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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

SECRETARY-GENERAL AMBASSADOR SOHAIL MAHMOOD REPRESENTS D-8 AT BOAO FORUM FOR ASIA HIGH-LEVEL EVENTS IN CHINA

At the invitation of H.E. Zhang Jun, Secretary-General of the Boao Forum for Asia (BFA), the Developing-8 Organisation Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood participated in two major high-level events in Haikou, China, from 15-17 September 2026. These included the Asia-Pacific Regional Cooperation Roundtable; and the 2026 Haikou Conference of the Global Health Forum. The Secretary-General also had productive bilateral interactions on the sidelines with leading participants from a cross-section — aimed at strengthening D-8's institutional and sectoral partnerships.

The Roundtable on Asia-Pacific Regional Cooperation and the Global Health Forum 2026 brought together nearly 300 participants from more than 30 countries and regions, including senior government representatives; international organizations, including the World Health Organization (WHO) and D-8; business leaders; academia and think-tanks; civil society; and the media from China and across Asia.

The thematic focus of the Regional Cooperation Roundtable on 15 September was *“Toward an Asia-Pacific Community: Vision and Action.”* Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood participated as a Speaker in the high-level session on *“Accelerating Regional Economic Integration Towards the Vision of FTAAP.”*

In his remarks, the Secretary-General highlighted the Asia-Pacific's central role in global growth, trade and investment, and emphasized the importance of openness, connectivity, and practical cooperation in sustaining the region's economic dynamism. He underlined the importance of stronger policy coordination, resilient supply and value chains, greater synergy among regional trade and economic arrangements, and effective use of innovation and digital transformation to promote growth and shared prosperity. The Secretary-General also highlighted the D-8's commitment to expanding trade and economic cooperation and the significant potential for stronger linkages between its nine Member States and partners across Asia.



The Secretary-General later joined discussions in three other Roundtable sessions, focused on: ‘Asian Economy in the Context of the Middle East Crisis’; ‘Enhancing Regional Connectivity & Supply Chain Resilience for Energy and Economic Security’; and ‘Digital Economy and Global Governance in the AI Era.’

On 16 September, the Secretary-General attended the opening and plenary session of the Global Health Forum titled “*Health for All: Innovation Shapes the Future,*” and later participated as a Speaker in the panel discussion on “*Building a More Multipolar, Efficient and Sustainable Global Health Governance Mechanism.*”

In his intervention, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood underscored three priorities for a more trusted, equitable, efficient, and sustainable global health system: stronger institutions and wider ownership; Universal Health Coverage anchored in equity and innovation; and sustained, result-oriented cooperation. He stressed that national health systems, regional cooperation and effective multilateral institutions should reinforce one another, while innovations such as digital health, telemedicine and artificial intelligence should help narrow health inequalities.

Drawing on the D-8 experience, the Secretary-General highlighted the complementary strengths of Member States in pharmaceuticals and vaccines, biotechnology, medical technologies, digital health, research and public-health systems. He emphasized the potential to connect these capabilities through capacity-building, joint research and technology partnerships, as well as co-development and co-production where feasible.

On the sidelines, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood held a substantive bilateral meeting with Boao Forum for Asia Secretary-General Ambassador Zhang Jun. Besides exchanges on the international and regional economic situation, and processes of trade and economic integration, the discussions focused on strengthening D-8–BFA institutional cooperation and exploring practical opportunities in trade and investment, business linkages, connectivity, innovation and sustainable development. The two sides highlighted the potential to connect the economic networks and capabilities of the two organizations through mutually beneficial initiatives.

The Secretary-General also met with H.E. Sardar Md. Sakhawat Hossain, Minister of Health and Family Welfare of Bangladesh, for an exchange focused on strengthening practical health cooperation within D-8. He briefed the Minister on recent progress, the Secretariat’s efforts to translate agreed priorities into tangible initiatives, and next steps in the D-8 health cooperation agenda, including the D-8 Ministerial meeting on Health in Türkiye. The Minister welcomed the progress and reaffirmed Bangladesh’s active support for D-8 health initiatives and its readiness to contribute actively to their implementation.

On 17 September, the Secretary-General joined a Field Trip to key innovation and technology facilities in the Hainan Free Trade Port — including Haikou Bio city, Bloom age Biotechnology Industrial Park, Fullsinging Town International Digital Port, and Hainan University Science Park. The



visits to these facilities provided useful insights into China's experience in biotechnology, digital innovation, and science-industry collaboration.

Founded in 2001, the Boao Forum for Asia, headquartered in China, is dedicated to promoting economic cooperation and common development between Asia and the rest of the world. It was jointly initiated by 29 member states and holds its annual conference in Boao, Hainan Province. Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon is serving as the current Chairman of the BFA Board of Directors.

Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood's participation in the high-level events denotes the first-ever representation of the Developing-8 Organisation for Economic Cooperation (D-8) in the Boao Forum and illustrates the D-8 Secretariat's continuing efforts to expand its international outreach and visibility, build mutually-beneficial partnerships, and translate dialogue into practical cooperation.

Concluding the visit, Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood expressed sincere appreciation to BFA Secretary-General Zhang Jun, the Boao Forum for Asia, and the Provincial leadership and relevant authorities in the Hainan Free Trade Port for their warm hospitality and excellent arrangements. The Secretary-General also thanked the Ambassador of Pakistan to China, H.E. Khalil Hashmi, and his team for their valuable support in facilitating the visit.



Istanbul, 19 September 2026