

THE 2011 LANDING OF TURKEY ON SOMALIA: THE “STATE TO PEOPLE” ASPECT OF TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY TOWARDS SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

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Abstract

Although Turkey's relations with the African continent have had a long history, an unprecedented level of interaction is recently being observed between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa. Started by the growing importance of non-Western world in Turkish foreign policy apart from the 1990s, Sub-Saharan Africa became one of the regions where Turkey intensified its relations. The Africa Opening Plan that was prepared in 1998 has been the catalyzer of the Turkey's foreign policy initiative towards Sub-Saharan Africa. Through comparing the plan's initial objectives with the outcomes, we argue that the Turkey has successfully put the 1998 Plan into action. Behind this success was careful implementation of the cultural component of the plan, which helped to encourage not only state-to-state but also state-to-people and people-to-people relations. These two latter relations made Turkey's foreign policy initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa both sustainable and equitable.

Keywords: Turkey, Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkish foreign policy, Turkey-Africa relations, the 1998 Opening Action Plan

Introduction

On the 19th of August 2011, a delegation composed of four Turkish ministers and several members of Turkey's cultural and business elite paid a visit to Mogadishu under the leadership of Prime Minister Erdogan. In addition to its official dimension, the visit was aimed at bringing moral support to Somalis who were suffering from a regional food scarcity. At that time, 2.8 million people were under serious threat of death at a rate of 10,000 adults per day in Somalia. Malnutrition exceeded 38% in some areas which left 20 % of the whole Somalia population without food.¹⁸² The situation was so acute that famine was declared in the state by the United Nations for the very first time since 1984.

The August visit was not the first step Turkey took to resolve the famine crisis in East Africa. The Turkish government had sent 200 million USD to Somalia the month before, in addition to 350 million dollars collected by several Turkish NGOs for the East African famine¹⁸³. The total Turkish contribution not only exceeded that of 54-member African Union which had pledged 350 million USD,¹⁸⁴ but it alone amounted to 10% of the 2 billion USD necessary to cope with such a famine according to the United Nations.

Nevertheless, it would be insufficient to measure Turkey's interest in the East African famine merely through its economic dimension. Prime Minister's visit in August 2011 also carried an important symbolic meaning. Erdogan became the first Western statesman who visited Somalia in the last twenty years¹⁸⁵. By visiting the people of a country strained by the

¹⁸² “Turning Japanese”, *The Economist*, July 30-August 5, 2011, pp.32.

¹⁸³ “Türkiye'den Somali'ye Yardım Eli Uzandı” available at

<http://siyasetdergisi.com.tr/Haber/TURKIYE'DEN-SOMALI'YE-YARDIM-ELI-UZANDI/129>

¹⁸⁴ “Ten Years on”, *The Economist*; September 3-9 2011, pp.36.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with the Somalian Ambassador to Turkey Nur Sh. Hamud, *Turkey Magazine*, Fall 2011, 34-37.

impacts of civil war, the actions of the Islamist group Al Shabaab and piracy, Erdogan pledged moral support to Somalis as well. His visit impressed not only the Somali people, but also the people of whole Sub-Saharan Africa.

If Turkey's recent engagement with East Africa and Somalia is addressed in a wider perspective, one might observe that the increasing level of Turkey-Somalia relations is not an isolated incident, but an extension of the Turkish state's opening up to Sub-Saharan Africa. Somalia was the 11th Sub-Saharan African country visited by the top Turkish state officials in 2011. Turkey also intensified its diplomatic representation in Sub-Saharan Africa by opening embassies in seven different Sub-Saharan countries, including Burkina Faso, Zambia and Mozambique. Turkish import and export rates with respect to Sub-Saharan Africa reached their peak with each amounting to 3.2 million USD¹⁸⁶. Turkish Airlines launched its first flight to Mogadishu, which was the first service to the Somali capital by any European airline in two decades¹⁸⁷. Five different official summits about Sub-Saharan Africa were held in Ankara and İstanbul. Moreover, 875 students from 39 different Sub-Saharan African countries were granted undergraduate scholarships in Turkey.¹⁸⁸

The increasing level of interaction between Turkey and overall Sub-Saharan Africa in 2011 attests to the fact that the Somalia visit was actually part of a larger foreign policy schema. Once declared as the Africa Opening Plan, Turkey's Africa initiative dates back to 1998 and it is the main strategy which led to Turkey's recent success in building bridges between Turkey and Sub-Saharan African countries. In this framework, this article analyzes the motivations behind the Turkish state's opening to Sub-Saharan Africa by referring to 1998 Plan. By illustrating the steps Turkey took and the mechanisms it utilized in building closer relations with Sub-Saharan African states through 2012, we highlight the importance of the 1998 Opening Plan in Turkish-Sub-Saharan Africa relations. By comparing the plan's initial objectives with the actual outcomes, we argue that Turkey has had considerable success in its Africa opening throughout deliberate planning and initiative by the Turkish government and its commitment to take into account both Turkish and African societal demands. Once monitoring the level of success in the 1998 Plan, we resume how Somalia visit of 2011 reflects the state to people aspect of Turkish foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa.

Sub-Saharan Africa in the pre-1998 Turkish Foreign Policy: A History

Until the end of the Cold-War, Turkish foreign policy has mainly focused on relations with the Western powers. The international circumstances of WWII and Cold War together with Turkey's domestic social, economic and political problems limited Turkey's outreach to non-Western societies.¹⁸⁹ Nonetheless, Turkish foreign policy has witnessed brief periods of attempts at a more proactive and multidimensional foreign policy which coincide with a relative increase in Turkey's relations with Sub-Saharan Africa. Turkey's opening up to non-Western world has gained a fresh momentum when Turkey's room for maneuver greatly increased especially after the Cold War. Along with newly independent states of Former Soviet Union and the Middle Eastern countries, Africa has emerged as a new focus of interest for Turkish foreign policy.

During the early Republic between 1923 and 1945, Turkey's relations with Sub-Saharan Africa were based on establishing limited diplomatic contacts. Even though the anti-imperialistic character of the Turkish War of Liberation triggered independence feelings for Sub-Saharan African communities, bilateral relations with Sub-Saharan Africa could not move beyond that point¹⁹⁰. Ethiopia became the first and only Sub-Saharan African state

¹⁸⁶ T.C. Ministry of Economy, "Foreign Trade Statistics –February 2012" available at <http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=79192159-19DB-2C7D-3D5AE56731D11E50>

¹⁸⁷ "Nuclear Energy", *The Economist*, March 10–17, 2012, pp.13.

¹⁸⁸ Student Selection and Placement Center, *The Number of Foreign Students by Nationality* available at <http://www.osym.gov.tr/dosya/1-58220/h/21yabanciogrenciuyruk.pdf>

¹⁸⁹ Nasuh Uslu, *Turkish Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Period*, (New York: Nova Publishers, 2004)

¹⁹⁰ Ahmet Davutoglu, *Stratejik Derinlik*, (39th Edition), (Istanbul: Kure, 2009) pp. 207

where Turkey was diplomatically interested in opening an embassy in this period. The Embassy of Addis Adaba opened in 1926 became the first Embassy of Turkey in Sub-Saharan Africa. In 1945, Turkey implied health measures against Madagascar where plague revealed all of a sudden¹⁹¹.

Turkey's membership to the UN in 1946 and its entry into NATO in 1952 were defining points in Turkish foreign policy, not only in terms of its relations with the Soviet Union, but also with respect to its relations with Asian and African countries. Turkey's pro-British stance in Cyprus and the Suez Crisis and its disbelief in the effectiveness of neutrality in the face of Soviet expansionism, led to confrontation between Turkey and African states that took part in Non-Aligned Movement. The pro-Western attitude Turkey displayed in the Bandung Conference of 1955 caused tension between sides. Moreover, Turkey's failure to support Algeria's independence in the UN General Assembly in 1956¹⁹² inflicted a serious blow to Turkish-African relations¹⁹³. Apparently, Turkish foreign policy on Sub-Saharan Africa seemed dominated by total Western dependence in this period.¹⁹⁴ Despite all, this period witnessed a number of positive developments with respect to Turkey-Sub-Saharan Africa relations. Turkey's support for the UN General Assembly decision to send economic assistance to the Sahel region¹⁹⁵ in 1948 helped to warm relations with Sub-Saharan Africa.¹⁹⁶ Turkey also opened a General Consulate in Nigeria in 1956¹⁹⁷ and an Embassy in Ghana in 1957. The opening of the Ghana Embassy was a clear sign of Turkey's recognition of Ghana's independence.¹⁹⁸

From mid-1960s onwards, Turkey tried to redress its relations with the non-Western world as Turkey-US relations deteriorated due to Cyprus issue.¹⁹⁹ This period also converged with the decolonization process in the African continent. Turkey recognized newly independent countries and attempted to develop economic, cultural and political relations with them.²⁰⁰ In the next five years, Turkey opened embassies in Lagos (Nigeria) in 1960, in Dakar (Senegal) in 1962, and in Nairobi (Kenya) in 1968.²⁰¹ Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selasiye visited Turkey in March 1967 whereas Turkish President Cevdet Sunay visited Ethiopia in December 1969.

The 1970s started with the ongoing deterioration of relations between Turkey and the US. The US pressure on poppy cultivation in Turkey, Turkey's Cyprus intervention and the subsequent US arms embargo not only exacerbated the anti-American feelings in Turkish public opinion but also gave a new boost to diversification of Turkey's foreign relations. As expected, these feelings were implicated on Turkey's relations with Sub-Saharan Africa. In November 1971, Selasiye paid his second visit to Turkey. The 1976 opening of Turkey's Embassy in Kinshasha (Democratic Republic of the Congo), the medical assistance package

¹⁹¹ Decision No. 5944, Sıhhat ve İçtimai Muavenet Bakanlığının Madagaskar Muvarıdatına Karşı Vebaya Mahsus Tedbirler Konulduğuna Dair Tamimi, Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey, 01 March 1945

¹⁹² Meliha Altunışık, "Worldviews and Turkish Foreign Policy in the Middle East." *New Perspectives on Turkey, Special Issue on Turkish Foreign Policy* 40, (2009):.169-92; 174.

¹⁹³ Mehmet Ozkan, "Türkiye'nin Afrika Acilimi ve Asya ile İlişkileri" in *Türkiye'de Dış Politika*, (ed) İbrahim Kalin (Istanbul: Meydan Yayıncılık, 2011): 115-139, 121

¹⁹⁴ Mustafa Aydın, "Determinants of Turkish foreign policy: Changing Patterns and Conjectures During the Cold War," *Middle Eastern Studies* 36, no.1 (2000):103-139; 105.

¹⁹⁵ Northern region of present-day Burkina Faso.

¹⁹⁶ Feridun C. Erkin, "Turkey's Foreign Policy", *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science* 24, no. 4, (1952):122-133., 127-128

¹⁹⁷ Salih Zeki Karaca, "Turkish Foreign Policy in the Year 2000 and Beyond: Her Opening up Policy to Africa" *Dış Politika (Foreign Policy)* Vol: 25, no. 3-4 (2000): 115-119; pp. 116

¹⁹⁸ Numan Hazar, "The Future of Turkey-Africa relations, *Dış Politika (Foreign Policy)* Vol:25,no:3-4 (2000), 110.

¹⁹⁹ Aydın, 2000, 130

²⁰⁰ Hazar, 2000, 110.

²⁰¹ Numan Hazar, *Küreselleşme Sürecinde Afrika ve Afrika-Türkiye İlişkileri* (Ankara: Yeni Türkiye Medya Hizmetleri, 2003).

sent to Zimbabwe in 1978 and the Economic and Technical Cooperation agreement signed with Sierra Leone²⁰² in 1979 underlined the beginnings of a new sensitivity in Turkish foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁰³ Furthermore, Turkey designed an Action Plan and established a new administrative system in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to materialize its multifaceted foreign policy objectives²⁰⁴. One crucial element was creation of regional desks, each responsible for Turkey's relations with different regions. However, lack of personnel in the Ministry led to the abandonment of the Plan.

In the 1980-1983 period, Turkey was under a direct military rule whose influence in politics remained during the next few years. Due to the economic difficulties, Turkey had to close its Ghana Embassy in 1981. In January 1982, the President of Sudan, Mohammed Nimeyri visited Turkey. Same year, Turkey's first graduate program on African Studies was opened at Gazi University. Towards the end of the 1980s, however, "activism" and "multi-faceted" foreign policy was again on the agenda with the impact of economic liberalization and Turkish President Ozal's strong convictions about liberal economic development and foreign policy. While Turkey's fast economic liberalization estranged a few Sub-Saharan countries²⁰⁵, official economic agencies like State Planning Organization (SPO) and Treasury became assets in Turkey's new foreign policy implementation mechanism. In 1985, SPO started Turkey's first official development program which amounted to 10 million USD to be used for institutional capacity building in Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia and Sudan.²⁰⁶ Turkey signed a cooperation agreement with Uganda on industry, trade, agriculture and air transportation in 1987.²⁰⁷ It also made trade, economic and technical cooperation agreements with Botswana,²⁰⁸ Chad,²⁰⁹ Djibouti,²¹⁰ Gambia,²¹¹ and Zambia²¹² in 1989.

The end of Cold War made Turkish policy makers to reconsider Turkey's strategic importance to the US. Turkey's foreign policy activism and multi-dimensionalism in the post-Cold War was based on an understanding that Turkey's future with the West would rely on its relations with the non-West. Accordingly, Özal administration signed more international agreements with the non-West than any other previous administration in Turkish history.²¹³

²⁰² Decision No. 7/18294 "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile Sierra Leone Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti Arasında Ekonomik ve Teknik İşbirliği Anlaşması" *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 16823, November 28, 1979.

²⁰³ Hazar, 2003.

²⁰⁴ Karaca, 2000, 117- 118.

²⁰⁵ One of these countries was Ethiopia. The Communist Derg regime in Ethiopia forced Turkey to close its embassy there in 1984

²⁰⁶ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's Development Cooperation" available at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiyenin-kalkinma-isbirligi.tr.mfa>

²⁰⁷ Dec. No. 87/12077 Uganda Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile Hükümetimiz Arasında Sanayi, Ticaret, Tarım, Bayındırlık ve Hava Ulaşım Alanlarında İşbirliğine Dair Mutabakat Zaptının Onayı Hakkında Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no.19635, November 15, 1987.

²⁰⁸ Dec. No. 90/1057 Botswana Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile Türkiye Arasında Teknik İşbirliği Anlaşmasının Onaylanmasına Dair Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 20315, November 21, 1990

²⁰⁹ Dec. No. 89/14552 Nijer, Türkiye ve Çad Arasında İmzalanan Teknik İşbirliği Andlaşmaları ile Tutanaklarının Onaylanması Hakkında Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 20329, November 1, 1989

²¹⁰ Dec. No. 89/14402 Cibuti Cumhuriyeti ile Türkiye Arasında İmzalanan Ticaret, Ekonomik ve Teknik İşbirliği Anlaşmasının Onayına Dair Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 20272, September 04, 1989

²¹¹ Dec. No. 89/14701 Gambiya Hükümeti ile Türkiye Arasında İmzalanan Teknik İşbirliği Protokolünün Onaylanmasına Dair Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no.20339, November 11, 1989

²¹² Dec. No. 89/14527 Zambiya ve Botswana Cumhuriyetleri ile Türkiye Arasında Yapılan Teknik Yardım İşbirliği Mutabakat Zaptının Onaylanması Hakkında Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 20315, October 17, 1989,

²¹³ Muhittin Ataman, "Leadership Change: Ozal Leadership and Restructuring in Turkish Foreign Policy" *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations* Vol. 1, No.1 (2002):120-153; p. 132

With respect to Sub-Saharan Africa, Turkey signed cooperation agreements with Sudan on health,²¹⁴ security²¹⁵ and culture,²¹⁶ and economic and technical cooperation agreement with Senegal²¹⁷ in 1993. Formal bilateral visits have also become more frequent in this period. Foreign Affairs Minister of Cameroon Jacques Roger Booh paid a visit to Turkey in August 1991. In 1993, President Özal visited Senegal. In 1996, Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan visited Nigeria to sign a trade cooperation agreement²¹⁸ and the President of Kenya Daniel Arap-Moi visited Turkey. Moreover, Turkey opened an embassy in Republic of South Africa in 1994.

Whereas Turkey's international economic relations showed a dramatic development in the post-Cold War, its political relations suffered a serious blow in 1997 when the European Union denied Turkey official candidate status due to problems regarding relations with Greece and Cyprus. In response, Turkey decided to freeze its political dialogue with the European Union.²¹⁹ The frustration with the EU and the popular distrust of the EU's sincerity, as a result, led to reconsiderations about the need for a more multidimensional foreign policy. Africa has become one of the foci of these considerations. While Turkey went on its normal relations by signing bilateral agreements with African countries,²²⁰ preparations were made for a more sustained effort to develop Turkey's relations with Africa in general, and with Sub-Saharan Africa in particular.

Preparation of the 1998 Opening Action Plan involved multiple actors among Turkish politics, diplomacy, business groups and civil society. In addition to representatives of several ministries, private organizations and individual companies, ambassadors and honorary consuls of African states attended series of meetings to discuss recent Turkey-Africa relations. Consequently, the 1998 Plan consisted of multiple components, which embody a wide array of issues and domains. Its diplomatic component aimed at improving official Turkish representation in Africa, whereas its political component was designed to increase bilateral contacts. Moreover, its economic component was designed to develop economic and trade relations between sides. The cultural component, on the other hand, was designed to familiarize Sub Saharan Africa in Turkey and Turkey in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Taking “Action” on Sub-Saharan Africa: The 1998 Opening Plan

Designed in four components, the 1998 Opening Action Plan aimed at bringing vitality to Turkey's relations with African states. However, the coalitional confrontations and the

²¹⁴ Dec No.91/1634 Sudan Cumhuriyeti ile Yapılan Sağlık Alanında İşbirliğine İlişkin Anlaşmanın Onaylanmasına Dair Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey* no. 20843 April 12, 1991.

²¹⁵ Dec No. 92/3632 Sudan Cumhuriyeti İçişleri Bakanlığı ile İçişleri Bakanlığımız Arasında Güvenlik İşbirliği Protokolünün Onaylanmasına Dair Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no.21401, November 10, 1992.

²¹⁶ Dec. No. 93/4783 Sudan Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile Hükümetimiz Arasında 1993-1994-1995 Yılları için Kültür Anlaşması İcra Programının Onaylanması Hakkında Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 21719, October 5, 1993.

²¹⁷ Dec. No. 93/3963 Senegal Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile İmzalanan Ticaret, Ekonomik ve Teknik İşbirliği Anlaşmasının Onaylanmasına Dair Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 21487, February 5, 1993

²¹⁸ Dec. No. 96/8896 Nijerya ile Türkiye Arasında İmzalanan Ticaret Anlaşmasının Onaylanması Hakkında Karar *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 22855, December 22, 1996.

²¹⁹ F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, “Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty”, RAND Corporation (MR-1612), 2003, 51-52.

²²⁰ Dec. No. 97/9604 “Gana ile Türkiye Arasında Ticaret ve Ekonomik ve Teknik İşbirliği Anlaşmasının Onayına Dair Karar” *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 23067, August 1, 1997 and Dec. No. 97/9273 “Gine ile Türkiye Arasında İmzalanan, Ticaret, Ekonomik ve Teknik İşbirliği Anlaşmasının Onaylanması Hakkında Karar” *Official Gazette of Republic of Turkey*, no. 22977, May 2, 1997.

economic crisis of 2000-2001 that drifted Turkey into a significant political and economic turbulence restricted Turkish policy makers' capacity to implement it on time²²¹.

Once the effects of economic crisis began to fade and a single party (Justice and Development Party –JDP) was brought to power by the general elections of 2002, the plan was revisited. With the support of business groups and civil society, "The Strategy for Developing Economic Relations with Africa" was prepared by the Under-Secretariat of Foreign Trade in March 2003. This strategy was used by JDP as the catalyst for the 1998 Plan²²².

Diplomatic Component

The diplomatic component of the 1998 Plan would consist of four main measures. Specifically, the level of Turkey's diplomatic representation would be increased, existing infrastructures of Turkish embassies would be improved, and Turkish honorary consuls would be appointed in Africa. Last but not least, ambassadors to embassies in Africa would be given direct accreditation.²²³

The diplomatic component basically gave priority to expansion of Turkish embassies in Africa. Accordingly, ambassadors were given direct accreditation to fourteen²²⁴ new Turkish embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa from Ankara. Whereas the Turkish embassies in Ivory Coast and Tanzania were opened in 2009, the ones in Angola, Cameroon, Ghana, Madagascar, Mali and Uganda were opened in 2010, and the ones in Mauritania, Mozambique, Zambia and Zimbabwe were opened in 2011. The very same year, Turkey signed necessary protocols to open embassies in Burkina Faso, Chad, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Namibia, Niger and South Sudan by 2012.

Similarly, between 2003 and 2011 new Turkish Honorary Consulates were opened in Sub-Saharan African countries including, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mauritania, Mauritius, Sierra Leone, Sudan, Swaziland and Togo²²⁵. In line with the 1998 Plan, infrastructures of some Turkish Embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa were also improved. In 2010, the Turkish Embassies in Madagascar and Ghana moved to proper buildings from the hotel rooms they were operating until that time.

Table 1: Opening years of Turkish Embassies in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Republican period.

Year	1926	1960	1962	1968	1974	1978	1994	2009	2010	2011	2012
Number of embassies opened	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	6	4	8

Note: Sub-Saharan Africa includes all countries in Africa except North African countries. Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Political Component

The political component of the 1998 Opening Action Plan would also consist of four measures. Mutual official visits would be paid between Turkey and Africa, more contacts with African policy makers would be established through international organizations, political consultation mechanisms would be founded between sides, and peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance would be provided²²⁶.

²²¹ Mehmet Özkan and Birol Akgün, "Turkey's Opening to Africa", *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 4 (2010): 525-546, 533; "Kemal Kirişçi and Neslihan Kaptanoğlu, "The Politics of Trade and Turkish Foreign Policy" *Middle Eastern Studies* 47.5 (2011): 705-724, 713.

²²² Alain Vicky, "La Turquie à l'assaut de l'Afrique", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, Mai 2011, available at <http://www.monde-diplomatique.fr/2011/05/VICKY/20450>

²²³ Hazar, 2000, 110.

²²⁴ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Turkey-Africa Relations" available at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa>

²²⁵ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs "Sub-Saharan Africa" available at <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkiye-afrika-iliskileri.tr.mfa>

²²⁶ Hazar, 2000, 110.

The 1998 Plan prioritized mutual official visits that mainly concerned President, Prime Minister, Foreign Affairs Minister and the Parliament. In addition to President of Chad who visited Turkey in April 2000, Turkey hosted presidents of sixteen Sub-Saharan African states during the First Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit in 2008, the 4th UN Least Developed States Conference in 2011, and regular trips²²⁷. On the other hand, Turkey paid Presidential visits to Senegal in 2008, Kenya and Tanzania in 2009, Congo Democratic Republic, Cameroon, Nigeria in 2010, Ghana and Gabon in 2011.

Beyond mutual Presidential visits, six Sub-Saharan African Prime Ministers and twenty six Foreign Affairs Ministers have paid visits to Turkey since 2003.²²⁸ Similarly, most of these visits were paid around the First Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit, the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed states, and on regular trips²²⁹. On the other hand, Turkey paid Prime Minister level visits to Ethiopia and South Africa in 2005, Sudan in 2006, Ethiopia in 2007 and Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs visited Ethiopia, Republic of South Africa and Somalia in 2011. These high level officials were the first to visit these states. Whereas Erdogan became the first Turkish Prime Minister to give a speech at an African Union Assembly in his 2007 Ethiopia visit, Gül became the first Turkish President to give a speech in the parliament of a Sub-Saharan African state in his 2011 Ghana visit. Between 2008 and 2011, seventy five other Ministerial meetings were held between Turkish and Sub-Saharan African states²³⁰.

Table 2: High level visits from Turkey to Sub-Saharan Africa in the Republican period

Years	President	Prime Minister	Foreign Affairs Minister	Total
1923-1998	2	1	1	4
1998-2003	-	-	-	-
2003-2012	8	4	3	15

Note: 1st of January 2012 is the limit to the years. Source: Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Mutual official visits did not only include President, Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister levels but also inter-parliamentary ones. Inter-parliamentary Friendship Committees were the main mechanism in organizing these visits. Turkish parliament established friendship committees with Sudanese Parliament in 1999, the Malian Parliament in 2006, the Ghanaian Parliament in 2009, and the Tanzanian Parliament in 2010. In addition, delegations from the Foreign Affairs Commissions of the Sudanese National Parliament and the Senegalese National Parliament visited the Turkish parliament in 2009 and 2010 respectively. Also, a delegation from Kenyan Parliamentary Committee on Local Authorities and Accounts Funds visited Turkey in 2010²³¹.

Apart from visits, the meetings of international organizations were also utilized for establishing contacts between Turkish and Sub-Saharan African policy makers. Turkish President Gül met the Presidents of Benin, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Madagascar, Namibia, Swaziland and Zimbabwe at the 63rd UN General Assembly in

²²⁷ Presidents of Mauritius, Senegal, and Sudan in 2008, President of Djibouti in 2009, Presidents of Mauritania, Tanzania, Uganda, Somalia and Zambia in 2010, Presidents of Nigeria, Benin, and Zanzibar in 2011 visited Turkey for regular trips.

²²⁸ Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate General for Bilateral Political Affairs (Africa, East Asia and Oceania) "Turkey-Africa Partnership: Developments since the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit", December 2011, 8-9.

²²⁹ Foreign Affairs Ministers of Benin, Gambia, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Nigeria, Mauritania, Malawi and Prime Ministers of Togo and Niger attended the First Turkey-Africa Summit in 2008; Foreign Affairs Ministers of Uganda, Rwanda, Malawi, Sierra Leone, Central African Republic, and Prime Minister of Lesotho attended the 4th UN Conference on the Least Developed States in 2011. Foreign Affairs Minister of Botswana in 2009, Foreign Affairs Ministers of Botswana, Senegal and Tanzania in 2010; Foreign Affairs Minister of Ghana in 2011 and Foreign Affairs Minister of Cameroon in 2012 visited Turkey for regular trips.

²³⁰ "Turkey-Africa Partnership," 13-14.

²³¹ "Turkey-Africa Partnership," 19-20.

September 2008. One year later, Turkish Prime Minister Erdogan met the Prime Minister of Somalia and the President of Tanzania at the 64th UN General Assembly in September 2009. During the 65th UN General Assembly that took place in 2011, President Gül met with the Presidents of Gabon and Namibia, whereas the Turkish Foreign Affairs Minister Davutoglu met with the Foreign Affairs Ministers of Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Gambia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda. Moreover, Turkey was represented at the African Union Summits²³². As envisaged in the 1998 Action Plan, Turkey signed protocols to establish political consultation mechanisms with Kenya in 2008, Ethiopia, Republic of South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda in 2009, Cameroon and Gabon in 2010, Ethiopia, Sudan and Ghana in 2011²³³. The Turkish government also held two international conferences on Somalia; Istanbul I in 2010 and İstanbul II in 2012, which aimed to build international consensus to state-building and economic development in Somalia. The conferences also sought to include representation from Somali people in order to promote home-grown solutions to Somalia crisis²³⁴.

There have also been efforts to carry out the last part of the political component, providing peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance to Africa. In this context, Turkey has taken part in nine UN Peacekeeping operations²³⁵ since 2008. Seventeen officers have been appointed to UN Mission in Ivory Coast (UNOC), fifteen police corps have been appointed to UN Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUC), twenty seven police corps have been appointed to UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), twenty seven officers have been appointed to UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS), three police corps have been appointed to UN Mission in Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), eleven police corps have been appointed to UN Mission in Darfur (UNAMID), and twelve officers have been appointed to UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) since 2008. Moreover, Turkey donated 1 million USD to the African Union's mission in Somalia. Concerning humanitarian assistance, the Turkish state donated 6,375 million USD to Comoros, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Niger, Somalia, and Uganda between 2006 and 2011.²³⁶

Economic Component

The economic component of the 1998 Plan would consist of nine measures. According to the Plan, the foreign trade volume with African states would be increased; trade, economic and technical cooperation (TET) agreements with African states would be signed, government officials from Ministries of Trade, Industry, Health, Agriculture and Education in African states would be invited; short term training programs for African experts in the fields of health, agriculture, pharmaceutical industry, mining, water managements would be organized, a special technical assistance fund would be established for African states, Turkey's membership to African Development Bank as a non-regional donor and to African exports and Imports Bank as a shareholder would be realized, Joint Business Councils or Chambers of Commerce with African states would be founded, communication and transportation links (both air and maritime) with African states would be set up, and finally Turkish contractors would be encouraged to enter African markets²³⁷.

Building on the 1998 Action Plan, the 2003 Strategy aimed at establishing country-based action plans for each and every African state²³⁸. Consequently, the 2003 Strategy was a

²³² "Turkey-Africa Partnership" 14.

²³³ "Turkey-Africa Partnership" 16-17.

²³⁴ II. Istanbul Conference on Somalia Official Website, <http://somalikonferansi.mfa.gov.tr/about.en.mfa>

²³⁵ Turkish Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade "Strategic Plan 2009-2013" 51, available at

<http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/upload/strateji/belge.pdf>

²³⁶ "Turkey-Africa Partnership" 39-40.

²³⁷ Hazar, 2000, 110.

²³⁸ "Strategic Plan 2009-2013", 54.

milestone concerning the trade between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1998 and 2012, Turkey's annual import average with Sub-Saharan Africa was 1,597 billion USD. Whereas this average was 454 million USD between 1998 and 2003, it reached 2,232 billion USD between 2003 and 2012. A similar trend was observed in Turkey's export with Sub-Saharan Africa. Between 1998 and 2012, Turkey's annual export average with Sub-Saharan Africa is 1,378 billion USD. Whereas this average was 342 million USD between 1998 and 2003, it reached 1,954 billion USD between 2003 and 2012. In 2011, Turkey's overall foreign trade volume with Sub-Saharan Africa reached to 6.9 billion USD compared to 1.3 billion USD in 2003.

Table 3: The import-export of Turkey with Sub-Saharan Africa between 1996 and 2011 in million US dollars

Year	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Import	265	283	457	704	558	820	1589	1835	2526	3168	2503	2158	2108	3384
Export	316	311	285	371	430	554	765	1087	1469	1947	3212	2735	2258	3558

Source: TUIK data on the import–export rates of Turkey with Sub-Saharan African states. For further details, please visit <http://www.ekonomi.gov.tr/index.cfm?sayfa=7155BE01-D8D3-8566-45208351967592CF>

Instrumental to increasing the foreign trade volume between Turkey and Sub-Saharan Africa, were the TET agreements, signed with Mali and Congo in 2000, Uganda and Sudan in 2005, Burkina Faso and Malawi in 2006, Madagascar and Kenya in 2007, Ivory Coast and Angola in 2008, and Cameroon in 2010²³⁹. With these agreements, eighty one technical ministers from Sub-Saharan African states visited Turkey to discuss the cooperation possibilities in related domains²⁴⁰. The Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) were appointed as the responsible organ for managing special technical assistance fund. To facilitate its operations, TIKA opened branches in Addis Ababa, Khartoum and Dakar. In the context of African Development Program, TIKA concluded seventy projects in twenty two countries since 2006. These projects were diverse in terms of their purposes and functions, ranging from the inspection of water resources in Djibouti and the donation of a garbage truck to Mali, to building a village of six hundred houses, a police station and a mosque in the Darfur region²⁴¹. Through these projects and donations, several Turkish experts were sent to Sub-Saharan Africa.

The Turkish government also took steps towards participating in African regional economic organizations. The Turkish Embassy in Nigeria became accredited to the West African Economic Community (ECOWAS) in 2005. Moreover, Turkey became the 25th non-regional member of African Development Bank, a member of African Exports and Imports Bank, and a member of the International Partners Forum of the Inter-governmental Development Authority in 2008. Joint economic commissions were established with the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Mali and Sudan in 2009, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Kenya, Senegal, Nigeria and Uganda in 2010 and with Mali in 2011²⁴². Business Forums were created with Nigeria and Ghana in 2010; and with Ghana, Gabon and South Africa in 2011 along with Trade and Investment Forums established with Cameroon in 2010 and Tanzania in 2011²⁴³. Seven more Trade Attachés were appointed to Sub-Saharan Africa from

²³⁹ *Strategic Plan 2009-2013*, 53

²⁴⁰ In 2008, Gambian Minister of International Cooperation, Gabonese Minister of Economy; in 2010 Ivory Coast Minister of Trade, Ghanaian Minister of Trade, and Cameroonian Minister of Industry; in 2011 Angolan Minister of Finance, Swaziland Minister of Economy and Development and Zimbabwean Minister of Finance visited Turkey for technical cooperation talks. "Turkey-Africa Partnership Developments since the Turkey-Africa Cooperation Summit report", 24-26.

²⁴¹ "Turkey-Africa Partnership" 38.

²⁴² "Turkey-Africa Partnership" 32.

²⁴³ "Turkey-Africa Partnership", 33

Turkey in 2007. Moreover, the Turkish Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) and the Union of African Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture Professions (UACCIAP) met for further cooperation to establish a Turkey-Africa Chamber²⁴⁴.

In order to facilitate movement of people and goods, transportation agreements were signed with Kenya, Gambia, Somalia, Mali and Ghana in 2009, Uganda and Zambia in 2010 and Sierra Leone in 2011. Recently, Turkish Airlines launched direct flights to Khartoum (Sudan), Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) and Lagos (Nigeria) in 2006, Johannesburg and Cape Town (South Africa) in 2007, Nairobi (Kenya) and Dakar (Senegal) in 2009, Dar'es selam (Tanzania), Entebbe (Uganda) and Accra (Ghana) in 2010, and Kigali (Rwanda) and Mogadishu (Somalia) in March 2012²⁴⁵.

In addition to government sector, Turkish business groups also took initiatives. Turkey-Africa Trade Bridges were organized by Confederation of Turkish Businessmen and Industrialists (TUSKON). Organizing seven Foreign Trade Bridges meetings since 2006 in Turkey, TUSKON provided a stable atmosphere where business possibilities in Sub-Saharan Africa and Turkey were discussed²⁴⁶. TUSKON also organized the 4th United Nations the Least Developed Countries Summit in 2011, where policy makers and businessmen from around the world had the opportunity to meet and address problems regarding Africa. In addition, the Commission of Foreign Economic Relations (DEIK) organized a Turkey- South Africa Forum in 2011 to increase the attention of Turkish businessmen to Africa.

Cultural Component

The cultural component of the 1998 Opening Action Plan would consist of five measures. In this framework, cultural agreements would be concluded with African states, scholarships would be granted to African students, African scholars would be invited to various international seminars or international festivals, trainings for African military and diplomatic personnel would be organized, and an Institute of African Studies would be found.²⁴⁷

In line with the 1998 Plan, Turkey signed cultural agreements with Cameroon, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa between 2005 and 2011. Moreover, several delegations related to culture visited Turkey between 2009 and 2012²⁴⁸. Technical cooperation agreements on education were signed with Djibouti, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Republic of South Africa in 2009, and similar agreements on tourism were signed with Kenya and Nigeria in 2010, and Ghana in 2011.

Offering scholarships to African students has been the most effective part of the cultural measures. Regular undergraduate and graduate scholarships to students from all African states have been offered by the government since 2003. The scholarships attracted 5554 students from Sub-Saharan Africa to Turkish universities between 2003 and 2012.²⁴⁹ With these offers, a larger number of Sub-Saharan African students were granted scholarships. It is also important to note that the number of the recipient Sub-Saharan countries has also increased.

²⁴⁴ Akgün and Özkan, 2011, 536.

²⁴⁵ Turkish Airlines, www.thy.com.tr.

²⁴⁶ 1st Turkey-Africa Trade Bridge was held on 8th-9th of May 2006, 2nd Turkey-Africa Bridge was held on 18th-19th of May 2007, 3rd Turkey-Africa Bridge was held on 13th-15th of May 2008, 4th Turkey-Africa Bridge was held on 3rd-5th of June 2009, 5th Turkey-Africa Bridge was held on 4th-5th of November 2010 and the 7th Turkey-Africa Bridge was held on 16th of December 2011 in Turkey.

²⁴⁷ Hazar, 2000, 111.

²⁴⁸ In 2009, Education Minister of Ivory Coast and a delegation from the Mozambique Ministry of Education; in 2010, Congolese Minister of Education and Ivory Coast Minister of Youth and Sports; and in 2011, Nigerian Minister of Education visited Turkey.

²⁴⁹ Student Selection and Replacement Center (OSYM) *Book of Statistics of Higher Education in Turkey*. Available at <http://osym.gov.tr/belge/1-128/sureli-yayinlar.html>

Table 4: Number of Sub-Saharan African students and number of different Sub-Saharan African states in Turkish universities between 1998 and 2011.

Academic Year	Number of Sub-Saharan African students/Total Number of Foreign students in Turkish universities	Number of Sub-Saharan African students' countries
2002-2003	236/15017	27
2003-2004	326/14693	27
2004-2005	278/14794	22
2005-2006	296/15481	27
2006-2007	348/15893	27
2007-2008	422/16829	34
2008-2009	484/18158	36
2009-2010	643/21361	36
2010-2011	875/25545	39

Source: Student Selection and Replacement Center (OSYM) *Book of Statistics of Higher Education in Turkey*. Available at <http://osym.gov.tr/belge/1-128/sureli-yayinlar.html>

As the 1998 Plan envisaged, The Center for African Studies (AÇAUM) was founded by the Ankara University in 2008. The Center invited professors to lecture on Sub-Saharan Africa in its master program such as Dr.Nancy Walker and Dr.Getie Gelaye²⁵⁰. AÇAUM publishes its monthly “Afrika Gündemi” (The African Agenda), and has launched the first issue of biannual scholarly journal *Afrika*. It also organized cultural events like African Poetry, Movie, Book Days and occasional seminars on African countries.

The Turkish government also organized “the Young Diplomats Training Program” in which several diplomats from nineteen Sub-Saharan African states participated between 2009 and 2011.²⁵¹ Moreover, more than 200 military personnel from Africa received training at Turkish military schools. As of 2011, 60 students from 12 different Sub-Saharan African states have been trained in these schools.²⁵²

The cultural relations between Turkey and Sub-Saharan African countries have moved beyond steps foreseen in the 1998 Plan, by the active involvement of civil society and private sectors. After AÇAUM, several graduate programs, think tanks, corporations and associations focusing on Africa were founded. Izmir Economy University, Kadir Has University and Kırklareli University opened graduate programs in African Studies in 2009, 2010 and 2011 respectively. Think-tanks with special desks on Africa like the Turkish Eurasian Research Center (TASAM) and private corporations such as Afroturk and African Innovation and Development Ankara (AIDA) were also founded. Africa Brotherhood and Cooperation Association were founded in 2010 to provide humanitarian assistance to African peoples.²⁵³ Turkish education did not only accept African students, but also spread into Sub-Saharan Africa with the Turkish primary schools and colleges in Angola, South Africa, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Gambia, Guinea, Cameroon, Kenya, Congo, Congo Democratic Republic, Liberia, Senegal, Tanzania, Mauritania, Nigeria, Sudan and Zambia. The Turkish media and private cultural institutions have also become more interested in Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁵⁴ Accordingly, in May 2012, a Turkey-Africa Media forum was organized by the Directorate General of Press and Information of Turkey (DGPI) with the support of the African Media

²⁵⁰ Ankara University, Afrika Çalışmaları Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi
<http://www.acaum.org/arastirma-egitim/konuk-ogretim-uyeleri.html>

²⁵¹ “Turkey-Africa Partnership,” 68.

²⁵² “Turkey-Africa Partnership,” 52.

²⁵³ Africa Brotherhood and Cooperation Association Website,
<http://www.afkad.org/Afkad%2BHakk%C4%B1nda>

²⁵⁴ “Yedek Yaşamlar” *Cumhuriyet*, 9 April 2012; “Memleket Meselesi” TRT Gap, 2 January, 2012. Haber Afrika Website <http://www.haberafrika.com>; are examples for growing interest in Turkey about African affairs. Afrika Gündemi by AÇAUM and Afrika Günlüğü by TASAM, provide daily reviews on developments in Africa

Initiative (AMI).²⁵⁵ 270 Media representatives from 54 African countries met during the forum and agreed to establish a journalist exchange program under the auspices of the DGPI and AMI. The growing interest in African culture is also manifest in organizations like Africa Movie Festival by the Istanbul Modern Art Museum on 5-22 January 2012²⁵⁶.

Turkey's Opening up to Sub-Saharan Africa: An Assessment

A comparison of the initial goals of the 1998 Plan, and the development of Turkey-Sub-Saharan Africa Relations in its aftermath shows that Turkey has successfully implemented its components. In this part, two questions are addressed. Firstly, why did Turkey open up to Sub-Saharan Africa? Secondly, what are the factors behind Turkey's the success in Turkey's foreign policy toward Sub-Saharan Africa? As regards to the first question, we argue that both international and domestic factors enabled and encouraged Turkey's opening. The international factors are the post-Cold War international security environment and globalization. The domestic factors are enhanced capacity and transnationalization of Turkey's small-and-medium sized enterprises (SMEs). With respect to the second question, we argue that successful implementation of the 1998 plan's cultural component, through which state-to-people and people-to-people connections are established and maintained, is the reason behind the overall success of Turkey's Sub-Saharan Africa initiative.

The post-Cold War international structural change along with the increasing economic globalization, are the international factors behind Turkey's enthusiasm in building closer relations with Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁵⁷ The post-Cold War international structural change, which generated the current security environment and the power vacuum in Afro-Eurasia, has enabled states to pursue a more independent and multidirectional foreign policy. The realization of the current system as a multipolar one, rather than a unipolar one, eased the hands of the Turkish political elite and encouraged them to take bolder steps.²⁵⁸ The fact that Turkey's recent experience in a more independent and assertive foreign policy is not unique,²⁵⁹ shows that similar factors have also instigated the rise of non-Western societies as powerful actors, especially in the economic realm.²⁶⁰ Therefore, Turkey's opening to Sub-

²⁵⁵ Turkey-Africa Media Forum Official Website, available at <http://www.turkeyafricamediaforum.org/en/>

²⁵⁶ İstanbul Modern, "Afrika: Afrika Sinemasının Sasirtici Cesitliliği" available at http://www.istanbulmodern.org/tr/basin/basin-bultenleri/afrika-sinemasinin-sasirtici-cesitliliği_89.html

²⁵⁷ William Hale, *Turkish Foreign Policy, 1774–2000* (London: Frank Cass, 2000); F. Stephen Larrabee and Ian O. Lesser, *Turkish Foreign Policy in an Age of Uncertainty* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003); Lenore G. Martin and Dimitris Keridis (eds.), *The Future of Turkish Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003); Alan Makovsky, "The New Activism in Turkish Foreign Policy" *SAIS Review*, Vol.19, No.1 (Winter/Spring 1999), pp.92–113.

²⁵⁸ Ziya Öniş and Şuhnaz Yılmaz "Between Europeanization and Euroasianism: Foreign Policy Activism in Turkey during the AKP Era" *Turkish Studies* Volume 10, Issue 1, (2009): 7-24; Binnur Ozkececi-Taner "The Impact of Institutionalized Ideas in Coalition Foreign Policy Making: Turkey as an Example 1991–2002," *Foreign Policy Analysis* Volume 1, Issue 3, pages 249–278. F. Stephen Larrabee "Turkey Rediscovered the Middle East" *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007, available at <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/62649/f-stephen-larrabee/turkey-rediscovered-the-middle-east>; İbrahim Kalın "Turkey and the Middle East: Ideology or Geo-Politics?" *Private View* August 2008, available at www.setavakfi.org.tr/public/HaberDetay.aspx?Dil=tr&hid=11010

²⁵⁹ Ziya Öniş "Multiple Faces of the "New" Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique" *Insight Turkey* Vol 13, no. 1 (2011): 47-65; p. 56. Aydın also gives examples of India, Brazil and Poland as newly emerging potential regional powers: Ersel Aydın "Bölgesel Güç Olmak ve Türk Dış Politikasında Yön Arayışları" in *Yeni Dönemde Türk Dış Politikası: Uluslararası IV. Türk Dış Politikası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri*, Dincer, Osman Bahadır, Habibe Özdal, Hacı Ali Necefoğlu (eds) (Ankara:USAK) 2010.

²⁶⁰ Suat Kınıkloğlu, "Turkey's Neighbourhood and Beyond: Tectonic Transformation at Work?" *The International Spectator*, Vol. 45, No. 4, December 2010, 93–100; Mehmet Babacan, "Whither an Axis Shift: A Perspective from Turkey's Foreign Trade" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1 (2011):129

Saharan Africa have also been facilitated by economic globalization, which encourages finding new markets, increasing trade and accessing the cheap resources and labour.²⁶¹

The foremost domestic implication of economic globalization in Turkey, has been felt in business sector. It has become one of the most important actors which take part in Turkey's Africa Opening. Since the liberalization wave of the 1980s, business associations started to assume a more active role in Turkey's economic life, which translated into their formal participation in policy making. The Turkish state has gradually make room for private sector to play a role in the process, "because it is deemed to be capable of administering specific functions more efficiently than the state."²⁶² In addition to their enhanced capacity, they have transnationalized their activities.²⁶³ Especially SMEs in Turkey, mostly known as "Anatolian tigers," the firms from rising centers of the Anatolian capital, have begun to assert increasing influence towards the government for finding new markets. Since these capital owners, most of whom have an Islamic, socially conservative outlook, are argued to be the basis of AKP's political support,²⁶⁴ their demands are more easily translated into foreign policy initiatives.²⁶⁵ Thus, the business associations, which represent these rising centers of industrialization and capital accumulation in Turkey, TOBB, MÜSİAD and TUSKON, have become leading instigators of Turkey's African opening. Turkish foreign policy has increasingly been driven from below, so much so that it is "no longer the monopoly of politicians and diplomats."²⁶⁶

In order to understand why Turkey's opening to Africa has been successful so far, one should consider the dynamics which not only enable but also shape and sustain Turkey's foreign policy initiatives. While the post-Cold War environment and globalization have been the necessary conditions for Turkey's attempt, they do not successfully explain why Turkey has achieved most of its goals. Indeed, the increasing level of relations between Turkey and Sub-Saharan African countries is not an isolated incident, but an extension of Turkey's recent foreign policy activism. For the last decade, Turkey has been building a complex web of international and global relations, which covers not only other governments but also other peoples. Defined as "multidimensional foreign policy" by Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu,²⁶⁷ this activism surpasses Turkey's immediate neighbourhood and reaches out to formerly neglected regions such as Latin America or Sub-Saharan Africa.²⁶⁸ In addition to geographical expansion, the defining characteristic of multidimensionality in Turkish foreign policy is to establish and maintain relations state-to-people relations as well as to encourage more people-to-people relations.

²⁶¹ Kemal Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 40 (Spring, 2009), pp. 29-57; Kınıklıoğlu, 2010; Mustafa Kutlay, "Economy as the 'Practical Hand' of Turkish Foreign Policy: A political Economy Explanation" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, pp. 67-88; Öniş, 2011; "Out of the ruins", *The Economist*, March 27th-April 4th 2010.

²⁶² Altay Atlı, "Businessmen as Diplomats: The Role of Business Associations in Turkey's Foreign Economic Policy" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No.1, 2011, pp. 109-128.).

²⁶³ Öniş, 2011,56.

²⁶⁴ Öniş, 2011, 57.

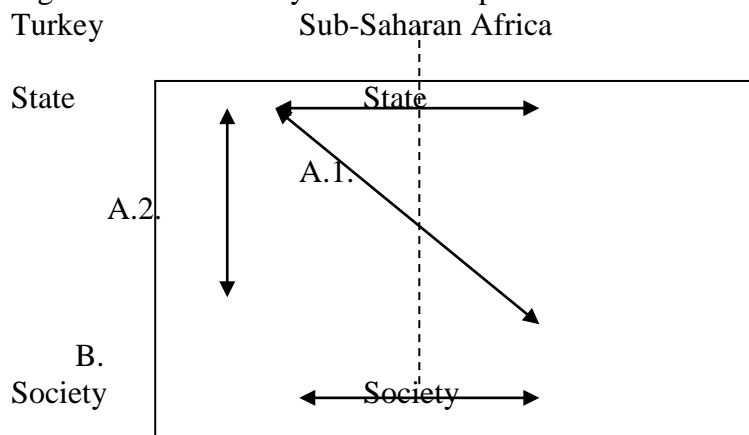
²⁶⁵ Kirişçi, 46.

²⁶⁶ Öniş, 2011, 56.

²⁶⁷ Ahmet Davutoğlu, "Turkey's Foreign Policy Vision: An Assessment of 2007" *Insight Turkey* Vol. 10, No. 1 (2008): 77-96

²⁶⁸ Bülent Aras, "Davutoğlu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy" *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 11, No.3, 2009, pp. 127-142

Figure 1: State-Society Relations Aspect of Multidimensionality in Turkey's Foreign Policy Turkey



By encouraging state-to-people relations (Figure 1; A.2 and A.1.), economic and ideational demands of both Turkish and African people are projected into foreign policy initiatives. Two dynamics are at play. The first one comprises of the institutions and platforms where policy demands of different segments of Turkish society are heard (A.1.). The second one is to establish direct contacts with the Turkish state and sub-Saharan African people to hear their needs and concerns (B.1). In return, these demands provide the definitive impetus behind Turkey's continuous engagement and the subsequent success in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In many cases, Turkish foreign policy efforts are a mixture of formal initiatives by the government and the informal activities of NGOs in Turkey.²⁶⁹ This unprecedented parallelism between the state and Turkish civil society shows signs of a new complexity, which does not lend itself to be defined as either top-down or bottom-up. Instead, a simultaneous and two-way demand-response-feedback-reformulation mechanism is at work. In this framework, sub-state actors with distinct economic and ideational concerns find mechanisms to voice their demands in formal foreign policy making platforms, provide and receive feedback on the steps that are taken, and help in reformulating the initial policies on the basis of originating issues and needs. Thus, state-civil society nexus presents itself not only in the implementation but also continuation and reformulation of Turkish foreign policy.

With respect to Turkey-Sub-Saharan Africa relations, business associations and research centers emerged as the leading partners in the above processes. For example, focusing on economic cooperation, investment and trade, TUSKON played a leading role in funding and organizing Turkey-Africa Trade Bridges. It was supported by both state institutions like Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade and TİKA, as well as civil society organizations like Turkish-African Cultural, Social and Economic Cooperation Association, Turkish Exporters Assembly (TİM), İstanbul Exporters Union, İstanbul Mineral and Metals Exporters Association (İMMİB) and the İstanbul Textile and the Apparel Exporters Association (İTKİB).²⁷⁰

Other than business, research centers (think-tanks) have increasingly become instrumental in providing input for foreign policy initiatives. Their numbers have risen enormously and the variety in their political orientation and activities are unprecedented. These think-tanks host not only Turkish but also foreign officials, discussing and shaping Turkish foreign policy.²⁷¹ While the 1998 Plan foresaw establishment of a single research

²⁶⁹ Kemal Kirişçi, "The Transformation of Turkish Foreign Policy: The Rise of the Trading State," *New Perspectives on Turkey*, No. 40 (Spring, 2009), pp. 29-57; Suat Kınıklıoğlu "Turkey's Neighbourhood and Beyond: Tectonic Transformation at Work?" *The International Spectator*, Vol. 45, No. 4, (2010) 93-100

²⁷⁰ TUSKON Website, http://www.tuskon.org/icerik/haber_detay.php?id=265

²⁷¹ Sedat Laçiner "Yeni Dönemde Türk Dış Politikasının Felsefesi, Fikri Altyapısı ve Hedefleri" p. 39 in *Yeni Dönemde Türk Dış Politikası: Uluslararası IV. Türk Dış Politikası Sempozyumu Tebliğleri*, Dincer, Osman Bahadır, Habibe Özdal, Hacali Necefoğlu (eds) (Ankara:USAK)2010

institute, numerous research centers and think-tanks were established, with some extensively focusing on Africa. The conferences and fora they organize bring Turkey's state and non-state organizations together, while their research projects inform both Turkish state and people about Africa.

Business associations and think tanks are also instrumental in providing venues for African state institutions and business groups to voice their concerns. Therefore, they are also instrumental in the second dynamic of state-to-people relations, i.e. to encourage relations between the Turkish state and Sub-Saharan African peoples. TASAM's ongoing Turkey-Africa Congresses, where issues discussed ranged from African history to performances of environmental NGOs in Africa, from foreign aid to climate change,²⁷² and TUSKON's Trade Bridges are illustrative of this second function.

Connections between Turkish state and Sub-Saharan African people are also maintained by active involvement of governmental institutions. In collaborating with African civil organizations, they ensure that sub-Saharan African peoples are also at the receiving end of the benefits that would emanate from increasing bilateral relations. As such, these institutions greatly contribute to Turkish foreign policy's successful implementation. For example, cooperation of Directorate General of Press and Information of Turkey (DGPI) with African Media Initiative is illustrative of their function in building further connections. Office of Public Diplomacy and DGPI also cooperated with Selçuk University and Mardin Artuklu University in organizing two Turkish Foreign Policy workshops, which bring together over 200 graduate students and academics with government officials.²⁷³ In both workshops, there were sessions where relations with Africa have been on focus. Appointment of honorary consuls in Africa have a similar function. Mostly prominent African businessmen, they establish semi-formal links between Turkey and Sub-Saharan African countries. They are also sources of information and guidance for both African and Turkish policy makers and individual businessmen.

Nevertheless, among government institutions, Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA) stands out. Since providing official development aid is the most important means to connect the Turkish state and Sub-Saharan African societies, TIKA plays a vital role. Through TIKA, Turkey has provided funds to several Sub-Saharan countries since the end of the Cold War. Substantial amounts of development aid by TIKA goes to diverse activities in various fields, such as economic and industrial infrastructure development, the health and education sectors, and academic cooperation. TIKA assisted the Sub-Saharan African infrastructure with seventy projects in twenty two countries. As a public institution, TIKA primarily addresses issues and problems that have a direct effect on local African people. To that effect, it cooperates with African associations like "Chantal Biya Foundation" in Cameroon and Africa Technology Center in Sudan. Moreover, it provides knowledge and guidance for Turkish NGOs, operating in Sub-Saharan Africa. For example, it collaborates with several Turkish health care NGOs like ESADER, SAMEDER, DESADER in organizing free check-ups in Madagascar, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi and Cameroon. Therefore, it operates as one of the most important mechanisms through which both Turkish and African societal demands are addressed.

Encouraging more "people-to-people contact"²⁷⁴ (See Figure 1, B) between Turkish and Sub-Saharan African societies, comprises of establishing links of inter-societal information, communication and cooperation. Therefore, the first steps were directed at building infrastructure mechanisms in Africa to connect Turkish and African societies. Improving conditions of trade, business, communication and transportation, changing visa

²⁷² See Webpage of TASAM African Institute for details. <http://tasamafrika.org/>

²⁷³ Prime Ministry of the Republic of Turkey, Office of Public Diplomacy, "Foreign Policy Workshops" available at <http://kdk.gov.tr/faaliyetler/dis-politika-calistaylari/25>

²⁷⁴ Kınıkioğlu, 2010, 94.

requirements, and building primary channels of bilateral communication at the societal level, like designing web pages, broadcasting Turkish TV Channels in Africa, supporting joint associations, funding research centers and providing scholarships were among many other activities through which Turkish state facilitates “people-to-people” relations. They also show that Turkey’s engagement with Africa is neither superficial nor short term.

Tourism, sports, economy and culture are the main venues to which this encouragement is directed.²⁷⁵ Tourists from Sub-Saharan Africa are growing in numbers thanks to changing visa policies, which facilitate the free movement of people, goods, services and ideas. Thanks to some sports clubs’ investment on Sub-Saharan African players, demands to Turkey have been made from sub-Saharan African countries to assist building soccer infrastructures.²⁷⁶ In the economic realm, six Turkish export products fair were organized in Senegal, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Ivory Coast, and Ghana in the last two years and joint business forums were organized with South Africa, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon and Kenya in 2009, 2010 and 2011. In the cultural sphere, African movie days are organized, African writers are being invited, and studies have been made on African history.²⁷⁷

Looking at these various dimensions, it is clear that foreign policy does not exclusively consist of behaviours of official actors or implemented by conventional means. Turkey’s relations with Africa are not only state-to-state dealings, which have little direct projection to the lives of the people but actual relations which could improve conditions of both peoples. By improving state-to-people and people-to-people relations, it is ensured that Turkey’s attempts at multidimensional foreign policy are accompanied by Turkish civil society initiatives on the one hand, and they are specifically tailored to the needs and demands of the domestic constituents of the countries in question.²⁷⁸ Since only such foreign policy initiatives bare sustainable and equitable results, state-to-people and people-to-people relations are vital in ensuring foreign policy success. Accordingly, cooperation in development, education, culture, tourism and trade, where more people-to-people contact is possible (low-politics), are the fundamental spheres for cooperation in other spheres (high politics). Developing these relations is also the best response to the pressures of globalization, whereby citizens are increasingly pushing for interests, demands and world-views which transcend the borders of states.

Conclusion

The way how Turkey regarded Sub-Saharan Africa has changed since the formulation of the 1998 Opening Action Plan. Whereas Turkey’s relations with Sub-Saharan Africa were minimal until 1998, a multifaceted opening to the region was introduced with the 1998 Plan, which specified Turkey’s involvement with the region with respect to diplomatic, political, economic and cultural spheres. While, changes in the international security structure and globalization encouraged Turkish foreign policy makers to seek closer relations with the region, the enhanced capacity and transnationalization of business sector, were the domestic factors which increased interest in Sub-Saharan Africa.

By 2012, the premises of the 1998 Plan have been realized. Indeed, the extent of Turkey’s relations with Sub-Saharan Africa has surpassed the level that was stipulated by the plan. In that regard, Turkish foreign policy towards Sub-Saharan Africa has been successful. The main reason behind this success was Turkish government’s ability to include different

²⁷⁵ Kınıklıoğlu, 2010, 95.

²⁷⁶ Fotomac Daily, “Gençlerde Afrika Esintileri” (“African Breeze in Youth”)

<http://www.fotomac.com.tr/Genclerbirligi/2012/03/01/genclerde-afrika-esintileri>

²⁷⁷ Melek Firat “ Türkiye- Afrika İlişkilerinin Tarihsel Arka Planı Ve Afrika Açılımlında Sivil Toplum Kuruluşlarının Rolü” IV. Turkey-Africa International Congress, available at

<http://www.tasamafrika.org/pdf/afk5/12-Prof-Melek-FIRAT.pdf>

²⁷⁸ Mehmet Ozkan, “What drives Turkey's involvement in Africa?” *Review of African Political Economy* 37, no.126, (2010): 533-540, Aras, 2-3; Uslu, 8.

segments of the Turkish and sub-Saharan peoples. In addition to expanding its zone of action in Africa, Turkey also deepened its state-to-people relations through collaborating with sub-state groups like research centers, associations and business groups. Government agencies like TIKA acted as intermediaries between various civil society organizations. Moreover, Turkish state facilitated improvement of the people-to-people relations by building primary social and material infrastructure for inter-societal relations. Thus, Turkey's opening to Sub-Saharan Africa has begun to take a more long-term and sustainable course.

In these regards, Erdoğan's Somalia visit of 2011 shall be best viewed as a recent example of how Turkey moved beyond conventional state-to-state dealings in implementing its foreign policy. With a focus on the needs and conditions of the Somali people, the visit was more than an official visit, and carried an important symbolic meaning for those suffering from famine, civil war and crisis.