

**Speech of the D-8 Secretary-General at the  
22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the D-8 Organization  
28 June 2019**

**Your Excellency Temel Karamollaođlu,  
Distinguished Ministers,  
Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I feel greatly honoured for the invitation extended to me to attend this programme that is being held to mark the 22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation and hence, would like to thank the Saadet Party for the continuous support they have rendered to our esteemed organization since its inception. I also would like to use this opportunity to thank His Excellency, Mr. Temel Karamollaođlu for graciously accepting our invitation to the Anniversary Programme to be held on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2019 at Hilton Bosphorus Hotel. Your attendance, and through you, the presence of Saadet Party will greatly add value to our event and show our mutual determination to further deepen our cooperation.

Before I go further, I would like to take a moment to commemorate the former Prime Minister of Turkey and founding father of the D-8 Organization, Late Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan, one of the most distinguished political figures of Turkey. Late Erbakan was not only a great statesman of Turkey but also a widely respected personality in the Islamic World and beyond. He was a great and visionary leader who pioneered a political approach that paved the way for the socio-economic upliftment of the people. His positive impacts are not limited to the national frontiers of Turkey but are spread to the Muslim Ummah in particular and humanity in general. I feel privileged to lead one of the legacies that he pioneered and established; namely the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation.

**Distinguished participants,**

Late Erbakan had a great vision about the future of the developing world and it is only now that we truly and profoundly understand the grandiosity of his vision. He projected an economic and social alliance among the most promising economies of the Muslim world. Assuming the leading hand in 1997 in establishing D-8 Organization, Late Erbakan forged economic and social unity among eight Muslim countries namely Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey. From humble beginnings in 1997, D-8 countries today have become an economic powerhouse of **USD 4 trillion of GDP, USD 110 billion of intra trade, USD 700 billion of export capacity**. Among OIC countries, we claim 40% of total tourism revenues, 60% of foreign direct investments and more than 60% of total population. This gives us a highly competitive edge in the global economy which is being recognized by many internationally renowned organizations. Just recently, one of the most prominent advisory companies, PriceWaterhouseCoopers has projected that by 2050, **six of the eight Member States of the D-8 will rank among the top twenty economies of the world and, with a combined GDP of USD 38 trillion, the D-8 group will become the third biggest economy after China and India**, thus, surpassing US and Europe.

I believe that we should take a step back to look at this picture and celebrate Late Erbakan's vision in foreseeing a success that was once unimaginable to many. We are delighted that D-8 today lives up to his dream. However, priding ourselves on our past achievements is not enough. We should dream big and aim high to truly extend his legacy. And in doing so, **navigating our way in a cruelly competitive, highly unpredictable and utterly unjust world, we should abide by our founding principles: 'Peace instead of conflict, Dialogue instead of confrontation, Cooperation instead of exploitation, Justice instead of double-standard, Equality instead of discrimination and Democracy instead of oppression'**.

**Distinguished participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In my capacity as the Secretary-General of D-8, I admit that I have inherited a legacy with strong foundations. By the time I assumed duty, the D-8 had successfully formulated the Charter, Global Vision, Preferential Trade Agreement, Roadmap and several other documents in order to ensure growth and development through effective partnership among the Member States. On these very foundations, we started building new structures and initiating new programmes that will concretize our efforts in making **D-8 an economic hub of technology, education, R&D, investment, production and trade.**

In this regard, with the noble initiative taken by the Islamic Republic of Iran we established the **D-8 International University** in Hamedan in 2019. Founded under the Bu-Ali Sina University and hosted by the Ministry of Science, Research and Technology of Iran, the D-8 International University aims at advancing STEM education in Member States by fostering exchange of students and academicians. The success of the initiative echoed among the Member States and Malaysia just recently offered to host other departments of the institution in Kuala Lumpur.

We have also initiated the **Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation (NPRI)**, a framework that aims at bolstering technology and knowledge transfer among the research centers, universities and scientific councils of the D-8 Member States. In the short time span since its inception, the NPRI received nominations from 23 highly prominent universities and we continue to receive further requests. Furthermore, we have established the **D-8 Aviation Network** and signed a Letter of Intent with Istanbul Sabiha Gokcen airport, which has become the first designated airport of our organization. Karachi Airport of Pakistan has also recently joined the network by successfully erecting the D-8 priority counter. Federal Republic of Nigeria has also offered its Nnamdi Azikiwe International Airport in Abuja as the D-8 designated airport. We have also started working on the ambitious project of **D-8 Industrial Parks** to be established in Member States and have taken concrete steps to bring these to fruition. Again, this year, Islamic Republic of Pakistan has nominated Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Agriculture and Food Security (USPCAS - AFS) in Faisalabad, Pakistan as the designated **D-8 research Centre**. The main objective of the Centre is to improve the state of science, technology and innovation in the D-8 countries in agriculture and food security. To this end they aim at fostering capacity building by initiating training programs, extending graduate scholarship to talented

students, promoting the implication and advancement of the latest technologies and building a network of affiliated experts from the D-8 Member States. Last but not least, on 19 June, 2019, under the leading hand of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, we held the Inaugural Consultation Meeting and initiated the **D-8 Health and Social Protection Programme**.

In line with the provisions of our Charter, we work relentlessly to foster 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. In May, 2019 as part of an invitation to speak at the Multi-year Expert Meeting on Trade, Services and Development of UNCTAD, we called on the highest-ranking executives of the **World Trade Organization, International Trade Centre, South Centre and UNCTAD in Geneva, Switzerland**. Through these bilateral meetings we had the opportunity to convey the challenges faced by our Member States and reaffirm commitment to work on joint projects to address these issues.

**Distinguished participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We are working hard and we aim to work even harder. Our road is enlightened by the vision and institutional spirit set out by Late Erbakan. We are deeply motivated by his ideologies of universal humanity, global peace and prosperity through peaceful means of economic cooperation. With this in mind, the D-8 Organization strives to harness national potentials as well as resources in order to yield positive outcomes that are of life changing scales.

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished participants,**

I wish to once again register my deep appreciation to Your Excellency for organizing this anniversary programme and I thank you for your gesture in accepting our invitation. Before I

conclude my statement, I join all in praying for Allah's mercy so that late Erbakan Hodja rest in eternal peace.

I thank you for your kind attention.