

**Speech of the D-8 Secretary-General in
ECO Safranbulu Ministerial Conference on Climate Change**

27 March 2015, Safranbulu

Your Excellency Professor Mustafa Ozturk, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Environment and Urbanization, Turkey

Your Excellency Ambassador Shamil Aleskerov, ECO Secretary-General

Your Excellency Mr. Orhan Alimoglu, Governor of Karabuk

Excellencies, Distinguished Panelists, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

The timing and venue for the ECO Safranbulu Ministerial Conference on Climate Change cannot be more apposite. I congratulate the government of Republic of Turkey along with Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) for successfully holding this timely conference at a very critical juncture when the world witnesses growing climatic vulnerabilities and also continues working on wrapping up a robust, legally-binding outcome this December in Paris. I am certain that the outcome of this conference will greatly contribute to the conclusion of a win-win agreement for all.

But before I begin, please allow me to express my gratitude for the invitation to attend this august gathering. I would also like to express my deep appreciation for the warm and friendly welcome offered to me in this heritage city of Safranbulu.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The world we live in today is fundamentally different even from the immediate past century. Everything is so inter-connected with one another that almost everything has an impact at a global scale. The impact, however, is grossly asymmetric and marked with disproportionate bearing on human life in different parts of the world. Climate change is **the** important global issue with challenges facing the humanity at variance.

We all know that High level Global Panel of the UN Secretary-General identified ‘climate change’ as one of the five challenges that the world needed to address in making “transformative shifts” over the next decades. By transformative shifts we understand people’s adaptation with the changing environment and their ability not only to cope up but also to live with sustenance in the Ecosystem. Mere development cannot ensure people’s survival in a more difficult world. Development has to be sustainable, widespread, even and enabling in order to ensure equity across countries, communities and peoples. This is where we at the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation strive to change the economic fate of our peoples, to change the face of poverty into freedom of economic choice. The D-8 Organization works to give governments more economic choice and offer their people better living through building capacity and reduction of dispossession. At this stage, please allow me to share the works of the Organization with you in brief.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In 1997, leaders of Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey formed the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation through the historic ‘Istanbul Declaration’. The spirit of establishment of this inter-governmental entity entails economic cooperation through intensification of trade and commercial relations and enhanced participation in decision-making at international level. The common and shared belief as well as diversity among the Member States makes it a unique organization with opportunities as well as challenges.

The D-8 is a mix of Members with different economic size and strength. Some of its Members place their seat among the top economies of the world. During the establishment of this economic group back in 1997, the leaders of the Member States had strong political will as well as commitment to cater to the need of the countries in a small but more effective group that might necessarily be able to avoid complexities of a large organization and make decisions that are prompt, effective and result-oriented. Since its establishment in 1997, the D-8 successfully formulated the Charter, Global Vision, Roadmap and several other documents in order to ensure growth through effective partnership and elevate Member States’ positions in the world economy, diversify and create new opportunities in trade relations and provide better standard of living. The D-8 is also committed to work towards

broadening support for the Organization at the national level within the Member States and strengthening its visibility and image at regional and international levels, including through active engagement in and promotion of South-South and South-North cooperation. The Charter of the Organization stipulates establishment of ‘mutually beneficial collaborative relationships with other states, regional or international organizations, institutions and non-governmental organizations with a view to establishing partnerships and/or initiating joint projects’.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace and prosperity through economic cooperation being the core business of the Organization, its Members have set trade targets and agreed on trade facilitation measures having major impact on the level of economic activities within the D-8. Ease in movement of people and goods are being worked out and we are striving to make the Organization a self-reliant, mutually inter-dependant entity that not only sustains the demand within itself but also feeds beyond its periphery.

Cooperation through the principal means of trade is our primary focus. At the trade cooperation front, the D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement was signed in May 2006 and it entered into force in August 2011. After the entry into force of the “Preferential Trade Agreement among D-8 Member States” (PTA) on 25 August 2011, a “Supervisory Committee” was established which is working on the draft document on Dispute Settlement Mechanism. In order to help boost D-8 trade, the Organization also succeeded in concluding the D-8 Visa and D-8 Customs Agreements aimed at facilitating people-to-people movement and ease in commercial movement of goods. These measures made significant positive impact on the increase of D-8 intra-trade since 1997 till now. In 1997, 1998 and 1999, the D-8 intra-trade was 15 (3.4%), 14.3 (3.8%) and 14.5 (3.7%) billion, respectively. In 2012, D-8 intra-trade was US\$ 148.2 billion or 8.2% of total D-8 trade (US\$ 1.82 trillion). In 2013, D-8 intra-trade reached US\$ 133 billion, or 7.4% of total D-8 trade (US\$ 1.8 trillion). You can see that the cumulative trade figure of three years from 1997 till 1999 was less than one-third of the single trade volume achieved in 2012. 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. We do not content ourselves with these developments, yet we are making continuous efforts to augment capacity of our peoples.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Climate change will have direct impact on the ability of nations, developing world in particular. Developing countries will lose their GDP as well as competitiveness. Climate induced migration and refugees will make people's lives vulnerable, and all of you know, many island nations fear existential threat. Climate negotiations and subsequent outcomes should, therefore, encompass all externalities, capacities of nations to handle changed circumstances and above all, enabling environment for the ones struggling hard to survive. Our development approach should also be sustainable in order to make people ready for anticipated change. The D-8 Organization is working to contribute to the sustainable development process within its periphery as well as in partnership with specialized international agencies.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am confident this process in Safranbulu will bring about significant lead to the upcoming climate deals. We look forward to a strong, legally binding and ambitious climate change agreement which will have equity and SDG at the centre of its approach. I hope that this meeting will be able to further our shared responsibility leading shared prosperity. Our commonalities and complementarities are our strengths to progress and prosper. Each of us must add to the strength of others in order to keep our planet livable for all.

I thank you all for your kind audience and wish this event a resounding success.