

**Statement by the D-8 Secretary-General at the first Virtual Conference on 17 June, 2020
hosted by D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry to discuss the impacts of COVID-19
on the business community**

**Honourable Presidents,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentleman,**

Asalam o Alaikum and Good afternoon

It is a great honour and singular privilege for me to address this conference of the D-8 business community. I would like to start by appreciating the painstaking efforts of Mr. Rifat Hisarciklioglu, president of The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industries (D-8 CCI) in organizing this very important event which affords us the opportunity to interact at this critical time when the world is facing unprecedented health and socio economic crises.

I also wish to thank you all for your valuable presence. We look forward to benefitting from your contributions and your wealth of experience.

You would certainly agree with me that the current global health situation is perilous and the challenges of the pandemic are planetary. All our Member States are afflicted by the COVID-19 virus and their attention is now focused on mitigating this disease and saving the precious lives of their citizens and protecting their national economies from its consequential adversities.

As a result of the global health crises, the economic and humanitarian cost is huge for our Member States and they are trying their level best to overcome this catastrophic situation. Therefore, I strongly believe that we should reiterate and solidify our commitment and cooperation as well as share our vast experiences and operational knowledge in order to mitigate the hardship imposed on us by COVID-19. In other words, I wish to solicit for your unassailable expertise and enormous resources in order to help the business community of the D-8 Member States to overcome the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to assure you that the D-8 Secretariat is working tirelessly along with the D-8 Health and Social protection Programme Office (D-8 HSP), Member States, philanthropic organizations, Research and Development institutions, United Nations Agencies and financial Institutions in order to provide immediate relief as well as equip the Member States to deal with pandemics like COVID-19.

It is in line with our efforts to respond to the COVID-19 crises that the D-8 Secretariat, D-8 HSP and Chatham House jointly organized the first virtual roundtable of health professionals of the D-8 Member States on 16th of April, 2020 in order to discuss the COVID-19 Pandemic. Member States participated at the highest level and assured us of their unalloyed support and total cooperation in our efforts to stem the tide of the health and economic challenges posed by COVID-19.

The prime objective of the virtual roundtable is to come-up with a mechanism for cooperation in order to lessen the hardship caused by the pandemic through knowledge and resources sharing as well as understanding of country specific needs. During the meeting the D-8 Member States shared some ideas and innovative solutions implemented by them in line with global best practices.

In the same vein, the Secretariat also launched the COVID-19 Visualizer Map developed by Islamic World Citation Center (ISC) for the benefit of the D-8 Member States. It is a useful tool to guide policymaking, case management and interventions in support of national responses.

**Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In addition, the Secretariat is working very closely with Turkey as the current chair of the Organization and Bangladesh as next chair on the following proposals in order to cushion the effects of the pandemic on our Member States:

- Establishment of a Working Group in order to review the economic adversities of COVID-19 and come up with proposals on addressing same in post pandemic scenario.
- Establishment of a Fund for tackling the Economic and Health adversities of Pandemics such as COVID-19
- Convening a Special Leaders' Summit in response to COVID-19.

The pandemic is a battle for survival and the need to bring our members actively together cannot be overemphasized. We are therefore working hard to strengthen solidarity and cooperation among Member States and helping them to identify constraints and bottlenecks in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic as well as supporting them to build post-pandemic resilient health and economic systems.

There is no gainsaying that the D-8 CCI is a very important forum and it represent the D-8 business community which is affected the most by the current crises. Economic activities have been halted for many months and the losses are enormous. Therefore, unwavering commitment amongst us is needed to tackle such huge crisis that has not been witnessed in recent human history.

Distinguished Delegates,

I wish to inform you that in order to facilitate and promote the free flow of investment amongst D-8 Member States, UNCTAD, D-8 and the Institute of Malaysian and International Studies (IKMAS) are jointly organizing a webinar titled “International Investment Policies and the COVID-19 Pandemic” that is to be held on 30th June, 2020.

The Webinar aims at reviewing the key findings of UNCTAD’s “World Investment Report 2020” and discussing international investment policies in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. It will serve as a platform to share ideas on how best to act and cooperate in the face of Covid-19 pandemic, especially given the rapidly evolving risks on international investments.

**Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The increasing trend in digitalization and e-commerce activities especially during the current crises provides us an opportunity to consider the establishment of e-commerce platform in order to promote private sector activities and trade within and beyond D-8. The forum will also help our business community in showcasing their products and services internationally at a time when traveling is not feasible and safe.

It is my strong belief that with sincere and concerted efforts, unity of purpose and doctrinal commitment, we will soon overcome the current planetary health situation and the economic meltdown and social circumscription that it brought about.

I wish you all good health, happiness, success, everlasting prosperity and progress.

Thank you for your attention