

ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN TURKEY AND AFRICA: CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT

African affairs occupied a secondary status in Turkish foreign policy until very recently. However, following the adoption of the Action Plan for Opening up to Africa in the late 1990s, Turkish politicians started to assign a higher priority to relations with African countries. The incumbent Turkish government now attaches great importance to developing long-term relations with those countries. We can also see that Africa's image in Turkey is changing with journalists presenting new narratives about the continent and supporting Turkish involvement in African affairs. There is also an increasing interest in African studies in the academia, although scholarly work produced on African issues remains limited. This study explores the evolution of Turkish-African relations and concentrates mostly on Turkey's economic engagement in African countries. It also seeks to analyse recent Turkish initiatives in Africa's energy sector. The article argues, among other things, that although the low level of attention paid to African issues has changed, the pace of the development of relations with Africa is still slow and more steps have to be taken to further improve relations with African countries.

Keywords: Turkey, Africa, Sustainable Development

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1. INTRODUCTION

For many years, Turkish foreign policy gave very low priority to engagement with African countries. Instead, following the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, successive Turkish governments focused on developing political, economic and military relations with the Western world and neighbouring regions. Nearly all African countries

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were under colonial rule then; hence they did not register in Turkish foreign policy priorities. Even during the early years of decolonization, Turkey still could not develop relations with those countries. The Cold War dynamics compelled the Turkish government to align itself with the West, thereby emphasizing Turkey's role in the US-led Western bloc. During this period, alliance with Western countries was considered one of the main pillars of Turkish foreign policy. Indeed, Turkey paid such special attention to its relations with Western countries that its attitude at the historic Asian-African Conference of 1955 – also known as the Bandung Conference – caused the Turkish government to be defined as “the spokesman of American imperialism”.¹ For example, Turkey's representative at the meeting, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Fatin Rüstü Zorlu, warned Asian-African leaders against the “dangers of non-alignment” and emphasized the benefits of aligning with the Western world. Turkey also sided with its NATO allies during the Suez Crisis, joined the Baghdad Pact (seen by Arab and Northern African states as a vehicle of US expansionism in the Middle East) and abstained from voting for Algerian independence in the United Nations (UN).²

On the other hand, Turkey, historically, has had close relations with the North African countries dating back to the Ottoman Empire, which had a presence in most of North Africa, as well as some parts of the Horn of Africa (especially Ethiopia and Somalia). Having been under the Ottoman rule for centuries, the North African countries shared a common history, religion, and traditions with the Ottoman Empire and its successor, the Turkish Republic. One can easily see the impact of this legacy, along with an emphasis on the Ottoman Empire's non-colonial record, on the continent.³ However, Turkey only began to engage

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- 1 M. Dikerdem, *Ortadoğu'da Devrim Yillari*. Istanbul: Istanbul Matbaasi, 1977: 118.
 - 2 Ataöv, Türkkaya, Afrika ve Biz. *Vatan*. 21.03.1976, Ataöv, Türkkaya (1977). *Afrika Ulusal Kurtulus Mücadeleleri*, Ankara: AÜSBE, H Bağci, “Demokrat Parti'nin Ortadoğu Politikası in *Türk Dis Politikasının Analizi* (ed.) Faruk Sönmezoglu, Istanbul: Der Yayinlari (2001) 130-131; N Hazar (2003). *Küresellesme Sürecinde Afrika ve Türkiye-Afrika İlişkileri*. Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Yayinlari 112-113.
 - 3 For example, in the official webpage of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it is noted that the Ottoman Empire prevented colonial expansion in Northern and Eastern Africa (See Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey-Africa Relations. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa>. (30.09.2014). One can also see a higher level of attention being paid to the importance of Africa in the public statements of various senior politicians, including the current President and former Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Speaking at the 8th African

sub-Saharan African (SSA) countries by starting diplomatic relations with many of them in the late 1960s and 1970s. For example, it provided foreign aid to a few African countries, such as Namibia, Rhodesia, Zimbabwe, and Eritrea; signed mutual trade and cooperation agreements, such as the Economic and Technical Cooperation Agreements with Sierra Leone and Somalia; and carried out official visits to some African countries, including Ethiopia, Tunisia and Egypt during the 1970s and early 1980s.⁴ However, the independence struggles of those countries, together with Turkey's lack of financial resources and political disinterest impeded further development of relations with African countries during this period.

This active foreign policy attitude of the 1970s continued during the 1980s and early 1990s under the leadership of Turgut Özal, who sought to liberalize the Turkish economy. During this period, Turkey approached the Middle Eastern countries, as well as the newly independent states in Central Asia, South Caucasia, and the Balkans, seeking to develop collaboration with them. It was also during this period that Turkey's membership was rejected by the European Union in 1989. However, Turkey's aspiration to create a Turkish community and become its leader was not embraced by the newly independent

Union Summit held in Addis Ababa in January 2007, Erdoğan declared that "Africa is the centre of our common future. The success of Africa will be a success for all humanity" (Hürriyet, 29.01.2007). This is even as the former President, Abdullah Gül, has argued that the Turkish government, which had always demonstrated "an unrequited love" for Africa, should adopt a different foreign policy approach to the region than that taken by the European powers. This policy is based on equal partnership and includes investing in, bringing new technology into and introducing better qualified manpower to African countries, rather than simply pursuing Turkish interests (cited in Afacan, 2012: 17; Arman, 25.03.2011). Following the First Ministerial Review Conference of Turkey-Africa Cooperation held in İstanbul in December 2011, the then Minister of Foreign Affairs, and previous Prime Minister, Ahmet Davutoğlu, also predicted that the 21st century will be Africa's century and that, as an African himself, he was "proud of Africa's rise" (Turkish NY, 16.12.2011). Such an emphasis on win-win relationships, mutual interests and cooperation can be observed in nearly every public speech of Turkish officials about Africa.

- 4 V. Ipek & G. Bıltekin "Turkey's foreign policy implementation in Sub-Saharan Africa: A post-internationalist approach" (2013) *New Perspectives on Turkey*. 49: 126-127; B. Oran, *Az Gelişmiş Ülke Milliyetçiliği: Kara Afrika Modeli* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi (1977), 677.

Central Asian countries.⁵ Having lost its strategic importance to the Western world after the Cold War and being denied membership of the European Union (EU), following the EU's decision at the 1997 Luxembourg Summit, the Turkish government decided to pursue a multidimensional foreign policy rather than solely aligning itself with the West. In its search for foreign policy alternatives by playing a more dynamic and constructive role in world politics in the post-Cold War period, Turkey adopted its Opening to Africa Policy in 1998 when Yılmaz Cem was the Minister of Foreign Affairs.⁶ Similarly, a new bourgeoisie that emerged during the liberalization of the 1980s began to push for the opening up to new markets.⁷ This new class soon began to influence foreign policy-making as economic issues gained greater significance in foreign policy.⁸

The foreign policy activism of the 1980s continued throughout the 1990s when Turkey sought to diversify its foreign policy alternatives and reach new markets. Given this background, the adoption of the Opening to Africa policy constituted a major policy shift, which had the wider aim of engaging with other regions than the West. Kırışçi also notes that the lobbying of Turkish companies and business associations played an important role in the development of the

5. T. Wheeler, *Turkey's Role and Interests in Central Asia* (Saferworld 2013) 3.

6. The Action Plan covered various political, diplomatic, economic, educational and social measures (Hazar, 2012: 8), requiring in particular a detailed examination of economic measures taken to help improve relations with African countries. As Özkan notes, diversifying economic relations was one of the major motivations for Turkey's recent involvement in Africa, so economic measures have a central place in the Opening Up policy. These include signing economic, technical and scientific cooperation agreements with African countries, inviting the ministers responsible for the economy, commerce, industry, agriculture, education and health and African experts on technical education programmes. Other measures included coordinating technical assistance programmes for African countries, becoming a non-regional member of the African Development Bank and the African Export-Import Bank (Afreximbank), promoting mutual investment and business visits, and establishing business councils or joint chambers of commerce, Özkan, *supra* note 34, Hazar, 2012: 8).

7. M. Pâhin, *Anadolu Kaplanları Türkiye'yi Ortadoğu ve Afrika'da Etkili Kiliyor*. (2011) *Ortadoğu Analiz* 2(17): 95-99.

8. Here, it should be noted that this "conservative bourgeoisie" emerged in the 1980s and created its own business associations in order to explore new market opportunities provided by an important segment of the incumbent AKP's (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi) electoral support base (Atlı, 2011: 124).

Opening Policy.⁹ This is no surprise as the Action Plan for Opening Up to Africa was prepared following consultation not only with government officials, but also Turkish ambassadors to African countries, African ambassadors, and representatives of the private sector.¹⁰ However, Turkey's financial crisis, political instability and lack of political will subsequently impeded the implementation of the plan until AKP's accession to power in 2002.¹¹

Having both adequate financial resources and political will, the AKP government continued to pursue a proactive foreign policy, especially in the once-neglected regions. It is no surprise, therefore, that the Strategy on the Development of the Economic Relations,¹² prepared by the Under-Secretariat of Foreign Trade in 2003, followed the Action Plan for Opening Up to Africa under the AKP government. AKP has assumed a greater role in regional and world politics, with its engagement with African countries being an important part of this new foreign policy vision.¹³ To this end, the AKP government has used

9 K Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State" (2009). *New Perspectives on Turkey*. 40: 29-57.

10 Hazar, 2012: 8.

11 Özkan, 2010: 534, n 34; Özkan and Akgün, 2010: 532, n 34.

12 The Strategy also stated various objectives to develop bilateral and multilateral economic and trade relations with African countries. These include increasing trade volume with African countries, encouraging direct investment by Turkish companies – primarily small and medium-sized enterprises – in those countries, gradually increasing the number of Turkish firms and banks operating in African markets, signing preferential trade arrangements and free trade agreements with African countries, and supporting African countries' efforts to gain membership of the World Trade Organization (WTO) (Kızılarla, 2007: 25-26).

13 It is also true that the AKP government is looking for new partners outside the Western world as it seeks to increase its role in world politics. On the other hand, Turkish officials do not take the recent foreign policy activism as conflicting with Turkey's historical relations with the West. Rather, it complements its EU vision. Davutoğlu further says that "the road to Paris passes through Africa" (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 27.02.2009). This new foreign policy understanding is also visible in Davutoğlu's seminal book, *Stratejik Derinlik* (Strategic Depth, 2001). Before becoming the 26th Prime Minister of Turkey, Davutoğlu steered Turkish foreign policy under the AKP rule by serving as the Minister of Foreign Affairs between 2009 and 2014, and chief advisor on foreign affairs to then Prime Minister, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, from 2003. In *Strategic Depth*, Davutoğlu proposes several principles for Turkish foreign policy that require the implementation of a novel vision-oriented, systematic and dynamic foreign policy with more active involvement in international issues. According to Davutoğlu, the strength of a country can be measured by its economic, cultural and diplomatic activism in other regions. Therefore, the Turkish government should revise its foreign policy

humanitarian aid and development assistance as a means to develop its relations with African countries, which would, in turn, complement Turkey's commercial interests. In line with this approach, government agencies, including TIKA (the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency) and AFAD (Disaster and Emergency Management Authority), have increased their activities in Africa and provided humanitarian and development support to many African countries. Several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also operate in African countries and enhance Turkey's visibility and prestige in the region. Business groups, together with these NGOs, have also helped to implement the Opening Up plan to Africa.

These factors explain why Turkey's initiatives in Africa differ from the involvement of BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) or even European powers. Unlike the latter, Turkey does not have a colonial past in the continent, nor has it the negativities seen in other countries' relations with African countries. The fact that Turkey gained its independence from some of these same powers is also a source of sympathy among African people (Habiyaemye and Oguzlu, 2014: 79). An important part of Turkey's engagement in Africa is the contribution of non-state actors, which has helped to enhance Turkey's presence through their humanitarian activities and trade relations. It is argued that among these organizations, Gülen-inspired humanitarian associations, schools and business groups have once become a source of Turkish soft power in the region. The Gülen movement is especially active in education, opening schools in sub-Saharan Africa since the late 1990s (Harte, 2012). However, Gülen-affiliated schools are now defined as agents of a parallel state and the government aims to replace these schools with government-sponsored schools providing the same service. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan also called on African leaders to shut down the schools. Özkan notes that "these developments could possibly contribute to closer cooperation between Ankara and African capitals since the Turkish authorities are increasingly likely to develop a more direct and comprehensive policy toward the continent. In this sense,

by focusing on other distant regions, and not only its immediate neighborhood. In line with his brief criticisms of previous government policies that ignored Africa, he noted that Turkey has to reconsider its African policy in the post-Cold War era because continued deprioritization of Africa would be an unacceptable mistake and weakness in Turkish foreign policy in this new period.

various aspects of Turkish-African relations will continue to remain on the forefront of public attention in the foreseeable future”.¹⁴

While the government is still the dominant actor in delivering humanitarian assistance, the role of civil society organizations is increasing. Both government institutions and Turkish NGOs provide direct aid, working in high-risk areas in contrast to other traditional powers that generally implement their aid activities via local NGOs and/or international aid organizations. On the other hand, Western countries use both multilateral channels and local/international NGOs while BRICS generally operate bilaterally or through multilateral organizations, with an emphasis on South-South cooperation. Because Russia, for example, is hesitant to work with NGOs, it channels most of its humanitarian aid through multilateral humanitarian agencies.¹⁵ Chinese NGOs also play only a marginal role in delivering Chinese external assistance, and this is not likely to change in the near future. Only a few Chinese NGOs are involved in aid projects and they are generally seen as policy implementers of the Chinese government.¹⁶ India’s contributions to international organizations have increased, especially in the last years. However, like the Chinese case, financial constraints mean that only a few Indian NGOs are active abroad. India, thus, prefers to use multilateral channels, especially in complex humanitarian emergencies.¹⁷ The focus of Brazilian aid is technical assistance, especially for health and agricultural projects, and the transfer of technology from Brazilian institutions. South Africa’s presence is mostly concentrated in Southern Africa, but its financial capacity in development assistance and humanitarian aid is not comparable to that of other BRICS countries. As with Turkey’s involvement in Africa, the aid activities of those powers have facilitated commercial expansion in the continent. However, BRICS aid is often bound up with the purchase of goods and services from those countries.¹⁸

14 2014: 27.

15 A. Brezhneva, & Daria Ukhova, *Russia as a Humanitarian Aid Donor* (OXFAM Discussion Paper, 2013) 9.

16 Y Sun, Yun, “China’s foreign aid reform and implications for Africa” *Brookings*. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2015/07/01-china-foreign-aid-africa-sun>

17 Meier, Claudia and Murthy C.S.R, “India’s Growing Involvement in Humanitarian Assistance’ (GPPi Research Paper No. 13, 2011) 5.

18 E. Tjønneland, “Providing Development Aid to Africa: Comparing South Africa with China, India and Brazil (SAFPI Policy Brief No. 25, 2013).

Turkish aid, on the other hand, generally does not come with many strings attached, in contrast with concessional aid or grants, such as China's "loans-for-oil" policy or India's development assistance provided in exchange for the purchase of Indian goods (Poon, 2013). Another difference in Turkey's African engagement is the increasing activities of Turkish NGOs operating in various African countries. This multiplicity of actors involved in foreign policy-making towards Africa is very visible in the Turkish context. At the same time, Turkish aid, as for that of other traditional and emerging powers in Africa, serves the country's economic interests. In other words, Turkey is also economically motivated in its interest in Africa. However, while other emerging powers, such as the BRICS, concentrate both on the import or control of Africa's natural resources and on developing market opportunities, the Turkish government aspires to create markets for Turkish products and find investment opportunities for its companies. During the colonial period, European powers exploited Africa's natural resources for their own economic development. These former colonial powers still use these trade relations with African countries inherited from the colonial era. The USA, on the other hand, uses both diplomatic and military involvement to secure access to Africa's abundant resources.¹⁹

The US government established AFRICOM (The United States Africa Command) in 2007, which is responsible for military relations and security cooperation with African nations and regional organizations.²⁰ However, it is argued that the Command also aims at reducing Chinese influence in the continent as access to African resources is still an important part of US national strategy. The Western hegemony over Africa's resource market have been challenged by the emerging powers, and the traditional powers of the USA and the EU now feel threatened by the increasing influence of these countries, especially China. China combines its trade relations with investment in the infrastructure and development capacities of African countries. It has thus changed the structure of the competition over African resources. At the centre of

19 A. Habiyaremye & T. Oguzlu "Engagement with Africa: Making Sense of Turkey's Approach in the Context of Growing East-West Rivalry" (2014) *Uluslararası İlişkiler*; 1(41): 65-85, also A Habiyaremye, Afrika'nın Doğal Kaynakları ve Sino-Amerikan Jeostrateji Rekabeti. *Ortadoğu Analiz* (2012) 4(46): 39-51.

20 AFRICOM. (2014). About the Command. <http://www.africom.mil/about-the-command> (27.05.2016).

this East-West rivalry for Africa's oil and minerals are oil contracts, mining concessions and trade deals.²¹

In contrast with BRICS having large investments in African energy industry, Turkey only has a few initiatives in Africa's energy and mining sectors. As will be discussed in more detail in the following parts of the article, Turkish-African trade also still falls below the expected rates at US\$17.5 billion in 2015. Meanwhile, Africa's trade with the BRICS has grown faster than its trade with other regions, being projected to reach US\$500 billion by 2015. China's trade with African countries (mostly on primary commodities) approached US\$300 billion in 2015. African trade with India, another important trade partner, was also projected to reach US\$100 billion in 2015 (*China Daily*, 10 November 2015; *The Economist*, 17 January 2015; United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2013).²²

However, there is an increasing diversity in the BRICS' sectoral interests. China and India are the two main consumers of agricultural raw material exports (more than 90 per cent) and fuel exports (almost 85 per cent) from Africa. On the other hand, the BRICS export mainly manufactured goods (particularly China) and food products (particularly Brazil) to Africa (United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 2013). Having its own abundant natural resources, Russia invests mainly in fuel energy and agriculture while Brazilian corporations also focus on energy, natural resources and mining. India invests more in manufacturing, energy and telecommunication; while South Africa also invests in telecommunications and manufacturing. Chinese investments are focused on various sectors, including agriculture, infrastructure, energy and telecommunications.²³ In 2012, China's investment in Africa,

21 Habiyaemye and Ođuzlu, 2014, *supra* note 19.

22 Africa's trade with Brazil (in goods) in 2015 amounted to US\$16.9 billion. Russia-Africa trade was roughly more than US\$10 billion while US-African trade was US\$51 billion. On the other hand, EU-Africa trade the same year exceeded US\$300 billion during. Africa's major import category both from the USA and the EU is machinery, nuclear equipment and boilers while Africa's exports to the USA and the EU are mostly mineral fuels and oils. See <<http://www.trademap.org/Index.aspx> for more detailed info on Africa's bilateral trade data with those countries/regions>

23 United Nations Economic Commission for Africa. 2013. Africa-BRICS Cooperation: Implications for Growth, Employment and Structural Transformation in Africa. Ethiopia, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (2014). BRICS/Africa: Partnership for Development – Driving Inclusive Growth and Transformational Change. Ethiopia. 21-22.

especially by Chinese state-owned enterprises, exceeded US\$40 billion while the total investments of Turkish companies reached only 6.2 billion dollars in early 2016.²⁴

This article will proceed with a more detailed analysis of the evolution of Turkey-Africa relations with a particular focus on the involvement of non-state actors. Drawing on recent trade data, the third part of the article, analyses Turkey's economic engagement in Africa along with recent initiatives in Africa's energy sector. Finally, the conclusion concentrates on the challenges and prospects awaiting Turkish-African relations which might weaken relations with African countries. It is argued that, although the revival in Turkey's relations with African countries is a positive development in diversifying Turkish foreign policy, more steps have to be taken to further develop political relations and increase trade volumes, which still remain below the anticipated level.

2. TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS AFRICA

Various interrelated developments are responsible for Turkey's recent engagement in Africa, with the ruling AKP government now assigning a higher priority to the region. The decision to open up to Africa through government agencies and civic and business channels was a significant rhetorical and policy shift. By attaching great importance to Africa for the reasons discussed above, Turkey has not only strengthened bilateral relations with the majority of African countries²⁵ but also with non-governmental actors, including civil society organizations and business associations. The Turkish government has also shown serious interest

24 D. Shinn, "China's Investments in Africa. *Africa Up Close*. <<https://africaupclose.wilsoncenter.org/chinas-investments-in-africa/>> (10 April 2016); Shinn, David. (2015). Turkey's Engagement in Sub-Saharan Africa: Shifting Alliances and Strategic Diversification. *Chatham House, The Royal Institute of International Affairs*, Research Paper. DEIK. (2016). Afrika Kalkinma Bankasi Semineri Sonus Raporu. Istanbul: DEIK. DEIK. Türkiye ile Afrika Ülkeleri Arasindaki Iliskiler Saglam Temeller Üzerinde Ilerliyor. <https://www.deik.org.tr/6209T%C3%9CRK%C4%B0YE_%C4%B0LE_AFR%C4%B0KA_%C3%9CLKELER%C4%B0_ARASINDAK%C4%B0_%C4%B0L%C4%B0%C5%9EK%C4%B0LER_SA%C4%9E_LAM_TEMELLER_%C3%9CZER%C4%BONDE_%C4%B0LERL%C4%B0YOR.html> (19.07.2016).

25 For a full list of Turkish missions abroad, including Africa <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-representations.en.mfa>>

in Africa as a whole. This has resulted in greater involvement in African issues, including active participation in peacekeeping missions and providing significant amounts of humanitarian assistance, an increased diplomatic presence and the expansion of commercial relations. Turkey has also enhanced relations with regional organizations, such as the African Union, while Turkish embassies in various African countries are now accredited to the following sub-regional organizations: IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority on Development Partners Forum), ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States), EAC (East African Community), COMESA (Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) and ECCAS (Economic Community of Central Asian States).²⁶ Non-state actors have also helped to enhance Turkey's presence in African countries. For example, TUSKON (Turkish Confederation of Businessmen and Industrialists) has once been very active in organizing business meetings and annual summits between African countries and Turkey while MUSIAD (Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) have organized other small-scale activities, including business forums. Having a semi-legal status, DEIK (Foreign Economic Relations Board) has established business councils in 30 African countries. Turkish NGOs have also increased their humanitarian activities, investing especially in education, health, and emergency relief.

In turn, this multifaceted interest of government and non-state actors has driven academic interest, culminating in an increase in scholarly work on Africa. As of 2016, three universities offer Masters Programmes on African Studies, including Gazi University, Ankara University, and Istanbul Ticaret University, with research centres being established within universities and think-tanks outside the universities. These efforts all aim at increasing awareness on African issues. Similarly, seven universities now have African Studies Research Centres which are located at Kadir Has University, Ankara University, Izmir University of Economics, Kirklareli University, Erciyes University, Istanbul AYdin University and Gazi University. An important Turkish think-tank, the Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies (TASAM), has an African Institute, which publishes important work and organizes various conferences, workshops, and roundtables on African issues. Apart from TASAM, there is the Centre for Middle Eastern and African Studies, operating under the name International Strategic Research Organization

26 <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa>>

(USAK) while the International Relations and Strategic Analysis Centre (TURKSAM) also studies the region within its Middle East and Africa Centre. Such centres aim to contribute to the development of literature on Africa by conducting scientific and policy research, and training researchers willing to specialize on the continent.

In contrast with the former neglect of the continent, there is now a strong emphasis by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs on developing long-term relations with African countries. Africa is redefined as “one of the prime orientations of Turkish foreign policy”, and as a re-emerging continent “with many promising developments”, such as increased regional integration, good governance, democracy, conflict prevention and economic development. To establish long-term relations with African countries, the ministry aims at establishing closer political relations, supporting the democratic, good governance and economic objectives of African countries, especially through trade, investment and humanitarian assistance, as well as contributing to the management of conflicts by participating in peacekeeping missions in the continent and supporting their international and regional organizations.²⁷ In accordance with this new pro-Africa foreign policy orientation, the number of Turkey’s embassies in Africa has more than tripled, rising from 12 in 2009 to 39 in 2016, while the number of African embassies in Turkey has increased from 10 in 2011 to 32 in 2016. Along with the Turkish government’s increasing diplomatic visibility in Africa, its trade ratio with African countries is also increasing, though not as much as those of other emerging powers. However, as elaborated in the following section, exports to Africa exceed imports. The Turkish government is also an active contributor to seven out of nine UN missions in Africa (Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali, Central African Republic, Darfur, South Sudan, Ivory Coast and Liberia). The determination to improve relations with Africa is also seen from the increasing number of scholarships provided to African students and the expansion of Turkish Airlines’ routes to 48 African destinations.²⁸

In the mood of Turkey’s celebration of 2005 as “The Year of Africa”, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan travelled south of the Equator that same year, thus becoming the first Turkish prime minister to visit the continent.²⁹ Also, in 2011, Erdoğan became the first non-African leader

27 <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa>>

28 <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa>>

29 The destination countries were Ethiopia and South Africa.

to visit Somalia in two decades.³⁰ Following the visit, which was intended to draw attention to the famine in the country, Turkey scaled up its aid programme in the country and organized the second Istanbul Somalia Conference in 2012. The visit was symbolically significant and emphasized Turkey's growing interest in Africa as an important part of AKP's multidimensional foreign policy.³¹ As Tank noted, "the growing engagement with Africa is indicative of a new humanitarian approach expressly linked to [Turkey's] globalizing foreign policy and a stronger proactive role, which includes trade and peacebuilding initiatives as a part of an all-encompassing humanitarian and development agenda".³² For example, Turkish businesses, which see Somalia as an emerging market for Turkey, have helped develop Somalia's infrastructure and funded the aid activities of Turkish NGOs.³³

Turkey sees its Somalia policy as a "litmus test" for its relations with Africa as a whole. It is believed that the success or failure of Turkey's Somalia policy will determine the perception of other African countries towards Turkey. Turkey's involvement in Somalia has also played an important role in placing the country's issues on the global agenda.³⁴ In February 2016, for example, Turkey hosted the third Somalia High Level Partnership Forum (HLPF) with the participation of representatives from more than 50 countries and 11 international organizations.³⁵ Turkey also mediated between the conflicting parties and launched mediation talks as part of its peace-building efforts. The first (indirect) talks took place between the Transitional Federal

30 Shinn, 2015: 9.

31 P. Tank, "Turkey's New Humanitarian Approach in Somalia" (2013) *NOREF Policy Brief* 1.

32 Ibid.

33 Akpınar, 2013: 743.

34 M. Özkan, *Turkey's Involvement in Somalia: Assessment of a State-Building in Progress* (SETA Publications, 2014) 9-11; Özkan, Mehmet. (2010). Turkey's Rising Role in Africa. *Turkish Policy Quarterly* 9(4): 93-105; Özkan, Mehmet. (2010). What Drives Turkey's Involvement in Africa? *Review of African Political Economy*. 37(126): 533-540; Özkan, Mehmet (2012). "A New Actor or Passer-By: The Political Economy of Turkey's Engagement with Africa". *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*. 14(1): 113-133; Özkan, Mehmet (2014). "A Post-2014 Vision for Turkey-Africa Relations". *Insight Turkey*, 16(4): 23-31.

35 For the details of the meeting, see European Union External Action. (29 February 2016). Somalia High Level Partnership Forum <http://eeas.europa.eu/top_stories/2016/240216_somalia-high-level-partnership-forum_en.htm> (27.05.2016).

Government and al-Shabaab. Turkey also hosted the first presidential meeting between Somalia and Somaliland in Ankara in 2013. The meeting also aimed at encouraging the flow of international aid and development to the country.³⁶ Turkey's involvement in Somalia increased its visibility and prestige in the continent and, thus, can further contribute to its relations with other African countries, especially in the SSA.

The Turkish government was accepted as an observer country of the African Union (AU) in 2005, before becoming a strategic partner in 2008.³⁷ In the same year, Turkey also held the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit with the participation of 49 African countries. Twenty-nine of these countries were represented by their heads of state and government at the summit.³⁸ The summit produced the Istanbul Declaration on Turkey-Africa Partnership: Cooperation and Solidarity for a Common Future, which involved cooperation in various priority areas, including trade and investment, agriculture, agribusiness, rural development, small and medium-scale enterprises, health, peace and security, infrastructure, energy and transport, culture, tourism and education.³⁹ The Second Turkey-Africa Partnership Summit was held in Equatorial Guinea in 2014 under the theme of "A New Model of Partnership for the Strengthening of Sustainable Development and Integration." The summit declaration adopted another Joint Implementation Plan of Africa-Turkey Partnership for 2015-2019 (The African Union, 2014: 4), which projected institutional cooperation, cooperation within international organizations, and with regional economic communities and civil society. The plan also included several other articles on trade and investment, agriculture, health, peace and security, conflict resolution, migration, culture, tourism, education,

36 P. Akpınar, "Turkey's Peacebuilding in Somalia: The Limits of Humanitarian Diplomacy" (2013) *Turkish Studies*. 14(4): 735-757.2013: 745, see also Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Historic Somalia Summit in Ankara. Presidents of Somalia and Somaliland met in Ankara (27 May 2016).

37 A. Özerdem, "How Turkey is emerging as a development partner in Africa" (2014). *The Guardian* <<http://www.theguardian.com/global-development-professionals-network/2013/apr/10/turkey-development-partner-africa>>

38 UNCTAD, 2010: 18.

39 See the Istanbul Declaration on Africa – Turkey Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future <<https://www.issafrica.org/uploads/TURKEYAFRIDECAUG08.PDF>>

sports, media, environment, and energy.⁴⁰ In his opening speech at the summit, the Turkish President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, said that the opening process has been completed and Turkey and Africa have moved to a new stage of “equal partnership.”⁴¹ However, the AU’s webpage noted that “the Africa-Turkey Partnership has enormous potentials, but its rate and scope of implementation will need to take off because, as of now, not much progress has been made in implementing the Istanbul agreement.”⁴²

2.1 The Involvement of Non-State Actors and Humanitarian Assistance

Turkey’s aspiration to become a more active player in world politics has also resulted in its adopting a humanitarian diplomacy. To this end, it has increased its humanitarian involvement in different regions, including Africa, both through government agencies and civil society organizations. For example, in 2013, Turkey distributed US\$1.6 billion in humanitarian aid, making it the third largest donor after the USA and UK.⁴³ Similarly, in 2014, Turkey provided US\$383 million in development aid to sub-Saharan African countries. This amounted to one-third of Turkey’s overall development assistance for that year.⁴⁴ As Turkey’s major aid agency, TIKA also increased its aid activities in Africa. The organization was established in 1992 with the sole purpose of coordinating operations in Central Asia and Caucasia. However, after 2005, TIKA expanded its scope to different regions, including

40 See Joint Implementation Plan of Africa-Turkey Partnership for 2015-2019 <<http://afrika.mfa.gov.tr/data/turkey-africa-joint-implementation-plan-2015-2019.pdf>>

41 Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 November 2014, Speech by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of the Republic of Turkey. <<http://afrika.mfa.gov.tr/21-november-2014-speech-by-HE-recep-tayyip-erdogan-the-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey.en.mfa>> (10.11.2015).

42 African Union. Africa-Turkey Partnership. <http://www.au.int/en/partnerships/africa_turkey> (30.09.2014). The document does not have a publication date. However, the author accessed it before the second Turkey-Africa summit.

43 Global Humanitarian Assistance Report. 2014. <<http://www.globalhumanitarianassistance.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/GHA-Report-2014-interactive.pdf>> (08.04.2016).

44 M. Çavuşoğlu (2014). 2015 Yilina Girerken Dis Politikamız. T.C. Disisleri Bakanligi, M Çavusoglu (2016). 2016 Yili Basinda Dis Politikamız. T.C. Disisleri Bakanligi.

programme coordination offices in two African countries (Ethiopia and Sudan). Currently, 11 of the 40 programme offices are located in the following African countries: Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Senegal, Niger, Sudan, Ethiopia, Somalia, Kenya, Cameroon, and Namibia.⁴⁵ In line with government policy to improve relations with African countries, TIKA now places particular importance on Africa by developing programmes primarily in education, health and agriculture. Whereas only 28 of the 562 TIKA projects were devoted to Africa in 2005, since Asia was the priority area, the number rose to 525 or 33.7 per cent of its 1,800 projects in 2013.⁴⁶

TIKA now operates in 28 African countries with Somalia and Ethiopia being among the major recipients. Between 2011 and 2014, TIKA distributed US\$315 million in development assistance to various African countries.⁴⁷ In 2013, Egypt was the second largest recipient of Turkish official aid after Syria.⁴⁸ In 2014, TIKA delivered more than US\$26 million in development assistance to Africa. Somalia received US\$4.5 million while Ethiopia received US\$1 million. Kenya, Libya, Niger, Senegal, Sudan and Tunisia were the other major recipients.⁴⁹ TIKA develops its projects mostly in coordination with other public agencies, NGOs and international organizations, including the Islamic Development Bank and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The Ministry of Health and the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality are among the public institutions

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- 45 TIKA. (2005). Faaliyet Raporu 2005. <<http://www.TIKA.gov.tr/upload/oldpublication/faaliyet-raporu-2005.pdf>> (08.04.2016); TIKA. (2013a). *Annual Report* 2013. <<http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/publication/TIKA%20ANNUAL%20REPORT%202013.pdf>> (8 April 2016); TIKA. (2013b). Turkish Development Assistance 2012. <<http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/oldpublication/TurkishDevelopmentAssistance2012.pdf>> (23 April 2016); TIKA. (2013c). Turkish Development Assistance 2013. <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/publication/KYR_FRAE_2013_uyg9.pdf> (24.05.2016); TIKA. (2015a). Africa. <http://www.tika.gov.tr/upload/2015/Prestij/Afrika_Ing.pdf> (20 May 2016); TIKA. (2015b). TIKa Afrika'nin 28 Ülkesinde Faaliyet Gösteriyor. <[http://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/tika_afrika_nin_28_ulkesinde_faaliyet_gosteriyor_\(video_haber\)-15825](http://www.tika.gov.tr/tr/haber/tika_afrika_nin_28_ulkesinde_faaliyet_gosteriyor_(video_haber)-15825)> (21.05.2016); TIKA. Fields of Activity. <http://www.TIKA.gov.tr/en/fields-of-activity/2> (1 October 2014).
- 46 TIKa, 2005: v-vi, 151; TIKa, 2013a: 18-19, *ibid.* TIKa has not published an annual report since 2013.
- 47 TIKa, 2015b, *supra* note 45.
- 48 TIKa, 2013c: 90, *supra* note 45.
- 49 TIKa, 2015b, *supra* note 45.

delivering medical relief to African countries.⁵⁰ AFAD also provides humanitarian assistance, especially for disaster and emergency relief.

As already discussed, Turkish aid is delivered not only through the Turkish government but also through civil society groups operating on the ground. In 2011, 60 per cent of all NGO assistance was distributed for alleviating famine in Somalia. In 2012, Africa was still the leading regional recipient of Turkish NGO assistance with US\$68.54 million, followed by the Middle East with US\$42.07 million, and South and Central Asia with US\$27.54 million.⁵¹ However, following recent developments in Syria, the Middle East replaced Africa as the major recipient of NGO assistance in 2013 when US\$113.38 million was distributed to the Middle East, and Syria received 40 per cent of all NGO assistance. Aid to Africa also increased to US\$93.22 million, with Somalia, Niger, Chad, Mali, Burkina Faso and Egypt being the major recipients in 2013.⁵²

Turkish NGOs often coordinate with local partners. This was very visible in Somalia, where Turkish NGOs also employed Somali staff, while Turkish officials worked with government ministries, local authorities and Somali NGOs.⁵³ This contrasts with other donor countries that deliver their aid through Nairobi-based international organizations. Turkey's aid activities in Somalia illustrate the strong coordination between the Turkish state and civil society organizations.⁵⁴ In 2015, the Somali President, Hassan Sheikh Mohamud, noted that, "from the outset, Turkey has treated Somalia as an equal partner, respected our requests and insisted on our input ... Where other international partners chose to plan their interventions from elsewhere, Turkey put its people on the ground in Somalia to maximize the efficient use of their human and planning resources in support of their financial resources".⁵⁵ For example, Kizilay (Turkish Red Crescent) established a Somalia Delegation Presidency after the United Nations (UN) declared

50 In July 2015, the Turkish government also pledged to donate \$1 million to the African Union in its fight against the Ebola outbreak (Al Jazeera, 9 July, 2015).

51 TIKA, 2013b: 77; 2013c: 76, *supra* note 45.

52 TIKA, 2013c: 76-77, *supra* note 45.

53 Saferworld, 2013, 9.

54 Saferworld, 2015, 9.

55 H. Mohamud, "Turkey's Role in Somalia: A Model of Solidarity in Tough Times" *Daily Sabah* <<http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2015/01/24/turkeys-role-in-somalia-a-model-of-solidarity-in-tough-times>> (09 April 2016).

a famine in two areas in Somalia in 2011 and started a relief campaign in the same year.

Several NGOs and charity agencies, including Cansuyu Charity and Solidarity Foundation, IHH (Humanitarian Relief Foundation), Doctors Worldwide and Deniz Feneri Association also operate in various African countries, investing mostly in education and health. Cansuyu Foundation and IHH mainly deliver assistance to those suffering from conflicts, wars, crises and natural disasters. In addition to emergency aid activities, including search and rescue operations, urgent housing and medication aid, IHH also has food aid, vocational training, orphan care and sanitary aid programmes.⁵⁶ Deniz Feneri is one of the largest Turkish NGOs, delivering humanitarian assistance in 18 African countries, including the renovation of a hospital in Niger, reopening an unused hospital in Somalia, drilling water wells in many African countries, providing food aid and assistance in education and health, and organizing other activities during religious holidays.⁵⁷ Doctors Worldwide operate in 30 different countries, including 10 from Africa. The organization provides humanitarian and medical aid to Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, Ghana, Kenya, Niger, Guinea-Bissau, Libya, Mauritania, and Somalia.⁵⁸ As previously noted, business circles also have a strong interest in Turkey's integration into world markets. The next section shows that the activities of those business groups have also encouraged Turkey to expand its involvement in Africa and increase its commercial relations with African countries. The next section of this study discusses Turkey's economic engagement in Africa in more detail along with Turkish initiatives in Africa's energy industry.

3. TURKEY-AFRICA ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL RELATIONS

In a 2012 interview, Davutoglu claimed that economic interests are influential in shaping Turkish foreign policy. According to him, "Increasing the level of economic cooperation with as many countries as possible has become an important priority of Turkey. It compels us

56 See the webpage of Cansuyu Foundation <<http://cansuyu.org.tr/>> and the webpage of IHH <<http://www.ihh.org.tr/>>

58 See the webpage of Deniz Feneri Association <<http://www.denizfeneri.org.tr/>>

59 See the webpage of Doctors Worldwide <<https://www.yyd.org.tr/>>

to reach out and enhance the scope of our relations on a global scale.”⁵⁹ The view that there are wide areas of potential cooperation between Turkey and Africa, such as technology transfer, trade relations and investment opportunities that further require the development of commercial relations, is gaining appeal among senior government officials.⁶⁰ As Ihsan Dagi notes, “To understand Turkey’s vigorous regional and global policy one needs to look at the dynamism of the business sector”. Turkish companies have acted successfully to exploit the opportunities created by this new diplomatic activism.⁶¹ Having discovered Africa, Turkish business groups, especially small-and medium-size enterprises, have started to search for more business opportunities in the continent.⁶² Many Turkish companies have also started to invest in Africa. In 2007, the direct investments of 350 Turkish companies around the continent totalled around US\$400 million.⁶³ By 2013, this reached US\$5 billion and climbed higher to US\$6.2 billion in 2016.⁶⁴ In 2003, for example, only one Turkish company was doing business in Ethiopia, but by 2014 the number had increased to more than 300.⁶⁵

In their search for alternative export markets, Turkish exporters now consider that Africa has great potential for meeting their economic interests. Turkish firms are particularly active in construction and

60 S. Umar, “The Economic Relations between Turkey and African Countries” IVth Workshop Final Report: *Economic Relations between African Countries and Turkey* (Istanbul: TASAM Strategic Report No: 24: (2007) 22-24.

61 A. Vicky, “Turkey Moves into Africa” (2011) *Le Monde Diplomatique*. <<http://mondediplo.com/2011/05/08turkey>>

62 *Hürriyet* (29.01.2007). Erdogan: Asirilar dünyayi krize sürüklüyor. <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/5856841_p.asp> (30.10.2014); *Hürriyet*. (27.01.2009). Africa as a savior for Turkish firms. <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/finance/10861936.asp>> (02.01.2015); *Hürriyet Daily News*. (27.02.2009). Ties with Africa help ties with <EU. <http://avrupa.hurriyet.com.tr/haberler/daily-news/278988/ties-with-africa-help-ties-with-eu>> (30.10.2014); *Hürriyet Daily News* (05.02.2013). Energy dependence to grow in Turkey. <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/energy-dependence-to-grow-in-turkey.aspx?pageID=238&nid=40585>> (22.05.2016); *Hürriyet Daily News*. (10.08.2015). Turkish Aksa inks deal with Ghana to build 370 MW power plant. <<http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-aksa-inks-deal-with-ghana-to-build-370-mw-power-plant-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=86730&NewsCatID=348>> (12.04.2016).

63 Umar, 2007: 24, *supra* note 60.

64 Dünya, Güney Afrika’dan Türkiye’ye yatırım çağrısı. <<http://www.dunya.com/ekonomi/yatirim/guney-afrikadan-turkiyeye-yatirim-cagrisi-209474h.htm>> (12.04.2016), (DEIK, 2016: 2

65 Çavusoglu, 2014: 108; Çavusoglu, 2016: 110.

infrastructure, with African countries constituting 19 per cent of Turkish contractors' international business volume in 2011 (Armagan, 2011). A 2015 survey revealed that company directors now see Africa as a fertile area of development with the potential to bring further investment opportunities. According to the survey, Africa is the second most popular market (30 per cent) after the Gulf Region (45 per cent) (KPMG, 2015). For example, in 2015, Limak Holding began to build a cement factory worth US\$40 million in Mozambique with an expected annual capacity of 2 million tonnes. One Limak board member, Serdar Bacaksýz, declared that "the company has been closely monitoring the African market for a long time and might increase its investment by up to US\$150 million if needed."⁶⁶

Such construction and infrastructure firms have participated in projects, especially in Northern African countries like Egypt, Libya, Algeria, and Morocco, since the 1970s. They still operate such projects, especially in the latter three countries. The total value of construction and infrastructure projects undertaken by 115 Turkish firms up to 2010 is US\$20.5 billion in Libya, US\$5 billion in Algeria and US\$1.4 billion in Morocco. In 2016, Libya constituted 36.3 per cent of the total construction business of Turkish companies. Meanwhile, Turkish construction equipment exports to African countries dramatically increased from US\$8 million in 2000 to US\$264 million in 2011, although more than half of these were in North Africa alone.⁶⁷ However, projects have also recently started in the following SSA countries:

66 Limak. Limak Holding begins work on cement factory in Mozambique. <<http://www.limak.com.tr/press-room/news-limak/2015-en/limak-holding-begins-work-on-cement-factory-in-mozambique>> (15.04.2016).

67 Armagan, Zeynep. (2011): 4-7, 'Kuzey Afrika'da Kazandıran Sektör: İnşaat İzmir Ticaret Odası, Dis Ekonomik İlişkiler ve Uluslararası Organizasyonlar Müdürlüğü <http://www.izto.org.tr/portals/0/iztogenel/dokumanlar/kuzey_afrika_4-17-2012%2010-38-28%20am.pdf>; Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 21 November 2014, Speech by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the President of the Republic of Turkey. <<http://afrika.mfa.gov.tr/21-november-2014-speech-by-HE-recep-tayyip-erdogan-the-president-of-the-republic-of-turkey.en.mfa>> (10.11.2015); Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Interview by Mr. Ahmet Davutoglu published in AUC Cairo Review (Egypt) on 12 March 2012. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/interview-by-mr_-ahmet-davuto%C4%9Flu-published-in-auc-cairo-review-_egypt_-on-12-march-2012.en.mfa> (01.01.2015); Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey's Development Cooperation: General Characteristics and the Least Developed Countries (LDC) Aspect. <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey_s-development-cooperation.en.mfa>

Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Senegal, Congo, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Tanzania. Turkey's share of the construction sector in Africa has doubled within eight years, from 2 per cent in 2004 to 4.1 per cent in 2012.⁶⁸ From 1990 to 2016, 200 projects were implemented in SSA countries worth US\$8.8 billion⁶⁹ In 2011, the Turkish government also signed free trade agreements with three Northern African countries (Tunisia, Egypt, and Morocco) and one SSA country (Mauritius) (United Nations, n.d: 79). It also established 23 joint economic commissions and 17 business councils and signed eight double taxation prevention agreements with African countries (Akel, 2014: 9).

As a United Nations document reveals, Turkey is now one of seven key emerging economies active in Africa, along with Brazil, China, India, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation (United Nations, 2010). Between 2000 and 2010, these countries were involved in 239 infrastructure projects in Africa, of which 141 (59 per cent) were linked to Chinese stakeholders followed by Brazil (15.9 per cent), Korea (8.8 per cent), India (6.3 per cent), Turkey (5.9 per cent), Malaysia and Russia (2.1 per cent) (United Nations, n.d: 12). Turkey's determination to increase its engagement in Africa can be seen from the fact that it was one of Africa's top 20 trading partners in 2008 and top five investment partners in 2011.⁷⁰

With business councils throughout Northern Africa and in 25 SSA countries, DEIK has also increased its activities in the region. Various summits and meetings were held in Turkey with the participation of several African countries. Speaking at the Symposium of African Day held by DEIK in May 2015, Ömer Cihad Vardan, President of DEIK, said that Turkey's economic, commercial, social and cultural relationship with African countries is mutually beneficial. Vardan also noted that Turkish private sector supports the expansion towards Africa through economic bases and not through military bases as some other countries do.⁷¹ MUSIAD, having offices in five African countries – Ivory Coast,

(02.12.2014); Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey-Africa Relations. <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkey-africa-relations.en.mfa>> (30.09.2014); Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey's Energy Profile and Strategy. <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy.en.mfa>> (22.05.2016).

68 Türkiye Müteahhitler Birliği <<http://www.tmb.org.tr/>>

69 Ibid.

70 UNCTAD, 2010: 13, 31-32) (United Nations, n.d.: 82).

South Africa, Niger, Nigeria, and Senegal – also pioneered the establishment of business associations in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Mauritania, South Africa, Niger, Sudan and Uganda.⁷² The activities of different business associations have all aimed at strengthening comprehensive economic cooperation. The following subsection considers whether these initiatives, together with government efforts, have translated into a significant increase in the trade ratio between Turkey and African countries by presenting recent data on bilateral and multilateral trade.

3.1 Turkish-African Trade in Numbers

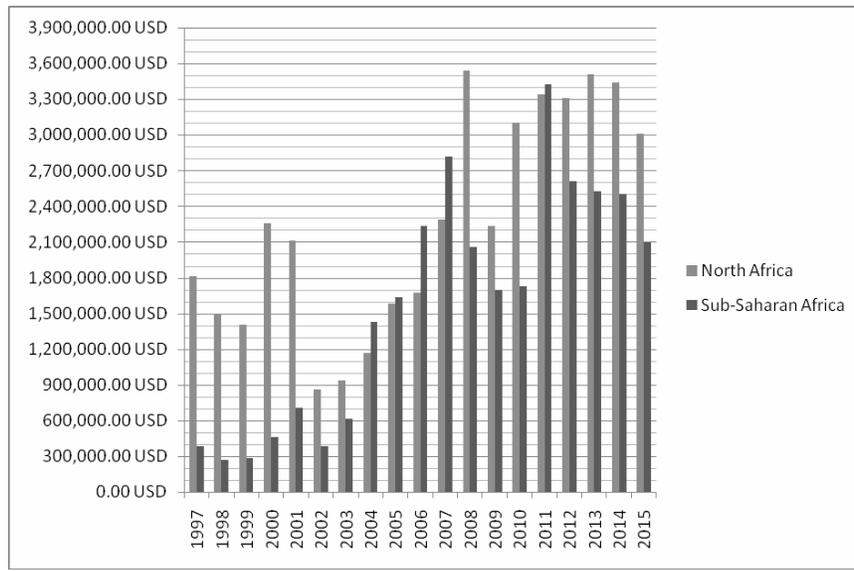
The last decade saw a dramatic increase in Turkish-African relations, as reflected in trade volume growth between Turkey and African countries. Graph 1 presents Turkish-African import data between 1997, the year before the adoption of the Opening to Africa Plan, and 2015. Overall, Turkish imports from Africa rose after 1997, peaking in 2013. There have been some fluctuations, particularly the fall in 2002 and 2009. Nevertheless, despite the slight decline since 2012, imports remained at US\$5 billion in 2015.⁷³

Figure 1. Turkish-African Import Data: 1997-2015 (000 US\$)

71 DEİK. Türkiye ile Afrika Ülkeleri Arasındaki İlişkiler Salam Temeller Üzerinde İlerliyor. <https://www.deik.org.tr/6209/T%C3%9CRK%C4%B0YE_%C4%BOLE_AFR%C4%B0KA_%C3%9CLKELER%C4%B0_ARASINDAK%C4%B0_%C4%B0L%C4%B0%C5%9EK%C4%B0LER_SA%C4%9ELAM_TEMELLER_%C3%9CZER%C4%B0NDE_%C4%B0LERL%C4%B0YOR.html> (19.07.2016).

72 See MUSIAD. 2014. *Çerçeve*. Year 21. No. 63, 54. See also <<http://www.musiad.org.tr/tr-tr/subeler>>

73 The most important import categories from Africa are mineral fuels, lubricants and related materials, pearls and precious stones, inorganic chemicals, cocoa, and iron and steel (Turkish Ministry of Economy. Africa Regional Information. <<http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions>> (01.01.2015)). However, as the following tables better indicate, the EU is Turkey's major import and export partner followed by Asian and other European countries. Turkey's imports to the EU are dominated by machinery and transport material, chemical products and manufactured goods (European Commission. Countries and Regions: Turkey. <<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/turkey/>> 23.05.2016)). On the other hand, Turkey's major import category from the Middle East is raw materials. It is estimated that approximately 65 percent of Turkey's imports from the region are concentrated on mineral fuels and oils (Turkish Ministry of Economy. Countries & Regions: Middle East. <<http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions>> (23.05.2016)).



Source: Data abstracted from Turkish Customs and Commerce Ministry <<http://www.gtb.gov.tr/>>

Figure 2 shows that Turkish exports to Africa have risen steadily overall since 2001, except for a brief dip first in 2010, then in 2011 and 2015, from slightly over US\$1 billion in 1997 to US\$3.5 billion in 2005 and US\$12.5 billion in 2015. Exports mostly went to North Africa, with nearly less than one-half going to the sub-Saharan countries.⁷⁴

74 The most important export categories to Africa are iron and steel, mineral fuels lubricants and related materials, nuclear reactors, machinery and vehicles (Turkish Ministry of Economy. Africa Regional Information. <<http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions>> (01.01.2015)). Turkey's exports to the EU are mostly machinery and transport equipment and manufactured goods (European Commission. Countries and Regions: Turkey. <<http://ec.europa.eu/trade/policy/countries-and-regions/countries/turkey>> (23.05.2016)). Turkey's main export items to the Middle East are pearls, stones and precious metals, iron and steel, electric machinery and equipment, vehicles, machinery and mechanical appliances, and mineral fuels and oils (Turkish Ministry of Economy. Countries & Regions: Middle East. <<http://www.economy.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=countriesandregions>> (23.05.2016)).

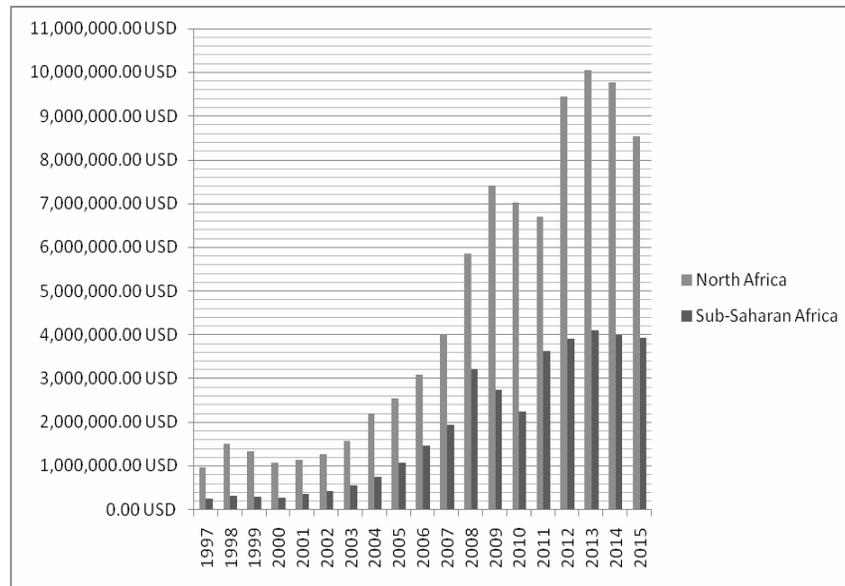


Figure 2. Turkish-African Export Data: 1997-2015 (000 US\$)

Source: Data abstracted from Turkish Customs and Commerce Ministry <<http://www.gtb.gov.tr/>>

As shown in Table 1, Turkey's exports to Africa are concentrated on a few major trade partners, with Turkey's five major export partners in 2015 all being from Northern Africa. After these come various SSA countries: South Africa, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Sudan and Ghana. The trade volume with these 10 countries constitutes nearly 85 per cent of Turkey's total African export volume.

Table 1: Top Five Export Partners in Africa, 2015 (000 US\$)

North-Africa				
Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt
1,337,801	1,826,181	819,091	1,420,240	3,125,089
Sub-Saharan Africa				
South Africa	Nigeria	Ethiopia	Sudan	Ghana
489,168	313,922	383,596	424,556	219,729

Source: Data abstracted from Turkish Customs and Commerce Ministry <<http://www.gtb.gov.tr/>>

Table 2 shows Turkey's major import partners in 2015 as Egypt, South Africa, Algeria, Morocco, Libya, Tunisia, Ghana, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Of these, imports from the three North African countries (Egypt, Morocco and Algeria) account for nearly half of Turkey's total imports from Africa. Together with the export data, this table indicates that Turkey's closest business partners are still located in North Africa despite all the official rhetoric emphasizing Turkey's determination to improve trade relations with SSA countries and all of the initiatives to diversify Turkey's trade partners in Africa. A detailed analysis also indicates that Turkey's major trade partners in SSA have remained the same following the opening to Africa.

Table 2. Top Five Import Partners in Africa, 2015 (000 US\$)

North-Africa				
Morocco	Algeria	Tunisia	Libya	Egypt
710,622	740,547	144,077	195,796	1,215,905
Sub-Saharan Africa				
South Africa	Nigeria	Congo Dem. Rep.	Ivory Coast	Ghana
918,541	189,985	130,523	274,350	168,907

Source: Data abstracted from Turkish Customs and Commerce Ministry <<http://www.gtb.gov.tr/>>

While economic and trade relations with African countries have continued to grow, they have not yet reached the desired phase or level. Table 3, which presents recent data for Turkey's imports by country groups, demonstrates that Africa still only has a marginal share, at 2.5 per cent, of Turkey's total imports, especially when compared to Turkey's traditional trade partners like European, Asian and Middle Eastern countries.

As Table 4 makes clear, the same applies to Turkey's exports by country groups. Although Turkey exports more to Africa than it imports, export levels, at 8.6 per cent, still lag far behind exports to EU countries or the Near and Middle East. Exports to SSA account for less than half of exports to North Africa.

Table 3. Turkey's Imports by Country Groups, 2015 (000 US\$)

Country Groups	Imports	% share
EU Countries	78,668,832	38.0
Other European Countries	28,109,858	13.6
North Africa	3,006,952	1.5
Sub-Saharan Africa	2,092,386	1.0
North America	12,057,020	5.8
Central America and the Caribbean	1,039,500	0.5
South America	3,661,121	1.8
Near and Middle East	13,574,618	6.6
Other Asia	53,339,679	25.7
Australia and New Zealand	608,577	0.3
Other Regions and Countries	9,821,057	4.7
Total	207,206,813	100

Source: Data abstracted from Turkish Statistical Institute <<http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/>>

Table 4. Turkey's Exports by Country Groups, 2015 (000 US\$)

Country Groups	Exports	% share
EU Countries	64,008,890	44.5
Other European Countries	14,143,878	9.8
North Africa	8,528,402	5.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	3,922,011	2.7
North America	7,066,716	4.9
Central America and the Caribbean	848,855	0.6
South America	1,309,912	0.9
Near and Middle East	31,092,055	21.6
Other Asia	10,308,562	7.2
Australia and New Zealand	619,543	0.4
Other Regions and Countries	105,899	0.1
Total	143,861,522	100

Source: Data abstracted from Turkish Statistical Institute <<http://www.turkstat.gov.tr/>>

The majority of Turkey's imports and exports are still concentrated on its traditional trade partners, although Turkey's overall trade volume with African countries increased by nearly 500 per cent, from US\$3.4 billion in 1997 to US\$17.5 billion in 2015. However, this trade is still dominated by Northern African countries, and this is unlikely to change, at least in the near future. Despite the efforts at trade diversification,

the recent increase in commercial relations and Africa's great investment potential for Turkish businesses, Turkish-African trade remains low. At the same time, some Turkish firms are cautious about investing in the African market as it is a new area, especially for small and medium-sized businesses with concerns over unknown risks.⁷⁵ As Kaplan puts it, "gaining a financial foothold in Africa would be a challenge, especially as Turkey has been gripped by its own domestic turmoil in recent months. The fact that India and China have already entered the African market, offering more competitive prices, was likely to make it difficult for Turkey to profit in the region"⁷⁶ It is therefore necessary to take more concrete steps to further increase cooperation at various levels, including energy. The following sub-section focuses on Turkey's recent interest in Africa's energy industry and major initiatives taken by Turkish companies.

3.2 Turkey's Interest in Africa's Energy Sector

Official sources emphasize an increasing engagement with African countries in the energy sector. Thus, Turkey's investment in African energy is based on mutual interests, unlike Africa's past trade partners. For example, at the 16th Africa Energy Forum held in Istanbul in June 2014, Taner Yildiz, former Turkish Minister of Energy and Natural Resources, emphasized Turkey's determination to invest in Africa's energy industry in a way to help African countries benefit from the natural resources extracted from their own territories.⁷⁷ Turkey's recent interest towards Africa's energy industry is largely related to the country's dependence on energy imports and the urgent need to diversify its source countries. Turkey is one of those countries highly dependent on outside sources to meet its rapidly increasing energy demand, which raises concerns over its energy security.

75 E.Kaplangil, *2 milyon dolari olmayan Afrika'ya gitmesin* (2016) *Hürriyet*. <<http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/2-milyon-dolari-olmayan-afrikaya-gitmesin-23353844>>

76 M. Kaplan, "Turkey-Africa Economic Relations: After Russian Sanctions, Turkish Businesses Eye African Markets to Offset Losses" (2015) *International Business Times*. <<http://www.ibtimes.com/turkey-africa-economic-relations-after-russian-sanctions-turkish-businesses-eye-2228482>>

77 Daily Sabah (18.08.2014). "Turkey Plans to Invest in Africa's Energy Industry". <<http://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2014/08/18/turkey-plans-to-invest-in-africas-energy-industry>> (01.10.2014); Daily Sabah. (21.08.2014). Turkey's TPAO to seek oil in Angola. <<http://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2014/08/21/turkeys-tpao-to-seek-oil-in-angola>>

Turkey is now second, after China, in terms of energy demand growth. Domestic sources only meet one third of the total energy demand while the rest is provided from different foreign energy suppliers. In order to reduce its energy dependence, there have been efforts to increase energy efficiency and the share of renewable energy sources, maximizing the use of domestic sources, and building nuclear power plants. As part of its energy strategy, Turkey also aims at becoming a regional energy hub along the East-West and North-South Energy Corridors.⁷⁸ The latest data reveals that nearly 99 per cent of Turkey's natural gas is imported via several energy supply routes. Specifically, Turkey imports 58 per cent of its natural gas from Russia, followed by Iran (18 per cent), Azerbaijan (12 per cent), Algeria (7.7 per cent) and Nigeria (2.4 per cent). Turkey also imports 89 per cent of its oil supplies. In 2015, nearly half of its crude oil imports came from Iraq (45.6 per cent). Other major suppliers were Iran (22.4 per cent), Russia (12.4 per cent), Saudi Arabia (9.6 per cent), Colombia (3.5 per cent), Kazakhstan (2.6 per cent) and Nigeria (2.1 per cent).⁷⁹ According to 2013 data, Turkey ranks fifth in natural gas imports, eighth in hard coal imports and 13th in oil imports.⁸⁰ Turkey's limited domestic reserves coupled with its growing energy demand have resulted in its foreign energy dependence.⁸¹ Furthermore, its energy demand is expected to double over the next decade.⁸² However, while Turkey is trying to diversify its energy partners, Nigeria is its sole African partner for natural gas and oil imports. Unlike BRICS countries, especially China and Brazil, with large investments in African energy, Turkey's interest in Africa's traditional energy resources is also limited to a few initiatives. These include the signing of energy cooperation agreements with Djibouti, Cameroon, Niger, Sudan, Kenya and the Gambia, and agreements to construct power stations in a few African countries, such as Ghana and Rwanda, which were unsuccessful due to feasibility problems.⁸³ In 2014, officials from the Turkish Energy and Natural

78 See Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Turkey's Energy Profile and Strategy. <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy.en.mfa>> (22.05.2016).

79 <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy.en.mfa>>

80 TMMOB (Makine Mühendisleri Odası) (2015). *Bülten: Ocak 2015 Itibariyla Türkiye'nin Enerji Görünümü Raporu*. Sayı 200.

81 <<http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkeys-energy-strategy.en.mfa>>

82 (*Hürriyet Daily News*, 05.02.2013).

83 *Daily Sabah*. (18.08.2014). Turkey Plans to Invest in Africa's Energy Industry. <<http://www.dailysabah.com/energy/2014/08/18/turkey-plans-to-invest-in-africas-energy-industry>> (01.10.2014).

Resources stated that Angola was one of the countries with priority for the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO), which is looking to invest in oil extraction. Since many other companies are also operating in deep-water searches, TPAO plans to explore on land.⁸⁴ Many Turkish companies have also started to export their gas-turbine power plants to mainly African countries that need to increase their energy supply. As Sarempet Enerji General, Ali Rıza Öner stated, “most African regions have an energy deficit, and their purchasing guarantees constitute the lifeblood of the second-hand power plant market”.⁸⁵ Experts argue that Turkey should invest more in African energy resources because of its proximity to the region. For example, Shinn noted in 2014 that he was surprised Turkey had not already invested in Africa’s energy industry although energy infrastructure is a lucrative sector for Turkish investors.⁸⁶

At the Africa Energy Forum in Istanbul, Edward Njoroge, Chairman of the Nairobi Securities Exchange, reportedly said Turkey should show more interest in investing in African countries, especially in power generation and power distribution. According to him, “There are opportunities in the continent. The demand is still very, very high, the suppliers are patient. Therefore, we are looking for any countries like Turkey to invest in Africa”⁸⁷ However, the forum was far from producing tangible economic outcomes for Turkish businesses. In late 2015, Sureyya Yücel, chairman of the Energy Business Council of DEİK, also said that Turkish businessmen should go to Africa to meet Africa’s energy demand.⁸⁸ Yet, there are only a few Turkish companies investing in African energy, such as Hakan Mining and Electricity Generation Industry, Karadeniz Energy Group and Aksa Energy.

In 2011, Hakan Mining reached an agreement with the Rwandan government to build a 100MW peat-fired power plant to raise the

84 *Daily Sabah*, 21.08.2014.

85 Erdil, 08.10.2015

86 S. Tonkus, “Experts Predict Turkish Energy Investment in Africa” *Anadolu Agency*. <<http://aa.com.tr/en/economy/exclusive-experts-predict-turkish-energy-investment-in-africa/149427>> (05.04.2016); *Turkish Weekly*, “Africa Courts Energy Investment from Turkey” <<http://www.turkishweekly.net/2014/06/28/news/africa-courts-energy-investment-from-turkey/>> (05.04.2016).

87 *Turkish Weekly*, 28.06.2014.

88 Anadolu Agency, (30.12.2015). Africa: New Destination for Turkish energy investors. <<https://energy.aa.com.tr/newsRegion.php?newsid=7177988>>

country's generating capacity by 90 percent.⁸⁹ This project, however, failed to deliver on time, reportedly because of poor feasibility studies. In 2016, the Rwandan government, through the Ministry of Infrastructure, signed another deal with the company to install an 80MW peat power plant. This time, the Minister of Infrastructure noted that if the new project was not delivered effectively on time, the company would be penalized.⁹⁰ In 2014, Karadeniz Energy Group, through its subsidiary, Karpowership Ghana Company Limited, signed a ten-year powerpurchase agreement with the state-run Electricity Company of Ghana for the construction of two floating power stations to generate 450MW of electricity to Ghana every year.⁹¹ In 2015, a Ghanaian opposition member filed a legal suit against the deal in Ghana's Supreme Court, alleging that the deal breached the constitution.⁹² Aksa Energy is among those few Turkish energy companies exploring new African markets. In 2015, Aksa Energy signed a five-year power purchase agreement with the Ghanaian government to build a 370MW power plant that is expected to operate from the second half of 2016.⁹³ In looking for investment opportunities abroad and developing energy projects in Africa, Aksa Energy has plans to further expand into 10 African countries.⁹⁴ As earlier indicated, Turkey's interest in Africa's energy sector is new and limited to a few initiatives with Turkish companies experiencing efficiency problems. These attempts cannot be compared with the interest of other great powers investing in Africa's energy sector.

Nevertheless, Turkey is now more determined in investing in Africa's energy industry as manifested in the detailed articles about energy cooperation of the Joint Implementation Plan signed after the second Turkey-Africa summit. In contrast with the Istanbul Declaration signed

89 S. Butera, "Rwanda, Turkey's Hakan Mining Sign \$283 Million Power Plant Deal" *Bloomberg*. <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2012-09-12/rwanda-turkey-s-hakan-mining-sign-283-million-power-plant-deal> (06.04.2016).

90 M. Nkurunziza, "Turkish Company to Invest \$400m in Peat Power Plant" (2016) *New Times*. <http://www.newtimes.co.rw/section/article/2016-02-11/196996>.

91 Ergin, 17.06.2014).

92 World Bulletin. (20.06.2015), "Ghana-Turkey Power Deal in Legal Limbo" <http://www.worldbulletin.net/news/160961/Ghana> (07.04.2016).

93 *Hürriyet Daily News*, 15.08.2015.

94 Enerji Enstitüsü. (07.04.2016). Aksa Enerji Afrika'da 10 ülkeyle görüşüyor. http://enerjienstitusu.com/2016/04/07/aksa-enerji-afrikada-10-ulkeyle-gorusuyor/?utm_source=haberler.com

after the first Turkey-Africa summit, which only acknowledged the importance of energy cooperation between the two parties without any detail on its implementation, the Joint Implementation Plan projected stronger cooperation in the energy field. The parties agreed to:

cooperate in enhancing energy infrastructure in Africa with a view to further develop the energy industry in Africa; promote the cooperation between Turkish energy companies and national petroleum and natural gas companies in African countries with a view to exploring opportunities of oil, oil products and natural gas trading for the benefit of both sides; improve institutional and technical capacities of African countries... and also cooperate in the field of effective management of mining resources; cooperate in the fields of engineering and pre-construction and construction of oil and natural gas pipelines; cooperate in every segment of the electrical sector; cooperate in the field of mining and mineral processing technologies, to accelerate the industrialization of Africa, to the mutual benefit of both parties.⁹⁵

So far, however, not much progress has been made to implement the plan while the strategic partnership announced at the summit has not been translated into large-scale projects or natural resource related concessions. As Tepebas notes, “competition in Africa’s energy sector is ‘very fierce’... and the government should increase incentives to do business in Africa”.⁹⁶ However, Turkey’s capacity to compete with other traditional and emerging powers investing in Africa’s energy sector is limited. Experts note that due to its geographical position, Turkey has important renewable energy potential. The government passed a Renewable Energy Law in 2005 to increase the use of these resources, especially for electricity. Nevertheless, as these resources are still inefficiently used and Turkey’s energy production is far less than its energy consumption, the reliance on imported sources continues.⁹⁷

95 See Article 12 of the Plan on Infrastructure, Energy, Mining and Transport <<http://afrika.mfa.gov.tr/data/turkey-africa-joint-implementation-plan-2015-2019.pdf>>

96 *Turkish Weekly*, 28.06.2014.

97 Arioglu Akan, Mahmure Övül, Ayse Ayçim Selam, Seniye Ümit Oktay Firat, Merve Er Kara and Semih Özel, “A Comparative Analysis of Renewable Energy Use and Policies: Global and Turkish Perspectives (2015) *Sustainability*: 7, 16379-16407.

This makes cooperation with African countries in the energy sector even more urgent. On the other hand, it also raises questions about Turkey's potential to contribute to the management of Africa's resources or improve the capacities of African countries in this field.

4. CONCLUSION

After many years that African affairs had occupied a secondary status in Turkish foreign policy, the late 1990s saw a different foreign policy initiative. This aimed at expanding foreign policy options, with African countries now viewed as offering Turkey new prospects for foreign policy diversification and an opportunity to enter new markets. Within the scope of the Opening Up to Africa, the Turkish government sought to correct past failures and pursue a more dynamic and multi-faceted foreign policy towards Africa. The years following the adoption of this policy, therefore, saw an increase in Turkey's engagement in the continent. As a result of this policy shift, Turkey steadily enhanced its diplomatic presence in African countries, improved its relations with regional organizations, adopted several strategies of economic relations and tried to develop its political relations with African countries on both bilateral and multilateral platforms. Providing development assistance in different parts of the world, including Africa, has become one of the most important aspects of Turkish foreign policy under the AKP government as Turkish officials try to reshape foreign policy to increase Turkey's role in regional and world politics. To this end, the Turkish government also committed itself to increasing assistance flows to Africa, with the increasing NGO involvement. More Turkish companies invested in African countries and expanded their activities, with Turkish business circles now considering Africa as a promising area for investment. These civic and business circles, with their increasing humanitarian and trade activities in Africa, have enhanced Turkey's presence in the continent.

On the other hand, African reactions to Turkey's Africa policy have been "a mixture of mild expectation and confusion".⁹⁸ As Özkan notes, "following China and India, the question of why Turkey has shown what some consider an unexpected interest in the continent still does not have a clear answer for African partners". Although the low level of

98 Özkan, 2010: 103, *supra* note 34.

attention paid to African issues has changed, the pace of the development of relations – especially with SSA countries – is still slow eighteen years after the opening policy was first implemented. Moreover, Turkey's growing diplomatic and humanitarian involvement in the continent has not been translated into a radical increase in investment and trade flows. Trade volumes with Africa still fall below anticipated levels. For example, whereas trade had been predicted to reach US\$30 billion soon after 2007 nearly ten years later, it is still below US\$20 billion, including both the North and Sub-Saharan Africa, while the goal of achieving a trade volume of US\$100 billion by 2023 also seems unrealistic.⁹⁹ Moreover, North Africa continues to dominate the bulk of trade between Africa and Turkey with Turkish companies being active mostly in the North African countries. African countries have recently attracted more attention, especially from Turkish construction companies with only a few projects in SSA countries. Although Turkey has an increasing interest towards Africa and it has expanded beyond North Africa, relations with SSA countries still remains low. As noted, Turkey's interest in African energy industry is limited so-far to futile initiatives of signing cooperation agreements with a few African countries. Turkey is still an energy importer, and despite recent attempts to increase its capacity, especially through the increasing use of renewables, not much progress has been made in this regard.

Recent developments in domestic politics, including the replacement of Ahmet Davutoglu, with Binali Yildirim as prime minister, raise the question of continuity in Turkey's African policy. This author does not think there will be any treat from the continent or any radical foreign policy change on Africa. Even though Davutoglu was the major architect of the Turkish foreign policy over the last decade, the opening plan to Africa was taken before the AKP government assumed power. It was the result of various interrelated factors explained before. Rather, relations with African countries have gained an irreversible momentum, especially during the last decade, and Turkish businesses, seeing Africa a fertile area for investment, would continue to pursue their commercial interests.

99 Umar, 2007, 23, *supra* note 60, African Union, 19.06.2013, African Union. (2014). Declaration of Second Africa-Turkey Summit 19-21 November 2014 Malabo, Equatorial Guinea Africa-Turkey/Assembly/Draft/Decl.(II)Rev.2. http://summits.au.int/en/sites/default/files/Summit_Declaration_e.pdf (01.01.2015), African Union. Africa-Turkey Partnership. http://www.au.int/en/partnerships/africa_turkey