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TÜRKİYE'S FOREIGN AIDS LEADERSHIP IN AFRICA

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Abstract

As humanitarian and foreign aid has become a norm in international relations, those foreign policy tools have been widely used in world politics to enhance states' foreign policy goals and help countries in need. Nonetheless, difficulties in delivering humanitarian and foreign aid to Africa have been the subject of much discussion and criticism. Many of these reasons missed the opportunity to consider how diplomacy may help facilitate the process by which aid and humanitarian assistance are given in Africa, even though many of these arguments are legitimate in their objective critique of the efficacy of foreign aid in Africa. On the other hand, Türkiye's approach toward Africa has never been through the same lens as the former imperial states assisting in the region. Türkiye's approach to the region is embraced by the "win-win" motto, which maintains its relationships with African nations based on "friendship" and "fraternity." Thus, Türkiye's regional leadership based on humanitarian and foreign aids basis is remarkable. This study aimed to examine Türkiye's Dost Eli approach in Africa with leadership, especially in the days of Covid-19.

Keywords: Africa, Foreign Aids, Leadership, Humanitarian Aids, Covid-19.

Türkiye'nin Afrika'daki Dış Yardım Liderliği

Abstract

İnsani ve dış yardımlar uluslararası ilişkilerde bir norm haline geldiğinden, bu dış politika araçları dünya siyasetinde devletlerin dış politika hedeflerini geliştirmek ve ihtiyacı olan ülkelere yardım sağlamak için yaygın olarak kullanılmaktadır. Bununla birlikte, Afrika'ya insani ve dış yardım ulaştırmada yaşanan zorluklar, çok fazla tartışma ve eleştiri konusu olmuştur. Bu gerekçelerin çoğu, Afrika'daki dış yardımın etkinliğinin nesnel eleştirilerinde bu argümanların çoğu meşru olmasına rağmen, diplomasi'nin Afrika'da yardım ve insani yardımın verildiği süreci kolaylaştırmaya nasıl yardımcı olabileceğini düşünme fırsatını kaçırmıştır. Öte yandan Türkiye'nin Afrika'ya yaklaşımı hiçbir zaman bölgeye yardım sağlayan eski emperyalist devletlerin bakış açısı gibi olmamıştır. Türkiye'nin bölgeye yaklaşımı, Afrika milletleriyle ilişkilerini "dostluk" ve "kardeşlik" temelinde sürdüren "kazan-kazan" mottosu çerçevesinde taçlanmaktadır. Dolayısıyla Türkiye'nin insani ve dış yardımlar bazında bölgedeki liderliği dikkat çekicidir. Bu çalışma, bilhassa Covid-19 döneminde Türkiye'nin Afrika'daki dost eli yaklaşımını liderlik temelinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Afrika, Dış Yardımlar, Liderlik, İnsani Yardımlar, Covid-19.

Introduction

Foreign and humanitarian aid, as foreign policy tools, have faced unusual difficulties due to continuing global crises. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, humanitarian assistance and support must be revised in light of new policies, philosophies, and viewpoints. According to the United Nations World Population Prospects 2019 statistics, Africa is the second-largest continent by population, with around 1.37 billion people, or 17.4% of the World's population (UN, 2019). Northern, Western, Central, Eastern, and Southern Africa are the five African sub-regions with 54 recognized sovereign nations.

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Each region has distinct and varied cultures, architecture, terrain, geography, history, demography, politics, religion, and economics that impact how people live there (Calderisi, 2006).

It is also important to note that the African region has millions of speakers of various languages. A country in West Africa, such as Nigeria, has up to over 300 dialects spoken throughout the nation based on the number of tribes or ethnic groups in each district, demonstrating that there can be several hundreds of languages and dialects spoken within a region in Africa. Therefore, despite cultural differences, dialectal differences, or ethnic divides, social capital, politics, and economic interests play a significant role in bringing people together. Thus, it's crucial to understand and feel Africa develops and interprets foreign policy toward the region.

With the Justice and Development Party (AKP/AK Party) rule, Türkiye's foreign policy had a paradigm shift. Thanks to this transformation, Türkiye's foreign policy was structured on a multi-faceted, multi-directional, and multi-dimensional approach to the international system as one of the pillars of Türkiye's multi-faceted foreign policy is strengthening her ties and cooperation with the African continent. Under the tenet of "African solutions for African issues" and with the goal of reciprocal benefit, Türkiye shares with African nations its own historical experience, social, political, and cultural accumulation, as well as opportunities and resources. Henceforth, Türkiye's Africa policy, which was developed based on history, entails creating political, humanitarian, economic, and cultural ties on a bilateral, regional, continental, and international scale.

The measures Türkiye has undertaken on the African continent in recent years have attracted attention due to this goal, both domestically and internationally. Today Türkiye has 42 Embassies in more than 50 countries in the African region. Also, apart from the formal diplomatic missions, Türkiye supports her initiative in Africa with state and non-state actors. First and foremost, Turkish Airlines (THY), Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Anadolu Agency (AA), Yunus Emre Institute (YEE), Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD), and Turkish Maarif Foundation (TMV) are acting in the region. Furthermore, Türkiye's Foreign Economic Relations Board (DEIK), Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association (MUSIAD), non-governmental organizations, and companies establish contact with the people of the continent.

The colonial legacy left by the Western states to the region caused the African people to distrust the West. Especially regarding former imperial countries, even today, many Africans could have acknowledged their steps in the region in the same manner: "White people do not provide anything free." Contrary to this false legacy of Western states, Türkiye handles steps toward the African continent in four dimensions: country, regional, continental, and global within the context of historical depth. Türkiye's leadership position in the African region crowns not only by Türkiye's inter-state level relations but also by providing development assistance and humanitarian aid. In other words, Türkiye's *Dost Eli* also extends to African countries. Türkiye as a continuation of her approach toward to region, Türkiye's foreign and humanitarian aid policies are also enhanced by this leadership vision.

A Continent in Need: Humanitarian Assistance and Foreign Aids in Africa

As mentioned above, it should be considered that it is not easy to comprehend the region as a single unity when talking about the African continent. Contrary, the continent consists of more than 50 different sovereign countries, their cultures, languages, and social dynamics. Thus, as a whole, the African system, in other words, African realities, may differ from the rest of the World. This concise but clear review of Africa points to the need for a deeper comprehension of the principles and practicalities of humanitarian aid in light of the unique setting in which emergencies in Africa take place. The specific dynamics of the current African system could undermine the tenets and methods of humanitarian assistance as they are offered on other continents. For instance, emergencies in Africa may

be brought on by natural disasters, technological catastrophes, epidemics, conflict, or war, with impacts and consequences quickly escalating as a result of the strong influence of culture, physical, economic, and unstable political systems, which results in the death of many people. For instance, the Covid-19 pandemic has made life more difficult for African people. As mentioned above, apart from the hardships discussed above that Africa is enduring, the Covid-19 pandemic caused a crisis in the basis of reach of medicine, vaccine, and other essential medical treatments and gear.

The word *humanitarian assistance* is frequently used to refer to help, a collection of initiatives intended to preserve and promote human dignity throughout and after times of crisis and disaster (Tomasini and Wassenhove 2009). Despite the possibility that these activities will always produce the desired results. For instance, some circumstances could make organizing humanitarian aid more challenging or improve readiness for upcoming crises and disasters (James, 2008). Despite these drawbacks, maintaining an effective response and respect for human dignity depends on more excellent knowledge of humanitarian ideas and the interplay of all local elements. As a donor country, Türkiye's experience with foreign aid and humanitarian aid mainly takes its roots in the early 1990s after the dissolution of the USSR. From the very foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 to the 1990s, Turkish Foreign Policy was forced to be single-focused and had the sole destination of going along with the US, the European Union, and NATO. Of course, this unidirectional foreign policy understanding is rooted in Türkiye's western-oriented state identity (Akıllı, 2016).

But before focusing on Türkiye's experience providing foreign aid, it's crucial to shed light on the foundation of the foreign aids terminology.

Which terminology? ODA, Foreign Aids, Humanitarian Assistance? Foreign aid as we know it today did not exist at the end of World War II. During the nineteenth and first part of the twentieth century, a few short-term initiatives for humanitarian aid occurred. However, it wasn't the transfer of public assets from one government to another (Lancaster, 2007). Activities supported by foreign governments and international organizations are common and well-known in many of the World's poorer nations (Lancaster, 2007). In the international relations literature, foreign aid and humanitarian assistance can be described by many definitions (Sumner and Mallett, 2013). Of course, foreign aid's aims, format, and content may vary across donor countries. In this situation, there are many ways to offer foreign assistance, and different types of aid may be given due to foreign aid's social, economic, and structural effects. On the other side, nations may use various techniques to provide such assistance. The Development Assistance Committee of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) classifies foreign aid as official or private, concessionary or non-privileged, bilateral or multilateral. Foreign aid can be divided into two categories: development aid and humanitarian help. So much so that it could be said that interactions between governments are based on a win-win understanding when it comes to development aid (OECD, 2021).

In contrast, humanitarian aid is primarily for urgent human needs (Dudley and Montmarquette, 1976). "In general, the transfer of capital and technology from rich countries to poor countries" is how the notion of foreign aid is defined. According to these definitions, foreign aid is the finance and transfer of all types of resources offered by states and international organizations to underdeveloped or developing countries via governmental or non-governmental organizations (McKinlay, 1979).

Foreign aid is defined as "money, food, and other resources donated or loaned by one state to another" by the Oxford Dictionary (Oxford Dictionary). Encyclopedia Britannica defines foreign aid as "the overseas transportation of capital, products, or services by a country or international organization for the benefit of the recipient country or the population in that country" more thoroughly. Sönmezoğlu et al. define foreign aid as "generally, the transfer of capital and technology from rich countries to developing countries (Sönmezoğlu et al., 2005). In light of all these definitions, it is reasonable to

explain the idea of foreign aid as financial support and other resource transfers made by governments and international organizations to underdeveloped or developing nations via governmental or non-governmental organizations.

The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC) defines official development assistance (ODA) as government funding that expressly supports and promotes developing nations' welfare and economic growth. In 1969, the DAC designated ODA as *the gold standard* of international aid, which is still the primary funding source for development assistance (OECD, 2021a). So, what is considered ODA? ODA flows to DAC member nations and regions provided by official agencies, including state and municipal governments, or by their executive agencies; or concessional (i.e., grants and soft loans) and administered with the promotion of the economic development and welfare of developing countries as the primary purpose are considered as ODA (OECD, 2021a). On the other hand, promoting contributors' security interests and military assistance and dealing with larger business goals, such as export credits, are not considered ODA (OECD, 2021b).

Since 1945, the idea of "foreign aid," which describes how governments help other states and societies in the international system, has gained prominence in international relations and as a diplomatic tactic in interstate relations (Sönmezoğlu et al., 2005). Although there are various definitions of the term, it is generally understood to refer to assistance from economically developed nations to less-developed nations. A bipolar world order developed due to World War II, and the US and the USSR began a ferocious power struggle to encircle other countries in their poles. While the possibility of communist parties taking power in Italy and France started to arise in 1947, it should be remembered that countries like East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Romania steadily melded into the Soviet Union's sphere of influence. The Soviet Union's pressure on Türkiye to strengthen its position in the region and Yugoslavia's backing for installing a communist government in Greece heightened US concerns about the USSR's influence expanding throughout Europe. As a result, on March 12, 1947, the Truman administration of the United States approved a 400 million USD aid package, with 100 million dollars going to Türkiye and 300 million going to Greece. With the 13 billion USD economic recovery initiative, also known as the Marshall Plan, an essential step was taken to restore Europe's prosperity and security as part of this aid package known as the Truman Doctrine (Lancaster, 2007). It should be mentioned that with the introduction of these two aid packages, the idea of foreign help started to gain traction in the world order. Since it has been shown that "political and strategic calculations dictate aids," the power struggle between the USA and the USSR during this time predominantly affected foreign aid (Alberto and Dollar, 2000).

One definition of international aid states that it is assistance provided from one nation to another with permission. OECD defines foreign aid as "long-term, low-interest loans, of which at least 25% are given as grants to another country, non-governmental organizations, and international organizations to advance economic development and raise the welfare level in developing countries." (OECD, 2021). According to one definition, foreign aid transfers capital and technology from developed to less developed countries. Aid is described as the mobilization of a state's resources for another state or states in need. It is characterized as helping the development of the countries in need if we look at the conceptual explanation of aid in interstate relations. Foreign aid is described in another definition as "cash, food, and other resources donated or lent by one state to another." Another description states that "the worldwide movement of capital, goods, or services by a country or international organization for the benefit of the recipient country or the population of that country" constitutes foreign aid (Lancaster, 2007).

Many writers and philosophers have pondered the idea of defining the concept of foreign aid within the field of international relations and have widely acknowledged the definition in the literature.

For instance, according to Carol Lancaster, foreign aid is the “voluntary transfer of public resources from one state to another independent state, a non-governmental organization (NGO), or an international organization (such as the World Bank, UN Development Program) with at least 25 percent donations,” with the goal of “improving the humanitarian situation in the receiving country” (Lancaster, 2007). As is evident, receiving nations benefit significantly from providing aid. The key takeaway from this is that a state providing foreign help may act following only one of the objectives mentioned above, or it may consider all of them at once. Because the idea of foreign aid “serves a broad spectrum of military, political, financial, commercial, and psychological goals, often concurrently” (Sogge, 2022).

Hence, the OECD, a leading international organization in foreign aid, connected with the Development Assistance Committee (DAC), created the idea of “official development aid” in foreign aid. Therefore, it is important to emphasize two factors for aid qualifying as official development aid. The first component is that official entities and organizations, such as state and municipal governments and executive authorities, give out foreign aid. The second factor is that foreign aid has an exceptional quality that will guarantee that at least 25% of the help is contributed to the recipient country because it is based on enhancing developing nations’ economic development and welfare. According to these criteria, the Development Assistance Committee does not recognize as official development assistance military aid that is not tangentially tied to economic growth and welfare. Similarly, the DAC says that unwavering credit support given to developing nations is not regarded as formal development assistance (Lancaster, 2007).

Interstate economic aid is another phrase used to describe international aid in terms of its purposes. In this situation, it wouldn’t be incorrect to argue that the financial support in question plays a significant role in the foundation of world politics. ODAs, which are described by nations as the most often utilized and politically dominating sort of help in the international system, might be used as an example of this type of assistance (Lancaster, 2007).

The Development Assistance Committee categorizes foreign aid into three categories: Official development assistance (ODA) is a term used to describe the funds that donor nations give to low- and middle-income countries. At least 25% of the assistance offered under this aid form is granted. Other Official Flows (DRA/OOF), item (ii). This sort of aid differs from ODA in that it is not created with a development objective or has a grant rate of less than 25%. Private Flows (PA/PF), in (iii). Aid given by non-governmental organizations or private institutions is called private streams (OECD, 2021).

One could argue that the OECD’s definition is more restrictive because it looks at international aid from an economic standpoint. Foreign aid is now given in various forms, from financial aid to humanitarian aid. Therefore, foreign aid is used in many fields, from meeting necessities like food and shelter to promoting education, life safety, career training, and technical infrastructure support. This situation means that depending on the nation and area where the aid is given, the scope and application of the idea of foreign aid as a diplomatic tool and foreign policy tactic may differ. Foreign aid covers a fairly broad range in terms of type, even though it is conceptualized differently and implemented using different methods depending on the country. There may be differences between the OECD’s emphasis on some concerns and the country-specific definitions of foreign aid. So much so that the general structure of the contested definition and the USIAD’s (the United States Agency for International Development) definition of foreign aid include various scopes. Some people contend that the only objective of foreign aid should be economic development (Lancaster, 2007).

Türkiye’s Experience with Foreign Aids. During the Cold War period, Türkiye has traditionally been a receiver of foreign aid. On June 5, 1985, with the State Planning Organization (DPT), Türkiye started her foreign aid program. Through DPT, Türkiye gave aid packages totaling USD 10 million to the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Senegal, Somalia, and Sudan to improve

institutional capacity (MFAa). In the years that followed, Turkish foreign aid, which had first taken the shape of food shipments, also diversified in quantity, quality, and geography.

The South Caucasus, the Balkans, and the Middle East have all been conflict hotspots in the post-Soviet international order after the Cold War ended at the beginning of the 1990s. The State of the Republic of Türkiye has attempted to base its foreign policy on the dangers and possibilities presented by the current global order. In this context, significant actions have been made, and foreign policy changes have been made in regions with long-established communication barriers (Akıllı, 2016).

To reach out to those regions, especially to the young sovereign Turkic states, TİKA was established as a division within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992. Through TİKA received technical aid, it's aimed to ensure that the Turkic nations that had recently acquired independence could participate in world politics and market to support efforts to adapt to the economy (Kulaklıkaya and Aybey, 2008). In 1999, TİKA was relocated under the Prime Ministry at the request of the Prime Minister, Mr. Bülent Ecevit, and with the consent of the President at the time, Mr. Süleyman Demirel. Nonetheless, the spectacular growth in the capacity and effectiveness of the TİKA was done on November 2, 2011; TİKA was re-established, and its ability and budget were enhanced to develop projects all around the World (TİKA, 2016).

Turkish foreign aid has been significantly impacted by the dynamism seen in Turkish foreign policy in recent years; it's almost as if "Turkish Foreign Policy and the geography of Foreign Aid have diversified and expanded simultaneously" (Bayram, 2016). Türkiye still supports numerous nations in Africa, Asia, Europe, and America via project and program support, technical collaboration, scholarships, support for refugees, and emergency aid (Tosunoğlu, 2015). The desire of Türkiye to make more effective arrangements for forming a more equal and fair world order serves as the foundation for Turkish foreign aid's expansion (Dal and Gök, 2014).

Following World War II, while the European nations suffered greatly, the notion of foreign aid was developed for international politics. Especially during the Cold War, the US supported these countries in dressing their wounds. Under the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Aid, the US institutionalized its economic aid models. When TİKA's structure and missions were organized, the US's foreign aid strategy and the Japan Official Development Assistance models were used as guidelines (Akıllı and Çelenk, 2019). Establishing TİKA—the driving force behind Turkish foreign aid policy—is visible in this context. TİKA, whose area of expertise is currently restricted to the newly independent Turkic Republics, made its most significant stride with the AK Party. Türkiye has moved from a peripheral country to the center of the international system thanks to the AK Party-led governments and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's leadership. Turkish generosity to other countries and the responsibilities and mobility of being an orphan in repressed regions are significant foundational elements of this remarkable development (Akıllı, 2016).

In actuality, Türkiye came in top place with a total of 8.14 billion US dollars in humanitarian aid in the 2018 Global Humanitarian Aid Report produced by the "Global Humanitarian Assistance - GHA" program in England. Türkiye became the most generous donor nation in 2018 due to the aid. On its journey to becoming an influential nation in the international arena, Türkiye's position has further boosted its excellent reputation. Countries prioritize actions that will improve their favorable reputation in the global system in the globalizing world order because the worldwide community supports the foreign policy actions in question, even though the legitimacy of the foreign policies pursued by the states with a positive reputation is strong (Akıllı and Çelenk, 2019).

Some believe foreign aid should be implemented based on technological, economic, and military aspects. Meeting the nation's needs in demand in terms of foreign assistance is an issue that should not

be disregarded. Several countries have experienced a severe shortage of medications, masks, and other medical supplies due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The Republic of Türkiye has contributed and continues to supply humanitarian aid, particularly cover and medical relief, to numerous nations due to its humanitarian diplomacy during the Covid-19 pandemic. The importance of influencing states only in the economic context is stressed between the lines in the literature about foreign aid that is Western-oriented. However, countries like Türkiye that attach importance to conscience and humanity in diplomacy prioritize humanitarian aid in their foreign policies. TİKA's current state is the culmination of many years of work and effort. The institution's duties and responsibilities have grown in line with changes and demands. With the paradigm shift of the Turkish Foreign Policy, it is seen that TİKA has become the implementer of Turkish Foreign Policy in many regions, especially in the states with which Türkiye shares common values, history, and culture. In addition to diplomacy, TİKA stands out as a policy enforcer and reinforcer. Türkiye has lessened the gap between talk and deed with the initiatives and activities it does through TİKA (Akıllı, 2016). It demonstrates an expanding foreign policy expansion from Central Asia and the Caucasus region to other parts of the World, Eastern Europe, and Africa with the aid of TİKA's operations and programs. In this context, it is referred to as Türkiye's friendly hand (in Turkish: *dost eli*). Thanks to TİKA, Türkiye's *dost eli* extends all around to World to those in need.

Türkiye's Leadership and *Dost Eli* in Africa. Türkiye is physically and historically associated with more than one region and culture, which allows it to play a vital role and move around in multiple locations at once. Türkiye is at the center of a larger region known as Afro-Eurasia, which stretches from Central Asia to the Caucasus and sub-Saharan Africa via the Middle East, thanks to the multi-directional foreign policy approach (Donelli, 2015). Türkiye gained a unique position among Africa's non-traditional allies in the past ten years due to two primary developments: the diversification of its economic ties and the maintenance of its reorientation in world politics (Akgün and Özkan, 2010). In other words, Türkiye's expansion to Africa is motivated by two factors: its reorientation in global politics and its need to diversify its economic ties in a new global political economy (Özkan, 2012).

As mentioned above, thanks to the dynamism in Türkiye's foreign policy TİKA became one of the locomotive institutions of Türkiye to increase and extend its effectiveness all around the globe. As a continuation of this dynamism, Türkiye is also expanding and strengthening relations with the African continent. As aforementioned, under the tenet of "African solutions for African issues" and with the goal of reciprocal benefit, Türkiye shares with African nations its own historical experience, social, political, and cultural accumulation, as well as its opportunities and resources. Türkiye's Africa policy, which was developed based on history, entails creating political, humanitarian, economic, and cultural ties on a bilateral, regional, continental, and international scale. Türkiye's relations with the nations of Africa have greatly improved since 2004, thanks to bilateral projects for development and humanitarian assistance as well as economic and trade agreements. Türkiye has increased the number of its diplomatic missions and honorary consuls operating across the continent in recent years. Türkiye was granted observer status by the African Union in 2005 and strategic partner status in 2008 due to its diplomatic efforts and cooperation initiatives (Özkan, 2010).

Nonetheless, in 2008 the very first Türkiye-Africa Cooperation Summit was also organized by Türkiye. During the event on 18-21 August 2008, in Istanbul, "The Istanbul Declaration on Türkiye-Africa Partnership: Solidarity and Partnership for a Common Future" and its annex "Framework of Cooperation for Türkiye-Africa Partnership" were adopted at the said Summit. Intergovernmental cooperation, trade, investment, agriculture, agribusiness, rural development, water resource management, small and medium-sized enterprises, health, peace and security, infrastructure, energy, and transportation, culture, tourism, and education, media, information, and communication technology, and environment were identified as the priority cooperation fields in this context (MFAb). Türkiye has

two advantages over conventional Western actors in its interactions with African nations: the lack of a colonial background, which allows for a clean slate approach, and the presence of cultural, historical, and religious linkages. As mentioned above, the Western countries' colonial past still haunts their relations with the African region. On the other hand, Türkiye highlights the Ottoman history and uses it to re-establish old identity ties, while the historical past presents a barrier to Western actors (Donelli, 2016).

The growth in Program Coordination Offices, another sign that TIKA took more robust and more active action after 2003, is indicated in the lines above. It expanded the number of Program Coordination Offices from twelve in 2002 to twenty-five in 2011 and thirty-three in 2012. As of 2012, TIKA operated with 33 Program Coordination Offices in 30 cooperation partner nations. By 2023, the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency Presidency will have 62 Program Coordination Offices spread across 60 nations, operating in 150 countries. The Republic of Türkiye has an active and principled foreign policy, and as a result, the number of nations we collaborate with grows daily. The initiatives and endeavors made on the continent of Africa, which had not previously been a part of Turkish foreign policy, can be seen as the revival of the new perspective that now governs Turkish foreign policy. In addition, President Thomas Boni Yayi of Benin stated that "Benin and Africa wish to join their wealth and power with Türkiye and lend strength to Türkiye's power" during his visit to Türkiye on March 13, 2013. President Yayi also stated, "We must have the same vision and adopt the same ideals in the political sense, on the route to the collaboration of these riches" (Akıllı, 2016). With the support of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Türkiye, the General Directorate of the Turkish Red Crescent, TIKA, Türkiye continues its humanitarian and development aid activities in almost every African continent. There are 22 program coordination offices run by the TIKA in Africa (MFAc).

Nearly 20 heads of state, high-level delegates, and ministerial representatives from Africa attended the third Türkiye-Africa Partnership Summit, held in Istanbul on December 17 and 18, 2021, under the theme "Strengthened Partnership for Development and Prosperity Together." Türkiye-Africa relations' five-year plan and road map were agreed upon at the conference. As a catalyst of the meeting and cooperation between Türkiye and African countries, TIKA carries out numerous free production, educational, and health projects in Africa. TIKA helped redefine African and partner nation identities by completing countless social and cultural projects. Türkiye is among the top three nations in the World for humanitarian help compared to its gross domestic income, and it should be noted that Africa contributes the most to this process (Doğan, 2021).

Following its diagnosis on January 13, 2020, in a group of individuals with respiratory symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath) in Wuhan, China, in December 2019, the Covid-19 (corona) virus spread quickly throughout the world, and a pandemic has developed. The world has been put to the test during this epidemic period. The Republic of Turkey fights the coronavirus not only within its borders but also aids other nations in their fight by providing financial support and medical resources to contain the epidemic's global spread and stop the loss of life. Rumi's those words summarize Türkiye's humanitarian assistance during the Covid-19 pandemic: "There are many hopes behind despair. There are many suns behind the darkness". Significantly during the pandemic, Türkiye extended her dost eli toward the African continent to provide humanitarian assistance to those in need.

On March 15, 2022, President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan delivered a speech at the "International Kindness Awards" ceremony held at the Beştepe People's Congress and Culture Center. During his speech, President Erdoğan said, "We are gradually delivering the 15 million doses of vaccine that we promised at the 3rd Türkiye-Africa Partnership Summit to our African brothers" (Directorate of Communications, 2022). Apart from vaccines, Türkiye provided humanitarian assistance to Africa for

combating Covid-19. Among the regions where Türkiye receives aid requests, the African continent comes first with 49 countries. Below are some examples of that humanitarian assistance:

Libya: Health supplies included 150,000 masks, 60 face shields (panoramic), 300 eye protection masks, 600 overalls, and 400 liters of disinfectant were provided to Libya as part of the Covid-19 conflict. The Ministry of Health of the Libyan National Consensus Government received the second aid shipment, including 200,000 masks, 70 face shields, 300 eye shields, 120 N95 masks, 600 overalls, and 400 liters of disinfection, on May 14, 2020. (UMH). Three respirators were given on August 6, 2020. (Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, 2020).

Algeria: Following the terms of the Grant Agreement (30.06.2020), Algeria received 12 tons of food, 30,000 surgical masks, and roughly 5 tons of cleaning and hygiene supplies on various dates to support 1,000 households. A teleconference and interactive training unit were set up to collaborate with 48 provinces in the struggle against Covid-19. The following items were sent by evacuation plane to Algeria on July 22, 2020: 25 ventilators (with foot set and accessory set), 2 PCR machines, 30,000 PCR test kits, 50,000 surgical masks, 50,000 N95 masks, 25,000 overalls, and 30,000 viral nucleic acid isolation kits (Anadolu Ajansı, 2020).

Chad: 25 respirators, PCR test kits, 86,350 overalls, 100,000 surgical masks, 30,000 N95 masks, 5,000 safety glasses, 87,600 gloves, 50,000 shoe coverings, three ambulances, and ten inflatable pitches will be provided as part of the grant agreement between Turkey and Chad on May 26 and June 18, 2020. Military cargo jets were used to deliver the emergency unit. On June 25, 2020, 2,000 hand soaps and 40 pedal hand washing devices were handed to 15 schools in the capital of Chad to aid in the country's fight against the pandemic. In addition, the health centers in 10 districts of Encemine received 100 mechanical pedal hand washing equipment and liquid soap support (TRT Haber, 2020).

Namibia: 10 respirators, 30,000 N95 masks, 60,000 3-ply masks, and 20,000 protective overalls were supplied to Namibia on June 25, 2020, in compliance with the Grant Agreement. Turkey gave 33 disabled families who were struggling to survive food assistance. Five hundred food packages containing rice, oil, tea, sugar, salt, flour, and soup were given out to about 3,000 people in four regions, including the capital city Windhoek, Oshakati, Keetmanshoop, and Osire Refugee Camp. A donation of 200 disinfection pumps and 40 remote thermometers was made on May 29, 2020, to the Namibian Ministry of Health and Social Services. The Namibia University of Science and Technology received a digital EKG machine, defibrillator monitor, portable ultrasound, infusion pump, multi-monitor, portable ventilator, video laryngoscope, aspiration device, and emergency cart (Directorate of Communications, 2021).

Somalia: On April 17, 2020, 100,000 surgical masks, 400 boxes of Kovid-19 rapid test kit, 50 boxes of favipirapir tablets, 250 boxes of synpitan amps, 18,000 FFP2 masks, 250 protective overalls, 500 safety glasses, 50,000 3-ply surgical masks, 50,000 powder-free vinyl gloves, 1000 N149 masks, 1000 protective overalls, 576 goggles, 60 hepatitis-b injections, 800 muscoblok flk, Medical supplies produced as a result were transferred to Somalia. On May 2, 20,000 diagnostic kits, 40,000 surgical masks, 10,000 N95 masks, 20,000 protective overalls, ten respirators, and their accessories arrived in Mogadishu with the directive of Türkiye's President, Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan (Directorate of Communications, 2021).

Sudan: On August 22, 2020, 50 ventilators, 100,000 surgical masks, 50,000 N95 masks, and 50,000 overalls were shipped to Sudan in compliance with the Grant Agreement. Face shield masks are made in the Turkish-established facility. A total of 34 tons of food aid were given to 2,000 families in the Şecarab camp, which houses Eritrean refugees in Kassala Province, on Ramadan in 2020. Healthcare workers in the East Darfur region received medical equipment like protective and surgical masks,

thermometers, gloves, disinfectants, and oxygen cylinders in July 2020 (Directorate of Communications, 2021).

Türkiye's Covid-19-related initiatives directly helped a total of 2,200,000 persons. The Somali Recep Tayyip Erdoğan Training and Research Hospital and Nyala Sudan-Turkey Training and Research Hospital, both previously built by TİKA, have become key nodes in the fight against the virus in the countries they are in during the time of the pandemic (Directorate of Communications, 2021).

Conclusion

Due to the ever-changing nature of the international system, states had to use new instruments to conduct international relations due to the changes in politics. Due to this need, the idea of foreign aid entered the field of international relations and carried out a crucial function outside of diplomacy. The idea of foreign aid, particularly after World War II, was employed by states as a supplementary foreign policy tool to advance specific political objectives. A global institutionalization has started to be required to carry out foreign aid activities around the World under a particular program due to the concept of foreign aid receiving more and more attention. The creation of the OECD and the Development Assistance Committee within the organization stand out in this context as significant steps toward institutionalization. The definition of foreign aid can be applied more successfully thanks to the line drawn by the Development Assistance Committee defining what constitutes official development aid. A minimum of 25% of the help must be provided to the recipient country for it to be deemed official development aid in this context, and aid must be given to improve the welfare of the country receiving it. On the other hand, the requests made by the UN in 2000 under the name of the Millennium Development Goals are another crucial step in promoting the struggle against extreme poverty and other connected issues worldwide. In addition, the Monterrey Consensus makes it possible for wealthy nations to contribute legal development aid to undeveloped countries at a rate of 0.7 percent of their total national income, which is a crucial step in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (Akıllı, 2016).

The Development Assistance Committee Aid Effectiveness Working Group has supported four meetings so far, and the principles outlined in the Paris Aid Effectiveness Declaration, which was adopted as a result of the meeting held in Paris in 2005, are remarkable. These meetings have been held to ensure foreign aid activities' success. As a result, it is emphasized that the recipient nation of help should develop its anti-poverty plan per the ownership principle. The parallelism principle underscores the need for donor nations to model their foreign aid after the recipient nation's development plan and to promote the use of local mechanisms in this process (OECD). Even if research is done to improve assistance effectiveness, the idea of foreign aid is criticized because development cannot be achieved at the desired level, particularly in the African continent, despite significant help flows provided by wealthier nations. Both donor nations and recipient states are subject to criticism from various angles. However, the most frequent objection is to the notion that foreign aid places the needs of the donor nation above those of the recipient nation.

With the aid package handed to a group of African countries in 1985, the Republic of Türkiye, which had long been receiving foreign assistance from the USA throughout the Cold War era, switched sides. Turkish foreign aid, which began with food shipments, has grown through time to include a variety of project and program supports, technical collaboration, scholarships, refugee support, and emergency help. In the local press and foreign sources, Türkiye is referred to as "the most generous country" due to the significant increases in foreign aid that the Republic of Türkiye has supplied in recent years. It is crucial to stress that Turkish assistance should not be restricted to a particular area and should instead be distributed to communities with various ethnic, religious, and cultural identities throughout a broad geographic range, from the Balkans to Africa. The effective foreign aid strategy and the assistance programs implemented throughout a wide geographic area are "indicative of Türkiye's multi-

regionalism and the value it places on ‘integrative identities’ based on historical and cultural linkages.” Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, Türkiye keeps providing humanitarian assistance to the African continent. In doing so, Türkiye’s Covid-19-related initiatives directly helped 2,200,000 persons. The Somali Recep Tayyip Erdoan Training and Research Hospital and Nyala Sudan-Turkey Training and Research Hospital, both previously built by TİKA, have become key nodes in the fight against the virus in the countries they are in during the time of the pandemic (Directorate of Communications, 2021). These statistics again prove that Türkiye’s leadership in foreign aid and humanitarian assistance in Africa is more robust than ever.

Statement of Research and Publication Ethics

The article was written according to research and publication ethics principles.

Authors’ Contribution Rates

This article has written by only one author.

Statement of Interest

The author has no conflict of interest with any person or organization.

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