

**OPENING STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ISIAKA ABDULQADIR
IMAM, SECRETARY GENERAL OF D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR
ECONOMIC COOPERATION, AT THE SECOND WORKING GROUP
MEETING ON GRANTING OBSERVER STATUS AND PERMITTING
THE ACCESSION OF NEW MEMBERS INTO THE ORGANISATION,
HELD VIRTUALLY ON WEDNESDAY, 7TH DECEMBER, 2022**

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Members of the Working Group,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning and Asalam Alaikum to you all,

I want to warmly welcome Your Excellencies Distinguished Commissioners and Members of the Working Group to this very important meeting of the Working Group on Granting Observer Status and Permitting the Accession of New Members into our noble Organization.

At the outset, may I remind you that the formation of this Working Group is a reflection of the importance and the seriousness our organization attaches to the issue of accession and enlargement of

our noble Organization. For this purpose, therefore, our deliberations today are expected to make a momentous impact on the history and progress of the Organization.

Today's meeting marks the second meeting of the Working Group, since the matter of enlargement and accession of new members have been on the agenda, as far as back as 2017. In the past, three meetings had been held to deliberate on the subject matter of our discussion today. The Working Group meeting on 'Creating New Partnerships and Accession of New Members, held virtually on 3 October, 2019. That meeting had expressed a general support for the idea of expanding the membership to bring more dynamism to the organisation.

Deliberation on the issue continued further at the Special Session of the D-8 Commission held on 11 October 2019 in Istanbul,

Türkiye, which mentioned that, “the Working Group will continue to convene on the way to the D-8 Summit”.

Subsequent to the 45th Session of the Commission held in July, 2022 in Dhaka, Bangladesh, some of our member states shared their comments on Expansion, which were further discussed during the Special Session of the Commission, held virtually on 8 November 2022. A compilation of the comments received from the Member States form part of the documents for this meeting.

Today’s meeting is taking place in accordance with the directives of the last Special Session of the Commission of 8 November 2022, which mandated the Secretariat to reconvene the Working Group and prepare an updated Concept Note, for consideration and guidance of this Meeting. To that end, the Secretariat has placed before this esteem gathering, updated Concept Note on Expansion.

Also placed before you is draft Working Paper, for consideration and guidance of the Working Group. The 'Working Paper' compiles the comments received from the Member States, and categorized them into separate sections, with a view to streamline discussions and facilitate decision-making. The 'Working Paper' should therefore provide a basis for our today's discussion.

I want to appeal to our Distinguished Members of the Working Group to accord this job the seriousness it deserves, so that we can actually come out with concrete results that would guide the future of our organization, particularly relating to admitting new member states and organizations into the D-8 Community.

In conclusion, **Distinguished Commissioners, Ladies and Gentlemen**, we at the Secretariat look forward to positive outcome from today's meeting, which essentially is to **finalize the**

criteria and modalities for granting Observer status and permitting the accession of new members to join the organization. The outcome of today's meeting would be a great step forward in the development of our organization, not only for the current foundation members, but also for those waiting to join the organization, in future. We need to bear in mind that we have to take concrete decisions today, so that we are able to report progress at the next Commission's meeting early next year.

I thank you all for your kind attention, while wishing you a fruitful deliberation.