

Original : English

**REPORT OF THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE
Istanbul, 20 October 2003**

As per the agenda of the 19th Session of the COMCEC, the Sessional Committee held its meeting on 20th October 2003.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Ambassador Nabika Diallo, Assistant Secretary General of OIC. The meeting was attended by the following ;

- General Secretariat of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference
- COMCEC Coordination Office
- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC)
- The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT)
- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Commodity Exchange (ICCI)
- The Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
- Islamic University of Technology (IUT)

and the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

The meeting adopted the following agenda items;

- 1- Status of Supplementary Mechanism to implement the OIC Plan of Action
- 2- Status of the preparations for the launching of Trade Negotiation
- 3- Exchange of Views on Trade and Transport Facilitation among the member states
- 4- Any other issues

Under Agenda item 1, the COMCEC Coordination Office informed the Committee of the status of the Supplementary Mechanism. Thereafter, it was agreed that in order to give further impetus the following steps would be undertaken;

- 1- The Committee agreed that as a first step, all the projects in hand, received through the sectoral committees should be dealt with. Accordingly, the General Secretariat of OIC in consultation with the COMCEC Coordination Office, will send a letter by end of November 2003 to all the sponsors of the projects asking them to indicate their present position on their project proposal. In addition to that, the sponsors will be requested to fill in the project profile form and to send their responses to the General Secretariat of OIC, within 4 months. In case no response is received within this period it will be assumed that the sponsors are no longer interested and subsequently the proposal will be removed from the list.
- 2- On receiving this information the General Secretariat of OIC will inform the OIC Institutions, who will then select projects falling within their scope of activities. Thereafter, the OIC Institutions will coordinate with the sponsor and the interested countries for their possible implementation.
- 3- It was underlined that the role of OIC Institutions in this process will be only to give advisory as well as technical or eventually financial assistance to the concerned Member States.
- 4- The Committee agreed that the progress of the implementation process will be regularly reviewed and evaluated at all OIC Meetings.

Under Agenda item 2, ICDT and the COMCEC Coordination Office informed the Committee about the steps undertaken by the Secretariat of the Trade Negotiations Committee. The Committee laid emphasis on the participation of the 12 member states, who had ratified the Agreement, in the first round of negotiations, to be held in Turkey in April, 2004, with the possible assistance of IDB. Thereafter the following points were adopted.

- 1- Chairman of COMCEC will send invitation letters to the heads of State or the Government of the 12 Member States that have ratified the Agreement informing them the Government of Turkey will host the First Round of Trade Negotiations.
- 2- Member States will also be invited by the COMCEC Coordination Office, in coordination with ICDT and the General Secretariat of OIC. The said letters will call on Member States who have ratified the Agreement to confirm their participation latest by end of February 2004 their delegation, comprising of members who would be in a position to take relevant decisions. In addition to the above, the General Secretariat of the OIC will also send invitation letters to those countries who have signed, encouraging them to ratify so that they may take part in the negotiations.
- 3- Depending on the Member States, invitation letters and documentation will be sent through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or Ministry of Trade and Commerce. But for the 12 ratifying Member States, ICDT will request for the name of the focal points for all communication.
- 4- It was also agreed that maximum coverage may be given to this subject by publishing it on the websites of ICDT, ICCI and COMCEC Coordination Office.
- 5- The COMCEC Coordination Office, ICDT and OIC will send by 15th November 2003 under separate cover all the documents pertaining to the first round of trade negotiations, to Member States and concerned OIC Institutions.
- 6- The COMCEC Coordination Office and ICDT will present progress reports on the state of preparations for the launching the trade negotiations to the next Meeting of Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs to be held in Jeddah.

Under agenda item 3, the Committee reviewed the topic for Exchange of Views Session for the 20th COMCEC, namely Trade and Transport Facilitation among OIC countries. The Committee proposed the holding of the related workshop by the ICDT and the Organisation of Islamic Shipowners' Association (OISA).

The Committee concluded its deliberations with thanks to the chair.

