

Statement by the Secretary-General
at
International Symposium on Financing for Development
23 November, 2018
Istanbul, Turkey

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Esteemed Participants,

Permit me to begin by expressing that it is a great honour for me to be given the opportunity to address this prestigious symposium, co-organized by our two invaluable partners, SESRIC and the Islamic Development Bank. I would like to thank both Organizations for bringing such an important issue to the attention of D-8 and would in particular want to express my sincere gratitude to H.E. Ambassador Musa Kulaklıkaya for the kind invitation. I also would like to wish utmost success in today's discussion on development finance to Mr. Jorge Chediek, Ambassador Baghdad Amreyev, Ambassador Hüseyin Avni Bıçaklı and Dr. Rahman Nurdun. It is my fervent belief that our endeavours will create synergies that will cement and deepen the South-South cooperation agenda as well as provide new avenues of partnerships among our peer organizations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

According to the IMF, since 1990s only a handful of countries managed to advance to the level of developed economies. Out of thirteen countries to achieve that level, eight are located in Southern & Eastern Europe whereas three of them that are located in Asia are city and island states, whose developmental challenges and aspirations differ drastically from those of larger countries. **This forces us to make a reality check and rethink the fact that despite the achievements here and there, developing nations did not manage to make the overall leap forward so far.** And as rightly put forward by the title of this symposium, it points out to the fact that development challenges have been rather persistent. It goes without saying that problems of persistent nature call for persistent solutions, which I believe is achievable once we ensure access to ethical, responsible, credible and sustainable finance as a means to improve South-South cooperation agenda.

The noble idea of South-South cooperation has been the cornerstone of collaboration among developing nations to surmount challenges to socioeconomic development. It aids

nations of “Global South” in enhancing their creative capacity to find innovative solutions to economic obstacles and provides a framework for multilateral cooperation. Above all, it aims at providing a **common, vocal and stronger stance against the pending economic inequalities in the global economic system.**

My organization, the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1997 by eight developing countries namely, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey, all of which are members of the **Global South**. The aim of our Organization is to increase economic cooperation among our Member States in order to boost economic growth and sustainable development and promote the well-being of our citizens. Since its establishment, D-8 countries have advanced to an economic powerhouse of 1.1 billion citizens, USD 4 trillion of combined GDP, USD 1.5 trillion of exports and USD 110 billion of intra-trade. The level of economic achievement is astounding. Yet, our countries are still confronted by **multifaceted challenges to socioeconomic development**. As the D-8 Secretariat, we acknowledge these challenges and work untiringly towards creating new and innovative solutions in all areas of cooperation.

There is no gainsaying that one of the **major obstacles to socioeconomic advancement is access to reliable and sustainable finance**. As the Secretariat, we prioritize this issue and focus our attention to creating new sources of finance for the Member States. One such funding mechanism initiated by the D-8 Secretariat is the **D-8 Project Support Fund**. The Fund aims at financing prefeasibility and feasibility studies of projects that bear significance for the economic and social endeavours of our Organization. We have initiated discussions with UN agencies such as FAO and UNCTAD in order to make best use of the fund as a leverage for agricultural and trade projects.

At this juncture, I also would like to elaborate on our **MoU with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)**, a scheme that has granted us access to one of the world’s leading financial resources. The MoU envisages cooperation in areas of implementation of Joint Projects and SME finance as well as allocation of scholarships through IsDB Scholarship Programme and exchange of knowledge and information. We are also actively encouraging our Member States to utilize the science and innovation platforms of IsDB namely **Engage and Transform networks**.

Apart from these existing platforms, we are initiating talks with national development agencies to delve into the possibilities of extending **micro-finance** to young entrepreneurs. We

are also assessing alternative methods of SME finance in our countries including the highly effective method of **crowdfunding** and alternatives tools of **Islamic finance** which have been attracting growing attention not only from Muslim but also non-Muslim countries.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We all acknowledge the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of 2015 as the pinnacle of our efforts in building a global framework for financing development in Global South. The Action Agenda identifies seven priority areas, two of which I want to put a special emphasis on. The first action refers to the mobilization and optimal use of domestic financial resources. South-South cooperation, above all, is very much interlinked with the self-reliance and economic sovereignty of the countries and in this respect, I would like to endorse the laudable achievements of development agencies of the D-8 Member States. The more we deepen our dialogue with these agencies, the better we comprehend their immense potential in assisting development finance, changing the lives of even the most disadvantaged people in the remotest geographies. As D-8, we are recognizing development agencies as major stakeholders and aim at furthering the cooperation in between. The second pillar of action I want to highlight is the international development cooperation which complements domestic efforts and aims at endowing countries with scaled-up international financial support. This, in return, refers to the provision of credible and sustainable finance to the countries of Global South as a means to assist them in surmounting the constraints posed by the national budgets. We as D-8, use all tools at our disposal to channel additional sources of finance including those from the private sector and hereby call international stakeholders to join us in our efforts with their projects and funds, as part of the noble initiative of Corporate Social Responsibility.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Esteemed Participants,

As I have pointed out earlier, access to sustainable finance is an integral and indispensable part of development agenda. However, on its own, **finance does not guarantee results**. It has to be complemented by a common vision among developing countries to **advance, evolve and rise in unity**. As the South-South cooperation agenda suggests, opening of additional channels of communication, strengthening economic integration and creating multiplier effects of technical cooperation lies at the heart of this process. In line with these

objectives, the D-8 Secretariat creates new platforms of collaboration among Member States in order to capitalize on the best-practices, know-how and the accrued expertise.

One very recent attempt is the initiation of a tripartite discussion among D-8, FAO and IsDB on agribusiness and global value chains. Our attempt is to investigate the agricultural potential in Member States, seek ways to better integrate our companies to the international markets and eventually move our countries up the ladder of value chains. We primarily aim at capacitating micro and small sized enterprises of agro-industry with the knowledge to access finance and assist them in integrating to the global value chains. We hope that this initiative will foster flow of information among the small-scale shareholders, providing them with the unmatched expertise of FAO and IsDB.

Recognizing the crucial role of foreign direct investment in financing development in D-8 Member States, we have initiated talks with UNCTAD to hold a workshop that aims at empowering D-8 countries in order to modernize their existing stock of old-generation investment agreements. This is in line with the Responsible and Sustainable business models that are being endorsed today. We hope that through this tailor-made workshop, we will be able to familiarize Member States with the new generation investment policy tools, advance their knowledge on optimal policy design and **empower them to obtain fair and much-deserved share from international trade.**

Apart from these, we are initiating talks with peer institutions and development agencies to foster cooperation in new areas such as e-commerce, blockchain technology and renewable energy. We hope that through our efforts, we will be able to cater for the needs of our Member States and help them surmount the “seemingly persistent” challenges to socioeconomic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Esteemed Participants,

Determination, ambition and clear goals always give one a head start, especially in economic affairs. With this in mind, D-8 has formulated the Decennial Roadmap 2020-2030 in line with the lofty targets set by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In this pivotal roadmap, among other things, we reiterate our commitment to promote South-South cooperation as a means to enhance the development agenda of our Member States. Allow me

to also thank the President of IsDB, H.E. Dr. Bandar Hajjar in advance for graciously calling on our Secretariat next week. I believe that our upcoming discussion together with the deliberations of this symposium, will provide us with new avenues of partnerships.

I would like to remind you that D-8 Member States are forecast to be in the list of the world's top 24 economies in 2050 and we all together will be the world's third biggest economic power with a combined GDP of USD 38 trillion. And this will only be possible through the combined and resolute effort of our countries. I am hopeful that this conference will lead to the adoption of new and fresh perspectives by our Member States in particular and the developing world in general.

I thank you very much for your attention.