

**WELCOME STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF D-8 ORGANIZATION
FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION, H.E. AMBASSADOR ISIAKA ABDULQADIR
IMAM, AT THE RECEPTION JOINTLY ORGANIZED BY THE D-8 SECRETARIAT
AND ERBAKAN FOUNDATION IN COMMEMORATION OF THE 25TH
ANNIVERSARY OF D-8 ORGANIZATION AT THE CIRAGAN PALACE, ISTANBUL
ON WEDNESDAY 15 JUNE 2022**

Dr. Fatih Erbakan,

The President of the Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan Foundation,

Honourable Ministers here Present,

Distinguished Members of the Board of Erbakan Foundation,

Excellencies and Ambassador from D-8 Countries,

Distinguished Invited Guests,

Members of the Press,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asalam o Alaikum and Good Morning to you all,

I feel exceedingly delighted to address you all today. As we are all aware, this day marks the Silver Jubilee Anniversary of the establishment of the D-8 organization. It is right here in this historic city of Istanbul and at this same Ciragan Palace we are present today that the Heads of State and Government of eight countries namely, **Bangladesh, Egypt, Iran, Indonesia, Nigeria, Malaysia, Pakistan and Turkiye**, gathered under the direction of visionary leader and a renowned

scholar, the late Prime Minister, Dr. Necmettin Erbakan, to establish this noble organization with the Istanbul Declaration on this day 15 June, 1997, which is also being regarded as the first summit that birthed the D-8 organization for Economic Cooperation Countries.

Let me use this opportunity to thank the President of Erbakan Foundation Dr. Fatih Erbakan, and members of the Foundation for partnering with the D-8 Secretariat to organize this Reception in commemoration of the anniversary of the founding of D-8 organization. I am aware this has been an annual event for the foundation to celebrate the visionary leadership of Dr. Erbakan, who conceived the idea of D-8 organization. It is fitting and proper to continue to celebrate him for his service to humanity. Permit me to also extend warm welcome to Honourable Ministers from D-8 Countries, all D-8 Ambassadors here present, the Diplomatic community, and all the distinguished guests, to this important gathering.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Invited Guests and Ladies Gentlemen,

I would like to pay my tribute to H.E. Late Professor Necmettin Erbakan, former Prime Minister of Turkey and founding Father of D-8 Organization. The late Prime Minister was not only a great statesman but also a widely-lauded personality in Islamic World. He was passionate for humanity, freedom, justice and development in Islamic societies. He aimed to develop and prosper Turkey and Islamic world as he attached great importance to cooperation among Islamic countries. He stood against all acts of injustice and wrongdoings that caused sufferings to peoples around the world. On this note, Excellencies and Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, let me humbly make

a request to all of us to kindly stand up and observe a minute silence in memory of our great leader, Dr. Necmettin Erbakan.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Invited Guests and Ladies Gentlemen,

Let me place this on record that the D-8 organization has made remarkable achievements in the last 25 years of its establishment. The key priority areas of **agriculture, trade, energy, transportation, industry and tourism** have remained on the top of agenda of our organization. We have not deviated from the vision Dr. Erbakan had for D-8 when he conceived the idea of a group of nations coming together to form an alliance for the purpose of socio-economic cooperation that would bring solid improvements into the lives of citizens of its member states.

During this journey, and with joint efforts of member countries, D-8 has made considerable progress, and commendable achievements in reducing widespread poverty and strengthening cooperation in all the priority areas of cooperation. However, we at the D-8 organization might not have achieved all we had sets out to do in the last 25 years, but surely, we are on course.

Your Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Under the review of our score card in the 25 years of D-8 existence, the total GDP of D-8 countries has more than tripled from USD 1.2 trillion in 1997 to almost USD 4.0 trillion in 2019. Intra D-8 trade also rose from USD 14 billion in 1997 to USD 110 billion in 2019, in nominal terms. The eight countries make up almost 60 per cent of the total GDP of Muslim world. These macro–

economic indicators summarize the economic potential of the D-8 and its future. It is our desire to see intra-D-8 trade rise to \$400 billion by 2030 as envisaged in our 2022-2030 Roadmap.

Besides the quantum of achievements, we have recorded in increasing trade relations among our member states, we have also, in the course of time, encouraged entering into partnership in form of signing Memorandum of Understanding with several institutions and organizations that shares our objectives and aspirations. This we have done to enhance the organization's visibility at the global level and more importantly to meet expectation in areas of capacity building, technical assistance and knowledge sharing. A number of organizations that we are working with include United Nations and its specialized agencies such as UNCTAD, FAO, WTO and WCO. We are also working with the Chatham House, World Islamic Citation Centre, IRENA, and ISDB, amongst others.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Given the rapid changes in the global economic order, the D-8 is changing its dynamics and taking on new challenges in order to remain relevant and attain the vision of its founding Fathers. In this connection, we have carefully established some new institutions that are affiliated to the organization and meant to perform specific objectives to accelerate and enhance our socio-economic cooperation among member countries. Among such new affiliate institutions are as follows:

- i. D-8 Network of Pioneers for Research and Innovation (D8-NPRI) established in 2019 to bring researchers, government and semi-government research institutes, industrial research bodies and academia under one umbrella to promote the joint researches and developments in innovative technology.
- ii. D-8 International University, established in 2018 and based in Hamedan, Iran, to serve as the starting point for an extensive student exchange program and scientific development among the D-8 member states.
- iii. D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry established in 2018 to acts as an umbrella organization among the national chambers of commerce and industry of the D-8 Member States.
- iv. D-8 Technology Transfer and Exchange Network (D-8 TTEN), established in 2013 and based in Teheran, Iran and aimed at serving as a technological cooperation and business network platform to foster technology transfer among D-8 countries.
- v. D-8 Health and Social Protection Programme, established in 2019 and based in Abuja, Nigeria to enhance cooperation in health and social protection and accelerate progress towards the attainment of the SDGs for the D-8's more than one billion population.
- vi. D-8 Agriculture Research Centre established in 2020 and based in Faisalabad, Pakistan to conducts joint research and development in agriculture and food security.

Finally, **Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen**, I want to assure this gathering that we at the D-8 will continue to work with governmental and non-governmental organizations like Erbakan Foundation that share similar aspirations with the D8, for the realization of the aims and objectives of the founding Fathers of our organization.

I want to once again appreciate the Erbakan Foundation for the wonderful arrangement made for this reception. We look forward to continue our partnership in a mutual beneficial way. And we all have to keep the vision of our great leader, Dr Necmettin Erbakan, alive and ensure that D-8 organization continue to grow from strength to strength. That's the biggest tribute we all can pay to him.

Long live D-8 Organization!

Long live Erbakan Foundation!!

Long live Republic of Turkiye!!!

I thank you all for your kind attention.