



INTERNATIONAL TURKISH - AFRICAN CONGRESS

“Future of the African Economy and Turkey”





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VISION DOCUMENT (DRAFT)

11TH INTERNATIONAL TURKISH - AFRICAN CONGRESS

“Future of the African Economy and Turkey”

(28-30 September 2022, CVK Park Bosphorus Hotel, Istanbul)

The first quarter of the 21st century is described with the tendency of finding answers to the problems inherited from the 19th and the 20th centuries with a great historical breakup and the critical questions accumulated by people in their institutional memory and historical conscience.

However, even though it is possible to define the current stage as a new "cold war" period due to various and simply observable facts throughout the world, particularly the armament race that does not differentiate the distinction of nuclear - conventional weapons, it is also possible to define this stage as an **atypical and asymmetrical**, multi-dimensional and wide-ranging "**hegemonic war**" not resulting from a **doctrinal or ideological difference** at the discourse and activity level, but a **political and economic competition** to a large extent.

In this framework, the new international power balance forming as multi-blocks takes place as a long-term supremacy struggle not because of the differences in terms of vision and mission, but the similarities to a large extent, and uses micro nationalism as a fragmentation and annexation tool but also is "**nation or commonwealth**" based, and is focused on economic and military domination, and includes "**cultural/identical survival**" in its codes.

The African continent, which is thought to be on the verge of a great transformation opportunity, is the principal location of the said hegemonic war. Even though regional differences are observed in the continent, those people excluded from the decision-making mechanisms to a large extent along with the cooperation of domestic and foreign elites by means of using sophisticated methods pay the heaviest price.

Therefore, the Africa's strategy towards this fact of "conflict", which carries the potential of evolving into a positive direction, particularly in the eye of civil society, has a critical importance for the future of both the Continent and the world. Because, as the spheres of political and economic influence of the global and regional powers narrow, the pressure on both the world and Africa will gradually increase in terms of either the opportunities or the risks.

Depending on the conjuncture effected from this situation, the number of those countries making significant economic progress in the last fifteen-year process, particularly some of the Sub-Saharan countries, is at a considerable level.



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Even so, when the inequality of opportunity and income distribution, inadequacy of education and infrastructure, and the political and social crises throughout the continent are taken into consideration, there are many measures that are necessary to be taken against the impacts that may effect the periodical and long-term development strategies.

At the present time, the main problem of Africa, which is thought to have started presenting its willpower more strongly while determining its future, is to provide a macro economic balance throughout the Continent. Because, it is not possible to resolve the multi-dimensional infrastructure and institutionalization problems without ensuring a macro economic balance.

However, this target is for the long-term, extremely complicated, multi-dimensional development moves of Africa based on how Africa will carry out its multilateral diplomacy in a period when the economic thought is questioned from all perspectives. This is a realistic target as long as the original policies considering the nature of the African people within their differences as much as the Continent-specific needs and traditional structures are developed and implemented.

It cannot be said that the initiatives, such as **the Lagos Action Plan (1980)** and **NEPAD (2001)**, which aim at providing development and macro economic balance throughout the Continent within the cooperation with the other regional unions, such as **ECOWAS, SADC, EAC** and **COMESA**, in particular **the African Union (2002)**, and depend on the political stability, could completely reach the targets desired because of the lack of leadership as well as the coordination and source problems.

As the instant resolution of all the infrastructure problems is impossible, at least "maximum economic and social achievement by using the scare infrastructure resources in the most efficient way" must be aimed in the short-term as emphasized in the projection of **the African Development Bank** for 2018. Moreover, while opening field for direct foreign investments, getting the dependency on the primary financial resources, such as the USA, EU and China, gradually under control, and reducing ever-increasing debts to a reasonable level will be required. In this context, increasing mutual investments among the countries of the Continent and improving the intra-continental trade gain importance.

The Continental Free Trade Area Agreement (AfCFTA), which was signed among 44 African countries in Kigali in March, 2018 and carries the potential of bringing 1.2 billion people to the same market, is considered as one of the important steps for ensuring the continental integration within the scope of the 2063 project of the African Union. The agreement is predicted to remove the customs and import barriers and give great acceleration to the intra-continental trade. However, the reservations of Nigeria and South Africa, which are amongst the 10 African countries that had not signed this agreement and are more developed compared to the other countries, must be carefully examined.



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Along with the BRICS countries, such as India, Brazil and Russia, in particular China, the countries, like Turkey, having gradually increasing their power in their regions slowly gain strength in the Continent as a balance and competitive equilibrium against the Western block countries, such as the USA, England and France, which are Africa's traditional cooperation partners. As this atmosphere includes various risks for Africa, the social legitimacy basis may be evaluated as an opportunity in care of solid leadership staff in the field of capacity building and diversification of diplomatic relations.

On the other hand, the African Union not being able to strengthen its military capacity due to some problems in industry at large - in defense industry specifically - give rise to some problems. In addition to the USA's **Africa Command (AFRICOM)** and China's "aggressive" but economy-weighted investment policies with global competition motivation and soft power outlook, their ever-increasing military contingents are allowed rooms for positioning in the Continent with implicit or explicit reasons as an extension of the international competition.

This situation prevents the local military units, such as **the Group of Five (G5)**, which was established under the leadership of France with the support of the EU, from acting independently in favor of the Region. It is also required to take into consideration those concerns that the international military strategies with the scope of Africa feed the regional security crisis in the Continent.

One of the parameters having the strongest potential in Africa for capacity building is the Continent's demographic structure. According to the data of the African Development Bank, approximately 200 million of the population is consisted of young people, and this number is predicted to double until 2045. Yet, this young population also poses a significant risk element, if they are not adequately and accurately educated. In this respect, it is required to make investments first on the educational infrastructure specifically in the Sub-Saharan Africa, and reconsider the education targets and methods - in other words, the education paradigm - with all dimensions and by means of a different approach due to their importance for the social development throughout the Continent.

Some ongoing discussions in the Continent that might be gathered under the title of "**Mental Decolonization**" indicate a need in this direction. Within this scope, the NGOs, think tanks, universities and especially the R&D agencies must be pioneered to open new areas of activity within the cooperation with the correspondent institutions.

The Continent-wide and high-level visits, which are being reciprocally made as a start of a new period in the Turkish - African relations in the last fifteen-year period, are important developments showing that the mutual initiatives qualified as multi-dimensional "**active diplomacy**" have been slowly increasing. The steps taken in this process have arisen a satisfaction in many social segments, particularly in the business world. Developing bilateral relations positively has the potential to go towards a new and stronger ground that will pave the way for developing official/civil multi-dimensional strategic dialog and cooperation with a common vision.



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In general, there are many missions that Turkey, whose multi-dimensional initiatives and efforts in Africa and specifically in the East African region are appreciated by the objective observers, can assume more responsibility in the upcoming period with all of its official/civil channels particularly in the Sub-Saharan, North and West African regions. It is important to develop multi-dimensional relations not only in the economy, but also many fields and sectors ranging from energy to security and education to tourism.

The efforts of Turkey for being effective on growth and global scale require it to carry its relations with the African countries to a further level. Africa constitutes a virgin area for the global expansion policies of Turkey, and still waits to be explored.

While particularly the policies for creating a sphere of influence towards the regions out of Africa was limited to a large extent in terms of economic international relations, it is seen that the Continent offers more favorable opportunities to Turkey when considering the factors, such as the improvement and development level, the human resources and the natural resources of the African continent. And the needs, such as overcoming the political and diplomatic crises seen in the Middle East in the recent period more easily, preventing Turkey from becoming isolated in the field of diplomacy, necessitate the development of relations with the African countries in every sector.

Expanding the market for the Turkish export goods, limiting terrorism, enhancing the security measures, and sharing the experiences in the fields of energy and technology depend on the development of relations with the African countries. Within this scope, it is aimed at contributing to the multi-dimensional strategical relations of Turkey - Africa and the reciprocal capacity building thanks to **the 11th International Turkish - African Congress**, which will be held with the main theme of the "**Future of the African Economy and Turkey**" and in which the representatives of various sectors, institutions and organizations will come together within the framework of the Turkish - African relations.

Main Theme

Future of the African Economy and Turkey

Sub-Themes

Searches of a Macro-Economic Balance in Africa
Belt and Road Project, Africa and Turkey
Domestic/Foreign Partnerships in the Shade of Global Politics
Regional Economic Perspectives (North, East, West etc.)
Modern Paradigm Questioning in the Education and Social Development
Towards the New World - Transformation Dynamics of the Turkish - African Relations

Event Page

Event details and the vision document can be reached via the link below:

https://tasam.org/en/Etkinlik/14996/11th_international_turkish_-_african_congress