

13th AMBASSADORS CONFERENCE

OPENING SPEECH

August 8, 2022, 10.30-11.30, Ankara

Distinguished Guests, Esteemed Ambassadors,

Honored Colleagues, Dear Interns,

- Welcome to the Ambassadors Conference 2022!
- The Ambassadors of Türkiye, which have the fifth largest representation network in the world, have come together for the 13th time today.
- Last year, due to the conditions of the pandemic, we held the Ambassadors Conference online. This year, I am glad that we are attending this conference in person, once again, in our Capital.
- During the pandemic, we stood by our citizens all around the world. We have the honor and the experience of having been able to do so.
- Through the largest repatriation operation in the history of the Republic, we brought our citizens back to our homeland. We also extended a helping hand to other nations in need.
- We stood together in difficult times, and our central units and missions abroad worked with devotion as a single mind and heart.
- As the Foreign Affairs Ministry family, we lost loved ones, including family members and friends, to the pandemic.
- We lost St. Petersburg Consul General Mehmet Ferhan Yorulmaz and EU Delegation staff member Ahmet Eğri in this period. Murat Sencer Ozan, the husband of our Ambassador to Podgorica, Songül Ozan, passed away recently.
- I wish Allah's mercy upon our friends who lost their lives, and forbearance to their families and loved ones.

Esteemed Guests,

- 2022 is a Year of Confirmation in Turkish foreign policy in many respects.
- It is becoming increasingly clear that the conclusions we reached at critical turning points and the policies we developed accordingly are proving themselves to be accurate.
- In our speeches during the last years at the Ambassadors Conferences, we have underlined that the world and our environment are not an idyllic place.
- We noted that our strategy consisted first of stopping negative trends, and thus seizing the opportunities that arise accordingly.

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We underlined that in so doing, we should use different elements of power together.

- We emphasized the importance of strong leadership, in the person of our President, and the will of the nation behind him.
- We had always been aware that Türkiye does not belong to just one region—rather, we are located at a crossroads with different dynamics, shaped by surrounding basins.
- We emphasized that there were simultaneously different challenges, interests, alliances and struggles around us; and that Turkish diplomacy has been developing specific reflexes as a result of state experience.
- At the same time, we knew, in the wise words of the Great Poet Yahya Kemal, who was himself an Ambassador, that “being the future whose roots draw from the past” is the basic trait of Turkish diplomacy.
- Accordingly, we defined innovation not as a contradiction to our traditions, but as a key, fundamental trait in carrying the deep-rooted Turkish diplomacy into the future.
- We underlined mediation, digitalization and strategic foresight as fundamental faculties that need to be developed today.
- In so doing, we also noted the need to diversify the tools of our diplomacy and consequently, we added new elements to our vocabulary.
- Thanks to our Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy, the Republic of Türkiye, at a time when the world is beset with crises, has been bestowed with instruments that make our diplomacy universal, and with successes that will be referred to for many years to come.
- With the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, we have successfully created a globally active “participatory diplomacy” model that consists of bringing minds together, rather than watching debates from afar.
- We have diversified and revived current initiatives in order to create a brand value in mediation.
- Thanks to Digital Diplomacy, we did not slow down during the pandemic era; on the contrary, we gained momentum, and reached out farther and deeper.
- In parallel with our EU strategic goal, we implemented a structured foreign policy with Asia Anew, through concrete action plans, in this key continent.
- We increased the number of our High-Level Strategic Cooperation Mechanisms to 28, the most recent with Colombia.
- We continued to diversify our Trilateral and Quadripartite Collaboration processes.
- Lastly, in June, we convened our Türkiye-Azerbaijan-Kazakhstan process for the first time in a Trilateral Meeting format that brought together Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Ministers of Transport.

- Last week, we came together with Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan in a new format in Tashkent, this time with the participation of our Ministers of Trade and Ministers of Transport.
- We have used our multilateralism tools effectively: We make a difference on all multilateral platforms, from the United Nations to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, from NATO to the OSCE, from the G-20 to MIKTA and the Organization of Turkic States, whose term presidencies we hold this year,
- With our President's motto of "The World is Bigger than Five", we advocate a more just world order.
- We have achieved all of the above-mentioned successes by means of an enterprising rather than a dogmatic, and a humanitarian rather than an unprincipled foreign policy.
- In other words, we have become "wise, just and compassionate" with a domestic and national foreign policy concept powerful on the ground and at the table, and straight from the heart of this country!

Distinguished Ambassadors,

- The result turned out exactly as we predicted.
- Turkish foreign policy rose on these foundations.
- Turkish diplomacy achieved its successes, which were broadcast live on world televisions, again based on these very foundations.
- As a result, we hosted talks between Ukraine and Russia as a facilitator-mediator in Antalya and in Istanbul.
- The Istanbul agreement, regarding the export of Ukraine's grain, which contributes to the solution of the world food crisis, and the implementation of such an important agreement, is the very result of these efforts.
- These developments turned out to be the global showcase of Turkish diplomacy.
- I had already mentioned that our conclusions and policies have been confirmed one by one.
- There are numerous examples where negative trends have been prevented and positive steps have been taken at the right opportunity.
- For instance, we provided effective diplomatic support to the various cross-border counter-terrorism operations we carried out.
- These operations were very important for the territorial integrity of Syria and Iraq.
- We cleared 4,000 square kilometers of land beyond our borders from terrorists, and it was possible for 515,713 persons to return to those lands.

Had we not carried out these operations, neither DAESH nor PKK/PYD/YPG terrorists would have been cleared from this area.

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- We don't even want to think about how the territorial integrity of these two countries would have been affected.
- In another instance, we supported the legitimate government of Libya, recognized by the United Nations, despite all the criticism.
- Had we not done so, there would have been a geopolitical impact and even a humanitarian catastrophe in the region today, that would have spilled over far beyond Libya.
- Our conclusions were accurate; our policy was correct.
- Again, for instance, in the Aegean and Eastern Mediterranean, we disrupted the calculations of those who believed that "they would get away with anything".
- Had we stood indifferent to the trespassing of our legitimate rights, this would have led to a new dispute and even a conflict environment that would have lasted for decades.
- We took effective measures. We showed that nothing could be done in the region without taking us into consideration.
- For instance, we prevented the exclusion of Türkiye and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus from the region's energy equations.
- Thanks to our seismic research and drilling activities and to the agreement signed with Libya in 2019, we disrupted plots against us.
- We set the boundaries of our continental shelf. Now, alternatives are being sought that will include us.
- Together with the TRNC, we put forward proposals to concretize this dynamic.
- For instance, Türkiye stood by the truth, the right side and justice, as the invasion hindering peace collapsed in Karabakh.
- We questioned the term frozen conflict. We reminded the world that thawing means the eruption of conflict at any moment.
- When the fighting began, we supported the heroic Azerbaijan army's efforts to liberate its occupied territory.
- Then we quickly initiated efforts for regional peace.
- This is why, today, we are not talking about occupied territories, displaced people, or a conflict that might explode at any moment, but rather about peace and cooperation.
- We also warn Armenia once again not to carry out new provocations.
- The examples are aplenty.
- Whenever those who believed they could act in spite of Türkiye did so, we balanced them out with our strong diplomatic muscles.

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Now, cooperation channels with Türkiye are being sought and used.

- We are in a building process today, as we were able to halt the negative course of events in different geographies; our friendships are being revitalized.
- Türkiye is not hostile to anyone. Nor does Türkiye have any claims over anybody's land or interests.
- Türkiye regards its region with the belief that the world can be more just. That is our understanding, goal and effort.
- Those who believe the opposite, bear their own shame.

Dear Colleagues, Distinguished Guests,

- In the first century of our Republic, our foreign policy was shaped by the legacy of our Great Leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk: the principle of "Peace at Home, Peace in the World".
- This goal remains the steady direction of our foreign policy.
- We know that the most solid foundation that will carry Türkiye's foreign policy through upcoming centuries is the establishment of peace on our borders, in our region and in the world.
- Can we have peace of mind without achieving peace,
 - in the neighboring lands where our state tradition has been shaped,
 - in friendly countries where our ancestral kinsmen live,
 - in the far corners of the world where oppressed peoples, who seek help from Türkiye's compassionate power, live?
- With this understanding, today, we also act as the driving force of peace and cooperation, both at the regional and global level, with our Enterprising and Humanitarian Foreign Policy, under the leadership of our President.
- In this endeavor, two particularities of diplomacy that serve to establish lasting peace in the 21st century come to the fore:
 - The first is conducting rational analyses and providing solutions to intertwined, intricate and entrenched problems.
 - The second is to be able to use our power in the interest of compassion, mercy and benevolence, by weighing the solutions we provide on the delicate balance of our conscience.
- With this in mind, we are organizing this year's Ambassadors Conference with the theme, "Wise and Compassionate Turkish Diplomacy on the Eve of 2023 and Beyond".

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- There is a growing need for this vision. Because the world is on the threshold of a new era of turmoil.

- The world is restless. It is searching for equilibrium.

It was once said that globalism is the name of the international system; now it is being questioned.

- We live in an environment that prevents development, which nations seek.

- There is a new agenda and geopolitics that will transform the global economic system as a whole.

- Energy security equations are being rewritten. The transition to clean energy and renewable energy sources will be the cornerstones of this concept.

-But transitioning away from the hydrocarbon economy will not take place without problems. Moreover, the world is sliding toward a period of recession.

- The food crisis, which started with the disruption of supply chains because of the pandemic and the negative effects of climate change, together with the war in Ukraine, is reaching dimensions that threaten food security worldwide.

- Developments have reintroduced war and nuclear threats into European territory, as well as concepts such as “expansionism” and “annexation,” which we wanted to forget, necessitating a renewed European security architecture.

- In strategic rivalries, the great powers are engaged in competition.

- The drivers of these developments can be found in a wide range of factors,

- from climate change to energy and economic system transformation,
- from power transfers and rivalries to the progressive weakening of international institutions.

Dear Guests,

- The 59 years following the French Revolution have been hailed as the “Age of Revolution”.

- This was followed by the “Age of Capital” and then, in the 40 years leading up to the first World War, by the “Age of European Empires”.

- Subsequently, until the end of the Cold War, the brief but devastating 20th century has been termed the Age of Extremes.

- The relative silence of the last 30 years, which has not been named, is today being broken by successive, consecutive shocks.

- We may qualify the era we have entered as the Age of Crises.

- The world is going into this turmoil blindfolded. Resistance to shocks and sustainability have become essential attributes.

- For many countries, this is a big change. But for us, it is the same old story.

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- In the interim period after the Cold War, many countries benefited from a “peace dividend”. In other words, peace made an additional contribution to their economy and welfare.

Türkiye, on the other hand, could not get its fair share from this peace. On the contrary, wars, cold and hot, have never been absent from the lands just beyond our borders.

- Today it is Ukraine, but previously Iraq, the Gulf Region, the Caucasus, the Balkans, Syria and the Middle East, were all trapped in a circle of fire.

Afghanistan, Palestine, Yemen, Libya, Syria, Ukraine—are they far from Türkiye?

Haven't the PKK/PYD/YPG, DAESH and others found shelter in such environments?

- Since the 1990s, Türkiye's neighborhood has been an environment of clashes, which has forced us to live with a security bill in our pockets at all times.

- Türkiye has been obliged to be active, while many of our friends have preferred to be judgmental.

- Türkiye expects its friends to be more friendly, more active, less critical and more helpful in carrying the burden from now on.

- We hope that the Ukraine crisis has revealed the value of Türkiye once again.

- We also say this:

- Türkiye is the country that you would want to stand by in every crisis. The course of history teaches everyone the value of Türkiye's friendship again and again.

-Türkiye is a natural and strong partner in protecting and enforcing peace, prosperity and stability in the EU and wider Europe.

- If we had accomplished with Europe what we have achieved in foreign policy on our own, the EU would have received a standing ovation as a global actor all over the world.

Let's first acknowledge this.

- There is a search for engagement under the European Political or Geopolitical Community formula. But in fact, we already have such an engagement through our association relation, the Customs Union and the negotiation process for EU membership.

- Proposals which put into question our membership process are out of the agenda.

- On the other hand, we welcome the integration steps that will accelerate our membership process and make us part of the decision-making in related political areas.

- At the same time, the need for putting into practice a comprehensive, sophisticated, genuine and concrete negotiation and cooperation mechanism within the real borders of Europe, one that is not restricted to the borders of the EU, is obvious.

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- Europe is discussing Europe once again.
- We will again deal with the European security architecture, the interaction between the EU and its neighborhood, as well as the enlargement process.
- We want everyone to realize the gravity of the strategic challenge we are all facing.

Türkiye continues to maintain its commitment to the goal of EU membership and to pursue constructive policies in order to strengthen dialogue and cooperation in all fields.

- In the context of our EU membership process, the Directorate for EU Affairs continues to work decisively on reforms, harmonization, financial cooperation and communication issues.
- It is not right to yield, in the name of EU solidarity, to the narrow-minded interests of some members against a candidate country and NATO ally.
- We expect the EU to:
 - take concrete and meaningful steps that will speed up cooperation and our membership process again, and
 - prevent the abuse of veto power.
- Türkiye-EU relations are so strategic that they cannot be downgraded to the narrow interests of one or two member states.
- Similarly, despite the political decisions taken by the Council of Europe, Türkiye has a deep-rooted relationship with this institution.
- In the period ahead, our embassies in the European Continent will explain how indispensable a European Türkiye is, through a new program that we will prepare, with a deepened focus.
- We will continue to explain to the EU political and intellectual circles, as well as to the public, in a resolute way, what they already should know.
- In every capital, we will contribute further to European intellectual debates.
- Because “Türkiye is Europe,” and Europe needs Türkiye.
- We possess the knowledge and capability to win, on the intellectual platform, our struggle against narrow mindsets.
- With this in mind, I wish to underline that we look at Europe as a whole, and that we foresee an effective participation and interaction in all tracks, with the broadest content and vision, from security architecture to policy, economy, energy, climate, digitalization, education and innovation.
- War is at the doorstep of Europe once again, since the painful breakup of Yugoslavia.
- This looming war has prompted the EU countries to become aware again of the realities of the world.

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- The irregular migration crisis, the energy crisis, the security crisis and the climate crisis are now deeply shaking Europe.
- Security is like a breath of air: You realize its importance in its absence.
- That is why Türkiye is needed for European security.
Türkiye, as part of Europe, has the responsibility to contribute to the security of the continent.
- Because “Türkiye is Europe.”
- Therefore, as a European power, we are turning our attention again back to Europe in this difficult period facing the continent. Our continent needs this.
- We consider “Türkiye is Europe” and “Asia Anew” as complementary elements of the same strategic vision.
- In this context, we are working to envision how we can benefit from the format of “Asia Anew” for Europe and other geographies.
- Similarly, with a 360-degree approach, we request that the language of peace and sustainable development prevail and that we act accordingly in every region around us and in our globe. Dear Colleagues,
- We have spared no efforts to ensure that NATO, in which we recently celebrated the 70th anniversary of our membership, provide us assurances.
- A strong Strategic Concept was agreed upon in Madrid.
- In a way, this document covered the shame of the EU’s Strategic Compass, which is “neither strategic nor a compass.”
- Most importantly, two months ago, an important threshold was crossed against an approach that directly affects our security.
- I hope that the framework that has been set up, as EU members Finland and Sweden accepted that they too have responsibilities in the fight against terrorism, will be an example and a precedent for everyone.
- So, I am telling you, but I hope the others also hear me!
- We will not only hope for this, but will continue to follow up on the promises and statements of intent made in this regard.
- Because, terrorists find shelter just beyond our borders and in certain other countries.
- This is the biggest challenge in eradicating terrorism.
- We are determined to fight against terrorist organizations, first and foremost against the PKK/PYD/YPG, FETO and DAESH. We are sensitive on this issue.

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- We expect all countries to support our fight against terrorist organizations.
- We hope that the world public opinion has duly understood the fact that the fight against terrorism is Türkiye's red line.

Esteemed Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests,

- I have already said that we are going through the Age of Crises.
- In the short term, urgent solutions must be found to the new crises created by the war between Russia and Ukraine.
- Türkiye is profoundly feeling all of the effects of this war which erupted between its two important neighbors in the Black Sea.
- Our aim is to end the war as soon as possible through the achievement of a just peace that will safeguard the territorial integrity and independence of Ukraine.
- With this understanding, from the first day of the war, we pursued a multitrack policy.
 - We provided support to Ukraine and to international humanitarian efforts.
- We conducted active diplomacy under the leadership of our President to facilitate the negotiation process between Ukraine and Russia.
- On the one hand, we identified Russia's attack as an act of war and activated Article 19 of the Montreux Convention.
- On the other hand, we advised all interested parties, including NATO, not to let their warships pass through the Straits during this sensitive period. - Thus, we have prevented military escalation in the Black Sea.
- We brought the parties together at the political and technical level, in the margins of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum and in Istanbul, by assuming a facilitator role between Russia and Ukraine.
- The agreement reached in cooperation with the UN for the solution of the food crisis is the result of these efforts.
- Let's never forget one fact. The Black Sea is our common house. This unjust and unlawful war will come to an end one day.
- In the meantime, as riparian countries, our efforts to protect our common interests in the fields of security, economy, trade, culture and the environment will continue.
- We cannot allow our common achievements, such as the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, the only inclusive organization in the Black Sea region, which is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, to be among the victims of this war.

Dear Guests,

- The European security structure will be recoded in light of the new reality.
- In the long term, we will need to think calmly and strategically to bring to this region lasting peace and security.
- Türkiye will prepare from now on for the reconstruction process.

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- It is always our priority to pave the way for dialogue and diplomacy to solve problems.

This priority shapes our views on the Balkans, the South Caucasus, the Eastern Mediterranean and the Middle East.

- We are sincere about the establishment of normalization and good neighborly relations in the South Caucasus.

- We want to use the appropriate conditions created by the victory in the Patriotic War of our dear brother Azerbaijan to make peace and stability permanent in the region.

- Our mutually assigned Special Representatives with Armenia continue their talks.

- Of course, we do not consider this process independently of the ongoing process between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and of our target of normalization and cooperation in the whole region, which is our ultimate goal.

- The tensions in the region in the past few days have revealed once again how fragile the current moment of calm is.

- In this process, our solidarity with Azerbaijan will continue to grow stronger.

- May both our friends and enemies know that dear Azerbaijan is never alone.

- We have seen that the changing dynamics in the Middle East have led the countries of the region to closer cooperation.

- With a positive agenda in our relations with Israel, the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, we rolled up our sleeves to start a new collaborative era.

- We hope that we will have similar positive momentum with Egypt as well.

- Of course, our country's strong support for the Palestinian cause continues.

- Israel's attacks on Gaza, which started on Friday, and attempts by fanatic Jewish Israeli groups to enter the Al-Aqsa Mosque are unacceptable.

- Nothing can justify or excuse the killing of innocent people, especially 5-year-old girls like little Ala Abdullah.

- We strongly condemn Israel's aggression, and we want these provocative policies to end as soon as possible.

- We consider the ceasefire declared last night as a right step in this direction.

- In fact, our dialogue with Israel allows our sensitivity toward Palestine to be conveyed directly.

- In the Balkans, the preservation of peace and stability is an issue that we particularly emphasize.

- The burden generated by the crises in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Kosovo is obvious.

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- In addition, the anxiety caused by the war in Ukraine has increased the importance of our unifying role and the power of trilateral consultation mechanisms.

- Aware of this fact, I visited five Balkan countries in June.

The visit of our President to the Balkans next month will further consolidate our active and unifying stance.

- We also want peace and cooperation to prevail in the Eastern Mediterranean and the Aegean.

- The key to the solution for our national cause, the Cyprus issue, is evident. The Turkish Cypriots' inherent rights, namely sovereign equality and equal international status, must be reaffirmed.

- Neither we nor the Turkish Cypriots have another fifty years to lose.

- If there is to be a negotiation, it will be between two states, not between two communities.

- We advocate the fair sharing of resources around Cyprus.

- The TRNC has been putting forward proposals for this since 2011.

- Lastly, on the 1st and 8th of July, the TRNC conveyed a constructive cooperation proposal to the UN once again. If such a mechanism is established, half of the problem in the Eastern Mediterranean will be solved.

- We will continue to explain our President's Eastern Mediterranean Conference proposal and the cooperation proposal introduced by the TRNC to all parties, and to the world public opinion.

- Another element of our Eastern Mediterranean policy is, of course, our sovereign rights.

- The Greek/Greek Cypriot duo tried to send ships nine times to our continental shelf in the past year. We prevented them from doing so through measures we took both on the ground and at the table.

- God willing, tomorrow the Abdülhamid Han drill ship will sail to the Mediterranean for its first mission.

- We continue to pursue our Eastern Mediterranean policy without concessions, in line with international law and the principle of equity.

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- In the Aegean, we want the interrelated disputes to be addressed in a holistic approach and to achieve a comprehensive, fair and lasting solution to all Aegean disputes, in accordance with international law.
- But Greece cannot muster the will to solve its problems with us. Old habits die hard.
- We have explained to our interlocutors—first and foremost to the UN—that the islands that are close to our coasts, which have a demilitarized status according to international agreements, have been militarized.
We will continue to address this issue, which bears critical importance for the security of our country.
- We continue to lead all efforts, including the Astana Process, to end the Syrian crisis through a political process, based on the territorial integrity and unity of this country.
- The joint operations of our heroic Armed Forces in northern Syria, in cooperation with the Syrian National Army, have ensured the safety of civilians and paved the way for safe and voluntary returns in accordance with United Nations standards.
- However, the attacks of the PKK/PYD/YPG terrorist organization and its extensions continue against our country and against Syrian civilians, in attempts to disrupt this environment of stability and to advance the organization's separatist agenda.
- Our country, which contributes to the security of millions of Syrians, cannot be expected to remain indifferent in the face of these attacks.
- We are also closely monitoring developments in our neighbor Iraq.
- We want to see Iraq stable, peaceful, prosperous and fully sovereign in every inch of its territory.
- The presence of the PKK in this country is an important aspect of our relations with Iraq.
- We expect Iraq primarily to state the obvious—that the PKK is a terrorist organization—and to take concrete steps against this organization.
- We will continue to take the necessary measures for our national security until this expectation is met.
- We have centuries-old historical, cultural and people-to-people ties with the Asian continent.
- In 2019, I announced on this platform that we had launched the "Asia Anew" initiative in order to develop our relations with the Asian continent in a more planned and focused way.

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- We are moving our initiative forward with an inclusive and balanced approach, taking into account regional sensitivities and needs.
- We have drawn out a list of actions consisting of about a thousand items that we have been implementing in the short and medium term.
- These actions are aimed at implementing a multi-track and multi-stakeholder cooperation model with Asian countries on the basis of mutual benefit.
- Just before the conference, I traveled to Cambodia for the ASEAN Sectoral Dialogue Partnership meeting. Then I visited Malaysia.
- Interest in cooperation with Türkiye is rapidly increasing in Asian countries.

The Asia Anew Initiative Policy Document, which is under preparation and which we plan to share with the public later this year, will set out the visionary and long-term goals of the initiative.

- Last year, a new era began in Afghanistan, the Heart of Asia.
- In this new era, it will be important to maintain an engagement with the Taliban administration, without recognition.
- Thanks to this engagement, we also have an opportunity to make the necessary suggestions to the Taliban administration on issues such as political inclusion, women's rights and girls' education.
- We did not leave the Afghan people on their own during this difficult period. During the transition period, we were the only NATO member country whose Embassy continued to carry on its activities in Kabul.
- We strongly sustain our relief activities on the field with our Turkish Red Crescent, AFAD, TIKA and NGOs.
- Our Maarif Foundation schools are open. Of the 44 schools that are open, 12 are girls' schools.
- No matter how Afghanistan's political future is shaped, the ancient friendship between the Turkish and Afghan peoples will continue to grow stronger.
- Contrary to the prejudiced approach that considers Africa as a set of challenges, we view the continent through the eyes of our African partners.
- We began the journey to unleash Africa's potential with the motto "equal partnership with Africa."
- Our trade volume, which increased 11-fold over the last 18 years, our 44 Embassies in the Continent and 38 African Embassies in Ankara show that we are on the right path.

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- The decisions we adopted at the Third Türkiye-Africa Partnership Summit, attended by 16 Heads of State and Government and 100 Ministers from 38 countries, will allow us to elevate our relations with the Continent to new levels.
- We are also reaping the fruits of our policy of opening up to Latin America. Our trade volume, which has increased 15-fold in the last 20 years, is an important indicator of this progress.
- During my visit to the region in April, I personally witnessed the interest of the countries of the region in our country's position as a rising global actor and in the active role it plays in solving international problems.
- We cannot and will not leave this interest unanswered.

We have further expanded the network of our representations in Latin America with an embassy in San Salvador, which we inaugurated this year.

- We have increased the number of our diplomatic offices there from 6 to 19 in the last 20 years (*18 Embassies and 1 Consulate General*).
- We have recently started developing a meaningful dialogue with our NATO ally, the United States, not only in the context of our bilateral relations, but also on many regional and global issues.
- However, we have unfortunately not yet seen the satisfactory steps we expect from the United States regarding the issues of the PKK/PYD/YPG, FETO and unilateral sanctions.
- We have established the Türkiye-U.S. Strategic Mechanism to address these differences of opinion and to discuss our opportunities for concrete cooperation with a sustainable and constructive approach.
- Following the 1st meeting at the level of Deputy Ministers, I met with my counterpart Blinken in May.
- Our bilateral trade volume and economic cooperation with the United States, which reached a record level in 2021 despite the pandemic and the international conjuncture, have become the driving forces of our positive agenda.
- Nevertheless, it is a fact that the United States must take the necessary steps in line with our legitimate expectations.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Esteemed Guests,

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- Diplomacy in the 21st century is no longer a platform confined merely to political and military areas. We pursue a multidimensional, multi-layered and multi-stakeholder diplomacy.
- Our humanitarian, health, economic and cultural diplomacy are growing stronger and reinforcing each other. I can also add parliamentary diplomacy to the list.
- By ratifying the Paris Agreement, we demonstrated our sincere approach regarding the issue of climate change.
- We collaborate intensively with our institutions in promoting, on a global scale, the cultural values of these lands that have a deep-rooted history and ancient traditions.
- Our latest achievement in this regard is our work on gastro-diplomacy, which has become a rising trend worldwide.
- Based on the book, *Turkish Cuisine with Timeless Recipes*, prepared by our Ministry of Culture and Tourism under the guidance of First Lady Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, we set the dates between May 21st and 27th as Turkish Cuisine Week, during which we celebrated the occasion with colorful events organized by our missions.

We are continuously looking for ways to provide additional promotional opportunities for our country.

- We will make the name “Türkiye” more visible by using it on the international scene, in accordance with the request of our nation for many years.

Esteemed Ambassadors,

- Although our range of activities has expanded and diversified, our motto is clear:

Serving our citizens is always our essential duty.

Serving our people is serving God.

- I proudly share the following: With the breakthrough we have achieved in consular services, by providing 74 different services, we are at the top of the countries that offer the largest number and greatest variety of services to their citizens living abroad.
- Today, we are adding new services to those we continue to provide for our citizens.
- These include the provision of a video call service for the hearing-impaired individuals, which we launch today.
- The further strengthening of access to our Consulate Call Center through instant communication platforms,

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- And the implementation, today, of the artificial intelligence application “Hızır” at the service of our citizens.
- With a view to improving the quality and speed of our consular services, we will continue bringing to life ground-breaking innovations.
- Protecting the health and well-being of our citizens abroad is our main priority.
- The safe repatriation of our citizens from crisis areas is an important part of this approach.
- We brought our citizens abroad who fell ill, back from all over the world to our country with ambulance planes. Since 2020, more than 500 of our citizens have been repatriated to our country in this way.
- We have put to practice the experience gained in the course of the pandemic period from the operations through which we ensured the return of more than 100,000 citizens to our homeland, to other crisis areas.
- As a result of the events that took place in Libya, Yemen, Afghanistan and Kazakhstan, we have repatriated about 20,000 of our citizens and citizens of third countries.
- After Afghanistan, the war in Ukraine has become a new test case for us.

- In an environment where clashes take place on the streets and missile attacks continue, to be able to rescue our citizens safely was difficult from a logistical standpoint, and required a significant diplomatic traffic.
- Thanks to God, we managed to repatriate more than 18,000 people through successful operations. Each one of these operations could be the dramatic scenario of a film.
- In these efforts, we did not leave our kinsmen behind. We supported the repatriation of 12,000 people—including our kinsmen and citizens of the Turkic Republics—or their passage through the borders of Ukraine.
- In this process, 4,258 Meskhetian Turks and 930 Crimean Tatar Turks have come to our country.
- These efforts have been successful thanks to our Foreign Ministry staff who worked day and night under difficult conditions.
- In gratitude for their service, I will avail myself of this opportunity to thank once again, first and foremost, our Ambassador in Kabul, Cihad Erginay, and our Ambassador in Kyiv, Yağmur Güldere, and the Embassy and Consulate General staff in Afghanistan and in Ukraine, who continued their work, putting their own security aside during this period, to keep the missions open during these repatriations.

Dear Colleagues,

- This year's Ambassadors Conference again has a rich and busy program.
- One aspect of the conference that thrills us all is the review of our preparations for 2023.
- 2023, when we will celebrate the 100th Anniversary of our Republic, is an important milestone in the glorious history of our nation.
- It is a turning point for which we have been preparing for a long time, in line with the goals set by our President.
- It is also the 500th Anniversary of the date we laid the foundations of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The history of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the memory of our organization, which sheds light on its present and future.
- It is always the essence of this historical accumulation of knowledge that determines the identity of our diplomacy and shapes our basic reflexes.
- This unique heritage and experience are among the most important foundations of the competence and power of Turkish diplomacy, which commands respect in the world today.

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We are preparing to leave behind the first century of our Republic in a world where change is happening at an unprecedented pace.

- The main rule of pursuing a rational foreign policy today is to be able to closely monitor change, and draw lessons from it.
- I am honored to work with the most educated and well-equipped diplomats of the world.
- Thanks to this human resource and 255 missions, we infuse life into the fifth largest diplomatic network in the world.
- Today, we have staff in our organization who can speak many local languages, from Hebrew to Hungarian, Korean and Japanese to Finnish and Bosnian, in addition to the UN languages.
- To improve our local language capacity, we envisage additional studies.
- We will continue to develop, with modern means and methods, our strategic foresight capability.
- In our world, where knowledge and perception have become elements of national power, it is as important to take our steps correctly as it is to be able to explain what we do correctly to the world public opinion.
- We view our public diplomacy activities and social media, which is an important tool in this direction, with this understanding.
- The Turkish Twitter account of our Ministry ranks first in Europe and fifth worldwide in terms of the number of followers among Foreign Ministries.
- Furthermore, prior to this meeting, my colleagues informed me that I am;
 - The Foreign Minister who has the 4th highest number of followers on Twitter worldwide,
 - The Foreign Minister who has the 3rd highest number of followers on Facebook and Instagram.
- These figures show that we are on the right track both in terms of the interest that our foreign policy has aroused in world public opinion and in using social media.
- The Turkish National Agency offers training, exchange, internship and volunteering opportunities to 60,000 of our citizens in other European countries every year.
- It provides similar opportunities to around 20,000 citizens of other European countries to come to Türkiye.
- The Turkish Accreditation Agency, TURKAK, on the one hand,
 - Sets the standards of product quality,
 - Provides technical support, especially to friendly and brotherly geographies on the other hand, and is an important force behind our international trade.

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The effective cooperation of our institutions that contribute to our soft power all over the world is our biggest support in this regard.

- The projects and activities of Turkish Airlines, Kızılay, TİKA, AFAD, Religious Affairs, Yunus Emre and Foundations which achieve “the difficult immediately, and the impossible a little later,” have positive ripple effects across various geographies.
- The fact that our country ranks among the top 10 in the list of countries hosting international students with the branded works of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities under the name of “Türkiye Scholarships” is a matter of pride for all of us.
- The glimmer of hope lit by the Maarif Foundation through its schools in different geographies is an investment in the future of humanity.
- I would like to thank all of these institutions for their unwavering contributions in spreading Türkiye's compassionate power to every corner of the world.
- We gladly allocate our buildings abroad which we did not use to the Maarif Foundation and to Yunus Emre Institute.

Esteemed Guests,

- Turkish diplomacy has a story. This story is as vivid and beautiful as our beloved Türkiye itself.
- The unique colors and flavors of our culture and state governance experience are present in this story.
- I announced last year that we would start the Compassionate Power Documentary that aims to further promote Turkish diplomacy around the world.
- We are developing our preparations for the production of this documentary together with TRT.
- In addition, I should also make a special reference to the Antalya Diplomacy Forum, of which we laid the seeds in 2019.
- The reputation gained worldwide by the Antalya Diplomacy Forum has become an occasion of pride for both our Ministry and our country in a very short time.
- The Antalya Diplomacy Forum, which we organized under the auspices of our President for the first time in 2021 and the second time last March, has already become one of the main elements of the international political calendar.
- Our entire organization has contributed greatly to this success.
- The contribution of our missions abroad to both the worldwide promotion of the Forum and its strengthening in terms of content and participants is especially important.
- The fact that one out of every three Foreign Ministers in the world has taken the time to attend the Forum says something in and of itself.

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The reason why the Antalya Diplomacy Forum has been welcomed as a valued institution from the very beginning is obvious.

- The forum saw a gap and filled it. It met a need.
- The Türkiye brand now generates, from a political and economic standpoint, the same impact in the North, South, East and West.
- We will always continue our future initiatives with this foresight, enthusiasm, knowledge and vision.
- We have rolled up our sleeves to provide a worthy infrastructure for our diplomacy, which is growing, expanding and gaining effectiveness day by day.
- The Turkish House, which was inaugurated by our President in September last year, creates a silhouette worthy of Turkish diplomacy in New York, the center of global diplomacy.
- We inaugurated the modern buildings of many of our missions from Baghdad to Dakar and Sao Paulo, and our efforts in this direction will continue.

Esteemed Ambassadors of the Republic of Türkiye,

Dear Colleagues,

- As you climbed the career ladder one by one, “You were raw, seasoned, and then burned”.
- You have spent every day being put to test on behalf of this supreme nation, this supreme state.
- During your professional life, you have dealt with all kinds of political tensions, conflicts, epidemics and natural disasters.
- You have struggled with various difficulties, and made personal sacrifices together with your families.
- Your colleagues have lost their lives on this path. As an organization, we have 41 martyrs. May their souls rest in peace!
- As Turkish diplomats, you did not become dismayed, tired or consider anything as a burden.
- In the ruthless, competitive environment of international relations, some targeted your country and tried to break you, but you did not bow down.
- Today, you continue to spread the light of hope and compassion, on behalf of the Turkish nation and the state, like torches blazing in all corners of the world.
- Our Ministry of Foreign Affairs is a great plane tree whose trunk stretches from the past to the future, whose branches extend to every corner of the world.
- We will grow this plane tree together, make it even taller and carry it to the future in the name of the vitality, unity, peace and prosperity of our homeland.

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- I am proud of all of you.

I wish success to our 13th Ambassadors Conference and greet you all with respect and affection.