

**HAZİNE MÜSTEŞARI SN. İBRAHİM H. ÇANAKCI'NIN**  
**“REPUBLIC OF TURKEY DAY”**  
**İÇİN YAPTIĞI AÇILIŞ KONUŞMASI**

Honorable Minister,

Mr. President,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great privilege for me to welcome you all to Republic of Turkey Day on the occasion of Thirty Eighth Annual Meeting of the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Istanbul is truly honored by your distinguished presence.

We are having this year's Annual Meeting at the crossroads of Asia and Europe. This unique city, hosted the seats of both Byzantine and the Ottoman thrones for centuries and was a true global center of its times. It was perceived as *the only real city in the world* by its dwellers and for many who visited.

Istanbul was the place that heart of global trade was beating. Indeed, one can observe it while strolling in the city's old streets. Mosques, churches, synagogues all are mingled with each other. One could hear more than twenty

different languages on the streets in Istanbul even many centuries ago, a privilege that not many cities enjoyed at those times.

The city recently started to assume its old role as a regional trade and finance hub, once again. Istanbul is resurrecting as a global commercial and financial center and restoring to its old glorious days.

In this spirit, we are very proud to host this year's Annual Meeting in Istanbul.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Turkey has been a center of attention in the last few years with booming economic activity along with many watershed economic and political reforms. EU Council's decision in December last year to start full membership negotiations in 2005 has turned the eyes of international community to Turkey, once again.

Turkey is in a very deep transformation process. The willingness to change reflects itself in every sphere of life, from exercising personal freedoms to introducing competition to many key sectors in the economy. We observe that this process is self-feeding and intensifying over time. A strong external anchor like EU allows for further consolidation of this progress. The economic reforms are deep rooted and have already started to produce incredible gains, as

reflected by the significant improvements in all economic indicators such as growth, inflation, interest rates and public debt burden. While there is broad understanding on the course of the change in Turkey amongst the foreign observers, the nature of change often goes underestimated. I very much believe that the ADB meetings in general, and presentations today in particular, will provide an important opportunity to directly convey the nature of change in Turkey to a broader audience.

We would like to give you a compact picture of Turkey with a special emphasis on economy. I hope, the preparations we have undertaken for this event and our deliberations will make your attendance a productive experience and worth remembering. Our speakers will cover many different areas ranging from Turkey's cultural heritage to foreign direct investment.

We will have many distinguished speakers in our program; Minister Babacan is our guest of honor today. We are also grateful to President Kuroda for his participation in this program.

Today's speakers are first class practitioners of economic policy making in Turkey. They have kindly accepted to share their experience and views with us.

Under the program, we first have President Kuroda; I believe he needs no introduction. He has been a prominent figure in international economic circles

with a very successful professional background before he was elected as the President of the ADB.

Then, we will have the pleasure of listening Honorable Minister Babacan who skillfully orchestrated the economic policy making in the country, and one of the main architects of the economic program. He is going to make us walk through Turkey's recent economic developments and the EU process.

Dr. Ahmet Tıktık, Undersecretary of State Planning Organization, is a renowned bureaucrat and long time practitioner of development policy in Turkey. He will give a speech on Turkish development experience and prospects for future.

Our third guest speaker is Mr. Tuncer Kayalar, Undersecretary of Foreign Trade. He is with our foreign trade office for many years and one of the leading figures behind Turkey's recent impressive external trade performance. He will dwell on Turkey's trade policy and will present our trade strategy vis-a-vis Asia.

Our next guest is coming from a different discipline than pure economics and finance. He is the Undersecretary of Ministry of Tourism and Culture. Professor İsen will take us to a tour of Turkish Cultural Heritage, indeed giving us a little break off from the discussion of economics.

After the lunch break, we will start at program with Professor Dinçer. He is an academician by background and assumes the highest public civil servant post in the country, as the Undersecretary of the Prime Ministry. Professor Dinçer is the architect of the ongoing public sector administration reform. Today, he will give us hindsight in his experience with the public sector reform.

My Deputy Mr. Cavit Dağdaş, will speak on investment environment in Turkey. Cavit has extensive experience in the public sector. He worked for the State Planning Organization and the Central Bank of Turkey for long years. He is responsible for our foreign direct investment department and has hands on experience in FDI.

As the last speaker of the day we have Mr. Osman Birsen, Chairman of Istanbul Stock Exchange. He served in many different high-level capacities in the public sector. Mr. Birsen is also amongst my predecessors in Treasury. He will give a presentation on Istanbul Stock Exchange and regional collaboration.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given the speaker list I have just introduced, I expect that the sessions will be comprehensive and stimulating.

Now let me leave the stage to our distinguished speakers.

Thank you.