



**ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK**

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**REPORT ON:  
IDB's WTO-RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM**

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**33<sup>rd</sup> Session of the COMCEC  
(Istanbul, Turkey, 20-23 November 2017)**

## **IDB WTO-RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The IDB WTO-related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program (WTO-Program) was launched in 1997 and has now been under implementation for twenty years. The IDB has regularly submitted progress reports on the implementation of this program to the COMCEC meetings.

The IDB launched the WTO-Program with the prime objective of facilitating its member countries to strengthen their human and institutional capacities to adjust to the new multilateral trading system. The aim of the Program is to provide greater awareness to the OIC member countries on WTO Agreements and their implementation and facilitate the process of their accession to the WTO. It also serves as a forum where relevant officials from member countries can exchange views and discuss various multilateral trade matters. In the recent years, the focus of the Program has been more on helping the member countries in their accession to WTO, strengthening their negotiation skills and issues related to negotiations within the framework of the recent WTO developments.

### **II. MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM**

The main elements of the IDB Group's WTO Program include: organizing seminars and workshops on WTO agreements; conducting technical courses on Trade Policy; organizing Consultative Meetings on important issues and in preparation for the WTO Ministerial Conferences; undertaking WTO-related studies; and providing advisory services through financing of experts/consultants to member countries on WTO-related matters. Briefly, the activities that have been undertaken under the IDB Group's WTO Program since its inception are as follows:

**Seminars and Workshops:** The IDB organizes seminars and workshops covering a wide range of WTO issues with the view to familiarizing the member countries with the contents and provisions of the WTO Agreements as well as the with the activities of WTO so that they may be in a better position to defend their interests. Since its inception till end-October 2017, 105 Seminars and 55 Workshops have been organized by the IDB under this program.

**Trade Policy Courses:** Organized in collaboration with the WTO, these courses are short versions of the WTO Trade Policy Course which is a three-month course offered by the WTO in Geneva. The Trade Policy Course covers a wide range of topics, such as, market access, customs and trade administration, agriculture, textile and clothing, sanitary and photo-sanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, government procurement, general agreements on trade in services, intellectual property rights, anti-dumping, subsidies and countervailing measures, dispute settlement, agreement on trade-related investment measures, trade and competition policy, trade and environment, and regionalism. Since the inception of the Program till end-October 2017, 21 Trade Policy Courses have been organized by the IDB under this program.

**Special Studies:** The IDB occasionally undertakes in-depth studies on WTO-related issues based on the requests of the member countries. So far, the IDB has undertaken studies on: Agriculture sector, Investment, Services sector, Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), and Electronic-Commerce. Each study included a set of case

studies on OIC member countries and contained valuable practical tips and negotiation strategies on the various issues concerning the OIC member countries.

**Consultative Meetings:** The IDB organizes consultative meetings for the member countries mostly in conjunction with the WTO Ministerial Conferences. These meetings provide a forum for the delegations of member countries to exchange views and, where possible, coordinate their positions on matters related to the WTO, adopt a common stance and act as a group to acquire stronger bargaining power. So far, the IDB has organized ten consultative meetings for both capital-based and Geneva-based officials.

**WTO Specific Technical Assistance to OIC Member Countries:** The IDB also provides specific technical assistance to member countries through hiring consultancy services or fielding in-house WTO experts on vital WTO issues such as, WTO accession, drafting of national laws, establishing WTO Units and providing capacity building for all general purposes.

### **III. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN UNDER THE PROGRAM SINCE THE 32<sup>nd</sup> SESSION OF THE COMCEC**

Based on the feedback and requests of the member countries, the current focus of the Program is on three themes: (i) Accession to the WTO (ii) Regional integration and (iii) National Activities. The major activities organized by the IDB since the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the COMCEC are the following:

1. Workshop on Promotion of Trade and Transport Corridors to Enhance Regional Integration among IDB's African Member Countries, 20-22 February 2017, Dakar, Republic of Senegal.
2. "Seminar on "Trade in Services: Potential gains and Challenges to promote Regional Economic Integration in the Middle East and North Africa region", 22-24 March 2017, Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco.
3. Seminar on "the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and the Prospects of Activating the OIC Single Window", 16-18 April 2017, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
4. National seminar on "accession of Azerbaijan to WTO", 27-28 April 2017, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan
5. Preparatory seminar for the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference: "An African Concertation", from 17 to 19 July 2017, Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco
6. Preparatory seminar for the 11<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference: "An African Concertation", from 24 to 26 July 2017, Istanbul, Republic of Turkey
7. Regional Seminar on Implications of the Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) on Regional Integration of IDB African MCs 11-13 October 2017, Abidjan, Cote d'Ivoire
8. Seminar on preparation of the 11<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial: An Arab perspective, Dubai, UAE, 30 Oct-1 Nov 2017.

### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The IDB endeavors to facilitate the OIC countries in every possible way in building their human and institutional capacities to enable them to address the challenges of the multilateral trading system. The IDB has implemented its WTO program in close collaboration with the WTO and other relevant international, national and OIC institutions and highly appreciates their cooperation and support. The IDB welcomes new ideas and suggestions to further enhance the impact of this program and looks forward to working with them even more closely in the future for the effective delivery of this Program. The

IDB would like to cordially invite all esteemed member countries to participate in the Consultative Meeting of OIC Trade Ministers to be organized by it on eve of the Eleventh Ministerial Conference which is to be held on 11-14 December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

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**STATUS OF THE OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE WTO  
(as of end-October 2017)**

WTO Members	Date of Accession	Observers	No Status
1. Afghanistan	29 July 2016	1. Algeria	1. Palestine
2. Albania	8 September 2000	2. Azerbaijan	2. Turkmenistan
3. Bahrain	1 January 1995	3. Comoros	
4. Bangladesh	1 January 1995	4. Iran	
5. Benin	22 February 1996	5. Iraq	
6. Brunei Darussalam	1 January 1995	6. Lebanon	
7. Burkina Faso	3 June 1995	7. Libya	
8. Cameroon	13 December 1995	8. Sudan	
9. Chad	19 October 1996	9. Uzbekistan	
10. Cote d'Ivoire	1 January 1995	10. Syria	
11. Djibouti	31 May 1995	11. Somalia	
12. Egypt	30 June 1995		
13. Gabon	1 January 1995		
14. Gambia	23 October 1996		
15. Guinea	25 October 1995		
16. Guinea-Bissau	31 May 1995		
17. Guyana	1 January 1995		
18. Indonesia	1 January 1995		
19. Jordan	1 January 1995		
20. Kuwait	1 January 1995		
21. Kyrgyz Republic	20 December 1998		
22. Malaysia	1 January 1995		
23. Maldives	31 May 1995		
24. Mali	31 May 1995		
25. Mauritania	31 May 1995		
26. Morocco	1 January 1995		
27. Mozambique	26 August 1995		
28. Niger	13 December 1996		
29. Nigeria	1 January 1995		
30. Oman	9 November 2000		
31. Pakistan	1 January 1995		
32. Qatar	13 January 1996		
33. Saudi Arabia	11 December 2005		
34. Senegal	1 January 1995		
35. Sierra Leone	23 July 1995		
36. Suriname	1 January 1995		
37. Tajikistan	2 March 2013		
38. Togo	31 May 1995		
39. Tunisia	29 March 1995		
40. Turkey	26 March 1995		
41. Uganda	1 January 1995		
42. UAE	10 April 1996		
43. Kazakhstan	30 November 2015		
44. Yemen	26 June 2014		