

**SPEECH OF MR. BURHAN KAYATURK
HAED OF THE TURKISH DELEGATION OF APA
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“Promoting Peace, Reconciliation and Dialogue in Asia”

Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by expressing my pleasure to address such a distinguished audience today in the friendly capital city of Phnom Penh on the occasion of the Eighth Plenary Session of the Asian Parliamentary Assembly.

Taking this opportunity, I would also like to thank to our Cambodian hosts for their warm welcome and hospitality.

Distinguished colleagues,

Today, the majority of the world's fastest growing economies are in Asia. According to the indicators given by the Asian Development Bank, the share of global gross domestic product produced by the Asia and Pacific regions are almost 39 per cent in 2013, increasing 9 percent between 2000 and 2013. According to many economic researches, Asia will continue to be the engine of growth for the world in the years to come.

Asia has undergone a process of rapid urbanization and increasing social dynamism in the last 20 years, with growing cities, new hi-tech roads, new bridges, new factories and new universities. Asia accounts for 61 per cent of the world population today.

Considering these political, economic and social advancements and indicators, it is now widely accepted that the rise of Asia is one of the defining and decisive trends of the 21st century. Asia has already become a centre of attraction.

Dear colleagues,

Despite these bright developments, Asia is far from being risk free. Inter-state tensions, frozen conflicts, terrorist networks, resource-allocation competitions and territorial disputes continue to disturb our common security.

Nevertheless, despite the serious problem on our security agenda, this is not and should not be a time for pessimism. The promising developments in our continent show that Asia has huge potential for a prosperous future. If this potential is harnessed fully through appropriate policies and a strategic vision, Asia will certainly play a far greater role in world affairs.

Dear friends,

Situated at the hearth of Eurasia, Turkey has a special place in Asia for historic, linguistic and religious ties with a wide range of countries and regions. We have shouldered our own part of responsibility in bringing more prosperity, stability and peace to the region.

Let me briefly mention our endeavours in this regard.

With the understanding that dialogue, interdependence and cooperation are essential for the achievement of comprehensive security, stability and prosperity, we have concentrated on establishing win-win type of relations and consolidating multi-dimensional cooperation not only in our neighbourhood but also beyond. We have established a dense network of cooperation in a wide area, from Middle East to Central Asia, from Balkans to Caucasus, from Asia-Pacific to South-East Asia by strengthening political dialogue, raising economic interdependence and intensifying social and cultural interactions.

We also took concrete steps for sustainable regional stability. We initiated regional cooperation processes and established new channels of dialogue to strengthen mutual trust among the countries of the region and to address our common issues. The trilateral processes of

Turkey-Azerbaijan-Iran, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Georgia, Turkey-Azerbaijan-Turkmenistan and Turkey-Afghanistan-Pakistan are just a few examples in this regard.

In Asia-Pacific, we have elevated our relations with Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia and Singapore to the level of “strategic partnership” and with China to the level of “strategic cooperation”. We have also strengthened our diplomatic presence in the region by rising the number of our missions to 14, with recently opened embassies in Myanmar, Cambodia and Brunei.

Distinguished delegates,

At the recent G-20 Leaders Summit held in Turkey on 15-16 November 2015, we, together with our partners and on the basis of this agenda, committed to implement our past promises and to boost investments as a powerful driver of economic growth.

Distinguished colleagues,

Humanitarian diplomacy is another very important aspect of Turkish foreign policy. Turkey is a leading country in terms of official development aid amount of 3,5 billion US Dollars. Turkey also ranks third worldwide in humanitarian assistance, and the top country in proportion to its GDP.

We have also pursued an open door policy for all Syrians who need our assistance since the very beginning. Currently, we are hosting more than 2 million Syrians. During the last four years, we have spent 8 billion US Dollars for the maintenance of the needs of our Syrian guests, whereas the contribution of the international community remained as low as 455 million US Dollars.

Unfortunately the humanitarian plight in Syria has already exceeded the boundaries of this country and led to an immense crisis in the Mediterranean. Every day, more and more people take a very dangerous course of journey in the sea, risking their lives and that of their children, simply because they are denied the very basic right to

life in their home country. Since the beginning of 2015, Turkish Coast Guards rescued more than 80 thousand migrants from sea by conducting more than 2.100 operations so far.

As for the rest, we are deeply saddened by their losses, for all late women, men and little children, whose only guilt is to ask for what they deserve as human beings.

The recent attacks in Ankara on 10 October and in Paris on 13 November revealed once again that terrorism is among the gravest threats to international peace and security today. Turkey actively contributes to international community's efforts in the fight against terrorism.

We currently co-chair "The Global Counter Terrorism Forum". We have been among the very first countries to declare DEASH a terrorist organization and we are determined to continue our fight againsts them.

Dear colleagues,

We are going through very challenging times. We have so many issues on our security agenda. However, the world keeps changing, just as our continent. As long as there is change, there is always hope for the better.

And we also witness that the current situation in America, in Europe and in the world is not much better than the situation in Asia. As an MP of Turkey, I worked in European Parliament as well as in the Council of Europe for eight years. I have seen that the future in Europe is not brighter than the future of Asia.

Despite challenges and difficulties if we enhance our partnership, we can boost our capacities and stand together against all problems we face.

This is a responsibility we should praise and bear here today as representatives of the countries and peoples of Asia, which deserve a better fate of peace, stability and prosperity.

Thank you.