

## Turkey – South Africa

### Bilateral Cooperation and Opportunities in Higher Education

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**President of Turks Abroad and Related Communities Mr. Abdullah Eren,**

**Chairperson of Turkey-South Africa Business Council Dr. Fatih Kemal Ebiçlioğlu,**

**Chairperson of Education Business Council Prof. İrfan Gündüz,**

**Dear Panelists and Participants**

On behalf of Foreign Economic Relations Board of Turkey - DEİK, I am delighted to be together with you for an important subject as education and wish a healthy day to all of us.

Let me start with a brief introduction of DEİK for whom who may not have enough information before.

Foreign Economic Relations Board, DEİK, is a business platform that has been continuing its activities for 36 years in order to enhance all economic relations, between Turkey and the other countries. We continue our works with an understanding of "business diplomacy" together with our

146 country to country based business councils all over the World. Our Education Business Council and Turkey-South Africa Business Council are two of them. You know, there are 54 countries in Africa and we have 45 Business Council there, I think this is quite valuable.

Also personally, I had intense relations with South Africa doing business there in the past so, I am aware of the possibilities and capabilities of South Africa and its important place in Africa and the world. We certainly hope there will be a compromise for Free Trade Agreement between our countries that will further improve our cooperation.

Despite the challenges of Covid-19, we are now learning that there is a paradigm shift. I will not talk about the health aspect of the issue. However, we had to comply with the social distance rule including working from home. The coronavirus has turned our lives upside down; and for a sector as big as education, decision-making become a difficult exercise.

The pandemic presented us challenges and opportunities.

We see an increasing demand for digital solutions and artificial intelligence.

Globalization is most probably changing to Glocalization.

Economic Scale was an important parameter for competition, but we noticed that it also creates the problem of being bounded to one or limited supplier. So supply chain diversification became more important than ever and it took more important position in our life.

So, the life is changing more rapidly than we all expected.

The ones who catch it, who manage it, who design it will be the winners.

The ones who guaranteed the supply chain and transferred enough trust to counterparts will be the winners.

Also, the epidemic process directly affected international education. There is a difficult process in this area and education in the world is probably evolving in a different direction. It is important to keep up with this change and to work on future education models.

Such as the need for our universities to diversify their resources while concentrating more on operational efficiencies and to improve academic results, to effectively integrate technology, to design university-industry cooperation from scratch without considering stereotypes, and to ensure governance and stakeholder engagement.

Like the fact that higher education must become even more important with increasing automation and digitalization.

Universities that quickly adapt to global trends, strive harder to increase their international activities and change themselves.

As DEİK, we continue our work with all our partners intending to establish permanent relations between our countries and increase our economic relations to higher levels.

Thank you.

**Nail OLPAK**

**President of DEİK**