

**Statement of the Hon'ble Foreign Minister at the Opening of the 20th D-8
Council of Ministers**

BismillahirRahmanir Raheem

Your Excellencies - the Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegation of
D-8 Member States,
Excellency, The Secretary General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

AssalamuAlaikum and a very good day to you all.

I am humbled to Chair this august meeting at the time when the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation is celebrating its 25th anniversary. I would like to extend my congratulations to all the member states on this historical moment. I would also like to thank the Secretary General for the proactive measures and initiatives that he and his team have undertaken to help Member States foster and advance the goals of the D-8.

Excellencies,

The journey of D-8 so far has been measured and cautious. Our leaders had envisioned of a world where financial stability can be ensured through exploring trade and investment opportunities. During the last 25 years, our intra-trade has increased from 13 billion to 129 billion, almost 10 times. However, during next 10 years we plan to increase intra-trade by at least 10 times or 1.3 billion dollars. Such is possible if we energise our youth and women through digital mechanism for a barrier free trade and commerce.

The D-8 countries have a combined population of 1.1 billion people; of which 207 million are aged between 15-24 years. We only need to tap the unbound potential of this youth turning the D8 into a vibrant, dynamic, and lively organization. The ideas and fearless energy of the youth to bring change is a possibility which we should utilize by providing them education and job opportunities.

Women power is a major force in every country. It is time that we recognize their potential and involve them in our economic development. I believe that we provide priority on female education, skills training and creating conducive working environment for them, the result is likely to be spectacular.

To achieve the goals, D8 Member States should be fully prepared and equipped sufficiently to cope up with the ever-changing world of Information and Communication Technology. Our populace should be trained in the digital and innovation driven skills.

Excellencies,

As the whole world is experiencing an unprecedented public health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and recent political instability, I personally feel the urge that, we, the D-8 Member States need to stand together more than ever. The food, energy, fertilizer crisis that we are facing is only the tip of the iceberg if we do not become careful and come together to address it. We should concentrate on climate resilience agriculture, try to find alternate energy source and exchange of best practices and knowledge. Since the overall objectives of this global organization is to improve Member-States' life and livelihood situation through multiple approach, I earnestly hope that the PTA will become fully operational to create more investment and trade opportunities. We can also consider creating a D-8 digital marketplace to ensure the common interests of all member states.

Excellencies,

In order to minimize the worsening effects of Covid-19 and the Ukraine war, to overcome challenges of food and energy security, Bangladesh would like to explore all avenues for economic recovery through collaboration among the D-8 Member States.

Individually we might be struggling to stay afloat but together we can become a force to reckon. The D-8 governments and private sectors should come together during the next decade to highlight how D-8 Member States can deepen connectivity, trade and investment, networking and collaboration in light of experiences.

Excellencies,

Bangladesh will take all pragmatic initiatives to open new avenues of cooperation among the D-8 Member States to continue realizing the dreams of our founding leaders in turning the group even more vibrant, active and effective.

I thank you.

Joi Bangla, Joi Bangabandhu
May Bangladesh Live Forever
Long live the D-8.
