

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

### NIGERIA - TÜRKİYE RELATIONS

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Bilateral relations between Nigeria and Türkiye, which formally commenced at diplomatic levels since 1960, remain robust and is blooming in all ramifications. Anchored on strong intergovernmental cooperation as a vehicle for promoting partnership, both countries continually engage in exchange of high-level official visits, inter-governmental dialogue and constructive partnership in trade and investment, agriculture and agribusiness, rural development, water resource management, small and medium-sized enterprises, health, peace and security, infrastructure, energy, transportation, culture, tourism, education, media, information and communication technology and environment. Public and private sector officials on both sides, continue to expressly demonstrate tremendous goodwill and understanding towards enhancing socio-economic development and prosperity on the basis of equal partnership and mutual benefit.

Nigeria and Türkiye hold identical views on strategies to address topical global issues like education, health care, the war against terrorism, climate change, and human migration, promotion of global peace and security, as well as calls for reform of the global governance system for greater

inclusiveness to accommodate all interests across the various regions of the world. Both countries collaborate in promoting development cooperation through multilateralism. This is exemplified by their membership in the Developing 8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and several other multilateral institutions.

The last Joint Commission of both countries which took place in Ankara, in September 2021 further reinforced the imperative for removing identified obstacles to trade, investment and bilateral economic cooperation in general, with an investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (IPPA) along with other agreements. This should\_ substantially contribute to the desired increase in the volume and value of trade and investment. It is significant that since the last series of visits at the highest political level involving Türkiye's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to Abuja in October 2021, and Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari to İstanbul in December 2021, both sides continue to seek new grounds to deepen relations, and especially, raise trade volume to 5 billion USD, as envisioned by the two leaders.

During these visits, 7 new Memoranda of Understanding and agreements were signed, including on defense cooperation, energy, hydrocarbon, mining, taxation, youth development, as well as consultative cooperation between the two Foreign Ministries. Aside established diplomatic channels, Türkiye's activities in Nigeria increased through Yunus Emre institute, the Turkish Maarif Foundation, the Turkish Religious Foundation, Anadolu News Agency and, Turkish Airlines (THY) which currently runs two daily flights in and out of Nigeria. The Turkish government also provide scholarships to some Nigerian students for graduate and post-graduate studies across various universities in the country.

Cognizant of the eminent role of the private sector in the development of economic relations, Türkiye and Nigeria established the Joint Business Councils for better coordination. In this context, the Foreign Economic

Relations Board of Türkiye (DEİK) and the Nigerian Chamber of Commerce Mines, industries and Agriculture (NACCIMA) are strongly collaborating in the promotion of private sector engagements, including in construction, energy, agriculture, manufacturing and Health and Hospitality. Among several Turkish firms in Nigeria include AK-AY Electric that sells electricity to about 3 million Nigerian households and companies, Yapı Merkezi involved in the construction of railway infrastructure, Hayat Holding that produces sanitary and hygiene products and Jubilee Syringe Manufacturing Company, the largest and leading syringe manufacturing company in Africa.

In conclusion, it is apposite to state that Türkiye and Nigeria have immense economic potentials they can explore for their respective economic transformation. Nigeria remains a very significant commercial partner of Türkiye in Africa and, indeed the second among the sub-Saharan African countries. In addition to existing areas of trade and investment, there is a new interest by Nigeria for procurement of military equipment and hardware from Türkiye. This interest already translated to several deals with a handful of Turkish defense manufacturers in the last 24 months. This is indicative that relations between both countries will constantly break new frontiers and grow exponentially.