

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

**Her Excellency . Sheikh Hasina,
Hon'ble Prime Minister of the Government of the
People's Republic of Bangladesh
Excellencies
Ladies and Gentlemen**

السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،

It is a distinct honour and privilege for me to represent the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in today's Virtual 10th Summit of the D-8.

The Muslim world is experiencing a historic demographic shift. Most of the OIC member countries are blessed with a relative young population. Currently, More than 338 million young people of 56 OIC countries are between 15 to 24 years of age. It means that 28% of the world's total

youth today live in the Muslim world. This number is projected to increase to 30.7% by 2030.

The tremendous and invaluable youth capital should be harnessed and developed to drive economic, and social change. However, the youth in the Islamic world face critical issues like growth of violent extremism, radicalization, exclusion, Islamphobia, and economic deprivation. These challenges hamper their ability to contribute to the development and prosperity of their countries. Lack of employment opportunities leads to lack of opportunities in life and socio-economic marginalization of our youth that also leads to extremism and political instability.

Today the world is witnessing a new historic technological revolution; one as fundamental as the industrial revolutions of the past few hundred years. The emerging technologies such as the internet of things, Artificial intelligence,

robotics and big data are revolutionizing almost all spheres of our life. Such vast increase in technological capabilities always creates new challenges and opportunities for the developing countries. In most of the developing countries, utilization of these new technologies has been fairly limited due to a variety of factors, including weak technological infrastructure, shortage of skilled technical personnel in these fields, limited resources and difficult overall economic conditions.

The OIC fully recognizes the emergence/importance of these new challenges to the economic development, societal inclusion and cohesion of its Member States. We believe that promotion of Science, Technology and innovation has a crucial role in providing our youth with decent employment thus enabling the Member States to break the nexus between poverty, disease, illiteracy and extremism.

Given the predominantly young population of the Muslim countries, the OIC has devised many strategies to harness their potential. The OIC Charter accords priority attention to the creation of conducive conditions for sound upbringing of children and the youth in an environment free from all forms of intimidation, religious or cultural discrimination.

To this end, OIC has adopted a number of policy frameworks. The 13th Islamic Summit held in 2016, adopted the OIC – 2025: Programme of Action that places special emphasis on the need for youth capacity building and guided engagement in critical sectors of economic growth, peace and security, human rights and entrepreneurship.

Similarly, The OIC leaders during the First OIC Summit on Science & Technology held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in September 2017 adopted a Ten-year Plan ‘OIC STI

Agenda 2026’ that called for “Nurturing a True Scientific Culture in Young Minds”. The OIC Member States agreed to work for increasing allocation for education to a minimum of 8% of their annual national budgets.

In order to implement the vision of the Head of states of the Member countries, OIC Ministers of youth regularly meet every two years. The 4th Session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers held in the Republic of Azerbaijan in 2018 adopted a comprehensive OIC youth strategy to strengthen intra-OIC cooperation to improve well-being of youth in OIC Member States and eradicate socio-economic developmental challenges that they face through joint-actions.

Excellencies,

The concerns and challenges faced by the youth today are quite different from those faced by the old generation. We have to listen to them, bridge the gaps between the

generations and take the right policy decisions for fully exploiting the potential of our young population and recent technologic advancement.

OIC on its part is working with its Member States to increase intra-OIC and international collaborations for a meaningful transformation to innovation-led and knowledge-based economy by taking necessary steps for the creation, development and diffusion of new technologies and the empowerment of the youth.

Thank you,

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته