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**REQUEST OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
FOR ADMISSION AS A MEMBER OF THE ECONOMIC COMMISSION
FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Note by the secretariat

By means of a note dated 22 January 2016, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey conveyed to the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) the request of its Government that Turkey be admitted as a State member of the Commission.

The secretariat is hereby circulating the present note to apprise the members of the Commission of this request.



Minister of Foreign Affairs

Ankara, 22 January 2016

Your Excellency,

Turkey has been pursuing an outreach strategy to Latin America and the Caribbean region for more than a decade.

In this context, Turkey has increased significantly the number of its diplomatic missions (14) in the region. Today, Turkey enjoys strategic partnerships with Brazil and Mexico. We are expanding the scope of our cooperation in the region in every field, from trade to investments, from energy to culture and science.

Establishing institutional ties with regional organizations is an important pillar of our outreach strategy. Turkey has been granted observer status within the Organization of American States (OAS), the Association of Caribbean States (ACS), the Central American Integration System (SICA) and the Pacific Alliance. We have dialogue mechanisms with CELAC and CARICOM.

On the economic front, our trade volume with the region increased from 2,7 billion Dollars in 2005 to 8,2 billion Dollars in 2014. Currently, Turkey has a free trade agreement (FTA) with Chile. Negotiations to sign FTAs with Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru are underway. Recently, we have proposed to launch FTA negotiations with SICA as a block. We also held exploratory talks with MERCOSUR with the same purpose.

Development cooperation constitutes another key dimension of our relations with the region. In the last two years, development cooperation projects carried out by Turkey in Latin America and the Caribbean region amounted to 11 million Dollars. I am convinced that the recent opening of Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency's (TİKA) Regional Coordination Offices in Bogotá and Mexico will further strengthen the South-South cooperation that we are developing in partnership with regional development agencies.

I should also add that Turkey takes part in MINUSTAH Mission in Haiti with security personnel and is the co-sponsor -along with the Dominican Republic and Qatar- of the HOPEFOR initiative, which provides for the mobilization of military assets under civilian command in disaster relief efforts.

H.E. Alicia Bárcena
ECLAC Executive Secretary

On the social front, Turkey is willing to reconnect with the diaspora known today as "Los Turcos" which immigrated to Latin America in the 19th and early 20th century from Ottoman territories.

As a fast developing country and as a member of G-20 and OECD, Turkey is fully aware of the challenges and opportunities presented by globalization. Being the 17th largest economy in the world and with its trade volume exceeding 400 billion Dollars, Turkey is now ready to take its relations with Latin America and the Caribbean to its next level.

In this context, I have the honor to submit our candidacy for Membership to ECLAC. Once our application receives a favorable response, a joint event with ECLAC and CELAC might be held in Istanbul/Turkey as proposed by Ecuador during the CELAC term-presidency of the latter, with a view to explore new venues to further increase our trade and cooperation with the region.

Looking forward to your response, please accept, Your Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration.



Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu