

**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE FIFTH MEETING OF
THE TURKISH-ARAB COOPERATION FORUM
AT THE LEVEL OF THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
Istanbul, Republic of Turkey
December, 1st, 2012**

1. The Fifth Meeting of the Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum at the level of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs was held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey on 1 December, 2012 between the Republic of Turkey and the League of Arab States.
2. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (the host country), and H.E. Dr. Adnan Mansour, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Emigrants of the Republic of Lebanon (Presidency of the Arab League Council), H.E. Dr. Nabil Elaraby, Secretary General of the League of Arab States. In addition, H.E. Mr. Muhammed Emhammed Abdulaziz, Minister of International Cooperation of Libya (Succeeding Presidency of the Arab League Ministerial Council), H.E. Ambassador Jamal Al Ghunaim, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the League of Arab States (preceding Presidency of the Arab League Council), H.E. Dr. Ambassador Walid Hamid Sheltagh, Head of Department of Neighbor Countries of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iraq (Presidency of the Arab League Summit), and Their Excellencies the Ministers and Heads of Delegation (attached list of participants).
3. The Participants recalled the conclusions of the Fourth Ministerial Meeting of the Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum that was held in Rabat on 16th November, 2011 in the Kingdom of Morocco as well as the “Rabat Initiative for a Comprehensive and Sustainable Turkish-Arab Partnership 2012-2015” which aims to enhance the activities related to the Forum.
4. The Forum also discussed the latest developments in the Middle East, regional and international issues of common concern as well as bilateral and multilateral issues regarding the political, economic and cultural relations between Turkey and the member states of the Arab League.

5. The Forum meeting was held in a spirit of openness and cooperation. It emphasized the importance of the realization of the legitimate aspirations and demands of the peoples of the region for freedom, reform, development and social justice, ensuring that these demands are exercised in a peaceful manner, with full respect to the fundamental freedoms.
6. The Ministers condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, irrespective of its motivations, and underlined that terrorism cannot and should not be associated with any religion, culture or ethnic group. They reiterated their determination to enhance cooperation in combating this scourge against humanity.
7. The Ministers asserted the legitimate rights of peoples to resist occupation.
8. The Ministers condemned the religiously and ethnically motivated killings that the Rohingya Muslims in the Rakhine (Arakan) State of Myanmar are exposed to and called on the Myanmar Government to take all necessary measures to prevent the recurrence of such events in the future and enable full access of humanitarian aid to the needy in the region, and further called on the international community to continue to encourage the Myanmar Government to take positive steps for finding a long term solution to the plight of the Rohingya Muslims, including their legal status and birth-rights.

In that regard, the Ministers commended Turkish and Arab firm positions, and efforts that were exerted to offer political and financial support to the Rohingya Muslims, including the visit of H.E. Mr. Ahmet Davutoğlu, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey to Myanmar, and the Rakhine Region on 8-10 August 2012.

9. The Ministers reiterated the need for full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of the countries of the region and the principles of non-interference in internal affairs and good-neighbourly relations, in conformity with international principles and laws.
10. The Ministers welcomed the historic resolution adopted by the UNGA on November 29th, 2012, in recognition of Palestine as a non-member observer state, and with the full support provided by the members of the UNGA, and stressed the importance of it, as a preliminary step to reach the full membership of Palestine, and agreed that it is a designative step in the way of the restoration of the legal and historic rights for the

Palestinian people to self-determination and the establishment of their independent and viable state on the borders of June, 4th 1967, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The Ministers expressed their regret for the unjustifiable decision of certain states to vote against the General Assembly Resolution.

The Ministers highlighted the absolute rejection of all illegal Israeli actions, and all unilateral actions aimed at erasing the identity of Jerusalem and changing its geographic and demographic facts. The Ministers further stressed their rejection for all illegal Israeli aggressions aimed at Judaizing the city and make it the capital of Israel. They also rejected the decision of Israeli Prime Minister claiming the West Bank territory as not occupied, and demanded the cessation of all the repeated attacks on Al-Aqsa Mosque and the rest of the Islamic and Christian religious sanctities. They strongly condemned the settler violence in and around Jerusalem. The Forum supports the steadfastness of Jerusalem and Jerusalemites, against Israel's attempts to obliterate Arab and Islamic identity of the holy city, including efforts by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to protect the Islamic and Christian Heritage of the city, and its effective role in supporting the steadfastness of Jerusalem and Jerusalemites, and Jordanian efforts that have been made in the UNESCO, and resulted in the issuance of unanimous decision that bind Israel not to take any unilateral action to change the parameters of the road of Mughrabi gate, and also commends the efforts of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of El Al-Quds Committee and the efforts of Bayt Mal Al-Quds in supporting Jerusalemites and preserving its Arab and Islamic identity.

11. The participants also stressed that Turkey and the Arab countries are partners in the pursuit of a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in its three tracks, Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese to achieve security, stability, peace, and prosperity in the Middle East. They demanded an end to the Israeli occupation of the Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights and the Lebanese territories of Shebaa Farms and Kafr-Shuba hills and the northern part of Ghajar village, in accordance with the relevant United Nations resolutions, the Madrid Terms of Reference, the principle of land for peace, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map. The participants also called for the settlement of all outstanding issues related to the final status of the Palestinian cause (water, security, borders, refugees, and Jerusalem). They called on the Security Council to assume its role and

responsibility to directly engage in the process towards resolving Arab-Israeli conflict to achieve security and stability in the region.

12. The Ministers condemned the brutal and indiscriminate Israeli aggression on Gaza Strip which caused dozens of lives and hundreds of injury of civilians including women and children, as well as the destruction that affected the infrastructure and institutions. They praised the resistance of the Palestinian people against the Israeli assault. They fully endorsed the resolution adopted at the extraordinary session of the League of Arab States Council of Ministers held in Cairo on November 17th, 2012, reassessing the Arab position on the course of the stalled peace process from various aspects and dimensions including the feasibility of continuing the Arab commitment to put the Arab peace initiative as a strategic option, deploring the brutal violence that constitutes war crimes and crimes against humanity by Israel in Gaza. They welcomed the ceasefire agreement reached as a result of intensive efforts from Egypt to eliminate the increased tension and to end Israeli attacks on Gaza. They expressed their hope to stand by the agreement and to avoid any actions that may break the ceasefire. They praised Egypt, Turkey and Qatar for their active involvement and congratulated Egypt for the leading role in reaching this ceasefire. They emphasized the importance of the visit of the Arab League Ministerial delegation together with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Turkey to Gaza, as a landmark demonstration of solidarity with the Palestinian people. They also welcomed the visits of the Prime Minister of Egypt, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Speaker of the Parliament of Iraq, and Deputy Head of the Libyan National General Council and the rest of the Arab delegations. They praised all forms of humanitarian and medical aids and the human relief and solidarity provided by the Arab countries and Turkey.

They also praised all exerted efforts to break the blockade on Gaza Strip, in particular the efforts of the State of Qatar and the visit of the Emir of Qatar to Gaza despite the blockade and the financial aid of this country worth of over 400 million dollars for the reconstruction of Gaza, and for providing fuel to the electric power stations in Gaza.

13. The Participants condemned in strongest terms the ongoing Israeli inhumane blockade on Gaza and the Israeli piracy in international waters for ships bound for Gaza to break the siege, the latest of which was the Finnish ship Steel, in clear violation of international law specially international humanitarian law, and called for immediate

lifting of the Israeli blockade. The participants commended the Egyptian actions to ease the blockade on the Gaza Strip through the permanent opening of the Rafah crossing and facilitate the passage of fuel supplies and building materials for the reconstruction of Gaza Strip.

14. The Ministers called upon the international community to exert all efforts for halting the Israeli settlement activities and implementing the relevant resolutions specially the UN Security Council resolutions 465 (1980) & 497 (1981). They further stressed that the Israeli settlement activities are illegal and contrary to Security Council resolutions and international law. The Participants rejected any proposals that would envisage partial or transitional approach to the Palestinian State's borders. They also condemned the Israeli decision to establish 3000 housing units in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, as a reaction of the November 29th UNGA Resolution.
15. The Participants called on the international community to exert all efforts for the release of all Palestinian and Arab prisoners and detainees in Israeli prisons, including the political and elected leaders in accordance with International Humanitarian Law, and the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949. They also welcomed the initiative by the Republic of Iraq to hold an international conference on the Palestinian and Arab prisoners in the Israeli prisons to be held on 11-12/12/2012 in Baghdad.
16. The Ministers welcomed the success that has been achieved in the parliamentary and presidential elections in a number of Arab countries which were held in an atmosphere of credibility, transparency and objectivity and in accordance with international standards; realizing the demands and the aspirations of its peoples in establishing a pluralist political system based on freedom, justice and democracy.
17. The Ministers demanded the Syrian government to immediately and completely halt all forms of killing and violence against the Syrian people. The Ministers expressed their deep concern on the increasing violence and its serious consequences and implications for the future of Syria, the security and stability in the region. They also expressed their concern for the deterioration of humanitarian situation, particularly the internal displacement of over two and a half million people inside Syria, as well as the influx of hundreds of thousands to neighboring countries. The Ministers reiterated the urgency to allow immediate humanitarian access to the all Syrians and the need for an increased humanitarian

assistance to all Syrians inside and outside Syria. They urged all parties to respect International Humanitarian Law, including the inviolability of all medical facilities medical, personnel and vehicles. They called on all donors to increase their contribution to the latest UN appeals and to realize greater synergy of Arab and international efforts led by UNHCR and other humanitarian relief organizations.

The participants commended the efforts made by the Governments of Turkey, Jordan, Lebanon, Iraq and Egypt in providing support and assistance to the Syrians. The participants called on all countries and international organizations and associations to share the burden with neighboring countries that host Syrian refugees and to provide the necessary assistance to them.

The Ministers hailed the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the Fourth Ministerial Conference of the Group of the Friends of Syrian People to be held on December 12th, 2012, in Marrakech, and the importance of this meeting to renew support in achieving the aspirations of the Syrian people.

The Ministers welcomed the agreement reached by Syrian opposition groups on 11/11/2012 in the recent meeting held in Doha under the auspices of the Emir of Qatar and the League of Arab States that resulted in the formation of the Syrian National Coalition for Revolutionary and Opposition Forces building on the results of the Syrian Opposition meeting held on 2-3 July 2012 in Cairo under the auspices of the League of Arab States. The Ministers further expressed their gratitude to the State of Qatar for the conclusion of Doha agreement, and invited other opposition forces to join this national coalition in order to be inclusive for all spectrums of the Syrian People regardless of their ethnicity, religion or sect, and urged regional and international organizations to recognize it as a legitimate representative for the aspirations of the Syrian People and consider this Coalition as the legitimate representative and the main interlocutor with the League of Arab States, and called to provide political and financial support for this inclusive structure.¹

The Ministers reaffirmed their support to the mission of H.E. Mr.Lakhdar Brahimi, the Joint Special Representative of the Secretary General of the United Nations and the Secretary General of the League

¹ Algeria and Iraq emitted reservation. Algeria considers that recognition is sovereign decision of each country.

of Arab States. They also restated their support to a political process taking into account the decisions of the League of Arab States Council, and the Final Statement issued at the meeting of the International Working Group in Geneva on June 30th, 2012.

The participants stressed the importance of working together for the swift conclusion of the transition process in the accordance with the legitimate aspirations of the Syrian people for freedom and pluralistic democracy. The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and political unity of Syria.²

18. The Participants condemned the terrorist Israeli aggression that targeted a factory of conventional weapons in Khartoum, calling it violation of International Law and of the sovereignty of Sudan and a threat to the international peace and security. They expressed their solidarity with Sudan in the face of this aggression and stated their determination to take the appropriate action in accordance with international norms and conventions. The participants praised the efforts of the State of Qatar and the League of Arab States in reaching the Darfur Peace Agreement as well as the endeavors to implement the Doha Peace Document and to achieve stability in Darfur that allowed the transition from early recovery to the reconstruction phase. They called on the factions that had not signed the Doha Peace Document to do so. The participants called on the International Community to provide support to Sudan for the establishment of sustainable peace, through financial and economic assistance and debt forgiveness.
19. The Ministers reaffirmed the importance of preserving Yemen's unity, respecting its territorial integrity, and ensuring the success of the National Dialogue Conference. They highlighted the need to reinforce international assistance to Yemen in order to address the humanitarian and economic challenges. They stressed the need to fully implement the GCC initiative and achieve security and stability including by preventing radicalization, fighting against terrorism, and meeting the humanitarian and economic challenges. The Ministers commended the success of the conferences of the Friends of Yemen, which took place in Riyadh and New York, in addition to the donors' conference hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Riyadh.

² Lebanon disassociates itself from this item

20. The Ministers welcomed the end of the transitional period in Somalia, expressed their appreciation for the progress achieved by the leaders and people of Somalia in bringing an end to the transition including the adoption of the constitution, the selection of the members and inauguration of the new Somali Federal Parliament and the election of a new Speaker and President, and the appointment of a new Prime Minister as well as the forming of a new government, and renewed their commitment to helping the Somali government to face different burdens on the economy as well as for the completion of the national reconciliation efforts. The Ministers also welcomed the success of the international conference to combat piracy, which was held in the United Arab Emirates in June 2012.
21. The participants welcomed the formation of an interim elected government in Libya in the context of the transition towards democracy and state building, and expressed their support for the new Libyan government in its endeavor to ensure security and stability in the country and to achieve development and prosperity for the Libyan people.
22. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of cooperation among their countries in the field of water resources.
23. The Participants expressed their concern for the lack of progress towards reaching a peaceful resolution over the three islands of Abu Musa, Lesser Tunb and Greater Tunb. They reiterated their support for a peaceful settlement of this dispute in accordance with international law, either through direct negotiations between the parties or by referring the matter to the International Court of Justice.
24. The Ministers believe in the necessity of a just and lasting political settlement in Cyprus and share the view that a negotiated and mutually agreed solution can be reached through the efforts of the UN on the basis of the well-established UN parameters, the inherent constitutive power of the two peoples and their political equality.
25. The participants expressed concern about the impact of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction on security and stability in the Middle East, and stressed the need for Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear state, and put all its nuclear facilities under the overall control of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). They also expressed their deep concern for the postponing of the conference of 2012 by the

organizers of the conference as well as setting different conditions and requirements on the establishment of a zone free of nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East, which is a contravention of obligations that have been identified in the outcome document of the 2010 NPT review conference. The participants are concerned that this delay and non-implementation of the resolution on the Middle East for the year 1995 may have negative impact on the non-proliferation regime. Moreover, the Forum recognizes the right of all countries, in compliance with their obligations under the NPT, to develop nuclear energy for peaceful uses.

26. The Ministers stressed the urgent need to encourage more dialogue and understanding among peoples and the respect of their specific religious and cultural identity, and the importance to actively participate in regional and international initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions, and cooperation in concluding an international treaty to combat the defamation of religions and their symbols. They also called for tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful methods to express views, and welcomed the establishment of the King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz International Center for Dialogue among Believers and Cultures , which was opened in Vienna on 26/11/2012, and "Amman Message" , "Common Word " and the initiative of " Interfaith Religious Harmony Week " launched by Jordan and adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations and commended the role of these initiatives in promoting understanding among humans and civilizations .
27. The Forum underlining once again the need to encourage greater dialogue, understanding and respect between different cultures, reiterated its full support for the UN Alliance of Civilizations initiative co-sponsored by Spain and Turkey. The Forum also welcomed the efforts exerted toward the preparation of the Fifth Forum of the Alliance to be held in Austria, in 2013.
28. The participants strongly condemned all kinds of abuse and insolence against our Islamic religion and the person of Prophet Muhammad (peace and blessing upon him), and reaffirmed their firm position in defending their sacred religious symbols.
29. The Forum called on the international community to resist all forms of the repugnant Islamophobia through international means, mechanisms and institutions, as well as the promotion of media content inciting hatred and contempt of religions, and for the need to respect religious

and cultural diversity around the world. They also welcomed the establishment of the International Centre against discrimination and violent extremism in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, which will be inaugurated on December 14th, 2012, which is the first of its kind in the world to combat extremism intellectually, by creating dialogue, cooperation, publishing, research and training.

30. The Ministers reaffirmed the necessity of protecting the cultural heritage. They particularly stressed the duty of governments in the preservation of cultural heritage threatened by violence. The Forum welcomed collaborative efforts and initiatives to restore and preserve the monuments belonging to the Turkish-Arab common cultural heritage. The participants encouraged the establishment of cultural centers, cooperation and development of mutual programmes between cultural institutions, museums, archives, and media organizations.
31. The participants welcomed the decision of the Turkish side to start the teaching of Arabic language as a foreign language in public schools during 2012-2013 school year. The Forum encouraged Turkey and Arab countries to continue the cooperation in the field of primary and secondary education, evaluation and teacher training. It also noted the importance of twining relations between Turkish and Arab schools. The Turkish side informed of its readiness to support the teaching of Turkish language in Arab countries, especially at university level, through the work of the "Yunus Emre Institute" and welcomed the cooperation between the two sides in the field of high education.
32. The Ministers acknowledged the importance of future economic cooperation between the Arab countries and Turkey, and called on the Ministers of Economy, Trade and Investment on both sides to hold biennial meetings to stimulate trade and investment between both sides. In this context, the Forum also encouraged further studies to explore ways of signing free trade agreements between Turkey and the Arab States.
33. The Ministers urged international cooperation to face off the negative effect of climate change and welcomed the outcome of the Durban COP 17 and the hosting of Qatar to the COP18, and expressed their hope to have outcomes reflect positively on the environmental situation in the region and the world, and contribute to the reduction of negative environmental influences on the climate. The Forum also called the Forum to enhance cooperation in the field of clean energy technologies

to reduce greenhouse gas emissions significantly in order to achieve economic and social development.

34. The Ministers stressed the importance of establishing a Turkish-Arab Business Council which would include the General Union of Arab Chambers and other private sector institutions and their counterparts on the Turkish side.
35. The Ministers welcomed the outcome of the seventh session of the Arab Turkish Economic Forum - organized by the Economy and Business Group and DEIK, and stressed the importance of cooperation with them in the framework of the eighth session of the Arab Turkish Economic Forum - in June 2013.
36. The Ministers encouraged the creation of sustainable mechanisms for cooperation in the fields of industrial development, the promotion of small and medium sized enterprises, mutual investments, science, technology transfer, tourism, food security, social security, water, environment, maritime, air and land interconnection projects, as well as expanding the volume of trade, sharing experiences on energy and renewable energy, and exchanging economic data and statistics.
37. The participants welcomed the invitation extended by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to host a book and documents fair in Amman during 2014 and the Kingdom of Morocco to host two workshops on "Modernizing the Judicial Administration in order to Improve the Business Environment" on 24-26 February 2013, and "Housing and Urban Development" in March or April 2012. The Forum also welcomed the proposal of the Ministry of Energy and Industry of the State of Qatar to host a workshop on "Setting up a joint vision for sustainable development" on 19th February, 2013 in Doha as well as the readiness of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to discuss issues related to energy and renewable energy with Turkey, as well as holding a workshop by the General Secretariat to discuss ways to increase the volume of mutual investments between the Arab states and Turkey during the second half of 2013.
38. The Ministers welcomed the conclusions of the second session of "The Turkish-Arab Industrial Cooperation Conference" which was held on 3-4 June, 2012, in Benghazi under the title "Libya's Reconstruction", and also welcomed the Fourth Round of the Turkish-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue" that was held in Cairo on 14th April, 2012.

39. The participants also welcomed Egypt's readiness to host the third session of "The Turkish-Arab Industrial Cooperation Conference" in Cairo 2013.
40. The Arab side welcomed the candidature of the Republic of Turkey to the UN Security Council for the term 2015-2016.
41. The Arab side also welcomed and supported Turkey's candidacy to host the 13th Summit Meeting of the Islamic Cooperation Organisation in 2014.
42. The Ministers expressed its appreciation to the Senior Officials Committee for its efforts to develop the Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum; and to maintain its ongoing success. The Ministers entrusted the committee to convene its next meeting to follow up the recommendations of the 5th session of the Forum.
43. The Ministers expressed their appreciation for the efforts exerted by the Mission of the League of Arab States in Ankara in enhancing the Turkish-Arab Cooperation.
44. The Ministers conveyed their sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Republic of Turkey for its generous hospitality and exceptional organization of the Fifth Ministerial Turkish-Arab Cooperation Forum Meeting.
45. The Ministers decided to hold the next meeting in Khartoum in 2013.