

Speech of the D-8 Secretary-General in

22nd Anniversary of D-8

5 July, 2019

Hilton Bosphorus Hotel, Istanbul

Distinguished Chair,

Distinguished Ambassadors, Consuls-General,

Distinguished Representatives of International Organizations and Valuable Stakeholders,

Esteemed Members of the Press,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to the 22nd Anniversary of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation and extend my heartfelt gratitude to you for honouring our cause with your valuable presence on this very special day. I hope that this event will mark the beginning of a tradition and provide us a platform **to advise and be advised, to connect and learn from each other** as we all take part in national and international decision-making.

I would like to begin my words by extending my sincere gratitude to the Republic of Turkey for the excellent support they have granted to our Organization during their Chairmanship. In the same vein, I also would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey for granting us our new premises which perfectly reflects our diplomatic and institutional image and suits the changing mindset of our Organization. Some of our distinguished guests have already been to our premises on different occasions. Given the increasing number and scope of activities taking place at the Secretariat, I remain hopeful to host all of our guests at their earliest convenience.

In this regard, allow me to remind you that our premises are not just a home to the Secretariat **but a home to all our Member States, stakeholders and anyone who wants to contribute to the peaceful solution of the problems and challenges faced by the developing world.**

Distinguished guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Allow me to briefly introduce our Organization. D-8 was officially established as an intergovernmental organization by the Summit of Heads of State/Government in Istanbul on 15 June 1997. Our founding fathers had a vision to forge an economic alliance between the most promising and dynamic economies of the Muslim world, namely Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan and Turkey.

From humble beginnings in 1997, the D-8 Member-States today have become an economic powerhouse of **USD 4 trillion of GDP, USD 110 billion of intra trade and USD 700 billion of export capacity**. Among OIC Member-States, we claim 40 percent of total tourism revenues, 60 percent of foreign direct investments and more than 60 percent of the 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, Price Waterhouse Coopers has projected that by 2050, **D-8 Member States will rank among the top 24 economies of the world and, with a combined GDP of USD 38 trillion, D-8 will become the third biggest economy**, surpassing US and Europe. As the Secretariat of the Organization, we are working relentlessly to contribute to the success of this heuristic trajectory.

As of today, D-8 has already achieved some major milestones by successfully formulating the Charter, Global Vision, Preferential Trade Agreement and Roadmap. These key documents are the manifestation of a mutual understanding and a common will to cooperate to ensure inclusive growth and rapid development. 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, research and development, investment, production and trade**.

Following Honorable President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's message to the Organization to increase trade in local currencies, we partnered with **KOMEPS Fintech** company to issue the D8 Payment Card. The card aims at reducing financial intermediation from third parties and increase the financial services trade among D-8 Member States. We have obtained clearance from most of the D-8 Central Banks and we aim at initiating transactions by 2020.

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 Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (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.

Under Turkey's presidency, we furthered the work of **D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (D-8 CCI)** which is an umbrella organization for the private sector companies of the Member States. D-8 CCI successfully finalized and adopted its Charter and laid out a roadmap for the private sector cooperation among Member States. We have also initiated the **Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation (NPRI)**, a framework that aims at bolstering technology and knowledge development among the research centers, universities and scientific councils and the private sector 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, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan has nominated Pakistan Centre for Advanced Studies in Agriculture and Food Security (USPCAS - AFS) in Faisalabad 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. Just recently, we issued a call for project proposals to be financed through the **D-8 Project Support Fund** and we have started receiving some very promising feedbacks. Last but not the 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. 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**. This week we called on the Secretary-General of the **World Customs Organization in Brussels**. Through these bilateral meetings, we had the opportunity to convey the challenges faced by our Member States and reaffirmed commitment to work on joint projects to address these issues. As part of the external relations agenda, we also initiated the **D-8 Roundtable Discussion Series** to create synergies among the economic/trade counsellors of the Member States, international organizations and think tanks to thematically discuss pressing economic issues with a view to resolving them. I also would like to make an open call and invite all our guests to kindly remain attentive to these discussions and contribute, if possible.

**Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Times are changing and we are faced with multifaceted challenges that can only be solved by collective efforts. In this regard, I present you the D-8 as an active, determined and inclusive platform that lives up to its founding principles while promoting economic success: ‘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’.

I wish to once again register my deep appreciation to all our distinguished guests for their invaluable participation.

I thank you for your kind attention.