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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

D-8 AND OIC YOUTH FORUM TO INTENSIFY COLLABORATION ON YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND EMPOWERMENT

The Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) and the OIC-affiliated Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) have agreed to intensify mutual collaboration on youth engagement and empowerment. This was decided during the meeting between D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and ICYF President Mr. Taha Ayhan at the D-8 Secretariat in Istanbul. Ambassador Mustafa Özcan, Director at the D-8 Secretariat, and Mr. Yunus Sonmez, Director General ICYF, also joined the discussions as part of their respective delegations.

Extending a warm welcome to the ICYF President, Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood lauded his active role in steering youth affairs from the important OIC platform, underlined the complementary nature of the approaches of D-8 and ICYF in terms of youth development, and stressed the importance of optimal implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the two Organizations in 2025. The Secretary-General also apprised of recent developments in the D-8's youth engagement policy -- including the outcomes of the first D-8 Youth Summit hosted (virtually) by Bangladesh (2021), the first Meeting of the D-8 Youth Ministers in Dhaka (2024), and the first D-8 Youth Dialogue in Baku (2025). Ambassador Mustafa Özcan highlighted the salients of the 'Baku Youth Declaration' adopted at the conclusion of the 2025 Youth Dialogue.

President Taha Ayhan apprised of the ICYF's recent endeavors about engagement of the youth across the OIC geography and noted the synergy with D-8's core mission of economic cooperation and sustainable development. He assured of ICYF's readiness to explore all possible avenues to advance the shared objectives through closer collaboration.

In the ensuing discussions, it was agreed to focus on cooperation in the fields of youth leadership, capacity-building, skills development, and entrepreneurship. The participants agreed that this would be accomplished, *inter alia*, through joint programmes and training initiatives as well as the earliest possible operationalization of the 'Investment and Youth Entrepreneurship Forum' envisaged under the 2025 MoU. There was also agreement between the two sides on organizing joint events and activities on the margins of relevant international gatherings.



In the first instance, the ICYF would be partnering with the D-8 Secretariat in the “D-8 Youth Bridges Programme”, being organized to mark the International Youth Day (12 August 2026).

The meeting concluded with a mutual reaffirmation of a strong institutional relationship between D-8 and ICYF and a shared resolve to pursue activities with tangible outcomes.



Istanbul, 30 July 2026