

REPORT OF THE 1ST VIRTUAL CONFERENCE OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY OF THE ASIA COOPERATION DIALOGUE MEMBER COUNTRIES

20 January 2021

1. The Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) was established as an intergovernmental forum in 2002 to develop cooperation between Asian countries and improve the competitiveness of Asia at the global level. With 35 member countries ACD is the first international organization which covers the entire Asian geography. The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of ACD member states meet annually to discuss ACD developments, issues of regional cooperation and ways to enhance and solidify Asian unity. Turkey is a current Chair of the ACD for the term 2019-2020.
2. The **1st Virtual Conference of the Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) of the Asian Cooperation Dialogue (ACD) Member Countries** was organized by the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey as a side-line event of the 17th Ministerial Meeting.
3. The meeting was chaired by Mr. M. Rifat Hisarcıklıoğlu, the President of TOBB and honoured by the presence of H.E. Ruhsar Pekcan, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Turkey and Dr. Pornchai Danvivathana, ACD Secretary General. (*Attachment 1 – Opening Statements*)
4. National Chamber representatives from Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Iran, Japan, Kuwait, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan Palestine, Philippines, Qatar, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Tajikistan, Turkey, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan and Viet Nam attended the meeting. (*Attachment 2 – Participants list*)
5. Following the opening statements, Mr. Ahmet İhsan ERDEM, Vice President of the Investment Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey made a presentation “Why Invest in Turkey?” (*Attachment 3 – Presentation “Why to Invest in Turkey?”*)
6. During the roundtable session, the heads of delegations took the floor to share the economic state of play in their home countries and exchange views on how to develop the intra ACD trade and investment relations. (*Attachment 4 – Presentations by national chambers*)
7. As a result, the following five recommendations were drafted:
 - The delegations showed a moderate optimism about the post-Covid-19 recovery process. This recovery process for the business community requires the continuation of the public support.
 - Despite all negative impacts of the Covid-19, the process of Asia becoming the centre of the global economic power has not changed and this trend will continue without any interruption. In order to increase the competitiveness of the region, an intensive dialogue mechanism between the member countries is required.
 - The need of the continuation of the CCI Conference on more thematic topics was underlined. So, the issues of an informal permanent secretariat and a follow up mechanism for the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of the ACD Member Countries were raised by some of the delegations.
 - As the first thematic topic, “e-commerce in Asia”, was highlighted. During the pandemic, every country has developed its own experience in e-commerce. Now it

is time to focus on e-commerce opportunities among the member countries. We would like to share know-how and energize the cross-border potential in e-commerce.

- The need of setting up a working group to support SME internationalisation through e-commerce was also underlined.

8. Following the roundtable discussions, Prof. Dr. Guven SAK, Managing Director of the Economic Policy Research Foundation (TEPAV) made a presentation on “How to think of an agenda for ACD Business” (*Attachment 5 – TEPAV Presentation*)