

**Statement by the D-8 Secretary-General  
His Excellency Ambassador Dato' Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari  
at the Inaugural meeting of the D-8 Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation (D-8  
NPRI) was held on virtual platform on 21st December, 2020**

**Mr. Chairman,  
Distinguished Chancellors and Vice Chancellors,  
Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,  
Assalam o Alaikum and Good Morning**

It is an honour and privilege to welcome you all to the Inaugural Meeting of the D-8 Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation (D-8NPRI). As this is the first ever meeting of the D-8 intellectual fraternity I am attending as the Secretary-General, it is a great honour and singular privilege to meet you all and I wish to solicit for your guidance, cooperation and support in discharging my responsibilities.

I wish to start by expressing our immense gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and COMSATS University, Islamabad for graciously hosting this inaugural event on this important area of cooperation.

**Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to thank you all for your kind and valuable presence at this important meeting. We have convened here to discuss a number of items of pivotal importance.

I also wish to register my gratitude to all the Member States for their support and trust and the confidence reposed in me to initiate this framework of cooperation and summon this important intellectual gathering. I look forward to receiving your wise counsel and valuable guidance on moving the initiative to the next level. Be assured that I will put in my best in implementing the decisions of the meeting in accordance with the D-8 Charter and other Statutory Documents.

**Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I would like to give a clear message to the developing world especially D-8 that they must come together and build their own technologies for their survival and meaningful participation in Global value chains. Technological collaboration in developing world is inevitable. In line with the need for capacity building and technological collaboration, I introduced several new

initiatives in D-8 as I believe that without building our own infrastructure and technological base we will remain behind.

According to IMF estimates, currently the emerging economies and developing countries are recording a GDP growth of 4.4% on an annual average and the number is quite low in the developed world which stands at 1.8%. It shows the potential of the developing world and room for the future growth. What we need to do to enhance our existing capabilities, reduce the burden of the reliability factor on western research and technologies and produce our own technologies to cater for the future requirement of the industrial revolution and production.

It is for reason that when I took over as the Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization in January 2018, the initiative of D-8 Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation (D-8 NPRI) was one of the new ideas that I introduced.

The idea behind the establishment of the D-8NPRI is to bring D-8 Member States researchers, government and semi-government research institutes, industrial research institutes and research in D-8 universities under one umbrella. Through this network, D-8 will expand the level of innovation in the D-8 Member States to enable the economic growth essential for sustainable development in D-8 region, identify research and development capabilities and exchange the research results with industries in Member States, extend laboratory facilities to the Member States researchers and students, conduct joint research projects on industrial areas, and institute research fellow exchange programme among universities in D-8 Member States and the D-8 International University.

**Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Hence, the NPRI is an open concept that will penetrate the “Hard Shell” of Member States’ borders on research and development and thus benefit all.

I would propose that D-8 NPRI consist of Universities and Research Institutes of Member States, D-8 Technology and Transfer Exchange Network (D-8 TTEN), D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (D-8 CCI), D-8 Research and Development Council, D-8 Health and Social Protection Programme Office (D-8 HSP), Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC), Islamic World Citation Center (ISC) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) as well as other Institutes that identified later.

D-8 CCI and MTDC would be major contributors to this network as they provide platform for showcasing the research conducted and approved by the D-8NPRI to the D-8 business community and international arena. In other words, they will help us work towards expanding the number and quality of research as well as scaling up the conduct of research and innovation and promote industrial development in the D-8 Member States.

According to Watts Humphrey *"Innovation is the process of turning ideas into manufacturable and marketable form."*

There is no gainsaying that exploring sources of funding is essentially important for conducting researches and converting them into manufactured products. My priorities are to explore project-based initiatives and thus would like to welcome both private and government sector partnerships in this drive. In this vein, I am also closely working with different international financial organizations and partners including the Islamic Bank for Development IsDB with which we signed an MoU in 2017 in order to create financial mechanisms to support the development of the D-8 Member States.

In the light of the foregoing, the D-8 NPRI will undertake the following activities:

- Conduct joint research projects in industrial and technical areas that can facilitate social economic development of the D-8 Member States
- Expand the level of innovation and research in D-8 Member States
- Strengthen the linkage among universities, research institutions, industry-related organizations and training institutes to develop collaborative research on common challenges and devise strategic discourse
- Promote collaboration and establishment of Joint Ventures (JVs) with leading companies of the D-8 CCI on technical and other materials;
- Help the industries and SMEs in Member States by providing research results and technology to overcome the challenges and problems that they are facing and develop innovative technologies for industries and SMEs.
- Help the D-8 HSP by providing research materials and inventions to overcome the challenges and problems in the Health Sector of the Member States.
- Initiate Research Fellow exchange programmes among universities in D-8 Member States.

**Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I particularly want to mention here the establishment of the D-8 International University in Hamadan, the city of Ibn Sina in Iran. The aim of establishing the D-8 University is to strengthen scientific research and technological cooperation among the Member States. It is worth mentioning that the Islamic Republic of Iran has offered to locate the D-8 International University in the Campus of Ibn Sina University. This will build a strong bond between the D-8 and our renowned scholar, ibn Sina.

Also, I would like to point out that we are making efforts to galvanize the youths in order to undertake scientific researches and translate them into finished products. The D-8 Organization

is working with the Islamic World Science Citation Centre in order to provide favorable climate for the growth and development of science and technology in the D-8 Member States through, among others, ensuring optimum cooperation among scientists in the Member States and make effective policies in the field of science and technology in the D-8 countries, including through cooperation with the D-8 NPRI Universities.

**Distinguished Delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is in this light that the Islamic World Science Citation Center (ISC), in collaboration with the D-8 Secretariat, launched a portal on D-8 Map of Scientific Excellence and Collaboration. The aim of this portal is to identify D-8 journals indexed in Web of Science, ISC and Scopus.

It is important to point out that D-8 Journal Citation Profile is an essential tool for in-depth analyses and ranking of scholarly journals. This portal measures research influence and impact at the journal and subject-category levels and shows the relationships between citing and cited journals. It helps researchers and policy makers keep up with the latest bibliometric developments and track publications and citation patterns. Many features of this portal are in development process. To see the demo version of the portal you can visit [www.d8.isc.gov.ir](http://www.d8.isc.gov.ir)

**Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is my belief that the D-8 will be an Economic Power House in the near future and we should be ready for this big positive outcome. Here, I want to particularly mention the report of PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC) titled “The World in 2050”. The analysis concluded that the D-8 Member States will be in the list of the world’s top 24 economies and we all together will be the world’s third biggest economic power with expected combined GDP of \$38 trillion. The data in the report shows the impressive economic revolution that is knocking at our doors and we have to be prepared for it.

It would all remain dreams if we do not collaborate within D-8 and beyond and equip ourselves with indigenous technologies that will reshape our economies and transform our lives.

As for a new vision, we have to talent spot brilliant pupils in a wide spectrum of areas from the beginning in our various schools and nurture them in order for them to reach their potentials. Also, a funding facility must be made available to them in order to finance the conduct of research and exploration of their innovative prowess. In short, we have to work really hard on developing our human resources.

In the words of Bill Gates, *“I believe in innovation and that the way you get innovation is to fund research and learn the basic facts.*

**Ladies and Gentleman,**

Quality education is also essential in economic development. Research and innovation are of utmost importance in the invention of new technologies. The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) data shows the reality of the situation in developing countries. According to it, we are lagging behind in spending on research and development.

According UNESCO, currently global spending on research and development has reached a record high of almost US\$ 1.7 trillion. Unfortunately, about 10 countries account for 80% of this expenditure. As part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), countries have pledged to substantially increase public and private R&D spending as well as the number of researchers by 2030.

In the absence of research and innovation activities, we can't achieve sustainable economic development and we will be unable to compete with the developed world. Therefore, we have to make a reality check and start spending on R&D, establishing research centers and integrate them, sharing knowledge and best practices, utilize our journals and scientific researches.

**Mr. Chairman  
Distinguished Participants,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before I end my statement, permit me to summarize my recommendations for the way forward. As you are well aware, industrial revolution 4.0 is an uphill climb and indeed a race to the top. We, as developing countries, cannot afford to lose any more of our precious time. Hence, we should act fast. In doing so, we should make best use of our most valuable and abundant resource: human capital. Developed countries attract increasingly more of our most creative and fertile minds. These minds, educated in our very system, seek greener pastures outside their countries leading to the serious problem of brain-drain. Therefore, it is imperative that we build an ecosystem not only for their financial betterment but also academic nourishment. This is the kind of ecosystem I would like to build with NPRI: a network of distinguished researchers that will provide expertise among D-8 Member States. Permit me to state that D-8 pledges to promote all projects and programs requested by the Member States

The second issue I would like to highlight is the importance of public-private partnership. It is true that innovation and entrepreneurship is the specialty of the private sector. We cannot claim that bit. But as public servants and technocrats, it is our duty to incentivize them with high quality infrastructure and a supportive legal system. It is not a coincidence that the first three industrial revolutions were pioneered by Europe and the USA. They had the resources, the mindset and the incentives.

we should reevaluate our approach and remove unnecessary impediments to innovation, research and technology.

**"There are no incurable diseases — only the lack of will. There are no worthless herbs — only the lack of knowledge."**

-- **Avicenna**

I thank you for your attention.