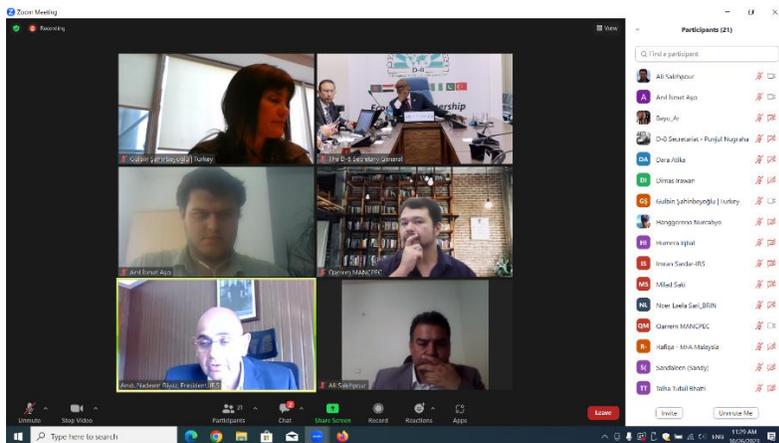


Report of the Webinar on Hosted by  
Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) Islamabad  
26 October 2023

The D-8 Think Tanks Webinar was hosted by Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) on 26 October, 2023. The webinar, which was initially planned to address the topic “How can D-8 be Made More Effective” discussed a range of issues related to D-8 Organization and the development, cooperation, and future endeavors of the D-8 member countries' think tanks. The meeting involved participants from Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Türkiye and the D-8 secretariat. The list of the participants is attached as **Annex-I**.



**Welcoming Remarks-** Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz, President of IRS, welcomed the participants and introduced the topic of the webinar.

**Opening Remarks** – Ambassador Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, Secretary-General (SG) delivered his opening remarks and appreciated IRS, Think Tanks and participants from the member states. Secretary-General highlighted the challenge of D-8 not being a regional organization but spanning three continents. He emphasized the importance of overcoming challenges, especially in the area of trade, capacity building and visibility and called on the participants to come up with recommendations that would enable the D-8 organization overcomes some of these challenges. His Remarks are attached as **Annex II**.

## Discussions by the Representatives of the Member States

**Ambassador Nadeem Riyaz, President of IRS of Pakistan**, outlined key issues and factors that the think tanks should consider, including economic diversity, different political systems, the issue of limited resources, and capacity building. He further stressed the importance of addressing humanitarian issues, food security, disaster management, and enhancing people-to-people contacts and collaboration among think tanks of the D8 countries.

**Mr. Ali Salehpour, representing Iran's Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS)**, covered a range of research areas, including geographical studies, international legal and environmental issues, studies on neighboring countries, and climate change.



Mr. Qarrem MANCPEC from Malaysia's Institute of Strategic and International Studies Malaysia (ISIS) Malaysia, expressed interest in exploring geopolitical crises and climate issues. He also provided insights on commodities, agriculture, food security, agri-food technology, and capacity building, underlining the potential for further collaboration in these domains.



**Representatives from The Economic Policy Research Foundation of Turkiye (TEPAV)**, Ms. Gulbin Sahinbeyogsu and Mr. Anil Ismet, introduced their organization as an independent think tank associated with the Turkish Union Chamber and Commodity Exchanges of Turkiye (TOBB). They expressed interest in innovation studies and international partnerships and suggested that



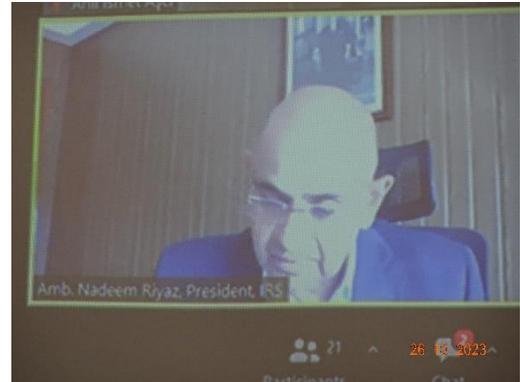
they could offer technical contributions and insights on global value chains, as well as digitalization and green transition efforts for D-8 member states.

**Mr. Ahmar Ismail, Director-I from D-8 Secretariat** stressed the importance of showcasing the comparative strengths and weaknesses of each member state through the contributions of think tanks. He proposed the creation of a concise table or chart for a comprehensive analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the Organization, as well as the outcomes of the meeting.

**Mr. Punjul Nugraha, Director-II from D-8 Secretariat**, recommended that think tanks could contribute articles and research for publication in the D-8 quarterly magazine.

**Lastly, the Secretary-General** identified critical areas of focus, which include recognizing the non-contiguous nature of the D-8 Organization, prioritizing capacity building, and enhancing visibility of D-8 Organization.

**Ambassador Riyaz** from IRS, Pakistan proposed the establishment of a D-8 network of Think Tanks and called upon Think Tanks D-8 countries to designate focal persons while the Secretariat could serve as the coordinator. He also recommended scheduling a monthly or bi-monthly meeting of the Think Tanks to delve on areas of any identified subject within the D-8 Priority areas of cooperation. He added that in-person meeting and conferences of Think Tanks could be considered, in the future. The agenda for the meetings and conferences could include presentations, discussions, and recommendations.



In order to bring together youth from D-8 countries, the idea of a D-8 ‘Writing Competition’ was put forward. It was also suggested that specific activity and focus should be laid in the areas of Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security through dedicated Forums etc.

The SG appreciated the ideas presented and welcomed the proposal to organize monthly or bi-monthly webinars on specific topics in relation to the D-8 cooperation and agenda and stressed that the recommendations from these webinars would be brought to the attention of the Commission.

### **Concluding Remarks and recommendations of the Webinar:**

#### ***Iran:***

Mr. Milad Saki, representative of the D-8 international University, suggested that D-8 International University could be useful to fulfill the scientific needs of The Think Tanks.

Mr. Ali Salehpour recommended outsourcing conceptual or comprehensive studies on the D-8 to enhance cooperation among member states, drawing inspiration from the BRICS model.

*Malaysia:*

Mr. Qarrem highlighted the need to establish an annual journal as well as appointment of a focal point and sharing of contacts to facilitate cross-think-tank collaboration among D-8 member states, stressing the need for the D-8 Think Tanks Network to start small and gradually expand.

**Recommendations:**

- Participants agreed that the D-8 Think Tanks should start small and gradually expand.
- Participants recommended that Think Tanks should nominate focal points and focal segments to the D-8 secretariat.
- It was recommended that the initiative should prioritize the production of an annual journal, focusing on D8's shared areas of interest.
- Participants understood the need to maintain ongoing communication and work towards holding in-person meeting in one of the member states, while noting the need to also work towards coordinating forums on Artificial Intelligence and Cyber Security, with a designated focal point overseeing this effort.
- Participants recommended the establishment of specialized groups to delve into priority areas. This is to allow for more detailed discussions.
- Participants understood the role of youth in development and recommended that the youth should be engaged in the activities of the Network and D-8 by establishing an essay writing competition to encourage their involvement in D-8.
- It was recommended that a dedicated portal for the Think Tank Network should be established on the on D-8 website to serve as a platform for discussion.
- It was recommended that in the medium and long term, the Think Tank should organize annual conference, while monthly or bi-monthly meetings focusing on specific subjects could be held regularly.

**Closing Remarks by SG:**

The SG expressed appreciation for the IRS and its efforts in organizing the meeting. He welcomed the idea of continuing the engagement and called upon member states to volunteer to host the next webinar.

**Closing Remarks Remarks by President of IRS:**

Ambassador Nadeem expressed his gratitude for the realization of the proposed concept and acknowledged the efforts made to bring it to reality.

**Conclusion:**

The D-8 Think Tanks Meeting witnessed extensive discussions and valuable insights into the ways think tanks from D-8 member countries can collaborate and contribute to the development and cooperation agenda of the D8 Organization. The participants expressed their commitment to work together and move forward with a range of initiatives and activities to strengthen the think tank network. The initiative holds great potentials to support ongoing efforts of the member states to develop the D-8 and take the organization to greater heights.

Therefore, the secretariat wishes to enjoin all member states to support this initiative.