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Africa in Turkey’s Foreign Policy Agenda: Trade, Economy And Military Cooperation

Summary

The paper which goes under the title of "Africa in Turkey’s Foreign Policy Agenda: Trade, Economy and Military Cooperation" demonstrates various valuable ideas, that is the reason that made us dwell on a similar topic. Africa, as the second largest continent in the world in the history became a close part of Ottoman Empire. Turkey and African countries have many issues in common in terms of social, cultural, political and economic aspects as the heritage of the past and cultural affiliation. Recently Turkey and Africa have introduced a variety range of relation perspectives, which promote the integration of people and trade between the two sides. Business that is worth millions of dollars has been conducted between African countries and Turkey. Some products have been imported and exported between the two sides. In last decade strong diplomatic ties between Turkey and Africa have been established where Turkey has opened many embassies in different countries in Africa.

Key words: Africa, Turkey, economy, trade, bilateral relations, economic growth.

JEL codes: N40

Introduction

Turkey and Africa have long-standing historical relations dating back to centuries. Positive relations between Africa and Turkey established since Ottoman Empire. Traces of Ottoman presence in Africa like bridges, mosques, water and sewage systems, roads, buildings, market places still exist (Uchehara 2008). It maybe argued that Turkey – Africa relations has experienced a revival after 1998. Turkey has an interest of improving the relations with Africa through concrete projects in economic, social and political fields. Turkey and Africa established various efforts to make their mutual relations to be stronger and effective, for example, Turkey – Africa Cooperation Summit that held in August 2008 in Turkey that marks the turning point of the new beginning of the Turkey – African relations (Ozkan 2008). Recently Turkey, particularly during the first decade of AK Party’s rule struggled a lot to bring the new vision
of Turkey–Africa relations. The Summit opened a new door for Turkey to engage fully to African matters in order for both sides to benefit in economic development. Turkish–African relations promoted integration of people for various purposes such as tourism, business and cultural exchanges. To influence and promote similar activities many embassies of African countries established in Turkey, thus Turkey opened more embassies to African countries. Augmentation in number of embassies reflects how the two sides dedicate their resources to improve and strengthen the relations. To improve African countries Turkey established particular organizations which are responsible for providing aid to African countries. Many countries benefited from these aids for example Somalia, Burkina Faso, etc. “In 2009 development aid to Africa by Turkish government organizations was worth nearly $44 million; in 2012 ODA was increased to $772 million” (Bilgic 2014).

In addition to that different NGOs have played an important role in a social and development dimension to Turkey-African relations. For example, TUSKON as a major NGO is very active in Africa as a leading engine of Turkish business in the Continent. TUSKON has encouraged the business, which conducted between Turkey and African countries. Several meetings held between both sides to investigate investment opportunities, which could utilize by Turkish and African businesspersons to expand the business (Ozkan 2014a). “Yet while facets such as economics, culture, and politics have taken the limelight, questions of Turkish-African military relations and security affairs remain largely unconsidered and understudied” (Kaya and Warner 2012).

History, politics and economy of the Republic of Turkey

Turkey is a country that is situated between Europe and Asia. Turkey, “Over the last decade, the world’s 16th largest economy grew by $383 billion, exports rose from $63 billion to $135 billion and per capital incomes doubled (in current US dollars) against a backdrop of central government debt shrinkage from three figure levels to 46 percent of gross domestic product (GDP)” (Macovei 2009).

Turkish economy depends much on industrial production, agriculture, trade and tourism. Turkey is very famous for tourism destinations in Africa. Population has been increased in Turkey each year and this caused many citizens remain unemployed. “Turkey has the potential to become a USD 6 trillion economy by 2050, making it the third largest in Europe. Turkey could also rapidly narrow the income gap with the EU and achieve a per capita GDP level of USD 60 000 or 75% of the projected EU average by 2050. Current developments show that Turkey has managed to overcome a number of obstacles, but must continue to reform in order to fully realize its growth potential” (Bilgic and Nascimento 2014).
Economic and political relations between Turkey and Africa

It is a known fact that Turkey hadn’t any colony when Africa was colonized by superpowers. Therefore Turkey did not participate to colonize Africa; hence it has good relation with most of African countries without the trace of colonial past. Turkey has shown interest to cooperate with Africa and the target was to have mutual benefits in all their terms for the relation. Turkey has made some reforms to its foreign policy in order to meet the conditions of Africa on various issues. The foreign policy, which has been introduced by Turkey, was focused on economic, political and social issues (Ozkan 2011).

Since the AKP accession to power in 2002, Turkey’s vision towards Africa has changed and the aim was to initiate the strong relation with African countries. Turkey has repositioning itself in the fastest growing economy in the world. Both Africa and Turkey have the opportunities to engage and unity their economy in order to meet the goals of development. The new era after post-Cold War especially from 1998 Turkey had shown much interest to Africa and this has resulted to cooperation that aimed to eradicate hunger, poverty and conflict.

With this regard it is vital to mention that the Turkish – African Summit was held by President Abdullah Gul in August 2008 for the first time in the history of Turkey – Africa relation. The Summit was highly successful and more than 50 top officers from African countries participated. Since 2008, Africa and Turkey have increased their efforts to improve diplomatic relation by opening new embassies and honorary consulates to both sides (Kaya and Warner 2012) Similar initiative of government was also supported logistically as Turkish Airlines increased its route more African countries which on one hand connected Istanbul to Africa while on the other hand Turkey turned out to be a bridge for Africa.

Turkey has invested billions to African countries to improve the economy and trade relations between the two sides. According to the reports which have been published by OECD, UN and ADB the results as named Turkey to be the new actor in the Africa economy. Turkey, due to its efforts in the economic development of African countries it has gained a membership in the ADB.

Topping Ankara’s agenda is the attraction of allies via economic endorsements, where Turkey has signed free trade agreements with numerous African states, including Ethiopia and Senegal. These enticements appear to be working: Turkey’s exports to Africa increased from $1.5 billion in 2001 to $10.3 billion in 2011, while the overall trade volume between Turkey and Africa rose from $4 billion in 2000 to $19 billion in 2011 (Gunay 2011). The Figure 1 shows Turkish exports to Sub-Saharan African countries from 2004 until 2013. Based on the Table 2 we can conclude that since Turkey has opening trade relations with African countries the volume of trade has increasing rapidly.
The trade cooperation between Turkey and Africa has relied on the new investment to some African countries based on consumer goods, textile manufacturing, steel and iron, etc. Turkey has involved in African and its companies have offered services to various sectors such as furniture, food, health services, education and construction (Ozkan 2012). Turkey is very popular in textiles and furniture industries in the world. In Africa Turkish textiles, companies are in South Africa and some other countries. Tourism has encouraged the Turkey-Africa relations to progress because millions of tourists and business people from both sides have travelled to see the opportunities in which they can gain after their visit. In order to improve its trade activities with Africa countries, Turkey has established business councils that have been regulated by the DEIK. These business councils are functioning in some African countries such as Sudan, Tunisia, South Africa, Morocco, Egypt, Ethiopia, Algeria and Libya (Besenyő and Olah 2012).
Turkey’s Contributions to Africa

In comparison to many other superpowers one may argue that Turkey’s contribution to African continent is highly limited yet parallel to Ankara’s increasing interest in the continent, the level of contribution recently has augmented. Turkey has contributed different aspects to African countries like economic, political, social and security fields. Turkey has provided humanitarian aid and education to many African countries.

Security

Turkey has played a crucial part to ensure peace and security of African nations. It has taken part to resolve some problems, which may affect the peace and security in the African nations under the laws of United Nations because Turkey is the member of it. Turkey has provided military and training support to some African military and police. Some agreements and treaties have been signed concerning military training and exchange of technical and scientific knowledge related between Turkish and African armies. Examples of the African countries that have signed these treaties were Egypt, Gambia, Mali, Ethiopia, and Ghana. Turkish troops under UN have participated in peace keeping operations in various countries of Africa such as Ivory Coast, Congo, Liberia, and Somalia. Besides, Turkey provides support to some African refugees and migrants (Kaya and Demirbas 2012).

Humanitarian Aid

Like many other countries Turkey also provides humanitarian aid to many countries in Africa. Many institutions and agencies have been involved to provide humanitarian aid, however the major one was TIKA. It is operating in more than 30 countries worldwide yet it is the most influential Turkish institution in Africa. It is under the Prime Minister’s office. The humanitarian aid that has been provided by Turkey depends much on the strategies set by Turkey to selected countries. The humanitarian aid has focused on many regions around the globe such as the Middle East, Sub-Saharan Africa, Central and South Asia. The humanitarian aid, which has donated by Turkey and the reports, have been prepared and coordinated by Turkey’s official development aid since 1991. Table 1 shows Turkish aid to Africa since 2005 up to 2012.
Table 1. Turkey’s official development aid (in millions of USD)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specifications</th>
<th>Official Development Aid</th>
<th>Official Development Aid to Africa</th>
<th>Percentage to Africa in Turkey’s ODA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>601</td>
<td>11.76</td>
<td>1.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>712</td>
<td>24.79</td>
<td>3.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>602</td>
<td>30.97</td>
<td>5.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>780</td>
<td>51.73</td>
<td>6.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>707</td>
<td>46.96</td>
<td>6.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>967</td>
<td>38.08</td>
<td>3.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>1,276</td>
<td>269.78</td>
<td>21.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>2,422</td>
<td>749.47</td>
<td>30.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Turkey’s official development ... 2015.

Countries, which have political instability and wars, have become the most recipients of the Turkey’s humanitarian aid. Some of these recipients are Somalia, Sudan, DRC, etc. TIKA has involved in various activities in Somalia and other African countries. Some of the projects that have financed by TIKA in Somalia are as follows:
- Galkayo Vocational Training Centre and Youth Sports Center Project;
- Furnishing and technical equipment assistance to Galkayo Orphanage;
- Ventilation of Galkayo Prison Courtyard and Rehabilitation Project;
- Completion of two water wells and four water ducts at Camp Tevekkül;
- Goat Distribution in Camp Tevekkül in cooperation with the Universal Islamic Cultural Trust” (Ozkan 2011).

Education

Turkey has provided scholarship to many African countries. Each year since 1999, African countries have been provided by Ankara numerous scholarships to support the efforts of the Africa to eradicate the illiteracy rate. Turkey, as a UN member, has followed UN strategies to improve the literacy rate around the globe which will help to achieve the UN goals of equal development and eradicate poverty which has been caused by the existence of large number of illiterate people in Africa. Turkey under its ministry of education has granted scholarship to many African countries based on their mutual relations with Turkey. Table 2 indicates the number of African students who have received scholarship from a Republic of Turkey.
Table 2. Number of scholarship students from African countries to Turkey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Specifications</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Somalia</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>315</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morocco</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethiopia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tunisia</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uganda</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic Republic of Congo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GineBissau</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total of All African Countries</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**NGOs as a bridge between Africa and Turkey**

Many NGOs have been established in order to support the trade, economic and social cooperation between Turkey and Africa. Some of these NGOs have performed wonderful job in order to bring the Turkey-Africa relation to be more effective and yield the desired results. The most effective Turkish NGOs, which have been operating in Africa for decades, are TUSKON and IHH.

TUSKON has been operating in many African countries and its aim was to open the door and encourage the Turkey and African businesspersons to invest and engage in trade. Turkish businessmen have expanded their investments and cooperation with African countries. The relation has grown because both sides have satisfactory natural resources and vast areas which can be utilized and bring positive results to their people and governments as well. TUSKON has prepared various trade exhibitions to many African countries and some businesspersons from African countries have been invited to Turkey. TUSKON currently has 7 business federations and 162 business associations and have more than 30000 businesspersons. Over 100000 companies have been registered under the TUSKON and it is widely spread to almost all cities and districts of Turkey. TUSKON has its offices in many countries in Africa and it is able to organize and provide trade and investment to help international companies to reach the reliable and matching countries to start the business (Gunay 2011). Since its establishment in 2005 it has facilitated the growth of various airlines in Africa and Turkey, and the most benefited is Turkish airlines. Turkish Airlines has increased its trips to various destinations in African countries due to the increase of trade flow between the two sides.
Conclusions

Turkey – Africa relations have progressed since past decade. Africa and Turkey have an historical background in their relation since the time of the Ottoman Empire. Africa and Turkey have cooperated in various aspects such as in economy, social, and politics. African is favored by Turkey and became its main target in recent years because Africa has vast of opportunities. It is a well known fact that African has many natural resources such as minerals, fertile land, forests, water sources, etc. Africa has large population, which is very important for the growth of the continent. Due to this fact Turkey has been attracted to invest to initiate and revive its relation with African countries. Turkey has opened many new embassies to African countries in order to increase its diplomatic relations with Africa. As the result of this relation, both sides have shown development and growth in their economies and diplomatic relations.

Turkey through its NGOs and government institutions have organized trips to Africa in order to support various development activities which are on process to many African countries. Turkey has initiated some programs to African countries such as providing scholarships to African countries and students exchange between Turkey and Africa, humanitarian aids have provided to some of African countries, which have faced some difficulties such as disasters, hunger, civil wars, diseases, etc.

Turkey and Africa have some agreements on peacekeeping and because of trust of African countries to Turkey, they have selected Turkey to be in a security council as a non-permanent member. Turkey has promised to be a voice of Africa in the Security Council and as a G-20 member. AU works very close with Turkey in maintaining the security and resolves some problems, which threat African people.

The migration between Turkey and Africa has increased in recent years because both sides have made some reforms to their policies, which relate with International relations. Students, businesspersons, government officers have travelled frequently between the two sides with different purposes. Import and export trade volume have been increased and has affected the economies of both sides to be more competitive hence influenced the development of their countries and their people.

The gerelation between Africa and Turkey has shown a progress since past decades, however there are many challenges to their relations. The major challenges are security and market competition, although there are other challenges, which did, not discussed in this thesis. Some African countries have weak security, which have threaten people to engage fully in the development programs, therefore hinder the development and decreased their economies. Civil wars and terrorists attacks have caused political instability to many Africa
countries, which prevent their government to invest in various development projects. Corruption also is the major problem to many African countries because leaders are not sincerely with their work of bringing the development to their people. Turkey has faced several demonstrations and protests, which have affected some of the government plans and slow down its relation with some African countries. Turkey has been accused by some International organizations for violation of human rights during these protests, hence hinder government transparency and democracy.

There is possibility for Turkey and African relation to be improved in the future I have recommend that both foreign policies of Turkey and African countries to be changed so that to copy with the current situations which are facing the world in terms of security, economy, politics and social aspects. The changes in their policies will facilitate the rapid development of their economies; therefore will be easy to improve their securities and other factors that will make both sides to be better place to live.

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Afryka w agendzie polityki zagranicznej Turcji: współpraca handlowa, gospodarcza i wojskowa

Streszczenie


Słowa kluczowe: Afryka, Turcja, gospodarka, handel, stosunki dwustronne, wzrost gospodarczy.

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