

VII. SESSION OF THE COMMISSION

(Dhaka, 22-23 February 2000)

COMMISSION,

Reaffirming the D-8 Guiding Principles,

Underlining once again the large potential of co-operation among member countries in the designated sectors of co-operation for the economic growth and social development of their countries,

Having met in Dhaka on 22-23 February 2000,

Adopted the following decisions,

AGRICULTURE

1. Expresses its appreciation to Pakistan for printing the Directory of Experts, Scientists and Institutions in the field of aquaculture, and noted its offer for developing a web page and to issue a revised version updating the information and adding data on businessmen operating in this field.
2. Requests the member countries to ensure widest circulation of the Directory to all relevant institutions and firms in the public and private sectors so that efficient exchange of knowledge, experience and expertise take place between those members with capacity and the others in need.
3. Welcomes the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to insert the information provided in the Directory into the ITDB web site under the respective country pages in order to facilitate prompt and easy access.
4. Appreciates the successful course on Brackish Water, organized by Malaysia and emphasises upon the need to follow on the future line of action for including new areas of co-operation in the field of aquaculture.
5. Invites the member countries to organise similar training courses, seminars, etc. to share their experience and expertise, including the involvement of their private sector.
6. Expresses its appreciation to Pakistan for organising the Workshop on Food Security and endorses its recommendations.
7. Requests member countries to co-ordinate their position with respect to negotiations on food trade liberalisation in various international fora to prevent any adverse consequences of the liberalisation of food trade, affecting the

socio-economic life of population of countries whose income largely depends on the production of food.

8. Requests member countries, who have not yet done so, to designate focal points in their respective ministries dealing with food & agriculture and disseminate the recommendations of the Workshop within their countries.

9. Requests the Executive Director to submit a progress report on the implementation of these recommendations of the workshop to the Ninth Session of the Commission, based on the information which will be provided by the member countries.

10. Welcomes the proposals of Egypt on aquaculture and food security and requests the competent authorities in the member countries to provide their views and comments on the following proposals:

a. Utilizing the water covered surface areas, coastal marine areas and marine areas close to the shore and strengthening intra D-8 co-operation.

b. Organizing training programs for cadres so as to utilize mixed fresh/ marine water resources in fish production via cage culture or semi intensive aquaculture.

c. Utilizing Marine Coastal areas via employing marine cage culture methods in the production of high export quality fish types, sea bream, sea bass, grey mullet and certain aquatic invertebrates, as well as specially making use of the areas where agricultural irrigation water resources are located.

d. Installing cages in marine water, as well as establishing shrimp and sea bass hatcheries in marine water so as to promote the fisheries industry with a view to decreasing dependence on natural fisheries.

e. Setting up a food dissemination system at the household level in the member countries.

f. Disseminating of information on food, agriculture and technology development among member countries through the respective national focal points.

11. Also welcomes the intention of the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold the following activities in the agriculture sector:

a. Research and educational workshops on fisheries.

b. A workshop on food security with special emphasis on food safety.

c. A joint fair on agricultural machinery and requests it to provide more details on these activities to the member countries.

INDUSTRY

12. Appreciates the work of the Study Group and congratulates the Turkish Aerospace Industries (TAI) for manufacturing the prototype of the agricultural aircraft.

13. Requests the member countries to expedite their response concerning open items' list/parts of the agricultural aircraft, which may be supplied by them with competitive prices.

14. Further requests interested member countries to expedite the information on their quantitative need of the agricultural aircraft.

15. Welcomes the willingness of interested member countries to participate in the engineering work and serial production of the aircraft, as offered by TAI.

16. Invites TAI to finalize the issue of certification with the relevant Turkish authorities.

17. Welcomes the joint invitation by the Turkish Government and TAI to the esteemed D-8 Ministers of Industry to attend the inaugural flights that are reported to take place soon.

18. Requests, in pursuance of the Dhaka Declaration, interested member countries to inform TAI of their approximate needs of the multipurpose aircraft so that the design and engineering work may start on this new version.

TRADE

IMTC Project

19. Expresses its appreciation to the Government of Egypt for organising II and III Expert Group Meetings on Trade and the extensive work undertaken by the trade co-ordinator particularly on the IMTC Project.

20. Endorses the recommendation of the III Expert Group Meeting on Trade in Cairo on 19-20 January 2000.

21. Expresses its appreciation to the International Trade Centre (ITC) for its technical advise and contribution to the discussions in the Working Groups.

22. Approves in principle the reduced revised cost of the feasibility study.

23. Deeply appreciates the IDB's offer to contribute to the financing of the feasibility study and requests Egypt to contact the IDB with a view to

reconsider the terms attached to its offer, in particular the requirement that the proposed IMTC should not involve itself in actual trading except through the means of counter trade, as the Commission considers trading as the main objective of the proposed company and further requests the IDB to consider waiving the 50% ceiling attached to its offer.

24. Calls upon the participating member countries to declare their readiness to contribute, albeit in a symbolic amount, to the cost of the feasibility study as soon as possible, in any case before the end of March, in order to demonstrate their commitment to the project.

25. Gives in principle the authorisation to Egypt to sign the grant agreement with the IDB.

26. Requests Egypt and Nigeria, the African D-8 members, to approach the African Development Bank and Egypt as the co-ordinating country to approach other international financial institutions to seek contributions to the project so that the participating countries' share in financing the feasibility study is minimised.

27. Decides that the project should become private sector driven, and accordingly requests the member countries to encourage their private sector through the chambers of commerce to participate in the project.

28. Welcomes the establishment of an independent D-8 Forum for Chambers of Commerce & Industry and Business Associations and calls upon the Governments to encourage their national chambers of commerce & industry and business associations to sign its Charter so that the Forum will start functioning soon.

29. Invites the newly established D-8 Forum for Chambers of Commerce & Industry and Business Associations to launch the IMTC Project among the D-8 Business Community on the occasion of the forthcoming meeting of the OIC Chambers of Commerce & Business Associations which will take place in Doha on 15-17 October 2000, and accordingly requests the D-8 member countries to encourage their businessmen to attend this meeting.

TRADE RELATED ISSUES

30. Expresses its appreciation to Malaysia for organising the seminar on Trade Facilitation and Simplification of Customs Procedures, held on 09-12 November 1999 in Kuala Lumpur.
31. Recommends the member countries to undertake in-depth study of the experience of ASEAN and APEC and, taking into account the findings of their study, also recommends to submit before the next session of the Commission to the Executive Director a description of their customs procedures coupled with their views and proposals to facilitate customs co-operation and eliminate existing obstacles.
32. Requests the Executive Director to transmit the views and proposals on simplification of customs procedures by the member countries in an analytical format to the International Trade Center (ITC) and further requests the ITC to examine the potentials of customs harmonisation within D-8 in accordance with the recommendation of the 3rd Expert Group Meeting on Trade.
33. Welcomes the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to establish a Customs Association for member countries and requests the competent authorities in the member countries to provide their views and comments on that proposal, based on the information to be provided by Iran.
34. Requests those members, who have not yet done so, to submit their comments on the Iranian draft agreement on easing visa procedures for businessmen.
35. Agrees to consider at its next session, on the basis of comments by the member countries, the conclusion of a agreement for easing visa procedures for the businessmen, which will be open to interested member countries.
36. Recommends meanwhile the members to expedite issuing visas, as appropriate, for businessmen with the simplest possible procedures.
37. Calls upon those members that have not yet done so to engage in negotiations to conclude between them agreements on the avoidance of double taxation and promotion/encouragement of investments and requests the Executive Director to submit a progress report on the status of existing agreements.
38. Endorses the recommendations of the III Expert Group on Trade regarding the simplification and harmonisation of banking measures by central

banks in line with the internationally recognised practices and the adherence by the banks to the criteria of banking loans as stated in the Basle Convention.

39. Requests member countries to recommend to their central banks to consider positively the proposal to set up a committee comprising the representatives of the D-8 central banks to meet alongside the annual meeting of the Board of Governors of the IDB.

40. Recommends the member countries, who have not yet done so, to utilise to the maximum extent the existing mechanisms functioning under the OIC and IDB (ICDT, OICIS NET) for the exchange of trade information.

41. Invites member countries, who have not yet done so, to designate their focal points which will be responsible for providing trade and business information.

42. Requests Egypt to prepare the structure and format of the proposed trade database and to circulate it to the national focal points through the Executive Director before the next session of the Commission.

43. Further requests Egypt as the Trade Co-ordinator to make this information available on its trade-point web-site, and also requests the Islamic Republic of Iran to put the database in the ITDB web-site.

44. Expresses its appreciation to Egypt for convening the First Expert Group Meeting on Shipping that was held in Alexandria, Egypt on 15-16 November, 1999 and endorses the recommendations adopted in the field of shipping, in particular, the designation by the member countries of their local focal points for exchange of information about ships and cargo, and establishment of direct shipping services between the member countries.

45. Welcomes the following proposals of Egypt in the area of Shipping and requests the competent authorities in the member countries to provide their views and comments on them:

a. The establishment of a committee comprising Shipping experts to discuss ways and means of updating available information about national flag vessels, cargo movement and facilities and conditions of the main ports in the respective countries, including through posting this information on the e-mail

of the major forwarder to be designated by each country, and to be free of charge for the utilization of member countries.

b. The offer by the Egyptian Company for Maritime Transport to establish a liaison office on its own premises to be responsible for gathering information concerning the cargo movements, as well as freight tenders for interested member countries, and to be operated by local staff and fully covered in terms of expenses by the company.

c. Similarly, each interested member country would have to name a local liaison office, the expenses of which would be covered by each respective country.

46. Welcomes the proposal of Bangladesh to form a Shipping Business Forum involving entrepreneurs of member countries which could help much needed partnership on joint venture basis and thereby help necessary expansion and sustainability of shipping trade in the member countries and requests the competent authorities in the member countries to provide their views and comments on the above proposal.

47. Welcomes the readiness expressed by ECO Shipping Company to co-operate with D-8 shipping programme as conveyed by Iran.

48. Welcomes the offer of co-operation by the organisation of the Islamic Ship Owners' Association which was conveyed through Egypt by the Secretary General of that organisation.

49. Underlines the importance of SMEs (Small and Medium range Enterprises) in the overall development of the economies of D-8 countries, and accordingly invites the member governments to encourage co-operation amongst their entities supporting SME's.

50. Decides that the Republic of Turkey acts as co-ordinator in the field of SMEs.

TELECOMMUNICATION & INFORMATION AND SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

51. Endorses the recommendations of the Second Workshop on ITDB Project including the step-by-step Plan of Action and appreciates the work undertaken by the co-ordinating country (I.R. of Iran) in designing and constructing a fully dynamic web-site and web-based data base for this purpose.

52. Calls upon member countries to post their own information on different areas of industry, consultants, R & D etc. and to feed the web-site with as much information as possible on other programs and projects.
53. Requests the co-ordinating country to operationalize the ITDB web-site by May 10, 2000 and also requests all member countries to publicize the site to the maximum extent possible.
54. Requests the member countries, who have not yet done so, to designate their national focal points/administrators and provide their E-mail addresses at the earliest. The national administrators shall enter relevant information concerning their country in the web-site and will meet in Tehran one month before the launching of the web-site for final co-ordination.
55. Further Requests the member countries to submit through the Executive Director their views on the Iranian proposal concerning the three alternatives for the future utilization and expansion of ITDB, including the establishment of the private Data Bank Network, to the next session of the Commission.
56. While appreciating the Islamic Republic of Iran's approach to ITU (International Telecommunication Union) and possible co-operation of ITU with D-8, encourages the I.R of Iran to continue its contacts with ITU for preparing a feasibility study on e-commerce among the D-8 countries, within the framework of assistance to developing countries through the ECDC (E-Commerce for Developing Countries) program, as well as other interested international organizations.

POVERTY ALLEVIATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT

57. Expresses its appreciation to Indonesia for organising a Joint Meeting of Experts and Decision Makers on Social Safety Nets held in Jakarta on 13-17 August 1999 and endorses its recommendations.
58. Underlines the importance of continued exchange of information on their social safety nets programs as well as their experience in poverty alleviation, and requests the member countries to follow up the implementation of the recommendations of the Joint Meeting as well as of the Seminar on Poverty Alleviation, also held in Jakarta on 16-19 June 1998.

59. Requests the Executive Director to submit progress report to the Ninth Session of the Commission on the implementation of these recommendations, based on the information to be provided on request by member countries.

60. Requests Indonesia as the Co-ordinator to consider presenting to the next Session of the Commission proposals on how to commence co-operation among member countries in the areas of human resources development and poverty alleviation, including training programs.

61. Welcomes the Indonesian initiatives to prepare the data of experts as well as to compile a compendium on activities and programmes relating to human resources development and poverty alleviation.

62. Welcomes the proposal of Bangladesh to share its experience in micro-credit, rural development and poverty alleviation.

FINANCE-BANKING –PRIVATIZATION

63. Expresses its appreciation to Malaysia for organising the International Workshop on Re-takaful (31 May-1 June 1999), the Seminar on Islamic Banking and Finance (2-4 June 1999) and the Training Programme on Banking (13-25 September 1999).

64. Endorses the resolutions of the International Workshop on Re-takaful and calls upon interested member countries to take necessary measures and actions to realize the objectives.

65. Urges interested member countries of D-8 to promote and encourage the active involvement of the private sector in establishing takaful companies so as to ensure the future of ASEAN Re-takaful International (L) Ltd. as a viable D-8 Re-takaful company, jointly owned and supported by the majority of takaful industry companies.

66. Urges interested member countries of D-8 to contribute towards the process of creating a conducive environment for the takaful industry to develop and prosper.

67. Invites Islamic insurance companies/financial institutions in member countries if any, to consider participating in the enlarged paid-up capital of ARIL to ensure that they become meaningful contributors to ARIL's business growth by becoming shareholders and participating in re-takaful arrangements with ARIL.

68. Appreciates the readiness of Malaysia to organise technical training programmes on finance this year and on privatization in the year 2001.

69. Takes note of the proposal of Egypt, that the Federation of Insurance and Re-insurers (FAIR), headquartered in Cairo-should co-ordinate between the various insurance companies that undertake Islamic Reinsurance Operations with a view to increasing intra D-8 co-ordination in the field of Islamic Reinsurance (Re-takaful).

70. Welcomes the offer by the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold training courses and seminars for the interested D-8 countries on Islamic banking.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

71. Decides that the project entitled "Promoting Rural Industrialisation by Comprehensive Approach" should speedily be implemented, and for this purpose requests Bangladesh the co-ordinating country and Egypt the sponsoring country to jointly prepare, if necessary, a revised version of the project in the light of comments received from member countries.

72. Requests these two members to approach UNIDO on the basis of the revised project to seek technical and financial assistance for its implementation.

ENERGY

73. Expresses its earnest hope that Nigeria as the co-ordinating country will soon convene the Working Group meeting on Energy.

74. Welcomes the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran to organise an oil and gas workshop.

75. Expresses its appreciation to Indonesia for organising a Training Program on Solar Energy Systems for Isolated Villages (SESIV), held in Jakarta between 29 November till 1st December 1999, as well as a Training Program on Micro-hydro Power Plant, held in Jakarta from 22-25 February 2000, and endorses its recommendations and requests the member countries to inform at the Ninth Session of the Commission, through the Executive Director, of the actions taken on the implementation of these recommendations and in this respect hopes that D-8 as a group would take initiative to seek external funding for financing projects in the rural energy sector.

PERMANENT UNIT (COORDINATING CENTER)

76. The Commission discussed the modalities of setting up a permanent unit, in accordance with Paragraph 30 of the Dhaka Declaration. The members were deeply appreciative of the generosity of Turkey to provide the Executive Director, his staff, and the office and facilities up to the year 2000.

77. The Commission felt that, thereafter, the co-ordination should continue to be performed by a small establishment, as is being done at present, until such time the volume of work warrants a full-fledged secretariat. The members also agreed to make a yearly financial contribution to the tune of US\$ 100,000, excluding Turkey, towards the expenses of the unit. Turkey is expected to meet the rest of the cost of the unit. The modalities of the contribution would be discussed at the next Commission Meeting, for a recommendation to the Council. It was also agreed that this would be a transitional arrangement, to be reviewed before the end of the Chairmanship of Egypt.

LIAISON

78. It was decided that Bangladesh as the Chairman of the D-8, the Islamic Republic of Iran as the Chairman of OIC and Malaysia as the host country of the next Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers would submit a draft resolution in general terms on the establishment of liaison with OIC and IDB, for the approval of the Foreign Ministers.

79. Requests the Executive Director to discuss with their secretariats the modalities of co-operation and to submit to the next session of the Commission the draft texts of memoranda of understanding which may be agreed upon ad referendum with them to spell out these modalities.

NEXT SESSIONS OF THE COMMISSION AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

80. Decides that the next session (VIII.) be held in New York, on the sidelines of the UNGA, to immediately precede the IV. Session of the Council of Ministers. The dates for the meeting would be co-ordinated by the chair country in consultation with the member countries.

OTHER MATTERS

81. Welcomes the offer made by the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold a meeting of the representatives of Technical and Engineering Consulting Associations of member countries in the first half of the year 2000 and with

the active participation of the Islamic Association of Engineering Consultants, as a follow up to para 27 of the Dhaka Declaration with a view to consider the establishment of a D-8 Federation of Technical and Engineering Consulting Association and requested the member countries to encourage active participation of their private sector in this event.

82. Welcomes the suggestion of the Islamic Republic of Iran to use the D-8 databank network for the dissemination of relevant D-8 documents by member countries, where appropriate, under their respective country pages in order to facilitate their accessibility.

83. Welcomes the offer made by Turkey, acting as the co-ordinating country for environment, to organise a working group meeting on environment between the months of May and August in order to find out the priority areas of member countries for this purpose (Turkey will soon distribute a proposal containing a list of priority areas of co-operation) and also welcomes the proposal of the Islamic Republic of Iran to hold a meeting on the issues of technical co-operation in environment and co-ordination of positions of member countries in international fora regarding this issue. It is the understanding of the Commission that any member country may organise workshops, seminars, etc. in various aspects of the environment, once the proposed list of areas of priorities is agreed upon.

84. The Commissioners expressed their gratitude to the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh for its warm welcome and generosity and for the excellent arrangements for the Commission Meeting. They also expressed their deep appreciation to the Chairman for efficiently conducting the work of the Seventh Session of the D-8 Commission.