

**ADDRESS by DEİK PRESIDENT ÖMER CİHAD VARDAN  
AT WELCOMING RECEPTION of TURKEY-SICA FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTERS  
FORUM**

**His Excellency, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, Prof. Nabi Avcı;**

**Most Excellent Ministers of Foreign Affairs of Latin American and Caribbean  
Countries;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

On behalf of the Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey - DEİK, I would like to welcome you all to Istanbul and the Welcoming Reception of Turkey-SICA Foreign Affairs Ministers Forum.

**Distinguished Guests;**

It may be a good idea to start by explaining who we are...

DEİK, established in 1986, is a professional businessman's organization that shapes our country's foreign economic relations. DEİK is an accredited institution especially to organize all business events of the Turkish President and relevant government bodies of the Turkish Republic.

With its 134 Business Councils, of which 127 of them are country-based, DEİK works to improve Turkey's trade and investment relations in a strategic manner with direct contact in these 127 countries.

As Mr. Aykut Eken, our Coordinator Chairman of the region clearly just explained, we are very much interested in working with your countries.

We actually stand devoted to the prospects of Turkey's cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries, including in trade, investment and technology.

As Turkish Business Community, we also stand for a strong, politically united and economically stable Latin America, which is currently asserting itself as one of the pillars of the developing global order.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Turkey does not see the region through the prism of geopolitical confrontation. Instead, Turkey supports the consolidation of mutual benefits with the region's countries in all areas.

The same applies for us: business world.

It seems that trade and investments will emerge as the main driver of our relationship in taking Turkey-SICA ties to a distinctly higher level.

Turkish companies and Turkish nationals have already started venturing out to Latin America, Central America and the Caribbean for investment and trade. Turkish dramas have already took over dominance at Latin American televisions.

This yields the immense potential in bringing the business people of two regions closer.

Therefore, I wholeheartedly believe that the Forum will allow Turkey and Latin American countries to elaborate new proposals and initiatives that will facilitate further development of trade and economic relations among each other.

### **Excellencies;**

I would like to conclude by thanking all of you once again, for attending tonight's Reception.

I deeply wish the Forum will lay down the road map for our future plans for strengthening and making this cooperation more meaningful and substantive.

**Thank you and have a fruitful evening.**