



**PRESS INFORMATION DEPARTMENT
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
ISLAMABAD**

**BANQUET SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER SYED YUSUF RAZA GILANI
ON THE OCCASION OF VISIT OF TURKISH PRIME MINISTER RECEP
TAYYIP ERDOGAN TO PAKISTAN, 12-13, OCTOBER 2010**

Islamabad: October 13, 2010

Following is the text of Prime Minister's Speech:-

“Your Excellency Prime Minister
Recep Tayyip Erdogan,

Members of the Turkish Delegation,

Honorable Ministers and
Members of Parliament,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you and your delegation to Pakistan.

We are deeply touched by your Excellency's visit in the wake of the devastating floods that have affected lives of so many Pakistanis. This special gesture of solidarity and support is greatly appreciated by us all. Your visit, following closely the visit to the flood affected areas by Madame Erdogan last month, adds a new chapter to our bilateral relations.

Excellency,

Turkey and Pakistan share a history of mutual respect, affection and support for each other. Moreover, relations between our two countries are rooted in centuries' old bonds of history, culture and religion. The government of Pakistan accords the highest priority to further strengthening these relations with Turkey in all areas. As on previous occasions, Turkey's response to the current catastrophe in Pakistan has remained unparalleled. It was most heartening to see our Turkish brothers and sisters rallying in support of their Pakistani counterparts.

I am most grateful to you, Mr. Prime Minister, for personally launching an aid campaign, which has collected donations of around US\$ 200 Million for the flood

victims. The trail of destruction, however, is unprecedented, both in terms of scale and ferocity. The humanitarian crisis in Pakistan is larger than the combined effects of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami and the earthquakes that struck Haiti and Northern Pakistan in 2005.

Twenty percent (20%) of Pakistan's landmass has been ravaged by the floodwaters. Every eighth Pakistani has been affected; and one in twenty has been rendered destitute. Standing crops, worth billions of rupees have been destroyed. Over one million tons of wheat stored in warehouses has been swept away. Infrastructure networks, including roads, rail and bridges have been equally devastated.

Excellency,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The actual costs of reconstruction and rehabilitation are estimated to be enormous. A clear picture would, however, only emerge as the flood waters recede fully and affected areas become accessible for damage assessment. The floods have dealt a severe blow to our economy as well, which also needs early recovery. Although the government of Pakistan has mobilized all its national resources to provide relief to the flood affected people, the scale of the calamity is far too huge for Pakistan to handle alone. Pakistanis are a resilient nation. It has weathered many a storm in the past and emerged more resolute each time.

I am confident that with the usual determination and fortitude we shall be able to withstand the aftereffects of these floods.

We are greatly encouraged by the strong expression of support to us by Turkey in its recent commitment to help Pakistan rebuild its lives and infrastructure in the future. In the days ahead, we also look forward to utilizing Turkish expertise in disaster relief management.

Excellency,

The relationship between our two peoples predates the emergence of Pakistan and Turkey as modern States. This relationship has not only stood the test of time but also flourished over the years. We are determined to further build upon our relationship with Turkey on geo-economic advantages, and take it to unprecedented heights.

During your last visit, we had constituted the High Level Cooperation Council to channelize the existing enormous goodwill into an institutional framework. This is the highest institutional mechanism that Pakistan has entered into with any country. We can utilize this opportunity for intensifying our economic relations, and realize our commitment of achieving bilateral trade target of US\$ 2 billion by the year 2012.

Excellency,

Let me also avail myself of this opportunity to congratulate Your Excellency and the people of Turkey on the successful passage of the Constitutional Reform Package through a national referendum on September 12. Indeed the results have shown the confidence of the Turkish people in your dynamic leadership.

I once again express my deep gratitude for Turkey's formidable assistance for Pakistan and believe that its continued support for the flood-ravaged country will enable us to come out of this national catastrophe sooner than later. Long Live Pakistan-Turkey Friendship".