

Agenda 6: Statement of the D-8 Secretary-General

Mr. Chairman,

Hon'ble Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

Assalamualaikum

It is an honour and privilege to welcome Your Excellencies to the 17th Session of the D-8 Council of Ministers here in Istanbul, Turkey. Since the last meeting, i.e. 16th session of the Council of Ministers held in December 2013 in Islamabad, Pakistan, a lot has been awaiting the Council for review and approval, in addition to the core subject of the 9th D-8 Summit. I would like to express my profound appreciation for your valuable presence and support in this important meeting despite your extremely busy schedule.

I thankfully register my gratitude to Member States for their strong support, trust and confidence put in me to serve their economic, social and development causes as well as to serve the causes of solidarity in general. It was an honour to serve as your Secretary-General for almost five years. During this period, I had the opportunity to meet almost all the Foreign Ministers on different occasions and received your invaluable guidance for betterment of the Organization. I pursued with cordial endeavor and effort in order to fulfil the confidence entrusted upon me as the D-8 Secretary-General. I strived my best to implement your guidelines into actions in accordance with the D-8 Charter and the Statutory Documents.

Mr. Chairman

Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Upon my joining the Secretariat in January 2013, I felt that there were a lot of areas awaiting more attention and improvement. I along with my small team of professionals incessantly made efforts to bring the Secretariat into action-oriented diplomatic establishment, from substantive works to the diplomatic communication standards. We streamlined the areas of cooperation, priority areas in particular, and made the duties and responsibilities specific in a more clustered and structured approach. My effort has started to yield outcome in terms of delivering productively and more efficiently in the Secretariat.

I was successful to imprint the idea of the transition from policy-making to the project implementation phase within the Organization. I was able to convince the leadership that the benefits of the establishment of this Organization must be tangibly visible in order to make our peoples believe that the noble idea of such an Organization back in 1997 is relevant with the rapid geo-political changes around the world. I felt the need for more efforts to augment visibility of the Organization and tried to enhance its presence in whatever manner possible. On external relations, not only the obtainment of observer status in the United Nations General Assembly was a successful effort, but also a lot of other institutional arrangements during my period added to the strength of the D-8 Organization both horizontally and vertically.

Now, **Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen**, please let me draw your kind attention to the progress made during this time. You are kindly aware that the Organization identified five priority areas of cooperation namely, Agriculture, Industry and SME, Trade, Transportation and Energy; Tourism has been added as the sixth area of priority cooperation. The leaders also emphasized that in all areas of cooperation, strong linkage with trade should be established. Keeping that directive in mind, I had continuously consulted Member States and stakeholders so that our trade target was achieved and significant progress was made in priority and other areas of cooperation.

Now, in Agricultural cooperation, 4th and 5th Ministerial meeting was held in 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria and in 2014 in Istanbul, Turkey in which, the D-8 Agriculture Ministers outlined short and long-term goals and strategies the D-8 Organization in order to achieve its objectives. Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the establishment of D-8 Fertilizer Association has been finalized.

On Industry and SME, 4th and 5th Ministerial meetings took place in 2015 in Tehran, Iran and in 2016 in Cairo, Egypt, respectively. The Tehran Declaration and subsequent Cairo Declaration adopted Strategic plan on D-8 industrial cooperation, agreed to finalize Terms of Reference for the Task Forces and establish Database of directory of institutions for each Task Force and Scientists and Technologists in D-8 Member States. In this area, the D-8 Petrochemical Association and D-8 Automotive Association were established. Simultaneously, Government of the Republic of Turkey undertook and accomplished an information webpage for industry actors in the name of www.d8coop.com. We have seen that the D-8 Transfer of Technology and Exchange Network (TTEN) based in Tehran, Iran has been working hard to facilitate technology transfer within the D-8 Member States. Next month (14-16 November 2017) we are going to Abuja, Nigeria to hold another round of consultation at the level of Ministers.

On the issue of D-8 Trade cooperation, the backbone of our cooperation, 1st and 2nd Ministerial meetings were held in 2013 in Abuja, Nigeria and 2016 in Islamabad, Pakistan. The Ministerial Meeting in Islamabad announced date of implementation of the D-8 PTA from 1st of July 2016. Many steps forward have been made throughout the works of the Supervisory Committee on Trade and the Ministerial platform; still, we have yet to make significant leap forward. Although the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) has already been operational, trade between D-8 Member States under the PTA has yet to commence. I have the honour to draw the kind attention of the D-8 leadership so that trade cooperation receives accelerated momentum.

On Transportation cooperation, we have yet to hold the 1st Ministerial meeting. Although good progress has been made in civil aviation sector and the Directors-General are meeting every year to review their progress, other sub-sectors such as shipping, multimodal transportation etc. have yet to initiate discussion. I have approached our Member States innumerable times to hold meetings in this area but succeeded with little outcome. As I have mentioned, in civil aviation sector, we will hold 11th round of regular consultation at the level of Directors-General of Civil Aviation on 27-28 November 2017 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

On Energy sector, there were some scattered activities, especially on Renewable Energy but we have no concrete activity per say. 1st Energy Ministers' meeting which was postponed after the sad mine accident in Turkey in 2014, did never see light afterwards. Whereas all our Member States are both producers and heavy consumers of carbon as well as renewable energy, we failed so far to convince our stakeholders the need for a long-term D-8 partnership in this sector. I have mentioned many a time in relevant occasions that we must be inward looking whilst we look for prospect of energy cooperation; we can be inter-dependent and more resilient from outside shock should we build our own network of energy security. I request our eminent leaders here in this Summit for directives so that we can foresee pragmatic and cooperative approach to further our common agenda in all these areas.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

I felt the need for a comprehensive review of the Organization's progress and subsequent recommendation for renewed momentum. When I floated the idea of Eminent Persons Group (EPG)

meeting, it was approved by the Council. The idea was to bring together finest minds from the Member States and to receive their critical views, suggestions on the pursuit of the Organization. I express my gratitude and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for their financial support rendered to implement the initiative. EPG recommendations have been reflected in the D-8 Istanbul Plan of Action that the Leadership will consider in this Summit.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Though the D-8 was founded in 1997 and 20 years have passed, it has been less visible in its activities and public diplomacy in the Member States. Since the beginning of my assignment as the D-8 Secretary-General, I have put significant importance to the improvement of visibility of our Organization. As part of this, I held interviews with press and media, interacted with universities and institutions. On the External Relations front, based on our engagement and other activities, our efforts have borne remarkable progress in terms of visibility and development of partnership. With our concerted efforts, D-8 was granted observer status in the United Nations General Assembly on 10 December 2014. In addition to the observer status in the UNGA, we established institutional relationships with, *inter alia*, African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), Turkish International Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Agriculture and Rural Development Support Institution (ARDSI) of Turkey, United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), International Trade Centre (ITC), United Cities and Local Government – Middle East and West Africa (UCLG-MEWA) and the Erbakan Foundation.

On the occasion of the Summit of D-8 Leadership, we are going to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with the Islamic Development Bank to support us financially which is very important in the absence of any financial mechanism.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

Please allow me to give you a brief overview on the agenda items to be discussed in this meeting.

Under Agenda item No. 8, the Council will review the Summit documents finalized and recommended by the Commission in its last sessions and subsequently recommend the same for adoption by the Summit tomorrow. The Documents for consideration are the draft Istanbul Declaration 2017 and the draft D-8 Istanbul Plan of Action.

Under Agenda item No. 9, the Council will consider and adopt the Reports of 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th and 3 (three) Special Sessions of the D-8 Commission. Since the last Council meeting in December 2013, the D-8 Commission met in five regular sessions and three extra-ordinary sessions in Islamabad and Istanbul. The reports contain the provisionally approved Budget of D-8 Secretariat for 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018 as well as the amendments to the Statutory Documents adopted by the Commission in its earlier sessions.

Under Agenda item No. 12, the Council may finalize the date and venue of the 18th Session of the D-8 Council of Ministers.

Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

This Summit marks the 2nd phase of the life-cycle of the Organization. We need to be more action-oriented and focused in order to make the project development phase of the Organization more fruitful and result-driven. However, I felt that the Organization needs attention in three primary areas viz. adequate financial mechanism to fund and finance the projects and programmes, required number of staff and suitable premises for the Secretariat to carry out its activities. I streamlined the Secretariat as best as I could although I felt strong need for manpower and resources. I hope that the new Secretary-General would get better support from all the Member States in order for him to find, at ease, to carry forward the responsibilities entrusted upon him.

I wish to heartily welcome H.E. Dato Ku Jaafar Ku Shaari as the new D-8 Secretary-General and assure him of all cooperation should he require during his office in the D-8 Secretariat.

And finally, on a personal note, please allow me to register my special thanks to Pakistan for everlong period of chairmanship and most sincere gratitude and appreciation to the People and Government of the Republic of Turkey, and the historic, beautiful, and memorable City of Istanbul. I have enjoyed living and working here, with a whole lot of nice memories to cherish.

Finally, **Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen**, I once again thank you for your support and wish all the best for the D-8 family and the Member States.

Thank you very much.