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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

D-8 SECRETARY-GENERAL AMBASSADOR SOHAIL MAHMOOD PARTICIPATES IN STRATCOM SUMMIT 2026 IN ISTANBUL

The Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation, H.E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, participated in the International Strategic Communication Summit (STRATCOM Summit) 2026, held in Istanbul on 27-28 March 2026. The Summit was organized by the Directorate of Communications of the Republic of Türkiye under the overarching theme “Disruption in the International System: Crises, Narratives, and Search for Order.”

Convened at a time of heightened geopolitical tensions and systemic transformations, the Summit brought together high-level representatives from governments, international organizations, media institutions, and think-tanks. The discussions reflected the growing complexity of the international environment, where competing narratives, legitimacy crises, misinformation and disinformation, and rapid technological advancements are creating formidable challenges and reshaping global discourse.

The Summit commenced with opening remarks delivered by Prof. Dr. Burhanettin Duran, Head of Communications of the Republic of Türkiye, and H.E. Cevdet Yılmaz, the Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye, alongside a video message from H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Hon’ble President of the Republic of Türkiye, underscoring the strategic importance of communication in addressing contemporary global challenges.

Other prominent speakers during the Summit included Türkiye’s Foreign Minister H.E. Hakan Fidan; Director MIT H.E. Prof. İbrahim Kalın; Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Turkish Grand National Assembly H.E. Fuat Oktay; several Ministers from Europe, Asia and Africa; and noted parliamentarians, scholars, and media persons from Türkiye and abroad.

During the course of the two-day programme, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood participated in various sessions that explored key thematic areas, including the evolving architecture of the global order, the role of leadership and diplomacy in conflict mediation, and the challenges posed by declining trust in international institutions. Discussions also addressed the persistence of crises in global governance frameworks, the implications of regional conflicts on global stability, and the increasing relevance of strategic narratives in shaping international engagement.



In addition, significant attention was devoted to the impact of emerging technologies, particularly artificial intelligence, on the future of communication, as well as the role of media in times of uncertainty. The Summit further highlighted the perspectives of women leaders in addressing global challenges and examined the transformation of soft power dynamics in an increasingly fragmented international environment.

On the sidelines of the Summit, Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood had interactions with a number of leading participants. From amongst the D-8 Member States, the Secretary-General met with H.E. Zahir Uddin Swapon, the Minister of Information and Broadcasting of Bangladesh. Their discussions focused on enhancing collaboration among D-8 Member States in the media sector, recognizing its critical role in strengthening the Organization's visibility and outreach at both regional and global levels.

Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood also had fruitful meeting with Mr. Ahmed Ismayilov, Head of Media Development Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan, focusing on ongoing efforts to establish the D-8 Media Excellence Center in Azerbaijan. The discussions also underlined the importance of fostering closer collaboration among media institutions, news agencies, and communication platforms across D-8 Member States.

In his interaction with Prof. Burhanettin Duran, Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood highlighted the valuable contribution of the Stratcom Summit to the cutting-edge discourse on some of the defining issues of the times. He also stressed the importance of exploring avenues for deepening cooperation between D-8 and the Directorate of Communications in the fields of strategic communication and public diplomacy.

Throughout the course of the Summit, the Secretary-General engaged with a range of stakeholders — including senior government officials, media executives, and representatives of prominent think-tanks. These interactions provided an opportunity to exchange perspectives, strengthen partnerships, and promote the objectives of the D-8 Organization.

The participation of the D-8 Secretary-General in the Stratcom Summit 2026 reaffirmed the Organization's commitment to enhancing cooperation among its Member States, particularly in the fields of media, communication, and public diplomacy. It also highlighted the importance of strategic communication as a key instrument in fostering mutual understanding, strengthening resilience, and addressing shared global challenges in an increasingly interconnected world.

Istanbul, 29 March 2026