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**REPORT
OF THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC
(İstanbul, 23-26 November 2015)**

1. The Thirty-First Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) was held on 23-26 November 2015 in İstanbul.

2. The Session was attended by representatives of the following Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC):

- 1- Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
- 2- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- 3- Republic of Azerbaijan
- 4- Kingdom of Bahrain
- 5- People's Republic of Bangladesh
- 6- Republic of Benin
- 7- Brunei Darussalam
- 8- Republic of Cameroon
- 9- Republic of Chad
- 10- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- 11- Republic of Djibouti
- 12- Arab Republic of Egypt
- 13- Republic of Gabon
- 14- Republic of the Gambia
- 15- Republic of Guinea
- 16- Republic of Guinea-Bissau
- 17- Republic of Indonesia
- 18- Islamic Republic of Iran
- 19- Republic of Iraq
- 20- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 21- Republic of Kazakhstan
- 22- State of Kuwait
- 23- Republic of Lebanon
- 24- Libya
- 25- Malaysia
- 26- Republic of Maldives

- 27- Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- 28- Kingdom of Morocco
- 29- Republic of Mozambique
- 30- Republic of Niger
- 31- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- 32- Sultanate of Oman
- 33- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- 34- State of Palestine
- 35- State of Qatar
- 36- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- 37- Republic of Senegal
- 38- Republic of Sierra Leone
- 39- Republic of Somalia
- 40- Republic of the Sudan
- 41- Republic of Tajikistan
- 42- Republic of Togo
- 43- Republic of Tunisia
- 44- Republic of Turkey
- 45- Turkmenistan
- 46- State of the United Arab Emirates
- 47- Republic of Uzbekistan

3. Bosnia-Herzegovina, The Russian Federation, Kingdom of Thailand and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus participated in the Session as observers.

4. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and Standing Committees, namely Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC) and Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), the following subsidiary, specialized and affiliated OIC institutions attended the Session:

- 1- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
- 2- Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT)
- 3- Islamic Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
- 4- Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
- 5- Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group
- 6- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
- 7- Islamic University of Technology (IUT)
- 8- Organization of the Islamic Shipowners Association (OISA)
- 9- Association of National Development Financing Institutions (ADFIMI)

- 10- Federation of Consultants from Islamic Countries (FCIC)
- 11- Federation of Contractors from Islamic Countries (FOCIC)

5. Representatives of the following UN and other international organizations attended the Ministerial Session and Special Sessions as well:

- 1- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- 2- Developing Eight D-8
- 3- Economic Cooperation Organization Trade and Development Bank (ECOBANK)
- 4- United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- 5- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- 6- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)

(A copy of the List of Participants of the Thirty-First Session of the COMCEC is attached as Annex I.)

6. The Meeting of Senior Officials of COMCEC that preceded the Ministerial Session was held on 23rd and 24th November 2015 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Emre YUNT, Director General for Multilateral Economic Affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey. The Senior Officials deliberated on the agenda items and prepared the Draft Resolutions for consideration by the Ministerial Session.

Opening Session

7. The Opening Ceremony of the Thirty-First Session of the COMCEC was held on November 25th, 2015 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Turkey and the Chairman of the COMCEC.

8. Welcoming the delegates, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed that the global economy could not yet entirely overcome the crisis that started nearly seven years ago and the growth rate of the global economy follows a course at an extremely slow rate compared to the pre-crisis figures, and also has made little progress for the last few years. H.E. ERDOĞAN said that in spite of all the uncertainties and negative developments in the global economy, the share of the Islamic countries in the global trade thanks to Allah, has increased by almost 40 percent within the past decade. OIC countries' share in global output has also increased nearly fifty percent.

9. H.E. ERDOĞAN emphasizing that although human and natural resources potentials, of OIC Member Countries are quite abundant for further development, regretted to say that Member Countries still face serious challenges such as underdevelopment and poverty, whereas some are spending billions of dollars on luxury and ostentation. H.E. ERDOĞAN stressed that without waiting for a third party, whether countries or institutions, to handle our problems, we need to address our own issues and problems, and courageously face them.

10. H.E. ERDOĞAN drawing all Member Countries' attention that some Member Countries in the Middle East are confronted with severe challenges and problems, reminded that everyone should be aware of the fact that hiding behind barbed wires or high walls does not keep one safe from problems.

11. H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined that in terms of SDGs, poverty eradication is one of the most challenging items for OIC Member Countries, as OIC member countries still have 350 million people living under poverty line corresponding to 21 percent of the total population. In this respect, H.E. ERDOĞAN emphasized the importance of 31st Ministerial Exchange of Views Session theme, namely "Post-2015 Development Agenda and Development Challenges of the Islamic Ummah: Improving Basic Service Delivery".

12. H.E. ERDOĞAN stressed that after the implementation of the Strategy, a sizeable increase has been achieved in the number and the efficiency of the efforts exerted under the umbrella of COMCEC.

13. H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed that Member Countries can play a significant role through activating political will in an effective manner, adoption of proper public policies, strengthening institutional and human capacity, introducing a sense of effective partnership and mobilizing financial resources with the involvement of NGOs and private sector for the successful implementation and follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goals. H.E. ERDOĞAN also called upon the all Member Countries to use existing instruments of COMCEC more efficiently and develop new ideas and programs for this purpose in order to approximate policies among the OIC Member Countries.

14. President ERDOĞAN also emphasized the necessity of actual implementation of TPS-OIC System at the earliest for enhancing intra OIC trade further. H.E. ERDOĞAN concluded his speech by thanking all the delegates and OIC Institutions for their contribution and support to COMCEC.

(A copy of the text of the Inaugural Statement of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN is attached as Annex II.)

15. Following the Inaugural Statement made by H.E. ERDOĞAN, H.E. Iyad Ameen MADANI, Secretary General of the OIC, made a statement at the Opening Session.

16. Thanking the Government of the Republic of the Turkey for the hospitality extended to the delegates, H.E. MADANI emphasized that multilateral trade instrument, which seeks to achieve the removal of qualitative and quantitative trade barriers, is yet to come into effect.

17. H.E. MADANI presented his homage to the Member States for their unwavering support and collaboration with the General Secretariat towards ensuring the success of the various economic and commercial programmes of the Organisation. The Secretary General also commended the increasing collaborative spirit among the various OIC institutions, which has generated the required momentum for the realization of the OIC joint action.

(A copy of the address of H.E. Iyad Ameen MADANI is attached as Annex III.)

18. The Heads of Delegations of the State of Kuwait, Republic of Gabon and Islamic Republic of Pakistan made statements on behalf of the Arab, African, and Asian regional groups, respectively. They expressed their thanks and appreciation to the Republic of Turkey for the warm hospitality and excellent organization of the Meeting. They also thanked H.E. ERDOĞAN for his wise guidance and leadership in enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member States. Emphasizing the challenges ahead in connection with the Global Post - 2015 Development Agenda, SDGs, they stressed the importance of coordinated efforts, experience sharing and effectively utilizing COMCEC platform to further enhance solidarity and cooperation among the Member Countries.

19. The Heads of Delegations also expressed their support and commitment to the COMCEC and emphasized the need for improving cooperation under the auspices of the COMCEC.

20. H.E. Dr. Ahmed Mohammed ALI, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group also delivered a statement at the Opening Session. H.E. Dr. ALI commended the programs and projects initiated by COMCEC; and referring to the SDGs and development agenda, emphasized the support and dedication of IDB for further enhancing cooperation among the OIC Member Countries.

(The text of the Statement of the IDB Group President is attached as Annex IV.)

21. Rıfat HİSARCIKLIOĞLU, President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), also made a speech at the Opening Session. Mr. HİSARCIKLIOĞLU underlined the importance of enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among the Member Countries for the expansion of intra-OIC trade and the potential role of the private sector in this regard.

(The text of the Statement of the President of the TOBB is attached as Annex V.)

22. A special signing ceremony was held at the Opening Session. During this ceremony, the Head of Delegation of Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Erbolat DOSSAEV, Minister of National Economy, signed the General Agreement on Economic, Technical and Commercial Cooperation among the OIC Member States.

23. During this ceremony, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the COMCEC Coordination Office signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for enhancing economic and commercial cooperation.

24. Following the Opening Ceremony, H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN received the Heads of Delegation.

Ministerial Working Session

25. The Ministerial Working Session of the Thirty-First Session of the COMCEC was held on November 25th, 2015 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Cevdet YILMAZ, Minister of Development of the Republic of Turkey.

26. The Session adopted the Agenda of the Thirty-First Session of the COMCEC.

27. Following the adoption of the agenda, H.E. Ambassador Emre YUNT, as the Chairman of the Senior Officials Meeting, briefed the Session on the outcome of the Senior Officials Meeting as well as the recommendations of the 6th Meeting of COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group on “Post-2015 Development Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals: Improving the Basic Services Delivery in the OIC Member Countries” considered by SOM for submission to Ministerial Session.

28. Following the presentation of H.E. Ambassador Emre YUNT, the Exchange of Views Session of the 31st Session of the COMCEC was held with the theme of “Post-2015 Development Agenda and Development Challenges of the Islamic Ummah: Improving Basic Service Delivery”.

29. Mr. Nikhil SETH, Executive Director for the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) made presentation as keynote speaker.

30. Afterwards, the Ministers and heads of delegations of Member Countries made presentations reflecting their country experiences on ways and means of enhancing OIC cooperation in the process of the implementation of the SDGs and the improving of basic service delivery in the Member Countries as well as the potential role of the COMCEC in this regard.

31. A special signing ceremony was held at the Ministerial Exchange View Session. During this ceremony, Kingdom of Morocco and International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on trade promotion cooperation.

Side Events/Special Sessions

32. The 27th Meeting of the Sessional Committee was held on November 22th, 2015 as a sideline event with the participation of the relevant OIC Institutions.

(A copy of the report of the 27th Meeting of the Sessional Committee is attached as Annex VI.)

33. Presentations on the “Introduction of Successful Projects funded by the COMCEC Project Funding” were made on November 24th, 2015. During the event, owners of the successful projects that were funded under the second project call of the COMCEC Project Funding made presentations regarding the implementation of their projects.

34. The special session on “Implementing SDGs and Post-2015 Development Agenda: Financing Sustainable Development” was held on November 26th, 2015. The session was moderated by H.E. Ambassador Pertti MAJANEN, Co-chair of the UN Sustainable Development Financing. H.E. Muhammad Abdul MANNAN, State Minister of Finance and Planning of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh; H.E. Dr. Ahmad Mohamed ALI, President of the IDB Group; H.E. Mansur MUHTAR, Former Minister of Finance in the Federal Republic of Nigeria; and Mr. Zamir IQBAL, Head of the World Bank Global Islamic Finance Development Center in Istanbul were the speakers of this special session.

35. The special session on “Closing Data Gap for Monitoring the SDGs and the Post-2015 Development Agenda” was held on November 26th, 2015. The session was moderated by Mr. Ben SLAY, Senior Advisor at UNDP İstanbul Regional Hub; Mrs. Keiko OSAKI-TOMITA, Assistant Director of Department of Economic and Social Affairs at United Nations Statistics Division; H.E. Musa KULAKLIKAYA, Director General of SESRIC; Mr. Joseph TEDOU, Director General at National Statistical Institute of Cameroon; and Dr. Bouba HOUSSEINI, Research Officer at Oxford

Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) were the speakers of this special session.

36. The special session on “Cooperation and Partnership for Sustainable Development: NGO and Private Sector Engagement” was held on November 26th, 2015. The session was moderated by Dr. Carlos CONDE, Head of Middle East and Africa Division Global Relations Secretariat at OECD; Dr. Amal HAMIDALLAH, Director of Gulf Foundation; Mrs. Andeisha FARID, Founder and Chairperson of Afghan Child Education and Caring Organization (AFCECO); Ms. Dato Hafsa HASHIM, Chief Executive Officer of SME Corporation Malaysia; and Dr. Mohamed ASHMAWEY, Chief Executive Officer of the Islamic Relief Worldwide (IRW) were the speakers of this special session.

37. As the sideline events of the 31st Session of COMCEC, “COMCEC Project Funding Exhibition”, “Exhibition on Calligraphy Masterpieces, Selected from IRCICA International Calligraphy Competition”, “Exhibition on Haramayn During the Ottoman Period, Historical Photographs”, and “Exhibition on Jarusalem (al-Quds) Photographs from Past to Present” were displayed on 23-26 November 2015.

38. Upon the invitation of the Minister of Economy of the Republic of Turkey, a consultative meeting was held among the Ministers of Commerce and Heads of Delegation of the 12 Member Countries, which have ratified the TPS-OIC Agreements and submitted concession lists to the TNC Secretariat, on November 24th, 2015 on the sidelines of the 31st Session of the COMCEC.

Closing Session:

39. The Closing Session of the Thirty-First Session of the COMCEC was held on November 26th, 2015 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Dr. Cevdet YILMAZ , Minister of Development of the Republic of Turkey.

40. H.E. Yousaf JUNAID, Rapporteur of the Senior Officials Meeting, summarized the outcomes of the Senior Officials Meeting and highlighted some salient points in the Resolutions.

41. The Session adopted Resolution OIC/COMCEC/31-15/RES.

42. H.E. Ambassador Hameed OPELOYERU, Assistant Secretary General read out the message of H.E. Iyad Ameen MADANI, Secretary General of the OIC. In his message H.E. MADANI extended his congratulations to the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 31st Session of the COMCEC and to all participants for the successful conclusion of the Session.

43. Her Excellency Abeer ODEH, Minister of Economy of the State of Palestine, made a statement on behalf of all participating Member Countries. Her Excellency the Minister thanked the Republic of Turkey, OIC General Secretariat, COMCEC Coordination Office, and all OIC and other institutions for contributing to the successful conclusion of the 31st Session of the COMCEC. Her Excellency also thanked Turkey for the warm hospitality extended to all delegations.

44. H.E. Dr. Cevdet YILMAZ, Minister of Development of the Republic of Turkey, made a closing statement at the Session. H.E. YILMAZ expressed that OIC Member Countries are now closer than ever to launch actual implementation of the TPS-OIC and PRETAS and the implementation of TPSOIC System will further increase the intra-OIC trade which stands around 19 percent of the total trade of our countries now. Underlining the role of investment, H.E. Cevdet YILMAZ stressed that we need swift measures to improve our investment environment, increase efficiency of related public and private institutions, leverage private investment, attract foreign direct investments and enhance our investment efficiency as well as using some effective tools such as Public-Private Partnerships to realize burdensome infrastructural investments.

45. H.E. YILMAZ also expressed that in terms of eradicating poverty for prosperous societies, Member Countries should decisively fight with poverty which results in various forms of deprivation including maladies, illiteracy, unproductivity, unemployment and other social problems. Given the importance of the implementation of SDGs, H.E. YILMAZ also stated that OIC Member Countries should continue this timely exercise by taking sound measures in the forthcoming period which depends on first and foremost a strong ownership, raising awareness of all segments of the society through full utilization of all communication tools together with all our public institutions, NGOs and citizens.

46. H.E. Dr. Cevdet YILMAZ concluded his statement by expressing the significance for COMCEC Member Countries to actively participate in various cooperation programs and projects conducted under the COMCEC.

(The text of the Closing Statement of Dr.Cevdet YILMAZ is attached as Annex VII.)

47. All documents submitted to the 31st Session of COMCEC will be available on the COMCEC web site (www.comcec.org).

