

**Statement by H.E. Ambassador Cinar Aldemir, Executive Director, Secretariat of
the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)
at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

**Mr. Chairman,
Honourable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,**

At the outset, I would like to thank His Excellency Mr. Shamil Aleskerov, Secretary General of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) for his kind invitation to CICA to participate in this very important meeting. I would also like to thank the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran for their traditionally warm hospitality and excellent arrangements for the meeting.

Today, fundamental shifts are underway in the global distribution of economic and political power and Asia has to play a prominent role in ensuring that the world order is inclusive, just and equitable.

CICA, as an important forum for dialogue in Asia, can help contribute to this process through development of a cooperative and pluralistic security order in this continent, based on mutual understanding, trust and sovereign equality. CICA has the privilege of a unique composition of Member States from all corners of Asia covering nearly ninety percent of its population and area. Its heterogeneity has broadened the scope of the discussions and has served to foster a deeper sense of mutual understanding and respect among diverse countries.

In order to accomplish the ultimate goal of making Asia a region of peace and security, it is necessary that there should be active cooperation among all Asian regional and sub-regional organizations and fora. With this in view, CICA reached out to other organizations and fora for establishment of institutional level relationship.

It is a matter of great honour that ECO was the first organization with which CICA signed a Memorandum of Understanding in August 2008. There is indeed unlimited scope for cooperation between CICA and ECO. CICA and ECO are natural allies because all the Member States of ECO, with the sole exception of Turkmenistan are also members of CICA and ECO. Both the bodies share the objectives of sustainable economic development of Member States; development of transport & communications infrastructure linking the Member States with each other and with the outside world; regional cooperation for drug abuse control; ecological and environmental protection; and strengthening of historical and cultural ties among the peoples of the region. Sovereign equality of the member states is the most important guiding principle of both.

They also share the objective of exchanges in educational, scientific, technical and cultural fields.

We are looking forward to active interaction and cooperation between the two bodies.

**Statement by H.E. Seyed Ali Mohammad MOUSAVI, Secretary General of D-8
Secretariat at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

**Honorable Chairman,
Distinguished Ministers,
Distinguished Secretary-General
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is indeed a great honor and pleasure for me to participate in this august meeting representing D-8 Organization. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Islamic Republic of Iran for hosting this meeting and for the warm hospitality.

Mr. Chairman,

At the D-8 Secretariat we prepared a detailed report for the information of distinguished house and because of the time pressure, I refrain going to detail of that report. Just to bring your Excellencies' attention only a few points as follows: First the MoU between D-8 and ECO signed by Secretary Generals in October 2011 and later on we had several rounds of meeting at different level for its implementation and action plan prepared by two Secretary Generals for the full implementation of MoU.

On the same base D-8 Secretariat also took initiative and hold first D-8 and ECO Film Festival in Istanbul. The festival was to exhibit a selected group of films from D-8 and ECO member countries. This first launch of cultural activity will pave the way to many more events to take place in the future, which not only will have significant effect in enhancing the visibility of both Organizations, but also, will bring D-8 and ECO countries much closer. I believe it is now time for more practical cooperation, D-8 and ECO countries would like to see a concrete action plan in cultural cooperation.

I would like to take this opportunity to inform the house, the 16th D-8 Council of Ministers meeting is going to be held on 19 December 2013 in Islamabad to review D-8 achievements from the 8th Summit which was successfully held in Islamabad. I take this time to thank our current chair Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its successful leadership during the last year.

It is also worth mentioning that D-8 Organization will complete the first phase of its life-cycle by the 9th Summit in 2014 which will be held in Turkey. This will mark the services provided by each and every member country in the decisive role as the Chairman of the Organization. In the upcoming Summit, the vital role of the Chairman will be rotated again and for the second time to the Republic of Turkey, the initiator of the organization.

I trust, the start of the second phase of the life-cycle of the Organization will be a turning point for D-8 to move in a manner commensurate with the requirements of

developments and the pace of changes surrounding its individual members as well as the entire Organization. Within this context, I strongly believe, it will be the most appropriate occasion for the Organization to shift from the current situation as I call it “policy coordination” to a new phase which I want to name as “project implementation.”

Although we have already had good achievements in the adoption of basic documents of the Organization such as Charter, Roadmap 2008-2018 ,Global Vision and also PTA, Visa and Custom Agreements. But I believe we have long way to go to facilitate more economic cooperation and trade in all economic fields within our member states.

Among these legal instruments, the PTA, which came into force almost a year ago, should be taken as a model. Its full implementation will epitomize the real success of the group. Intra-D8 trade volume accounted to 150 Billion USD in 2012, it means 8.2 percent of D-8's world trade. But the challenges ahead of us, we should be increased it to 500 Billion USD by 2018 which is among the targets stipulated in the Roadmap. It is a very challenging target but I believe with strengthening economic and trade relations among D-8 private sector, creating new and additional mechanisms and also with above mentioned agreements we can reach this target.

Mr. Chairman,

Having said that, I would like to thank you and through your government of Islamic Republic of Iran for their warm hospitality.

Finally, I thank you very much for your attention and wish all of you every success in this meeting.

Wassalamualaikum Warrahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.

**Statement by Mrs. Eva Hammerschmiedova, Assistant Counsellor,
Intergovernmental Organization of International Carriage by Rail (OTIF)
at the 21st Meeting of Council of Ministers
(Tehran, 26th November, 2013)**

**Your Excellencies, Honorable Ministers,
Secretary General,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

First of all, on behalf of the Secretary General of OTIF, Mr Davenne, I should like to thank you for the invitation to this meeting of the highest decision making body of your organisation. We are very grateful for this opportunity to gain an insight into the way the various working bodies of ECO carry out their work. As far as the working bodies of our organisation are concerned, in particular the General Assembly and the Revision Committee, OTIF will of course be most glad to send the ECO Secretariat invitations, and we should very much welcome the participation of a representative of ECO.

The reason why our Secretary General, Mr Davenne, is unable to participate in person here is that today, an important meeting of the OTIF Administrative Committee, which is the supervisory body for financial and staff matters, is being held in Berne. I am sure there will be another opportunity for a meeting between the heads of our organisations, at which it can be discussed how to implement the Memorandum of Understanding between our organisations in terms of specific new actions. You may remember that the Memorandum was signed in Istanbul on 9 June 2009.

I should like to remind you of our successful capacity-building workshop jointly organised in Islamabad by ECO and OTIF in December 2011. Currently, three important Member States of ECO are members of OTIF, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan. It is thanks to an initiative of ECO that Pakistan has been a COTIF Member State since 1 September 2013. As a result of this, the transport of goods in the ECO container train on the Islamabad-Tehran-Istanbul corridor can be performed on the basis of the CIM uniform legal regime, with all the advantages of legal certainty which this brings.

We would imagine that the future development of COTIF, and in particular of the CIM Uniform Rules, i.e. the rules that apply to the international carriage of goods by rail, may be of interest to ECO. All ECO Member States, including those that are not Members of OTIF, will be invited to the next meeting of the OTIF Revision Committee, which is scheduled for June 2014.

Apart from updating the existing legal regime for international carriage by rail, Member States of both organisations will certainly take part in UNECE and UNESCAP activities with the aim of achieving Uniform Railway Law for both Europe and Asia.

Another area of possible future cooperation may be in our efforts to overcome the administrative and technical obstacles to border crossing. Within OTIF, there is a new beginning and a new direction in activities in connection with the facilitation of border crossing. An exchange of views on these topics between ECO and OTIF at a later date would certainly be welcome.

Thank you for your attention. I am following your meeting with great interest and I should like to wish you every success in your work.
