

Statement
of the D-8 Secretary-General
at
The Executive Board of Asian Mayors Forum
29 August 2015, Tehran, Qazvin - Iran

Your Excellency Dr. Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Mayor of Tehran

Your Excellency Eng. Masoud Nosrati, Mayor of Qazvin

Your Excellency Mr. Mohammad Khodadadi, Secretary-General of Asian Mayors Forum

Distinguished Delegates

Ladies and Gentlemen

Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

I profoundly thank you for your invitation to attend the meeting of *Executive Board of Asian Mayors Forum* (AMF) in Tehran and Qazvin, Iran. This excellent opportunity allows for mutual interaction and consolidation of institutional cooperation between D-8 Organization and Asian Mayors Forum.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The AMF may play a critical role in the infrastructure development of the mega cities as well as the process of urbanization in a sustainable manner. This organization boasts of bringing key metropolitans and mega cities in Asia into a single platform. This is where the D-8 Organization would like to put its focus as an international partner of development.

Now, **Excellencies and ladies and gentlemen**, please allow me to give a brief introduction on the scope of activities of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation. The D-8 is an intergovernmental organization consisting of eight developing countries namely, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey, dispersed in three different continents in Asia, Europe and Africa. The leaders of these eight developing countries gathered in June 1997 in Istanbul and through the historic ‘Istanbul Declaration’, established the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation.

D-8 is based on friendship, solidarity and pursuit of sustainable economic growth. D-8 countries are endowed with abundant human and natural resources and the Organization aspires to become a dynamic economic group promoting sustainable development in member states as well as a major actor in global economic governance and system. We are putting efforts to cope up with the complexity of today’s global economic environment which has already integrated such concepts as inclusiveness, environmental sustainability, etc. to pursue constructive works.

Cooperation through the principal means of trade is our primary focus. In 1997, the D-8 intra-trade was only US\$ 15 (3.4%) billion. In 2012, D-8 intra-trade increased to US\$ 148.2 billion or 8.2% of total D-8 trade (US\$ 1.82 trillion). The figures attest that we are marching toward the right direction in terms of greater economic cooperation. We could, however, have reached a better economic height should our private sector be more engaging and inward-looking to promote the D-8 intra-trade.

Excellencies and Distinguished participants,

Given this background, I would like to happily share with you our outreach in external relations. The D-8 Organization has already established cooperative linkage with

a number of international, regional and inter-governmental organizations including, inter alia, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), International Youth Foundation, African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), World Maritime University (WMU), Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO). Recently, our organization received observer status in the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). We are in close contact with other international organizations such as, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and United Cities and Local Government-Middle East and West Africa (UCLGA-MEWA) to finalize the draft MoU. We are working closely with our international partners for realization of objectives and taking up projects.

We have focused more on realizable terms in the cooperative framework already in place with different organizations and we continue to explore opportunities in this regard. I am confident that these efforts will add to the progress of the Organization as well as to its visibility both within the D-8 community and in international arena.

Excellencies

Ladies and gentlemen

The D-8 Organization currently boasts of 06 (six) megacities within the Member States, apart from other key cities and commercial centres, whereas in 1997 it had only 01 (one) megacity. Imagine growth of a region by more than 600% in the process of either urbanisation or urban expansion. Some of these megacities and metropolitans have proven their efficiency in managing resources meticulously to ensure maximum ease and comfort of the city denizens. Others are trying to manage; their efforts will, however, be more efficacious and result-driven should they receive the knowledge and expertise that have been critical in successful cities in managing their affairs. Mobility of people, in

particular, has become a critical component of growth and productivity in these newly developed centres.

The importance of urban transportation in the developing countries has been more highlighted in the recent years. It is directly related to economic growth, development and sustainability. In most developing countries, urban sector accounts for at least 50 percent of the gross national product (GNP). Cities in developing countries often devote 15 to 25 percent of their annual expenditures to their transportation systems. Infrastructure of the transportation in the developing countries affects the populace and its productivity as well as climate. Considering the importance laid to metropolitan and urban areas on overall economic strength of a country, the D-8 will organize its First Mayors' meeting in Iran in a few months. This is where I am eagerly looking forward to an effective linkage between the two platforms so that mutual benefits may be realized with limited resources.

I thank you for your attention and wish all the success.