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D-8 PLEDGES TO STRENGTHEN TOURISM COOPERATION

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On his part the Secretary-General of the D-8 Organization, Seyed Ali Mohammed Mousavi underlined that Tourism sector nowadays is one of the most significant sector in the global economy. He mentioned that D-8 Member Countries are very rich in culture as well as in natural beauties. Thus Dr. Mousavi pointed out that Tourism might be an economic driver for Member Countries.

Delegations from Member Countries exchanged views and shared information on tourism initiatives and proposed areas for collaboration. They reviewed and remarked the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of previous D-8 Tourism Cooperation meeting. The meeting scrutinized

some of the most important issues such as the facilitation of tourist visa, the role of the private sector (SMEs) in tourism development, how to increase the volume of tourists.

At the end, Delegations adopted proposals and recommendations for promoting the field of D-8 tourism cooperation and welcomed the idea to establish a D-8 Tourism Fund and a Working Group for preparing a 10-year Roadmap and hailed Turkey and Malaysia for showing their interest to host the next meeting.

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PAKISTAN OFFERS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF D-8 JOINT BUSINESS COUNCIL

D-8 Secretary-General, Dr. Mousavi and Minister of Commerce of Pakistan, Mr. Qasim M. Niaz had a bilateral meeting to discuss recent developments in the area of the trade cooperation on the sideline of the 33rd Session of the Commission, held in 2-3 September 2013 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

In the meeting, Dr. Mousavi expressed the need to increase the trade level to \$500bn by 2018 as stipulated in the D-8 Roadmap for 2008 - 2018. The statistics illustrated that with the current \$148bn intra-trade volume among Member Countries, the group is lagging behind the target indicated in its Roadmap. He

end of 2018, which means the group must increase intra-trade from \$148bn in 2012 to about \$500bn in 2018”.

Minister Niaz expressed that in order to increase D-8 intra-trade, the implementation of D-8 Agreements on Trade, Visa and Custom plays vital role. “Furthermore, for reaching this target we need the active involvement of the private sector of D-8 Member Countries. D-8 private sector must serve, and mostly involve, as the economic engine of growth while the government provides facilitation, policy support and incentives”, he expressed.

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said, “Taking into account the current figure of D-8 intra-trade in 2012, which is around \$150bn, we are now in the lagging position towards the trade target in D-8 Roadmap, particularly in the second phase, which was expected to reach \$170bn in 2012.”

Secretary-General, Dr. Mousavi explained that one of the core objectives of the D-8 Roadmap is to increase the intra-trade of D-8 countries at least to 15 per cent to 20 per cent of their total trade in the world by the

He also disclosed that the establishment of a Joint Business Council of D-8 Member Countries can be a viable and effective option. “We can hold a meeting at the sideline of the next Trade Ministers Meeting and discuss the challenges and possibilities and also share experiences, best practices with the private sector”, he added.

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