

**Statement**  
**by**  
**Ambassador Dato' Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari**  
**D-8 Secretary General**  
**at the Sixth D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Food Security**

Sustainable agro-industry development and smallholder farmer integration in the global value chains: Key issues for D-8 Member States

Virtually held on 16 December 2020

*H.E. Mr. Syed Fakhar Imam,*  
*Chairman and Federal Minister of National Food Security and Research of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan,*  
*Hon'ble Ministers/ Heads of Delegation of D-8 Member States,*  
*Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I am delighted to be here this morning at the Ministerial Session of the 6th Agricultural Ministerial Meeting on Food Security. On behalf of the D-8 Secretariat, I extend warm welcome to all Ministers, Heads of Delegations and delegates from the D-8 Member States to this important meeting.

There is no gainsaying that Agriculture and Food Security is an important framework of cooperation for the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation. I thank you immensely for finding time to participate in this event despite your crowded schedules.

Permit me to also thank the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for graciously hosting this meeting and the one that preceded it, that is Expert Level Meeting, the conclusion of which is the basis for this one. . We are also grateful to Pakistan for availing us of a state of art facility for the conduct of research and development in agriculture and food security located in Faisalabad.

Our gratitude also goes to the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) for generously supporting this meeting and partaking in our development efforts and cooperative endeavour. We are pleased that our Organization is working along with renown international organizations that are highly reputed for their expertise in the domain under discussion.

*Hon'ble Ministers of D-8 Member States,*  
*Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

As you are aware, agriculture remains one of the important sectors to our national economies, especially in terms of providing decent source of income and livelihood to many people in the rural areas. Moreover, agriculture is also an important source of food and nutrition for all countries both in the developing world and the advanced societies. Considering the significant contribution of this sector, agriculture has been listed as one of our priority areas of cooperation.

Since the beginning of our collective efforts in this area, D-8 Member States have continuously reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen agricultural cooperation. Among others, the main agenda of our cooperation is to increase productivity of the agricultural sector and food availability; institute better governance of food systems at all levels; ensure adequate supply of quality fertilizers, improve seeds and animal feed; fisheries commodities and management; and harmonization of food standards and regulations.

Continuing from the momentum that we have generated from the previous meetings; I am optimistic that the Islamabad Initiatives that we will adopt at this meeting will further reaffirm our commitment to pursue agricultural cooperation and subsequently implement tangible projects that could benefit the target groups of D-8 Member States. The initiative will also provide useful guidance to the working groups to address issues in implementing the proposed projects including through collaboration with international and regional organizations such as the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).

*Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

This is the first thematic meeting that we are having on this sectoral track of cooperation. Its focus “**Sustainable Agro-Industry Development and Small Holder Farmer Integration in the Global Value Chains: Key Issues for D-8 Member States**” is not only relevant but also timely. This is in view of the compelling need to enhance the marketability of the produce of our farming communities and to effectively integrate them into the international system.

And justice has been done to the theme, thanks to the unwavering commitment and unassailable knowledge of the participants and the resource persons. All that remains is the adoption of the outcome documents by the Honourable Ministers and their implementation to the latter by the relevant institutions of our members.

*Hon’ble Ministers/ Heads od Delegation of D-8 Member States,  
Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that agriculture and food security should be placed on our priority development agenda and should be pursued vigorously at all levels and sub-sectors. Moreover, the role of the private sector should be enhanced in order to complement the programmes and initiatives undertaken by the governments. The synergy between public

and private sector has the potential to create better results and engender self-sufficiency and self-reliance in agriculture and food security.

There is no gainsaying that we need to sustain the tempo of meetings and other cooperative activities in order to achieve our set targets. We therefore need to schedule regular meetings and encourage broader interface between and amongst our relevant institutions so that our dreams can be realized.

I wish you success and thank you for your kind attention.