

**TOAST BY H.E. PAUL BIYA, PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON,
IN RESPONSE TO THAT OF PRESIDENT
ABDULLAH GÜL**

**At the Official Dinner Offered in his Honour
during his State Visit to the Republic of Turkey**

Ankara, 26 March 2013

- **Your Excellency, President of the Republic of Turkey and Madam,**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am very pleased and highly privileged to be in Turkey, this big and beautiful country of yours.

Permit me, Mr President, to extend to you my sincere gratitude for the warm welcome and solicitude accorded my wife, myself and the delegation accompanying me since our arrival in this beautiful city of Ankara

My visit to Turkey comes three years after yours to Yaounde on 16 and 17 March 2010, which was the first ever by a Turkish Head of State to Cameroon. Since then and thanks to our shared determination, relations between our two countries have continued to grow and diversify for the benefit of our two peoples. Proof of this is the exchange of visits, such as those to Turkey by the President of the National Assembly of Cameroon and several members of the Government of Cameroon and, in return, that of Professor Mehmet Gormez, President of Religious Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, to Yaounde in December 2012.

Beyond its symbolism, my visit to your country, which is also the first to Turkey by a Cameroonian President, testifies to our mutual commitment to strengthening our friendly and cooperation ties within the framework of a win-win strategic partnership.

- **Mr President of the Republic,**

Turkey, which was already a major power under the Ottoman Empire, has continued to marvel the world. Built with steadfast determination by Mustafa Kemal known as Atatürk, after the abolition of the Sultanate in 1922 and the Caliphate in 1924, the State of Turkey is today a politically stable, economically prosperous and socially peaceful nation. I honour the memory of Atatürk, the eminent patriot who, at the beginning of the last century, courageously laid the groundwork for a secular and modern Turkey. This remarkable work has been consolidated over the years.

In fact, thanks to the ambitious reforms and programmes resolutely undertaken by its leaders since 2002, your country, which ranks as the world's 15th largest economy, is currently one of the major actors of global growth. Such performance is all the more remarkable as it comes at a time when efforts are being made to get the global economy out of crisis. Permit me, therefore, to seize this opportunity to extend my heartfelt congratulations and to say how happy my country is to be counted among the friends and partners of such a great nation.

Cameroon, for its part, is currently pursuing a "Major Accomplishments" Programme, which consists in implementing major projects in the areas of energy, infrastructure, mining, agriculture, etc., and is geared towards making Cameroon an emerging country by 2035.

To that end, my country has substantial advantages and potentials, namely its strategic position in Africa, huge natural and human resources, political stability, sustainable economic growth, investment-friendly environment and central position in the Central African Sub-region.

To carry through its lofty national plans which has the support of Cameroonians of all social strata, both at home and abroad, Cameroon knows it can count on the commitment of its external partners, notably Turkey whose competence and know-how are commensurate with its needs.

Right away, I would like to seize this opportunity to express the gratitude of the Cameroonian people for the support provided by the Government and people of Turkey to Cameroon's development process.

- **Mr President,**
- **Distinguished Guests,**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Cameroon and Turkey share common values and principles within international bodies, notably the United Nations Organization and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to which both countries belong.

This common belonging has enabled us to appreciate the vital moderating role played by Turkey, notably in the Syrian crisis, in the tension-ridden near and Middle East region. Your actions at the helm of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation between OIC members has also caught our attention.

Lastly, I would like to underscore the importance of your initiative aimed at institutionalizing a consultation platform between your country and the African continent. This Summit of Partnership and Turkey-Africa Cooperation based on the principle of equality and win-win cooperation is proof of your interest in the African continent. That accounts for Cameroon's active participation since its inception in 2008.

- Mr President of the Republic,
- Distinguished Guests,
- Ladies and Gentlemen,

While extending my best wishes for the future of Cameroon-Turkey relations, I invite you, Ladies and Gentlemen, to raise your glasses in honour of His Excellency Dr. Abdullah GÜL, President of the Republic of Turkey and Madam, his Wife.

Long live Turkey-Cameroon friendship and cooperation!

Thank you for your kind attention.