

## The Advancements in Türkiye-Africa Cooperation: Impacts and Prospects for Development\*

### **Türkiye-Afrika İş Birliğindeki Gelişmeler: Etkiler ve Gelişim İçin Beklentiler**

**Dr. Patrice Racine DIALLO**

*Türkiye Research Center (Maarif Foundation), Bamako, MALI*  
*Türkiye Araştırmaları Merkezi Türkiye Maarif Vakfı Bamako, MALİ*  
racinediallo5481@gmail.com  
ORCID 0000-0003-1800-1725

#### **Makale Bilgisi / Article Information**

**Makale Türü / Article Types :** Araştırma Makalesi / *Research Article*  
**Geliş Tarihi / Received :** 07.04.2024  
**Kabul Tarihi / Accepted :** 15.05.2024  
**Yayın Tarihi / Published :** 30.07.2024  
**Yayın Sezonu / Pub Date Season :** Haziran / *June*  
**Cilt / Volume: 2 • Sayı / Issue: 1 • Sayfa / Pages:** 33-46

#### **Atıf / Cite as**

DIALLO P.R. The Advancements in Türkiye-Africa Cooperation: Impacts and Prospects for Development.  
*Disiplinlerarası Afrika Çalışmaları Dergisi*, 2/1 (2024), 33-46.

**Doi:** 10.5281/zenodo.13212213

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**Abstract:** The growing trend in recent years for Türkiye to strengthen its cooperation with African countries, and the increasing need for African nations to diversify their partners, underline the importance of studying relations between Türkiye and Africa. Indeed, despite these significant advances, academic research dedicated to African issues remains limited. Consequently, an in-depth analysis of the dynamics of bilateral ties between Türkiye and Africa is needed to better understand the opportunities and challenges of this growing cooperation. This article undertakes an analysis of specific cooperation projects between Türkiye and Africa, aiming to provide an innovative perspective on the opportunities and challenges of this evolving collaboration. By examining these projects in detail, we seek to highlight successes as well as

\* This article was presented as a paper at the Malatya İnönü University International African Symposium on 25-27 May 2024.

shortcomings in order to identify best practices and opportunities for improvement. Also, a methodical assessment of the social, economic, and environmental impacts of these initiatives is undertaken. In addition, this article proposes a forward-looking exploration of emerging areas where cooperation between Türkiye and Africa could be intensified in the future. By identifying these areas of potential growth, we aim to guide policymakers and stakeholders towards more strategic and beneficial initiatives for Africa's sustainable development. Such a study would not only enlighten policymakers and economic players on the economic, political, and social implications of these relations, but also fill the current gaps in academic knowledge on Türkiye-Africa interactions.

**Keywords:** Africa, Türkiye, Cooperation, Development

**Öz:** Son yıllarda Türkiye'nin Afrika ülkeleriyle iş birliğini güçlendirmeye yönelik artan eğilimi ve Afrika ülkelerinin ortaklarını çeşitlendirme ihtiyacının artması, Türkiye ile Afrika arasındaki ilişkilerin incelenmesinin önemini vurgulamaktadır. Aslında, bu önemli gelişmelere rağmen, Afrika konularına adanmış akademik araştırmalar sınırlı kalmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, bu büyüyen işbirliğinin fırsatlarını ve zorluklarını daha iyi anlamak için Türkiye ile Afrika arasındaki ikili ilişkilerin dinamiklerinin derinlemesine bir analizine ihtiyaç duyulmaktadır. Bu makale, Türkiye ve Afrika arasındaki belirli işbirliği projelerinin bir analizini yaparak, bu gelişen işbirliğinin fırsatları ve zorlukları hakkında yenilikçi bir bakış açısı sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu projeleri detaylı bir şekilde inceleyerek, en iyi uygulamaları ve iyileştirme fırsatlarını belirlemek amacıyla başarıların yanı sıra eksiklikleri de vurgulamaya çalışmaktayız. Ayrıca, bu girişimlerin sosyal, ekonomik ve çevresel etkilerinin metodik bir değerlendirmesi de yapılmaktadır. Buna ek olarak, bu makale Türkiye ve Afrika arasındaki işbirliğinin gelecekte yoğunlaştırılabileceği yeni alanların ileriye dönük bir araştırmasını önermektedir. Bu potansiyel büyüme alanlarını tespit ederek, politika yapıcıları ve paydaşları Afrika'nın sürdürülebilir kalkınması için daha stratejik ve faydalı girişimlere yönlendirmeyi amaçlamaktayız. Böyle bir çalışma sadece politika yapıcıları ve ekonomik aktörleri bu ilişkilerin ekonomik, siyasi ve sosyal sonuçları konusunda aydınlatmakla kalmayacak, aynı zamanda Türkiye-Afrika etkileşimleri konusundaki mevcut akademik bilgi boşluğunu da dolduracaktır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Afrika, Türkiye, İşbirliği, Kalkınma

## Introduction

Cooperation between Türkiye and Africa has expanded considerably in recent years, resulting in significant impacts and promising prospects for development. Africa has always been a priority for Türkiye, which considers the continent an essential partner in its foreign policy (Tepeciklioglu, 2017). Through a series of initiatives and agreements, cooperation between the two parties has been strengthened in various fields such as the economy, trade, security, education, and culture (Dodo, 2016; Donelli, 2018; Orakçi, 2022).

In economic terms, Türkiye has become one of the largest investors in Africa, with key sectors including energy, agriculture, infrastructure, and tourism. These investments have had a significant impact on the economic development of the

African countries concerned, creating jobs, stimulating growth, and promoting the transfer of knowledge and technical skills (Kizilarслан, 2009; Njuafac & Katman, 2016).

Trade cooperation between Türkiye and Africa has also intensified, with an increase in the volume of bilateral trade. Turkish exports to Africa have increased significantly, while African countries have found Türkiye a diversified market for their products (Uchehara, 2008). This increase in trade has contributed to the diversification of African economies and the creation of new outlets for businesses on both sides.

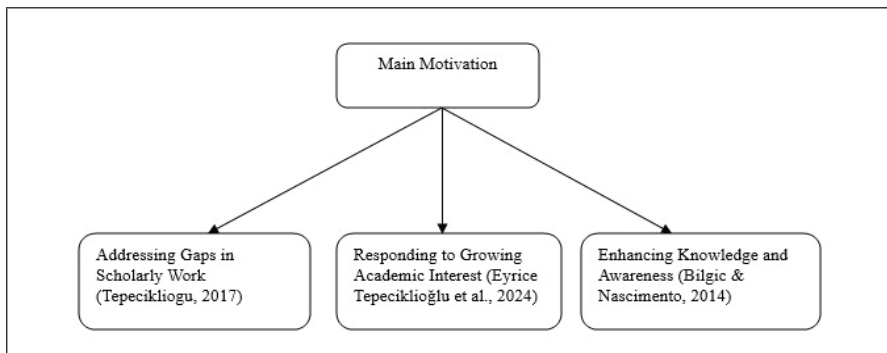
In the field of security, Türkiye has developed close cooperation with African countries in the fight against terrorism, organized crime, and transnational threats (Sıradağ, 2018). By providing assistance in terms of training, equipment and intelligence, Türkiye has helped to strengthen the capacities of African countries in this crucial area.

Education has also been a major focus of Türkiye-Africa cooperation. Türkiye welcomes a growing number of African students to its universities, offering scholarships and high-quality research programs (Njuafac & Katman, 2016). This cooperation in the field of education promotes cultural exchanges, strengthens human relations, and contributes to the training of young African talent, who will drive the development of their countries in the future.

Finally, cultural cooperation between Türkiye and Africa plays an essential role in strengthening ties between the two sides. Cultural festivals, art exhibitions, artistic exchanges and twinning programs are organized on a regular basis, enabling the Turkish and African peoples to get to know each other better, share their values and promote cultural diversity (İpek & Biltekin, 2013; Gamawa, 2017).

### • **Motivation**

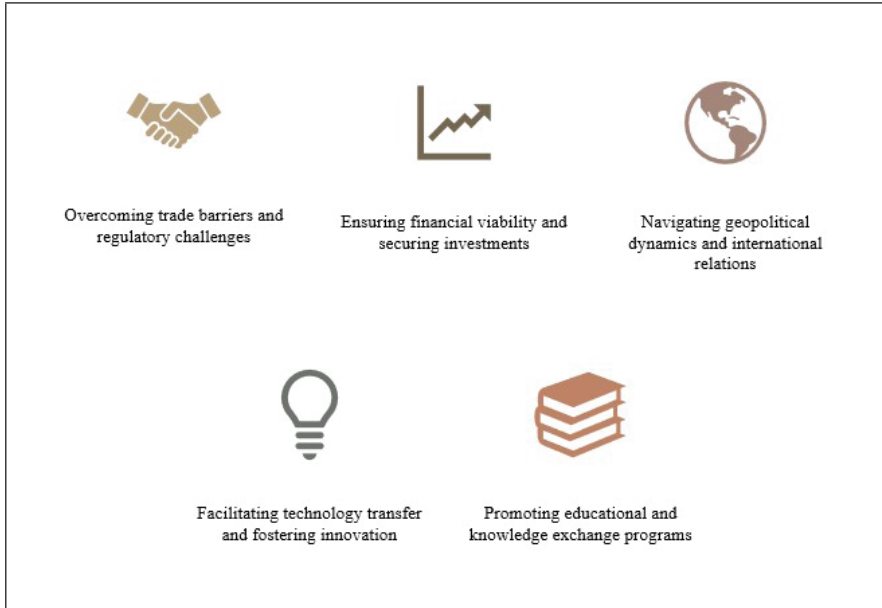
Figure 1 below shows the main motivations for this research.



**Fig. 1** Research Motivation

• **Critical Issues**

Figure 2 depicts the five critical issues that the study focuses on.



**Figure 2:** Five main critical issues

Overall, advances in cooperation between Türkiye and Africa are having a very positive impact on the development of African countries. They foster economic growth, job creation, the transfer of technological knowledge, the strengthening of security capabilities, and the promotion of education and culture. Development prospects are therefore promising, with even greater potential for cooperation between the two parties in the years to come.

**Cooperation projects between Türkiye and Africa**

Existing projects within the framework of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa testify to the growing commitment of both parties to strengthening their economic, political, and social ties. These projects, undertaken in various sectors and fields, aim to promote sustainable development, strengthen local capacities, and foster mutually beneficial exchanges between Türkiye and African countries. The initiatives underway reflect both parties' desire to diversify their partnerships and explore new opportunities for cooperation. Existing projects cover a wide range of areas, including infrastructure, energy, agriculture, education, health, and trade (İpek & Biltekin, 2013; Gamawa, 2017; Gorgulu, 2010; Kizılarslan, 2009; Özkan, 2011).

For example, in the infrastructure sector, Türkiye is actively involved in the construction and renovation of transport infrastructure, such as roads, ports and airports, in various African countries. These infrastructure projects aim to improve regional connectivity, facilitate trade, and strengthen economic integration between the two regions (Ozkan, 2010b). In the field of energy, cooperation between Türkiye and Africa focuses on the development of renewable energies, in particular solar and wind power. Türkiye shares its expertise in clean technologies and supports the implementation of renewable energy projects in various African countries. These initiatives help to reduce dependence on fossil fuels, promote sustainable development and enhance energy security in Africa. Agriculture is another key sector in which Türkiye and Africa work closely together. Türkiye offers its expertise in modern agricultural techniques, farmer training and the development of sustainable agricultural value chains. Joint agricultural projects aim to improve agricultural productivity, raise farmers' incomes, and strengthen food security in Africa (Enwere & Yilmaz, 2014). In the field of education, Türkiye grants scholarships to African students and encourages academic exchanges between the two regions. Partnerships between Turkish and African higher education institutions are established to strengthen educational capacity and promote academic cooperation (Atabaş & Köse, 2023; Rudincová, 2014). In the field of health (Ozkan, 2010a), Türkiye provides medical assistance and participates in the construction of hospitals and medical centers in certain African countries. These projects aim to strengthen access to quality healthcare, improve local healthcare systems and build medical capacity in Africa. Finally, commercial cooperation (Wheeler, 2011) between Türkiye and Africa is supported by initiatives aimed at facilitating trade and investment between the two regions. Economic forums, trade fairs and business meetings are regularly organized to promote business opportunities and encourage business partnerships between Turkish and African companies.

These various existing projects testify to the diversity of areas of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa. They contribute to strengthening economic, political, and social ties between the two regions, and offer promising prospects for mutual development and prosperity. By highlighting these concrete projects, it is possible to underline the significant advances made in Türkiye-Africa cooperation, and to explore the prospects for the future development and impact of this cooperation (Özkan, 2014).

Future cooperation projects between Türkiye and Africa testify to the growing commitment of both parties to strengthening their diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations. These projects, which have emerged over recent decades, aim to promote mutual development, regional stability, and cooperation in various key sectors. They also illustrate the prospects and opportunities for growth that can arise from this bilateral collaboration (Ozkan, 2012). One of the main

areas of future cooperation between Türkiye and Africa is trade and investment. Projects such as the creation of special economic zones, the expansion of bilateral trade agreements and the promotion of public-private partnerships will help to facilitate trade and promote investment between the two sides. The strengthening of transport and logistics infrastructures, the establishment of trade corridors and the development of joint industrial clusters are all future projects that will promote economic development and job creation in Türkiye and Africa. Cooperation in the energy field is also a strategic focus for future relations between Türkiye and Africa. The implementation of renewable energy projects, such as wind and solar power, in African countries will improve access to electricity and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. The construction of power plants, the development of electricity distribution networks and the promotion of research and development in the energy sector are all initiatives that will stimulate economic growth and contribute to Africa's energy transition (Kyirewiah & Bilate, 2022). Promising future cooperation between Türkiye and Africa also concerns the fields of agriculture and food security. Türkiye possesses considerable expertise in agriculture, as well as advanced agricultural technologies and practices. Cooperation with African countries can help strengthen agricultural capacities in Africa, improve agricultural productivity and guarantee food security in the region.

Future projects such as sharing knowledge, training farmers, developing agricultural research, and promoting investment in the agricultural sector will stimulate economic growth and improve living conditions for the people of Africa (Eyryce Tepecikliouglu et al., 2024). Finally, future cooperation between Türkiye and Africa also includes projects in the field of education and training. Türkiye is setting up scholarship programs for African students and is welcoming a growing number of African students to its universities. This cooperation is aimed at strengthening academic and cultural exchanges, as well as promoting the sharing of knowledge and skills. Future projects, such as the strengthening of partnerships between Turkish and African universities, the creation of joint research centers and the organization of vocational training programs, will contribute to the training of African youth and the strengthening of human capacities in Africa.

In nutshell, future cooperation projects between Türkiye and Africa will open new development prospects and strengthen existing ties between the two parties. These projects are in line with the logic of partnership and mutually beneficial cooperation, focusing on key sectors such as trade, energy, agriculture, and education. They testify to both parties' commitment to working together to promote economic growth, regional stability, and sustainable development. The future of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa holds promising opportunities and prospects for a strengthened and mutually beneficial partnership.

## **Social, Economic, and Environmental Impacts of the Cooperation between Türkiye and Africa**

### **• Social Impact**

The social impact of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa is many and varied. This cooperation helps create social links between the two regions, promotes cultural exchange, contributes to capacity building, and supports the human development of the populations concerned. Initiatives in the fields of education, health, vocational training, and the fight against poverty are all socio-economic measures aimed at improving the living conditions of African populations.

In the field of education, cooperation between Türkiye and Africa helps to increase access to education for the most vulnerable populations. University exchange programs, scholarships and educational partnerships have been set up to strengthen African education systems and foster the development of younger generations. These initiatives help to reduce poverty and inequality by offering educational opportunities to the most disadvantaged populations (Atabaş & Köse, 2023). In the field of health, Turkish-African cooperation supports the implementation of health policies and programs aimed at combating endemic diseases and strengthening African health systems. Medical training, awareness-raising campaigns, infrastructure construction and partnerships in medical research all contribute to improving access to quality healthcare and reducing infant and maternal mortality in Africa. Vocational training is another area in which cooperation between Türkiye and Africa is having a significant socio-economic impact (Kavala, 2016). Training, exchange of expertise and technology transfer programs are set up to enhance the skills of African workers in various sectors such as agriculture, industry, infrastructure, and trade. These initiatives help to promote employment and entrepreneurship in Africa, offering economic and social opportunities to local populations.

Finally, Türkiye-Africa cooperation is also committed to the fight against poverty. Socio-economic development projects, such as the construction of basic infrastructure, access to drinking water, rural electrification, and the promotion of local entrepreneurship, help to reduce poverty and improve the living conditions of affected populations (Orakçi, 2022). These socially responsible interventions foster inclusive growth where everyone can benefit from economic opportunities.

In short, cooperation between Türkiye and Africa has a significant social impact. By promoting access to education, strengthening healthcare systems, developing vocational training, and combating poverty, this cooperation contributes to the human development of African populations. The socio-economic initiatives put in place promote social inclusion, reduce inequalities, and improve living conditions. By guaranteeing the well-being of populations,

cooperation between Türkiye and Africa lays the foundations for a lasting and balanced relationship between the two regions.

**• Economic impact**

Cooperation between Türkiye and Africa has significant social, economic, and environmental impacts. On the economic front (Tepeciklioglu, 2017), this cooperation opens new opportunities and promotes economic development for both Türkiye and African countries. Trade relations, investments, and strategic partnerships between the two regions are constantly expanding, creating sustainable economic growth.

Within the framework of this economic cooperation, trade between Türkiye and Africa is developing positively. Türkiye has increased its exports to Africa, particularly in the automotive, construction, pharmaceutical and textile sectors. Turkish products are finding new outlets on the African continent, boosting the competitiveness of Turkish companies, and diversifying their export markets (Dodo, 2016). For their part, African countries benefit from access to quality goods and services from Türkiye, which in turn promotes their economic development. Turkish investment in Africa is also a key factor in this economic cooperation. Türkiye has increased its foreign direct investment in Africa, particularly in the construction, energy, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors. These investments contribute to local job creation, technology transfer and the diversification of economic activities in African countries. They help to improve infrastructures, strengthen productive capacities, and promote the industrialization of the continent. Economic cooperation between Türkiye and Africa also promotes the development of strategic partnerships and joint projects (Habiyaremye & Oguzlu, 2014). Cooperation agreements have been signed in areas such as transport, energy, agriculture, information and communication technologies, health, and education. These partnerships combine the strengths and skills of both parties, fostering mutual development and the achievement of common goals. Fair trade and sustainable investment operations are also encouraged within the framework of economic cooperation between Türkiye and Africa. These initiatives aim to promote economic practices that are both environmentally friendly and socially responsible. They help preserve natural resources, improve working conditions, fight corruption, and promote inclusive development.

By highlighting economic benefits such as trade expansion, investments and partnerships, this cooperation contributes to economic growth and sustainable development. In addition, fair trade and sustainable investment initiatives reinforce the positive social and environmental impact of this cooperation. Overall, economic cooperation between Türkiye and Africa creates a dynamic that promotes mutual prosperity and improved living conditions for the populations concerned.



• **Environmental impact**

The environmental impact of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa is of paramount importance for the sustainability and preservation of ecosystems in both regions. When we consider the environmental impact of this cooperation, several aspects need to be considered, including the management of natural resources, the protection of biodiversity, the fight against climate change and the sustainability of development projects.

The management of natural resources is a major issue in cooperation between Türkiye and Africa (Tepeciklioglu, 2017). Both regions are rich in natural resources, such as water, minerals, and arable land, but they are also faced with problems of overexploitation and unsustainable management of these resources. Cooperation between Türkiye and Africa can contribute to better management and use of natural resources, by putting in place conservation policies, monitoring systems and sustainable practices, to preserve these resources for future generations. Protecting biodiversity is also a crucial issue in cooperation between Türkiye and Africa. Both regions are home to a great diversity of ecosystems, plants, and animals, but also face challenges in terms of biodiversity loss due to urbanization, deforestation, and degradation of natural habitats. Cooperation can promote the exchange of best practices in biodiversity conservation, ecosystem restoration and protected area protection, to ensure the survival and sustainability of flora and fauna in both regions.

In the context of climate change, cooperation between Türkiye and Africa can play a key role in combating its adverse effects. Both regions face challenges such as rising temperatures, drought, flooding, and rising sea levels. Cooperation can foster the sharing of knowledge and technologies to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, promote renewable energies, and strengthen adaptation and resilience efforts in the face of the impacts of climate change. Regarding the sustainability of development projects, it is essential to ensure that they do not have negative environmental impacts. Cooperation between Türkiye and Africa must be accompanied by a rigorous assessment of the potential environmental impacts of the various projects envisaged, whether they involve infrastructure, mining, or agriculture. Environmental protection measures must be integrated right from the planning stage, to minimize adverse effects on local ecosystems, natural resources, and biodiversity.

The sustainable development approach in cooperation between Türkiye and Africa is essential to preserve the environment and guarantee a sustainable future for future generations. This implies responsible management of natural resources, protection of biodiversity, mitigation of climate change and sustainability of development projects. Cooperation can play a key role in promoting these objectives, by enabling the sharing of knowledge, resources and best practices between Türkiye and Africa.

In other words, cooperation between Türkiye and Africa must incorporate a strong environmental dimension to preserve natural resources, protect biodiversity, combat climate change, and promote the sustainability of development projects. Joint efforts in these areas will help create a more sustainable future for both regions and strengthen their commitment to environmental protection.

### **Emerging Areas where Cooperation Between Türkiye And Africa could be intensified in the Future**

#### ***• Identification of emerging areas***

The intensification of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa involves the identification of specific areas in which this cooperation could be strengthened in the future. These emerging areas offer new opportunities for collaboration and mutual development between Türkiye and African countries. The identification of these areas is based on an analysis of Africa's needs and development priorities, as well as Türkiye's assets and skills (Ozkan, 2012). In this way, points of convergence can be identified that will promote fruitful and mutually beneficial cooperation.

The first emerging area where cooperation between Türkiye and Africa could be stepped up is infrastructure. Africa's infrastructure needs are immense, whether in the fields of transport, energy, telecommunications, or urbanization. Türkiye, with its solid expertise in these fields, can contribute its technological know-how, its experience in the construction and management of quality infrastructures, as well as financial partnerships to support the development of these projects in Africa. Enhanced cooperation in the field of infrastructure would make it possible to bridge existing gaps and foster Africa's socio-economic development. Another emerging area is agriculture and food security. Africa has vast agricultural land, but farming is often constrained by outdated practices, limited access to modern technologies and failing support infrastructures. Türkiye, which has successfully modernized its agricultural sector and achieved food self-sufficiency, can share its expertise in advanced agriculture, irrigation techniques, water resource management and innovative agricultural technologies with African countries. This enhanced collaboration in agriculture would help to improve agricultural productivity, enhance food security, and promote rural development in Africa. A third emerging area is education and training. Africa faces major challenges in the field of education, particularly in terms of access to quality education, vocational training, and skills development. Türkiye, with its expanding education system, can play an important role in strengthening educational capacity in Africa (Atabaş & Köse, 2023). Cooperation in this field can take the form of student exchange projects, scholarship programs, institutional collaboration, and the transfer of pedagogical knowledge. By working together, Türkiye and Africa can foster sustainable human development and strengthen the skills needed to meet the challenges of the 21st century. A final emerging area is technology

and innovation. Digital transformation is underway in Africa, and demand for information and communication technologies, digital solutions and innovation is constantly growing. Türkiye, which has experienced rapid growth in the field of information and communication technologies, can share its experience in digital transformation, technological entrepreneurship and innovation with African countries. This collaboration would help boost the development of Africa's IT sector and foster the emergence of a dynamic digital economy.

Identifying these emerging areas of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa opens new opportunities for development and mutually beneficial partnerships. By focusing on these areas, both parties can strengthen their economic, social, and cultural cooperation, thus contributing to sustainable and inclusive growth in both regions. Enhanced cooperation in the fields of infrastructure, agriculture, education, and technology would tap Africa's development potential, strengthen ties between Türkiye and Africa, and promote mutually beneficial collaboration for a prosperous future.

**• *The need for cooperation in these emerging areas***

Cooperation between Türkiye and Africa in various emerging fields is of great importance for the mutual development of both entities. The need for cooperation in these areas is based on several key factors, including the opportunities for economic growth, the common challenges facing Türkiye and Africa, and the mutual benefits of bilateral cooperation (Kyirewiah & Bilate, 2022). To exploit the full potential of this collaboration, cooperation in these areas must be strengthened and intensified in the future.

One of the areas where cooperation between Türkiye and Africa could be intensified is the agricultural and agro-industrial sector. Africa has significant untapped agricultural resources and strong potential for agricultural development. On the other hand, Türkiye has acquired expertise in the field of agriculture and agro-industry, particularly in terms of production techniques, resource management and food safety. Increased collaboration between the two parties would help to promote sustainable agricultural development, improve agricultural productivity, and promote food security in Africa. Another area where cooperation between Türkiye and Africa is needed is the energy sector (Tepeciklioğlu, 2017). Africa is rich in natural resources, including oil, gas, and renewable energies. Türkiye, for its part, has advanced expertise and experience in the energy field, particularly in exploration, production, and distribution. By strengthening cooperation in the energy sector, Türkiye and Africa could mutually benefit from the diversification of energy sources, the transfer of knowledge and the promotion of renewable energies, thus contributing to a more sustainable energy transition. Cooperation in the field of infrastructure is also essential for the development of trade and economic ties between Türkiye and Africa. Improving transport in-

frastructure, including roads, railroads, ports, and airports, would facilitate trade flows and the exchange of goods between the two sides. Türkiye has expertise in the construction and management of transport infrastructure, while Africa has considerable development potential in this field. Enhanced cooperation in infrastructure would contribute to better regional connectivity and greater economic integration between Türkiye and Africa. Finally, cooperation in the field of education and training is crucial to the development of human resources in Africa. Türkiye boasts a dynamic education system and high-quality higher education institutions. By strengthening ties in the field of education, Türkiye could contribute to the capacity building of students in Africa, the promotion of higher education and vocational training. Increased cooperation in this field would help bridge the skills gap, promote innovation and talent development in Africa, paving the way for sustainable economic growth.

The need for cooperation in these emerging areas between Türkiye and Africa is based on identifying mutual opportunities for growth, recognizing common challenges and seeking pragmatic solutions. Enhanced cooperation in the fields of agriculture and agro-industry, energy, infrastructure, and education will boost economic development, promote sustainability, and strengthen ties between Türkiye and Africa (Dodo, 2016). By working together, both sides can create a strong and mutually beneficial partnership that contributes to the prosperity and sustainable development of both regions.

### **Conclusion**

Cooperation between Türkiye and Africa has grown significantly in recent years, with numerous commercial, political, and cultural agreements between the two parties. This cooperation has opened new development opportunities and established strong ties between Türkiye and African countries. What lessons can we draw from this fruitful cooperation?

Firstly, Türkiye-Africa cooperation demonstrates the importance of political and diplomatic commitment. Türkiye has developed a clear strategy towards Africa, sending high-level diplomatic missions, organizing forums and summits between African and Turkish leaders, and setting up regular dialogue mechanisms. This political will has created a favorable environment for cooperation and strengthened mutual trust between the two parties. Secondly, economic cooperation between Türkiye and Africa has been a key driver of their partnership. Türkiye has invested heavily in various sectors in Africa, including agriculture, energy, textiles, and infrastructure. These investments have helped to create jobs, strengthen the productive capacities of African countries, and foster economic development. Türkiye has also facilitated access to its market for African products, opening new export opportunities for African countries.

These lessons can serve as a model for other international relations and contribute to the sustainable and balanced development of countries and regions. It is essential to continue strengthening cooperation between Türkiye and Africa, fully exploiting their potential and consolidating the ties already established, to contribute to the common prosperity of both parties.

All in all, these different lines of research offer perspectives for in-depth analysis and understanding of cooperation between Türkiye and Africa. By looking at political and economic relations, specific sectors of cooperation, the socio-cultural dimension, and environmental issues, it is possible to provide answers to the complex questions linked to this cooperation and to propose recommendations for its future development. This research will thus contribute to strengthening Türkiye-Africa cooperation and fostering mutually beneficial development for both parties.

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