

PAKİSTAN-TURKEY BUSINESS DIALOGUE

September 1, 2016 – Lahore

Ömer Cihad Vardan, DEİK's Chairman

Mr. Chairman;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Assalam Alaikum!

On behalf the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey-DEİK, I would like to welcome you all to Pakistan-Turkey Business Dialogue Meeting organized in this beautiful city of Lahore.

Lahore, with its glorious history and rich culture, also has a proud tradition of entrepreneurship, ambition and talent.

The city is the right place to this gathering of business people who exemplify all these virtues.

And on this gathering; I wish to commend and thank to the efforts of the Punjab Board of Investment and Trade and DEİK's Turkish-Pakistani Business Council for organizing this impressive event.

My thanks also go to the business people and entrepreneurs from Pakistan for being partners in this journey of friendship and brotherhood between the two countries, for long years.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

For the ones who dont know, yet, I would like to spend a few minutes on DEİK.

DEİK established in 1986, is Turkey's foremost institution entitled to shape our country's trade relations with the rest of the World.

Turkey's leading business organizations and business people are gathered under DEİK's umbrella today.

With its 134 Business Councils, of which 126 of them are country-based, DEİK works to improve Turkey's trade relations in a strategic manner.

Today DEİK has 103 Founding Institutions that embraces the biggest business circles of Turkey; like Turkish Business Union (TOBB), Turkish Exporters Union (TIM), TUSİAD,

MUSİAD, Constructors Union etc. We can easily say that DEİK's power comes from its Founding Institutions and today we have the biggest ones on our Board.

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you all very well know; Turkey witnessed a terrible event, a nightmare, 1,5 months ago.

On the evening of July 15th, a small fraction within the Turkish Armed Forces associated with the terror organization called FETÖ tried to engage in a junta, particularly in Ankara and İstanbul.

For long years the terror organization successfully hindered its objective by seemingly functioning as a school, education and culture centers, professional business organization or NGOs.

This functioning of FETÖ was used as the 'soft' power and the organization gained the sympathy and support of the Turkish people in Turkey, as well as abroad.

This has been true for Pakistan as well.

However the nightmare is over!

As DEİK, we perceived this coup attempt as a last move by the terror organization who infiltrated into strategic institutions of the Turkish state with the objective of seizing control of state institutions.

The attempt, failed thanks to the exemplary and self-motivated resistance of Turkish nation with all state institutions.

Throughout the process all political parties and the Members of the Turkish Grand National Assembly, Turkish business community, Turkish civil society, media and the people of Turkey stood firmly behind the Turkish democracy, the Constitution, Turkey's democratic politics and her democratic institutions.

Millions of Turkish people together defeated the attempt and stood by democracy and the rule of law.

On the post-coup attempt period as DEİK;

We have no doubt that Turkey and Turkish democracy will emerge reinforced by this incident.

We are convinced that the rule of law and democracy will be respected during the detention and judicial process.

We are sure that Turkish economy will remain to be strong.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you might imagine, the attempt from the junta was a direct threat to Turkish democracy and our integrity.

We expected from all countries abroad to react this attempt swiftly; condemn the attempt and help Turkey and its Government to fight against the ones who are responsible.

While we received a lot of global support from different countries; some messages given by some leaders disappointed us.

But we had no surprise from Pakistan, as well-expected.

Following the unfortunate events on the night of July 15, 2016, Pakistan's stance has been exemplary.

Excellency the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Memnun Hüseyin, was one the first world leaders calling our President to condemn the coup attempt.

The same applies for His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif. His complete support and call for solidarity with our President, our democratically-elected government, our democratic institutions and the people of Turkey was important.

On my behalf and my institution, I wholeheartedly want to thank you His Excellency Memnun Hüseyin and His Excellency Nawaz Sharif for their support.

Last but not the least, we are also grateful for both houses of Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in support of democracy in Turkey. We are gratified by the visit of the Parliamentary delegation from your country, being the first Parliamentary delegation arriving in Turkey after the abortive coup attempt.

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Our visit to your country is not only a firm endorsement of our commitment to Pakistan but also depicts the gratitude we have, looking at the support from your country.

As DEİK, following the coup attempt, we have started a self-initiated mobilization.

Myself, our Board Members, the Presidents of our Business Councils do travel all around the world in order to combat with the misinformation with regards to the coup attempt in Turkey.

Our goal is also to give a very simple message: We do business as usual.

Within this perspective, we are visiting your country and hopefully tomorrow we are going to have quite a lot of high level meetings. And we are going to discuss how we can open up new horizons on Turkish-Pakistani relations.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Pakistan and Turkey are bound and developed a special relationship by succeeding generations for decades.

It is deeply motivating that our close and cordial relation continues to acquire strategic dimensions.

Your country's strong support following the attempted coup is what this strategic partnership deserves.

Therefore we, Pakistan and Turkey, need to be closer.

But not only economically: we need to strengthen our bonds with cultural, academic, intellectual, youth exchanges.

We need to bring Pakistan closer to Turkey; and Turkey closer to Pakistan.

That is what this brotherly relation requires and deserves.

We need to attach highest importance to the friendship between our peoples and our mutually beneficial partnership.

Dear Brothers; and Sisters;

We are all business people.

Business is what we do and what we know the best.

We earn money but we also witness how business can bring people and nations closer even if distances tiers us apart.

Therefore economy, trade and investments are ways to cooperate to further strengthen our brotherly bounds.

Today Turkish Airlines has direct flights to 3 destinations in Pakistan (Islamabad, Karachi, Lahor); that's a brilliant opportunity in front of us.

Pakistan's pro-business investment environment towards Turkish business people remains to be a central plank of your country's strategy; and this is one of the strongest advantages of our bilateral trade relations.

Today our business men have no serious problems with regards to visas, work permits in Pakistan; they feel themselves at home. That's an even bigger opportunity for us.

We have all on the ground; all the ingredients needed.

Therefore we need to set new targets and we need to cooperate and work in order to achieve those goals.

Mr. Chairman;

Distinguished Guests;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Before I conclude my intervention, I would like to highlight once again that, economic prosperity for the people of Pakistan remains the principal priority of our country and our business people.

Therefore as earlier said, we need to further expanding the horizons of our growing partnership.

We need to think and act strategically.

We need to open up new grounds of cooperation.

I sincerely hope this meeting and the meetings we are going to have in the next 2 days will serve as a catalyst on our relationship.

I would like to thank once again to all business people from Pakistan participating to this meeting.