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## **PRESS RELEASE**

### **D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION**

#### **D-8 SECRETARY-GENERAL AMBASSADOR SOHAIL MAHMOOD UNDERTAKES OFFICIAL VISIT TO ANKARA**

The Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), H.E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, undertook a high-level official visit to Ankara from 23 to 25 February 2026 — his first since assuming office on 1 January 2026. The visit reaffirmed Türkiye's pivotal role as a founding member, host of the D-8 Secretariat, and a key contributor to the Organization's evolution since its inception.

The Secretary-General was accompanied by a delegation comprising H.E. Ambassador Mustafa Özcan, Director-I of the D-8 Secretariat, and Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan, Executive Assistant.

The visit commenced with a working Iftar hosted by H.E. Ambassador Aylin Sekizkök, the D-8 Commissioner of Türkiye, for the D-8 delegation. The engagement provided an opportunity to review institutional priorities -- including ongoing reform initiatives, strengthening coordination between the Secretariat and the host country, and preparations for the 12<sup>th</sup> D-8 Summit in Jakarta. Discussions underscored the importance of Türkiye's pivotal role in supporting the Secretariat's transformation agenda and enhancing the D-8's overall organizational capacity.

On 24 February, the Secretary-General had meetings with senior leadership the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including Deputy Ministers H.E. Musa Kulaklıkaya and H.E. Berris Ekinci. The comprehensive exchanges with Ambassador Ekinci focused on the D-8's present and future trajectory, strengthening the Secretariat's human and financial resource base, streamlining institutional structures and processes, expanding international outreach, and working for concrete outcomes of the Jakarta Summit.

In his call on H.E. Hakan Fidan, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood conveyed profound appreciation for Türkiye's generous support as host country since the establishment of the D-8 Secretariat and as a vital pillar of the Organization's strategic direction. Noting Türkiye's major initiatives like the Antalya Diplomacy Forum (ADF) and Presidency of COP31, the Secretary-General highlighted the global salience of D-8 Member States in geo-strategic and geo-economic terms and the Organization's overall potential to play a seminal role at the regional and global levels. He also briefed the Foreign Minister on his priorities as Secretary General, the ongoing efforts to advance institutional reform process, strengthening D-8's global outreach, and ensuring impactful outcomes of the Jakarta Summit. During the meeting, Türkiye's strong and steadfast support for the D-8 was reaffirmed by the



Honourable Minister and guidance provided on ways for the D-8 to enhance its activities, visibility, and effectiveness.

In his meeting with Minister of Trade H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat, the Secretary-General emphasized the imperative of expanding intra-D-8 trade and welcomed Türkiye's role in hosting the permanent D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CCI) Secretariat in Istanbul, a milestone for deeper private-sector engagement and integration. Both sides underscored the importance of the D-8 Business and Investment Forum and Halal Expo, being convened as side events of the Jakarta Summit, as further catalysts for trade and investment connectivity.

The meeting with H.E. Murat Kurum, Minister of Environment, Urbanization and Climate Change, focused on climate cooperation and Türkiye's COP31 Presidency, exploring joint initiatives in climate resilience, green transformation, and sustainable urbanization across D-8 economies.

At the Presidential Complex, Ambassador Mahmood was received by H.E. Mr. Cevdet Yılmaz, Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye, where he briefed the Vice President on preparations for the 12<sup>th</sup> D-8 Summit and its expanded programme. The Secretary-General also attended an Iftar hosted by H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.

On 25 February, the Secretary-General continued outreach with key institutional stakeholders. At the TRT Headquarters, discussions with Director General Prof. Dr. Mehmet Zahid Sobacı explored media cooperation and strategic communication partnerships. The importance of the legacy and digital media in raising global awareness about the D-8, amplifying the D-8 message and narrative, and fostering cultural and people-to-people connectivity was underscored with a view to making collective endeavors to advance these shared objectives.

In his meeting with H.E. Mehmet Fatih Kacır, Minister of Industry and Technology, the Secretary-General commended Türkiye's rise as a global innovation hub and explored collaboration in advanced manufacturing, Industry 4.0, and AI-driven industrial transformation.

The Secretary-General also engaged with the leadership of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB), focusing on operationalizing the D-8 CCI Secretariat and strengthening business connectivity ahead of the Jakarta Summit.

The Secretary General also attended the Iftar hosted by Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan for the Ambassadors/Head of Mission of the Member and Observer Countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Ankara.

Concluding the visit, Secretary General Sohail Mahmood expressed his sincere appreciation for the gracious hospitality extended by the Government of Türkiye and the comprehensive programme charted for the visit. He stated that the exchanges during the visit reinforced alignment on a range of issues



pertaining to institutional capacity and helped strengthen the momentum toward a more dynamic, results-oriented, and globally engaged D-8.

Istanbul, 27 February 2026