



ROUND
TABLE
DISCUSSIONS

01

FACING GLOBAL CHALLENGES: TURKISH AND SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

AUGUST 1, 2019

PREFACE

On August 1st 2019, African Foundation organized a round table discussion on the theme “Facing Global Challenges: Turkish and South African Perspectives”. This report presents an overview of Turkey and South African perspective towards regional and global challenges. Over the last two decades the shift in regional and global balance of power has ushered in new opportunities and challenges for emerging powers. Regional and global restructuring has triggered significant political, social, and economic transformation in both Turkey and South Africa. It is highly probable that South Africa and Turkey now have a pioneering role to play in their respective regions and in the international geopolitical landscape. This report presents a synopsis of Turkey’s and South African perspective towards regional and global challenges. The paper relies on the views proffered by political leaders, bureaucrats, academicians and civil society experts during a round table meeting organized by Africa Foundation. The political experts mapped out contemporary challenges, sketched out new avenues for cooperation and established a framework for future relations.

Africa Foundation would like to thank the ANC Secretary General Ace Magashule, alongside other political leaders, academicians, diplomats, bureaucrats and civil society experts both from Turkey and South Africa for their participation and valuable contribution in this academic discourse.

Hasan Basri Kurt
Chairman of the Board

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Round Table Discussion Series-1

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FACING GLOBAL CHALLENGES: TURKISH AND SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVES

TURKEY HAS A STRONG HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA THAT DATES BACK TO THE 19TH CENTURY AND POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS THAT DATES BACK IN 1994 WHEN THE FIRST TURKISH EMBASSY WAS OPENED IN PRETORIA.

In the 21st century, the shift in global and regional balance of power has ushered in new challenges and opportunities for rising powers. In the face of such regional and global challenges and opportunities, it is imminent that emerging powers like Turkey and South Africa have a pioneering role to play in regional and global politics. It is on the basis of these considerations that a group of Turkish and South African deputy political leaders, bureaucrats, academicians and civil society experts met on August 1st 2019 to define the current challenges and opportunities for cooperation. Turkey has a strong historical relationship with the Republic of South Africa that dates back to the 19th century and political and diplomatic relations that dates back in 1994 when the first Turkish Embassy was opened in Pretoria. Nonetheless the representatives from South Africa underpinned that in the face of regional and global challenges there exists the willingness and potentials for development on both sides. This report relies on the views proffered Turkish and South African politicians, bureaucrats, academicians, and researchers during round table meeting organized by African Foundation on August 1st 2019. The meeting uncovered the challenges and opportunities that South Africa and Turkey face in the wake of changing regional and global order. The participants defined the current challenges, sketched out avenues for cooperation and established a framework for future relations.

CHALLENGES AND AVENUES FOR COOPERATION GEOSTRATEGIC LOCATION OF TURKEY AND SOUTH AFRICA

THERE IS HIGH PROPENSITY FOR POLITICAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION IN BOTH TURKEY AND SOUTH AFRICA.

The participants stressed that geostrategic location of both states provide a positive climate for cooperation. Turkey and South Africa has some geostrategic similarities, both countries have similar land size and population and play a leading power role in their respective regions. South African is centrally located within Sub-Sahara Africa and plays a leading role in that region due its economic potentials and political myth. Same can be said for Turkey which is centrally and geographically located between continental Europe, Middle East, Central Asia and the Mediterranean region. There is high propensity for political, social, and economic cooperation in both Turkey and South Africa. It was said that both countries possess strategic positions and the requisite potentials to play significant role in world politics, while South Africa is the most developed African country on the continent, Turkey is strategically located on the world stage. Both actors can play active roles in resolving international problems and work together on a set of global issues and challenges. South Africa is significantly important for Turkey in the opening of the Sub-Saharan region whilst Turkey is a gateway for South Africa to the Caucasus, Asia, Middle East and Balkans region.



ECONOMY AND TRADE COOPERATION

*IN PRACTICAL
TERMS, IT
WAS ARGUED
THAT TURKEY
CAN FULLY
COOPERATE
WITH SOUTH
AFRICA IN
AREAS IN WHICH
IT HAS THE BEST
COMPARATIVE
ADVANTAGE.*

In the wake of the shift in world order the participants accentuated the fact that South Africa and Turkey share similar challenges and opportunities. Challenges such as shrinking markets, increasing demography and unemployment are global economic concerns for both states. Turkey's current unemployment rate stands at 13% while that of South Africa is 29%. Against the backdrop of these challenges they emphasized that firm economic relations between both countries will improve interactions from people to people, from institutions to institutions and perhaps from NGOs to NGOs. To him these agents are the necessary role players to stimulate economic growth and to address global economic concerns in newly industrializing states. In practical terms, it was argued that Turkey can fully cooperate with South Africa in areas in which it has the best comparative advantage. Hence the areas in which Turkey has the best and least comparative advantage outlined in the meeting include sectors in which Turkey is good at and those which they're not good at.

- Turkey is very good in textile and manufacturing products, they have well developed textile industries in several cities. Several Turkish companies manufacture products for Versace, ZARA and many other famous brands.
- Turkey is very good at tourism, the quality of their services are quite good when compared to other European countries.
- Turkey's construction industry has developed during the last 30 years, at this stage they can offer all sorts of quality construction infrastructures in and outside of the country. Their companies have in many occasions won bids against American, British and French companies.
- Car production is also sophisticated in Turkey, Turkey doesn't have its own brand but do produce French cars like Renault, Japanese Toyota, American Ford, German Volkswagen etc. So they have a very good know-how in that area.
- It was also pointed out that Turkey's main economic challenge is finance, they have lots of projects but in shortage of finance to realize these projects.



Hence, the views expressed by the participants revealed that they're many areas in which both states can work together, such as in the mining and technology sectors. Statistics has it that South Africa is the leading trade partner of Turkey in Sub-Saharan Africa with over 30% of Turkey's trade in that sub-region. Nowadays, about 70 Turkish companies including DEFY operate in Republic of South Africa. Civil constructions, mining and textile are the leading sectors. In the field of cultural and economic affairs there exist great potentials for cooperation. Turkey has a 25 years relationship with South Africa in the Post-apartheid era and an increase in the volume of trade between both states could yield to more positive results in global power shift and in addressing challenges in the shifting world order.

The South African delegation highlighted some areas of common interest and opportunity for cooperation. The textile sector is very important for South Africa, it's an area in which South African women are highly interested and involved. A lot of South African business women buy clothes from Turkey. They argued that what is particularly important is for South Africa to be assisted to develop its textile industry. Also it was noted that in the area of food security, South Africa is deficient. To this end, the development of food security programs and advancement in food processing industries is also of paramount importance. More so, improved communication technology will serve as a driver of growth and development. In an era of the fourth industrial revolution the role played by communication in facing global challenges cannot be undermined. Likewise cooperation in the area of tourism needs to be intensified, it was proposed that Turkish Airlines can have a special discount in particular months of the year to promote the influx of tourists from South Africa to Turkey and vice versa.

Participants from the South African delegation further expressed the view that African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) will open new horizons for trade in Africa and influence a new regional economic order in the continent. The agreement comes at a critical moment for Africa. For centuries Europe, the United States, and more recently China have stripped the continent of its raw materials and rights. South Africa hope that increasing cooperation with strategic global and regional partners will increase their bargaining power, stimulate economic growth and reduce dependence on traditional western counterparts. To this far the highlighted the fact that South Africa had initiated measures to implement ACFTA. To ensure the full implementation of the agreement the ministry of trade was currently reviewing its policies in line with ACFTA agreement. It was further underlined that South Africa and Turkey can actually cooperate and assist poor African countries to implement and attain the objectives set by AFCFTA.

MULTILATERAL COOPERATION

TURKEY AND SOUTH AFRICA FURTHER EXPRESSED THEIR SUPPORT TO COOPERATE IN MULTILATERAL INTERNATIONAL PLATFORMS IN ORDER TO DEVELOP AN ALTERNATIVE POLITICAL DISCOURSE TO THE CURRENT GLOBAL ORDER WHICH IS IN A VERY DEEP CRISIS.

Turkey and South Africa further expressed their support to cooperate in multilateral international platforms in order to develop an alternative political discourse to the current global order which is in a very deep crisis. The participants offered that both countries are members of the G20 platform and as members of the said platform they represent leading actors in the world. For instance Turkey is a member of the G20 platform, the 18th largest economy in the world and with a total GDP of about 750 billion USD. As members of G20 platform both states possess the necessary economic capabilities to shape an equal world order.

Relating to the geopolitical dynamics, it was expressed that one of the recent development in South Africa's international politics is the BRICS phenomenon. It is necessary to see the BRICS as one key initiative that would change world politics and world governance particularly in relation to development. When South Africa hosted BRICS its president invited the Turkish president to be part of that important initiative. For BRICS to be effective it is important to identify key states that are strategically located and can play a meaningful role in making BRICS a reality. They further underpinned that South Africa is indebted to the world community for its liberation. This is because the international community played a very crucial role in the height of their struggle. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that the world community has a role to play in influencing events in the world and also in pushing for change. Thus, cooperation with strategic partners in international platforms such as the UN, AU and others cannot be overlooked in addressing contemporary global challenges.

INVESTMENT COOPERATION AGREEMENTS

THE VALUE OF THE TURKISH INVESTMENTS IN THE COUNTRY IS MORE THAN 500 MILLION USD.

Approximately 70 Turkish companies operate in South Africa. The value of the Turkish investments in the country is more than 500 million USD. These investments are mostly in the mining and textile sectors. Moreover, there are many Turkish companies especially in Cape Town and Johannesburg which carry out retail and wholesale, as well as import of textiles, carpets and food products. A greater proportion of the trade volume is from Turkey, in effect this means investment from South Africa is still limited. It was suggested that South Africa can promote and explore investment opportunities in Turkey. South Africa has huge potentials and if they introduce a one year investment promotion activity in Turkey, define key sectors, reach out to Turkish companies and try to bring them to South Africa this will make a significant difference. This is a small step that has huge implications to yield positive results.



MINERAL RESOURCE AND ENERGY COOPERATION

*DESPITE ITS
POTENTIAL,
TURKEY HAS NOT
BEEN FARING
WELL IN TERMS OF
MINING, MINING
CONSTITUTE JUST
1% OF TURKEY'S
TOTAL GDP.*

I was suggested that the exploration of mineral resources and energy production is an area of common interests given that they're lots of opportunities that both states can derive from each other. Energy is the backbone of any country and in South Africa the biggest challenge is the price of electricity and petroleum products. As a source of energy the South African delegation explained that their country do have its own technology for transforming coal which is quite selective and advanced. They stated as follows unlike Turkey, South Africa has coal which provides the baseline electricity, but the challenge is that they only have one source of energy for electricity, they are dependent on coal. South Africa is quite advance in the production of coal, but the country is still searching for better ways on how to clean up the coal. For now it has accumulated two centuries of coal as waste and there's the need to clean that up and use it as a source of energy. As at now South Africa want to explore better ways to clean up the coal so as to protect the environment. One of the areas in which they're quite advance as a country is mining; they've been mining gold and other mineral resources for over 120 years. So these are some of the key areas for cooperation. They went ahead to explain that South Africa is actually looking at opportunities to explore alternative sources of energy, exploring wind in the Western Cape and exploring solar energy which is quite abundant in Africa given the continent's exposure to sunlight. Also exploring renewables sources of energy will greatly contribute to the production of electricity in the country. They stressed that South Africa is still taking minor steps in these areas and confident the country can learn a lot from Turkey.

In an analogous manner, Turkey has substantial mineral reserves such as boron, marble, trona, chromium and some other industrial raw materials which make the country rich in terms of mining resources. Turkey is particularly good in boron and other minerals like Copper, chrome and marble. It is ranked the first in the world in marble exploration. Despite its potential, Turkey has not been faring well in terms of mining, mining constitute just 1% of Turkey's total GDP. Whereas mining advance countries like Canada, Australia, and South Africa incur at least 5% as a proportion of their country's GDP. It was noted that Turkey is dependent on energy, almost 95% of Turkey's energy comes from abroad, from Russia, Iran, Azerbaijan and the gulf countries. While on the other side, South Africa has great expertise and necessary mining infrastructures. They country is very good in Chromium, Coal, gold, diamonds, Platinum and palladium production. Though it is apparent that Turkey can't match South Africa's potentials, it was remarked that Turkey can transfer South Africa's technology, expertise and know-how through their bilateral cooperation networks. The participants further suggested that South Africa can be used as a hub for natural resource and energy projects in Southern Africa. Hence the advancement of mineral resource exploration and energy production will have great implications for the economic growth of South Africa and Turkey, it will provide them with the necessary tools to play a pioneering role and achieve strategic goal in terms of development in their respective regions.



SECURITY COOPERATION

*IN THE 21ST CENTURY
THE RISE OF SOCIAL
MOVEMENTS AND
THE INCREASING
SUPPORT FOR
VIOLENT EXTREMISM
AND RADICALIZATION
REPRESENT A GRAVE
SECURITY CONCERN
TO REGIONAL
AND GLOBAL
INTERNATIONAL
ORDER.*

In the 21st century the rise of social movements and the increasing support for violent extremism and radicalization represent a grave security concern to regional and global international order. Representatives of both states underpinned that security concerns constitute one the major challenges that may impair Turkish-South African relations and taint their hopes to achieve regional and global peace. It was underlined that in recent years Turkey has been fighting some of the most dangerous terrorist groups in the regions such as ISIS, PKK, Al-Qaida and lately FETO the orchestrator of the 15th July coup attempt. These organizations have always strived to impair the relationship between Turkey and its strategic partners. So South Africa and Turkey need to be more careful of these groups that strive to endanger their relations and damage the common goal to achieve regional and global peace.

In the wake of the shift in the current world order, Turkey has been witnessing complex internal and external security challenges. As at now the country have been able to contain internal security concerns and are trying to suppress external threats around its Syrian borders. In the black sea region the country encounters many threats from Russia, Greece and the long lasting Cyprus conflict. In all these security challenges Turkey remain an Island of peace and stability. In the last 15 years Turkey has invested a lot in the defense sector and have to some extent advance their technology in that area. Though there's still much to do both parties declared their readiness to cooperate in to maintain international peace and security. Turkey affirmed that they can cooperate with South Africa to develop its surveillance mechanism and defense technology. On the other side the South African delegation expounded on the distinctive role their country has played in ensuring international peace and security. South Africa do have some expertise on peace building because its experience in war and conflicts. In past decade they have played a key role in DRC, Burundi and Sudan through peace their peacekeeping forces.

YOUTH EMPOWERMENT

*BOTH STATES
HAVE INCREASING
YOUTHFUL
POPULATION AND
THERE'S NEED
TO INCLUDE
THE YOUTHS
WITHIN THE
FRAMEWORK OF
THE DISCUSSION
ON FACING GLOBAL
CHALLENGES.*

Representatives from both states specifically commented on youths and the opportunities for young people. They stressed that both states have increasing youthful population and there's need to include the youths within the framework of the discussion on facing global challenges. In South Africa the youthful age is defined those below the age of 35 years. Most of the population, about 65% of the population is under 35 years. So when establishing guidelines for bilateral relations aimed at facing global challenges young people should be involved. Whether experts look at it from an economic or political dimension, there must be ways on how they can include that large segment of the population within the framework of the existing bilateral relations. Apart from youths, they believed that they're people that shouldn't be left out, this include business men, academicians, and women. These actors are necessary role players in development. Henec part of the discussion was centered on them, that is how to bring the necessary role players within the new framework of bilateral relations.



GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

*THE ROLE THAT
SOUTH AFRICAN
AND TURKISH
WOMEN CAN PLAY
IN ADDRESSING
DOMESTIC
AND REGIONAL
CHALLENGES
CANNOT BE UNDER
ESTIMATED.*

The role that South African and Turkish women can play in addressing domestic and regional challenges cannot be under estimated. Women in South Africa constitute about 51% of the country's population and 50% of the membership of the ANC are women. More people who voted for the ANC to power were women. They also played a role in the campaign, they were in the trenches and have been part of key decision making bodies in South Africa. She went on to explain that within the ANC women played a special role in the course of its formation. In times of war women and children are the most affected. At regional level, South African women have been pushing forward the idea of African renaissance. Before the formation of the Organization of African Unity, a Pan African Women Organization had been formed in South Africa. This therefore imply that women did not play a marginal role in regional affairs at the time. Likewise in Angola there was Queen Nzinga, Queen of Angola, a prominent lady in the history of Angola and Africa at large. Queen Nzinga was a warrioress who fought for forty years for the independence of Ndongo and Matamba kingdoms (Angola) throughout the 17th century. Thus to her, women have a special place in addressing global challenges; they have to be part of the process of defining a new world order. Turkey and South Africa need women negotiators and mediators. If more women are part of a team it increases the likelihood of negotiation.

CULTURAL PARTNERSHIP

*SPORTS, ARTS
AND CULTURE ARE
VERY CRITICAL IN
BUILDING SOCIAL
COHESION AND
BRIDGING THE
DIFFERENCES
THAT OFTEN ARISE
BETWEEN NATIONS.*

Members of both states further resolved that in order to face global challenges and embrace opportunities in the changing world order, it is important to build cooperative relationships in the discipline of sports, arts and culture. Sports, Arts and Culture are very critical in building social cohesion and bridging the differences that often arise between nations. It was indicated that in 2003 Turkey and South Africa signed a temporal cooperation agreement in the field of Culture, Art, Education, Science, Technology, Sports and Youth between Turkish Government and South African Government. However the agreement expired in 2013 and since then both states have not made any efforts to renew it. Both camps noted that the agreement was important then and it is now. To that effect measures were introduce to renew the agreement.



EDUCATION AND HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

*EVERY YEAR MOST
POST-GRADUATE
STUDENTS WHO
STUDY ABROAD DO
NOT RETURN BACK,
ABOUT 50% ARE NOT
COMING BACK.*

Again, it was particularly revealed that with the advent of globalization and shift in world order, brain-drain constitute one major challenges rocking less developed and emerging states like South Africa and Turkey. The outflow of the most qualified and competent citizens from less developed countries and emerging nations to developed states have continued to deprive these nations and their continents of its best human resources. Enduring economic growth cannot be realized in the absence of professional expertise, administrative, entrepreneurial and managerial skills. It was noted that Africa have been losing its most talented citizens to well develop and Western countries. Every year most post-graduate students who study abroad do not return back, about 50% are not coming back. Most of them skilled professionals such as doctors and engineers remain and plough their trade in the Western countries, thus the country has been losing its human capacity and human capital.

Though the increasing trend of xenophobia, Islamophobia, populism and far right extremism have been pushing some of the educated citizens to return with the necessary knowledge and capacity, and more needs to be done in the face of global turmoil. It was resolved that South Africa and Turkey should recognize education as basis for progress, information the foundation of liberation and knowledge the source of power. They further expressed that the diaspora is very important and there's need to engage them within the framework of cooperation. Within the new framework of cooperation Turkey and South Africa took steps to advance education. The South African delegation declared their willingness to send more South African students to study in different Turkish Universities. In a meeting with the Turkish scholarship board, (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities-YTB) Turkey agreed to increase the quota of grants allocated to South Africa students to twenty. It was agreed that the grant will be distributed equally among male and female students. Both parties agreed that priority will be given to students in the area of technology since Turkey is more advance than South Africa in technology. They further stressed on the need for both states to allow exchange programs between South African and Turkish universities.

FRAMEWORK FOR FUTURE RELATIONS

*FOR THE NEXT
THREE TO
FIVE MONTHS
TURKEY AND
SOUTH AFRICA
WILL ENGAGE
IN HIGH LEVEL
DISCUSSIONS AND
MEETINGS.*

A member of the Turkish diplomatic corps unveiled Turkey's roadmap for future relations. It was underpinned that for the next three to five months Turkey and South Africa will engage in high level discussions and meetings. As a first step towards that Turkey plans to invite and host South Africa's Ministry of foreign affairs in Ankara. Secondly Turkey's vice president will visit South Africa for a meeting with the National Council, and thirdly president Ramaphosa will be invited to Turkey. In principle a lot of ground work has been initiated to build solidarity between Turkey and South African institutions to face existing global challenges. The South African delegation declared their willingness to host Turkey November. Both parties to have more dynamic and inclusive interactions with people from different groups in the society such bureaucrats, diplomats, academicians civil society organization etc.



CONCLUSION

*BOTH ACTORS
HAVE THE
POTENTIAL TO
PLAY ACTIVE
ROLES AND
POSITION
AS EQUAL
PARTNERS IN THE
REGIONAL AND
INTERNATIONAL
GEOPOLITICAL
LANDSCAPE.*

There has been significant economic, political, socio-cultural, and security transformation in both Turkey and South Africa over the last decade. In the 21st century the shifting regional and global balance of power has brought new challenges and opportunities for South Africa and Turkey. Both countries have a significant geostrategic advantages, both have similar land size and population. Both play a leading power role in their respective regions. While South African is centrally located within Sub-Sahara Africa and plays a leading role in that region due its economic potentials and political myth. While South Africa is the most developed African country, Turkey is centrally and geographically located between continental Europe, Middle East, Central Asia and the Mediterranean region. Both actors have the potential to play active roles and position themselves as equal partners in the regional and international geopolitical landscape. South Africa is significantly important for Turkey in the opening of the Sub-Saharan region of the continent whilst Turkey is the gateway for South Africa to the opening of the countries in the regions of the Caucasus, Asia, Middle East and Balkans region. Furthermore, South Africa is the largest trading partner of Turkey in the Sub-Saharan region and Turkey is one of the largest trading partners for South Africa in Eastern Europe. The recent high-level visit of the delegation of African National Congress provides the impetus to further strengthen and consolidate the existing bilateral relations between both states. They said the meeting organized by the African Foundation has provided new avenues for cooperation coupled with a roadmap for future relations.



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