showed that Turkey should give priority in opening embassies and consulates in the states that play important roles in the continent such as Mali, and that have been damaged and isolated by intense civil wars and political anarchy, but have likelihood of great leap in near future such as Angola and Mozambique.
3. In order to increase relations with Turkey, the African Union gave Turkey status of observer state on 12 April 2005. In the congress, Alpha Oumar KONARE, Chairman of the African Union Commission, proposed to open a representative office of the African Union in Turkey.
4. It is known that advertisement of Turkey in the African countries and advertisement of the African countries in Turkey is not sufficient and satisfying. For this reason, the congress stated the necessity of mutual efforts on this theme should be started and developed. For this purpose, mutual cultural activities such as festivals in the field of cinema, music, and literature can and should be organized. Such activities will contribute to advertisement of both Turkey and Africa. In the congress, it was decided to organize an “Africa Week” in Turkey in the near future. This Project is backed by Alpha Oumar KONARE, Chairman of the African Union Commission.

5. Establishment of cooperation at educational level between Turkey and the African countries is an important requirement. It is very important to establish cooperation between the Turkish universities and the Union of African Universities. The African countries can orientate their students to the Turkish universities. Accreditation issue between Turkish and African universities should be solved through cultural and educational understandings and agreements. Initiatives and studies should be started for establishment of departments of Turkology in the African universities and departments of African studies in Turkish universities. Unfortunately, Turkish universities continue to neglect studies about Africa and establishment of institutions and centers for such studies; however, not only Western European universities but also Eastern European universities establish centers and institutions for Africa studies. This issue was one of the most important issues that were discussed and emphasized in the First International Turkish-African Congress.

6. In the light of increasing commercial relations between Turkey and the African countries in the recent years, it is clear and important that required, appropriate and useful institutional and structural measures and arrangements should be taken and enforced in order to continue and improve such commercial relations.

7. Turkey can share its experiences about military and security issues with the African states. Military cooperation between Turkey and Gambia, which has a population of one million, established in the beginning of 1990s can be a model and example for the other African states. Military cooperation between Turkey and Gambia shows that Turkey can establish and conduct military cooperation with the other African states.

8. Historical artifacts made by the Ottoman Empire in the African countries, where deep friendly political, socio-cultural, economic and military relations were established among the Turkish and African peoples in the history, can and should be protected and restored.

9. Technological and scientific cooperation should be established between Turkey and the African states.

10. Turkish products and merchandises should be advertised in the African countries in order to increase commercial relations with Africa.

11. The initiatives of sister city between Turkish and African cities and municipalities should be increased in order to improve relations among the Turkish and the African peoples.

12. Cooperation among the Turkish and African voluntary benevolent associations and clubs should be developed with aim of improving solidarity between Turkish and African peoples.