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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

D-8 ACTIVELY PARTICIPATES IN ANTALYA DIPLOMACY FORUM 2026

Led by Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) delegation participated actively in the 5th edition of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2026, held from 17 to 19 April 2026. Other members included Ambassador Mustafa Özcan, Director, and Mr. Muhammad Bilal Khan, Executive Assistant.

Convened under the auspices of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the thematic focus of ADF 2026 was: “Mapping Tomorrow, Managing Uncertainties.” Overall, the Forum had participation from 150 countries, 66 international and regional organizations, and more than 6,400 guests. These included 23 Heads of State and Government; 50 Ministers; and 87 senior representatives of international organizations.

In his interventions in the high-level panel, bilateral meetings, and media interactions, Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood strongly underscored the importance of dialogue and diplomacy, multilateralism, and international cooperation and solidarity to address the myriad challenges emerging from the rapidly transforming global and regional strategic landscape.

Participating in a high-level panel on “Investment Across Continents,” Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood underscored the strong interplay between geopolitics and geoeconomics in shaping global investment flows. He noted that strategies such as ‘near-shoring’ and ‘friend-shoring’ reflected a growing emphasis on ‘diversification’ and ‘resilience’ and illustrated re-shaping of global value chains – powerfully influenced by the evolving geopolitical dynamics, way beyond just the cost calculations. From the D-8 perspective, he highlighted the need for a balanced and forward-looking response -- anchored in sound domestic policy frameworks and reinforced through international cooperation -- to sustain investment momentum across developing economies.

Emphasizing the centrality of diplomacy, the Secretary-General underlined its critical role in creating a conducive external environment – by fostering stability, preventing conflicts, stressing adherence to international law, emphasizing dialogue and diplomacy to resolve disputes, and supporting multilateralism. He further underlined that developing countries could enhance their attractiveness to investment by ensuring predictability, efficient facilitation, credible infrastructure, connectivity, and trusted cross-border partnerships. In this context, he also highlighted D-8’s collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in formulating “Guiding Principles for



Investment Policymaking,” reflecting the Organization’s commitment to practical and cooperative approaches.

On the sidelines of ADF, Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood held a series of high-level bilateral meetings with dignitaries from D-8 Member States and key international partners. In his meeting with H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Secretary-General commended Azerbaijan’s active and constructive role in advancing D-8’s agenda, with both sides reaffirming their commitment to further strengthening institutional cooperation across a broad spectrum.

In discussions with H.E. Dr. Khalilur Rahman, Foreign Minister of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, appreciation was conveyed for Bangladesh’s contributions to enhancing collaboration across trade, youth engagement, and institutional development, while both sides emphasized the importance of collective efforts in addressing evolving global challenges. In the meeting with H.E. Mr. Saeed Khatibzadeh, Deputy Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the focus was on expanding sectoral cooperation, particularly in academic and knowledge-based domains, alongside reaffirmation of shared commitments to strengthening the D-8 platform.

The Secretary-General also engaged with H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye; H.E. Ambassador Asad Majeed Khan, Secretary-General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO); H.E. Ambassador Kairat Sarybay, Secretary-General of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA); H.E. Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khokhar, Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC); Mr. Jamil Ahmad, Director, Intergovernmental Affairs, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP); and Mr. Nail Olpak, President of the Foreign Economic Relations Board (DIEK) of Türkiye.

In these engagements, discussions with the Minister of Trade of Türkiye focused on advancing trade cooperation and operationalization of Permanent Secretariat of the D-8 Chambers of Commerce and Industry in Istanbul; exchanges with Mr. Jamil Ahmad pertained to the environmental agenda of the D-8, including avenues to strengthen collaboration with UNEP and the significance of the forthcoming COP31 to be hosted by Türkiye; discussions with Ambassador Aftab Ahmad Khokhar emphasized enhancing linkages in the fields of science and technology, including expanded cooperation with OIC-COMSTECH. Discussions with the ECO Secretary-General focused on exploring synergies in regional economic integration and trade facilitation; while exchanges with SG CICA dwelt on establishing formal institutional collaboration. Engagement with DIEK emphasized strengthening private sector linkages and promoting business-to-business connectivity across D-8 Member States.

In his media interactions, the Secretary-General *inter alia* highlighted the historical evolution of the D-8, its founding vision, and its growing role as an important platform for South-South cooperation -- contributing to dialogue, partnership-building, and the promotion of inclusive and sustainable development. He also emphasized that ‘mapping tomorrow’ required strategic foresight, while leadership was imperative for ‘managing uncertainties.’



The Secretary-General also complimented the Turkish Foreign Ministry on successful convening of this edition of Antalya Diplomacy Forum – which has evolved into a vital global platform to deliberate on the cutting-edge issues of the times and discussing not just the challenges but also helping to craft solutions.



Istanbul, 21 April 2026