

INTERNATIONAL

Turkey and UN: Partnering for least developed countries

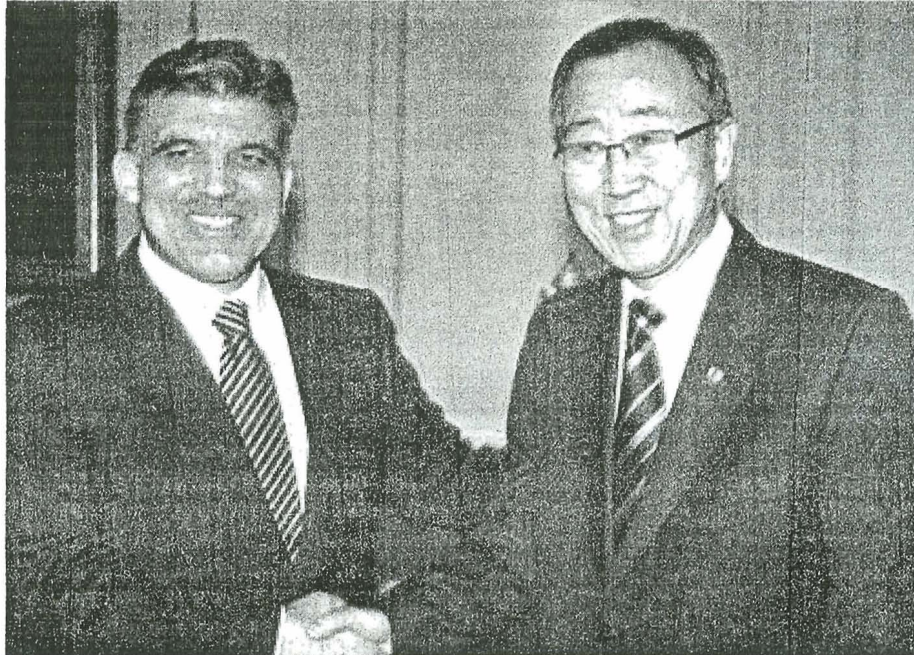
By Charles Onunaiju

Between the 9th and 13th of May, 2011, Turkey's historic City and its economic hub, Istanbul would host most array of World leaders, academics, development experts and horde of media practitioners for a high profile United Nations international conference on least developed countries. Turkey's soaring global profile makes Ankara a more appropriate and compelling host for the international conference on the critical challenges of least developed countries. Recent UN activities especially since the political upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa has focused the world body on these hot spots, with most of its decisions and resolution, especially the UN security council resolution 1973, stirring more controversy. The focus on high international politics with preponderance concern for the ideological and political preference of the dominant Western powers in the NATO and EU has entangled the UN in controversy. The UN decision to authorize the use of force in Libya against its government and in aid of the opposition armed militias has further dealt a blow to the world body.

Refocusing its search light to the challenges of development especially in the least developed countries, would return the world body to its noble prime concern in enabling a framework for overcoming the most acute global challenge of our time.

Turkey, the host of that conference has exhibited a clear level-headedness in number of global issues, raising a respectable voice in calls for moderation and caution. Even as a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Turkey on principle refused to lend any military support to the organization, a controversial military forage in Libya. Instead, Prime Minister Erdogan has called for cease fire among the combatants and issued a peace plan. He has vigorously and robustly denounced the Washington/NATO orchestrated plan for regime change in Libya.

Turkey has evolved from the uses of military intervention in its political process to a stable democracy, held up universally as a beacon of moderation. Since coming to office of the Justice and Development Party (A.K), Turkey International profile as a sure footed democracy has risen. Along with a reputation for political stability, Turkey has emerged a dynamic economic



UN Secretary General Ban shakes hand with Turkey's President Gul

power house in the region, now referred to as the "China of region in a fitting tribute to Ankara, a prolific manufacturing prowess.

Given, the background of her current economic and political status and even geo-political relevance, Turkey is most primed to host a universal search for a new paradigm for

East and North Africa" as of the same "historic significance, equal to the revolutions of 1848 and 1989 in Europe" stressing that the people in the region without exception revolted not only in the name of universal values but also to regain their long suppressed national pride and dignity. He however,

to the new political climate on the region," and further expressed his "firm conviction that the United States of America has a long overdue responsibility to side with international law and fairness when it come to Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Suffice it to say that these words are not from Israel or

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development especially as it affects the least developed countries.

In the Middle East region, where Turkey straddles a major geopolitical strategic line, with Europe, Ankara assumes a critical role to forge understanding between the two crucial civilizations. Writing in the New York times, recently Turkey's amiable President and former Foreign Minister, Mr. Abdullah Gul described "the wave of uprising in the Middle

pointed out that "whether these uprisings lead to democracy and peace or to tyranny and conflict will depend on forging a lasting Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement and a broader Israeli-Arab peace."

He identified "the plight of the Palestinians as the root cause of conflict in the region," and "which is being used as a pretext for extremism in other corners of the world. He categorically stated that "Israel more than any other country, will need to adapt

Washington-bashing Iranian leader, but formidable US ally a NATO member and even Israel's only friend in the region. More so, Mr. Gul is the President of respectable democracy and emerging economic power house. Therefore his voice should find listening ears in world capitals. President Gul underlines the crucibles to the sustenance of democratic culture in the region. Given its own clear perception for sustenance of democracy in the region,

Turkey's own dramatic rise to a model economy is another compelling reason, why Ankara would, play a vanguard role in redefining the new development paradigm.

The challenge of development especially for the least countries, mostly in Africa and Asia remain a critical concern. The United Nations initiative in creating a forum to discuss, debate and proffer solution to the issue of development in the least developed economies is apt and appropriate. Having Turkey to host such conference is even more appropriate. The questions that this conference should raise must deal with global trade. It is commonly believed that aid have failed to stimulate growth in least developed economies, and the paternalism that is associated with aid- given has seriously handicapped its impact. Therefore a conference for the least developed countries must deal with access to the markets for the least economies. Crucially, the accessibility of international credit without compromising the countries sovereign status should be given a serious consideration in the discussion of the challenges of the least developed countries. It is expected that Turkey as the host of conference shall impact considerably on its outcome.

Therefore, it is widely expected that at the conference, Turkey should bring to bear on its proceedings, its experience and views for a collective search for a new paradigm on development issues. Turkey has already pointed the way in the direction of investment and economic relations with developing countries especially in Africa. Apart from investment in critical infrastructure, Turkey is a key player in mobilising essential social infrastructure like schools and hospitals in response to the core concerns of developing economies.

In Nigeria, one of Africa's most challenged and promising economies; Turkey is already a key player, pointing the way in the new kind of international partnership for the conquest of poverty and stimulation of development. The world, though in turbulence expects much from the UN conference on the least developed countries in Istanbul and Turkey with its new dynamism and soaring world reputation must ensure that the conference did not go the way of other previous summits, whose decisions became only a matter academic interests.