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PRESS RELEASE

D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

D-8 SECRETARY-GENERAL ADDRESSES 12TH WORLD HALAL SUMMIT AND HALAL EXPO 2026 IN ISTANBUL

His Excellency Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), addressed the opening ceremony of the 12th World Halal Summit (WHS) and Halal Expo 2026, taking place at the Istanbul Expo Center from 25-28 November 2026. Held under the auspices of the Honourable President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the 4-day Summit -- themed "Sustainable Halal Economy: Eliminating Waste, Empowering Growth" -- is organized by the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), Discover Events, and Lokman Hekim University.

As one of the prominent international gatherings dedicated to the global halal industry, the WHS brings together high-level government officials, representatives of international organizations, halal certification and accreditation authorities, industry leaders, academics, experts, NGOs, and business representatives. Over the years, the Summit and Expo have served as an important platform for exchanging knowledge and expertise, strengthening institutional and commercial partnerships, exploring emerging business and investment opportunities, and advancing international cooperation towards a more sustainable, inclusive and competitive global halal economy. The opening ceremony featured addresses by high-level dignitaries, including H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Türkiye, as well as senior representatives of a large number of participating countries and international and regional organizations.

In his remarks, Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood commended the Government of Türkiye and the organizers for convening the Summit on a timely and forward-looking theme. He highlighted the significance of the Islamic principles of *Halal* and *Tayyib*, together with the Islamic injunction against wastefulness, in fostering an economic model that reconciles commercial prosperity with environmental stewardship and social responsibility. The Secretary-General underscored the immense potential of the global halal economy as a driver of economic growth, innovation, investment and employment generation. Referring to the magnitude of global food waste, he stressed that eliminating waste was not merely an environmental responsibility but also an economic necessity.

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In this context, Ambassador Sohail Mahmood recalled the special message of the Honourable First Lady of Türkiye, Mrs. Emine Erdoğan, to the D-8 High-Level Ministerial Session on Climate Action held during COP31 in Antalya, in which she stressed the importance of food waste prevention, improved resource efficiency, education, and increased public awareness. The First Lady also encouraged the development of a D-8 Zero Waste Roadmap according to the priorities of Member States. The Secretary-General also highlighted the recently adopted Antalya Ministerial Action Framework on D-8 Climate and Environmental Cooperation and reaffirmed the Organization's commitment to contributing to the global Zero Waste Movement.

Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood underlined the progressive integration of the halal economy within the D-8's strategic priorities, as illustrated in the convening of the inaugural D-8 Halal Expo in Indonesia in July 2026. He also highlighted Indonesia's intention, as the incoming D-8 Chair, to accord priority to the halal economy during its Chairmanship, as well as its proposal to host a D-8 Halal Economy Cooperation Secretariat. In furtherance of the D-8's target of achieving US$ 500 billion in intra-D-8 trade by 2030, the Secretary-General reiterated his proposals for the establishment of an Integrated D-8 Halal Trade Corridor and a Digital Halal Marketplace and Investment Platform. He noted that such initiatives, supported by the effective utilization of the D-8 Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) and closer cooperation with SMIIC, could facilitate market access, strengthen investment flows, enhance supply-chain efficiency, and promote industrial innovation across the Member States.

The Secretary-General underscored three strategic priorities for advancing cooperation in the halal economy: (i) strengthening halal standards, certification and mutual recognition arrangements; developing sustainable halal value chains through digital transformation, responsible use of Artificial Intelligence, resource-efficient production and circular economy solutions; and (iii) mobilizing investment and Islamic finance to empower enterprises, particularly micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), youth and women entrepreneurs.

Emphasizing the need to move beyond certification towards greater economic value creation, Secretary-General Sohail Mahmood called upon the international business and investment communities to translate the opportunities presented by the global halal economy into commercially viable partnerships and tangible economic outcomes. He reaffirmed the D-8's readiness to work closely with its Member States, international partners and the private sector to advance practical initiatives that contribute to a more responsible, resilient, inclusive and sustainable global halal economy.

Following the opening ceremony, the Secretary-General and accompanying members of the D-8 delegation visited several exhibition booths at the Halal Expo 2026, which showcased a diverse range of halal products, services and innovations from participating countries.

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The Secretary-General's participation in the Summit and Expo reaffirmed the D-8's commitment to strengthening international partnerships, promoting intra-D-8 trade and investment, and harnessing the potential of the global halal economy as a catalyst for sustainable economic development and shared prosperity.



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