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The Evolution of Turkey's Role in International Development: A Globalization Perspective

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Abstract

After World War II, the international economic system has largely been shaped by international organizations aimed at fostering regional, economic, and security cooperation, with the United Nations playing a pivotal role. Over time, the number of such organizations has increased and significantly influences global policies. The transformation in the economy has brought new cooperation treaties to the forefront of international relations. Furthermore, the increasing emphasis on regional development has changed the expectations of international cooperation. This study seeks to explore the necessary measures to meet these evolving expectations. Additionally, it aims to understand the changes needed in the organizational structures of international institutions, which serve as the main mediators of globalization. This study focuses on the acceleration of regionalization movements, a crucial aspect of today's global economy, and highlights the need for global restructuring in the context of international cooperation. Finally, this research strives to reveal the strategies noted to reshape Turkey's international relations in response to these global changes.

Keywords: International organizations, Economic cooperation, Development organizations, Global economy, Global cooperation

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Introduction

The emergence of globalization has led to diverse opinions about its impact. Critics, particularly anti-globalists, argue that the system disproportionately benefits developed countries, exploiting resources and cheap labor from less developed regions. In contrast, supporters highlight the advantages for countries integrated into the global system, pointing to the success of nations in East Asia, especially China, and multinational corporations. For instance, the 2009 financial crisis, which originated in the United States, rapidly became a global issue, highlighting how interconnected the world economy has become. Many critics attribute the rapid spread of the crisis to the forces of globalization.

In light of these developments, the perception of international development has undergone a significant transformation. The World Bank's report on shifting global wealth underscores the importance of global economic cooperation, urging both countries and multinational companies to collaborate. To address global development effectively, countries must engage in international decision-making processes concerning foreign economic policies. In this context, participation in international organizations has grown more crucial, and Turkey has increasingly sought a role in global cooperation, making its involvement in international activities more significant.



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This study seeks to explore the necessary measures to meet these evolving expectations. Additionally, it aims to understand the changes required in the organizational structures of international institutions, which serve as the main mediators of globalization. The study focuses on the acceleration of regionalization movements, a crucial aspect of today's global economy, and highlights the need for global restructuring in the context of international cooperation. Ultimately, the research strives to uncover the strategies noted to reshape Turkey's international relations in response to these global shifts.

Results and Discussion

Global development cooperation efforts

Following the Second World War, the establishment of international assistance agencies became a priority to address global development needs. The Bretton Woods Conference in 1944 called for a new economic system to tackle the challenges faced by the global economy in the post-war era. This led to the creation of key organizations, including the IMF, World Bank, and WTO, which aimed to stabilize and foster global economic cooperation. The United Nations, established shortly after the war, became a central body for international development cooperation, growing its membership over time.

Simultaneously, many developed nations formed their international assistance agencies to provide aid and promote development. Agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), the UK's Department for International Development (DFID), Denmark's Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA), and Canada's Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) were all established in the early 1960s.

The approach to development cooperation varies depending on the method used, the development level of the recipient country, and the number of actors involved. Bilateral cooperation involves direct partnerships between donor and recipient countries, while multilateral cooperation includes at least three partners, such as international organizations like the UNDP and the World Bank, alongside the recipient country. A major part of the financial flows within development cooperation is through official development assistance (ODA), which remains a cornerstone of international financial transfers.

ODA is defined by the OECD as financial assistance provided by one country or multinational agencies to support the development of countries or regions in need, with about one-fourth of this assistance being grants [1]. Within the realm of development cooperation, countries classified as "donors" are categorized according to various governance structures. The OECD has identified four different models, two of which involve foreign affairs ministries. In these models, the development activities are either directly managed by the ministry or coordinated independently, though still under the ministry's guidance. For models outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the cooperation unit coordinates with the ministry or operates under the oversight of another ministry.

Globally, the number of donor countries has increased as global trends evolve, and more countries are becoming part of donor portfolios. However, when the development cooperation resources are divided among multiple countries, the average scale of support projects tends to decrease. This has led to a growing emphasis on regional development cooperation projects. To enhance global development, it is recommended that multinational corporations, which have expanded significantly due to globalization and increased national incomes, participate in these cooperative efforts.

In this globalization-driven environment, cooperation must be designed on a country and region-specific basis. The financing of these cooperative efforts should align with the development levels of the involved countries and fit the overarching cooperation strategy. It is anticipated that, with regional development cooperation, localization will increase over time. This study will focus on the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) as a case study among international cooperation organizations, as it serves as a comprehensive example in the context of global development initiatives.

The OECD, established in 1961 under the Paris Convention and originally created by 20 founding members in 1960, is a prominent international economic organization. It succeeded the OEEC (Organization for European Economic Cooperation), which was set up in 1948 to address the economic restructuring needs of European countries after the adverse effects of World War II. Today, the OECD comprises 36 countries that collaborate to address issues arising from globalization and to leverage potential opportunities in the global economy. Current member countries include Australia (1971), Austria (1961), Belgium (1961), Canada (1961), Chile (2010), Czech Republic (1995), Denmark (1961), Estonia (2010), Finland (1969), France (1961), Germany (1961), Greece (1961), Hungary (1996), Iceland (1961), Ireland (1961), Israel (2010), Italy (1962), Japan (1964), South Korea (1996), Latvia (2016), Lithuania (2018), Luxembourg (1961), Mexico (1994), Netherlands (1961), New Zealand (1973), Norway (1961), Poland (1996), Portugal (1961), Slovakia (2000), Slovenia (2010), Spain (1961), Sweden (1961), Switzerland (1961), Turkey (1961), and the United Kingdom (1961). Syria's membership was suspended.

The primary goals of the OECD member countries include fostering economic growth, ensuring financial stability, and enhancing the welfare levels of both their populations and those of other member states through collaboration across various development sectors, with a particular focus on poverty alleviation. The organization also engages with key global economies such as Brazil, Indonesia, China, India, and South Africa. These nations participate in OECD's periodic activities, offering valuable advice and contributing to economic discussions. The number of non-member countries the OECD collaborates with

surpasses that of its members. To facilitate these partnerships, the OECD has established a cooperation center with non-member countries, which conducts studies and fosters regional cooperation.

Key areas of collaboration include programs with countries such as Brazil, China, and Russia, as well as partnerships with regions like Asia, Eurasia, Latin America, and Southeastern Europe. Instead of expanding membership, OECD member countries focus on enhancing cooperation with non-members through tailored programs. Additionally, the OECD maintains strong relations with other major international organizations, such as the IMF and the World Bank, exchanging information and aligning efforts where possible. The OECD's extensive range of activities is illustrated in **Figure 1**.

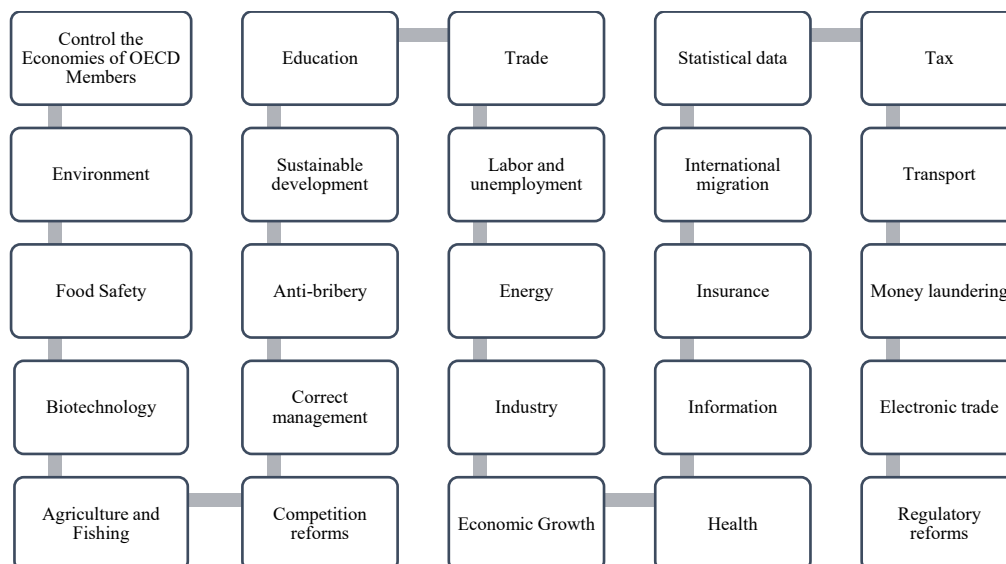


Figure 1. Field of activity carried out by OECD (KTB, 2020).

In addition to the aforementioned fields of activity, the OECD has also played a significant role in the creation of agencies such as the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA). These agencies, along with others, contribute to various global governance mechanisms. Furthermore, a series of specialized working groups have been formed within the OECD, tasked with addressing critical international issues. These working groups carry out regulatory initiatives and provide broad advice on vital concerns affecting global economic, social, and environmental conditions. Examples of these initiatives include:

- The OECD Convention is designed to combat bribery in international business transactions.
- The financial action task force (FATF), tackles issues related to anti-money laundering.
- The Committee for Corporate Governance Principles helps ensure ethical business practices across member countries.

The OECD is known for preparing extensive reports on global issues, some of which focus on specific member countries and others on broader topics like economic, social, or environmental development. These reports typically feature joint assessments, where the OECD works with member countries to evaluate the economic conditions of any given country, identifying key challenges and proposing solutions. These reports are particularly important as they help guide policy decisions and strategic planning across the global community. The methodologies and tools used by OECD member countries in preparing these assessments are adopted to maintain consistency and ensure the highest level of reliability. As one of the 20 founding members of the OECD, Turkey actively contributes to these collective efforts, offering both expertise and resources to support the organization's global objectives.

Turkey's role in international cooperation

Turkey has increasingly positioned itself as a key player in supporting global peace, security, and sustainable development. Due to its strategic location, which bridges the gap between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, Turkey has worked diligently to strengthen cooperation both with its neighboring countries and the broader international community. Over recent years, as regional conflicts have intensified, Turkey has positioned itself as a mediator, playing a crucial role in fostering dialogue and cooperation between countries affected by political instability, economic turmoil, or armed conflict.

Turkey's contributions have gained significant international recognition, especially as the global economy has faced numerous challenges, such as the ongoing financial crises and the rise of geopolitical tensions. Turkey's increasing engagement in international cooperation has prompted various organizations and countries to seek closer ties and partnerships with the country. This growing demand for collaboration highlights Turkey's emerging role as a central actor in fostering international cooperation and development.

Turkey's first significant foreign assistance project began in 1985 when the country created an assistance package worth approximately \$10 million. This initial project focused on helping countries such as Somalia, Sudan, Senegal, Guinea, Mauritania, and Gambia. In the years following the Cold War's conclusion, Turkey began reassessing its foreign policy and expanded its engagement to include newly independent republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia. The country worked to strengthen its economic relations with both regional neighbors and more distant countries to promote stability and cooperation. This led to the establishment of the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), which has since become a key tool in Turkey's international development efforts.

Over the past decade, Turkey's foreign policy has also shifted to encompass a growing focus on Africa. In 2018, Turkey's efforts to build relationships with African countries took a significant step forward when it officially joined the African Union as an observer, signaling its commitment to the continent's development. This move was followed by the establishment of 26 TİKA offices across Africa, enhancing Turkey's ability to engage directly with African governments and organizations. Turkey has since become one of the most generous global contributors in terms of humanitarian assistance, particularly in response to the ongoing crisis in Syria. Regionally, Turkey has provided substantial support to Syria, Palestine, Somalia, and Afghanistan, among others, with a focus on alleviating the impacts of ongoing conflicts and promoting long-term development.

Turkey's growing role in global cooperation and development has made it a prominent player on the world stage. By focusing on strategic partnerships, facilitating dialogue, and providing direct assistance to countries in need, Turkey continues to enhance its reputation as a leader in international cooperation, particularly in regions such as Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

The humanitarian assistance programs have consistently accounted for the largest share of Turkey's official development and cooperation assistance. A significant portion of these efforts has been dedicated to infrastructure development in social sectors. This assistance has been directed primarily toward sectors like health, education, housing, food, and water supply. However, the most pressing focus has been on security and the provision of basic humanitarian needs, as requested by the countries receiving support. Turkey's commitment to addressing these needs underscores its role as a key player in providing emergency aid and long-term development support to vulnerable populations.

In 2011, the United Nations organized a pivotal conference in Istanbul to strengthen cooperation between Turkey and the least-developed countries. This event led to the adoption of the Istanbul Action Program, which aimed to assist 47 countries, collectively home to over a billion people, to improve their development outcomes by 2020. This program highlighted Turkey's commitment to fostering long-term, sustainable development in regions facing severe challenges.

Another cornerstone of Turkey's international development efforts is its growing involvement in international cooperation organizations, particularly those that play a significant role in global development and governance. The United Nations organizations have received the highest share of Turkey's contributions, underscoring the country's strong commitment to multilateral cooperation. Turkey has also made voluntary contributions to various other organizations, including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with a notable emphasis on the OECD.

Turkey's ODA has experienced a remarkable increase since the 2000s. From an initial \$73 million in 2002, the country's ODA grew steadily, reaching \$2.5 billion in 2012 and \$8.5 billion by 2018. This upward trend reflects Turkey's expanding role as a donor nation and its increasing capacity to support development initiatives around the world. The chart below (**Figure 2**) illustrates the rapid growth in Turkey's ODA over the past two decades, highlighting the country's significant contributions to global development goals and its role as an influential actor in international cooperation.

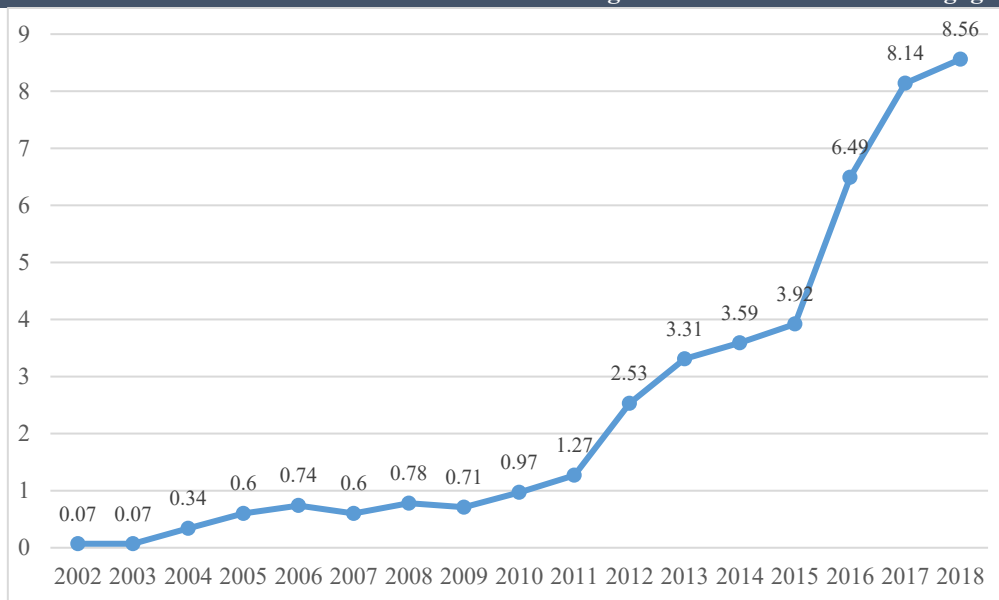


Figure 2. Amounts of official development assistance, which Turkey made - Billion \$ [2].

The organization responsible for providing development assistance to developing countries is the OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), and the aid provided by non-DAC countries to developing nations around the world has been steadily increasing. In previous years, Turkey was listed among the recipient countries of ODA in the DAC list of the OECD. However, in recent years, it has shifted to being a donor country providing such assistance [3].

Turkey's activities in the field of development cooperation are primarily focused on eradicating global poverty and ensuring sustainable development at a global level. In 2002, the ratio of ODA provided by Turkey concerning its national income was 0.04%. By 2018, this ratio increased to 1.10%, placing Turkey at the forefront in this regard. In 2017, Turkey's total ODA to the Middle East amounted to \$8,193.85 million. Due to an increase in immediate and humanitarian assistance, Turkey's total bilateral ODA reached \$8,894 million in 2017 [4]. The following graphic illustrates the top ten countries receiving the most assistance from Turkey, with Syria receiving the largest share of \$8,106.56 million from the total aid provided to the region (Figure 3).

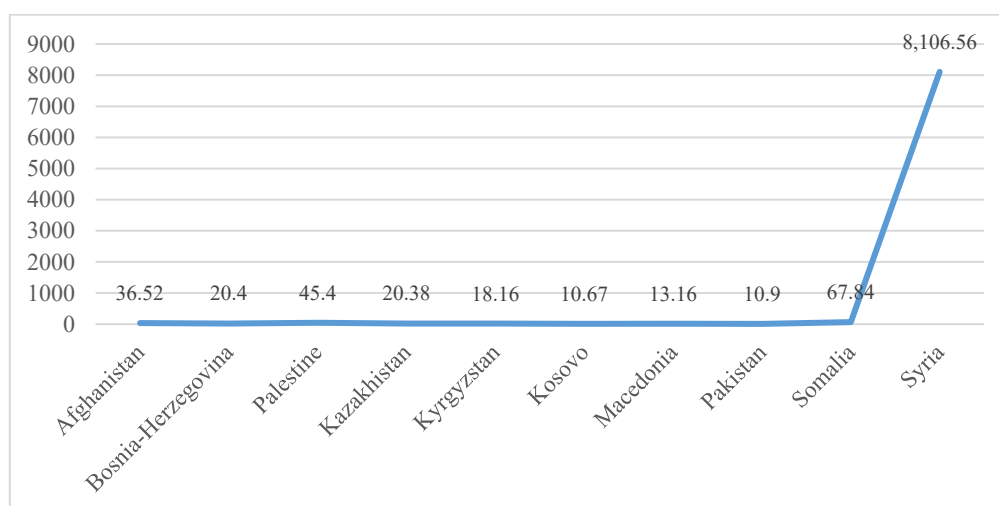


Figure 3. Countries mostly utilizing official development assistance – 2017 Million \$ [4]

Turkey's primary focus in bilateral development cooperation has been humanitarian assistance and refugee support. In 2017, Turkey provided humanitarian assistance amounting to \$7.28 billion, making it the largest provider of humanitarian aid globally. According to TİKA [4]:

“The least developed countries (LDCs) benefiting most from Turkey's bilateral assistance in 2017 included Somalia (\$60.6 million), Afghanistan (\$36.5 million), Yemen (\$10 million), Niger (\$9.6 million), Sudan (\$7 million), Ethiopia (\$5.8 million), Bangladesh (\$5.6 million), Myanmar (\$4 million), Djibouti (\$3.8 million), and Uganda (\$2.5 million). From a regional perspective, the Middle East region of Asia received the largest share of bilateral assistance, totaling \$7,324.82 million. The total bilateral assistance provided by Turkey worldwide amounted to \$7,950.45 million. When examining the categories of

Turkey's bilateral assistance, it is evident that 'immediate and humanitarian assistance' topped the list, amounting to \$7,277.8 million of the total \$7,950.5 million."

In line with international development cooperation projects, Turkey has also implemented regional development projects to address development disparities within its regions. Notable examples include the Southeastern Anatolia Project (GAP), the Eastern Anatolia Project (DAP), the Zonguldak-Bartın-Karabük Project (ZBK), and the Eastern Black Sea Project (DOKAP). Additionally, Turkey provides bilateral ODA to several countries, with the distribution of this assistance in 2017 shown in **Table 1**.

Table 1. Distribution of Turkey's Bilateral ODA - 2017

| Country/Region | Amount (\$ Million) | Country/Region | Amount (\$ Million) | Country/Region | Amount (\$ Million) |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| I- EUROPE | 226.88 | III- AMERICA | 10.41 | VI-non-regions | 481.58 |
| Albania | 6.49 | North and Central America | 3.55 | VII- world total | 7,950.45 |
| Bosnia Herzegovina | 20.40 | Costa Rica | 0.04 | IV- Asia total | 7,527.41 |
| Belarus | 0.07 | Cuba | 0.06 | Middle East Asia | 7,324.82 |
| Kosovo | 10.67 | Republic of Dominic | 0.07 | Iran | 4.23 |
| Moldova | 5.28 | El Salvador | 0.02 | Iraq | 8.27 |
| Montenegro | 5.06 | Guatemala | 0.09 | Jordan | 4.19 |
| Serbia | 6.47 | Haiti | 0.52 | Lebanon | 1.97 |
| Ukraine | 5.29 | Honduras | 0.08 | Syria | 7,246.78 |
| Europe Regional | 154.00 | Jamaica | 0.02 | Palestine | 40.59 |
| | | Mexico | 0.55 | V- OCEANIA | 0.80 |
| II- AFRICA | 296.63 | Honduras | 0.08 | Papua New Guinea | 0.02 |
| Algeria | 5.22 | Surinam | 0.03 | Tonga | 0.02 |
| Egypt | 396.47 | Uruguay | 0.02 | Vanuatu | 0.03 |
| Libya | 2.85 | Venezuela | 0.14 | Oceania regional | 0.73 |
| Morocco | 2.03 | | | VII- WORLD tOTAL | 7,950.45 |
| Northern Sahara Region | 0.09 | | | VI- non-regions | 481.58 |
| Southern Sahara | 136.16 | | | IV- ASIA total | 7,527.41 |
| Northern Sahara | 432.76 | | | | |
| Egypt | 396.47 | | | | |

The least developed countries (LDCs) that benefit the most from Turkey's bilateral assistance are Somalia, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Yemen, Niger, Sudan, Djibouti, and Uganda. Tunisia and Egypt are exceptions, as the loans provided to these countries have been repaid, leading to a negative balance in **Table 1**, where the repaid amounts are deducted from the total aid.

These projects aim to enhance income levels, improve productivity, and increase employment in rural areas, aligning with the changing global development outlook. The goal of these initiatives is to stimulate economic growth, social stability, and national development. Turkey's international cooperation plays a significant role in the implementation of these projects, which fall under bilateral ODA, covering areas such as mutual aid programs for students, refugee support, assistance to local non-governmental organizations, and technical cooperation. These efforts are focused on eradicating poverty, providing equal access to quality education, promoting economic growth, and reducing inequalities between and within countries [5].

Turkey initiated its development activities to strengthen ties with global organizations. Key international bodies that Turkey collaborates with include the United Nations (UN), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) [6].

International organizations can be classified as either governmental entities formed by states or private organizations established by non-governmental bodies operating internationally. The first global organization was the Central Commission for Navigation on the Rhine, created in 1815 during the Vienna Congress.

These global organizations are categorized into three types: political, military, and economic [7]:

Political organizations include the UN and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), with the UN being the largest, having grown from 51 members at its founding in 1945 to 193 by 2017.

Military organizations are exemplified by NATO.

Economic organizations include OPEC, the OECD, the IMF, and the World Bank.

Environmental organizations like Greenpeace also play an important role.

Regional organizations include the European Union (EU), NAFTA, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), and the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC).

Global international organizations encompass approximately 179 public and private entities. These organizations consist of states or non-governmental organizations from various regions, and they are governed by agreements designed to safeguard the interests of their members.

Turkey's international cooperation strategy is structured to foster sustainable social, economic, and humanitarian development in partner countries, under the broader framework of international development cooperation activities. The strategy aims to address regional, local, and global challenges by utilizing development cooperation methods and models. The primary focus is to meet the basic needs of the partner countries while achieving effective, productive, and human-centered outcomes that align with Turkey's foreign policy. The main objectives and goals of Turkey's development cooperation activities are outlined as follows [4]:

Objective 1: To efficiently carry out international development cooperation activities

Target 1: Strengthen development cooperation in Central Asia and the Caucasus

Target 2: Enhance development cooperation in the Balkans and Eastern Europe

Target 3: Expand cooperation in the Middle East and Africa

Target 4: Boost cooperation in East and South Asia, the Pacific, and Latin America

Target 5: Promote collaboration in foreign relations and partnerships

Objective 2: Strengthen corporate capacity

Target 1: Enhance human resources, physical infrastructure, and administrative systems

Target 2: Improve corporate legislation and reporting processes

In line with Turkey's international development cooperation strategy, the fundamental principle is to support all those in need, irrespective of their race, religion, nationality, or geographical location. Turkey's global development cooperation policy focuses on addressing the local needs of partner countries. The sustainable development strategy implemented under this policy includes the following goals [4]: eradicate poverty by 2030, implement agricultural projects to ensure food security, promote healthy living, ensure access to quality education for all, advance social equality, and assess and plan for future development initiatives.

Conclusion

Following World War II, international organizations played a key role in minimizing the negative effects on the global economic system. Cooperation-based organizations, particularly the United Nations, significantly influenced global policies. As the world economy transformed due to globalization, new cooperation agreements began to emerge between nations.

The impact of the economic ties between countries was particularly evident when the financial crisis that began in the USA spread globally. Despite this, the level of foreign direct investment in developing countries increased. Meanwhile, the economic rise of East Asian nations, notably China and India, alongside the globalization of regional crises, shifted international cooperation expectations.

It became clear that global cooperation must address regional development needs. Consequently, there was a growing recognition of the need to restructure international organizations, which are crucial mediators of both globalization and localization. This restructuring aimed to meet the evolving expectations for international cooperation and adapt strategies in international relations.

Global assistance programs emerged as one of the most effective tools for fostering global cooperation and supporting the development of underdeveloped countries. A global approach became essential, as the progress of any nation affects others, particularly the developed nations, where the welfare level could be negatively impacted by global stagnation. International development agencies were established in the latter half of the 20th century to facilitate international cooperation. These activities, shaped by the development levels of recipient countries and the number of stakeholders involved, evolved to meet global needs.

Regarding OECD, cooperation activities have been increasingly directed toward non-member countries and regions, rather than just the limited number of member states. This shift has led to cooperation efforts focused on specific countries and regions through organizations set up for this purpose.

Turkey serves as an example of a country actively engaged in ODA, both as a recipient and a provider. Turkey's participation in international development cooperation began in 1985, with its first use of foreign assistance occurring in the mid-1980s. This marked the beginning of efforts to strengthen Turkey's position in the global competitive landscape, enhance trade connections with developed nations, and increase cooperation with Turkish-speaking states and regions after the Soviet Union's collapse in the 1990s.

In 1992, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA) was established to assist the development of countries with shared cultural and linguistic ties to Turkey. This agency played a crucial role in systematizing Turkey's assistance efforts. Additionally, the importance of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) gained prominence after the devastating Marmara earthquake in 1999, further boosting Turkey's commitment to international assistance and cooperation.

In the 1990s, Turkey mainly focused on assisting countries with cultural and geographical ties. However, from the 2000s onward, Turkey expanded its focus and started providing aid to countries in need, regardless of these privileges, with Asia receiving the largest share. A review of regional assistance distribution shows that neighboring countries received the most significant portions. From this perspective, it is important to increase Turkey's involvement in assistance programs for more distant regions by enhancing collaboration with multilateral organizations. Given that the cooperation programs were initially based on bilateral agreements, it is anticipated that more efficient outcomes can be achieved by concentrating on aid projects. To ensure the long-lasting impact of assistance, it is crucial to involve the recipient country and apply models that foster a sense of ownership.

In conclusion, the changing development perception brought about by globalization highlighted the need for global cooperation. It was recognized that positive outcomes could be achieved by supporting cooperation activities, starting at the regional level and extending to the global level, through international cooperation organizations. Moreover, it is essential to make the necessary adjustments within these organizations and implement support projects involving countries with major economies and international companies.

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