



**ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK GROUP**

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

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**29<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC**

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## **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 more than fifteen years. The IDB has regularly submitted progress reports on the implementation of this program to the COMCEC meetings. The last report was submitted to the 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC. This report highlights the major WTO-related technical assistance activities undertaken under this program since the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 8-11 October 2012.

The IDB launched the WTO-Program with the prime objective of helping its member countries upgrade 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 Doha Work Program.

The main objectives of this Program are to: (i) assist member countries that are in the process of accession to WTO to negotiate the best possible terms of accession; (ii) upgrade the human and institutional capacities of member countries that are already members of WTO to implement the Uruguay Round Agreements and undertake the necessary economic restructuring to take maximum advantage of the new opportunities; and (iii) assist member countries in harmonizing their positions and to be well prepared for negotiations on new trade-related issues that are likely to emerge in future Ministerial Conferences of the WTO.

### **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 2013, 68 Seminars and 35 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 2013, 18 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. In this regard, the IDB obtained the services of experts in these fields and collaborated with UNCTAD in supervising some of these studies. 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 seven 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 ORGANIZED SINCE THE 28<sup>th</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) Negotiation skills. The major activities organized by the IDB since the 28<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC are the following:

1. Seminar on “WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism and the Developing Countries” 01 – 03 October 2012, Istanbul, Republic of Turkey.
2. Workshop on “Concessions and Commitments Undertaken by Arab Countries Acceding to the WTO”, 14-18 October 2012, Algiers, Algeria.
3. Seminar on Trade Facilitation for Arab Countries, 15-17 October 2012, Dubai, UAE.

4. Seminar on the WTO "Made in the World" initiative: Significance of Global Supply Chains for African Countries, *26-28 November 2012, Dakar, Senegal.*
5. Seminar on Non Tariffs Barriers (NTBs) to Trade in Maghreb Arab Countries, *24 - 26 December 2012, Casablanca, Morocco.*
6. Training Course on WTO Accession Issues for Iraqi Officials, *25 February – 01 March 2013, Ankara, Turkey.*
7. Seminar on “Trade and Development”, *25 – 27 March 2013, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.*
8. Seminar on Trade Facilitation (Arab member countries), *08-10 April 2013, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.*
9. Seminar on "Multilateral Negotiations on Trade in Services as leverage to promote intra-trade in the Arab Region", *4-6 June 2013, Casablanca, Morocco.*
10. Seminar on Doha Negotiations and WTO Accession for ECO member countries, *02-04 July 2013, Istanbul, Turkey.*

#### **IV. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2014**

Taking into consideration the needs and requests of the OIC member countries, the following activities are planned to be organized in 2014:

- Seminars on “the Impact of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs) on prospects of regional integration among member.
- Training Course for Azeri officials on Multilateral Trading System and accession to WTO.
- Intensive Trade negotiations Skills Course for Arab Countries
- Seminar on Trade Remedy Measures for West African Monetary and Economic Union.
- Seminar on prospects and Challenges of Regional Integration in North African Countries
- Expert Group meeting on Non-Tariff Barriers within TPS/OIC
- Seminar on “Multilateral Negotiations on Trade in Services as leverage to promote regional intra-trade”.
- Seminar on regional Integration in Africa ECOWAS
- Seminar on Regional Trade Agreements

## V. CONCLUSION

The IDB has been trying to assist 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 this 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.

As one of the regular activities under the IDB WTO programme, the IDB is organizing a Consultative Meeting of member countries on 2 December 2013 on the eve of the 9<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference to be held in Bali, Indonesia from 3 to 6 December 2013. The Bank looks forward to the active participation of the member countries in this meeting.

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**STATUS OF THE OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE WTO  
(as of end-September 2013)**

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

# Not yet Member of the IDB.