

Statement by the D-8 Secretary-General at the Training Program

**Mr. Dator Zamruni, The Director General of IFDR,**

**Distinguished Instructors,**

**Promising Diplomats,**

It is a pleasure to welcome you all in the first workshop in a series of training program to be organized jointly by the D-8 and IDFR. I would like specifically to thank IDFR for cooperating with us in organizing this very important e-training Workshop; which comes in a very critical moment in global diplomacy.

COVID19 hits an already shaking World order that witnessed a clash between two conflicting trends a growing international interdependence on one hand and an emerging attitude of isolationism by some countries on the other hand. Diplomacy has been affected so much and challenged by the pandemic COVID 19 with the international borders being closed, international conferences and meeting being cancelled or turned to the virtual word, official visits being postponed and negotiations being halted. It seems that the challenges imposed by COVID 19 might influence the essence and the form of diplomatic work and the scope of international organizations' activities .The fundamental task of the diplomats is interpersonal contact and interaction and this has been affected by the pandemic. In the meanwhile, though the world is in flux both internationally and politically, global economic ties continue to expand and this poses a challenge to diplomacy. Despite the communication restrictions there is still a need for diplomacy especially multilateral diplomacy and an urgent need to establish effective tools for international cooperation.

The measures taken by most of the states in the context of the spread of the pandemics such as investments screening, border closure, quarantine and movement restrictions, mandatory production or export restriction in order to deal with public health issues, proved to be very harmful for the global economy and will definitely affect the flow of investment and global trade, the matter that will highlight the importance of economic diplomacy and its significant role in dealing with the Post COVID 19 challenges.

The early signs of COVID19 consequences indicate that a new concept of globalization could be emerging, with new rules of the global game. Instead of the open borders and the freedom of movement across borders, the new concept of globalization is based on the widespread use of big data, the global exchange of information, knowledge and experience and the creation of several regional centers for the distribution of vital resources. It is diplomacy, and international organizations

that could take the lead to entrench this new concept of globalization and international cooperation. But is it the traditional diplomacy that could play this role? Or should diplomacy get adapted to cope with the new challenges of COVID19, in order to be capable of grabbing the potential opportunities that could be found in such crisis. COVID19 has enhanced the significance and importance of 'Soft Power' in diplomacy which will increase in the coming years, especially concerning scientific and technological potentials as well as fostering the inter-states economic ties.

All along my career in diplomacy, I learnt a golden rule emphasizing that for diplomacy to be effective, diplomats need to learn the skill of relating to and communicating with people whose interests are different than their own. This is the only way to establish peace among countries. A successful diplomat must demonstrate a true willingness to develop skills that will build relationships rather than break them, leading in direction to peace and cooperation.

Either in Post COVID 19 or Pre- COVID19, International relations have always been and will remain a function of interdependence and conflicts. Conflicts are normal, we should not be afraid from it. Conflicts are needed to enable development to happen but the essential factor is how to deal with conflicts and resolve them. The challenge of diplomacy is to channel fear-driven potential conflict into a value-added co-operative approach through which a compromise or a shared whole vision is reached. Thus, negotiation plays a vital role in diplomacy and powerful negotiations skills are a must for successful diplomat.

Negotiation is a process of reaching a compromise and settling differences. The skills need for it includes qualities that would allow the parties to reach this compromise, such as communication, persuasion, planning, strategizing and cooperating. Good preparation is responsible for 90% of negotiation success and you should make sure before starting the negotiation that you have all the information that you can get about the further negotiations, and during the negotiation process do not hesitate to ask questions to get the utmost information. Clarity is also very important; if the negotiator does not state his case clearly it can lead to misunderstanding and unfavorable result. Patience and active listening are also valuable qualities for a good negotiator. Instead of spending all the time defending his point of view, a good negotiator spends most of the time listening to the other party and find clues for further debates.

I believe that organizing a workshop on economic diplomacy, that focus on negotiation skills, deserves to be lauded and appreciated, as it would offer the diplomats from the D-8 member states the opportunity to interact together and share knowledge , best practices and experiences related to economic diplomacy. I hope you will make the best of this opportunity and I wish everyone a fruitful and successful workshop.