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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

D-8 SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS FOR DEEPER HALAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION AT INAUGURAL D-8 HALAL EXPO INDONESIA 2026

The first-ever D-8 Halal Expo Indonesia (HEI) 2026 was officially inaugurated on 8 July in Jakarta -- marking a major milestone in advancing economic cooperation and strengthening the halal economy among the Member States of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8). With the thematic focus on "Strengthening D-8 Halal Economy Through International Collaboration," the 5-day event brings together Ministers, Senior Officials, business leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, and halal industry stakeholders from across the D-8 region and beyond to promote trade, investment, innovation, and strategic partnerships throughout the global halal ecosystem.

The Opening Ceremony for HEI was officiated by H.E. Anis Matta, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, together with senior representatives of the National Committee for Islamic Economy and Finance (KNEKS); the Halal Product Assurance Agency (BPJPH); the Hajj Fund Management Agency (BPKH); Ambassadors, senior diplomats and Officials from D-8 Member States; as well as other noted dignitaries.

In a special video message on the occasion, H.E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization, extended his warm felicitations to the Government of Indonesia on successfully hosting the first-ever D-8 Halal Expo and commended its leadership in advancing the halal economy as a key driver of sustainable development, industrial transformation, and regional economic integration. He particularly welcomed Indonesia's proposals to institutionalize the D-8 Halal Expo as an annual flagship event and to host the proposed D-8 Halal Economy Cooperation (HEC) Secretariat, describing these as far-reaching initiatives that would further strengthen the Organization's institutional architecture while fostering enhanced policy coordination, private-sector engagement, research collaboration, capacity-building, and intra-D-8 trade and investment.

The Secretary-General noted that the D-8, representing more than 1.28 billion people and a combined GDP exceeding US\$5 trillion, possesses the complementary strengths required to become a globally competitive hub for halal production, trade, investment, and innovation. He observed that although the global halal economy is expanding rapidly across food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, healthcare, tourism, logistics, Islamic finance, and digital commerce, the Muslim-majority countries continue to capture only a limited share of global halal value chains. Addressing this gap, he stressed, requires greater regional integration, innovation, industrial competitiveness, and value addition.

Within the framework of the D-8 Decennial Roadmap 2020-2030, the Secretary-General described the halal economy as another critical enabler for realizing the Organization's target of US\$ 500 billion intra-D-8 trade



by 2030. He emphasized that deeper cooperation in the halal sector can contribute significantly to economic diversification, food security, SME development, investment promotion, and sustainable growth across Member States.

To advance this vision, Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood proposed three specific initiatives. First, the establishment of an Integrated D-8 Halal Trade Corridor through the gradual harmonization and mutual recognition of halal standards and certification systems, interoperable digital certification, enhanced customs cooperation, dedicated halal logistics corridors, and simplified trade procedures. Second, the creation of a D-8 Digital Halal Marketplace and Investment Platform to connect manufacturers, exporters, SMEs, investors, Islamic financial institutions, certification authorities, and buyers, thereby facilitating business matchmaking, cross-border e-commerce, investment partnerships, and supply-chain integration. Third, enhanced joint investment in research, innovation, halal industrial parks, biotechnology, food technology, pharmaceuticals, artificial intelligence, blockchain-enabled traceability, sustainable logistics, green manufacturing, and skills development to ensure that D-8 Member States remain competitive in the industries of the future.

The Secretary-General reaffirmed the commitment of the D-8 Secretariat to work closely with Indonesia, D-8 Member States, affiliated institutions, private sector, and international partners to transform these initiatives into practical programmes that deliver tangible benefits for businesses and citizens across the D-8 geography.

The Expo also featured remarks by Indonesian officials highlighting the importance of strengthening cooperation in halal standards, certification, trade facilitation, and investment while promoting Indonesia's role as one of the leading centers of the global halal economy. Over five days, the Expo will host international exhibitions, business matching sessions, investment forums, and thematic discussions covering halal food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, modest fashion, Islamic finance, tourism, digital services, and emerging technologies.

As the first event of its kind under the D-8 framework, the D-8 Halal Expo Indonesia 2026 represents a major landmark towards building integrated halal value chains, expanding South-South cooperation, strengthening regional competitiveness, and positioning the D-8 as a prominent player in efforts to promote a more innovative, resilient, and sustainable global halal economy



Istanbul, 9 July 2026