

PRESIDENT ERDOĞAN: "WE WILL MARK THE FUTURE OF TÜRKİYE- AFRICA RELATIONS WITH THE WORK WE DO AND THE DECISIONS WE TAKE"

The closing ceremony of the fourth Türkiye-Africa Business and Economic Forum, hosted by the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade and organized by the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) in cooperation with the African Union, was attended by the President of the Republic of Türkiye Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Chairperson of the African Union & President of the Union of Comoros (TBC), Azali Assoumani, Minister of Trade of The Republic of Türkiye Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat, Commissioner for Economic Development, Trade, Tourism, Industry and Minerals of the African Union Commission (AUC) Albert Muchanga, DEİK President Nail Olpak, President of the African Business Council Dr. Amany Asfour, and nearly 4 thousand representatives from the economy and business world of Türkiye and African countries.

Erdoğan: "Our trade volume with the African continent, which was 5.4 billion dollars in 2003, approached 41 billion dollars by the end of 2022"

Stating that they will make every contribution to ensure that the African continent takes its rightful place in the global system, **President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan** said: "The level of our relations with most of the countries of the continent was not at a level befitting neither us nor our African friends. First, in 2003, we put into practice the strategy of developing trade and economic relations with Africa. Then, by declaring 2005 as the 'Year of Africa' in our country, we opened a new page in our relations with the continent. As we embraced our African brothers and sisters again, we tried to advance our cooperation on the basis of equal partnership and win-win. We pushed away arrogant perspectives towards the continent. We paid attention to establishing relations with our African brothers and sisters at eye level, developing empathy and understanding each other more. Our trade volume with the continent, which was 5.4 billion dollars in 2003, reached 41 billion dollars as of the end of last year. The total value of our direct investments in Africa has exceeded 10 billion dollars. Our companies undertake very important tasks in eliminating Africa's infrastructure and superstructure deficiencies by doing business in different fields from energy to construction, from agriculture to white goods and food. Our companies contribute to employment and production in African countries by meeting most of their labor needs locally."

Erdoğan: "The total value of projects undertaken by Turkish contractors in Africa has exceeded 85.5 billion dollars"

Emphasizing that it is a source of pride for Türkiye that more than 100 thousand African workers have gained employment opportunities thanks to Turkish investors, President Erdoğan said, "The total value of the projects undertaken by Turkish contractors across the continent has exceeded 85.5 billion dollars. During our visits, we encountered roads, stadiums, airports, and factories built by Turkish companies and their African partners. Our interlocutors express their happiness to work for our companies at every opportunity. As the President of Türkiye, I welcome this recognition of our companies on the continent. We have increased the number of embassies in Africa to 44, and we are proud to host the ambassadors of 38 African countries in Ankara. The number of our commercial consultancies will soon reach 31. We established Business Councils with a total of 48 African countries. The number of countries with which we have trade and economic cooperation agreements has reached 48. The number of countries with agreements on mutual promotion and protection of investments has reached 32. We observe with great happiness that our relations with Africa develop daily in every field, from trade to investment, from culture to education. We believe that the African continent's free trade area will create important opportunities for trade and investments in the coming period. I would like to thank the African Union and the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEİK) for their cooperation and contributions to the realization of the forum."

President Assoumani: "We must make Africa a continent of hope and we must work together for this"

Chairperson of the African Union & President of the Union of Comoros (TBC), Azali Assoumani,

"This forum addresses issues of concern to the people of Türkiye and the African continent. Previously, the same forum was organized in 2021, aiming to increase prosperity jointly. With these steps, we have the opportunity to work in areas such as infrastructure, energy, agriculture, digital marketing, and health. Since the beginning of the partnership with Africa, Türkiye has always used these opportunities best. We must make Africa a continent of hope and reiterate our call to work together to do so. Türkiye's interest in and appreciation of the continent, such as President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's more than 40 visits to the continent, Türkiye's opening to Africa, and the declaration of 2005 as the Year of Africa, are invaluable for all of us. Now, we expect Türkiye's trade volume with African countries to reach 75 billion dollars in 2024, and we are happy to see Türkiye's support in this regard. We see that Africa needs huge investments in infrastructure and energy. We trust Türkiye to transfer its experience to the private sector in the continent. On behalf of the African Union, I would like to thank my brother, H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, once again and express our gratitude for his warm welcome."

Minister Bolat: "We support the approach that Africans will determine the future of Africa"

Stating that Türkiye has always aimed to develop relations with African countries based on equal partnership, brotherhood, and mutual respect and aims to establish mutually beneficial cooperation, **Minister of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat** said: "Türkiye has been taking decisive steps to develop its relations with Africa with a win-win principle since 2003 when the Strategy for the Development of Trade and Economic Relations with Africa was put into practice. Since 2003, when the Africa Strategy determined by our President Erdoğan was put into effect, bilateral relations have entered a period of rapid development. While our trade volume with African countries reached 40.7 billion dollars in 2022, we have reached a trade volume of 27 billion dollars this year as of the 9-month period. Our Türkiye-Africa IV. Business and Economic Forum, which we organized in the current conjuncture where international cooperation is even more needed, offered a significant opportunity

to address the agenda issues of economic and trade relations between Türkiye and African countries and identify new cooperation areas. We are pleased to have met with representatives of African countries and 24 ministers representing African countries during the two-day Forum. In the meetings held for two days within the scope of TABEF, we discussed how cooperation in the fields of agriculture, agriculture-based industry, tourism, health, manufacturing, infrastructure, textile and women entrepreneurship can be carried further. In addition, there were sessions, seminars and meetings where African governments introduced the investment opportunities in their countries to the Turkish private sector, and Turkish and African business people came together and had fruitful business meetings. While supporting the approach that the future of Africa will be determined by Africans, we will continue to stand by Africa in the international arena in the coming period, and we will continue to take decisive steps to develop together with African countries as equal partners. I would like to thank Azali Assoumani, Chairperson of the African Union & President of the Union of Comoros (TBC), who acted in partnership with our Ministry of Trade, the administrations of 6 African international organizations, DEİK management and staff headed by Mr. Nail Olpak, and nearly 4 thousand participants from Africa and Türkiye.

"Olpak: "We will increase our trade with Africa first to 50 billion dollars and then to 75 billion dollars"

Emphasizing that they are working diligently to increase the trade volume between Türkiye and African countries first to 50 billion dollars and then to 75 billion dollars, DEİK President Nail Olpak said: "In our Türkiye-Africa Business and Economic Forum, which we organized for the fourth time this year, we hosted 1 guest President, Ministers of 24 African countries, Commissioner of the African Union Commission and President of the Business Council, 32 Ambassadors, 19 business world presidents, 3,900 Turkish and African business people, 1700 of whom were from Africa. 9,800 business meetings were held within the scope of our program. I would like to tell a well-known short African story. When an explorer was moving through the African jungle, and one of his companions suddenly stopped, the explorer asked: "Why did we stop? Are you tired?" The man replied: "We are not tired, but we are moving so fast that our souls are left behind." Sometimes, we run so fast in the routine of life that we lose the soul of the work. Then, we need to take a breath and continue with a better plan. I see TABEF as a balancing process to catch our soul.

As DEİK, we continue our "Business Diplomacy" efforts to increase our investment and trade with our 152 Business Councils, 48 of which operate in Africa, by capturing the spirit of our business. We are working decisively to strengthen our trade and investments with African countries. We aim to increase our trade first to 50 billion dollars and then to 75 billion dollars. In order to reach our targets, overcoming visa problems, double tax avoidance agreements, mutual recognition and protection of investments agreements, FTAs, development of banking opportunities, and cooperation in the fields of technology and start-ups are crucial. And we have only one principle: win-win. I would like to thank our Presidents, our Minister of Trade and the African Union, our Ministers, panelists, and all representatives of the business world who participated in our program with great interest."

The best of Türkiye-Africa Business World were awarded

After President Erdoğan's speech, the Trade and Economic Cooperation Agreement between Türkiye and the Union of Comoros was signed. The agreement was signed by Minister of Trade Ömer Bolat and Minister of Post, Telecommunications, and Digital Economy of the Union of Comoros Kamalidine Souef. Afterward, Erdoğan and the President of the Union of Comoros, Azali, presented awards to the executives of 6 companies that developed projects covering the African continent and contributed to the development of trade relations with the continent.

Miller Holding CEO & Milvest Chairman Turhan Mildon, Aksa Energy Chairman Cemil Kazancı, Albayrak Holding Chairman Ahmet Albayrak, Doğanlar Holding Vice Chairman Adnan Doğan, Nuro! Holding Vice Chairman Oğuz Çarmıklı and Turkish Aerospace General Manager Prof. Dr. Temel Kotil were presented with their awards.

Sponsored by Miller Holding, Aksa, Albayrak, Doğanlar, Kolin, Nuro!, TAI, Selpak, Tay Group, Koluman, Ford Truck and Afrika Finance Corporation, the Türkiye-Africa IV. Business and Economic Forum ended with bilateral business meetings following the Türkiye-Africa Business Awards Ceremony organized as part of the TABEF Ceremony.