

The Report (Revised) of the Special and XIV. Sessions of the Commission
(Tehran, 10-12 January 2004)

1. The Commission held its Special Session in Tehran on 10-11 January 2004.
2. At the outset, the Commissioners and the Executive Director expressed their condolences and sympathies on the tragic earthquake which recently devastated the city of Bam. They shared profound grief of the Iranian people and wished Almighty Allah to bestow its blessing on those who lost their lives.
3. The Commission undertook extensive discussions on the measures to revitalize D-8 activities and enhance the effectiveness of D-8 cooperation and adopted a series of recommendations to be submitted to the Council of Ministers. The text of the recommendations is attached herewith.(Annex I)
4. XIV. Session of the Commission was held on 12 January 2004.
5. The Executive Director briefed the Commission on the activities since the XII. Session of the Commission at which several meetings, seminars had been approved. He stated that since then only the Third Expert Group Meeting on Trade Preferences, Customs Procedures and Trade Barriers was convened while some were postponed due to the inadequate participation and no date was set for others. The Executive Director brought the outcome of the report of the Third Working Group to the attention of the Commissioners.
6. In the light of the recommendations made at the Special Session whereby the Commission emphasized the priority of trade and trade related matters within D-8 cooperation, it was agreed to convene of the meeting of high officials of the D-8 ministries of trade alongside the Tehran Summit to discuss the subjects approved at the Special Session.
7. The Commission then considered all the technical meetings which had been approved at the XII. Session, including those postponed, and in the light of the recommendations made at the Special Session decided to adopt at its next session a calendar of events for the current year on the basis of the feed back from the member states, indicating their interests as well as tentative dates for their convening by the host countries. The list of these meetings is attached herewith. (Annex II)
8. Concerning the meeting of prospective partners and potential shareholders of the IMTC which had to be postponed, the Commissioner of Egypt informed the Commission that their Chambers of Commerce could not receive any response from other D-8 Chambers in the course of consultations conducted on the margins of

various meetings of D-8 private sectors, adding that she could not however take any position on this matter before consulting their relevant authorities about the fate of this project. In the discussions, it was suggested that the meeting of the Business Forum will provide yet another opportunity to ascertain the interest of the D-8 private sectors in this project.

9. In view of the importance of the shipping for the expansion of intra-trade, the urgency was stressed to organise the working group meeting on shipping which was pending for the last three years. The Commissioner of the I.R. of Iran stated that taking advantage of the Summit, they would endeavour to convene this meeting. It was also suggested that in case Bangladesh may not be in a position to do so, another member country may volunteer to organise this meeting at an early date.

10. The Commissioner of Malaysia informed the Commission of the invitation of his authorities to the D-8 governments and private sectors to join the ASEAN Retakaful International LTD. and circulated the text of this offer. In case the member countries are interested, the Company will be converted into D-8 Retakaful LTD.

11. The Iranian Commissioner briefed the Commission on the preparations for the Tehran Summit and responded to various questions raised in this respect. A briefing note is attached herewith. (Annex III)

12. The Commission considered draft text of the Tehran Declaration for submission to the Council of Ministers. Final reading of the text will be done at the XV. Session which will precede the Summit.

13. The Commission expressed their profound thanks and gratitude to the Iranian Government for its warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. They also congratulated H.E. Dr. Seyed M. Hossein Adeli for his very able chairmanship to conduct the meeting of the Commission in the most effective way.

10-11 January 2004

Recommendations by the Commission at its Special Session on the revitalization of D-8 Cooperation

1. In order to demonstrate the importance we attach to the D-8 cooperation, we should consolidate our D-8 vision, based on the goals and principles embodied in the Istanbul Declaration.

2. To be more focused and enhance efficiency, we have to prioritize and set targets on selected core subjects on annual basis. Based on each year's priorities, we have to

review/evaluate the D-8 programs and define whether they are viable/non-viable, realistic/non-realistic, affordable/non-affordable; we then have to set time frame for the implementation of projects and announce calendar of events on annual basis following the discussions and approval at the first Commission meeting of each year.

3. We should ensure convening the regular meetings of Commission twice a year as required in the Document “Structure and Functioning” with a view to better follow up the program and projects and their implementation. We should also take necessary measures to ensure timely organization of the meetings and the programs in various sectors, expeditious communication between relevant departments, timely nomination of participants, satisfactory attendance at the meetings by the experts from capitals, thorough preparation by the participants for the meetings, written comments well before the meetings required.

4. In order to create a conducive environment for cooperation and to facilitate interaction among the member countries, we should attempt to connect our economies and markets by eliminating/reducing tariff and non-tariff barriers and harmonizing economic and trade policies and regulations. To this effect, priority of trade and investment i.e. elimination of trade barriers, free trade, etc. has been emphasized.

5. We are of the opinion that engaging in negotiations to conclude TPS (Trade Preferential System) or FTA (Free Trade Area) arrangements within the context of D-8 on the basis of a framework agreement would further advance the objectives of our cooperation. To this end, special meeting of trade ministers is recommended to be convened. A high level expert group meeting would also be held to prepare the meeting of trade ministers.

6. In order to enhance its participation in D-8 cooperation, we have to create conducive environment for the private sector by offering various incentives including extending credit facilities, organizing meetings and seminars amongst the chambers of commerce, granting visa facilities, etc.

7. Whereas the Commissioners are the focal points of D-8, there is a need to devise a mechanism on sectoral basis to report to the Commissioners and facilitate for them to monitor the implementation of the projects and decisions in each member country.

8. Taking into account the failure of the WTO Cancun Ministerial Meeting, which represents a major setback to the objectives of global growth and poverty reduction and macro economic imbalances in world economy, we have to engage in

consultations and in efforts to harmonize our position in multilateral trading discussions as well as in other international conferences as appropriate.

9. In order to promote public awareness of D-8 and its activities in our countries, we could establish relationship between universities, scientific institutions, NGOs, etc., and organize cultural activities and sports events, offer field trips and scholarships for the students of the D-8 member countries. It is recommended that the meetings of D-8 Ambassadors to be hosted by the Commissioners be held every three months in each Capital. In New York, Permanent Representatives are also recommended to meet for consultations on subjects of common interest.

10. We decided to commemorate June 15 as the D-8 day every year in each Capital.

11. In order to give impetus to D-8 sectoral cooperation, we recommend that ministerial meetings be held as required and approved by the Commission.

12. We should strengthen the exchange of information by way of feeding and updating the ITDB and other data bases regularly.

13. We should establish working relationship including dialogue partnership with other international organisations with priority of UN agencies and those who are willing to offer their financial and technical assistance. Their experts could be invited to participate in D-8 meetings and to jointly develop concrete projects. In the case of non-member countries who are ready to offer their financial and technical assistance, the decision will be taken by the Commission on a case-by-case basis with the approval of each D-8 member.

14. The view was expressed that the existing structure of the Secretariat and its budget should be kept as it is under the present circumstances. In case the Secretariat is given additional mandate for the enhancement of the activities, then its structure, staff and the budget would be reviewed. Secondment of the Secretariat by the members with their experts might also be considered.