TABC Association
P.O. Box 4983
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1st CALIFORNIA TURKISH AMERICAN BUSINESS CONFERENCE
[March 29-31, 2001 - Hilton Santa Clara, CA]
by
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April 4, 2001, Santa Clara, CA – The 1st California Turkish American Business Conference, organized by the Turkish American Association of California (TAAC), was held on March 29-31, 2001, at the Hilton Santa Clara, located in the heart of Silicon Valley. The main focus of this three-day conference was to explore the high-tech business resources and opportunities in both Silicon Valley and Turkey by bringing together companies and entrepreneurs from both sides of the Atlantic.

The conference began with a Silicon Valley company tour on March 29th visiting Kaisere Electronics and Ubicom in the morning, followed by an afternoon visit to 3Com. In the evening, a conference welcome reception, attended by 100 guests, was hosted by Ambassador Aykut Berk, Consul General of the Republic of Turkey in Los Angeles, at the Hilton Santa Clara.

Mr. Kürşad Tuzmen, Undersecretary of Foreign Trade (Ankara); Ambassador Mark R. Parris, former U.S. Ambassador to Turkey; Mr. Tuncer Kayalar, General Director of Agreements (Ankara); Dr. Cengiz Ersun, the Deputy Secretary General of the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ITO); Dr. Űstün Eğruder, former president of Boğaziçi University (Istanbul); Ms. Bonnie Joy Kaslan, Honorary Consul General of Turkey in San Francisco; Miles Denny-Brown, U.S. Department of Commerce, Turkish Desk; and, Joe Hedges, International Program Manager, San Jose Office of Economic Development, were among the distinguished guests at the conference.

The first panel discussed the high-tech business resources and opportunities and geo-strategic advantages of Turkey to access the European and Central Asian markets, and the role of Turkish higher education institutions in the economy. The second panel "Doing Business in Turkey" explored the critical success factors as well as potential pitfalls for investors considering activities in the Turkish market with the participation of representatives from Turkish Embassy in Washington, D.C. and the U.S. Department of Commerce and American businessmen who shared their personal experiences in doing business in Turkey.

The last two panels in the afternoon were focused on doing business in the U.S. The "High-tech Business Opportunities and Resources in Silicon Valley" panel was very dynamic with the participation of high-level Turkish American executives from Silicon Valley. The panelists tried to answer the question of "What high-tech opportunities (industries/businesses) are in demand in Silicon Valley or will be in the future?", and " What resources are key to address these opportunities, how can one access these resources?". The last panel discussed issues regarding the local resources and the legal framework/requirements for opening a business in Silicon Valley, hiring employees from Turkey and the experiences of two Turkish CEOs operating high-tech companies in Silicon Valley.

During the last panel, International Management Professor Nakiye Boyacıgiller from San Jose State University gave a presentation about ""Why Culture Matters: Important Differences between the U.S. and Turkish Business Contexts" and Çigdem Acar, an immigration lawyer from NY, discussed issues around immigration to the United States.

The conference received great support from Turkish-American executives and business people, many of whom participated in the panels to share their experiences and to present the high-tech business resources and opportunities available in Silicon Valley. Distinguished participants were: Bülent Çelebi, President and CEO, Ubicom; İlhan Refioğlu, President and CEO, International Microcircuits, Inc.; Ziya Boyacıgiller, high-tech business consultant & former V.P., Maxim Integrated Products; Magdalena Yeşil, general partner, US Venture Partners; Nuray George Ugraş, general partner, Adams Capital Management; Erhan Aksoy, CEO, CodeServ; Ali Kutay, founder, WebLogic and AltoWeb; Bülent Baloğlu, founder and principal, Object Focus; and, Vacit Arat, Vice President, TelesciCOM.