

## Introduction of the Guest of Honor

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Hilmi Develi

Distinguished Undersecretary,

Distinguished Secretary General of BSEC,

The Country Representative of the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, which we are especially honored to be partners with for 16 years, has completed his remarks. I greet with respect all of you ladies and gentlemen and the esteemed President of KOSGEB, who kept a high pace for SME development, on my behalf and the Board of Directors of TOSYÖV.

TOSYÖV is a 17-year old organization. It is a non-governmental organization, based completely on volunteerism. It has been working in cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation for 16 years. We

are honored with the presence of a very distinguished individual who gave enormous support to us during the establishment of KOSGEB and TOSYÖV. His name is signed under the Council of Ministers decision. He was the Minister of State at the time. Mr. Kurtcebe Alptemoçin. I wish to thank him in your presence both for his cooperation in the establishment of TOSYÖV and for his support for our cooperation with the Konrad Adenauer Foundation.

Both of the Esteemed Ambassadors are true friends of SMEs. He has been saying such nice things about SMEs for so long, that he even surprises me. It is a question of passion. His views and approach to the topic are truly phenomenal. As someone who has set his heart on SMEs for so many years, I would like to offer my thanks to him for his interest in the problems of SMEs.

It is truly commendable to manage to continue organizing these meetings at the Black Sea Economic Cooperation for ten years without any interruption. These meetings provide us with an opportunity to bring SMEs from the region and the countries of the region together in order to discuss possibilities of cooperation between our markets and on technology-related issues. In so doing, we have been able to reach the best possible results. I hope that in the next two to three days, we shall have the opportunity to further deepen and diversify our level of cooperation at workshops.

In the past three years, Turkey has made excellent progress related to SMEs. The decrease in the inflation rate to a one-digit figure, the improvement of Turkey's investment environment, the continued presence of an economic structure conducive to foreign capital as well as stable growth have translated into prospects for new investment for SMEs providing them with new job opportunities.

In this context, the SMEs are very important for our country from a social point of view as well as from the point of view of providing concrete solutions to unemployment.

Consequently, from the perspectives of Turkey and the countries of the region, we all know well the importance of the support given to small and medium sized enterprises. As the President of TOSYÖV, I hope that this meeting will provide ample opportunity to discuss different outcomes. I also hope that the workshops will produce concrete projects that will culminate into benefits for the SMEs and the countries of the region of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation.

I would like to express my gratitude to all organizations that gave support to this meeting. Finansbank has been a good friend who truly believes in SMEs. They regularly offer regional SMEs various financing services.

This meeting will really be excellent. I would like to thank everyone who helped organize this event. I greet you all with respect on my behalf and the Board of Directors, hoping that this meeting will bring forth beneficial results. Thank you.