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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

D-8 SECRETARY-GENERAL CALLS FOR SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT AND STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS AT 9TH UNCTAD WORLD INVESTMENT FORUM IN DOHA

The Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), H.E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, participated in the 9th World Investment Forum (WIF) 2026 in Doha, hosted by the State of Qatar in partnership with the United Nations Trade and Development (UNCTAD), from 25-27 October 2026. The Forum's thematic focus was: "*Investing in the Future."*

Invited by UNCTAD, the Secretary-General attended the event's Opening Ceremony and participated as panelist in three separate high-level sessions on: Investment Facilitation and Partnerships for Sustainable Development; International Investment Agreement (AII) Reform; and Investing 'Beyond GDP' for Sustainable and Inclusive Progress. The Secretary-General also held bilateral meetings with Ministers from D-8 Member States and senior officials of regional and international organizations to advance trade, investment and institutional cooperation.

The Forum brought together over 5,000 participants, including Government leaders, Ministers, heads of international and regional organizations, investment promotion agencies, financial institutions, global investors, senior leaders from corporate world, and members of academia and the media, with over 400 speakers across more than 80 sessions.

In his interventions in the three high-level panels, the Secretary-General *inter alia* underscored the importance of mobilizing investment for inclusive growth and sustainable development. On investment facilitation, he highlighted the D-8's priorities in green and digital transformation, SME development, and regional connectivity, including opportunities for cooperation among investment promotion agencies.

Welcoming the launch of UNCTAD's *Guiding Principles for International Investment Agreements Reform*, he recalled the D8-UNCTAD *Guiding Principles for Investment Policymaking* for D-8 Countries, developed in 2020, and emphasized the importance of modernizing investment treaties while ensuring legal certainty, investor protection, and national regulatory space for sustainable development.

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In the plenary session on *Investing 'Beyond GDP' for Sustainable and Inclusive Progress*, the Secretary-General advocated stronger South-South cooperation to integrate broader measures of well-being, equity, inclusion, and sustainability into development planning and investment decisions. Highlighting the D-8's focus on youth engagement and empowerment, education and research initiatives, he also proposed exploring joint pilot programmes in education, artificial intelligence, digital transformation and entrepreneurship to assess the long-term impact of investments on employment, innovation, and opportunities for future generations.

On the sidelines, the Secretary-General had bilateral meeting with H.E. Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce of Pakistan. Appreciating Pakistan's active role in the D-8 processes, he lauded the Minister's personal contributions to the positive outcomes of 4th D-8 Trade Ministers Council Meeting in Cairo in 2025, that culminated in the signing of the Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM) as well as the decision regarding establishment of the D-8 Chamber of Commerce and Industry (D-8 CCI) Permanent Secretariat in Istanbul under the auspices of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Türkiye (TOBB). The Secretary-General also highlighted the target of increasing intra-D-8 trade to $ 500 billion by 2030 as envisaged under the D-8 Decennial Roadmap (2020-2030) and underscored the importance of collective measures for accelerating optimal implementation of the D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), enhancing private-sector awareness, and strengthening business cooperation. Appreciating the Federation of FPCCI's recent event in Karachi on "Economic Integration Among the D-8 Countries", he welcomed its expressed interest in hosting a D-8 Business Expo in Pakistan.

In his meeting with H.E. Dr. Mohamed Farid Saleh, Minister of Investment and Foreign Trade of Egypt, the Secretary-General commended Egypt's active Chairmanship of D-8 and successful hosting of the 11th D-8 Summit as well as the 4th Trade Ministers Council Meeting. He welcomed Egypt's ratification of the D-8 PTA, completing ratification by all original signatories, and discussed next steps towards its optimal implementation. Minister Saleh stressed the importance of reducing non-tariff barriers, strengthening training and awareness programmes on PTA across Member States to raise awareness, and promoting greater integration of financial services to facilitate intra-D-8 trade and economic collaboration. The exchanges also covered ongoing D-8 deliberations to explore expansion of the PTA towards a comprehensive economic partnership.

The Secretary-General's meeting with Ms. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, Director-General of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), focused on strengthening institutional cooperation through joint trade promotion activities, business forums, private-sector engagement, and capacity-building initiatives. The possibilities of a structured cooperation framework between the D-8 and ICDT were also discussed.

With Mr. Tomas Lamanauskas, Deputy Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the Secretary-General discussed opportunities for cooperation in digital connectivity, ICT infrastructure, artificial intelligence, digital inclusion, technological capacity-building, and

tech entrepreneurship for the youth. The discussions also explored potential joint programmes, technical assistance, and institutional partnerships to advance digital transformation and innovation across D-8 Member States.

The Secretary-General further engaged with representatives of international organizations, development institutions, investors and other stakeholders, exploring opportunities for enhanced cooperation in trade, investment and sustainable development. His participation in the Forum reinforced D-8's commitment to advancing practical economic cooperation, expanding international partnerships, and promoting inclusive and sustainable development.





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