



TURKISH INDUSTRIALISTS' AND BUSINESSMEN'S ASSOCIATION

THE SPEECH DELIVERED BY ÜMİT BOYNER
THE PRESIDENT OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF TÜSİAD
AT THE MEETING OF THE
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Mr. Prime Minister, Distinguished Ministers, Distinguished Group Presidents, Distinguished Founders, Dear TÜSİAD members,

I am very proud to stand before you as the president of an independent civil sector organization that has completed its 40th year in the Republic of Turkey, where democracy and free enterprise is relatively young, and an organization based entirely on voluntary efforts that gains its resources and power solely from its own members. We are delighted to be hosting the Prime Minister as the honorary guest speaker at the beginning of this 40th anniversary celebratory General Assembly.

I have served on the TÜSİAD Board of Directors since 2004 and have had the good fortune to have worked with Mustafa Koç throughout this time. I shall miss the friendship he has shown during 6 years as Council Chairman, his constructive and positive approach even at the most challenging and difficult times, his support and his courage. On behalf of myself and my friends on the Board of Directors, I would like to express our hope that his participation and support will continue into the future as well. We are all grateful to you, dear Mustafa Koç.

As we were designing the 40th Anniversary events last year, we had the opportunity to remember the history of these forty years and assess their achievements and relationships. We have designed this year's events in the framework of a programme that draws inspiration from that history yet at the same time serves to begin shaping the vision for the next 40 years.

Just as we have done over the past forty years, so we shall contribute to the shaping of our country's agenda, the broadening of discussions that concern the country, and the setting forth of a vision to our society. On that basis we shall continue dynamically to structure and develop our organization.

In our 2011 working programme and our 40th anniversary events, we specified the main themes for Turkey's agenda that would run along two axes:

One of these was the continuation of democratization and the reform process that has gained momentum within the perspective of EU membership.

The second was the question of how Turkey will position itself as a competitive country and the substance of its vision for the 21st century. We must formulate productivity policies designed to place Turkey amongst the world's most competitive nations. With Turkey's demography, geographic position, growth capacity, entrepreneurial potential and accumulated history will facilitate our reaching this objective, we believe we will be able to reach this objective.

Indeed, one of the most important indications that we will be able to achieve this goal is the unbroken period of growth that Turkey demonstrated from 2002 – 2007. Moreover, Turkey realized this period of historic success in growth with falling inflation, increasing budget discipline, central bank independence and a range of reforms and improvements in the business and investment environment.

We attach great importance to these two main themes because we will encounter a new structure shaped by the redistribution of production factors, a new concept of global management, new cooperation models and new global organizations. And if we also consider the increasing strategic importance of energy sources, Turkey will take its place in the new economy and administrative architecture being formed in the world according to its response on these two axes.

The Vice Presidents of the Board of Directors will shortly give you a briefing on our activities in 2010 as well as sharing with you the work to be conducted in 2011 in line with the Board of Directors' 2-year work programme.

I would especially like to fill you in on events we have planned within the scope of the 40th anniversary celebrations.

Today, this meaningful year will be started off with the speeches of our founder and first chairman Mr Feyyaz Berker, and (at 24) our youngest member Hacı Sabancı.

We staged our first 40th anniversary event last week with the "Women in Business Life" film and conference. As a highly significant economic and social developmental issue, our Social Affairs Committee will continue to place "The participation of women in education, business life and management" high on the agenda of its working programme throughout the year. We will share the film's DVD with you. Additionally the short version will be shown on TV and at cinemas. We request your attention on this matter.

On assuming executive responsibility last year, we shared with you the fact that preparatory work on the new Constitution would be on the working programme of this Board of Directors. Benefitting from TÜSİAD's democratization reports that have been prepared and updated ever since 1997, we began work on the new Constitution immediately after the referendum.

Firstly, I would like once again respectfully to honour the memory of the late Bülent Tanör, the Professor of the Constitution who remains one of the most important references that we used in drawing up our comprehensive 1997 publication.

Distinguished Members,

We have been discussing the issue of the new Constitution since September under five main headings. This work is being conducted by a 25-person group formed of distinguished academicians and opinion leaders under the coordination of Professors Ergun Özbudun and Turgut Tarhanlı.

To list the 5 main headings in order; management of the formation of the Constitution; essential fundamental principles and institutions in a New Constitution in the 21st century; Identities; Freedom of Religion and Conscience and the Separation of Powers. This work is ongoing. We believe that the essence of Turkey's new Constitution must be developed by formulating a unified synthesis of these headings that otherwise have the potential to divide society. We believe that we have to solve these problems through consensus and compromise on these issues in order to achieve a pluralist, participatory democratic order. We shall share the results of our work on the New Constitution with you on 22nd March 2011.

I want to gain clarity on this subject. We will not be issuing the text of a New Constitution. Our objective is raise public awareness by putting forward the views of distinguished academicians and opinion leaders from various branches and standpoints. At the conclusion of this work, we shall see the points on which our participants of known differences of view have reached consensus, and on which points they have put forward differing perspectives. In a sense this will constitute an evaluation of what sensitivities and proposals for solutions emanate from different parts of society. So we ask you to give priority to making time to attend our event on 22nd March.

There will be a dinner and honours ceremony in celebration of our 40th anniversary on the evening of 22nd March. We shall be presenting special plaques to honour distinguished members of more than 30 years standing and anticipate the attendance of our Prime Minister and the leaders of political parties and wish to give you a showing of our 40th anniversary film that is currently under preparation.

On 23rd March our seminar on relations between the individual and the state entitled “State and Identity in the EU Perspective” shall take place with the attendance of the former Prime Minister of Spain Felipe Gonzales and former Deputy Prime Minister of Spain Narcis Serra. As you know, Mr. Gonzales was also the head of the committee that prepared the EU 2030 vision report.

In spite of current difficulties, in order for Turkey to join the league of first class democracies and welfare states, the EU project remains indispensable as the integration of reference values and a model of administration.

I would like to brief you on an event on our economic future planned for a date at the end of September that has yet to be specified. We talk about speeding up growth and increasing our competitiveness. Fine, but will we be able to achieve sustainability on these issues?

We are conscious of our responsibility that falls on us as the business world in order to be able to give a positive response to this question. In this light we established the “Sustainable Development Duty Force” under our aegis and we have begun our work with the aim of forming a Turkey’s vision for sustainable development policies.

In our 40th anniversary year we also aim to prepare a strategy document sketching out a road map for the next 40 years, with the contribution of the Business World and Sustainable Development Association. This document will be shared with the public with the participation of the president of the World Sustainable Development Business Council Mr. Björn Stigson, following which we shall be organizing a series of sectoral sustainability activities and events.

On 6-7th October we shall be discussing how new perspectives might develop in the world and in Turkey’s region by means of futuristic scenarios that we shall create with the author of the “Next 100 Years” book George Friedman. With the participation of opinion leaders from home and abroad we shall be spotlighting Turkey’s relations with various regions in the world on themes of security, energy and trade. In the same framework we have formed the “TÜSİAD futurism think tank” composed of concerned members, political party representatives and academicians under the chairmanship of our member Alphan Manas, as a forum to facilitate and enable our organization’s continuous work on futurism.

Also in October, we shall realize our working group on Turkey’s Regional Development Perspectives. The issue of overcoming regional disparities is one that we have especially concentrated on as the Board of Directors. This working group will consider how to achieve regional development in the perspective of the 21st century from various angles.

I would also like to talk about an enterprise that we have begun this year but that will from now be one of TÜSİAD’s continuous activities: we have a project begun with the Student Associations of the Middle East Technical University and Bilkent University and which is planned to expand to our other universities. We shall organize a series of events together with students related to entrepreneurialism / employment. We plan to take under consideration how we can increase

employment – which is one of the most critical problems for Turkey and our young people – from an entrepreneurial perspective and in a participatory manner.

Our 40th anniversary events will conclude with the “annual assessment” at the High Advisory Council on 8th December to which the President of Turkey is invited.

Distinguished Members,

There is no doubt that the things that I have mentioned are highly comprehensive not only as events but also as projects. In fact we are entering fields and quests that will carry on for many years. But we have no doubt that we shall see these efforts bear fruit.

In a way the leaders who founded TÜSİAD were trying to sow seeds in very barren soil in the environment of the 1970's. They never doubted the significance and value of the work they had embarked upon. And they had confidence in themselves. The Turkey of those years in which they took their brave steps was a Cold War country undergoing ideological polarization and partisanship in which the survival of free enterprise in a closed economy was under question.

We are now living in a Turkey that is much more plentiful from every perspective. We are at a much more advanced point now than we were forty years ago not only with respect to the enormous economic steps we have taken in integrating into the global economy and the infrastructure investments we have realized, but also in terms of our human capital, our social structure transformation, increasing urbanization and rates of school provision.

Those of us who carry the flag forward in these new and more positive conditions also believe in the goals we have set and we have confidence that we shall achieve them.

We have also taken up such responsibilities as sharing our knowledge in line with our vision and our accumulated values with the public, and raising public awareness and consciousness. We must also acknowledge and accord them their rights.

We will have elections in about six months. We are sure that no one in Turkey wants the development of an environment of rising tension in the period up to the elections.

I am concerned about the possibility of deepening polarization arising from different life styles that is also reflected in the electoral map. We are obliged to find a point of balance on this subject. Wherever we live in this country, the problems we have to solve our common ones. I believe that we shall pay a heavy price if we fail to reach a social consensus that will achieve compromises on solutions. When there are ever more shared issues for all of us who live on this land, we do not understand or accept the serious dispute that has arisen on sociological bases that separates us into coastal and internal regions.

Our views on these issues have been fed by a freedom-loving approach that has matured and developed over years. We shall continue to defend and develop this approach. In our view a modern state is one that protects individual rights and freedoms and is focused on the individual. And the protection of individual rights is the most important condition of a modern democracy.

At this point in its history, its stability needs to be secured and deepened. And the conditions for achieving this are clear. We must continuously reassess the environment of our political structure, social life and individual rights within a freedoms-rights matrix.

On these issues that have corroded Turkey for decades, there should be no question of going back after reaching points of opening or reverting to old formulae.

I hope that all political parties will remember these realities at all times and abandon their old habits to allow a calm campaign without animosity.

Distinguished Members,

Turkey is a country that is both deeply effected by both world and regional developments, and that has the capacity profoundly to influence developments in its neighbourhood. That is why everyone who has held sway in Anatolia throughout history has had to keep a close eye on developments in the region. Developments here can influence and guide developments in the surrounding region and even in the world.

If you recall, during his visit to Turkey in 1999, President Clinton said that as the road to the 21st century was being drawn, Turkey's future choices would be a high level indication. I guess Mr. Clinton has been proved right.

To begin with strategic choices, questions such as how Turkey's secularism will continue, whether its democracy will deepen or not, how it will overcome ethnic or denominational problems, how citizen-state relations will develop and the direction of foreign policy are all choices that will effect the future path of the 21st century.

In making these choices and looking for solutions to our problems, it is crucial that we produce solutions that are characterized by and conform to our own norms. Such a varied and multi-cultural society should be able to come up with creative syntheses on almost every issue.

Yet in this age we must not withdraw into ourselves saying "we only look like ourselves". We cannot turn our backs on the accumulated experience of humanity. We have to take advantage of the rich experience presented to us by the world and the examples that have come down to us shaped and filtered through the sands of time.

Distinguished Members,

Over the past 40 years, because of the mission we have set ourselves, we have not stunted in our support when we have been persuaded that correct measures have been taken for political and economic progress, nor in our criticism when we think that we are on the wrong path. In doing so, we have always taken care to being open and transparent.

As a result, and as I have stated before, our duty is to state what we believe to be true and to explain why it is true. Our aim is to plant new ideas, produce syntheses, and follow a path that will serve the prosperity and tranquility of our country. All our work should be assessed as efforts that are conducted in this spirit.

It is our concern for the common interests of Turkey that sheds light and guides us in our path towards the objectives we have fixed. On no account do we shy away from the quest for a consensus in this direction, and we shall do what our duty requires. And there can be no doubt that we hold a robust line with our irreversible universal concept of freedom.

The sanctity of the individual's private life and the protection of individual freedom at whatever cost are our irrevocable principles. We are striving for the widespread acceptance in our society of the supremacy of the law, the inviolability of our rights and freedoms, freedom of religion and faith, and the separation of powers.

Ever since our foundation as an association of free individuals, we have measured ourselves against our production of ideas, not our defence of our interests. In this way we have represented our entrepreneurs more successfully, together we have discovered better ways forward. And we shall continue to conduct ourselves in this way in the future. For there are many issues before us on which to produce ideas, many problems to be solved, and many matters to pursue.

While producing these ideas, solving these problems and pursuing these matters, it is also our business to mobilize public opinion, to take action together with them and to represent our entrepreneurs effectively at home and abroad.

In fulfilling these duties, we shall continue to be TÜSİAD and behave as TÜSİAD in a manner that befits the legacy of our founders just as we have done for forty years.

Mr. Prime Minister, dear Members,

Besides everything I have talked about today, we are giving account to our members as the Board of Directors that has completed one year in office. We have left behind a turbulent and intense year both for Turkey and the world. As our friends will share with you shortly, we have been able to realize a significant part of our programme. We have been able to communicate messages both to public opinion, to the government and to politicians. We have striven with decision makers and the concerned ministries, given our views, and worked hard to open the way to progress and cooperation. And in the year that remains to us as the Board of Directors, we still have a heavy agenda and duties.

Our Prime Minister has graced and honoured us with his presence and today we have gained the chance to share this occasion with him. While preparing this speech I was asked what the lasting impression I would like the speech to leave was. I would like no one to misunderstand me, I can say this with human feeling, let everything I say remain in people's minds, let everyone understand me correctly, and believe in my sincerity. But I do not want to step down from the podium without drawing one subject to people's attention and underlining a subject for which everyone living in Turkey has been yearning. Yesterday was the 4th anniversary of the death of Hrant Dink. As well as the profound grief of those who cannot become accustomed to his passing, Hrant Dink's murder, like that of the late Uğur Mumcu and countless unsolved cases, is a symbolic affair. The failure in Turkish history to bring real criminals within the reach of the law reminds us of deep forces of darkness that somehow cannot be brought to justice. The lack of a feeling of justice is the greatest of all deficiencies.

Mr. Prime Minister, about ten years ago you were imprisoned on account of a poem you read. I imagine that you understand this deficiency very well. Let us relieve ourselves of the difficulties of the difficulties that are encountered today as a result of time extensions in the legal process. We have a profound and priority need for the rebuilding of the foundations of the most fundamental rights and freedoms, for legal reforms that will sate citizens' thirst for justice and give them confidence in the supremacy of the law. Impartial, independent, high quality, timely justice for every citizen, for all of us... This is an absolute requirement for our ease of conscience, our ability to look forward with confidence in justice and the supremacy of the law, for Turkey's future.

I conclude my words in the proud knowledge and awareness that we live in the most beautiful, bountiful, rich land, and in the belief that all of us will strive for a more enlightened Turkey, and thank you for listening to me so patiently.

I respectfully salute you all.