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**REPORT ON**

**THE ISSUES RELATING TO THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANISATION**

**DOCUMENTS PRESENTED BY**

**THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE**

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## BACKGROUND



The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (I.C.D.T) is a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (O.I.C) in charge of Trade Promotion between Islamic Countries, was mandated by the Secretary General of the O.I.C and the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation for Islamic Countries (COMCEC) to follow up in collaboration with the Group of the Islamic Development Bank, the multilateral trade negotiations organised by the World Trade Organisation (W.T.O) and extend support, provide relevant training and technical assistance to the OIC Member States in this field. Within this framework, I.C.D.T submits on a regular basis, progress reports on these negotiations to the COMCEC's annual meetings, the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs of the O.I.C and the annual Council of the Foreign Affairs Ministers (CFM).

Likewise, the Centre works out reports and studies in preparation of the WTO Ministerial Meetings in order to shed light on the positions of Islamic Countries at this meetings and identify a common platform to coordinate their stances.

Besides, the Centre organizes seminars and workshops on the Multilateral Trade Negotiations for the benefit of the representatives of the OIC Member States from both the public and private sectors and on intra-OIC trade negotiations.

- This report is divided into main three sections:
  - ✓ Section I : Recent developments of the WTO's activities relating to the OIC Member States ;
  - ✓ Section II : the ICDT's actions in the field of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations of the WTO ;
  - ✓ Section III: State of the accession negotiations to the WTO of some OIC Member States.

**SECTION I**  
**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS OF THE WTO**  
**ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE OIC MEMBER STATES**



1. The World Trade Organization held its 10<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference in Nairobi, Kenya, during the period 15-19 December 2015. The meeting adopted the “Nairobi Package”, a series of six Ministerial Decisions on agriculture, cotton and issues related to least-developed countries. In addition, a Ministerial Declaration outlining the Package and the future work of the WTO was also adopted.
2. The Declaration reaffirmed the pre-eminence of the WTO as the global forum for trade rules setting and governance. Ministers acknowledged the contribution that the rules-based multilateral trading system has made to the strength and stability of the global economy. Ministers also reaffirmed the value of the consistent practice of taking decisions through a transparent, inclusive, consensus-based, Member-driven process.
3. Ministers also accorded special attention to development issues and expressed their commitment to continuing to make positive efforts designed to ensure that WTO developing country Members, and especially the least-developed country Members, secure a share in the growth of world trade commensurate with the needs of their economic development. In particular, Ministers affirmed that they shall ensure that all issues of specific interests to LDCs shall be pursued on a priority basis, with a view to strengthening them, making them commercially meaningful and, when appropriate, legally binding.
4. The Tenth WTO Ministerial Conference also celebrated the enlargement of WTO by accessions in accordance with Article XII of the Marrakesh Agreement. Ministers noted the previous accessions of the Republic of Yemen, the Republic of Seychelles and the Republic of Kazakhstan to the WTO. In addition, the Conference witnessed the completion of the accession procedures for two least-developed countries, the Republic of Liberia and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, an OIC Member State.
5. Notably, the Conference adopted the following decisions:
  - **Work program on small economies;**
  - **TRIPS non-violations and situation complaints.**

The Transition Period under Article 66.1 of the TRIPS Agreement for least-developed countries for certain obligations with respect to pharmaceutical products as well as the related Waiver Decision adopted by the General Council concerning least-developed countries’ obligations under Article 70.8 and 70.9 of the TRIPS Agreement.

- **Work program on electronic commerce:**

In another significant outcome from the Nairobi Ministerial, WTO members representing major exporters of IT products agreed on 16 December on the timetable for implementing a landmark deal to eliminate tariffs on 201 information technology products valued at over \$1.3 trillion per year.

Negotiations on the expanded Information Technology Agreement (ITA) were conducted by 53 WTO members, including both developed and developing countries, which account for approximately 90% of world trade in these products. However, all WTO members will

benefit from the agreement, as they will all enjoy duty-free market access to the markets of the members eliminating tariffs on these products. The list of 201 products was originally agreed by the ITA participants in July 2015.

This breakthrough followed months of intensive negotiations among the ITA participants. Their review of “draft schedules” involved a process whereby each of them indicated over what timeframe and how they intended to implement the elimination of duties on these products.

For every product on the list, ITA participants have negotiated the level of reductions and over how many years it will fully eliminate the tariffs. As a result of these negotiations, approximately 65% of tariff lines will be fully eliminated by 1 July 2016. Most of the remaining tariff lines will be completely phased out in four stages over three years. This means that by 2019 almost all imports of the relevant products will be duty free.

6. With regard to Doha Development Agenda, the Conference adopted the following decisions:

- **Special Safeguard Mechanism for Developing Countries in the area of Agriculture:**

A Ministerial Decision on a Special Safeguard Mechanism (SSM) for Developing Countries recognizes that developing members will have the right to temporarily increase tariffs in face of import surges by using an SSM. Members will continue to negotiate the mechanism in dedicated sessions of the Agriculture Committee.

- **Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes:**

Ministers also adopted a Ministerial Decision on Public Stockholding for Food Security Purposes. The decision commits members to engage constructively in finding a permanent solution to this issue. Under the Bali Ministerial Decision of 2013, developing countries are allowed to continue food stockpile programmes, which are otherwise in risk of breaching the WTO's domestic subsidy cap, until a permanent solution is found by the 11th Ministerial Conference in 2017.

- **Export Competition in the area of Agriculture:**

A center piece of the Nairobi Package is a Ministerial Decision on Export Competition including a commitment to eliminate subsidies for farm exports. Under the decision, developed members have committed to remove export subsidies immediately, except for a handful of agriculture products, and developing countries will do so by 2018. Developing members will keep the flexibility to cover marketing and transport costs for agriculture exports until the end of 2023, and the poorest and food-importing countries would enjoy additional time to cut export subsidies.

The decision contains disciplines to ensure that other export policies are not used as a disguised form of subsidies. These disciplines include terms to limit the benefits of financing support to agriculture exporters, rules on state enterprises engaging in agriculture trade, and disciplines to ensure that food aid does not negatively affect domestic production. Developing countries are given longer time to implement these rules.

- **Cotton:**

In addition, a Ministerial Decision on Cotton stresses the vital importance of the cotton

sector to LDCs. The decision includes three agriculture elements: market access, domestic support and export competition.

On market access, the decision calls for cotton from LDCs to be given duty-free and quota-free access to the markets of developed countries – and to those of developing countries declaring that they are able to do so – from 1 January 2016. The domestic support part of the cotton decision acknowledges members' reforms in their domestic cotton policies and stresses that more efforts remain to be made. On export competition for cotton, the decision mandates that developed countries prohibit cotton export subsidies immediately and developing countries do so at a later date.

- **Preferential Rules of Origin for Least-Developed Countries:**

The Ministerial Conference adopted a decision that will facilitate opportunities for least-developed countries' export of goods to both developed and developing countries under unilateral preferential trade arrangements in favour of LDCs.

The decision in Nairobi builds on the 2013 Bali Ministerial Decision on preferential rules of origin for LDCs. The Bali Decision set out, for the first time, a set of multilaterally agreed guidelines to help make it easier for LDC exports to qualify for preferential market access.

The Nairobi Decision expands upon this by providing more detailed directions on specific issues such as methods for determining when a product qualifies as “made in an LDC,” and when inputs from other sources can be “cumulated” -or combined together- into the consideration of origin. It calls on preference-granting members to consider allowing the use of non-originating materials up to 75% of the final value of the product.

The decision also calls on preference-granting members to consider simplifying documentary and procedural requirements related to origin.

Key beneficiaries will be sub-Saharan African countries, which make up the majority of the LDC Group, the proponent for the Nairobi Decision on Preferential Rules of Origin for LDCs.

- **Implementation of Preferential Treatment in Favour of Services and Service Suppliers of Least-Developed Countries and Increasing LDC Participation in Services Trade:**

The Ministerial Decision on Implementation of Preferential Treatment in Favour of Services and Service Suppliers of Least Developed Countries and Increasing LDC Participation in Services Trade extends the current waiver period under which non-LDC WTO members may grant preferential treatment to LDC services and service suppliers. The period has been extended 15 years until 31 December 2030.

The waiver allows WTO members to deviate from their most-favoured nation obligation under the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS). To date, 21 members have submitted notifications granting preferences to LDC services and service suppliers. The decision also instructs the WTO's Trade in Services Council to encourage discussions among members on technical assistance aimed at increasing the capacity of LDCs to participate in services trade. It also sets up a review to monitor the operation of the notified preferences.

- **Accession:**

Trade ministers on 16 December welcomed the conclusion of negotiations on the

accessions of Liberia and Afghanistan at the Tenth Ministerial Conference. Liberia's President, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was present at the ceremony marking the formal conclusion of the negotiations, eight years after it applied for WTO membership. Liberia will formally become a member of the WTO 30 days after notifying the organization that it has ratified its accession terms.

Trade ministers also welcomed the conclusion of Afghanistan's WTO accession negotiations on 17 December 2015 by the Afghanistan's First Deputy Chief Executive Mohammad Khan Rahmani. Afghanistan applied for WTO membership in 2004 and will formally take its seat at the WTO 30 days after its ratification instrument is received. Afghanistan will be the 44<sup>th</sup> OIC Member Country to join WTO.

- **Trade Facilitation Agreement ratification**

After Nairobi Meeting, the WTO has received eight additional ratifications for the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), bringing up bringing up to 71 the number of WTO members (as of 16th March 2016) that have formally accepted the TFA from which 9 OIC Member States (Malaysia, Niger, Togo, Pakistan, Guyana, Côte d'Ivoire, Brunei, Mali and Turkey see tables in annexes tables 4 and 5).

The TFA broke new ground for developing and least-developed countries in the way it will be implemented. For the first time in WTO history, the requirement to implement the Agreement was directly linked to the capacity of the country to do so. In addition, the Agreement states that assistance and support should be provided to help them achieve that capacity.

7. The Conference witnessed differences of views among WTO Members regarding the future Doha Development negotiations. While many Members reaffirmed the Doha Development Agenda, and the Declarations and Decisions adopted at Doha and at the Ministerial conferences held since; other Members did not reaffirm the Doha mandates, as they believed new approaches were necessary to achieve meaningful outcomes in the multilateral negotiations. However, Members expressed strong commitment to advance negotiations on the remaining Doha issues, including all the pillars of agriculture, non-agriculture market access, services, development, TRIPS and rules.
8. Ministers also agreed that officials should work to find ways to advance negotiations and requested the WTO Director-General to report regularly to the General Council on these efforts.

## SECTION II

### THE ACTIONS OF ICDT AND THE OIC

ICDT was proactive and carried out several activities to serve OIC Member States' economic interests with regard to WTO issues. In particular, ICDT contributed to the following OIC Member States pre- and post- Nairobi Ministerial meetings and side events:

#### **A/ Pre-Nairobi Ministerial Coordination Meetings and Side Events:**

- **Consultative Meeting of the OIC Ministers of Trade, 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015:**

ICDT participated in the Consultative Meeting of the OIC Ministers of Trade in Nairobi on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2015 organized by the IDB Group on the sidelines of the WTO Ministerial Meeting held on 15-19 December 2015. The meeting was chaired by H.E. Mr. Jean-Louis BILLON, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire. The objective of the meeting was to gather common position of the OIC Member States to the issues of WTO which should be negotiated during the MC10 in Nairobi. More than 30 ministers and delegations attended this Meeting. During the meeting, ICDT presented the current state of negotiations in the WTO and highlighted the relevant issues to be raised by OIC Member countries during the Nairobi Meeting and distributed the ICDT's documents submitted on this occasion.

- **International Forum on Women in Business:**

ICDT attend the International Forum on Women in Business organized by the International Trade Centre (ITC) in collaboration with the Government of Kenya in Nairobi on December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2015. More than 1,500 participants attended this forum, notably H.E. Ms. Ellen Johnson SIRLEAF, President of Liberia, H.E. Mr. William Samoei RUTO, Deputy President of Kenya, Ms. Sahle-Work ZEWDE, Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi, Mr. Mukhisa KITUYI, Secretary-General of UNCTAD, Mr. Yonov Frederick AGAH, Deputy Director-General of WTO and Ms. Arancha GONZÁLEZ, Executive Director of ITC. The meeting raised the awareness of the importance of women in developing business in the world. In addition, policymakers, business community and representatives of Women Business Organizations discussed policies and actions to increase the participation of women in international trade: enhancing the rate of participation of women in the global economy and the role of private sector and governments in supporting the inclusiveness and equality in business.

During this meeting, participants requested policy makers, institutions, business and thought leaders from around the globe to encourage, identify and implement strategies and policies fit for the 21<sup>st</sup> century that leverage technology, foster conducive business environments, establish supportive institutional frameworks and increase the competitiveness of women-owned businesses.

- **Trade and Development Symposium (TDS), Nairobi, 15-17 December 2015:**

The TDS was organised by the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD) in partnership with the University of Nairobi and the Saana Institute, with the support of the Republic of Kenya in Nairobi on 15-17 December. ICDT participated in some events gathering more than 6000 participants who attended 63 meetings, including high-level plenaries, panel discussions, roundtables, and private sessions. Global thought leaders, key private sector actors, active civil society groups, as



well as high-level governmental and intergovernmental organisation representatives were represented.

The symposium tackled the following issues: Africa Rising (unleashing Africa's Potential), Trading Up (the power of inclusive growth), Emerging Governance (policy frameworks for shared goals), Food Security (feeding the world, sustaining livelihoods), Climate and Energy (From Paris to Nairobi and beyond), Natural Resources (Trade and nature working together), The Voice of Business (Policy solutions to practical problems), Focus Africa (Connecting to global markets), E15 Initiative (The future of global trade system), and Digital Economy (New opportunities, new participants).

- **World Customs Organization and Kenya Revenue Authority Session: Trade Facilitation-Borders Divide, Customs Connects, Nairobi, 16 December 2015:**

Following the invitation of the World Customs Organization and Kenya Revenue Authority, ICDT participated in the Session on Trade Facilitation-Borders Divide, Customs Connects, which was held in Nairobi on 16 December 2015. The objective of this session was to look back and acknowledge the achievements made and the tools available for WTO TFA implementation, to identify common challenges and to reaffirm commitment for full implementation in the future.

Eminent experts from WCO, Kenya Revenue Authority, Swaziland Revenue Authority, Uganda Revenue Authority, Ambassador of Finland to the Republic of Kenya, African Development Bank (AfDB), Director of NEPAD and Regional Integration and Trade presented their programmes and success stories for the implementation of TFA. During the debate, representatives of international and regional organizations took the floor and presented their programs on the implementation of TFA. ICDT presented the Centre's technical assistance programme on TFA for the benefit of the OIC Member States which will be executed in partnership with IDB Group and other international organisations. More than 200 participants attended this meeting.

#### **B/ Post-Nairobi Ministerial Meeting:**

9. In order to increase the awareness of OIC Member States of the results and outcome of WTO Tenth Ministerial Conference, ICDT organized a seminar on "The Outcome of WTO 10<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference and Accession to WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement", which was held on 25 November 2016 in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco. The seminar highlighted the following results for OIC Member States as realized in Nairobi Ministerial Conference:

- Increase the number of OIC Member States in WTO Membership to 44 countries, which provides strong leverage to OIC Member States to leverage their collective interests in WTO negotiations.
- Strengthen the capacity of OIC Member States to take trade measures aiming at increasing their agriculture exports and ensure food security. This would come as a result of WTO decisions to eliminate agriculture export subsidies, increase competition in global markets and to allow WTO developing countries to pursue public stockholding programs for food security purposes.
- Eliminating tariffs by 2019 on 201 Information Technology products as a result of WTO Plurilateral Agreement on Information Technology, which was concluded by 53 WTO Members.
- Facilitating LDCs exports of goods and services to international markets.
- Increased number of OIC Member States which have signed and ratified WTO Trade

Facilitation Agreement (As of writing this report, nine OIC Member States out of 71 WTO Member States which have notified their ratification of the agreement).

### **C/Other ICDT Technical Assistance and Capacity Building (TACB) Activities in the area of World Trade Organization:**

Within the implementation of resolutions of CFM and COMCEC relating to WTO issues, ICDT organized the following TACB seminars for OIC Member States, in partnership with IDB Group, WTO, UNCTAD, ITC and WCO and national experts, in order to increase OIC Member States' awareness and to develop their capacities in different international trade fields regulated by WTO agreements:

With regard to the WTO future multilateral trade negotiations, ICDT will continue its coordination work between the OIC Countries during the next negotiations of the WTO.

Technical assistance will also be ensured for the benefit of Member States, particularly the Least Developed among them in order to assist them in negotiations and the implementation of their results through consultancy and expertise.

Besides, ICDT is planning to organise several seminars and meetings between the OIC countries so as to make an assessment of the negotiations stakes, and even their impact on the trade policies and economies of Member States. Popularisation actions will be carried out for new themes in negotiations such as competition policy, trade facilitation, electronic commerce etc...

These activities will involve the participation of not only the representatives of concerned administrations but also those of the private sector in the OIC countries.

In the field of multilateral trade negotiations, ICDT and IDB will ensure the follow up of multilateral trade negotiations within the WTO and to contribute to the adoption of common stances by the OIC Member states in these negotiations.

#### **1. Workshop on the results of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the WTO and Post Bali Work Programme for the OIC African countries: Casablanca, 25-27 March 2014.**

Within the framework of their joint technical assistance in the field of the WTO multilateral trade negotiations to the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Islamic Development Bank Group (IDB) organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Investment and the Digital Economy, in charge of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco, a "Workshop on the Results of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the WTO and the post Bali work program for the OIC African Member States" on 25<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> March 2014 in Casablanca.

This Workshop took stock of the results of the Bali conference and highlighted the challenges and opportunities of Bali Package for African Countries.

During the opening session, the Minister Delegate, in charge of Foreign Trade to the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Investment and the Digital Economy of the Kingdom of Morocco, Minister of Commerce of the Republic of Guinea, the Representative of the Islamic Development Bank Group and the Director General of ICDT delivered their speech outlining the importance of the results of Bali on the economies of African countries, especially, in the area of trade facilitation, agriculture and development of LDCs.

More than eighty representatives from regional and international institutions and

countries attended this workshop, namely: WTO, UNCTAD, the South Centre, UNECA, ITC Geneva, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), ICDT, Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

The experts covered the following topics:

- Brief introduction to the Doha Development Agenda: Background of the Ministerial Conference in Bali and all its results;
- The Bali Package: Overview of the Agreement on Trade Facilitation in the WTO;
- The Bali Package: The Agreement on Trade Facilitation - Impact and potential opportunities for African countries;
- The Bali Package: Ministerial Decision on public stockholding for food security, export competition, and provisions for the administration of tariff quotas for agricultural products;
- The Bali Package: Ministerial Decisions on Agriculture: Challenges and Opportunities for African countries;
- Overview of the Bali Package for the benefit of LDCs and the decision on the monitoring of the Special and Differentiated Treatment;
- Post-Bali: Work Overview of the next work program and negotiations.

After a fruitful debate on the stances of participating countries, participants recommended the following:

The OIC African Member States should adopt a common position in trade negotiations in compliance with the directions of the Bali Conference, taking into account the different development levels and priorities of each Member State within the framework of the Special and Differential Treatment ;

To organize a meeting of the OIC African States in the field of agriculture and cotton in collaboration with ICDT, IDB Group and the relevant United Nations agencies ;

To hold a workshop on the results of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the WTO and the post Bali work program for English-speaking OIC Countries in collaboration with ICDT, IDB Group and the relevant United Nations institutions.

It should be noted that the Department of Cooperation and Integration of IDB has organized a workshop on the results of the 9<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference of the WTO and Post Bali Work for Arab Countries in Dubai from 10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

## **2. Seminar on "non-tariff barriers (NTBs) to trade in African OIC Member Countries" Casablanca, Morocco, 19- 21 November 2014.**

Within the framework of the implementation of the Ten Year Programme of the OIC (2005-2015), the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Integration and Cooperation Department of the Islamic Development Bank, organised a Seminar on "Non-Tariff Barriers and their impact on Trade of the OIC African Member Countries» in Casablanca - Kingdom of Morocco, from 19<sup>th</sup> to 21<sup>st</sup> November 2014.

The seminar was organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Economy and Finance and the Ministry in charge of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco, which has always paid special attention to economic cooperation among the OIC Member States and with African countries.

This event falls within the framework of the technical assistance program of the IDB and ICDT in multilateral trade negotiations and whose main objectives are to:

- Identify and analyze non-tariff barriers to trade and their impact on trade in African OIC Member Countries through the sharing of experiences of regional and international institutions namely UNCTAD, ITC, WCO, the OIC, ECA, the League of Arab States, but also those of the participating States;
- Identify the solutions implemented by countries and regional and international organizations operating in the African region to fight against the obstacles hindering the development of national and regional trade;
- Reflect on the national and regional strategies in a bid to gradually reduce NTBs in the area;
- And lay the foundations of the launch of an Observatory of NTBs in the OIC countries in the ICDT's website by the end of 2015 in collaboration with ITC, UNCTAD, WTO, WCO, CEA, the League of Arab States, WAEMU, CEMAC and other OIC Institutions.

More than sixty representatives of Member States as well as regional and international organizations participated in this seminar.

### **3. Seminar on "the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements among the OIC Arab and African Member States: Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, 4<sup>th</sup> - 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015.**

Within the framework of the implementation of Resolution N° 22 of the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Standing Committee For Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) relating to the preparation of a study on "The New Generation of Free Trade Agreements and their impact on intra-OIC trade and the holding of a seminar on this issue, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and Cooperation and the Integration Department of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organised a seminar on the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements among the OIC Arab and African Member States, in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, from 4<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

On this occasion, Mr. Mohamed ABBOU, Minister in charge of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco attended this seminar.

The objectives of the seminar were as follows:

- To study the configuration of the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements and their potential impact on intra-OIC trade in Arab and African Countries;
- To present the preliminary outcomes of the study on the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements and to consider the ways and means likely to enrich it in collaboration with the various experts involved;
- To exchange national and regional experiences in Free Trade Agreements and especially the so-called New Generation FTAs;
- To propose a way forward to boost the use of NG-FTAs to contribute to enhancing intra-OIC trade.

17 OIC Member States attended this seminar and Regional organisation like Economic Commission for Africa (ECA, North Africa Office), Agadir Agreement Technical Unit, AMU, SESRIC, South Centre, IDB Group (Department of Cooperation and Integration) and ICDT. Participants recommended to enrich the study on New Generation of FTA and to submit it to the next COMCEC Ministerial Meeting.

**4. Seminar on “the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements among the OIC Asian Countries +Turkey, Albania, Suriname and Guyana: Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, 25<sup>th</sup> -27<sup>th</sup> May 2015.**

Within the framework of the implementation of Resolution No. 22 of the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Standing Committee For Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) relating to the preparation of a study on "The New Generation of Free Trade Agreements and their impact on intra-OIC trade and the holding of a seminar on this issue, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and Cooperation and the Integration Department of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organised a seminar on the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements of Asian Countries plus Turkey from 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> May 2015.

The objectives of the seminar were as follows:

- To study the configuration of the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements and their potential impact on intra-OIC trade in Arab and African Countries;
- To present the preliminary outcomes of the study on the New Generation of Free Trade Agreements and to consider the ways and means likely to enrich it in collaboration with the various experts involved;
- To exchange national and regional experiences in Free Trade Agreements and especially the so-called New Generation FTAs;
- To propose a way forward to boost the use of NG-FTAs to contribute to enhancing intra-OIC trade.

9 Member States participated in this seminar along with the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), the International Trade Centre, the South Centre the Islamic Development bank, (Cooperation and Integration Department).

Participants recommended deepening and enriching this study and submitting it to the next ministerial session of the COMCEC.

**5. Seminar on Competition Policy: Republic of Tunisia, Tunis, 3 – 4 June 2015.**

**Within the framework** of the cooperation with the Ministry of Commerce of the Republic of Tunisia, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation organized the 6<sup>th</sup> Conference on «Competition Policies and Laws of the OIC Members States».

This event falls within the framework of the follow up of the "Tunis Declaration" of the Conference on **competition** policies and laws, held in Tunisia in 2010 and the relevant recommendations on cooperation between the OIC Member States in the field of competition. This event was also held within the framework of the implementation of the Resolution of the 30<sup>th</sup> Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC Countries (COMCEC), held in November 2014 in Turkey, regarding the organization of a conference on “competition policies and Laws in the OIC member countries” in Tunis in 2015 .

This Conference was also attended by the Competition Council of the Republic of Tunisia and several representatives of the competition authorities of Member Countries such as Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Turkey, Oman, Kuwait, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique. The Representatives of some non- member countries such as Austria, Belgium, and international experts of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) also participated in this event.

- ✓ The relationships between the competition policies and laws;
- ✓ The relationships between the competition authorities and sector-based organisations;
- ✓ The efficiency of the competition authorities;
- ✓ The review of the national experiences of the following countries: Tunisia, Egypt, Algeria, Austria, Turkey and Belgium.

## **6. Workshop on “the Single Window Modality and E-trade and their role in promoting intra-OIC Trade”, Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, 9-10 November 2015.**

In compliance with resolution n° A.7 of the 42<sup>nd</sup> Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC on Single Window and the various OIC fora relating to enhancing Intra-OIC Trade, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), organized under the auspices of the Ministry in charge of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco, a Workshop on “the Single Window Modality and E-trade and their role in promoting intra-OIC Trade”, in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, on 9-10 November 2015.

The major aim of this workshop is to share knowledge, experiences and best practices among the participants on the implementation of national trade facilitation programs and promote the development and implementation of single window & paperless trade projects in the OIC Member Countries (MCs).

The axes of the forum were:

- State of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreements (TFA) ratification and implementation in OIC Countries;
- Role of Single Window in boosting Intra-OIC Trade;
- Regional and National Experiences relating to Single Window and trade facilitation;
- Round-Table Discussion on the role of SW in facilitating the implementation of the WTO TFA.

More than 60 representatives of the following Countries, OIC Institutions and International organizations attended this workshop: Republic of Cameroon, Arab Republic of Egypt, Kingdom of Morocco, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Turkey and Singapore.

- COMCEC Coordination Office;
- International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC);
- Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT).
- Arab Maghreb Union (AMU);
- Arab Industrial Development Mining Organisation (AIDMO);
- World Trade Organisation (WTO);
- International Trade Centre (ITC);
- World Customs Organisation (WCO);
- Global Coalition Fore Efficient Logistics (GCEL);
- African Alliance for Electronic Commerce (AAEC).

## **7. Training Seminar on Trade in Services, Cairo - Arab Republic of Egypt, 21-24 December 2015.**

Within the framework of their technical assistance programs on issues related to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Agadir Technical Unit and the WTO organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Trade and Industry of the Arab Republic of Egypt a Training Seminar on Trade in Services

of the Member States of the Agadir Agreement and the OIC Member States, from 21 to 24 December 2015, in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt.

Took part in the seminar officials of trade in services from Trade Ministries of the following Countries: Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania and Palestine as well as the Director of the WTO Trade in Services sector.

The objectives of this seminar were to:

- Deepen participants' knowledge on the role of services and trade in services in the context of globalization;
- Increase knowledge of participants on the provisions and rules of the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) within the framework of the WTO;
- Deepen participants' knowledge on the technical and political aspects to complete with success the negotiations on the liberalization of services at international and regional levels;
- Discuss the opportunities and challenges facing the Countries of the Agadir Agreement in the field of negotiations on the liberalization of trade in services.

#### **8. Workshop on the Administration of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) and the prospects for Regional Trade Integration in the OIC Member States, Casablanca - Kingdom of Morocco, 21 to 23 December 2015.**

Within the framework of their joint program of technical assistance to the OIC Member States, the Department of Cooperation and Integration of the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade organized a workshop on the "Governance of Regional Trade Agreements (RTAs) and the prospects of regional integration among the OIC Member States" from 21 to 23 December 2015 in Casablanca (Morocco).

This workshop aimed to make on the one hand the inventory of bilateral, regional and multilateral trade agreements and the Free Trade Area Agreements (FTAs) of the Africans and Arab Member States of the OIC, as well as to evaluate the impact of these agreements on the sustainable development of their economies and to formulate practical recommendations enabling them to refine their national strategies in order to facilitate regional integration.

The countries which participated in this workshop were: Saudi Arabia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Guinea, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Senegal, Sudan, Chad, Togo and Tunisia.

Regional and international organizations also participated including: the Department of Cooperation and Integration of the IDB, the ICDT, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA), the Arab League, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Economic Commission for Africa (North Africa Office), the World Trade Organization, the International Trade Centre (ITC), the World Customs Organization, the South Centre, the Third World Network (TWN).

#### **9. Seminar on the Outcome of the 10<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference and Accession to the Trade Facilitation Agreement, Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, 25 February 2016.**

Within the framework of the implementation of the technical assistance programme for the benefit of the OIC Member States in issues related to the WTO activities, the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the World Trade Organisation (WTO), jointly organized under the auspices of the Ministry in Charge of Foreign Trade of the

Kingdom of Morocco, a Seminar on «*The Outcome of the 10<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference and Accession to the Trade Facilitation Agreement*», in Casablanca, on 25 February 2016.

The objective of the seminar was to inform the participants about the main outcomes of the 10<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference of Nairobi, and to introduce the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and its impact on the foreign trade development of the OIC Member Countries.

**10. Upcoming Workshops** on the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement of Arabic and French-speaking OIC Countries. This workshop will assist Developing and Least Developed Members Countries in identifying their needs for the implementation of the Agreement, including, the required time frame to implement each provision, and to assess their needs and priorities for technical assistance in trade facilitation. This event will also allow OIC members to update the results of their original needs assessments in order to take into account the progress achieved in the negotiations. It will help the Members to establish their notifications on Special and Differential Treatment (SDT) and determine their technical assistance needs. (under preparation).



### SECTION III

## THE OIC MEMBER STATES WHOSE ACCESSION TO THE WTO IS IN PROCESS

The total number of the WTO Member reached 164 countries with the accession of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan during the 10<sup>th</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference. Currently, 44 WTO Member States are OIC Members, that is to say more than the quarter of the WTO Members. The WTO Member States account for about 97% of the world economy.

The current number of the OIC Member States that have applied for accession to the WTO is ten, these are: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, Uzbekistan Sudan, Syria and Comoros.

Among these countries, it may be noted that Algeria and Azerbaijan are at very advanced stage of accession to the WTO. Furthermore, the progression and conclusion of any accession process based on contributions from accessing government. There is always a degree of uncertainty, which depends on many parameters such as: continuous negotiations with WTO Members, the technical complexities, difficulties at the national level and delays when a country wishes to analyze the impact of new or amended legislation.

The WTO accessions take place on the interrelated pathways multilateral, plurilateral and bilateral negotiations. Some processes have made significant progress in 2013, while others have not progressed as expected due to various factors, including further negotiations with Members, technical complexities, internal difficulties and choices.

Significant technical work has been undertaken on several accessions. Thus, the combination of technical assistance and outreach activities of the Secretariat is essential to help Members and acceding governments in their negotiations and better understand the effects and results of accession mean for the future of the Organization. In this regard, the contributions of the Chairmen of working groups were vital in 2014 It should be noted that technical assistance benefitted from the financial contribution of the following countries: Australia, Brazil, China, the United States, India and the European Union (EU) and its individual Member States.

#### ➤ **TRANSPARENCY OF THE ACCESSION PROCESS:**

Transparency and predictability of the accession process remain key priorities for Members and the WTO Secretariat. In 2013, measures and initiatives for transparency taken over the last four years have continued to be implemented and strengthened.

Thus, the informal group of accessions (GIA) met nine times in 2013. Consultations focused on the following questions: i) sharing and exchange of information on accessions with Members; ii) Secretariat's reports on technical developments in the accession process; iii) reports from the Chairs of the Working Groups to Members on the results of their visits to the countries; iv) planning of meetings on accession and related activities based on the progressive calendar of meetings on accession proposed by the Secretariat; and v) response to specific concerns raised by Members and acceding governments .

The information on WTO accessions Bulletin aims at providing to acceding governments, the Presidents and Members, a summary report of the meetings of the GIA. It also contains useful information on the operational level to help prepare the meetings and negotiations

on accession.

In 2013, the practice of meetings with various groups of WTO Members has intensified to focus on specific issues and concerns of each group. The overall objective is to report to the Members on activities during the calendar year, for their comments and raise concerns to be taken into account. This year, the Secretariat met with the Advisory Group of LDCs, the informal group of developing countries, the Asian Group in developing countries, GRULAC, the African Group and the Arab Group. During these meetings, it informed the group of the status of accessions, reported on its activities, exchanged views on the responsibilities of neighbouring /regional groups, considered the concerns rose by acceding governments and Members, and consulted its interlocutors on technical priorities for accession in 2014.

➤ **TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND AWARENESS-RAISING:**

Technical assistance and capacity building related to accession are focused on the training of government officials. They also include awareness-raising activities intended to Members of Parliament, the private sector, university circles, civil society and the media. In 2013, technical assistance and capacity building activities were the following: i) national seminars; ii) sessions on the accessions during the advanced trade policy courses, regional courses and introductory courses for LDCs; iii) workshops; iv) technical missions; v) visits by the Chairmen of the working groups; vi) the creation or strengthening of centres of reference of the WTO; vii) online training ; viii) dialogue with groups of WTO Members; and ix) participation in conferences.

➤ **TOOLS FOR THE ACCESSION:**

Database commitments under the accessions (ACDB): Database on commitments within the accessions (ACDB) was launched in May 2012. It gives access to all the commitments and related information contained in the reports of the working groups of the accession and accession protocols of 31 Members under Article XII MC (<http://acdb.wto.org>).

**1. Algeria:**

With an observer status since 1987, Algeria officially submitted to the WTO a report on its foreign trade regime in June 1996. The submission of this report represented the first step in the membership procedure in this organisation.

Since then, some WTO Member States, such as the United States, the EU, Switzerland, Japan and Australia, sent a series of questions to Algeria. The answers were sent to the WTO secretariat and a first meeting of the working group on the accession of Algeria to the WTO was held in Geneva in April 1998.

Algeria held five rounds of multilateral negotiations (April 1998, February 2002, May 2002 then November 2002 and May 2003, in 2004 and 2005) and two rounds of bilateral negotiations in the agricultural, industrial and services sectors (April 2002 and November 2002). The examined subjects are: agriculture, customs system, State trade, transparency and legal system reform and TRIPS.

Algeria submitted initial offers concerning goods and services in March 2002 and revised offers were distributed on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2005. The revised elements of a draft report of the working group and the latest new facts concerning the legislation were also examined during the meeting of the working group on 25<sup>th</sup>February 2005.

With respect to bilateral meetings, Algeria has met about ten countries; these are: the

United States, Japan, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Cuba, Uruguay, Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

The working group on the accession of Algeria, which is chaired by M.C Perez Del Castillo (Uruguay), numbers 43 countries.

The 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the working group in charge of the accession of Algeria to the WTO took place on October 21<sup>st</sup> 2005 at the headquarters of the WTO.

The agenda items of this meeting dealt with the progress of bilateral negotiations relating to market access, the consideration of the draft report of the working group and the new development of the Algerian legislation.

The working group in charge of the accession of Algeria to the WTO is currently tackling a document entitled "draft report of the working group on the accession of Algeria to the WTO". This document will comprise the main issues that will be discussed at the meeting of 21<sup>st</sup> October 2005.

Besides, on the sidelines of the 9<sup>th</sup> meeting of the working group, bilateral meetings were held during the period going from 18<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> October 2005 with the representatives of some WTO Members, particularly with the United States, Switzerland, New Zealand and Malaysia within the framework of the resumption of talks relating to the market access of commodities and services.

The Bilateral Negotiations in the field of market access are underway on the basis of revised offers concerning goods and services. The multilateral review on the foreign trade regime is underway and a revised draft report of the Working Party was circulated in June 2006.

#### **On 17 January 2008, members reviewed the revised draft Working Party report:**

The Working Party report describes Algeria's foreign trade regime and the reforms undertaken in recent years to bring Algeria's legal and institutional framework into compliance with WTO rules. Members also evaluated the progress made in the ongoing bilateral negotiations on market access for goods and services.

Members have acknowledged Algeria's progress in reforming its trade regime in order to be fully compatible with WTO rules. Algeria has passed new legislation on Technical barriers to trade (TBT); sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) issues; intellectual property (TRIPS); antidumping, safeguards and countervailing measures; pricing policies; customs valuation; importation of pharmaceuticals products; exports of beef, sheep and palm trees.

The Algeria's Working Group revised an offer on specific commitments in services and was circulated in February 2012.

The long march of Algeria for its accession to the WTO is explained also by the will of the Algerian government to lead, first, internal reforms, to successfully upgrade some areas likely to be threatened by competition and to achieve a diversification of its economy. A roadmap to accelerate the negotiation process of Algeria's accession to the WTO was developed and a series of bilateral talks to resolve differences and finalize agreements is planned between March and April in addition to the holding of an informal meeting with the Working Group on the accession of Algeria to the organization, in anticipation of the formal meeting to be held in June 2012.

#### **Bilateral negotiations on market access of goods and services:**

Algeria has completed negotiations with Brazil, Uruguay, Cuba, Venezuela and Switzerland. It still needs to conclude negotiations with the EU, Canada, Malaysia, Turkey, the Republic of Korea, Ecuador, the USA, Norway, Australia and Japan.

The tenth meeting of the working Group took place in January 2008.

Additionally, five bilateral agreements were signed by Algeria within the framework of the negotiations process for its accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012 with Brazil, Cuba, Venezuela and Argentine. Negotiations on the conclusion of a similar agreement with the EU, main trading partner of the United States have reached an advanced stage.

Negotiations for the signature with the other WTO Member States are still undergoing and Algeria is on the verge of concluding an agreement with Switzerland, Australia and New Zealand, while talks with Japan, Canada, Malaysia, Turkey and Ukraine are progressing well.

The long progression of Algeria towards its accession to the WTO reflects the will of the Algerian government to conduct, first, internal reforms, successfully upgrade some areas that might be threatened by competition and achieve a diversification of its economy.

The eleventh meeting of the Working Group was held on 5 April 2013 in the presence of the Minister of Trade, Mr. Mustapha Benbada. On this occasion, Algeria introduced for consideration by the working group twelve documents relating to revised offers for goods and services, the revised legislative action plan and proposals for amendments, supplements and updating of the draft report of the group.

Mr. Minister stressed that Algeria is willing to "bring its trade regime into conformity with WTO agreements." However, he wished "the granting of reasonable periods of transition" for some measures, which are not compliant with the agreements.

He also indicated that a program was drawn up under which member countries should send their questions before 10 May 2013 to Algeria, which has pledged to make the answers at the end of June or on 15 July 2013 and propose to hold another round of negotiations in Autumn 2013.

The Algerian delegation met on 2, 3 and 4 April 2013 the delegations of twelve Members of the WTO. These are from Malaysia, Indonesia, Ecuador, Argentina, the United States of America, El Salvador, Canada, Norway, New Zealand, Japan, Australia and Turkey.

Four bilateral agreements with Uruguay, Cuba, Switzerland and Brazil already signed were deposited at the WTO secretariat, while two other agreements with Venezuela and Argentina are being finalized.

-The Working Party on the Accession of Algeria met on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014 in order to take stock of the situation regarding Algeria's negotiations for the accession to the WTO. During this meeting, WTO members expressed satisfaction at the significant progress made by Algeria.

Members' comments focused on quantitative import restrictions, including prohibitions, restrictions on investment, export subsidies, discriminatory application of domestic taxes, the system for recording information on geographic indications, price policies, marketing rights and agricultural policies.

The other issues to be tackled concern industrial policies and subsidies, technical barriers

to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and trade related investment measures.

Besides, further to the future consultations among Members, the Algerian government and the WTO Secretariat will decide when to hold the next meeting of the Working Group. Beforehand, Algeria should provide updated information on developments in legislation, respond to the questions of Members and update its Legislative Action Plan, and then, Members should review this information.

## **2. Azerbaijan:**

Azerbaijan's Working Party was established on 16<sup>th</sup> July 1997. Azerbaijan submitted a Memorandum on its Foreign Trade Regime in April 1999. Replies to a first set of questions concerning the aide-memoir were circulated in July 2000 then a second series in December 2001. The first meeting of the working group was held on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2002. The last meeting of the working group was held on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2005. Bilateral negotiations on market access are underway on the basis of revised offers concerning goods and services.

A Summary of Points raised -an informal document outlining the discussions in the Working Party- was prepared by the Secretariat and circulated in December 2008. This summary was revised in July 2009.

Multilateral proceedings are underway on the basis of A Factual Summary of Points Raised since December 2008. The factual summary was revised in July 2009.

The working group on the accession of Azerbaijan held its eight meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010 to carry on the review of the economic and commercial regime of this country. They favorably took note of the progress recently achieved at the legislative level and underlined that it was important to keep on intensifying negotiations on market access.

The Factual Summary was last revised in November 2011. The ninth meeting of the Working Party took place in February 2012.

Azerbaijan's Working Group revised the Factual Summary in November 2011 and its ninth meeting was held on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2012 to review Azerbaijan's trade reforms and assess their conformity with WTO rules. Members requested more information on Azerbaijan's pricing policies, state trading enterprises, investment regime, competition policy, trading rights, tariff rate quotas, export duties and restrictions, export subsidies, agricultural policy, trade remedies, free trade zones, intellectual property, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, technical barriers to trade and government procurement. Azerbaijan's Deputy-Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev said on this occasion that his country faced the challenge of high dependence on the oil and gas sector and that the accession to WTO was central to Azerbaijan's diversification and long-term economic sustainability efforts. At the end of the meeting, the Chairperson of Azerbaijan's Working Group, Ambassador Walter Lewalter, urged Azerbaijan to continue pursuing its domestic reforms and market access negotiations in a proactive manner to move the process forward.

### **Negotiations on market access:**

Azerbaijan signed an Agreement with Georgia in April 2010. Negotiations are underway with the European Union and with ten WTO's members.

The Working Group held its ninth meeting on 24 February 2012 during which the latest reforms adopted by Azerbaijan to advance its accession to the WTO and bring its trade

regime into conformity with WTO rules were discussed. The group also discussed the legislative development and reviewed progress in bilateral negotiations on market access for goods and services.

The latest revision of factual summary of November 2012. The tenth meeting of the Working Group was held on 7 December 2012 and the WTO Members discussed the status of negotiations on market access, the trade regime and legislative reforms for the accession of Azerbaijan to the WTO.

In addition, Mr. Mahmud Mammad-Guliyev, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chief Negotiator of Azerbaijan gave on this occasion, an overview of the economic situation of the country and the development of relevant legislation in the context of the WTO. He said that the objective of his government was to diversify and modernize the economy in order to reduce its dependence vis-à-vis the oil and gas sector.

Regarding bilateral negotiations on market access, the Deputy Minister said that Azerbaijan had signed a bilateral agreement with the Kyrgyz Republic in March 2012 and had recently concluded bilateral negotiations with China. Other bilateral negotiations were held with Brazil, Canada, Korea, the United States, Japan, Norway and the European Union on the sidelines of the meeting of the Working Group.

The representatives of China, the United States, India, Japan, Norway, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Switzerland, Turkey and the European Union welcomed the contributions presented by Azerbaijan and expressed support for the accession of the country.

During the discussion, members requested to be given accurate details on the economic policies of Azerbaijan, state trading enterprises and privatization policy, prices, investment and competition, the exemptions from VAT and the application of excise duty and on the adoption of the Law on Customs Tariff. They also wished to have information on fees and charges for services rendered supplements, customs valuation, rules of origin, export bans, subsidies for industrial products, export subsidies agricultural products, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, government procurement and intellectual property.

The Secretariat was entrusted with developing the documentation by drawing up a draft report of the Working Group on the factual summary of raised points. Bilateral negotiations on market access are underway with interested Members on the basis of a revised offer concerning goods distributed in September 2013, and a revised offer relating to services, distributed in October 2013. Four Bilateral Agreements were deposited at the WTO Secretariat (United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kyrgyzstan and Turkey). The eleventh meeting of the Working Group took place on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2014.

During this meeting, WTO members discussed the trade regime of Azerbaijan on the basis of the draft report of the Working Group. Thus, Members asked Azerbaijan to provide clarifications on tax exemptions, investment incentives, the operation of foreign companies, privatization, technical barriers to trade, subsidies, transit and Intellectual Property.

The twelfth meeting of the Working Group was held on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2015 and the Chairman of the Working Group welcomed the steps taken by Azerbaijan to bring its trade regime into conformity with WTO rules and requested the government to accelerate the stages of its accession to the WTO and the members of this group to submit their questions before 15 April 2015.

### **3. Comoros:**

On 9<sup>th</sup> October 2007, the General Council set up a Working Party in charge of examining the accession application of Comoros to the WTO. It allowed its Chairman to appoint the Chairman of the Working Party in consultation with Members and the representatives of Comoros (Document WT/ACC/COM/1).

The Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime was circulated on 25<sup>th</sup> October 2013 (WT/ACC/COM/3). The Chairman of the Working Group was appointed on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The first meeting of the Working Group should be held as soon as the Comoros have completed their first round of questions and answers with Members.

### **4. Iraq:**

Iraq made its application for accession to the WTO on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004, under Article XII. A working group chaired by Mr Guillermo Valles Galmez (Uruguay) was established at the meeting of the General Council held on 13<sup>th</sup> December 2004.

Iraq has submitted an aide-memoir on its foreign trade system but the working group has not met yet.

For the first time since Iraq's application in 2004, the Working Party met to discuss and examine Iraq's trade legislation and its conformity with the WTO principles.

Iraq met bilaterally with Brazil, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, the United States, Jordan, Morocco, Norway Oman Taiwan, the EU and Viet Nam. Iraq was invited to submit initial offers to advance their market access negotiations on goods and services.

Iraq will prepare documents on agriculture, services, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary issues and intellectual property, it will also prepare a general legislative plan of action providing members with a state of play of current and future legislation.

Working Party members, on 2 April 2008, supported Iraq's rapid accession to the WTO and argued it would contribute to the country's integration into the world economy. Iraq's Trade Minister, H. E. Dr. Al-Sudani, stated that Iraq was determined to overcome the country's difficult circumstances to move forward on the accession process and added that Iraq's membership would represent a significant addition to the international community.

#### **Review of trade legislation:**

At this stage of the accession, members examine all aspects of Iraq's trade and economic policies to assess their conformity with WTO principles.

Since the 1st Working Party meeting held in May 2007, Iraq has provided members with a legislative action plan which shows the state of play of the ongoing legal reforms. Iraq also provided information on its sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, technical barriers to trade (TBT) and the trade-related aspects of intellectual property rights (TRIPS) as well as information on its domestic support and export subsidies in agriculture.

#### **Bilateral negotiations:**

Iraq has met with several members on the sidelines of the Working Party. Market access negotiations will start once Iraq tables its initial offers on goods and services.

Iraq submitted its Memorandum on the Foreign Trade Regime in September 2005. The Working Party met for a second time in April 2008 to continue the examination of Iraq's foreign trade regime.

Iraq has provided several documentary contributions requested by the Working Group. It has yet to submit its initial offers on market access for goods and services. The next meeting of the Working Group should be held as soon as Iraq has submitted its initial offers on market access.

#### **5. Iran:**

Iran submitted its application for accession to the WTO to the General Council during its session held on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July 2004 in Geneva (WT/ACC/IRN/1). This application was unanimously adopted by the General Council on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005. A working group was established at the meeting of the General Council held on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

The Aide-memoir on the Foreign Trade Regime was circulated in November 2009. Questions from Members about it were transmitted to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran in February 2010. Technical contributions, including responses to Members' questions were distributed in 2011. Before a meeting of the Working Group to be convened, the Chairman of the General Council will consult with Members to appoint a Chairman of the working Group

#### **6. Lebanon:**

Lebanon's Working Party was established on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1999. The aide-memoire on the Foreign Trade Regime was circulated in June 2001 and the answers to issues concerning the aide-memoire were circulated in June 2002. The working group met for the first time on October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2002.

Multilateral work is proceeding on the basis of a revised draft Working Party Report that was circulated in October 2009. Bilateral market access negotiations are conducted on the basis of revised offers on goods and services. The Seventh meeting of the Working Party was held in October 2009.

The Working Group will hold its meeting upon the provision by the Lebanese Republic of the necessary contributions.

#### **7. Libya:**

Libya deposited an official application for accession to the WTO on 25<sup>th</sup> November 2001 (Doc.WT/ACC/LBY/1). The WTO Members agreed on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2004 to start negotiations with Libya on its membership.

Libya has not submitted yet the aide-memoir on its foreign trade system and the working group has not met yet.

#### **8. Sudan:**

The Working Party on the accession of Sudan was established on 25<sup>th</sup> October 1994. Sudan's Memorandum on its Foreign Trade Regime was circulated in January 1999. Replies to a first set of questions concerning the Memorandum were circulated in November 2000 and a second set of questions were put in January 2003. The second meeting of the working group was held in March 2004.

The bilateral negotiations on market access for goods and services are underway, on the basis of the initial offer concerning services and a revised offer concerning goods.

Two bilateral agreements (with Brazil and China) concerning market access have been deposited at the Secretariat. Updated technical contributions are pending, and especially legislative and constitutional updated information following the independence of South



Sudan in 2012. The Secretariat keeps regular technical contacts with Sudan to identify areas in which documents and updated information are required. This accession is pending.

#### **9. Uzbekistan:**

The Working Party on the accession of Uzbekistan to the WTO was established on 21 December 1994. Uzbekistan submitted its aide-memoir on the Foreign Trade Regime in September 1998 and replies to questions on his aide-memoir were circulated in October 1999. Bilateral market access contacts have been initiated. The Working Party met for the first time on July 17<sup>th</sup> 2002.

Uzbekistan has started bilateral negotiations on market access with interested members on the basis of initial offers concerning goods and services submitted in September 2005. The third meeting of the working group took place in October 2005.

#### **10. Syria:**

Syria's request for accession was notified to the Director General of the WTO on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2001 (WT/ACC/SYR/1).

On 4<sup>th</sup> May 2010, the General Council agreed to establish a Working Party to examine the accession application to the WTO submitted by the Arab Republic of Syria.

The Arab Republic of Syria is designed to benefit from administrative arrangements for the category I.

#### **Conclusion:**

Although the membership of the WTO provides clear benefits, negotiations on accession are a challenge for all acceding governments, especially LDCs. The terms and conditions of the accession impose internal reforms. Acceding LDCs have limited technical and human capacity and financial resources to deal with the complex aspects of the accession to the WTO.

In 2012, the General Council adopted the recommendations of the Sub-Committee on LDCs to further strengthen, streamline and make the 2002 Decision on the accession of least developed countries operational (Guidelines on LDC accession). These recommendations were developed in accordance with the Decision adopted on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2011 at the Eighth Ministerial Conference of the WTO.

The General Council's Decision of 2012 was adopted as an addendum to the 2002 Guidelines on LDC accession. The extension of technical assistance tailored by the WTO Secretariat to acceding LDCs at all stages of the accession process to the WTO remained a priority in 2013. It was made by means of interactions with delegations in Geneva or in capitals.

The Program of China for LDCs and accessions has contributed greatly to strengthening the negotiating capacity of LDCs. So far, seven (7) trainees were trained under this program. In 2013, the WTO Secretariat has continued its dialogue with regional groups in the WTO and the Consultative Group of LDCs.

There are three OIC LDCs, in the process of acceding to the WTO: Afghanistan, Comoros and Sudan. It should be noted that among the 47 LDCs, only 31 are WTO members.

Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing countries have met on 12 September 2012 in Almaty (Kazakhstan) to discuss ways and means to enhance the commercial potential of

these countries and to establish a common position on major current business issues.

The purpose of the meeting organized by the Government of Kazakhstan and the United Nations Office for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States (UN-OHRLLS) is devoted to preparing for the Conference year review of the Almaty Programme to be held in 2014.

Developing countries (LLDCs) have no access to land and the sea and are relatively isolated from world markets, so they have to bear transport costs higher than average and low participation in international trade.

The landlocked OIC countries are the following: Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Burkina Faso, Chad, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Niger, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan.

## *ANNEXES*

Table 1: Dates of setting-up working groups of the OIC Observers Countries to WTO

Country	Date of the setting up of a working group	Chairman of the working group
Algeria	17 <sup>th</sup> June 1987	Argentina
Azerbaijan	16 <sup>th</sup> July 1997	Germany
Comoros	9 <sup>th</sup> October 2007	-
Iraq	13 <sup>th</sup> December 2004	Uruguay
Iran	26 <sup>th</sup> May 2005	-
Lebanon	14 <sup>th</sup> April 1999	France
Libya	27 <sup>th</sup> July 2004	-
Sudan	25 <sup>th</sup> October 1994	Morocco
Syria	4 <sup>th</sup> May 2010	-
Uzbekistan	21 <sup>st</sup> December 1994	Mexico

Source: WTO

**Table 2: Summary Table of Ongoing Accessions (as of November 2015)**

	Application	Working Party Established	Memorandum	First/Latest* Working Party Meeting	Number of Working Party Meetings *	Goods Offer		Services Offer		Draft Working Party Report **
						initial	latest*	initial	latest*	
<b>Algeria</b>	Jun 1987	Jun 1987	July 1996	April 1998 March 2014	12	Mar 2002	Nov 2013	Mar 2002	Oct 2013	February 2014
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	Jun 1997	Jul 1997	Apr 1999	Jun 2002/Feb 2015	12	May 2005	Nov 2014	May 2005	Feb. 2015	Jan 2015
<b>Comoros</b>	Feb 2007	Oct 2007	October 2013	Designation Sept 2013						
<b>Iran</b>	Jul 1996	May 2005	Nov 2009							
<b>Iraq</b>	Sep 2004	Dec 2004	Sept 2005	April 2007/ April 2008	2					
<b>Libya</b>	June 2004	July 2004								
<b>Lebanon</b>	Jan 1999	April 1999	June 2001	Oct 2002/Oct 2009	7	Nov 2003	June 2004	Dec 2003	June 2004	Oct 2009
<b>Syria</b>	Oct 2001	May 2010								
<b>Sudan</b>	Oct 1994	Oct 1994	Jan 1999	Jul 2003/Mar 2004	2	Jul 2004	Oct 2006	June 2004	Oct 2006	Sept 2004
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Dec 1994	Dec 1994	Oct 1998	Jul 2002/Oct 2005	3	Sept 2005		Sept 2005		Dec 1994

**Note:** \*As of the date of this document. \*\* Most recent Factual Summary (FS), draft Working Party Report or Elements of draft Working Party Report.

**Table 3: List of the OIC Member States, WTO Members**

<b>COUNTRY</b>	<b>DATE OF ACCESSION</b>
<b>1. Afghanistan</b>	<b>17 December 2015*</b>
2. Albania	8 September 2000
3. Bahrain	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
4. Bangladesh	13 December 1993
5. Benin	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
6. Brunei	January 1995
7. Burkina Faso	3 June 1995
8. Cameroon	13 December 1995
9. Chad	19 October 1996
10. Côte d'Ivoire	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
11. Djibouti	31 May 1995
12. Egypt	30 June 1995
13. Gabon	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
14. Gambia	23 October 1996
15. Guinea	25 October 1995
16. Guinea-Bissau	31 May 1995
17. Guyana	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
18. Indonesia	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
19. Jordan	11 April 2000
20. Kazakhstan	30 November 2015
21. Kuwait	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
22. Kyrgyzstan	20 December 1998
23. Malaysia	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
24. Maldives	31 May 1995
25. Mali	31 May 1995
26. Morocco	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
27. Mauritania	31 May 1995
28. Mozambique	26 August 1995
29. Niger	13 December 1996
30. Nigeria	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
31. Oman	9 November 2000
32. Pakistan	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
33. Qatar	13 January 1996
34. Saudi Arabia	11 December 2005
35. Senegal	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
36. Sierra Leone	23 July 1995
37. Suriname	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
38. Tajikistan	2 <sup>nd</sup> March 2013
39. Togo	31 May 1995
40. Tunisia	29 March 1995
41. Turkey	26 March 1995
42. Uganda	1 <sup>st</sup> January 1995
43. United Arab Emirates	10 April 1996
44. Yemen	26 June 2014

(\*)Afghanistan will have until 30 June 2016 to ratify its Protocol of Accession and would become a WTO member 30 days after it notifies its acceptance to the WTO Director-General.

## **LIST OF OIC MEMBER STATES CANDIDATES FOR ACCESSION TO THE WTO**

### **(OBSERVERS)**

1. Algeria
2. Azerbaijan
3. Comoros
4. Iran
5. Iraq
6. Lebanon
7. Libya
8. Sudan
9. Syria
10. Uzbekistan

### **LIST OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES, NON MEMBERS OF WTO**

1. Palestine
2. Turkmenistan
3. Somalia

**Table 4: State of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement ratifications of the OIC Member States (As of 16 March 2016: 9 members/71)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of ratification</b>
1. Malaysia	26 May 2015
2. Niger	4 August 2015
3. Togo	1 October 2015
4. Pakistan	27 October 2015
5. Guyana	30 November 2015
6. Côte d'Ivoire	8 December 2015
7. Brunei	15 December 2015
8. Mali	20 January 2016
9. Turkey	16 March 2016

**Table n° 5: State of the OIC Member States notifications of Category A of the WTO TFA (as of 16 March 2016: 26 members/83)**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of notification</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Date of notification</b>
1. Turkey	16 July 2014	14. Albania	10 September 2014
2. Malaysia	23 July 2014	15. Jordan	18 September 2014
3. Qatar	25 July 2014	16. Senegal	27 October 2014
4. Saudi Arabia	22 July 2014	17. Nigeria	10 November 2014
5. Morocco	4 August 2014	18. Gabon	17 December 2014
6. Tajikistan	4 August 2014	19. Egypt	7 January 2015
7. Indonesia	4 August 2014	20. Pakistan	20 March 2015
8. Brunei	8 August 2014	21. United Arab Emirates	2 June 2015
9. Côte d'Ivoire	11 August 2014	22. Uganda	6 August 2015
10. Kyrgyz Rep	11 August 2014	23. Bahrain	24 November 2015
11. Kuwait	14 August 2014	24. Suriname	30 November 2015
12. Oman	14 August 2014	25. Guyana	5 January 2016
13. Tunisia	4 September 2014	26. Kazakhstan	24 February 2016