



PERMANENT MISSION OF TURKEY TO THE UNITED NATIONS

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ADDRESS

BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

**TO THE HIGH LEVEL PLENARY MEETING OF THE
65TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
ON THE MILLENNIUM DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

(20 SEPTEMBER 2010, NEW YORK)

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President Treki,
President Deiss,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great honor to address this High Level Plenary Meeting of the General Assembly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

I would like to thank Secretary General Ban ki-Moon for his dedication to draw attention to the global challenges of development. His leadership has certainly created the much needed political momentum towards the timely achievement of MDGs.

Excellencies,

The MDGs have provided a solid framework for development in the past decade. Global challenges, including the economic and financial crisis and adverse impacts of climate change have made them even more pertinent today.

Five years from our deadline, there is an urgent need to reaffirm our commitment and strengthen our partnership in order to meet these Goals on time.

Indeed, we are gathered here today to send a strong message to our community of nations that we stand ready to keep our promise.

The MDGs will continue to guide our development efforts beyond the year 2015. Therefore, we must boost the spirit of global partnership with dedication and focused efforts.

These efforts should not be limited to government activities. We must also rally non-governmental organizations and the private sector around a revitalized development agenda.

Excellencies,

We must attach equal importance to each and every goal. It is also crucial that the MDGs are dealt with as one holistic package in order to create synergies between all the Goals. Thus, I believe it is important to work along the following guidelines:

- Our overarching objective must remain the eradication of poverty and hunger.
- We need to adopt strategies in favor of the poor and vulnerable.
- Investment in agriculture is essential to ensure food security.
- We need to make progress on gender equality and women's empowerment.
- There should be more emphasis on education and health.
- We need to pursue environmental sustainability with stronger political commitment and action.
- We should acknowledge mutually reinforcing relations among the notions of democracy, development and security.

I should underline that these guidelines are drawn from Turkey's own experience in development, as an emerging economy.

Excellencies,

Turkey is well on its way towards achieving the MDGs. We have adopted the MDGs as our primary national development goals and integrated them in our development plans.

- In recent years, we introduced ambitious and comprehensive social welfare programs to improve living standards of vulnerable segments of our society.
- Those policies have proven to be very effective and sustainable with solid financial resources to support them.
- We are on track towards reaching the hundred percent primary school enrollment ratio, thanks to the direct payments given to mothers to promote the enrollment of girls to school.
- We recorded significant progress on maternal and child health by implementing free pre-maternal health check-ups and compulsory vaccination programs.
- With the introduction of a new social security system, our citizens now enjoy universal health coverage.
- We also granted extensive scholarship programs to students with limited financial means, in all levels of education.
- We took all measures to contain HIV and provided access to treatment for those who need it.
- In recent years, more than five hundred thousand new houses have been built by the state-owned Housing Development Administration.
- Comprehensive measures and important policies have been introduced for environmental sustainability. Our EU accession process is also an important driving force in this regard.

As part of our commitment to the MDG agenda, we hosted a regional review meeting in Istanbul last June, in cooperation with UNDP and UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe).

The conclusions of that review provided significant input to this High Level Plenary Meeting.

Excellencies,

Turkey stands ready to lend its full support to the global partnership for development. Development issues now form an integral part of our broad foreign policy agenda.

Our focus is particularly on the least developed countries. We concentrate mainly on small and medium scale projects as well as on technology and know-how transfer. Our aim in these projects is to have a quick impact on the daily lives of local communities.

Our Official Development Assistance (ODA) is also increasing. With the contribution of Turkish NGOs, our overall development assistance exceeds one and a half billion Dollars annually.

In 2007, as the then Foreign Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, I had the pleasure and privilege of hosting my counterparts from the least developed countries in Istanbul for the United Nations Ministerial Conference on the LDCs.

Once again, we feel privileged to host the 4th United Nations Conference on the LDCs next year.

We hope that this meeting will generate strong political momentum and new partnerships to address the persistent challenges of the LDCs in the next decade. I look forward to the support of world leaders in this regard.

I believe that all these efforts demonstrate that Turkey has become a reliable partner for development. Our efforts will continue with the same determination.

Excellencies,

While we may not have too much time left for progress towards the MDGs, we certainly have the will and capacity to achieve them. But we need to act now, and act swiftly.

Let us commit here, once again, to joining our efforts in reaching our common goals. But let us not forget: Our partnership and solidarity for development must continue beyond 2015.

We must continue with a new and enhanced development agenda. This must be our pledge to future generations.

Thank you.