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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

D-8 YOUTH DIALOGUE 2025 CONCLUDED IN BAKU WITH ADOPTION OF BAKU YOUTH DECLARATION

The Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) has successfully concluded the D-8 Youth Dialogue 2025, held from 6 to 9 December 2025 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and hosted by the Ministry of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The Dialogue brought together youth delegates, government officials, experts, and representatives of relevant national institutions from all D-8 Member States, and was convened under the theme “Youth Shaping the Future of the Global Urban Agenda: Sustainable and Climate-Resilient Cities of Tomorrow.”

The high-level opening ceremony featured statements by H.E. Farid Gayibov, Minister of Youth and Sports of Azerbaijan; H.E. Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization; H.E. Anar Guliyev, Chairman of the State Committee on Urban Planning and Architecture of Azerbaijan; H.E. Yalchin Rafiyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan and COP29 Lead Negotiator; Ms. Merna Alzurikat, UN SDG Young Leader; and H.E. Mohamed Abdulkadir Ali, Minister of Youth and Sports of Somalia, as a special guest.

In his remarks, the Secretary-General emphasized that with 210 million young people across the D-8 region, youth constitute one of the bloc’s greatest comparative advantages, highlighting their indispensable role in driving innovation, human development, and sustainable urban transformation. He underlined that the Organization seeks to equip youth with the knowledge, skills, and networks, required to ensure that “no young person is left behind, in the journey toward sustainable urban development.” He also encouraged participants to take full advantage of the Dialogue, noting that the collective creativity and digital fluency of D-8 youth are vital to shaping the future of cities, across the Member States.

Throughout the four-day meeting, participants engaged in extensive discussions on youth-driven approaches to human development, including equitable access to education, skills training, decent employment, and social inclusion. The program also focused on the importance of empowering youth to contribute to the development of sustainable and climate-resilient cities. Panels and interactive sessions explored smart and inclusive urban planning, digital transformation, mobility systems, green jobs, low-carbon development, and climate adaptation, with contributions from experts representing UN-Habitat, national ministries, academia, municipalities, and the private sector. National presentations showcased the strategies and best practices of member countries, in integrating youth perspectives into urban governance and policy-making. Young participants also took part in storytelling sessions, workshops, and a mock negotiation exercise, designed to enhance their leadership, communication, and problem-solving skills.



A key outcome of the Dialogue was the adoption of the D-8 Baku Youth Declaration 2025. The Declaration reaffirms the commitment of D-8 youth to advancing human development and sustainable urbanization, as priorities for the region. It calls for broader access to education, digital literacy, vocational training, and health services; expanded opportunities for green jobs and youth entrepreneurship; and institutionalized youth participation in decision-making, at both national and regional levels. It further emphasizes the need for environmentally responsible and socially inclusive development, along with the integration of digital tools and artificial intelligence, into urban planning and public service delivery.

The Declaration stresses the importance of strengthening cooperation between governments, youth organizations, municipalities, UN agencies, and the private sector and activation of the D-8 Youth Council, as a crucial step toward enhancing regional youth cooperation. It also welcomes Azerbaijan's proposal for the creation of a D-8 Youth Capital initiative, which underscore the relevance of youth contributions to global processes, including the 82nd Session of UNESCAP and the 13th World Urban Forum, to be hosted in Baku in 2026.

During the Dialogue, the D-8 Secretary-General also held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Farid Gayibov, Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan. The two sides discussed opportunities to further strengthen youth cooperation within the D-8 framework, including joint programs and initiatives that will support the Organization's youth development agenda and deepen engagement among Member States.

The program included the Delegates guided tour of the Victory Museum as well as the city of Sumgayit, the 2025 Youth Capital of Azerbaijan that offered participants firsthand insight into Azerbaijan's youth development initiatives and urban planning experience. Also, the tour afforded the delegates the opportunity to observe the ongoing urban transformation projects and engaged with local youth representatives. These activities complemented the Dialogue's thematic sessions by illustrating practical approaches to sustainable development, community engagement, and cultural enrichment.

Istanbul, 9 December 2025