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THE D-8 CAIRO SUMMIT

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The Developing Eight Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) was established in 1997 under the leadership of Türkiye and with the goal of improving the position of developing Muslim countries in the world economy and to provide new trade opportunities.[1] The main principles of the Organization are; peace instead of conflict, dialogue instead of confrontation, cooperation instead of exploitation, justice instead of double-standard, equality instead of discrimination, democracy instead of oppression.[2] The members of the D-8 are Türkiye, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nigeria, Egypt and Iran. The members of the D-8 are also members of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation and Muslims constitute the significant majority of their populations. This situation shows that the D-8 is also important with regards to the Islamic geography.[3] The United Nations granted Observer Status to the D-8 in 2014. The D-8, constitutes an important example of the South-South cooperation.[4] A Preferential Trade Deal was accepted by the members of the D-8 Organization. The D-8 Decennial Roadmap for 2020-2030 was approvedin 2021 at the 10th Summit. Thus, long term vision goals of the Organization were determined. An Extraordinary Meeting of Foreign Ministers on the Situation in Gaza was held on 8 June 2024 in Istanbul and a Joint Declaration calling for unconditional peace in Gaza, was accepted by the members of the D-8.[5]

The 11th Summit of D-8 was held in Cairo on 18-19 December 2024 under the theme Investing in Youth and Supporting SMEs: Shaping tomorrows Economy. The Summit was also attended by non-D-8 guests, including Arab League Secretary-General, Palestinian President, and Lebanese Prime Minister.[6] The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Taha, announced that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation formalized a memorandum of understanding between the organisation and the D-8.[7] The most important political questions discussed at the summit were the issues of Gaza, Lebanon and Syria. A special session on the Humanitarian Crisis and Reconstruction Challenges in Gaza and Lebanon was held during the summit, the issues in Palestine and Lebanon and the reconstruction of the region were discussed.[8] President Erdogan

expressed at the summit that the D-8 countries should conduct joint efforts for a just and lasting peace. The President also held bilateral meetings with the Heads of State of the member, countries and discussed regional issues.[9] Iranian President Pezeshkian's participation in the Cairo Summit marked the first visit of a senior Iranian official to Egypt in eleven years. The diplomatic relations between Iran and Egypt, which have been turbulent since 1979, were on a course of rapprochement during the reign of Ibrahim Reisi.[10] At the Cairo Summit, President Pezeshkiyan emphasized the importance of establishing new ties and multilateralism.[11] In this regard, Pezeshkian's visit to Cairo is an indication of the new approach developed by Iran towards the region and the diplomatic rapprochement initiated between Iran and Egypt. Egyptian President el-Sisi expressed the importance of implementing the preferential trade agreement.[12] President Subionto of Indonesia proposed to strengthen the Islamic society and establish supply chains such as the halal value chain among D-8 members.[13] Yunus, the president of the Interim Government of Bangladesh, stated that his country needs partnerships between universities and educational institutions.[14] Nigerian Foreign Minister Tuggar stated that measures should be taken to improve human capital.[15] At the summit, all the leaders stressed the importance of economic cooperation. In addition, all the leaders made statements signifying the necessity of regional peace, especially in Gaza. This situation increases the significance of the D-8 Organization in terms of the members of the D-8 Organization with Muslim populations raising issues in the region, especially in Gaza, on international platforms. In addition, it is being asserted that the D-8 Organization has the opportunity to act as a catalyst for other organizations such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and the Arab League in this aspect.[16]

The most important outcome of the Cairo Summit was the unanimous approval of Azerbaijan's full membership. Thus, the number of members of the organization has increased for the first time. The increase in the number of members of the organization is important in terms of the potential to create new areas of economic, commercial and political cooperation between the member countries. The Cairo Declaration was adopted at the end of the Cairo Summit. In the declaration, it is stated that the goals set out in the 2020-2030 Decades Road Map" are supported. The Cairo Declaration discussed advancing partnerships in priority areas of cooperation such as infrastructure, trade and investment in line with the United Nations Development Goals, strengthening South-South cooperation, and promoting SMEs in emerging sectors such as climate change, e-commerce and fintech. In addition, issues such as artificial intelligence and the Internet of Things (IoT) were raised. It was stated that unilateral economic sanctions are opposed and this is seen as a violation of international law. It was emphasized that the recruitment of new members is supported. Furthermore, Antalya was selected as the D-8 tourism city for 2025, Indonesia was elected as the chair of the next term and it was decided to host the Twelfth Summit of the D-8 Organization.[17]

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