



الجماعة الإسلامية للتجارة والصناعة والزراعة
Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture
La Chambre Islamique de Commerce, d'Industrie et d'Agriculture

**Report on the Activities of the
Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture (ICCIA)
for submission to the 32nd Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of COMCEC**

**17-18 May 2016
Ankara, Republic of Turkey**

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Introduction:

In line with the Recommendation No.61 of the 31st Session of the COMCEC, the General Secretariat of the ICCIA wishes to submit its paper on its activities and future programmes.

The ICCIA was created with the objectives of bringing about greater economic cooperation among the Member Countries, through the Private Sector. Towards this end, it has diversified its programmes in line with the needs of the Private Sector and the fast moving economic challenges. As regards the assessment of its objectives, the ICCIA studies and evaluates the needs of the Private Sector and thereafter plans its activities.

These activities are providing a common platform to the Private Sector to interact, have B2B meetings, expand their business & investment ties. Furthermore, Training Programmes, Workshops, Forums and Private Sector Meetings are being held, which deal with topics that can enable the Private Sector to enhance their overall businesses.

The Private Sector of the 57 OIC Countries, varies from country to country, as per their economic potentials, knowledge, and business acumen. Therefore, the Islamic Chamber, organizes customized Training Programmes, which would help them upgrade their business, adopt best practices and make their business more competitive, as per International Standards and add more value.

The Islamic Chamber therefore continues to play its due role through its programmes aimed at the development of private sector in the OIC Member States. In its efforts to facilitate the Private Sector, the ICCIA evaluates its activities on a regular basis and thereafter prepares its Work Programme, based on the current need of the private sector and formulates its activities, such as Seminars, Training Programmes, and other similar activities, which would address these needs.

Till date, the areas where focus has been given are capacity building, commodity exchange forums, business leadership development, poverty alleviation, upgrading marketing and managing skills, value-addition, gender development, promotion & development of Small & Medium Enterprises, utilization of microfinance, developing Entrepreneurship, particularly in women and the youth.

The ICCIA has also been collaborating with some of the UN Agencies, with similar objectives. In this context, several initiatives have been taken with the UNDP Unit for South-South Cooperation. These have been result oriented, as they brought about a more focused cooperation between the private sector of the South and at the same time triangular cooperation involving the South-South Countries with the North.

In its endeavours, to further expand its scope of work, the ICCIA is also keeping the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), as its guidelines in its programmes and activities. Of particular reference are those related to food security, economic empowerment of women and promotion of inclusive growth.

The ICCIA is also playing a role for increasing the overall level of Intra Islamic Trade and Programmes are being held with the view of creating awareness, among the private sector regarding the OIC agreements, which are aimed to increase the level of intra-Islamic trade.

In undertaking its programmes, the ICCIA is working in close collaboration with the General Secretariat of the OIC and its Institutions as well as other related International Organizations on common goals & objectives. As part of a mechanism to further enhance its activities, hereunder are the broad areas and salient aspects of the ICCIA activities:

ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR:

The Islamic Chamber has been holding Private Sector Meetings and Businesswomen Forums to provide a common platform for the business community to interact and conduct B2B Meetings. In addition, the Islamic Chamber has also been organizing Sector-wise Commodity Exchange Forums, Business Leadership Workshops.

These activities have shown concrete results as business deals have been conducted, exchange of expertise has taken place, best practices have been learnt and skills have been developed. The ICCIA has so far, held sixteen (16) Private Sector Meetings and eight (8) Businesswomen Forums.

The Islamic Chamber had organized the 8th Forum for Businesswomen in Islamic Countries in Kampala, Uganda on 26th – 27th October 2015. The said event was organized in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Uganda National Chamber of Commerce & Industry under the theme of “Empowering Women Enterprises for Inclusive Growth”. It was attended by about 130 participants from 18 Countries, covering all OIC regions, Arab, Asia, Africa and CIS Countries. The Forum called for the concerned entities to give due consideration to the recommendations of the Forum, which highlighted the need for providing finance on easy installments for women-led enterprises and startups, assistance in finding new markets and opportunities for enhancing the existing high skilled training as well as exchange of knowledge and expertise.

ICCIA will organize the 9th Businesswomen Forum and the 17th Private Sector Meeting for the OIC Member States in one of the Member Countries in the year 2016.

Trade Exchange Forum/Exhibition (Sector-wise):

Apart from the Forums, Sector-wise Trade Exchange Forums are also being organized by the ICCIA. In these Forums, the focus is to actually have deals signed between the exporters and importers. In the last Forum held in Jeddah, deals were signed among various countries, such as, Algeria, Egypt, Sudan, Uganda, Niger and Kuwait.

These forums aim to increase the actual Trade Exchange, at the level of private sector, amongst the countries of the Islamic World. In addition, they grant an opportunity for closing direct transactions between the stakeholders (importers / exporters). Such activities are expected increase the actual level of commercial exchange among Islamic countries and thus expand the practical activities of the Chamber that generate tangible benefit and revenues.

Business Owners Conference:

Islamic Chamber will be organizing a Conference for Business Owners Union / prominent entrepreneurs. The idea is to make it different by benefitting from the influential economic experts and dignitaries or leading entrepreneurs, owners and CEOs of giant companies, so as to help the upcoming entrepreneurs to define the features of the economy and investment for the coming years.

Chambers of Commerce Forum:

Islamic Chamber will organize a Forum that gathers the subsidiary Chambers of Commerce of the Islamic Countries, so as to give an opportunity for the Chambers to project their success stories, in a way that other Chambers may benefit from their best practices. Based on their practices, chambers will be awarded and will be considered as role models for others.

Innovation and Excellence Award:

In addition to holding Private Sector Forums, Workshop and Seminars, the Islamic Chamber has also set-up the Excellence Award Project. The idea behind the project is to encourage the private sector to excel in their respective fields and to come forward with innovative ideas utilizing the local resources.

ICCIA Website:

ICCIA endeavors to utilize the information technology and the internet by operating a dynamic portal that interacts with the locals and international clients, taking into consideration the various categories/interests of users/clients in accordance to the services that are provided to them in an interactive and user-friendly approach. ICCIA's portal is a comprehensive source of updated contents that highlight the economic affairs in the Islamic World, which aims to play a major role in enhancing the intra OIC-trade through the information and services that it offers. The portal also provides detailed investment profiles about the members. This will help the potential investors to make right decisions about their investment options. The goals and objectives of the website are:

- To be a reference point for the key economic information related to the member countries
- To be a source of statistics and related reports, covering the member countries
- To be a platform for launching new projects and ideas
- To be a communication medium between members while fostering their common grounds and interest
- To introduce the chambers, their countries and projects
- To be a platform for marketing and advertising
- To Facilitate communication between ICCIA and the general public

Cooperation with International Organizations:

ICCIA continues to explore new avenues of cooperation with international organizations, such as:

- Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF);
- United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC);
- United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Investment & Technology Promotion Office (ITPO), Bahrain

As a result of this cooperation, the above Institutions, whenever possible, extend technical support in organizing Training Programs and Workshops and by sponsoring the participants and resource persons.

In view of the above cooperation, the ICCIA was invited to represent the OIC Member Countries at the High-level Multi-stakeholders Strategy Forum on Scaling-up Global Support for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, held in Macao, on 25-26 August 2015, wherein the ICCIA informed the representatives of the General Assembly of the UN of its activities and objectives. ICCIA has been acting as catalyst to provide the OIC window, to the UN Agencies, particularly UNOSSC, to enhance cooperation with the private sector from the OIC Member Countries.

Workshop on ‘Development of a Mechanism for Joint Ventures and partnerships among Women-led Enterprises through South-South Cooperation’ in Kampala, Uganda on 28-29 October 2015

The ICCIA, in collaboration with Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF)/United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) and Uganda National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (UNCCI), has organized the Workshop on ‘Development of a Mechanism for Joint Ventures and partnerships among Women-led Enterprises through South-South Cooperation’ in Kampala, Uganda on 28-29 October 2015. It was attended by 44 participants from 11 Countries. The objective of the Workshop was to setup Business Development Centres within Universities, Chambers and other similar entities and to promote mechanism for partnership among enterprises in OIC Countries, to mobilize resources with similar entities to strengthen economic cooperation, transfer of technology, technical know-how, expertise and best practices.

The Workshop was very beneficial for the women-led enterprises, women organizations working for the economic and social empowerment of the women.

Tourism:

Tourism has been playing an important role in the economic environment of the Member Countries. The OIC has been organizing the Ministerial Meetings on Tourism and efforts are being deployed to promote tourism among the OIC Countries. The Islamic Chamber, being the main representative of the Private Sector, was mandated to organize Tourism Forums for the private sector.

Forum/Workshop for Public and Private Investors in the area of Tourism Development

In pursuance of the mandate given by OIC, through Executive Program for the implementation of the Framework for Development and cooperation in the domain of Tourism among Member States, adopted by the 9th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, held in December 2015 in Niger, called upon the ICCIA to join efforts with Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC), Iran & Bangladesh to organize the “Forum for Public and Private Investors in the area of Tourism Development”. The objectives of the Forum will be to strengthen the role of Public Private Partnerships for the Development of the Tourism Sector in OIC Member States, as well as to highlight the ample investment opportunities in the Tourism sector of OIC Countries.

Contributing to the Establishment of an “Islamic Tourism Portal”

The ICCIA is also called upon, through the above Executive Program, to join efforts with the ICDT to create “OIC Tourism Portal” or “OIC Internet Guide for Tourism” in three languages for the dissemination of information on tourism related issues in the OIC countries. The portal will facilitate in increasing public awareness in the OIC countries about existing tourist attractions, resources and facilities in the Islamic world with a view to encouraging tourists’ visits to other Islamic countries by providing full information to potential visitors.

Islamic Banking and Finance in Uganda:

In order to introduce the concept of Islamic Banking and Finance to the business community, where Islamic Banking is not available, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture (ICCIA) had organized a Seminar on Introduction of Islamic Banking and Finance in Kampala, Republic of Uganda. The Seminar was held on 28th April 2014, in collaboration with Uganda National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (UNCCI) and Islamic Research & Training Institute (IRTI) of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group.

Soon after the seminar, the Finance Institutional Amendment Bill was endorsed by the Parliament of Uganda and passed to the parliament to provide legal framework for the introduction of Islamic Banking and Finance in Uganda.

Thereafter, a Committee was formed and the public / private sector representatives were invited to present their views during the first and second readings. Through the awareness created by the Seminar and highlighting the need of Islamic Banking for the private sector, as per the recommendations of the said seminar, the Bill to introduce Islamic Banking in Uganda was presented to the Ugandan Parliament for adoption, after extensive lobbying through the Members of Parliament.

As result of the above efforts, the **Parliament of the Republic of Ugandan has amended the Financial Institutions law to allow Islamic Banking and Agent Banking in the country**. Under the Islamic Banking, a Central Sharia Advisory Board will be established, in the Central Bank, to provide Islamic Banking products.

In these endeavors, the ICCIA wishes to put on record the efforts of the Uganda National Chamber of Commerce & Industry (UNCCI), that spearheaded this initiative and followed through with the authorities in Uganda for the adoption of the Bill. The ICCIA also wishes to thank Islamic Research & Training Institute (IRTI) of the IDB Group, for their support and cooperation in making this possible. With the enforcement of the Bill, greater number of private sector companies will be able to trade, through interest-free and Sharia compliant banking, thereby increasing the level of intra-OIC trade.

Participation of the ICCIA in the Review of OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW):

On the kind invitation of the General Secretariat of the OIC, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) has participated in the OIC Workshop for Reviewing the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW) and its Implementation Mechanisms, which was held on 28-29 January 2016 at the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey.

The ICCIA highlighted the role of Private Sector in the economic empowerment of women and it was duly reflected in the “Revised Draft OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women”.

The Workshop has called for the need to intensify efforts to promote the ratification by Member States of the statute for the Organization for Women Development to be based in Cairo, Egypt, in order to fully execute the effective implementation of the OPAAW.

Workshop on Key Infrastructure Development for Rural Growth for OIC:

Economies of the majority of the OIC Countries are largely rural based. But overall, the performance of rural economies spurred by agriculture sector is not promising. The challenge for OIC Countries, rural development strategy is to increase profitability, competitiveness and income earning capacity in a market-driven system for a large size of population, dependent upon agriculture for their livelihoods. In view of the above, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture (ICCIA) intends to organize a Workshop on “Key Infrastructure Development for Rural Growth for OIC Countries”. The Workshop will be held in collaboration with the Statistical, Economic & Social Research & Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and Perez Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) / United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC) in Ankara, Turkey in August 2016.

The objective is to provide an overall review of problems, issues and strategic option in developing a backbone and supporting infrastructure for rural development. The thrust of the workshop would be on Cold Chain System and other related infrastructure in developing a competitive rural economy. The Workshop aims to highlight the importance to facilitate the development of clusters of profitable small-medium-and large-scale farms and associated agribusinesses in selected Corridors from OIC region.

Specialized Workshops on Business Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development:

As part of its objectives, the ICCIA contributes to poverty alleviation and capacity building of OIC Member States, which will come into proper play by fostering the true spirit of Business Leadership & Entrepreneurship and providing networking opportunities to enter and expand their businesses. In this context, ICCIA had organized various Training Programs on Business Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development in many OIC Countries.

Similarly, ICCIA plans to organize specialized workshops on Business Leadership and Entrepreneurship Development, with the objective of creating opportunities for self-employment and contribute in the economic wellbeing of individuals and societies; as well as strengthening the trade and industrial base of OIC Countries; and to combat poverty & move towards self-reliance & prosperity as well as to learn about the qualities required in the senior management of businesses.

Workshop on Development of SMEs in OIC Countries:

The economies of today are focusing on SMEs as a viable and feasible option for growth, innovation and prosperity for the developing countries. However, despite the fact that SMEs are such an important sector of the economy, yet their growth and development is not in proportion to their importance.

Taking into consideration that SMEs form the backbone of the economies of the OIC Countries, the ICCIA is working on programmes for the development of SMEs. In this

context, ICCIA, in collaboration with the SMEs Development Authorities of the OIC Countries, will be organizing the Specialized Workshops on the Development of SMEs in OIC Countries.

26th IDB Annual Symposium:

Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organized the 26th Annual Symposium on “The Role of Intra-Regional Trade in strengthening Economic Cooperation among IDB Member Countries, which was held on 10th June 2015 in Maputo – Mozambique.

Its purpose was to provide a knowledge platform for the Governors to brainstorm and exchange views and practical ideas on how to address time honored issues of interest to their countries and the Bank. ICCIA took active part in the symposium and highlighted the prerequisites of having productive Intra-Regional Trade. It underlined the need to increase level of trade and commodity exchange between the countries of the region which will reduce inflation and tariff barriers, associated with foreign markets and thereby resulting in prosperity.

Upcoming Activities:

- The 17th Private Sector Meeting of the OIC Countries, 2016.
- 9th Businesswomen Forum in Islamic Chamber, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, 25th May 2016.
- Workshop on Key Infrastructure Development for Rural Growth for OIC Countries, Istanbul, Turkey, August 2016
- Trade Exchange Forum among Islamic Countries
- Excellence Award
- Specialized Workshop on (Food Security/Entrepreneurship Development/Promotion of Tourism Opportunities/Development of SMEs)
- Forum/Workshop for Private Sector Investors in the area of Development of Islamic Tourism.
- Conference on Muslim Business-Owners.
- Chambers of Commerce Forum.
