

Foreword



President Süleyman Demirel

The Republic of Turkey is a bridge of peace and stability between the continents of Asia and Europe with her physical and human potentials, rapidly growing economy and her firm adherence to the goal of development. Turkey's efforts in development originate from a philosophy which transcends her boundaries to bring welfare, justice, peace and well-being to the whole region. In short, it is a philosophy determined to create an environment of modern civilization.

The concepts of civilization and water have always been in close affinity since the very beginning of human history. In our times, civilization has come to depend more than ever upon the development and appropriate management of water resources. Hence, all efforts to preserve and further develop this scarce resource must be praised above anything else.

The people of Turkey live in a country which cannot be considered, in terms of available water resources, water rich. In other words, the water resources of the country display a distribution which is temporally, spatially and geographically unbalanced. This maldistribution has even reached dimensions to generate serious problems in some large cities. As one closely witnessing the problems and troubles created by the lack of water and the contribution of water to development first as an engineer and a technocrat, then as Prime Minister, and finally as the President of the Republic, I have considered, throughout my life, the issue of water as the most prominent one for civilization. Thus, as a person who has contributed to the efforts for the development of water resources, I have the feeling of having carried out a genuinely sacred mission.

The available water resources of Turkey make up about 185.6 BCM. Per capita availability of water is quite behind what is considered as average for routine needs by widely accepted standards. Of 28 million ha of arable land available in Turkey, about 8.5 million ha are economically irrigable, and presently only 3 million ha of this are under irrigation. This fact has led us to concentrate our efforts on the further development of water resources for the happiness and well-being of our people. Along with the worldwide development efforts starting after the Second World War, Turkey too became the stage for multipurpose projects based on the philosophy 'peace and welfare are indivisible'. Among them, the largest and the most comprehensive, the one which is accorded the rightful interest and appraisal of the whole world, is the South-eastern Anatolia Project, or GAP in short.

GAP envisaged the utilization of about 56 BCM of water which runs into the desert via the Euphrates and the Tigris in Southeastern Anatolia (these two rivers constitute 20% of the total water potential of Turkey). Thus it is possible to extract light by mastering the streams, to extract fertility by irrigating the soil, to extract food, clothing, employment and so on by utilizing this precious resource. What is essential is to do this not by destroying the world and its resources, but by ensuring sustainability through conservation and human development.

It is exactly this philosophy which underlies the activities of GAP, which has human wealth and well-being as its priority aim. Having all its details scrupulously planned and implemented, GAP is one of the greatest works of the Turkish Republic. I have no doubt that the socioeconomic development projects of GAP based on the development of water resources will take their distinct place in the history of civilization.

With her development efforts, the Republic of Turkey is now one of the major emerging economies of the world. It is our pride to adhere to the commitment of creating a better world with the friendship and cooperative contributions of a developed and strong Turkey.

Süleyman Demirel
President
Republic of Turkey