"ATATÜRK'S VISION LIVES THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS"

From UNESCO, MDGs—and—the Global Goals...

For the 93rd Anniversary Celebration of Republic of Turkey “93. Cumhuriyet Bayramı”

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“Mankind is a single body and each nation a part of that body. We must never say ‘What does it matter to me if some part of the world is ailing?’ If there is such an illness, we must concern ourselves with it as though we were having that illness.” – Atatürk

“For everything in this world—for civilization, for life, for success—the truest guide is knowledge and science.” – Atatürk
Thank you, to Robert McKay for the introduction. And, it is my great honor to speak in front of you for the 93rd Anniversary of the Turkish Republic in this gorgeous building, Hartford Capitol. And, I would like to thank SNETACA and Göknur McAvoy very much for organizing the event and inviting me to speak here.

The title of this keynote, “ATATÜRK’S VISION LIVES THROUGH THE UNITED NATIONS – From UNESCO, MDGs–and–the Global Goals...” might be found very challenging. Indeed, I would never have come up with it, had my organization, The Light Millennium, not been associated with the United Nations and had I NOT had the opportunity to attend the Annual UN General Assembly Gatherings since 2006 (the initial association year is 2005).

My initial inspiration is based on this ground. In other words, listening to 50-100 heads of member states’ annual human and social development reports, and also attending numerous High Level Forums, and major UN Conferences and UNNGO Briefings at the United Nations initially led me to organize a two day-long international conference, titled “Pioneer of the Millennium Development Goals: Atatürk” at Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken in 2013.

This is the Final Report of the Conference, the title of which I’ve taken from Stephen Kinzer’s Keynote Speech, where he introduced this concept towards his conclusion. I added the subtitle, “From UNESCO, MDGs-and-The Global Goals…”, for this particular speech.

If looked closely, everyone can quickly realize that Turkey’s development program is the foundations of NOT ONLY the Millennium Development Goals (2000), but also several UN General Assembly Resolutions, Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO (1945). In this line, UNESCO is also considered the intellectual mind/pillar of the United Nations.

Prior to illustrating and linking some of these facts with the human and national development agenda of Turkey and the United Nations, in other words, Ataturk’s Visions and the United Nations, I would like to read you UNESCO’s Resolution towards celebrating Atatürk’s 100th Birthday Celebration (1881-1938) at the United Nations and UNESCO, which is available online under, “UNESCO - Records of the General Conference Twentieth Session Paris, 24 October to 28 November 1978 - Volume I Resolutions 3/1.5 & 2.3/4 | PAGE 68“:
“The General Conference,

Convinced that eminent personalities who worked for international understanding, cooperation, and peace, should serve as an example for future generations,

Recalling that the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, will be celebrated in 1981,

Bearing in mind that he was an exceptional reformer in all the fields coming within UNESCO’s competence.

Recognizing in particular that he was the leader of one of the earliest struggles against colonialism and imperialism,

Recalling that he set an outstanding example in promoting the spirit of mutual understanding between peoples and lasting peace between the nations of the world, having advocated all his life the advent of ‘an age of harmony and co-operation in which no distinction would be made between men on account of colour, religion or race’,

Decides […] an international symposium designed to bring out various aspects of the personality and work of Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey, whose action was always directed towards the promotion of peace, international understanding and respect for human rights.”

This 1978-dated UNESCO Resolution strongly illustrates one of the fundamental grounds to declare that Atatürk’s Vision lives through the UNITED NATIONS. To that extent, The UNESCO Courier published an article by Afet Inan (printed in the magazine as “Afet Afetinan”) titled “Atatürk and the Emancipation of Women” in December 1963, which was 46 years before the formation of the UN-Women; 36 years before the 2000 Millennium Development Goals to be attained by the 2015; and 52 years before the Global Goals to be attained by 2030, which I will introduce you briefly later on. The cover theme of the 1963 dated “UNESCO Courier” issue is “Human Rights for All”, which also clearly demonstrates the important role of the UNESCO within the UN Body on human development–and–rights.

In her article in this issue, Afet Inan summarizes WOMEN’s Role and given importance to Women by Atatürk as part of the backbone of the development agenda in the following lines:
“In the democratic State which was created in 1923, Turkish Woman had at last attained the rights enjoyed by women in other modern states.

All faculties of the Istanbul University started opening their doors to girl students from 1921 and many teacher–training schools, lycées, and other institutes were opened for the benefit of girls. In addition, many of the existing schools introduced co-education. In 1928, the adoption of the Latin alphabet made learning much easier; and as a result, there was an immediate increase in the number of persons able to read and write.

In 1926, the Turkish Government introduced a new set of civil laws along the line of the Swiss Civil Code. This gave Turkish women all the rights customary in modern communities.”

Just reading the above lines alone for this speech for the 93rd Anniversary of the Republic of Turkey, it is clear that Atatürk was far ahead of his time, and even today, his “human advancement and national development—self reliance and sustainability” vision could be considered ahead of the Global Goals. More importantly, Atatürk did not only envision them but made all major necessary changes in the Constitution and public policy with a powerful political will. He implemented many of these fundamental human and national development factors and indicators during his life time within a very short time, including changing the alphabet in order to close the gap between the government and people towards uniting every citizen of Turkey for a common goal.

Afet Inan, in her article, quoted Professor Sadi Irmak, who wrote the following lines in 1962: "There are four factors that undermine our efforts to bring about equality for women: Ignorance, bad traditions, wrong interpretation of religious rules, male selfishness..." Professor Irmak analyses all these elements and emphasizes the effect of illiteracy, declaring: "we must educate women so that they, in turn, can educate our nation." It is essential that women of Turkey should realize the meaning of their rights and duties before exercising them.”

And, Inan concludes it with the following statement:

“The man responsible for the reforms in Turkey was Kemal Atatürk, who believed in preparing both the people around him and also public opinion before introducing anything new. Atatürk wanted his people to progress and to prosper according to the most 25 enlightened ideas and the principles of modern civilization.”

As Inan profiles powerfully, the formation of Republic and Reforms of Atatürk brought drastic revolutions. Some of these were: the education system at large, girls-women equality and civic rights, including banning polygamy, determining the peoples’ common language as Turkish written in the Latin Alphabet, instead of the “artificial language” of the Ottoman language. The Ottoman language was a combination of Turkish, Arabic and Persian, and had caused a complete disconnection from the mass population who only spoke and understood Turkish.

In a nutshell, I think that no one can deny that in Turkey, the Middle East and the rest of the developing and Islamic World that, Atatürk was, is, and will be the pioneer for equal educational and civic rights for girls and women.
In this context, in 2000, what the United Nations and its 189 member states at the time (later on this reached to 193 member states) and more than 22 international organizations signed off and committed to attained the Eight Millennium Development Goals by 2015, in particular, -- MDG#3 is “Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women” and MDG#5 is “Improve Maternal Health”, MDG#4 is “Reduce Child Mortality”--is also related with women’s health, life and rights issues along with MDG#1 “Eradicate Hunger” and MDG#2 “Universal Education” received the highest attention and collaboration. These initial goals from the MDGs also have carried onto the Global Goals with several sub-targets, for instance, under the SDG# 5 “Gender Equality” and SDG# 3 “Wellbeing”.

In this comparison, we even may claim that the entire World and the United Nations were too slow to catch up with the human centered development agenda of Turkey, and Ataturk’s vision of “Peace at home, peace in the world,” (1931), which was 14 years before the formation of the United Nations and 69 years ahead of the MDG# 8 Global Partnerships for Development. To that extend, there is a strong connection between this vision of Atatürk and the MDG#8 Global Partnership for Development, which now has been redefined and reflected--in my opinion---under the following three goals: SDG#10 Reduced Inequalities, SDG#16 Peace and Justice, and SDG#17 Partnerships for the Goals.

Despite the formation of the United Nations in 1945 along with the UNESCO, despite the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), despite of the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, and now with a new era with the Global Goals for the 2030 Agenda, still in the year 2016, there are more than 110 member states of the United Nations, which are defined by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Human Development Index 2015, as the “developing” countries with “the lowest human development rate” in most areas, in particular, women and children related issues.

This alone, should put Turkey’s 1920-1938 Human and National Development Agenda and Sustainability vision as a role model to these countries; there is no need to look anywhere else for how the human centered development, economic growth, sustainability and right to development can be achieved drastically, even just in 15 years, which was the case during the Atatürk Era!

To lay out the ground for the 2000 Millennium Development Goals, Secretary General of the United Nations, Ban Ki Moon, urges achieving Millennium Development Goals by 2015 in the
"Eradicating extreme poverty continues to be one of the main challenges of our time, and is a major concern of the international community. Ending this scourge will require the combined efforts of all, governments, civil society organizations and the private sector, in the context of a stronger and more effective global partnership for development. The Millennium Development Goals set time-bound targets, by which progress in reducing income poverty, hunger, disease, lack of adequate shelter and exclusion ‘while promoting gender equality, health, education and environmental sustainability’ can be measured. They also embody basic human rights’ the rights of each person on the planet to health, education, shelter and security. The Goals are ambitious but feasible and, together with the comprehensive United Nations development agenda, set the course for the world’s efforts to alleviate extreme poverty by 2015."

The United Nations Secretary General's above statement on the Millennium Development Goals helps us to understand better the initial first stage of the MDGs. The Global Goals, in other words, SDGS, developed based on the first 15 years of experience, mapping out the entire world’s human development status and achieved goals/made progress and lock of progress or achievements, which set out the ground for the 2030 Global Goals. In correlation with MDGs and the SDGs for 2030, the pioneering role of Turkey’s early HUMAN and SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA should be considered the very first human development agenda on the global level in the history of humankind, which still may be considered the best human and national development model for the developing countries.

Now (by 2015), the world has entered into a new era with the Global Goals to be achieved by 2030, which is also the second phase of the MDGs. In this context, the Republic of Turkey’s human-development agenda had certainly on the national level a perspective and vision for international cooperation towards global peace. With this particular era of Turkey in mind, it well might set out a “human and national development and sustainability” role model for the rest of the world in the eyes of and through the United Nations.

On the other hand, I still claim that most of the redefined goals for the SDGs or the Global Goals from MDGS, and related (total 169) sub-targets, including SDG#1 No Poverty; SDG#2 No Hunger; SDG#3 Good Health; SDG#4 Quality Education for ALL, SDG#5 Gender
Equality; SDG#8 Good Jobs and Economic Growth; SDG#10 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure; SDG#10 Reduced Inequalities; SDG#15 Life on Land; SDG#16 Peace and Justice and SDG#17 Partnerships for the Goals were very much in line with what Atatürk set out, by which he made a remarkable progress and big accomplishments within such a short time, mainly, during the first 15 years of the Republic of Turkey, which was also called, the “Golden Era of Atatürk”.

In connection with the Global Goals, UN Secretary General stated the following:
“Saving our planet, lifting people out of poverty, advancing economic growth... these are one and the same fight. We must connect the dots between climate change, water scarcity, energy shortages, global health, food security and women's empowerment. Solutions to one problem must be solutions for all.”

Perhaps, in reference to the Climate Change or SDG#13 Climate Action, we cannot draw a similar line with Atatürk’s human centered development agenda. This may be true also for the SDG#7 Renewable Energy; SDG#12 Responsible Consumption; SDG#14 Life Below Water and also to a certain degree to, SDG#11 Sustainable Cities and Communities that the most part of the country was already ruined, torn down with the WWI, invasions by several western powers and independence wars. In this picture, some of these goals and issues are newly introduced with the SDGs, which are also more relevant to our times than the first half of the 20th Century.

In the HUMAN DEVELOPMENT, the FIRST direct reference is seen during the 1920s of Turkey, when Ataturk removed a major gap between the masses of Turkish people and the new-formed Republic of Turkey in its fifth year, in 1928, by changing the “Artificial Ottoman” language, which mass population did not speak nor understood to the people’s language, Turkish. This was the first major step towards empowering people, giving a voice them along with to universal education, equal rights, civil rights, removing the disconnection between the government policies, court, press and literacy and many others. In The UNESCO Courier, Nov. 1981, a special issue on Ataturk’s Centennial, states the following:
“The linguistic drawback was always an obstacle to enrichment of thought. Since Arabic remained the language of religion and Ottoman the language of the notables, the Turkish-speaking masses were inevitably excluded from cultural exchanges which only took place within certain social groups and certain specific fields.”
Putting all these in perspective of where we are at now in the human development history, and considering the huge challenges of the times of the past, changing the “Artificial Ottoman” language to the majority of the peoples’ language, Turkish, was perhaps the most important one. It enabled other major reforms of Atatürk to be implemented and rapidly embraced by most of the population, and unified the Turkish people at large towards universal education, democratization, civic rights, equal rights for girls with boys in education, removing segregation in the public schools for girls and boys, and putting human development at the center and backbone of the sustainable development.

A combination of all these rapidly helped the young country, in particular, during the Atatürk Era, not only to stand on its foot and gain self-reliance, but also develop and implement international political and economic relations. Separation of religion and power was also an overarching reform. As a result of these, following the 10-15 years of the Proclamation of the Republic of Turkey in 1923, Turkey had already become a shining star in the region and in particular, the Islamic World; it was a role model to the least-developed and developing countries for several decades as the first and still the only secular country in the Islamic World.

Based on my observations at the United Nations, and listening to over hundreds of member states in each year, in particular, each of their human development report, it is very difficult to understand that the “human development” progress in most countries is still too slow...

Overall, when we look back to the 2000 United Nations’ Eight Millennium Development Goals for 2015, I consider that they were far behind what Atatürk had set out for Turkey starting in the 1920s, even prior to the Lausanne Peace Treaty (July 24 1923), which was followed by the Proclamation of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923.

Today, we are celebrating the 93rd Anniversary of it here in the Hartford Capitol of Connecticut, far from the homeland. At the same time, we’ve reached a better understanding and greater appreciation on the global scale based on what Atatürk had provided to all the citizens of Turkey during his life-time on a “golden tray”.

Unfortunately, Turkey has been pushed more and more towards conflicts and destabilization instead of focusing on human and national development, starting with the Adnan Menderes Era (1950-1960), and on, in particular, during the last decade.

On the other hand, Turkey, still certainly can and will eliminate all forms of worsened situation, existing and sustained conflicts over several decades and polarization of peoples of Turkey towards a more sustainable human, diverse and equal economic and social development stage. This will be only possible by owning the country’s initial founding principles and human development agenda in all levels again. The required related politic will and determination put the country back on the right track again, which was already granted, implemented and provided to all the citizens of Turkey. The Republic of Turkey and the Turkish people at large cannot afford to move away from its initial founding principles and it is obliged to own and advance it to a much higher and wider level of human development and sustainability agenda.

We can only then talk about the national, regional and global security and peace and sustainability, which is not the case today...
In conclusion, it is our responsibility to raise what we’ve been granted by Atatürk since the formation of Republic of Turkey to all citizens of the country to the global level and make the connection between his human development agenda of the 1920s and 1930s and the United Nations’ Global Goals visible.

With that, I would like to propose you all the following:

1) In collaborative efforts, to celebrate the 95th Anniversary of the Republic of Turkey at the United Nations;
2) To jointly organize an international conference in collaboration with a university on the “GLOBAL GOALS AND ATATÜRK” or “SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND ATATÜRK”.

Thank you very much for your attention and consideration...

And, once again, thank you to the organizers.

Special Thanks to: Goknur McAVOY

PHOTO ALBUM:
Turkish Republic and Flag Day Ceremonies in Wolcott and Hartford Capitol in Connecticut - October 28, 2016

DISCLOSURE: During the actual speech on October 28, 2016, several key REFORMS OF ATATÜRK and “Turkish National Holidays” were also referred, and briefly illustrated in correlation with many UNITED NATIONS RESOLUTIONS such as Universal Education, Universal Children Day, Youth Day, Sport for Development and Peace, International Day of the Girl Child, Gender Equality, Right to Vote-and-Be-Elected, Right to Development, and more...

Organized and Presented by SNETACA.Org
Sources:

1) Changing the World: From Atatürk’s ‘Six Arrow’s to the ‘Eight Millennium Development Goals’ by Stephen Kinzer
2) Pioneer of the Millennium Development Goals: Atatürk (April 19-20, 2013)
   – For the full Presentations and Videos of the Inaugural Session(April 19, 2013):
     http://www.lightmillennium.org/ataturk/2013/conference.html
4) The UNESCO – Courier – December 1963:
   “Atatürk and the Emancipation of Women” by Afet Afetinan (page 20)
5) The UNESCO – Courier – November 1981 – Dedication issue to ATATÜRK’S 100th Birth Anniversary:
   5.1. The birth of a modern nation amid the ruins of the Ottoman Empire by Bülent Tanör
   5.2. The Sultan silenced by the voice of the people by Cetin Altan
   5.3. In the avant-garde of literature, a new generation of Turkish women by Guzin Dino
6) The 2000 United Nations Millennium Development Goals:
   http://www.un.org/centenarygoals/
   https://www.globalgiving.org/sdg/?rf=ggad_15&gclid=CNjQ3Bnkg9ACFcNzhgodTfsEww
   http://report.hdr.undp.org/ (Video)
9) The 2000 United Nations Millennium Declaration (55/2)
   http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.htm
10) http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/quotes/b/bankimoon643813.html