



COMCEC

REPORT THIRTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC



İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018

COMCEC Coordination Office

OIC/COMCEC/34-18/REP

COMCEC

**Standing Committee for Economic and
Commercial Cooperation of the Organization
of the Islamic Cooperation**

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Ankara, November 2018

Address:

COMCEC Coordination Office

Necatibey Cad. 110/A

Ankara-TURKEY

Phone : 90-312-294 57 10

Fax : 90-312-294 57 77-57 79

Website: <http://www.comcec.org>

e-mail : comcec@comcec.org

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PART ONE

**RESOLUTIONS OF THE OIC FORMING
THE BASIS AND GUIDING THE ACTIVITIES
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC**

I

RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE THIRD ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE ESTABLISHING THE STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE OIC CHAIRED BY HEADS OF STATE

Resolution No. 13/3-P (IS)

The Third Islamic Summit Conference (Palestine and Al-Quds Session), meeting in Mecca Al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 19th to 22nd Rabi-Al-Awal, 1401 H. (25-28 January, 1981);

Having listened to the proposals by His Majesty King HASSAN II, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, that three committees will be established and chaired by the Kings and Presidents of the Islamic States,

Proceeding from a firm belief that joint Islamic action needs to be consolidated in the scientific and technological field, and in the economic and trade sphere,

Prompted by the desire to give information and culture a fresh impetus to help world public opinion understand the basic issues of the Islamic nations, particularly those of Al-Quds and Palestine, and to confront the tendentious campaign launched against Islam and Muslims,

DECIDES:

1. To establish three Standing Committees, the first for scientific and technological cooperation, the second for economic and trade cooperation, and the third for information and cultural affairs;
2. These Committees shall undertake to follow up implementation of the resolutions passed, or about to be passed, by the Islamic Conference in those fields; to study all possible means of strengthening cooperation among Muslim States in those fields, and to draw up programmes and submit proposals designed to increase the Islamic States' capacity in those fields;
3. Each Committee shall consist of the representatives of ten Islamic States, at ministerial level, and shall be chaired by the Head of State of an Islamic State;
4. Members of these Committees shall be elected by the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference for a renewable term of three years;
5. A Committee shall hold a meeting, if invited to do so by its Chairman or by a majority of its members; its meeting shall be valid if attended by a majority.

II

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE
OF THE FOURTH ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE
ENTRUSTING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION TO
H.E. KENAN EVREN, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

Final Communique No. IS/4-84/E/DEC

".... The Conference decided to entrust H.E. Mr. Kenan EVREN, President of the Republic of Turkey, with the Chairmanship of the Permanent Committee on Economic and Commercial Cooperation..." (Page 18, para 40).

III

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE
OF THE THIRTEENTH ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE
“UNITY AND SOLIDARITY FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE”
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, ÎSTANBUL
(14-15 April 2016)**

OIC/13TH SUMMIT 2016/FC/FINAL

129. The Conférence attached great importance to multi-modal connectivity to further advance economic coopération among OIC Member States. In this regard, it noted the recent developments on execution of the OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway project and encouraged OIC project owners and stakeholders to continue their efforts towards mobilizing technical and funding support for the successful implementation of this integrative project.

130. The Conférence commended the rôle of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Coopération (COMCEC) under the chairmanship of the Président of the Republic of Turkey in contributing to the realization of OIC objectives in the economic domain.

131. The Conférence expressed its profound appréciation for the successful implementation of the COMCEC revised statute and strategy adopted at the 4th Extraordinary Summit. It called on Member States to enhance the implementation of the revised COMCEC statute and strategy, in close coordination and coopération with the General Secrétariat and in accordance with the OIC Charter, and requested Member States to continue to actively participate in the work of the COMCEC under the chairmanship of H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Président of the Republic of Turkey.

PART TWO

**AGENDA, RESOLUTION AND REPORT
OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC**

AGENDA
OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC

(İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018)

Original : English



**AGENDA
OF THE 34th SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(Istanbul, 26-29 November 2018)**

1. Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda
2. Report on the COMCEC Strategy and Its Implementation
3. The Implementation of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action
4. World Economic Developments with Special Reference to the OIC Member Countries
5. Intra-OIC Trade
6. Enhancing the Role of Private Sector in Economic Cooperation
7. Improving Transport and Communications
8. Developing a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Sector
9. Increasing Productivity of Agriculture Sector and Sustaining Food Security
10. Alleviating Poverty
11. Deepening Financial Cooperation
12. Exchange of Views on “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States”
13. Date of the 35th Session of the COMCEC
14. Any Other Business
15. Adoption of the Resolutions

II

RESOLUTION OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC

(İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018)

Original: English

**RESOLUTION
OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018)**

The Thirty-fourth Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) was held on 26-29 November 2018 in İstanbul, Turkey;

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the 13th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey on 14-15 April 2016, which commended the role of the COMCEC under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Turkey in contributing to the realization of OIC objectives in the economic domain and expressed its profound appreciation for the successful implementation of the COMCEC revised statute and strategy adopted at the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit;

Recalling the relevant Resolutions of the Islamic Summit Conferences, the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) and the COMCEC, the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, the COMCEC Economic Summit in 2009, the 45th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the 33rd Session of the COMCEC;

Reaffirming the commitment of all Member States to the COMCEC Strategy adopted by the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference held on 14-15 August 2012 in Makkah Al-Mukarramah; and to the OIC-2025: Programme of Action adopted at the 13th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held on 14-15 April 2016 in İstanbul, Turkey;

Recalling the objectives and mandate of the COMCEC in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Islamic Summit and the COMCEC Statute including to serve as the central forum for the Member States to discuss international economic and commercial issues.

Taking note of the submission of the progress reports, working papers and studies on the different agenda items submitted by the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC Coordination Office, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce

Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) and the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC);

Expressing its appreciation to the Member Countries for hosting Ministerial Conferences, Meetings, workshops, fairs and other activities in the cooperation areas;

Commending the efforts made by the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC Coordination Office and the OIC institutions working in the area of economic and commercial cooperation, namely SESRIC, ICDT, IDB Group, ICCIA, OISA and SMIIC.

Report on the COMCEC Strategy and Its Implementation (Agenda Item: 2)

1- **Welcomes** the Progress Report submitted by the COMCEC Coordination Office highlighting the progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy; **commends** the Member Countries and the OIC Institutions for their valuable contributions to its implementation and **requests** the Member States and the OIC Institutions to further their full support to the implementation of the Strategy.

2- **Requests** the COMCEC Coordination Office to regularly report the progress in the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy to the COMCEC Sessions, the Follow-up Committee Meetings and other relevant OIC fora.

3- **Welcomes** the successful convening of the COMCEC Working Groups in the cooperation areas in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the 33rd Session of the COMCEC and **also welcomes** the research studies and sectoral outlooks conducted and prepared by the COMCEC Coordination Office specifically for enriching the discussions in each COMCEC Working Group Meeting.

4- **Commends** the efforts of the Working Groups towards approximating policies among the Member States in their fields of competence and **welcomes** the policy recommendations made by the Working Groups in their meetings held in February-April and September-November 2018.

5- **Also commending** the efforts of the Member States and the OIC Institutions for the realization of COMCEC Ministerial policy recommendations, **invites** all the Member States to exert efforts, to the extent possible, to implement the policy recommendations and **urges** the relevant OIC Institutions to support the Member States in this regard.

6- **Welcomes** the finalization of thirteen projects funded under the COMCEC Project Funding in 2017 and the progress achieved in the implementation of seventeen new

projects under the fifth project call in 2018, and **also welcomes** the sixth project call, made by the COMCEC Coordination Office in September 2018.

7- **Invites** the Member Countries to utilize more the COMCEC Project Funding to implement the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

8- **Calls on** the COMCEC National and Working Group Focal points to work more closely with the COMCEC Coordination Office for effective coordination and communication.

9- **Invites** the Member States to ensure the participation of the COMCEC National Focal Points and COMCEC Working Group Focal Points, to the COMCEC Follow-up Committee Meetings and the COMCEC Sessions.

10- **Encourages** the Member States, which have registered to the COMCEC Working Groups to actively participate in the upcoming Meetings of the relevant Working Groups and benefit from the COMCEC Project Funding for realizing their cooperation projects.

11- **Noting with appreciation** that the number of Member States having registered to at least one COMCEC Working Group has reached 50, **requests** the Member States which have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Working Groups and actively participate in the upcoming Meetings of the Working Groups.

12- **Welcomes** the holding of the Sixth Annual Coordination Meeting of the COMCEC Working Group Focal Points, organized by the COMCEC Coordination Office on 3-5 July 2018 in Ankara, Turkey.

13- **Calls upon** the relevant Member States to respond to the “Evaluation Forms” circulated each year by the COMCEC Coordination Office with a view to following-up the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

14- **Also calls upon** the working group focal points to be actively involved in the knowledge production efforts of the COMCEC through, among others, assisting in collection and verification of country specific data and providing feedbacks to research studies.

15- **Underlines** that the COMCEC Project Funding can be utilized more effectively by the member States having advanced capacities in various cooperation areas for sharing their experience with the other member States.

16- **Expresses** its appreciation to the COMCEC Coordination Office, SESRIC, ICDT, IDB Group, ICCIA, and SMIIC for their efforts towards the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy.

17- **Requests** the COMCEC Coordination Office to study the feasibility of establishing a new Working Group for covering crucial emerging issues such as industry, innovation, research and development, artificial intelligence and other related issues.

18- **Considering** the recent developments and changing trends in the world, **requests** the relevant OIC Institutions to take into consideration the issues regarding industry, innovation, research and development, artificial intelligence and other related issues in designing their future programs and activities.

19- **Emphasizes** the role of COMCEC in ensuring the overall coordination of the activities of the OIC relating to economic and commercial cooperation among the Member States, in accordance with its mandate.

20- **Further emphasizes** the role of CCO in undertaking activities with the Member States, the OIC Institutions and other international organizations in order to realize to objectives of the COMCEC as outlined in its Statute.

21- **Requests** the OIC Institutions working in the economic and commercial fields to continue coordination with the COMCEC Coordination Office, including through the Sessional Committee, in order to ensure progress and complementarity in the implementation both of the COMCEC Strategy and the OIC 2025: Program of Action, especially in the areas of trade and investment.

22- **Requests** the CCO to consider conducting study visits to the requesting Member Countries to assess the needs and priorities of the Member Countries and assist them in overcoming their common development challenges.

23- **Adopts** the recommendations of the 34th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC held on 9-10 May 2018 in Ankara, Turkey.

Implementation of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action (Agenda Item: 3)

24- **Takes note of** the report presented by the OIC General Secretariat on the implementation of the economic and commercial component of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action.

25- **Underlining** the importance of the active follow-up of the economic and commercial section of the OIC 2025: Programme of Action by the COMCEC, **requests** the OIC General Secretariat to regularly submit comprehensive progress reports on the implementation of the Programme to the COMCEC Sessions and the Follow-up Meetings in line with the previous relevant resolutions of the COMCEC.

26- **Recalling** the relevant resolutions of the COMCEC Sessions, **requests** the Member States to sign and ratify the agreements in the economic domain for furthering economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member States.

World Economic Developments with Special Reference to the OIC Member States (Agenda Item: 4)

27- **Takes note of** the 2018 edition of SESRIC's annual economic report titled "OIC Economic Outlook 2018: Challenges and Opportunities towards Achieving the OIC-2025" and **expresses its appreciations** to SESRIC for providing the first detailed analysis of the related priority areas of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action through selected key performance indicators.

28- **Invites** Member States to take into consideration the challenges and opportunities identified by the report in order to achieve the goals stated by the OIC-2025 through effective coordination and partnership.

29- **Entrusts** the SESRIC to continue monitoring world economic developments and their implications on the Member States and to report thereon to the annual sessions of the COMCEC.

Intra-OIC Trade (Agenda Item: 5)

30- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 11th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group, which also serves as a preparatory meeting for the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session, on 7-8 March 2018 in Ankara with the theme of "Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States", **welcomes** its policy recommendations submitted under the following six headings:

- Simplifying trade procedures and documentation
- Legal and regulatory framework
- Physical infrastructure and modernization
- Harmonization and alignment of standards and conformity

- Adopting measures to facilitate transit trade
- Regional/international cooperation

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(8))

31- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group on November 6th, 2018 in Ankara with the theme of “Improving Authorized Economic Operators Programs in the OIC Member States”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Encouraging the design of an attractive package where benefits provided by the AEO program to the private sector outnumber costs borne by firms and traders in order to attract companies to participate in the program,
- Promoting an integrated approach in the legislative, organizational and operational dimensions with other government agencies during the design phase of AEOs in order to eliminate duplications and redundancy as well as burdensome procedures,
- Encouraging the adoption of and increasing the number of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) as they enable AEO holders to enjoy trade facilitation benefits provided by the partner countries,
- Enhancing the communication with the private sector with AEOs through utilizing client relations management,
- Supporting the participation of SMEs in the supply chain for the operators in order to benefit from the AEO programs to their full extent.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(9))

32- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Trade Working Group to attend the 13th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group to be held on March 7th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Increasing Public Availability of Customs Information in the OIC Member States” and the 14th Meeting to be organized on October 24th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Facilitating Transit Trade in the OIC Member States with an Emphasis on WTO TFA” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Trade Working Group.

33- **Commends** the efforts of Suriname and ICDT for the successful implementation of the following projects in 2017 under the fourth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Strengthening SME Support Services in Suriname and Guyana to Enhance Participation in Global Value Chains” implemented by Suriname in partnership with Guyana and Turkey,

- The Project titled “Facilitating Trade: Identifying NTBs among the OIC Member States” implemented by ICDT in partnership with the Kingdom of Morocco, Senegal and the Arab Republic of Egypt.

34- **Also commends** the efforts of Morocco, Nigeria, Sudan and SMIIC for the following projects being implemented in 2018 under the fifth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “The Feasibility Study on the Interoperability of Selected Single Window Systems in the OIC Region” being implemented by Morocco in partnership with Cameroon and Tunisia,
- The Project titled “Boosting Intra-OIC Trade Through Improvement of Trade Facilitation Measures in the OIC Region” being implemented by Nigeria in partnership with Morocco and Indonesia,
- The Project titled “Strengthening Institutional Capacity for Single Window Systems in the OIC Member States” being implemented by Sudan in partnership with four other Member States,
- The Project titled “Harmonization of National Halal Standards with the OIC/SMIIC Halal Standards” being implemented by SMIIC in partnership with 20 Member States.

35- **Requests** the concerned Member States to actively participate in the activities to be organized by the COMCEC Coordination Office, SESRIC, ICDT, IDB Group (ITFC), ICCIA, and SMIIC in the field of trade and **calls upon** these institutions to send invitations to the Member States sufficiently in advance of the meetings so as to ensure their active participation.

36- **Takes note of** that Islamic Chamber Research and Information Center (ICRIC) of Islamic Republic of Iran will conduct a joint workshop with SESRIC on “the Impact of Entrepreneurship Strategies on Development of SMEs” in 2019.

37- **Expresses** its appreciation to the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting and ICDT for organizing the High-level Experts Meeting on “Main Investments Obstacles and Investment Facilitation in Africa” on 24-25 January 2018 in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco.

i) TPS-OIC

38- **Calls upon** the Member States which have not yet signed or ratified the TPS-OIC Agreements, namely the Framework Agreement, PRETAS and Rules of Origin, to do so at their earliest convenience.

39- **Welcomes** the submission of updated concession lists to the TNC Secretariat by Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Jordan, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Morocco

and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretariat on behalf of its six Member Countries, namely Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Bahrain, and Oman and **requests** the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Secretariat to communicate with the concerned participating Member States to ensure the submission of the concession lists in the same format and circulate them among the concerned Member States accordingly.

40- **Welcomes** the notification made by Pakistan, Bangladesh, Jordan, Morocco and Turkey to the TNC Secretariat on their relevant internal measures to be undertaken for the implementation of the TPS-OIC Rules of Origin, and **requests** the other participating Member States to notify the TNC Secretariat of their relevant internal measures to be undertaken for the implementation of the TPS-OIC Rules of Origin at their earliest convenience.

41- **Welcomes** the offer of the Republic of Sudan to host “Regional Workshop on TPS-OIC and the Multilateral Trading System” in Khartoum on 17-18 December 2018 and the Republic of Suriname to organize a workshop on “TPS-OIC and Intra-OIC Trade Solutions” in Paramaribo in 2019 in close cooperation with TNC Secretariat.

42- **Requests** the ICDT, COMCEC Coordination Office, IDB and other relevant OIC Institutions to continue organizing awareness-raising and capacity-building activities with regard to the TPS-OIC.

ii) Islamic Trade Fairs

43- **Expresses** its thanks and appreciation to the following Member States for hosting Islamic Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in cooperation with ICDT:

- The Republic of Turkey for hosting and ICDT and SMIIC for organizing the “5th OIC Halal Expo” in Istanbul on 23 – 25 November 2017,
- The State of Kuwait for hosting and ICDT for organizing the “Exceptional Edition of the Trade Fair of the OIC Member States” in Kuwait-City, on 6- 10 February 2018,
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting and ICDT for organizing the “2nd Edition of the Exhibition of Furniture and Interior Design of the OIC Member States” on 13-16 March 2018 and the “11th Exhibition of Agribusiness Industries of the OIC Member States” on 20-23 March 2018 in Jeddah,
- The Kingdom of Morocco for hosting and ICDT for organizing the “4th Higher Education Services among the OIC Member States” in Casablanca on 26-29 April 2018.

44- **Welcomes** the offer of the following Member States to host Islamic Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in cooperation with ICDT in 2018-2019 and **requests** all Member

States to encourage active participation of their private sector and relevant institutions in these events:

- The Republic of Turkey to host the “6th OIC Halal Expo” in Istanbul on 29 November-2 December 2018 and the “7th OIC Halal Expo” on 28 November-1 December 2019 in coordination with SMIC,
- The Republic of Cote d’Ivoire to host the “4th OIC Health Expo” in Abidjan in on 7-9 December 2018 and “the Forum and Expo on Social and Solidarity Economy” in collaboration with IDB Group in Abidjan in the first quarter of 2019,
- The State of Kuwait to host “Exceptional Edition of the Tourism and Handicraft Exhibition of the OIC Member States” on 5-8 March 2019 and “Construction and Decoration Fair for the OIC Member States” on 8-12 October 2019 in Kuwait City,
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the “12th Exhibition of Agribusiness Industries of the OIC Member States” in Jeddah from 26 to 29 March 2019,
- The Republic of Iraq to host the “16th OIC Trade Fair” in Baghdad on 7-13 April 2019,
- The Kingdom of Morocco to host the Expo and Forum on Transportation and Logistics of the OIC Member States concomitantly with LogisMed 2019 in Casablanca on 9-11 April 2019;
- The People’s Republic of Bangladesh to host Maritime Economy and the Shipbuilding and Fisheries Expo of the OIC Member States in Dhaka on 1-4 May 2019;
- The Islamic Republic of Iran to host the “3rd Tourism Fair of the OIC Member States” in Tehran in 2019;
- The United Arab Emirates to host World Expo “EXPO 2020 Dubai” in Dubai from November 2020 to April 2021.

45- **Takes note that** the offer of the Islamic Republic of Iran will organize 12th International Exhibition of Tourism and Related Industries” and “Halal Orientation, the New Global Trend” Conference concurrently on 12-15 February, 2019, in Tehran and “The 1st Halal Expo of Iran” in November 2019 and **requests** the Member States to actively participate in these events.

46- **Reiterates** its request to the Member States to encourage their private sector to actively participate in the Islamic Trade Fairs.

47- **Also reiterates** its request to ICDT to continue holding sector specific fairs in cooperation with the Member States and submit regular progress reports on the fairs to the COMCEC Sessions.

iii) WTO Related Technical Assistance

48- **Expresses** its thanks and appreciation to the IDB Group and ICDT for organizing WTO- related training courses and seminars for the benefit of the Member States and underlines the need for more effectively disseminating information on training courses among all Member States.

49- **Calls on** IDB and ICDT to continue providing technical assistance to the Member States on WTO-related issues and to enhance their efforts in sensitizing the Member States to the impact of WTO trade negotiations on their economies and **requests** IDB and ICDT to synergize and coordinate their efforts to strengthen the human and institutional capacities of the OIC Member States, so as to facilitate their full integration into the multilateral trading system on an equitable and fair basis.

50- **Calls upon** the WTO members of the OIC to assist non-WTO Members of the OIC in their accession process to WTO.

51- **Expressing its appreciation** to ICDT, OIC General Secretariat, OIC Geneva Office and IDB Group for organizing a workshop and preparing a study on “Practical Options Towards Increasing OIC Member States’ Coordination at the WTO”, **takes note** of the above-mentioned Study prepared by the ICDT and IDB Group and **requests** the IDB Group and ICDT to further their efforts for better coordination with the WTO and **also requests** permanent missions of the Member Countries to actively participate in the coordination meetings in Geneva.

52- **Requests** the Trade Working Group in its future meetings, where appropriate, to discuss WTO related issues and the COMCEC Coordination Office, in collaboration with IDB and ICDT, to consider the possibility of organizing the WTO-Related Consultative Ministerial Meeting on the sidelines of the COMCEC Ministerial Session.

53- **Expresses its appreciation** to the State of United Arab Emirates for hosting and ICDT and IDB for organizing a Workshop on Post-WTO Eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC11) of the OIC Member States in Dubai on 19-20 November 2018.

54- **Welcomes** the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey to share their WTO-related experiences with the non-WTO Members of the OIC through training programmes in collaboration with the relevant OIC Institutions to facilitate their accession process.

55- **Calls upon** the Member Countries and the relevant OIC institutions to extend support to the Member Countries who need technical assistance on trade facilitation

practices including technical, legal and infrastructural aspects as well as towards the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

iv) Trade Financing Activities

56- **Appreciates** the trade finance, promotion and development activities of ITFC and the mobilization of funds from the international market and development partners for funding the trade operations in the Member States, contributing towards the achievement of intra-OIC trade target of 25 percent.

57- **Takes note with appreciation** that ITFC's cumulative approvals and disbursement in trade finance reached, since its inception in 2008 until now, US\$43.9 billion and US\$34.5 billion respectively, and its total approvals and disbursement in 2017 reached US\$4.9 billion and US\$3.4 billion respectively.

58- **Commends** the efforts of ITFC in financing SMEs and the Least Developed Member States and **takes note** of its efforts to diversify its portfolio and extend more financing for agriculture sector that has direct and prominent impact on improving productivity, job creation, increasing export revenues and alleviating poverty.

59- **Calls upon** the Member States to complete their membership requirements for the institutions of the IDB Group (ITFC and ICIEC) so that the IDB Group implements its mandate successfully.

60- **Takes note of** the trade promotion and capacity development initiatives being implemented by ITFC under its various flagship programs including Aid for Trade Initiative for Arab States (AFTIAS), Special Programme for Central Asia (SPCA), Arab Africa Trade Bridge Program (AATB), Trade Development Fund, West Africa SMEs Program and Trade Development Forum to raise awareness of the private sectors on the activities of the ITFC.

61- **Takes note** of the efforts of the ITFC in implementing integrated Trade Programmes for commodity development including Indonesia Coffee Development Programme, Guinea Reverse Linkage Programme and the Cotton Bridge Programme.

62- **Also takes note** of ITFC's efforts for the diversification of Islamic Financial Instruments, supporting training programs on Islamic finance and promoting Islamic Finance solutions at international fora.

63- **Takes note** of the ITFC's high level Capacity Building Program provided to CIS countries and Afghanistan on Market Intelligence as part of its trade-related Technical Assistance Programs provided to Member Countries and **calls upon** the relevant OIC Institutions to join and support these efforts.

64- **Commends** the ITFC for organizing the 1st Governing Board meeting of the “Arab-Africa Trade Bridges” (AATB) Program in Morocco, which calls upon the ITFC to continue the successful implementation of the action plan to boost the trade flows between the Arab and African Regions, and calls upon the Member Countries in both regions to support and cooperate with ITFC for the implementation of this program.

65- **Commends** the efforts of the ITFC for implementing the Gambia Afflatoxin Mitigation Programme.

66- **Takes note** of the efforts of the ICIEC as the only multilateral export credit and investment insurance Corporation in the world that provides Shariah-Compliant insurance and reinsurance solutions.

67- **Takes note with appreciation** that aggregate business insurance provided by the ICIEC amounted to US\$29 billion over the last 5 years and the Corporation had facilitated US\$ 11.27 billion in trade transactions and foreign direct investments during 2017.

68- **Takes note** with appreciation of the IDB Group’s initiative called “OIC Business Intelligence Center” led by the ICIEC and **requests** the IDB Group, in particular the ICIEC, to start operationalization of this initiative as an OIC Program under one of the IDB Regional Hub, in close partnership with SESRIC and other relevant OIC institutions as required.

v) Trade Related Activities of SMIIC

69- **Welcomes** the activities of Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) in the area of standardization, metrology and accreditation and their impact on trade facilitation and capacity building projects for the Member States.

70- **Welcomes** the Republic of Cote d’Ivoire, the State of Qatar, Republic of Kazakhstan and Republic of Uzbekistan as the new members of the SMIIC, which have increased the number of SMIIC Member States to 37 along with 3 Observers and **invites** the concerned Member States to become a member of SMIIC and actively participate in its technical committees (TCs), Metrology and Accreditation Councils.

71- **Welcomes** the increasing visibility of the SMIIC and **expresses** its appreciation to the SMIIC for organizing capacity building activities in its field of competence and **invites** Member States to support to further increase its visibility in international fora, particularly through its accession as an observer to the WTO-Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.

72- **Invites** the Member States to adopt and use the OIC/SMIIC Standards as their national standards with a view to contributing to the harmonization of standards and alleviating technical barriers to trade among the Member States and **calls upon** the relevant Member States, which use OIC/SMIIC Standards, to officially adopt the standards according to SMIIC adoption guidelines.

73- **Expresses its appreciation** to the Republic of Turkey for hosting and SMIIC and ICDT for supporting the organization of the World Halal Summit (WHS) in Istanbul on 23-25 November 2017 and **calls upon** the Member States to participate in “Istanbul 2018 World Halal Summit” to be held on 29 November - 2 December 2018 under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey.

74- **Notes with satisfaction** of the organization of the 1st Meeting of the Standardization Management Council (SMC) on 26-27 June 2018, 1st Meeting of the Management of SMIIC Accreditation Council (AC) on 26-27 February 2018, 2nd Meeting of the Management of SMIIC AC on 28-29 June and 5th SMIIC Metrology Council (MC) Meeting on 19-20 April 2018 in Istanbul, Turkey.

Enhancing the Role of Private Sector in Economic Cooperation (Agenda Item:6)

75- **Takes note of** the efforts of the ICCIA in organizing Forums, Training Program, B2B Meetings, Seminars and Workshops in order to galvanize the role of the Private Sector to expand their network and increase their trading and investment opportunities.

76- **Encourages** the Chambers of Commerce of the Member States to be actively involved in the ICCIA’s activities.

77- **Takes note** of the organization of Training Program on “Technology Entrepreneurship Advocacy and Management of Business Incubation & Technology Parks” on 23-25 April 2018, in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey.

78- **Takes note** of the following activities to be organized by the ICCIA and **calls upon** the private sector of the Member States to actively participate in the following activities:

- The 17th Private Sector Meeting for the OIC Member Countries/ Trade Exchange Forum to be held in 2019,
- The 10th Businesswomen Forum in Islamic Countries to be held in 2019,
- Specialized Workshops/Training Programs to be held in 2019 on Promotion of Cottage Industries through SMEs; scaling-up existing Enterprises through Skill Development and exploring destinations for Health Tourism,

- Workshop on Promoting Green Growth and Technology in Food-Water and Energy Nexus for OIC Countries – Challenges and Opportunities to be held in the first half of 2019,
- Chambers of Commerce Forum for OIC to be held in 2019.

79- **Takes note** that ICD, the private sector arm of the IDB Group, has provided financing for 44 private sector development projects in 18 countries at a total value of \$910 Million in 2017.

80- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 33rd COMCEC Session and the 45th Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers, **welcomes** the recent developments regarding technical preparations and organization of two Task Force Meetings on April 13th, 2018 and July 9th, 2018 on setting-up of the OIC Arbitration Center affiliated to the ICCIA in Istanbul by TOBB and ICCIA and **requests** the ICCIA and TOBB to finalize the technical preparations for the operationalization of the OIC Arbitration Center in Istanbul in 2019 and **also requests** the Member Countries to encourage their Chambers to actively participate in the activities of the Arbitration Center.

Improving Transport and Communications (Agenda Item: 7)

81- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 11th Meeting of the Transport and Communications Working Group held on March 15th, 2018 in Ankara, Republic of Turkey with the theme of Governance of Transport Corridors in OIC Member States: Challenges, Cases and Policy Lessons”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Developing/Improving an enabling legal, institutional and regulatory framework for ensuring effective coordination and cooperation among the relevant countries and for achieving reform-demanding objectives,
- Emphasizing the importance of a dedicated corridor secretariat/coordination unit for facilitating corridor governance through ensuring permanent communication and coordination among the relevant countries,
- Promoting the development of transport corridor governance in a holistic way, combining hard measures such as infrastructure and soft measures such as political support, stakeholder consultation and capacity building,
- Seeking support of the related international organizations in carrying forward corridor governance, especially in the initial phase of corridor development.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(23))

82- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group on October 11th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “The Planning of National Transport Infrastructure in the OIC Member States”, **welcomes** its policy recommendations:

- Developing guidelines for the preparation and implementation of national transport master plans by taking into consideration international best practices towards having more integrated and sustainable land and transport plans and solutions.
- Identifying comprehensive and relevant Key Performance Indicators for the effective monitoring and evaluation of the performance of transport plans and their outcomes, and sharing the results with the relevant public and private sector stakeholders.
- Improving the planning capacity of the OIC Member States through applying contemporary methods such as setting a vision with a set of social and economic objectives.
- Improving national transport infrastructure planning process and encouraging public private partnerships (PPPs) particularly for needs assessment, encouraging investments, well-functioning operations and maintenance.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(24))

83- **Calls upon** the Member States, which have registered to the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group, to actively participate in the 13th Meeting of the Transport and Communications Working Group to be held on March 14th, 2019 with the theme of “Improving Transport Project Appraisals in the Islamic Countries”, as well as its 14th Meeting to be held on October 3rd, 2019 with the theme of “Improving Risk Management in Transport PPP Projects in the Islamic Countries” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group.

84- **Commends** the efforts of Cote d’Ivoire in partnership with Burkina Faso and Mali for the successful implementation of the project titled “Improving the Capacity on Road Safety in Cote d’Ivoire, Burkina Faso and Mali” in 2017 under the fourth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding.

85- **Also commends** the efforts of the Gambia, Iran and Jordan for the following projects being implemented in 2018 under the fifth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Analysis of the Road Database Management Systems in the Selected OIC States” being implemented by the Gambia in partnership with Nigeria and Senegal ,

- The Project titled “Feasibility Study of Iran- Caucasus Transport Corridor” being implemented by Iran in partnership with Azerbaijan and Turkey,
- The Project titled “Feasibility Study for Reconstructing the Old Ottoman Hejaz Railway Line” being implemented by Jordan in partnership with Iraq and Turkey,

86- **Welcomes the renewed offer** of the Republic of Sudan to host the Second Islamic Conference of Transport Ministers in 2019 in Khartoum, Sudan and **calls upon** the Member States and the relevant OIC Organs and Institutions including the COMCEC Secretariat to actively participate in this important event.

87- **Taking note of** the efforts of the OIC General Secretariat and the IDB Group to operationalize the OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway corridor, **requests** the General Secretariat and IDB Group to regularly inform the concerned Member States about the progress in the realization of the Project in the relevant OIC fora.

88- **Takes note** of the Islamic Republic of Iran’s proposal on prosperity trans-corridor and **refers** the matter to the relevant COMCEC Working Group.

Developing a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Sector (Agenda Item: 8)

89- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 11th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group on February 15th, 2018 in Ankara with the theme of “Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies in the OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Encouraging the establishment of/Strengthening local and regional public-private Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) with the assignment of responsibilities related to destination planning, development, marketing and management,
- Planning supply and demand as well as identifying and monitoring KPIs for ensuring sustainable tourism development at the destination,
- Encouraging self-funding of DMOs and improving efficiency as well as transparency in utilization and management of resources,
- Promoting destinations through forming OIC country alliances and the alliances with external stakeholders.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(28))

90- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 12th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group on September 13th, 2018 in Ankara with the theme of “Destination Marketing Strategies in the OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Establishing/Empowering a central body (i.e. DMO) to position the destination at a desirable place among the competing destinations, to create the brand image of the destination, and to promote the destination through utilizing such tools as social media, digital marketing, trade fairs, public relations, and fam-trip organizations.
- Encouraging new product development (i.e. events, festivals and other suitable products) to mitigate the adverse effects of seasonality and the risks related to dependence on one product or a single market.
- Managing and regulating existing distribution channels, developing new distribution channels to prevent dependency and minimize power asymmetry between destination stakeholders as well as international intermediaries, and establishing strategic alliances with external stakeholders that would create synergies for the destination and other collaborators (i.e. airlines, event organizers etc).
- Promoting collection, storage, analyses and dissemination of market data on visitor characteristics, seasonality, distribution channels performance, source markets, trends etc., while respecting confidentiality and privacy of individuals, to improve the marketing effectiveness of the destination stakeholders as well as DMOs.
- Utilizing digital platforms, mobile applications and allocating special attention on social media channels for improving tourist experience, information credibility and interaction among visitors in destination marketing.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(29))

91- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Tourism Working Group to actively participate in the 13th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group to be held on February 13th, 2019, in Ankara, with theme of “Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries” and its 14th Meeting to be held on September 5th, 2019 with the theme of “Developing Multi Destination Tourism Corridors in the OIC Member Countries” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Tourism Working Group.

92- **Commends** the efforts of Mozambique, Sudan, Gambia and SESRIC for the successful implementation of the following projects in 2017 under the fourth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Enhancing Capacity of Muslim Friendly Tourism Workforce” implemented by Mozambique in partnership with Mali and Senegal,
- The Project titled “Enhancing The Capacity of Craft Producers and Customers in the OIC Member Countries” implemented by Sudan in partnership with Chad and Djibouti,
- The Project titled “Developing a Training and Certification Program for the Muslim Travel, Tourism and Hospitality Industry” implemented by Gambia in partnership with Nigeria and Senegal,
- The Project titled “Training Program on the Development and Promotion of Muslim Friendly Tourism in the OIC Member Countries” implemented by SESRIC in partnership with 18 Member Countries.

93- **Also commends** the efforts of Burkina Faso, Mali, Mozambique and SESRIC for the following projects implemented in 2018 under the fifth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Strengthening the Resilience of Tourism Sector Against Crises through Communication” implemented by Burkina Faso in partnership with Niger and Côte d'Ivoire,
- The Project titled “Training on Crisis Communication in Tourism for Selected OIC Member Countries” implemented by Mali in partnership with four other Member Countries,
- The Project titled “Community-Based Tourism through the Promotion of Heritage Sites for Poverty Alleviation” implemented by Mozambique in partnership with four other Member Countries,
- The Project titled “Improving Islamic Tourism Ecosystem in OIC Member Countries: Destination and Industry Development” implemented by SESRIC in partnership with 13 Member Countries.

94- **Welcomes** the holding of the 10th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) on 5-7 February 2018 in Dhaka/Bangladesh and **commends** the selection of Dhaka/Bangladesh and Gabala/Azerbaijan as the OIC Cities of Tourism, for 2019 and 2020, respectively.

95- **Takes note** of the report of the 6th Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum held on March 8th, 2018 in İstanbul, with the theme of “Cultural Heritage as a Tool for Sustainable Tourism in the OIC Member Countries” **calls upon** the Member States to participate in the 7th Meeting of the Forum to be held in 2019 in İstanbul, Turkey.

96- **Invites** the Member States to encourage their relevant institutions, tourism companies and tour operators etc. to further their efforts through, among others, organizing promotion campaigns and additional tours to Quds al-Sharif for supporting Palestinian residents of Al-Quds and to demonstrate solidarity with them.

97- **Takes note that** the Islamic Republic of Iran will host “the 5th Health Tourism Conference of Islamic Countries” in 2019 and **requests** the Member States to actively participate in this event.

98- **Takes note with appreciation** of the following proposals of the Kingdom of Bahrain;

- Strengthening partnership between the public and the private sectors to diversify tourism projects and attract more investments,
- Achieving utmost efficiency, effectiveness and global competitiveness in tourism sector,
- Developing efficient and modern legislations to ensure flow of local and international tourism investments,
- Enhancing coordination and cooperation at the regional level to utilize cultural heritage sites and natural reserves as tourism attractions.

Increasing Productivity of Agriculture Sector and Sustaining Food Security (Agenda Item: 9)

99- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 11th Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group on February 22nd, 2018 in Ankara with the theme of “Improving Agricultural Market Performance: Developing Agricultural Market Information Systems”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations;

- Designing Market Information Systems (MIS) through assessing and reviewing targeted stakeholders with a sustained budget support and an effective monitoring and evaluation framework,
- Building sufficient capacity for stock monitoring, trend analysis and forecasting as well as other relevant subjects beyond providing price information for a better functioning MIS,
- Linking MIS to other market-supporting institutions and/or other risk-management tools to increase the mutual benefits,

- Forming the necessary mechanisms/platforms for an improved coordination among the key stakeholders and ensuring the effective review of the quality of information provided.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(35))

100- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group held on September 20th, 2018 with the theme of “Analysis of Agri-food Trade Structures to Promote Agri-food Trade Networks among the OIC Member States”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations;

- Developing and implementing preferential market access schemes and intra- as well as cross-regional trade agreements (e.g. TPS-OIC (Trade Preferential System among the Member States of the OIC)) with a view to contributing to collaborative and sustainable agricultural trade development,
- Building supply-side capacity and improving demand side capacity through rationalizing non-tariff measures (NTMs) for a sustained agricultural trade structure among OIC Member Countries,
- Developing and increasing economic connectivity as well as physical and information connectivity to reduce trade costs in agricultural trade markets for a sustainable agricultural trade development.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(36))

101- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group to actively participate in the 13th Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group to be held on February 21st, 2019 in Ankara with theme of “Reviewing Agricultural Trade Policies to Promote Intra-OIC Agricultural Trade” and its 14th Meeting to be held on September 12th, 2019 with the theme of “Increasing the Resilience of the Food Systems in Islamic States in Face of Future Food Crises” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group.

102- **Commends** the efforts of the Gambia and Indonesia for the successful implementation of the following projects in 2017 under the fourth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Reduction of Post-Harvest losses in Cereals for Improving Rural Livelihood” implemented by Gambia in partnership with Indonesia and Nigeria,

- The Project titled “Improving Income of Small and Medium Scale Farmers in the OIC Member States Through Reducing Losses of Livestock Production” implemented by Indonesia in partnership with Brunei Darussalam, Arab Republic of Egypt, Malaysia and Sudan.

103- **Also commends** the efforts of Indonesia and Turkey for the following projects implemented in 2018 under the fifth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Developing Agricultural Market Information System for Horticulture Farmers” implemented by Indonesia in partnership with six other Member Countries,
- The Project titled “Improving Agricultural Irrigation Extension Services” implemented by Turkey in partnership with Palestine, Morocco and Tunisia.

104- **Welcomes the renewed offer** of the Republic of Turkey to host the Eighth OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development in the last quarter of 2019 in İstanbul and **calls upon** the Member States and the relevant OIC Organs and Institutions including the COMCEC Secretariat to actively participate in this important event.

Alleviating Poverty (Agenda Item: 10)

105- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 11th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group on April 5th, 2018 in Ankara with the theme of “Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Increasing both the quantity and quality of teachers, particularly who teach in schools serving the disadvantaged and the poor through improving wage rates, pedagogical interventions, performance incentives, training and curricula reforms,
- Increasing teaching and learning effectiveness through adoption and widespread use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based new models,
- Promoting better early-childhood learning opportunities through accessible and affordable pre-primary schooling,
- Ensuring progressive universalism for closing the rich-poor gap in learning outcomes,

- Enhancing and reinforcing accountability through parental engagement and involving parents in the monitoring of their children's education and intensifying the parent-teacher interaction to improve education delivery.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(40))

106- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 12th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group held on October 4th, 2018 in Ankara, with the theme of “Skills Development in the OIC Member Countries: Vocational Education”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Improving access of poor student/youth to vocational education through eliminating/reducing school fees, offering monthly scholarship schemes and providing adequate facilities (i.e. accommodation) for students coming from remote areas,
- Matching the skills taught in TVET institutions with the industrial requirements through job-oriented and demand-driven curriculum update and improving facilities of TVET institutions as well as establishing a training centre inside industrial area,
- Increasing both the quantity and quality of teachers in TVET sector through providing professional development programs, industrial attachment, and recognition of their work based on performance,
- Increasing awareness about TVET and social recognition of its graduates in order to increase enrolment in TVET sectors and create new job opportunities for skilled graduates.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(41))

107- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group to actively participate in the 13th Meeting of the Working Group to be held on April 4th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “*Access to Health Services in the OIC Member Countries: A Pro-Poor Approach*”, as well as its 14th Meeting to be held on September 26th, 2019 with the theme of “Child and Maternal Mortality in the OIC Member Countries” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group.

108- **Also commends** the efforts of Albania, the Gambia, Indonesia and Suriname for the successful implementation of the following projects in 2017 under the fourth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Creation of a Road Map for an Integrated Social Service for Housing” implemented by Albania in partnership with Turkey and Indonesia,

- The Project titled “Training on Entrepreneurship and Management of Small Business for Women in the Gambia, Senegal and Sierra Leone” implemented by the Gambia in partnership with Sierra Leone and Senegal,
- The Project titled “Strengthening Community-Based Sustainable Livelihood for Activating Poor by Opening Marketing Channel through E-Commerce” implemented by Indonesia in partnership with Bangladesh, Malaysia and Pakistan,
- The Project titled “Professionalization of Childcare in Selected OIC Countries” implemented by Suriname in partnership with Nigeria and Guyana.

109- **Further commends** the efforts of the Gambia and Indonesia for the following projects being implemented in 2018 under the fifth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Training on Entrepreneurship for Teachers in the Selected OIC Countries” being implemented by the Gambia in partnership with Cameroon and Senegal,
- The Project titled “Improving the Single Window Service System for Social Protection and Poverty Reduction in the OIC Countries” being implemented by Indonesia in partnership with Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

i) Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD) and Special Program for the Development of Africa (SPDA)

110- **Commending** the Member States, who have contributed to the ISFD recently, **reiterates its requests** to the Member States which have pledged to the ISFD to fulfill their commitments and **requests** IDB Group to report back to the next COMCEC Session about the shortfalls in reaching the target capital of the ISFD.

111- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 33rd COMCEC Session on the observations of the Member States for improving the performance of the Fund in serving the purpose of poverty alleviation through, among others, augmenting the project base and outreach of the Fund by focusing on greater number of projects, especially grant based small/medium sized projects, **reiterates its request** to the ISFD to take these observations into consideration during planning its future programmes and activities.

112- **Taking note of** the reports of the IDB on ISFD and SPDA, acknowledges the progress achieved in SPDA and requests IDB to prepare evaluation reports on SPDA, upon completion of its projects, providing details about the targets, partners, beneficiaries, outcomes, lessons, learned, etc. and submit them to the relevant OIC fora including forthcoming meetings of the COMCEC.

113- **Requests** the ISFD to pursue its policy of supporting SMEs.

114- **Also requests** the ISFD to increase its efforts for resource mobilization and advocacy from different resources including governmental, non-governmental resources and the private sector in the Member States.

115- **Welcomes** the efforts of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for mobilization of resources from different financing institutions for the implementation of the Special Programme for the Development of Africa (SPDA).

116- **Recalling** the relevant resolutions of the 32nd and 33rd Sessions of the COMCEC, **reiterates its request** to the IDB to finalize the allocation of the funding to the SESRIC's capacity building project for the successful finalization of the OIC Cotton Programme.

ii) OIC-VET Program

117- **Appreciates** the continuous efforts of SESRIC towards initiating and implementing various capacity building programmes in different fields and areas of interest to the Member Countries with a view to enhancing the capacities and quality of human resources in these countries and **called upon** SESRIC to mobilize more financial resources towards the programme.

118- **Calls upon** the Member States to participate in and support the various capacity building programmes of SESRIC under the OIC-VET Programme.

119- **Requests** the SESRIC to conduct more training programmes focusing on entrepreneurship including women entrepreneurship within the framework of the OIC-VET.

iii) Implementation of the SDGs

120- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 33rd Session of the COMCEC, **takes note of** the list of SDGs-related activities of the relevant OIC Institutions compiled by the COMCEC Coordination Office towards the implementation of the SDGs in the Member Countries and **calls upon** the Member Countries and relevant OIC Institutions to actively participate in these activities.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(45))

121- **Requests** the COMCEC Coordination Office to compile the SDG-related activities of the relevant OIC institutions in the prioritized SDG areas of poverty, health, hunger, education, gender equality, decent work and economic growth, industry, innovation and infrastructure and climate change.

122- **Taking note with appreciation** of the report presented by SESRIC on the Tendency Survey on SDGs Priorities of OIC Member Countries, **requests** SESRIC to prepare an annual report on the progress at the OIC level towards achieving the prioritized SDGs as decided by Member States to be submitted to the Ministerial Sessions of the COMCEC, and **also requests** SESRIC to give a special importance to the development of the statistical capacities of the National Statistical Offices of the Member States within the framework of its OIC Statistical Capacity Building Programme (StatCaB).

Deepening Financial Cooperation (Agenda Item: 11)

123- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 10th Meeting of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group on March 29th, 2018, in Ankara, with the theme of “Role of Sukuk in Islamic Capital Markets”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Developing an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Framework for Islamic Capital Markets and Promoting Solid Collaboration among the Key Market Stakeholders to improve the ecosystem for Sukuk issuance,
- Improving Market Infrastructure and, where needed, the Existing Tax Framework for Enhancing Sukuk Issuance,
- Developing a Sustainable Liquidity Base to Support Demand for Shariah-Compliant Assets, and Facilitating Diversification of Market Players on the Demand Side of the Sukuk Market,
- Promoting a Sustainable Supply of Sukuk Issuance from the Private Sector in order to Foster Diversification of Industry Participants on the Supply Side and Expand the Benchmark Yield Curve,
- Developing a Seamless Shariah Governance Process for Facilitating Faster Turnaround Time for Sukuk Issuance, Improving Clarity of Sukuk Structures, Promoting Product Innovation, Building Market Confidence and Increasing Market Awareness among the Industry Practitioners.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(49))

124- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 11th Meeting of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group on October 25th, 2018 in Ankara with the theme of “Islamic Fund Management”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Development of Key Measures (developing masterplans, promotional activities, etc.) to Support a Viable Ecosystem for Islamic Funds,
- Development of a Robust Regulatory, Supervisory and Shariah Frameworks to Ensure Compliance, Growth and Protection of all Stakeholders' Interest particularly Investors',
- Encouraging Establishment of Institutional Funds to Increase Demand for Islamic Funds,
- Encouraging the Development of a Facilitative Tax Framework to Secure Strong Commitments from Supply and Demand Sides to Promote Competitive Positioning for Islamic Funds.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(50))

125- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group to actively participate in the 12th Meeting of the Financial Cooperation Working Group to be held on March 28th, 2019, in Ankara, with the theme of “Infrastructure Financing through Islamic Finance”, as well as its 13th Meeting to be held on October 17th, 2019, in Ankara, with the theme of “Improving Takaful Sector in the OIC Member Countries” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group.

126- **Commends** the efforts of Nigeria and Turkey for the following projects implemented in 2018 under the fifth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Training and Guidelines on Sukuk Issuance” implemented by Nigeria in partnership with the Gambia and Togo,
- The Project titled “Improving Financial Consumer Protection in the OIC Countries” implemented by Turkey in partnership with 11 other Member Countries.

i) OIC Exchanges Forum

127- **Welcomes** the report of the 12th Meeting of the OIC Exchanges Forum, which has been hosted by Borsa İstanbul on September 11th, 2018 in İstanbul.

128- **Takes note** of the Forum's decision on renaming the Forum as “OIC Exchanges Forum (OICEF)”.

129- **Takes note** of the briefing by Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum on the efforts of the Forum's Task Force on Precious Metals to accelerate the OIC Gold Exchange Project through utilizing the newly developed trading and safekeeping infrastructures of Borsa İstanbul as a preceding step before establishing the OIC Gold Exchange and **requests** the Forum's Secretariat to advance the technical preparations

for the establishment of the OIC Gold Exchange and report to the 35th Session of the COMCEC.

130- **Invites** the interested Member States to actively support Forum's Task Force on Precious Metals to finalize necessary works through accelerating the harmonization of regulatory frameworks.

131- **Welcomes** the offer of the Borsa Istanbul as the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum, to host the 13th Meeting of the Forum in 2019, in İstanbul, and **requests** all Member States to actively participate in this Meeting.

132- **Requests** the Borsa Istanbul as the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum in cooperation with IDB to continue to work towards the promotion of the S&P OIC/COMCEC Shariah 50 Index and its potential sub-indices and to develop effective products and services based on the Index.

133- **Also requests** the Member States to actively support the Forum's Task Force on Indices including the promotion of the S&P OIC/COMCEC Shariah 50 Index and its potential sub-indices including but not limited to publishing the Index on the official websites of their Stock Exchanges.

ii) Cooperation among Capital Markets' Regulatory Bodies

134- **Welcomes** the report of the 7th Meeting of the COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum, hosted by Capital Markets Board of the Republic of Turkey on November 8th, 2018 in Ankara.

135- **Welcomes** the efforts carried out by the Task Forces of COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum namely Capacity Building, Market Development and Financial Literacy and **calls upon** the Member States to support the efforts of the Forum through participating in its meetings, contributing to the accomplishment of the mandates of the Task Forces.

136- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 33rd Session of the COMCEC, the Session **takes note** of the briefing by the Secretariat of the COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum on the establishment of the COMCEC Real Estate Electronic Platform/COMCEC Real Estate Exchange among the interested OIC Member States and **requested** the Forum/the Forum's Secretariat to finalize necessary legal, administrative and technological preparations for the establishment of the COMCEC Real Estate Electronic Platform/COMCEC Real Estate Exchange before the 35th Session of the COMCEC.

137- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 33rd COMCEC Session, the Session **calls upon** the interested Member States to actively participate in the establishment of the COMCEC Real Estate Electronic Platform/COMCEC Real Estate Exchange and invited them to identify their authorized bodies as well as notify them to the Forum's Secretariat before the 35th Meeting of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee Meeting.

138- **Welcomes** the offer of the Capital Markets Board of Turkey as the Secretariat of the COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum, to host the 8th Meeting of the Forum in 2019, and **requests** all the Member States to actively participate in this Meeting.

iii) Cooperation among the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities

139- **Takes note** of the Communique of the 16th Meeting of the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of the OIC Member States hosted by the Central Bank of Turkey in Antalya/Turkey on 23-25 September 2018 and **also takes note** of the decision of the said Meeting to continue its activities as the "OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum."

140- **Welcomes** the offer of Central Bank of Turkey, as the Secretariat of the OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum, to host its 1st Meeting in 2019 and **requests** all the Member States to actively participate in this Meeting.

141- **Commends** the training and capacity building programs organized by the SESRIC among the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of the Member States in different aspects of cooperation and **requests** the SESRIC to continue organizing such activities for the relevant institutions of the Member States.

Exchange of Views on "Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States" (Agenda Item: 12)

142- **Welcomes** the Policy Recommendations on "Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States".

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(8))

Theme of the next Exchange of Views Session

143- **Decides** on "Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries" as the theme for the Exchange of Views Session at the 35th Session of the COMCEC and **requests** the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group in its 13th Meeting, in cooperation with the relevant OIC Institutions, to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report it to the 35th COMCEC Session.

Date of the 35th Session of the COMCEC (Agenda Item: 13)

144- **Decides** that the 35th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee will be held on 24-25 April 2019 in Ankara, Turkey and the 35th Session of the COMCEC will be held on 25-28 November 2019 in İstanbul, Turkey.

Any Other Business (Agenda Item: 14)

145- **Calls upon** the Member Countries to sign and ratify the statute of the OIC Labor Center in Baku Azerbaijan.

III

REPORT OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC

(İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018)

Original: English

**REPORT
OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC
(İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018)**

1. The Thirty Fourth Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) was held on 26-29 November 2018 in İstanbul.

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

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

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

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

4. Serbia participated in the Session as a guest.

5. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and the COMCEC Coordination Office the following OIC Organs/ Institutions attended the Session:

- 1- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
- 2- Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT)
- 3- Islamic Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
- 4- Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
- 5- Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group
- 6- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
- 7- Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association (OISA)
- 8- Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)
- 9- Federation of Contractors from Islamic Countries (FOCIC)
- 10- Islamic University of Technology (IUT)
- 11- Association of National Development Finance Institutions in Member Countries of the Islamic Development Bank (ADFIMI)
- 12- The Foundation Centre of Islamic Civilization (FOCIC)

6. Representatives of the following international organizations attended the Ministerial Session and Special Sessions:

- 1- Developing Eight (D-8)
- 2- Economic Cooperation Organization Trade and Development Bank (ECOBANK)
- 3- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- 4- World Customs Organization (WCO)
- 5- Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC)
- 6- Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI)

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

7. The Meeting of Senior Officials of the 34th COMCEC Session that preceded the Ministerial Session was held on 26th and 27th November 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Ambassador Salih Mutlu ŞEN, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Turkey to the OIC. The Senior Officials deliberated on the agenda items and prepared the Draft Resolutions for consideration by the Ministerial Session.

Opening Session

8. The Opening Ceremony of the Thirty Fourth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 28th, 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Turkey and the Chairman of the COMCEC.

9. Welcoming the delegates, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed his wishes for the session to be most beneficial for the member countries, the Muslim World and the world in general. H.E. ERDOĞAN stated that as long as the Palestinians stick to their righteous goal, the invaders will never achieve their aims.

10. H.E. ERDOĞAN mentioned that the fate of the OIC region was determined by the World War I. Although a century has passed since this war, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed that the Region is still feeling the trauma of its effects very deeply.

11. H.E. ERDOĞAN continued his statement by highlighting the need for reforming the United Nations system. H.E. ERDOĞAN pointed out that the United Nations, in its current form, largely lacks the capability to counteract problems, in which five countries retain the ability to obstruct the system with their vetoes, regardless of the desires of the other member states and the UN Secretariat.

12. H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined the importance of fighting against terrorism and expressed that, as the Islamic world, there is a need for objecting to the destruction of the primeval cities of Islamic civilization and the creation of new terrorist states in the region under the cover of DAESH as well as denounce the destruction of our future by such heinous organizations as FETO, PKK, AL-QAEDA, BOKO-HARAM and AL-SHABAAB.

13. H.E. ERDOĞAN stated that in order to minimize the risk of being subject to hostile attitudes in terms of economy, it would be a good start to increase the use of the national currencies in the commercial dealings between the Member Countries.

14. In the face of growing protectionist tendencies and increases in customs tariffs, H.E. ERDOĞAN pointed out that reducing non-tariff barriers and facilitating customs procedures will create a new opening for world trade, acting as a lifeline. In this respect, H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined the significance of the theme of this year's exchange of views session which is "Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States"

15. H.E. ERDOĞAN also underlined the importance of some crucial COMCEC projects such as the Trade Preferential System (TPS-OIC), the Gold Exchanges, the Real Estate Exchange and the OIC Arbitration Center. H.E. ERDOĞAN also stressed the need for accelerating the operationalization process of these projects and pointed out that Turkey has established a high level National Coordination Committee on COMCEC affairs.

16. While concluding his speech, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed his hope for all of the efforts aiming at developing cooperation among member countries of the OIC and COMCEC, would strengthen the collaboration between brotherly nations, and increase the prosperity of the Islamic Ummah.

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

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

18. His Excellency Dr. Yousef Al-OTHAIMEEN, the Secretary General of the OIC, thanked the Government of the Republic of Turkey for the traditional hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the success of this annual event. H.E. AL-OTHAIMEEN underlined that there is no doubt that the prioritization of trade and investment projects will go a long way in bridging the current gap in the member countries development paradigm, especially as it is aimed at reducing the widening unemployment among the youth and vulnerable segments of the OIC populations. H.E. AL-OTHAIMEEN also emphasized that the prioritization of trade and investment

projects would also assist in mitigating the current crises brought about by increased migration of youth beyond the OIC region.

19. H.E. Al-OTHAIMEEN also expressed his commends to all Member States that have continued to support the various activities of the OIC.

(The text of the Statement of the Secretary General of the OIC is attached as Annex III.)

20. The Heads of Delegations of Gabon, Indonesia and Qatar made statements during the Opening Ceremony. They appreciated the consistent support of the Government of the Republic of Turkey to the COMCEC's activities over the years and thanked H.E. ERDOĞAN for his wise guidance and leadership in enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member States. Highlighting the importance of improved customs risk management systems for facilitating trade in the member countries, they emphasized the need for enhancing regional integration, modernization of customs, digitalization, and exchanging knowledge in various fields.

21. H.E. Dr. Bandar M. H. HAJJAR, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group also delivered a statement at the Opening Session. H.E. Dr. HAJJAR expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Member Countries for their permanent support to the activities of the IDB Group. H.E. Dr. HAJJAR informed the delegations that IDB has recently started the implementation of the "President's five-year programme" which is based on the Islamic Development Bank's vision as well as the ten-year strategic framework of the Bank, which are both aligned with sustainable development goals. H.E. Dr. HAJJAR underlined that the five-year programme is based on fostering and broadening partnerships with various development parties, strengthening added value chains to amplify the development effect, innovating the appropriate development solutions and Islamic financing tools and strengthening the role of science technology and innovation to achieve socio-economic development in Member States.

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

22. Mr. Rifat HİSARCIKLIOĞLU, President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and the Vice-President of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture also made a speech at the Opening Session. Mr. HİSARCIKLIOĞLU stressed the importance of private sector in the cooperation endeavors among the member states. Mr. HİSARCIKLIOĞLU also informed the delegations that OIC Arbitration Center will be operationalized in 2019. Mr. HİSARCIKOĞLU underlined that the OIC Arbitration Center will boost the intra-OIC trade and investment.

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

Ministerial Working Session

24. The Ministerial Working Session of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 28th, 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey.

25. The Session adopted the Agenda of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the COMCEC.

26. Following the adoption of the agenda, H.E. Ambassador Salih Mutlu ŞEN, as the Chairman of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), informed the Session of the outcomes of the Senior Officials Meeting as well as the policy recommendations on “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States” deliberated by the SOM and submitted to the consideration of the Ministerial Session.

27. Dr. Mohammad SAEED, Senior Advisor at International Trade Center, has delivered a keynote speech on various dimensions of the trade facilitation Dr. SAEED underlined the importance of having an effective customs risk management system in terms of facilitating trade among the Member Countries.

28. Following the presentation of Dr. Mohammad SAEED, the Exchange of Views Session of the 34th Session of the COMCEC was held with the theme of “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States.”

29. Afterwards, the Ministers and heads of delegations of Member Countries made presentations on their country experiences with regards to trade facilitation efforts in their respective countries.

Side Events/Special Sessions

30. The 33rd Meeting of the Sessional Committee was held on November 25th, 2018 as a sideline event with the participation of the relevant OIC Institutions.

(A copy of the report of the 33rd Meeting of the Sessional Committee is attached as Annex V.)

31. The side event on the “COMCEC Project Funding: Experiences of the Project Owners” was made on November 27th, 2018. During the event, the owners of the successful projects funded under the fourth project call of the COMCEC Project Funding made presentations with respect to the implementation of their projects.

32. The special session on “Harnessing the Potential of Trade Facilitation for Regional Integration” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated

by Dr. Mohammad SAEED, Senior Advisor, International Trade Center. The speakers for this special session were as follows: Mr. Salifou TIEMTORE, Director of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Dr. Patricia SOURDIN, University of Adelaide and Mr. Hacı Hasan Murat ÖZSOY, Director General of Risk Management and Control Ministry of Trade of Republic of Turkey.

33. The special session on the “Challenges in Customs Modernization and Possible Solutions” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Aleksandr KUZMENKO, Head of Legal Department of Intergovernmental Organization for International Carriage by Rail (OTIF). Mr. Jalal BENHAYOUN, CEO of PORTNET, Mr. Ömür GEBEŞ, General Director of Customs and Tourism Enterprises Co Inc. and Mr. Mourad ARFAOUI, Regional Development Manager for MENA Region World Customs Organization, were the speakers of this special session.

34. The special session on “Private Sector Involvement in Trade Facilitation” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Fatih ÜNLÜ, Senior Expert at COMCEC Coordination Office. The speakers of this special session were as follows: Mr. Francisco Jaime King CANCINO, Vice-Chair of PSCG under WCO and Director General of Customs and Logistics Services, Mrs. Donia HAMMAMI, Vice-President of KGH Customs Services and H.E. Hani Salem SONBOL, CEO of ITFC.

35. The special session on “Facilitating Trade in the Digital Era: Challenges and opportunities for Increasing Cross-Border E-Commerce” was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Bilal Khan PASHA, Consul General of Consulate General of Pakistan. The other speakers at this session were, Mr. Ibrahima Nour Eddine DIAGNE, Former Chairman of African Alliance for E-Commerce (AAEC), Ms. Ana HINOJOSA, Director of World Customs Organization and Mr. Hakan ÇEVİKOĞLU, CEO of ePttAVM.

36. The Forum on Trade Facilitation was held on November 29th, 2018. The session was moderated by Mr. Bilal Khan PASHA. The speakers of the Forum were the moderators of the above-mentioned Special Sessions.

37. As a sideline event of the 34th Session of COMCEC, COMCEC Project Funding Exhibition took place on 26-29 November 2018.

Closing Session:

38. The Closing Session of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 29th, 2018 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey.

39. Mr. Bilal Khan PASHA, Consul General of Consulate General of Pakistan, Rapporteur of the Senior Officials Meeting, summarized the salient points in the Resolutions.

40. The Session adopted Resolution OIC/COMCEC/34-../RES..

41. Afterwards, a signing ceremony was held. Small and Medium Enterprises Development Organization (KOSGEB) of the Republic of Turkey and Libya Enterprise of the Libyan Arab Republic signed a memorandum of understanding.

42. H.E. Ambassador Hameed OPELOYERU, Assistant Secretary General read out the message of H.E. Dr. Yousef Al-OTHAIMEEN, Secretary General of the OIC. In his message H.E. Al-OTHAIMEEN extended his congratulations to the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 34th Session of the COMCEC and to all participants for the successful conclusion of the Session.

43. H.E. Amadou SANNEH, Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment of The Gambia to made a statement on behalf of all participating States. His Excellency the Minister thanked the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting successfully the 34th Session of the COMCEC. H.E. SANNEH, invited all the Member States to participate in the 14th Islamic Summit to be held in 2019 in The Gambia.

44. H.E. Mohammed Hashim ABDUL MAGED, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Iraq also made a statement and invited all the member countries to attend the “16th OIC Trade Fair” to be held on 7-13 April 2019, in Baghdad.

45. H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey, made a closing statement at the Session. H.E. OKTAY expressed that there is a growing protectionist wave in the world. H.E. OKTAY underlined that, in this conjuncture, eliminating tariffs and non-tariff barriers as well as simplification of customs procedures would be the right response to this protectionist wave for reducing trading costs.

46. H.E. OKTAY stressed that customs is the most critical component of trade facilitation process as well as being responsible for the security of the supply chain. H.E. OKTAY highlighted that it is necessary to balance both facilitation and security of trade with proper risk management techniques in customs. Moreover, H.E. OKTAY pointed out that modernization of infrastructure, adoption of information technologies and simplifying customs procedures will all help Member Countries in their endeavors for reaching a balance between facilitation and security of trade.

47. H.E. OKTAY underlined that the set of policy recommendations adopted by Ministers on “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member State” would enlighten Member Countries way towards trade facilitation and customs risk management.

48. H.E. Fuat OKTAY concluded his statement by expressing the significance of Member Countries' active participation in various cooperation programs and projects conducted under the COMCEC.

(The text of the Closing Statement of H.E. Fuat OKTAY is attached as Annex VI.)

49. All documents submitted to the 34th Session of COMCEC will be available on the COMCEC web site (www.comcec.org).

A N N E X E S

ANNEX

1

Original: English

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
34th COMCEC MINISTERIAL SESSION
(Istanbul, 26-29 November 2018)**

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

- Mr. MATIULLAH OMED
Director General, Ministry of Industry and Commerce
- Mr. ZEKRIA BARAKZAI
- Mr. MOHAMMAD NAEEMI

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- H.E. Amb. LAHSSAN BOUFARES
Ambassador of Algeria in Ankara
- Mr. FAROUK BAHAMID
Director General, Embassy of Algeria in Ankara
- Mr. ABDENNOUR BENI MOUSSA
Customs Officer, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. HAKIM BERDJOU DJ
Customs Officer, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. ABDELGHANI AMARA
Deputy Manager, Consulate of Algeria in İstanbul

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Mr. SAFAR MEHDIYEV
Chairman, State Customs Committee
- H.E. SAHIB MAMMADOV
Deputy Minister of Economy
- H.E. Amb. SHAHIN ABDULLAYEV
Ambassador of Azerbaijan in Riyadh, Permanent Representative of OIC
- Mr. IGBAL BABAYEV
Deputy Chairman, State Customs Committee
- Mr. DILAVAR FARZALIYEV
Chairman, State Customs Committee

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

- H.E. Amb. EBRAHIM YUSUF AL ABDULLA
Ambassador of Bahrain in Ankara
- Mr. SHAIKH HAMAD SALMAN ALKHALIFA
Director, Foreign Trade Relation
- Ms. ZAIN ABDULLA AL SHOMELI
Head of Risk Systems, Customs Affairs, Ministry of Interior
- Mr. RASHAD FAROOQ AL SHAJ KH
Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ms. MUNEERA MOHAMED DARRAJ
Customs Affairs, Ministry of Interior

- Mr. ENGİN KILIG
- Mr. ADNAN İNANÇ

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- H.E. Amb. GOLAM MOSHI
Ambassador of Bangladesh in Riyadh, Permanent Representative to OIC
- Mr. MD JOBAYEDUR RAHMAN
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
- Ms. PREETI RAHMAN
Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. MONIROL MUHAMMAD ISLAM
Consul General of Bangladesh in İstanbul
- Mr. MD MAHABUBUR RAHMAN
Vice Consul of Bangladesh in İstanbul

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

- H.E. ABDOULAYE BIO TCHANE
Minister of State of Planning and Development
- H.E. SERGE AHISSOU
Minister of Industry and Trade
- H.E. Amb. ISSIRADJOU IBRAHIM GOMINA
Ambassador of Benin in Ankara
- Ms. AWAOU BACO
Deputy Director General, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Mr. MENSAH HYACINTHE MONTCHO
Director of Development, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Mr. ROGER GNAHO
Economic Attache, Embassy of Benin in Ankara
- Ms. MAJLOUDINE ADAM SOULE
Secretary, Ministry of Planning and Development
- Mr. EULOGE HOUNGBO
Program Coordinator, Ministry of Industry and Trade

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

- H.E. Amb. SHAFIEE KASSIM
Ambassador of Brunei Darussalam in Ankara
- Mr. SALLEH JAAFAR
Attache, Embassy of Brunei in Ankara

BURKINA FASO

- Mr. TEGHAWENDE MACAIRE YAMEOGO
Customs Officer, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. EMMANUEL SOME
Project Coordinator, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

- H.E. Amb. IYA TIDJANI
Ambassador of Cameroon in Riyadh
- Mr. BOUBA AOUSSINE
Technical Counsellor, Ministry of Commerce

- Mr. ANGWAFOR FRU
Educational Officer, Ministry of Finance

REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE

- H.E. Amb. YACOUBA ATTA
Ambassador of Cote D'ivore in Ankara
- Mr. SOUMAILA BAMBA
Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. ADINGRA PRINCE FLORENT MENZAN
First Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. KOUE PIERRE FRANCIS BOLOU
First Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

- H.E. HASSAN HOUMED IBRAHIM
Minister of Trade and Tourism
- H.E. Amb. DYAEDDINE SAID BAMAKHRAMA
Ambassador of Republic of Djibouti in Riyadh, Permanent Representative to OIC
- H.E. Amb. ADEN HOUSSEIN ABDILLAHI
Ambassador of Djibouti in Ankara
- Mr. ALI OMAR YOUSSEF
Counsellor, Embassy of Djibouti in Ankara
- MOHAMED IDRIS MOHAMED
Counsellor, Embassy of Djibouti in Ankara
- Mr. OULOFA ISMAIL ABDO
Director, Ministry of Trade and Tourism

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- H.E. Amb. AMANY FAHMY
Deputy Assistant Minister of Foreign Affairs
- Ms. NERMEEN ABDALLA AFIFI METWALLY
Consul General of Egypt in Istanbul
- Mr. MOHAMED ELSAYED
Commercial Consul, Consulate General of Egypt in Istanbul
- Mr. BASSEM SAID ABDOU ABDELHADI
Consul, Consulate General of Egypt in Istanbul
- Mr. HAYTHAM ABDELGHANY
Deputy Trade Consul, Consulate General of Egypt in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF GABON

- H.E. DAVID MBADINGA
Minister of Trade
- Ms. CECILIA MOUSSASOU NGADSI
Diplomatic Advisor of Minister of Trade
- Mr. THIBAUT IFOUNGA
Chief of Protocol, Embassy of Gabon in Ankara
- Mr. DAVID MVE NDONG
Security of Minister of Trade

REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA

- H.E. AMADOU SANNEH
Minister of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
- Mr. ABDOULIE JARRA
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
- Ms. BATURU CAMARA
Assistant Director, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
- Mr. SERING MODOU NJIE
Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Gambia in Ankara
- Ms. JULDEH CEESAY
Deputy Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economic Affairs
- Ms. FATOU BEYAI RAJI
Director, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment
- Mr. SULAYMAN GAYE
Planner, Ministry of Transport, Works and Infrastructure
- Mr. ASSAN L.S JAMMEH
Planner, Ministry of Communication, Information & IT
- Mr. KEMO SONKO
Deputy Director, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA

- H.E. Amb. DAOUDA BANGOURA
Ambassador of the Republic of Guinea in Ankara
- Mr. LAYE DAOUDA KONATE
Chief of Protocol, Embassy of the Republic of Guinea

REPUBLIC OF GUINEA-BISSAU

- Mr. MALAM SAMBU
Ambassador of Guinea-Bissau in Beijing

COOPERATIVE REPUBLIC OF GUYANA

- Mr. RUDOLPH CLEMENT TEN-POW
UN Permanent Representative

REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

- H.E. BAMBANG BRODJONOEGORO
Minister of National Development Planning
- H.E. LEONARD TAMPUBOLON
Deputy Minister of National Development Planning
- Mr. HERRY SUDRAJAT
Consul General of Indonesia in Istanbul
- Mr. I MADE SUARTIKA
Deputy Director, Ministry of Transportation
- Mr. MESAHA TARIGAN
Director, Ministry of Agriculture
- Mr. YAHYA HIDAYAT
Director, Ministry of National Development Planning
- Mr. FLORENTINUS KRISTIARTONO

- Deputy Director, Ministry of National Development Planning
- Ms. CORDELIA ERVINA
Deputy Director, Ministry of Agriculture
- Mr. JOHANES MANGINSELA
Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. SEBASTIANUS SAYOGA KADARISMAN
Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Ankara
- Mr. ARIANTO HARTONO
First Planner Staff, Ministry of National Development Planning of Indonesia

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

- H.E. MOHAMMAD KHAZAEE TORSHIZI
Vice Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance
- Mr. AMER KAABI
Member, Parliament of Iran
- Mr. AMIR TAGHI TEHRANI
Advisor to the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance
- Ms. ZOHREH BAHREHBAR
Deputy Director General, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance
- Mr. ABOLFAZL GHASEMISEPARO
Division Chief, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Finance
- Mr. BAKHTIYAR ASADZADEH
Consul General of Iran in İstanbul
- Mr. MAHMOUD AHMADI
Economy Attache, Consulate General of Iran in Istanbul
- Mr. HOSSEIN PARVARESH
Protocol Officer, Consulate General of Iran in Istanbul
- Mr. KEYVAN ZADEH
Department of Economics Consultants, Consulate General of Iran in İstanbul
- Mr. HASSAN MIRHABA
Press Officer, Consulate General Iran in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

- H.E. MOHAMMED HASHIM ABDUL MAGED
Minister of Trade
- Mr. ADEL KHUDHAIR ABBAS AL MASOODI
Director General of Foreign Economic Relations, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. THARWAT AKRAM SALMAN
Commercial Attache, Embassy of Iraq in Ankara
- Mr. ASHRAF WALEED SAEED RAMZI
Staff, Embassy of Iraq in Ankara
- Mr. NİHAT İMAMOĞLU
Secretary, Iraq Trade Office

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

- H.E. TARIQ HAMMOURI
Minister of Industry and Trade and Supply
- Mr. ZAHER AL QATAR NEH
Director of Foreign Trade Policies, Ministry of Industry Trade and Supply

- Mr. NABEEL AL-TAL
Head of Arab Asian and African Affairs Division, Ministry of Industry Trade and Supply

THE STATE OF KUWAIT

- H.E. NAYEF FALAH AL-HAJRAF
Minister of Finance
- H.E. Amb. GHASSAN AL ZAWAWI
Ambassador of Kuwait in Ankara
- Mr. NABIL ALABDULJALIL
Assistant Undersecretary, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. MOHAMMAD AL MOHAMMAD
Consul General of Kuwait in Istanbul
- Mr. SHEIKH NIMER ALSABAH
Assistant Undersecretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Ms. AMAL ALHAMAD
Assistant of Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. NABEEL ALMEZYAD
Director, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. AIMAN AL-MAHANNA
Director, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. MESAID ALKULAIB
Deputy Consul General of Kuwait in Istanbul
- Mr. SAAD ALRASHIDI
Controller, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. ABDULLAH ALHERZ
Controller, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. ABDULAZIZ AL DALAH
Second Secretary, Embassy of Kuwait in Ankara
- Mr. MHANNA ALMHANNA
Diplomatic Attache, Consulate General of Kuwait in Istanbul
- Ms. NOURAH ALHAMAD

KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

- Mr. BAKTYBEK UMETOV
Consul of Kyrgyz Republic in Istanbul

LIBYA

- H.E. Dr. ALI ABDULAZIZ ELESAWY
Minister of Economy and Industry
- Mr. MOHAMED SALEH
H.E. Amb. ABDURRAZAQ MUKHTAR
Ambassador of Libya in Ankara
- Mr. MOHAMED TAWIL
Second Secretary, Embassy of Libya in Ankara
- Mr. KHAMIS MATUQ ABDULLAH
Department of Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. FAIK SALIH ZEYTUN
Department of International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Mr. ESAM SALIM EL MALHUF
Department of Trade, Ministry of Economy and Industry

MALAYSIA

- H.E. Amb. ABD RAZAK ABDUL WAHAB
Ambassador of Malaysia in Ankara
- Mr. MUHAMMAD FIRDAUS NOR AZLAN
Assistant Director, Ministry of International Trade and Industry
- Ms. ROSMIZAH MAT JUSOH
Director, MATRADE

REPUBLIC OF MALI

- Ms. ASSA SYLLA DIARRAH
Technical Advisor, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. MOUSSA SIDIBE
Customs Inspector, Ministry of Commerce and Competition

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF MAURITANIA

- Mr. DHEHBI DHEHBI
Ambassador of Mauritania in Ankara

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

- H.E. MOULAY HAFID ELALAMY
Minister of Industry, Investment and Digital Economy
- Ms. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI
Director, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Digital Economy
- Mr. YOUSSEF BENABDOUH
In Charge of Cooperation with Arab and Islamic Countries, Ministry of Industry, Investment, Trade and Digital Economy
- Mr. SAID AIT TALEBE ALI
Charge D'affaires, Embassy of Morocco in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF NIGER

- Mr. MADOU GAMBO GANA
Economist, Ministry of Foreign Office
- Mr. MAMOUDOU KAKA MAIRIGA
Chief Customs Inspector, Ministry of Finance

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF NIGERIA

- Mr. ZAYYAD HABU ABDUSSALAM
Assistant Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- H.E. Amb. DODO ISA MUHAMMADU
Permanent Representative to OIC
- Mr. REGINA KUMASHE AONDONA
Assistant Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. BUKOLA OTOLORIN EJIWALE
Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. HAUWA WAZIRI DANBABA
Special Assistant, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

- Mr. HADIZA IDRIS
Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. ABUDULAZEEZ ALIYU
Desk Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

SULTANATE OF OMAN

- Mr. TALAL BIN SULAIMAN AL RAHBI
Deputy Secretary General, Supreme Council for Planning
- Mr. EMAD BIN TALIB AL AJMI
Director, Supreme Council for Planning
- Mr. JUMA BIN THANI AL SHEYADI
Director, Directorate General of Customs Royal Oman Police
- Ms. RABIA BIN MUBARAK AL KHALILI
Coordinator, Supreme Council for Planning
- Mr. MOHAMED BIN BADR AL JABRI
Third Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. DHIYAB BIN HAMED AL MAAMARI
Agreement Specialist, Supreme Council for Planning

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- Mr. BILAL KHAN PASHA
Consul General of Pakistan in Istanbul
- Mr. IMRAN KHAN
Commercial Assistant, Consulate General of Pakistan in Istanbul
- Ms. MARIA KAZI

THE STATE OF PALESTINE

- Ms. ABBER ODAH
Minister of National Economy
- H.E. Amb. Dr. FAED MUSTAFA
Ambassador of Palestine in Ankara
- Mr. RAFAT RAYYAN
Manager, Ministry of Economy
- Ms. RANA ABUSIBAA
Economics Consultant, Embassy of Palestine in Ankara

STATE OF QATAR

- H.E. ALI BIN AHMED AL KUWARI
Minister of Commerce and Industry
- H.E. Amb. SALEM MUBARAK AL SHAFI
Ambassador of Qatar in Ankara
- Mr. AHMAD AHAN AHAN
Director, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. MANSOUR AL MANSOURI
Consul, Consulate General of Qatar in Istanbul
- Mr. MESHAL AL QAYED
Officer, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. SAEED AL MAARRI
Head of Department, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- Mr. HASSAN ABDULLA AL MOHANADI
Consultant, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. SHEIKH ABDULAZIZ AL THANI
Second Secretary, Embassy of Qatar in Ankara
- Mr. FAHAD HAMAD AL EIDA
Secretary, Embassy of Qatar in Ankara
- Mr. TAMIM MOHAMMED AZIM
Special Accompanying Person
- Mr. RASHID ABDULRAHMAN AL ANSARI
Expert, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. SAEED MOHAMMED AL BRAIDI
President, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. SALEH AL BANAI
Communication Officer, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. MISHAAL AL GAID
Executive Assistant, Ministry of Commerce and Industry
- Mr. ZİYAT KÖPRÜLÜ
Expert, Embassy of Qatar in Ankara
- Mr. JASEM AHMAD
- Mr. HÜSEYİN PATEL
Public Relations, Embassy of Qatar in Ankara
- Mr. CEVAT BABAKALOĞLU
Consulate Staff, Consulate Qatar

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- H.E. Dr. MAJED BIN ABDULLAH AL QASABI
Minister of Commerce and Investment
- H.E. Amb. WALEED A. ELKHEREIJI
Ambassador of Saudi Arabia in Ankara
- Mr. MOHAMMED ABDULAZIZ AL ABDULJABBAR
Assistant Undersecretary for Foreign Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Investment
- Mr. SAAD OTHMAN AL KASABI
Governor, SASO
- Mr. HUSSIN EED H. ALRASHEED
Director of Relations with South Africa Asia, Ministry of Commerce and Investment
- Mr. JARALLAH ALRGABI
- Mr. FAWAZ SAAD ALGHAMDI
Commercial Attache, Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Ankara
- Mr. MUTLAQ ALHURAYR ALDOSARI
Economic Researcher, Ministry of Commerce and Investment
- Mr. MAGED ABDALSATAR ALKADI
Vice Commercial Attache, Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Ankara
- Ms. SARAH NASSER ALGHALIBI
General Administrator, Ministry of Commerce and Investment
- Ms. AYŞEGÜL BAKIR
Commercial Specialist, Ministry of Commerce and Investment
- Mr. FAYEZ AL HEMAIDHI
Economic Researcher, Ministry of Finance

- Mr. ABDULAZIZ SALEH ALKARIDIS
Assistant Undersecretary of Social Security, Ministry of Labor and Social Development
- Mr. WAEL AWAD ALNOFIEY
General Directorate of Road Planning, Ministry of Transportation
- Mr. RAJEH BIN BANDER AL RAKKAS
Director General, Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture
- Dr. KHALED ABDULLAH ALZAHIRANI
Head of Committees and Organizations, General Authority for Tourism and Antiquities
- Mr. BADER FAHAD ALREBDI
Director, General Customs Authority
- Mr. AHMED AL ENAIZI
Attache, Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Ankara
- Mr. ABDULRAHMAN ALHUSSIN
Protocol Officer, Consulate General of Saudi Arabia in Istanbul
- Mr. SOCRAT FAWZI
Translator, Consulate General of Saudi Arabia in Istanbul
- Mr. BADER ALOTAIBI
Deputy Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. MESHARI AL SEHEBANI
First Secretary, Embassy of Saudi Arabia in Ankara
- Ms. MOHAMED AL SHAHRANI

REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

- H.E. ALIOUNE SARR
Minister of Trade, Informal Sector, Consumer Affairs, Promotion of Local Products and SMEs
- H.E. Amb. MOUSTAPHA MBACKE
Ambassador of Senegal in Ankara
- Mr. ANSOU SOUBA BADJI
Economic Research Commissioner, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. CHEIKH DIALLO
Head of Office, Embassy of Senegal in Ankara
- Ms. MAIMOUNA SOW DIENG
Counsellor, Embassy of Senegal in Ankara
- Ms. NDEYE YANDE DIOP
Staff, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. KEMAL ÖZTURANLI
Interpreter, Embassy of Senegal in Ankara
- REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE
- H.E. JACOB JUSU SAFFA
Minister of Finance
- Mr. SAHR L. JUSU
Financial Secretary, Ministry of Finance
- Mr. KAWUSU KEBBAY
Director, Ministry of Planning and Economic Development
- Mr. SULAY-MANAH KPUKUMU
Counsellor, Embassy of Sierra Leone in Riyadh

REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

- H.E. Amb. ABDIRAZAK SIYAD ABDI
Ambassador of Somalia in Riyadh, Permanent Representative of Somalia to OIC

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

- H.E. ILYOSIDDIN KAMOLIDDINZODA
Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade
- Mr. AZIM HAIDAR TURSUNZODA
First Deputy Chairman, Customs Service
- Mr. MIZROBIDDIN SAFAROV
Consul General of Tajikistan in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF TOGO

- Ms. SOLIM LAKIGNAN
Expert, Togo Customs

REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

- H.E. Amb. MOHAMED FAYCAL BEN MUSTAPHA
Ambassador of the Republic of Tunisia in Ankara
- Mr. HEDI MALEK
Consul General of Tunisia in Istanbul
- Mr. FAOUZI HIDRI
Consul, Consulate General of Tunisia in Istanbul
- Mr. HABIB HAOUALA
Director in Charge of Cooperation with ISDB Group, Ministry of Development, Investment and International Cooperation
- Mr. MONCEF SMIDA
Lieutenant Colonel, Tunisian Customs

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- H.E. FUAT OKTAY
Vice President of the Republic of Turkey
- H.E. RUHSAR PEKCAN
Minister of Trade
- H.E. AHMET HALUK DURSUN
Deputy Minister of Culture and Tourism
- H.E. ÖMER FATİH SAYAN
Deputy Minister of Transport and Infrastructure
- H.E. AKİF ÖZKALDI
Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Forestry
- H.E. GONCA IŞIK YILMAZ BATUR
Deputy Minister of Commerce
- H.E. NACİ AĞBAL
Head of Strategy and Budget Office, Presidency of Turkey, Strategy and Budget Office
- H.E. Amb. SALİH MUTLU ŞEN
Ambassador, OIC Permanent Representative, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. ALİ FUAT TAŞKESENLİOĞLU
President, Capital Markets Board of Turkey

- Mr. MEVLÜT UYSAL
President, Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality
- Mr. M. RİFAT HİSARCIKLIOĞLU
President, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
- Prof. Dr. CEVAHİR UZKURT
President of KOSGEB, KOSGEB
- Mr. TAMER KIRAN
Vice President, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
- Mr. YUSUF KAYA
Vice President, Capital Markets Board of Turkey
- Ms. ERİŞAH ARICAN
Chairman, Borsa İstanbul
- Mr. HASAN ÖZSOY
General Director, Ministry of Trade
- Ms. ELİF ESRA ÖNAL
Manager, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
- Ms. GÖZDE GÜRGÜN
Manager, Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey
- Ms. NEFİSE BETÜL HİDİROĞLU
Manager, Turkish Standards
- Ms. NESLİHAN DİNİZ
Manager, EXIMBANK
- Mr. MURAT ÇETİNKAYA
General Manager, Borsa İstanbul
- Ms. BENGÜ AYTEKİN
Head of Department, Ministry of Treasury and Finance
- Mr. VOLKAN GÜNGÖREN
Deputy Manager, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry
- Mr. TOLGA BERMEK
Deputy Manager, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ms. AHU DOKTAŞ
Deputy Manager, Eximbank
- Mr. SARP KALKAN
Assistant General Secretary, the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey
- Mr. KORAY ERDEN
Deputy Director General, EXIMBANK
- Mr. AYHAN TURNA
Head of Department, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. NEVZAT FIRAT KUNDURACI
Deputy Head of Department, AÇSHB
- Mr. ORHAN ÇAKIROĞLU
Head of Department, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. TAMER GÜNDOĞAN
Director, OIC Exchange Forum
- Mr. ADEM YAZICI
Head of Departments
- Mr. NECATİ GÜNAYDIN
Head of Departments

- Mr. HAKAN AYTEKİN
Assistant Director, Borsa İstanbul Institution

TURKMENISTAN

- H.E. BATIR BAZAROV
Minister of Economy and Finance
- H.E. Amb. İŞANKULI AMANLIYEV
Ambassador of Turkmenistan in Ankara
- Mr. MURATGELDI SEYITMAMMEDOV
Consul General of Turkmenistan in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

- Mr. EMMANUEL OLOBO BWOMONO
Counsellor, Embassy of Uganda in Riyadh

STATE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

- Mr. MOHAMMED SEIF ALSHIHI
Director of United Nations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Dr. KHALID AHMED ALSUWAIDI
Minister Plenipotentiary United Nations Department, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
- Mr. MOHAMMED SAEED SALEM ALNEYADI
Counsellor and United Charge Affaires, Embassy of the UAE in Ankara
- Ms. KHOLOOD SHABIB ALMARZOOQI
Business Development Director, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ms. NADYA ABDULLA KAMALI
Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. SAEED ABDULWAHID KHAMIS SAQER
Second Secretary, Consulate General of the UAE in Istanbul
- Mr. FAHRETTİN GÖKAY
Public Relations, Consulate General of the UAE in Istanbul
- Mr. MEHMET NURİ KARAKAŞ
Assistant, Embassy of the UAE in Ankara
- Mr. MUBARAK ALHAMMADI
First Secretary of the UAE in Riyadh

REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

- Mr. ANVAR ASAMOV
Deputy Chairman, State Customs Committee
- Mr. ILKHOM MUKHTOROV
Head of Risk Management, State Customs Committee
- Mr. ANVAR MUKHAMMADIEV
Head of Department Customs Control, State Customs Committee

B. OBSERVER COUNTRIES

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

- H.E. MIDHAT SALIC
Deputy Minister of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations

- Mr. HAMDO TINJAK
Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Economic Relations

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

- H.E. Amb. KONSTANTIN VICTOR SHUVALOV
Ambassador-at-Large, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

KINGDOM OF THAILAND

- H.E. JINTANA CHAIYAWONNAGAL
Vice Minister Attached to the Prime Minister, Ministry of Commerce
- Ms. YAOWARIN NOKSUK
Vice Minister Assistant, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. NIWAT HANSAWARD
Director, Thai Trade Centre
- Mr. PANKOSA SUPONGTHORN
Trade Officer, Ministry of Commerce
- Ms. PIYA SUTTHIMA KESKIN
Marketing Officer, Thai Trade Center

TRNC

- H.E. ÖZDİL NAMİ
Minister of Economy and Energy
- Mr. FAHRİ YÖNLÜER
Consul General of TRNC in Istanbul
- Mr. SERVET BAŞARAN
Director, TRNC Deputy Prime Ministry and Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ms. ÜLKÜ TAŞSEVEN
Executive Assistant, Ministry of Economy and Energy
- Mr. ÇAĞRI KALFAOĞLU
Consul of TRNC in Istanbul
- Ms. BİRSEN İKİZER KALFAOĞLU
Consul of TRNC in Istanbul
- Mr. KEREM İZMEN
Consul of TRNC in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

- H.E. RASIM LJAJIC
Deputy Prime Minister, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications
- Mr. BISERA BUHIC
Executive Assistant, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications
- Mr. UROS KANDIC
Counsellor, Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications

C. THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC TRADE FINANCE CORPORATION (ITFC)

- Mr. HANI SALEM SONBOL
CEO, ITFC
- Mr. AYMEN WAJIH KASEM
Division Head Trade Development, ITFC

- Mr. HARUN ÇELİK
Regional Head, ITFC İstanbul Office, ITFC

OIC

- H.E. Dr. YOUSEF AL OTHAIMEEN
General Secretariat of OIC, OIC
- H.E. Amb. HAMEED A. OPELOYERU
Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs, OIC
- Mr. BELAL KAMEL SASSO
Director of Protocol and Public Relations, OIC
- Mr. NAGHI JABBAROV
Professional Officer, OIC
- Mr. WAJDI SINDI
Professional Officer, OIC

D. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

ISLAMIC CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT)

- Dr. EL HASSANE HZAINE
Director General, ICDT
- Mr. MOHAMED CHIBA
Head of Department, ICDT
- Mr. ALİ BERRADA
Delegate, ICDT

RESEARCH CENTER FOR ISLAMIC HISTORY, ART AND CULTURE (IRCICA)

- Mr. HALIT EREN
Director General, IRCICA
- Mr. MUSTAFA YILMAZ
Assistant, IRCICA
- Mr. SAIKO UMARO EMBALO
Assistant, IRCICA

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (IUT)

- Dr. OMAR JAH
Acting Vice-Chancellor, Islamic University of Technology

STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR

ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

- H.E. Amb. MUSA KULAKLIKAYA
Director General, SESRIC
- Mr. NABIL M. DABOUR
Assistant Director General, SESRIC
- Mr. MEHMET FATİH SERENLİ
Director, SESRIC
- Mr. ÖMER FARUK DUMAN
Director, SESRIC

- Dr. ATILLA KARAMAN
Acting Director, SESRIC
- Ms. ESMA DEMİRTAŞ
Training Expert, SESRIC
- Ms. FATMA NUR ZENGİN
Events and Communications Specialist, SESRIC
- Mr. ONUR ÇAĞLAR
Technical Cooperation Specialist, SESRIC
- Dr. ERHAN TÜRBEDAR
Researcher, SESRIC
- Mr. ORXAN NADIROV
Events and Communications Officer, SESRIC
- Mr. EDMOND NEZA
PR and Media Officer, SESRIC

SPECIALIZED ORGANS OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB)

- Dr. BANDAR HAJJAR
President, Islamic Development Bank Group
- Mr. AZHARI GASIM AHMED
Lead Economist, IDB
- Mr. ZAKI MANSOUR
Director, IDB
- Mr. EMIL MAMMADLI
Investment Officer, IDB
- Mr. SUED HUSAIN QUADRI
Acting Director, IDB
- Mr. ALI IBN ABI TALIB MAHMOUD
Manager, IDB
- Mr. NAEL TALEB HAMDAN AL HAJAJ
Senior Partnership Officer, IDB
- Mr. SALAH JELASSI
Regional Director, IDB
- Mr. FARUK ÖZCAN
Protocol Officer, IDB
- Ms. DİLAN KALİÇ
Executive Assistant, IDB
- Mr. CEM ÖZENEN
Senior Specialist, IDB
- Mr. NAZAR MOHAMED ELTAHIR
Market Integration Specialist, Islamic Development Bank
- Mr. SELÇUK DAĞ
Program Assistant, IDB
- MOHAMMAD ALI DINMOHAMMADI
Communication Officer, ID
- Mr. OUSSAMA ABDUL RAHMAN KAISSI
Chief Executive Officer, ICIEC

- Ms. FATMA GAMZE SARIOĞLU
Turkey Representative, ICIE
- Ms. AYŞE SELDA KURT
Turkey Assistant Representative, ICIEC
- Mr. KHOSRO RASHID
Senior Business Development Officer, ICIEC
- Mr. DJAMEL GHRIB
Senior Technical Assistant, ICIEC
- Mr. WALEED AL WOHEEB
Director General, ISFD
- Mr. JAMAL AL SAYED OMAR
Senior Executive Information Specialist, ISFD

E. AFFILIATED ORGANS OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE (ICCIA)

- Mr. YOUSEF HASSAN KHALAWI
Secretary General, ICCIA
- Ms. ATTIYA NAWAZISH ALI KHAN
Assistant Secretary General, ICCIA
- Mr. ELSADIG GADALLA MUKHAYER IBRAHIM
Manager Public Relations, ICCI
- Mr. KHALID AL BALOCHI
Secretary, ICCIA

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADFIMI)

- Mr. NURİ BİRTEK
Secretary General, ADFIMI
- Mr. METİN ÖZDEMİR
Chairman, ADFIMI
- Mr. AHMET GÜNEY
Advisor of General Manager, ADFIMI

FEDERATION OF CONTRACTORS FROM ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (FOCIC)

- Mr. ABDERRAHIM ALAMI LAHJOUI
- Delegate, FOCIC

ORGANIZATION OF THE ISLAMIC SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION (OISA)

- Mr. MOHAMMAD ZAFAR BHATTI
Director Finance, OISA

STANDARDS AND METROLOGY INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SMIIC)

- Mr. LOTFI BEN SAID
Assistant Secretary General, SMIIC
- Ms. EMEL GÖNÇ
Executive Assistant, SMIIC

- Mr. YASİN ZÜLFİKAROĞLU
Expert, SMIIC
- Mr. YUNUS ETE
Representative, SMIIC

ISLAMIC CONFERENCE YOUTH FORUM FOR DIALOGUE AND COOPERATION (ICYF-DC)

- Mr. TAHA AYHAN
President, ICYF

F. OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

DEVELOPING EIGHT (D-8)

- Mr. DATO KU JAAFAR KU SHAARI
General Secretary, D-8
- Mr. ILHAM ULUDAĞ
Consultant, D-8

ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BANK (ECOBANK)

- Mr. BURHANETTİN AKTAŞ
Vice President, ECO Trade and Development Bank
- Mr. MASOUD REKABDAR
Vice President, ECO Trade and Development Bank
- Mr. FAZLI SAK
Deputy Director, ECO Trade and Development Bank
- Mr. ABID HAMEED
Deputy Director, ECO Trade and Development Bank

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

- Mr. SALIM MOHAMMED AL HAJRI
Secretary General, GCC
- Mr. BANDAR ABDULRAHMAN MUSA
First Attachee, GCC
- Mr. SAID BAIT ALQADHAR
Counsellor in Political Affairs, GCC

THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

- Mr. KANAN MURTUZOV
Executive Manager, BSEC

WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANIZATION

- Ms. ANA HINOJOSA
Director, WCO

THE ACCOUNTING AND AUDITING ORGANIZATION FOR ISLAMIC FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

- Mr. FARHAN NOOR
Head of Professional Development, AAOIFI

G. KEYNOTE SPEAKER

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

- Dr. MOHAMMAD SAEED
Senior Advisor, International Trade Centre

H. SPEAKERS

SPEAKER

- Mr. ALEKSANDR KUZMENKO
Head of Legal Department, OTIF
- Mr. FRANCISCO JAIME KING CANCINO
Vice-Chair-Director General, PSCG under WCO-Customs and Logistics Services Mexico
- Mr. HAKAN ÇEVİKOĞLU
CEO, EPTTAVM
- Mr. IBRAHIMA NOUR EDDINE DIAGNE
Former Chairman, African Alliance for E-Commerce (AAEC)
- Mr. JALAL BENHAYOUN
CEO, PORTNET
- Mr. MOURAD ARFAOUI
Regional Development Manager for the Middle East and North Africa Region, World Customs Organization
- Mr. ÖMÜR GEBEŞ
General Director, Customs and Tourism Enterprises
- Mr. SALIFOU TIEMTORE
Director, ECOWAS
- Ms. DONIA HAMMAMI
Vice President, KGH Customs Services
- Prof. Dr. PATRICIA SOURDIN
Lecturer, University of Adelaide

İ. PCM PANELISTS

PCM-PANELIST

- Mr. HÜSEYİN KUTLU KÖYCÜ
Trade Expert, Ministry of Trade

J. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. MEHMET METİN EKER
General Director
- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ
Director
- Mr. BURAK KARAGÖL
Director
- Mr. MEHMET ASLAN
Director
- Ms. ÖZGÜL YÜKSEL
Coordinator

- Mr. FATİH ÜNLÜ
Senior Expert
- Mr. FERRUH TIĞLI
Senior Expert
- Mr. GÖKTEN DAMAR
Expert
- Ms. VİLDAN BARAN
Expert
- Mr. ALİ ORUÇ
Expert
- Mr. DENİZ GÖLE
Expert
- Mr. EREN SÜMER
Expert
- Mr. FATİH ARSLAN
Expert
- Mr. CANER UYANIK
Expert
- Mr. CEZMİ ONAT
Financial Sector Specialist
- Mr. MEHMET AKİF ALANBAY
Expert
- Mr. MUSTAFA ADİL SAYAR
Expert
- Mr. NİHAT AKBALIK
Expert
- Mr. OKAN POLAT
Expert
- Ms. AYLİN ŞENOL GÜN
Expert
- Ms. AYTEN AKMAN
Expert
- Assoc. Prof. Dr. HALUK KASNAKOĞLU
Consultant
- Mr. İSMAİL ÇAĞRI ÖZCAN
Counsellor
- Ms. GÜNEŞ AŞIK
Counsellor

ANNEX

2

Original: Turkish

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY H.E. RECEP TAYYİP ERDOĞAN,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY AND
CHAIRMAN OF THE COMCEC
AT THE OPENING SESSION OF
THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(Istanbul, 28 November 2018)**

BISMILLAH ARRAHMAN ARRAHIM.

Distinguished Ministers,

Distinguished Secretary General,

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

ASSALAMU ALAIKUM WA RAHMATULLAHI WA BARAKATUH.

MAY THE PEACE, MERCY AND BLESSINGS OF ALLAH BE UPON YOU.

I would like to greet all of you with the most heartfelt feelings, affection and respect as we open the 34th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC, the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

As the Summit Term Chairman of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Chairman of the COMCEC, I would like to welcome all our distinguished guests to Turkey.

Once again, I am very pleased to welcome you to our beautiful city of Istanbul, as the cradle of civilizations and a source of pride for all humanity.

On this occasion, I convey my deepest affection to our brothers and sisters all over the world, to our friends, and to all those who are oppressed whose eyes and hearts are with us.

Our beloved Prophet glorified this mighty city and foretold its conquest, and today I greet all of our guests from the sister cities of Istanbul, from Mecca to Medina, from Sarajevo to Islamabad, from Cairo to Kabul.

In particular, I salute Palestine, the birthplace of civilization, peace and good will, and Al-Quds Sharif – the apple of the eye of Palestine and the Islamic world.

I send my sincere greetings to the young sons and daughters and women of Palestine, who have dedicated their lives to the preservation and defense of Al-Quds; and to all of the Palestinian refugees who have shed tears for 70 years as they yearn for their homeland.

I address my brothers and sisters with the magnificent verses of the late Mahmoud Darwish that embedded themselves in the hearts of invaders like an arrow.

I SWEAR

FROM EYE LASHES I SHALL WEAVE

A KERCHIEF FOR YOU

AND WEAVE ON IT A POEM FOR YOUR EYES I

SHALL WRITE ON IT A SENTENCE THAT IS

DEARER THAN MARTYRS AND KISSES;

"SHE WAS A PALESTINIAN AND SHE IS STILL SO"!

Yes, as long as there are Muslims, as long as there are people with a will to defend their rights, justice and freedom, Inshallah, Palestine will continue to exist.

Be izn Allah, no oppression and no tyranny will be enough to extinguish the fire of liberation in the hearts of the Palestinians.

As long as the Palestinians – men and women, young and old, and each a monument to courage and sacrifice – stick to their righteous goal, the invaders will never achieve their aims.

I pray to Allah the Almighty that the 34th Ministerial Meeting of the COMCEC will bear fruitful results, especially for Palestine, our Region, our countries and humanity as a whole.

Ya Rab, we pray for the realization of the decisions taken today following the consultations.

I believe that our friends who are with us today representing their countries share the same sentiment and the same sensitivity.

My distinguished brothers and sisters,

Distinguished Guests,

Today's Ministerial Meeting of the COMCEC is taking place on the 100th anniversary of the end of World War I, during which the fate of our region was determined.

Although a century has passed since this war, which at the time was thought would “put an end to all wars”, we are still feeling the trauma of its effects very deeply.

The region in which we live has been one of the first to experience the devastation of war and its destructive effects.

The resolution of the problems that can be linked directly to the results of World War I is possible only if we have identified and confirmed the true source of these problems.

We must especially turn this 100th anniversary of the Great War into an opportunity to “understand and comprehend”, rather than merely recognizing it with a “commemoration ceremony”.

As Muslims, it is extremely important that we do this without complexity, especially as nations whose fates have been interwoven within the same geography for thousands of years.

For us, history is not a series of past events, but rather an instrument from which we draw lessons with force, courage and inspiration.

For Muslims, every event that has been experienced in the past, every bittersweet situation should be duly interpreted, analyzed and taken into consideration.

That said, history can be unveiled only when we keep a clear mind and remain sincere in our efforts.

Studying history from an imposed perspective will not provide understanding, but will only exasperate existing prejudices.

Treating our own history with an orientalist approach will serve the efforts of those who feed upon inter-Muslim conflicts.

It is vital that we approach this matter after freeing ourselves from the shackles that stereotypes and prejudices have cast on our minds.

Today, there is a single reality that is once again making itself evident.

Although it ended 100 years ago, the devastation wrought on our region by this war has not yet been fully cleared.

As Muslims, we are still confronting the difficulties imposed by World War I on the human, political, economic and social spheres.

While those who brought war to the Middle East and Africa with imperialist ambitions are today living in peace and prosperity, we are, a century later, still paying the price of these conflicts and the tensions they have caused.

Those who once tore our region apart are today fortifying their solidarity through partnerships, while we remain at odds with one another, gradually becoming even more fragmented.

I would like to express very clearly and openly that the many crises, tensions, blood and tears that we are today experiencing across the entire region, from Syria to Iraq, and from Yemen to Palestine, have at their origin the designs behind the Great War.

The greatest victims of these nefarious plans, which were fashioned in Western capitals and executed by dark figures such as LAWRENCE, have been the Palestinians.

Millions of our Palestinian brothers and sisters have not only lost their land, but have also been subject to the world's gravest injustices.

Policies that fail to take history into account, as well as the social and human dynamics of our region, have caused pain, destruction and strife between brothers and sisters, not only in Palestine, but various other parts of the world.

With World War I, Western countries exported the same diseases that had been gnawing at their roots for centuries to the Middle East.

While this exchange brought them security and prosperity, what they left behind was only conflict and misery.

My Dearest Brothers and Sisters...

We, of course, cannot rewind history; nor is it possible to deny the past and ignore all that has happened.

So as Muslims, what is it that we must do?

On the centennial of the end of World War I, we must learn from history and take inspiration from the past to build a much brighter future.

We should no longer fall into the traps set by those acting with the mindset that “a drop of oil is more precious than a drop of blood”.

In this region, in which the borders have been drawn with blood, we should not create new borders or raise new walls in our hearts.

We must not let ourselves be deceived by those who try to cause animosity between us by emphasizing our differences.

Foremost among the diseases that have held Western societies captive for years, causing great destruction and death in Europe, and which were injected into our region with World War I, are racism and sectarianism.

The bigotry of sectarianism, in particular, is the most serious problem of the present day, undermining Muslim societies from the inside and leaving them open to external interventions.

This *fitna* that places personal preferences ahead of religion, and even “makes one view his or her sect as a religion”, has no place in Islam.

In our belief, everyone who turns towards the same *qiblah* and believes in the same god, the same prophet and the same Holy Scripture, are our brothers and sisters of faith.

No one has the right or authority to constrain the boundaries of the Islamic fraternity drawn by the Almighty Allah and his beloved Prophet (S.A.W).

In the heart of a believer, there is, and there should be, a place not only for the members of the 1.7 billion-strong Islamic Ummah, but for all of humanity.

In this regard, this is what the Rasoul'Allah commanded us in his last *khutbah*:

"LISTEN AND MEMORIZE MY WORDS WELL...

YOUR *RAB* IS ONE, YOUR FATHER IS ONE.

YOUR RELIGION AND PROPHET ARE ALSO ONE.

YOU ARE ALL FROM ADAM, AND ADAM WAS CREATED FROM CLAY.

NO ONE IS EVER SUPERIOR TO ANYONE BASED ON LINEAGE OR FAMILY.

IN THE SIGHT OF ALLAH, IT IS ONLY *TAQWA* THAT ELEVATES A PERSON.

ALL MUSLIMS ARE BROTHERS.

YOUR BLOOD, LIVES, RIGHT TO LIFE; YOUR GOODS, VIRTUES, HONORS AND PRIDES; YOUR PHYSICAL INTEGRITY ARE WORTHY OF FULL RESPECT AND SHALL BE PROTECTED AND SACRED UNTIL THE DAY YOU MEET ALLAH"

Yes... Our Rasoul'Allah (S.A.W.) illuminated the path to salvation for Muslims and for all of humanity in his orders and recommendations made 14 centuries ago.

No one has the right to breach these red lines, or even to remain unresponsive.

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Nobody can stand in front of our hearts when they beat together.

Our problems are not insurmountable as long as we retain our fellowship and act in unity and solidarity.

We will seek the solution within this community, not in others.

We will expect help and contributions from our brothers, from each other, when seeking to resolve our problems, rather than from others.

There is no point in expecting a cure from those who are the root causes of our problems.

We have witnessed and experienced the futility of expecting help from foreign countries on occasions when our hearts were being torn out and in other unjust situations over the last century.

International organizations have left us disappointed when we knocked on their doors to come up with a solution to the Palestine issue, and for such other problems as civil wars. What else could we expect from them? They will never strive for our benefit.

In particular, we have experienced very closely how organizations like the United Nations Security Council – which is, on paper, responsible for ensuring global peace and stability – act to protect the interests of their permanent members. The entire world looks to them, but only the will of the five permanent members is satisfied.

It is unfortunate that we have come up empty every time we have asked these organizations and so-called major states to contribute to regional peace in times of crisis.

In their eyes, do those who perish while trying to migrate across Mediterranean and Aegean have no value?

We have personally witnessed their greater concern for the number of whales at the North Pole than children dying of starvation in Somalia.

We have seen many times the concepts of democracy, human rights and freedom being meaningful only as long as they serve their own interests.

We now know very well that there are only few values that are appreciated by those countries aside from money, oil, diamonds and gold.

As Turkey, we have often expressed that "THE WORLD IS GREATER THAN FIVE", behind which are the bitter experiences, disappointments and double standards we have witnessed. We are no longer living in the post-World War I world.

It is these same reasons that drive our efforts to reform the United Nations system. It is crucial that the UN system be reformed.

This is also the motivation behind our efforts to make the Organization of Islamic Cooperation more active and involved throughout our Term Chairmanship.

We now need to establish a comprehensive policy that takes into account the weaknesses of existing international structures and their inability to come up with solutions to problems.

As we always say, it is time to take matters into own hands.

It is us and no one else that shall resolve the crisis in Syria while taking into account the territorial integrity of the country.

We shall take the initiative ourselves and bring to an end the conflicts that have brought thousands of children to the point of starvation and death in Yemen.

We shall be the first to condemn the treacherous attacks against those praying in a mosque in Afghanistan.

From Berlin to Paris, from Brussels to Moscow, we shall be the first to oppose the killing of innocents, regardless of the identity of the terrorist perpetrators.

We shall be the first to denounce the thuggery and state terrorism that has not hesitated in murdering Palestinian civilians before the eyes of the world.

We shall be the first to protect the rights of the Palestinian refugees in camps in Lebanon and Jordan who have been separated from their lands for 70 years.

We shall be the first to stand in the way of invaders seeking to blow out the candles of Al-Quds by encouraging our citizens to visit the city.

We shall be the first to raise our voices against those destroying the homes of the Rohingyas of Arakan and the ethnic cleansing of our brothers and sisters.

We shall be the first to object to the destruction of the primeval cities of Islamic civilization and the creation of new terrorist states in our region under the cover of DAESH.

We shall be the first to denounce the destruction of our future by such heinous organizations as FETO, PKK, AL-QAEDA, BOKO-HARAM and AL-SHABAAB.

We shall be the first to oppose the deaths of tens of thousands of African hope travelers every year in the stormy waters of the Mediterranean.

We shall, before any other country, protect and take care of the Syrian asylum seekers who have been forced to flee their homes to escape war and oppression.

As the followers of a belief that is based on the understanding that “Killing an innocent person is akin to killing all of humanity”, we shall, before anyone else, object to extrajudicial killings and brutal murders.

We shall be the first to raise voices against persecution and injustice, no matter where on earth it is happening.

We shall, before any other country, respect the laws of our neighborhood, regardless of the boundaries drawn up by imperialists.

Before any other party, we shall not allow our brotherhood be damaged, nor shall we accept the shedding of blood along ethnic, cultural and sectarian lines.

On the centennial of World War I, we shall act with foresight and discernment to prevent similar suffering and to prevent our enemies from devising similar plans; and shall learn our lessons together.

Only in this way can we ease our pain and prepare a peaceful and serene future for our children.

Distinguished brothers and sisters,

If we are to resolve our problems on our own, we need to utilize the platforms and the tools we have in our hands in the best way possible.

The use of national currencies in our bilateral trade is extremely important, in that it allows us to break free from the imperialist shackles that bind us.

As the member states of COMCEC, the more we invest in each other's countries and the more we increase our trade, the stronger we will become. There is no better solution than to use our own national and indigenous currencies, as failure to do so will continue our suffering under the effect of exchange rates.

I would like to once again underline the importance we attach to increasing intra-OIC trade to 25 percent.

I would like to call on all relevant countries to update their concession lists and to complete other necessary procedures for the entry into force of the Trade Preferential System of Islamic Countries.

I also call on all member states to take part in the trade facilitation activities of the Islamic Development Bank and its affiliated institutions.

As you may know, the recent increases in customs tariffs applied by the current US administration have resulted in a rise in protectionist tendencies in world trade.

It is apparent that the resulting trade wars will have severe negative repercussions on global trade, production and prosperity.

Reducing non-tariff barriers and facilitating customs clearance processes will serve as a lifeline to global trade and will open new horizons.

Furthermore, there is a need to modernize our customs infrastructures, to make wider use of information technologies and to further simplify customs procedures.

I find it very meaningful and appropriate that we are addressing the issue of "Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States" at this year's COMCEC exchange of views session.

We need to maximize our efforts toward the implementation of such initiatives as the Trade Preferential System, the Gold Exchange, the Real Estate Exchange and the Istanbul Arbitration Center.

I would like to emphasize that we await your valuable support in all these fields.

Carrying out the activities of COMCEC in a more effective manner requires a strong coordination and monitoring infrastructure at a national level.

For this purpose, in Turkey we have established the COMCEC National Coordination Committee under the Presidency Office of Strategy and Budget.

I hope that this Committee, which will convene at least twice a year, will give our cooperation significant momentum.

We are aware that some of our member states have established national coordination systems for COMCEC activities, and I invite the other member countries to take appropriate measures for the coordination of COMCEC activities at a national level.

Before concluding my remarks, I would once again like to express my pleasure at hosting you in our beautiful Istanbul.

I hope that the 34th Session of the COMCEC will bear fruit for all our countries. May Allah be our supporter and helper at all times.

Thank you all! May you live long, and I entrust you all to Allah the Almighty.

Take good care of yourselves...

ANNEX

3

Original: Arabic

**SPEECH OF H.E. DR. YOUSEF BIN AHMAD AL-OTHAIMEEN,
THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION
OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)
AT THE OPENING SESSION
OF THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 28 November 2018)**

In the name of Allah, and Peace and Blessings be upon His Prophet

Your Excellency Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey and
Chairman of COMCEC,

Your Excellencies the Ministers and Heads of Delegation,

Honourable Delegates,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.

It affords me immense pleasure to address this 34th session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (COMCEC). I am sincerely grateful to His Excellency Mr Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey, for supporting COMCEC's activities and programs during his tenure as the Committee's chair.

This session assumes great significance. It is taking place at a time when the traditional economic partnership and multilateral economic cooperation are threatened by the growing spate of economic nationalism, which in turn will reverse the gains accruable from international trade. We are also meeting at a time when many OIC member states are facing the challenges brought by the negative effects of economic slow-down and the dire need to restructure the economies of these countries, while putting much emphasis on the diversification of the economy and achievement of comprehensive development. It is instructive that inter-OIC trade, which has recorded a steady increase from 2004 began to decrease as noted in the recorded total trade volume in 2016, which accounted for an almost 20% decrease from the previous years.

Despite these challenges, I am gratified to note that our trade financing operations have continued to increase, while intensifying efforts to scale up intra-OIC investment in the agricultural and financial sectors. Accordingly, the elaboration of the OIC Infrastructure Development and Regional Integration Policy is receiving the desired attention of our member states, while regional cooperation frameworks are being consolidated with the aim of addressing the current human and physical infrastructure deficits.

In this regard, it should be noted that the activities of most OIC institutions have focused greatly on the development of intra-OIC trade, logistics and infrastructure, with the ultimate objective of promoting intra-OIC integration as well as sustainable development in the goods and services sector. In this connection, the two major regional programmes, namely the Special Programme for the Development of Africa and the Special Programme for Central Asia have featured greatly projects in both the trade, transportation, energy and agricultural sectors. Other activities in this regard include the Arab-Africa Trade Bridge, the implementation of the Trans-Saharan Highway and the Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan- Iran Railway and indeed the Dakar-Port Sudan Railway.

Excellency Mr President,
Excellencies,

There is no doubt that the prioritization of trade and investment projects will go a long way in bridging the current gap in our development paradigm, especially as it is aimed at reducing the widening unemployment among the youth and vulnerable segments of OIC populations. It would also assist in mitigating the current crises brought about by increased migration of youth beyond the OIC region. At this juncture, I wish to commend the responsiveness of many of the OIC active Member States regarding the economic and humanitarian problems some of the OIC Member States encounter, which were brought about by the multiplication of political and natural crises in these countries. The relevant OIC resolutions on humanitarian and development assistance to crisis-affected OIC member states would need to be implemented in a holistic and sustainable manner.

I should also avail myself of this opportunity to commend the efforts being made by COMCEC's Coordination Office to respond to the development priorities of the OIC Member States. I am equally thankful to the relevant OIC institutions for contributing to the implementation of OIC resolutions in the socio-economic domain. Our development intervention programmes have been effective thanks to the dedication of the relevant parties in the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group, while the mobilization of the private sector has continued to be positive due to the efforts of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA). I am glad to note that the task of creating a commercial arbitration center for OIC countries is being pursued with utmost vigor by the Chamber. In this regard, let me also express my appreciation to the President of the Islamic Development Bank for supporting our current demarche to put in place an appropriate legal framework for a permanent investment dispute settlement mechanism under the OIC Agreement on promotion, protection and guarantee of investments.

In the Halal Food and Standardisation Sector, it is gratifying to note the positive effect of the annual HALAL EXPO, co-held by the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT), on promoting intra-OIC trade and Islamic tourism, among other areas of cooperation.

On the OIC's efforts on labor and social protection, I am glad to note the sustained active role of Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) in the elaboration of the OIC Agreement on Mutual Recognition Arrangement of Skilled Workforce, the OIC Bilateral Agreement on Exchange of Manpower and the OIC Labour Market Strategy. These legal instruments would ensure a greater visibility for OIC in addressing the perennial problems of migration, unemployment and youth empowerment. In this context, SESRIC constant support for the OIC Occupational Safety and Health Network has become a flagship programme that has recorded appreciable success in galvanizing welfare of the workforce in our countries. This has naturally informed the successful adoption of the Statute of the OIC Labour Center, which the Government of Azerbaijan has graciously agreed to host its headquarters in Baku. I wish to therefore call on all member states to accede to the membership of this OIC specialized institution charged with cooperation in the domain of labour matters.

Similarly, our agricultural cooperation has received further boost in the aftermath of the definitive entry into force of the Statute of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security in February 2018, following ratification by twelve (12) Member States. The second General Assembly of IOFS is scheduled for 10-11 December 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan.

Your Excellency Mr President,
Excellencies,

Before concluding, I wish to seize this opportunity to commend all our Member States that have continued to support the various activities of the OIC, including the signing and ratification of the various OIC economic agreements. This is because our Member States are cognizant that these institutional frameworks are instrumental to the success of our joint action and the realization of our collective desire to build our organization to leading positions in all actions aiming to respond to the developmental aspirations of our member states and our peoples.

I thank you for your kind attention, and I wish you all successful and fruitful deliberations.

Wassalamu Alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.

ANNEX

4

Original: Arabic

**ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK
(IDB GROUP),
AT THE OPENING SESSION OF THE THIRTY FOURTH MINISTERIAL
SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 28 November 2018)**

In the name of Allah Most Gracious and Most Merciful

- Your Excellency President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey and chairman of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC).
- Your Excellency brother Fuad Uktai, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey
- Your Excellencies Ministers,
- Your Excellency Dr. Yousef bin Ahmad Al-Othaimeen, OIC Secretary General,
- Honourable members of delegations,
- Brothers and sisters,

Assalamu Alaikom Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh,

It is such a great honour for me to take part in the 34th session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation in the historic and beautiful city of Istanbul. First, I would like to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to the government and people of the Republic of Turkey for the warm welcome and generous hospitality that they have been extending to us since we set foot in this fine country. At the outset of my statement, allow me to express my thanks and deep gratitude to his Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of COMCEC for his sincere efforts to strengthen solidarity and cooperation amid Islamic countries.

The speech of His Excellency President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan contained numerous bright ideas and proposals aiming at strengthening and supporting the journey of economic cooperation between Islamic countries in all its forms. The Bank's Group shall work with the concerned parties, namely COMCEC secretariat, to implement these proposals on the field to enhance economic and commercial cooperation between Member States.

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Brothers and sisters,

Since the establishment of COMCEC, the Islamic Development Bank Group has kept an exceptional relationship with it by implementing the esteemed Committee's resolutions as well as the joint programmes and adopted initiatives such as COMCEC strategy, the preferential trade system, providing technical assistance to Member States to develop their commercial capacities in addition to the effective participation in the meetings of the work groups of COMCEC strategy as an appropriate practical mechanism to address the main issues facing Member States in economy and commerce.

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Your Excellencies Ministers,

IDB Group seeks to raise the level of its financing to help Member States achieve sustainable development goals. The Islamic Development Bank Group has been making colossal efforts to become the first development institution for its Member States, and it aspires to be an institution that responds swiftly to the needs of these states, in a world witnessing drastic changes and shifts, and advancing at an increasingly fast pace, especially in technological development

We recently started the implementation of the "President's five-year programme" which is based on the Islamic Development Bank's vision as well as the ten-year strategic framework of the Bank, which are both aligned with sustainable development goals. The five-year programme is based on fostering and broadening partnerships with various development parties, strengthening added value chains to amplify the development effect, innovating the appropriate development solutions and Islamic financing tools and strengthening the role of science technology and innovation to achieve socio-economic development in Member States.

I would like to commend the quantum leap in the IDB Group development business model which will guide the bank in the next five years. It involves working to shift from entirely relying on the Bank's own resources to including all developers such as the private sector, civil society, donors, charities, volunteers, researchers and academics to make markets work towards development and connect Member States' economies with global value chains in addition to enhancing their competitiveness which relies on each state's comparative advantages. Within this framework, various electronic platforms will help strengthen economic ties and intra-trade between Member States, and boost investment in them. The bank has launched the first Waqf platform to crowd source

grants and implement three new financing modes to mobilise financial resources within tripartite partnerships (public and private sectors, and third parties). The bank also established the Engage platform which is a meeting point and a forum for researchers, inventors, investors, small and medium enterprises, private sector companies, government decision makers and NGOs to provide innovative solutions to development challenges in the areas of food security, health, inclusive education, sustainable management of water and sanitary drainage, access to clean energy at reasonable prices and sustainable industrialisation.

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Your Excellencies Ministers,

Value chains have enjoyed a great deal of attention lately thanks to their positive results for the economy in many developing countries such as transferring technology, boosting development rates and attracting investments. Connecting our Member States to global value chains will doubtlessly increase exports between Member States and other states, which will contribute in cutting budget and trade balance deficit and create new job opportunities. Experts in economy, technology and trade view global value chains as the second wave of globalisation. In the first wave, international trade consisted in the trade of commodities and manufactured goods, while in this second wave international trade is characterised by the dismantlement of production operations and the distribution of its phases among various locations all around the world. The distribution of production among multiple locations has become cost-effective, and the Information and communication technology revolution also contributed to facilitating production operations. Progress made in robots, automated manufacturing, 3D printing and artificial intelligence will restructure international trade. Within this framework I call upon Member States to support and develop the competences of local companies so they become part of added value chains, and to introduce the appropriate policies to support innovation and remove restrictions to entrepreneurship activities.

Last year, the Bank initiated the implementation of a pilot project named the “Regional Rice Value Chain Programme” which aims at integrating 10 African states in the added value chains of rice production. All partners throughout every value chain stage were identified and emphasis was put on the important role of science, innovation and technology and Islamic financing in this area. The estimated financing cost of this project amounts to US\$176 million. It is expected that the income of small farmers in states benefiting from the project will increase by 80% and that these states will achieve self-sufficiency in rice. The Bank has also started adopting the first added value chain based MCPS with Gabon, focusing on the comparative advantages of this state like the

construction sector and manganese production. After the implementation of this strategy Gabon is expected to move from being a state that exports raw materials to one that exports manufactured products.

IDBG, with all its entities, will play its role in insurance, trade and encouraging the private sector. I also would like to point out that the Bank Group's new trend towards decentralisation and more field presence in its Member States will allow it to accelerate the implementation of these programmes, improve the quality of projects and amplify their development effect.

Achieving this vision doubtlessly requires more investment in the human capital through, education, training and empowering. The Bank recently launched an integrated programme in cooperation with the most prominent universities in the world to provide scholarships to prepare the youth to actively participate in the development journey, with emphasis on sustainable science. The Bank has also intensified capacity building programmes in various areas namely capacity building for innovators and entrepreneurs to secure success conditions for their projects and businesses. Within this framework, from 5 to 10 December 2018, in parallel with the Transformers Summit in Cambridge, Britain, the Bank is organising the first academy to support the capacities of the young people who received financing from the Transform Fund which was recently established by the bank with US\$500 million, which aims at supporting science, innovation and technology initiatives in our Member States.

It should be noted that the implementation of IsDB Group's new programmes requires Member States to provide an appropriate investment environment, remove obstacles hindering the flow of investment, especially from the private sector, and adopt policies to transform their economies into a market economy that contributes effectively to socio-economic development. It is important that this transformation takes place within win-win partnerships. In this regard, I would like to emphasize that IsDB Group remains committed to provide technical support to Member States to develop legal frameworks and establish electronic platforms and other tools that contribute to the success of the economic transformation of our Member States and the well-being and prosperity of their people.

Your Excellency Mr. President,
Brothers and sisters,

The promotion of economic and trade cooperation among Member States is a strategic objective of the IsDB Group and has been the major catalyst for its operations since 1975. In this context, I would like to share with you the actions that the Group undertook to this end in 2017:

- a) The Bank's total credit amounted to about US\$ 3.9 billion, geared to infrastructure projects in the areas of energy, transportation, water and sanitation, agriculture, health, and education.
- b) The Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) approved last year a record financing of US\$931 million. It also paid greater attention to overcoming the most difficult obstacles facing the private sector by investing in the financial sector through credit lines, equity investments and infrastructure financing to enhance private sector productive capacity and increase competitiveness in Member States.
- c) The International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC) increased its trade finance operations by 10% to about US\$5 billion, 35% of which was allocated to the least developed Member States, and 88 percent of these operations financed intra trade. ITFC has launched a number of important programs, such as the "Arab-Africa Trade Bridges" program and the "Aid for Trade Initiative for Arab States", which ended its first phase late 2017 and will now start its second phase after having completed 28 different projects in the Arab countries. In addition, the ITFC has recently adopted a program for the development of small and medium enterprises in West Africa. It focuses its action on measures to facilitate trade, including through programmes to improve border crossings and customs procedures.
- d) The Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC), over the past three years, has provided insurance cover for investment projects and commercial operations in 43 OIC Member States, with a development impact that exceeds US\$ 29 billion. I am pleased to inform you that ICIEC has recently launched a new initiative called COMCEC Business Intelligence Centre (CBIC), which is expected to significantly contribute to enhancing Member States' credit systems by boosting private sector lending in the region by US\$670 billion annually. It will also help to substantially increase intra-OIC trade.
- e) In the field of science and research, the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI) has played an effective role in developing the capacities of all IsDB Member States in the various areas of economic and social development. The topics it covered were not limited to Islamic banking and its role in achieving sustainable development but included other development areas such as public-private partnership, project evaluation, monetary policy, Blockchain, and development issues (intra-trade, microfinance, employment and transportation).

- f) Currently, the Bank is in the process of finalizing its strategy for regional cooperation and integration in preparation for its implementation starting from the first half of next year. It will be broken down into sub-regional programmes covering various economic sectors, including energy, agriculture and transportation. Under this strategy, a large share of the Bank's annual approvals will be allocated to regional projects. We hope that these regional projects will lead to greater integration among Member States.

Excellencies,

Brothers and sisters,

In connection with the theme of this thirty-fourth session, "Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States", it is worth noting that the IsDB Group has devoted special attention to trade facilitation among Member States over the past five years, particularly following the adoption of the Trade Facilitation Agreement in 2013 at the 9th Conference of the World Trade Organization in Bali, Indonesia. Indeed, the Group has implemented capacity building and training programmes in cooperation with the World Customs Organization, the World Trade Organization, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development and the United Nations regional commissions, in addition to reverse linkages from Member States well advanced in these areas.

I would like to emphasize that the new orientations, innovative mechanisms and programs, currently adopted by the IsDB Group, will contribute -by the Grace of Allah- to a quantum leap in the economic performance of Member States and to their prominent positioning within the global value chains and to creating a significant development impact for all segments of society so that no one is left behind.

In conclusion, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to all Member States for their continued support to the IsDB Group. I wish full success to this 34th Session, hoping it will come up with practical recommendations and proposals to promote and enhance cooperation between our Member States in the economic and trade fields.

Wassalamu Alaikom Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh

ANNEX

5

Original: English

**REPORT OF THE 33rd MEETING OF
THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE
(İstanbul, 25 November 2018)**

1. The 33rd Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the COMCEC was held on November 25th, 2018 in İstanbul, on the sidelines of the 34th Session of the COMCEC.

2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. M. Metin EKER, Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), the following OIC Institutions attended the Meeting:

- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
- Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT)
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group
- International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)-IDB Group
- Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC)- IDB Group
- Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD)- IDB Group
- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
- Organization of Shipowners Association of the OIC (OISA)
- Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)

3. The Meeting agreed on the following agenda items for discussion:

- Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy: Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the COMCEC Strategy
 - The List of Activities of the OIC Institutions Aligned with the COMCEC Strategy and COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations
 - Utilizing COMCEC Project Funding for the implementation of COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations
- Possible Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the Implementation of the SDGs in OIC Member States
 - Results of the “Tendency Survey on SDG Priorities of OIC Member Countries”
 - Activities of the OIC Institutions Serving to the Implementation of the SDGs

- Implementation of the Economic Cooperation Section of the OIC-2025 Programme of Action
- The Proposal on the “Business Intelligence Center”
- Trade Related Statistics
- Any Other Business

Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy: Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the COMCEC Strategy

4. Emphasizing the significance of the contributions of the OIC Institutions to the realization of the COMCEC Strategy and the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations, the Committee reviewed the completed and planned activities for the relevant OIC Institutions, aligned with the COMCEC Strategy for the periods of December 2017- November 2018 and December 2018-November 2019 based on the cooperation areas, namely trade, transport and communications, tourism, agriculture, poverty alleviation and financial cooperation. The Committee was also briefed by the relevant OIC Institutions on their planned activities.

(The list of activities organized and to be organized by the OIC Institutions aligned with the COMCEC Strategy between November 2017 and November 2019 is attached as Annex I.)

5. The Committee was informed by the CCO that out of 205 activities of the OIC Institutions listed in completed activities since the 33rd Session of the COMCEC, 39 percent of the activities were implemented in poverty alleviation area followed by trade (%33) and financial cooperation (%9). The Committee was also informed that with respect to types of the activities, the Institutions specially focused on trainings and technical assistance programs (%34.1), fairs, exhibition, forums (%19.5) and workshops (%13.2).

6. The Committee welcomed the proposal of the ICIEC (IDB Group) to add brief notes of the OIC Institutions regarding their achievements, programmes and activities since the previous COMCEC Session as an annex to the Report of the Sessional Committee Meetings. The Committee requested the CCO in collaboration with the ICIEC (IDB Group) to prepare a template for the abovementioned brief notes and circulate it to the OIC Institutions for receiving their feedbacks and comments. The Committee also requested the OIC Institutions to submit brief notes on their main achievements in line with this template to the next Meeting of the Sessional Committee.

7. For sensitizing the OIC Institutions on the programs and activities of each other, the Committee requested all the OIC Institutions to inform/invite each other to their relevant activities.

8. The Committee highlighted the importance of the works of the COMCEC Working Groups where detailed research reports, specific policy recommendations and capacity needs of the member countries are discussed by the Member Country experts in the specified themes. With a view to better addressing the needs and challenges of the Member Countries, the Committee requested the IDB Group to benefit more from the COMCEC research reports, which includes various field studies and the outcomes of the Working Group Meetings in designing their programmes, activities and drafting their country partnership strategies. The Committee welcomed the IDB Group's offer to the CCO for making a study visit to the IDB Headquarters for discussing a methodology for sharing the outcomes of the COMCEC Working Group Meetings and research reports.

9. The Committee underscored that the OIC Institutions shall give due regard to the Ministerial Policy Recommendations as well as the Working Group themes for the period 2019-2021 in planning their future cooperation activities and programs. With a view to better reflecting the activities of the OIC Institutions aligned with COMCEC Strategy and Policy Recommendations adopted at the Ministerial level, the Committee requested the OIC Institutions to indicate specifically the relevance between the activities and the policy recommendations in their lists of activities.

10. The CCO informed the Committee about the sectoral themes to be supported by the COMCEC Coordination Office in the 7th Project Call to be made in September 2019, under the COMCEC Project Funding. In this regard, the Committee underlined the importance of the submission of the project proposals by the OIC Institutions through COMCEC Project Funding for the realization of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations. The Committee also underscored that the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations should be utilized by the OIC Institutions in planning their future cooperation activities and programs.

11. The Committee welcomed the proposal of the ICIEC (IDB Group) to establish an e-platform to monitor the implementation of the planned activities of the OIC Institutions. The Committee requested the ICIEC (IDB Group) in collaboration with the SESRIC to prepare the details of this proposal and submit it to the next Sessional Committee Meeting to be considered as a separate agenda item.

Possible Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the Implementation of the SDGs in the OIC Member States

12. The Committee was informed by the SESRIC on the results of the "Tendency Survey on SDG Priorities of OIC Member Countries" circulated to the Member

Countries in line with the relevant resolution of the 33rd Session of the COMCEC. It was noted that 36 member countries have communicated their completed or partial responses to the SESRIC. The SESRIC informed the participants that the Member Countries prioritized the following eight SDGs respectively:

1. SDG-1 titled “End poverty in all its forms everywhere”,
2. SDG-3 titled “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”,
3. SDG-2 titled “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture”,
4. SDG-4 titled “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”,
5. SDG-5 titled “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”,
6. SDG 8 titled “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all”,
7. SDG 9 titled “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation”,
8. SDG-13 titled “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.”

13. The Committee was also informed that SESRIC has prepared a report on the Member Countries’ survey responses to be submitted to the 34th COMCEC Ministerial Session.

14. The Committee was informed by the CCO of the “List of Activities of the OIC Institutions Related to the SDGs for the period of 2018 and 2019” which was compiled by the CCO in line with the relevant resolution of the 33rd COMCEC Ministerial Session. The Committee requested the OIC Institutions to give due regard to the needs and priorities of the Member Countries, which was presented by the SESRIC via the SESRIC’s above-mentioned tendency survey, while planning their activities related to the SDGs and report to the CCO their activities directly related to the SDGs.

(The list of activities organized and to be organized by the OIC Institutions related to the SDGs between 2018-2019 is attached as Annex 2.)

15. The Committee underlined that the OIC-UN Coordination Meetings can be utilized for informing the UN bodies about the SDG-related efforts of the OIC Institutions.

Implementation of the Economic Cooperation Section of the OIC-2025 Programme of Action

16. The OIC General Secretariat informed the Committee about the recent developments towards the implementation of the OIC-2025 Programme of Action. The Committee highlighted the importance of effective cooperation and coordination among the OIC Institutions concerning realization of the goals defined by the OIC-2025: Programme of Action. It was noted that the 4th Meeting of ACMOI will be held on 3-4 December 2018 with the participation of the OIC Organs/Institutions.

The Proposal on the “Business Intelligence Center”

17. The ICIEC (IDB Group) made a presentation on “Draft Final Report for Business Intelligence Center”. The Committee took note with appreciation of the proposal and the efforts of the ICIEC (IDB Group) on realization of the project. The Committee highlighted the importance of and need for further elaboration regarding its organizational structure, legal framework and other technical details. The issue will be elaborated during the 34th COMCEC Session.

Trade Related Statistics

18. The Committee highlighted the importance of harmonizing the trade related statistics in the publications of the OIC Institutions. In this regard, the Committee requested the CCO, ICDT and SESRIC to utilize the possible venues, including the next COMCEC Trade Working Group Meeting to study and elaborate on the methodologies used for calculating OIC trade data with a view to harmonizing them.

Any Other Business

19. The Committee Meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

ANNEX

6

Original: Turkish

**ADDRESS BY H.E. FUAT OKTAY,
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE
34TH THE MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(Istanbul, 29 November 2018)**

Esteemed Ministers,
Distinguished Participants,

Essalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh

We have successfully concluded the 34th Session of the COMCEC after fruitful discussions.

In this year's meeting, we have held many beneficial and special sessions on "trade facilitation", and particularly on the subject of "customs risk management".

I would like to thank the delegations of member countries, the representatives of international organizations and our panelists for their contributions to the 34th Session of COMCEC.

Esteemed Participants,

As we are all very well aware, countries today are leaning more and more towards protectionist policies in world economy and trade, while the competitive atmosphere and uncertainties in the international arena are gradually growing.

In this respect, we need to focus on the structural problems that reduce our productivity and our competitiveness in global markets.

Rather than remaining dependent on the export of raw materials and a few agricultural products, our target should be to build an effective and high added value economy centered on production.

In this context, we should diversify our range of products as well as our trade partners, especially among countries of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, and take firm steps towards creating a production-based economy that generates high added value.

The share of Organization for Islamic Cooperation' countries in global trade was 9.5 percent in 2017. Considering that the geography of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation constitutes approximately 23 percent of the world population, it is clear that our share in the global trade is very low.

On the other hand, in 2017, products that demand high skills and technology have accounted for 44 percent of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation countries' exported goods.¹

This is indeed a very positive development.

However, it is essential that we strive to raise these figures even more, so that we may obtain a higher share in global production and trade, and compensate for our losses of the past.

Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,

As emphasized by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan in yesterday's inaugural speech, in addition to witnessing economic turmoils affecting the globe, we are deeply grieved by the current state of the Muslim world.

The blood of Muslims is being shed in Syria, Yemen, Libya and Palestine, while in many parts of the world, Muslims are struggling for their very survival in the harshest of conditions.

Conflicts between Muslims are being fanned to target our unity, our solidarity, our richness in every sense of the word, and our future, with an ongoing effort to collapse Muslim countries from within.

On one hand, the names of terrorist organizations acting as the puppets of dark forces are being associated with Islam, while on the other hand, cases of hostility and discrimination against Muslims are increasing all across the world.

It is our responsibility as well as our duty to halt this course of events.

In the Quran, our *Rab* commands us to remain united.

¹ OIC Exports by Degree of Manufacturing, UNCTADSTAT

As we all know, the Surah Al-Hujurat tell us: “İnnemâl mu'minûne ihvetun”. “The believers are but brothers”.

We must, first of all, follow this command of *Rab*.

Together, and as siblings, we must fight against any type of wrong and injustice Muslims face.

We must start this fight today, without further delay.

To achieve this, it suffice that we hold onto the guidance of our *Rab* and act in unison.

With our efforts, the Muslim community will continue to remain steadfast, unmoved by all the problems that are being imposed on it externally.

Distinguished participants,

To ensure that the Muslim world attains a stronger economy and has a prosperous future, we need to utilize such important mechanisms as COMCEC more effectively.

In this context, to develop trade within COMCEC and between member countries, we need to implement the Trade Preferential System between Organization for Islamic Cooperation at the soonest.

As we do this, we must, as emphasized by His Excellency President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, use our national currencies in our trade.

To protect ourselves from exchange rate manipulations, we have no other choice but to use our own national and indigenous currencies.

To increase the flow of foreign capital into our countries and to increase the efficiency of our investments, we need to take the necessary measures in a timely manner, and to create a suitable investment environment in our countries.

While the share of the countries of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation in foreign direct investments (FDI) was 10.2 percent in 2010, this fell down to 5.3 percent in 2016.

Although this share climbed to 7.4 percent in 2017, it still lags far behind our potential.

Distinguished Guests,

As you know, to alleviate the effects of the global financial crisis in 2008, the G-20 meeting was raised to the level of a meeting between heads of state. One of the main items on the agenda of the G-20 that gathered in Argentina this week was “the liberalization of trade” to prevent global economic contraction caused by the trade wars between the US and China.

In fact, I believe it is an important opportunity for OIC countries that the Term Chairman of the OIC, the President of the Republic of Turkey, will participate in this meeting and voice at the highest level the instrument of trade facilitation, which we have been discussing for the past two days.

In this context, the best response to this protectionist wave would be the reduction of costs through the facilitation of trade, and especially the elimination of tariffs and non-tariff barriers as well as the simplification of customs procedures.

As expressed by the delegation of Senegal in the meeting we held yesterday, we should increase our efforts for the facilitation of trade.

In this respect, it is important that more countries become parties to the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement.

After the World Trade Organization’s Trade Facilitation Agreement has entered into effect following its ratification by more than 110 countries, I believe that all member countries should actively support its implementation.

Customs is one of the most critical component of the trade facilitation process and of the chain of supply.

To facilitate trade and ensure safe commerce, we must implement the right and effective risk management procedures in our customs.

As expressed by Mr. Sonneh, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Regional Integration of Gambia, the simplification of procedures, as well as the modernization of infrastructure and the adoption of information technologies at customs, are of great importance.

I sincerely believe that the set of policy recommendations we have adopted today on “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in Organization for Islamic Cooperation Member States” will guide us and provide us with important clues on the way towards trade facilitation and customs risk management in our countries.

Esteemed Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,

At the 34th Session of COMCEC, we have also taken important decisions and adopted policy recommendations in key areas of cooperation, such as trade, transport and communication, tourism, agriculture, financial cooperation and poverty reduction..

We have reached the final stage for the implementation of the OIC Trade Preferential System, which is the first multilateral trade agreement to cover the Muslim world.

We have also reached the final stage in the work for the establishment of the IIT Arbitration Center, to be established in Istanbul.

The center is set to become operational in 2019.

We have taken the decision to initiate a program within the SESRIC and Islamic Development Bank for establishing a center among for commercial intelligence between Muslim countries.

In addition to all these developments, we have approved the founding of the OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum, while also deciding to give momentum to the efforts for the implementation of the COMCEC Gold Exchange and the COMCEC Real Estate Exchange Projects.

I fully believe that all member countries will demonstrate the necessary efforts to realize these decisions.

In this context, we are provided an effective and flexible financing opportunity by the COMCEC Project Finance mechanism.

Under this mechanism, 17 capacity building projects, from which 36 Islamic countries are benefitting, have been successfully implemented this year. I invite all member countries to benefit more effectively from this mechanism.

Esteemed Ministers
Distinguished Delegates,

I deem it very appropriate that next year's Ministers' Session of the COMCEC will address the subject of "Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries".

I believe that this is a very pertinent and timely theme as the Islamic World.

Before concluding, I would like to thank all member country delegations, the General Secretariat of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation, the Institutions of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and other international organizations for their valuable contributions.

I would also like to express my thanks to the COMCEC Coordination Office, our translators and interpreters, and all staff taking part in the organization of our meeting, for their valuable efforts in ensuring the successful execution of this meeting.

I hope that our discussions, deliberations and decisions taken in the Ministers Exchange of Views Session will bear beneficial results and deepen our cooperation as the Islamic Ummah.

Hoping that you will return to your countries with happy memories from Istanbul, I wish you all a safe return back home.

I would like to thank you all individually for your participation and contributions. I wish all of you a good trip, and take care good care of yourselves.

Thank you very much.

Esselamu Alaikum wa Rahmetullahi wa Barakatuhu.

ANNEX

7

Original: English

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

1. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP

1.1. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP FOR THE EXCHANGE OF VIEWS SESSION OF 34TH COMCEC SESSION

The 33rd COMCEC Session agreed on “Facilitating Trade: Improving Customs Risk Management Systems in the OIC Member States” as the theme for the Exchange of Views Session at the 34th Session of the COMCEC and requested the COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report it to the 34th COMCEC Ministerial Session. Along with the issues related to customs risk management, the WG also considered the challenges and possible policy options related to various aspects of trade facilitation. In this framework, the Working Group, come up with the following challenges and problems as well as the policy options for facilitating trade and improving customs risk management in the member countries.

Challenges and Problems:

In addition to the challenges related to high trade costs; non-tariff barriers and limited awareness of relevant stakeholders about the economic gains from trade facilitation; the Trade Working Group highlighted the following possible challenges and problems in trade facilitation and CRM:

Simplification and Harmonization of Trade Procedures

- Cumbersome trade procedures and documentation;
- Harmonization challenges in trade procedures and documentation;
- Need to simplify procedures for authorized traders with high compliance;
- Complex and outdated import and export requirements;
- Special case of Palestinian Customs- as they have no control on clearance procedures due to the absence of ports and borders, and their efforts for simplification of customs clearance procedures and trade facilitation confront major hindrances from the Israeli side

Customs Risk Management

- Limited coordination among the relevant stakeholders with respect to customs risk management
- Need for a sound risk management strategy for improving the CRM performances and modernization efforts;
- Inadequate IT infrastructure required for customs risk management

- Insufficient use of audit-based controls and risk assessment techniques;
- Lack of integrated customs risk management system

Legal and Institutional Framework

- Lack of strategic framework which will enable concerting efforts between public and private stakeholders for the national trade facilitation reform;
- Need for better national coordination
- Inadequate legal framework;
- Inadequate information and transparency on trade-related laws; regulations, procedures and inadequate public availability;
- Low level of co-ordination and communication among the relevant border agencies;

Infrastructure and Modernization

- Inadequate transport infrastructure (roads, posts, border points etc.)
- Limited physical infrastructure (buildings, equipment, etc.);
- Inadequate customs administrative capacity (technical, financial and human capacity);
- Limited use of information technology and automation as well as inter-operable data-sharing system;

Harmonization and alignment of product standards and conformity

- Need for the alignment of product standards with international standards;
- Need for the development of “quality infrastructure”² (e.g. insufficient number of accredited laboratories at the national level)

Transit Trade

- Inadequate transit systems
- Limited cooperation between agencies of countries involved in transit trade
- Insufficient pre-arrival processing for transit facilitation

International Cooperation

- Unaligned operating hours at Customs offices across countries;
- Need for an information exchange mechanism which allows electronic exchange of data between and among OIC customs administrations

² “A quality infrastructure is the totality of the institutional framework (whether public or private) put in place to formulate, issue, and implement standards and the associated evidence of compliance (i.e., the relevant mix of inspection, testing, certification, metrology, and accreditation) in order to improve the suitability of products, processes, and services for their intended purposes; prevent barriers to trade; and facilitate technological cooperation.” (UNECE, designing and implementing trade facilitation in Asia and Pacific, 2013)

Policy Recommendations

In light of the above-mentioned challenges and problems, TWG came up with a set of policy recommendations:

1. Simplifying trade procedures and documentation

- Conducting needs assessments by national authorities and the relevant international organizations to highlight the challenges and obstacles in ensuring the efficiency of customs procedures
- Promoting the adoption of international standards in customs procedures and related matters for harmonizing and simplifying data, documents and procedures related to the cross border trade and logistics operations consistent with national rules and regulations
- Streamlining customs law, regulations and procedures in line with the international standards to facilitate trade.
- Enhancing supportive IT infrastructure for automation of customs and other border agency procedures for imports, exports and transit formalities.
- Developing interoperable Single Window Systems³ as a trade facilitation tool to simplify and expedite import, export and transit formalities in the interested member countries.

Improving Customs Risk Management

- Developing/upgrading customs risk management (CRM) systems used by customs authorities to identify high risk areas while facilitating the legitimate trade;
- Establishing a risk management committee and developing an efficient and effective risk management strategy for improving the CRM performances and modernization efforts;
- Exchange of information in real-time with national and international agencies;
- Maintaining adequate IT support for the electronic submission of pre-arrival/pre-departure information for risk assessment;
- Using advanced techniques and tools for risk assessment; such as usage of appropriate statistical models etc.
- Utilizing Integrated CRM system including Data Warehouse, Business Intelligence, and Data Mining;
- Enhancing customs audit based controls; including post-clearance
- Developing integrated customs risk management system

³ "A Single Window is a facility that allows parties involved in trade and transport to lodge standardized information and documents with a single entry point to fulfill all import, export, and transit-related regulatory requirements." (UNECE Recommendation No 33)

- Promoting authorized economic operators program to facilitate the cross border movement of goods treated by low-risk operators;
- Implementing joint or coordinated controls at border posts where appropriate, in consultation with other Customs administrations to facilitate trade (e.g. one stop shop);

2. Legal and Regulatory Framework

- Calling for strong political and stakeholder support for the effective implementation of trade facilitation measures
- Developing a strategic planning framework and preparing a National Strategic Plan with a view to ensure coordination and collaboration among public and private stakeholders
- Establishing well-functioning national trade facilitation bodies for enhancing coordination among the relevant stakeholders through effective communication systems
- Encouraging national trade facilitation monitoring mechanisms in order to measure the progress in trade facilitation over time and take the necessary measures accordingly.
- Encouraging the governments to access to the relevant international conventions for standardizing the customs-related procedures
- Enhancing effective publication of trade rules and regulations (such as laws, decrees, changes in regulations, tariffs, fees and charges, working hours and announcements) through establishing trade portals and websites for allowing more transparent dissemination of import, export, and transit requirements and issuance of advance ruling.

3. Physical Infrastructure and Modernization

- Supporting customs modernization efforts through improving customs related infrastructure with information and communication technology and non-intrusive inspection technology to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of customs
- Enhancing human resources via training and continuous capacity building the existing staff and employing new staff having digital skills.
- Encouraging Public-Private Partnerships for improving customs infrastructure as well as enhancing customs modernization

4. Harmonization and alignment of standards and conformity

- Strengthening harmonization, alignment of standards and conformity assessment procedures with international standards.
- Participating actively in the work of international standards bodies so that the resulting norms can be applicable to the particular circumstances of the Member Countries, as appropriate

- Developing/Strengthening National “Quality Infrastructure” in order to facilitate access to the international markets.

5. Adopting Measures to facilitate Transit Trade

- Improving the usage of risk assessment to facilitate transit trade
- Considering transit agreements with neighboring countries, as appropriate
- Encouraging pre-arrival processing for transit facilitation
- Strengthening cooperation between agencies of countries involved in transit trade

6. Regional/International Cooperation

- Enhancing information exchange among the border agencies of the Member Countries with a view to facilitating trade
- Promoting mutual recognition agreements for border controls and authorized economic operators,
- Promoting cross-border interconnectivity and interoperability of the national Single Window Systems towards establishing sub-regional Single Window Systems in the OIC Member Countries.
- Conducting experience sharing programmes in the field of trade facilitation (expert exchange or trainings and best practices etc.) among the Member Countries especially by the relevant OIC Institutions.
- Improving the infrastructure of land border crossing points such as reciprocal modernization and automation of customs and transport connectivity through the joint efforts of the interested neighboring countries.
- Supporting the efforts aiming to acquire Palestinian’s right to establish their own customs warehouses and clearance centers.

1.2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 12th Meeting on November 6th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Improving Authorized Economic Operator Programs in the OIC Member Countries.” During the Meeting, Trade Working Group, made deliberations for policy approximation among the Member Countries regarding developing authorized economic operator programs. The Room Document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted specifically for the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions sent to the COMCEC Trade Working Group focal points by the COMCEC Coordination Office. During the Meeting, the participants agreed on the policy recommendations included in the Room Document. The existing document includes these policy recommendations highlighted during the Meeting.

Policy Advice 1: Encouraging the design of an attractive package where benefits provided by the AEO program to the private sector outnumber costs borne by firms and traders in order to attract companies to participate in the program

AEO programs aim at facilitating trade and contributing safety and security. Considering the fact that AEO is a voluntary program, attracting companies to participate in the program has vital importance. Therefore, the benefits provided by the AEO program to the private sector need to be evaluated in relation to the costs borne by firms and traders to obtain authorization. Such costs include application and procedure-related fees, and the costs of carrying out the necessary changes to become eligible for authorization. The EU case provides a good example for package design, where AEO guidelines are published and updated by the Taxation and Customs Unit. The guidelines provide a clear demonstration of benefits, procedures, legal texts and contact offices for agents wishing to obtain authorization.

In this respect, while designing a package, at least, the following benefits are suggested to be satisfied:

- Immediate release of cargo upon arrival by Customs and other government agencies.
- Deferred payment of duties and taxes
- Relief from guarantee/bond requirements

Policy Advice 2: Promoting an integrated approach in the legislative, organizational and operational dimensions with other government agencies during the design phase of AEOs in order to eliminate duplications and redundancy as well as burdensome procedures

Design of the AEO program should follow an integrated approach taking into account its multiple dimensions (legislative, organizational and operational). During the design phase, legislative and regulatory reform is often needed along with possible organizational restructuring and alignment with other government agencies (OGAs). In many countries, overlap is often present between Customs Authorities and OGAs involved in border security and control of exports and imports. Consultation and alignment with other government agencies during the design phase is therefore crucial to avoid redundant and burdensome procedures in areas of overlap.

A centralized and automated data exchange system between different AEOs and related government agencies can be adopted, where applicable. The import/export declarations of the trader can be sent to all stakeholders in a safe and secure electronic environment for their examination, verification and authorization of transactions. Next, the government agencies can either authorize electronically or require physical inspection.

Policy Advice 3: Encouraging the adoption of and increasing the number of mutual recognition agreements (MRAs) as they enable AEO holders to enjoy trade facilitation benefits provided by the partner countries

Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRAs) make it possible for AEO holders to enjoy the trade facilitation benefits provided by the partner countries. They also contribute the security of the supply chain due to recognition of AEO status across partner countries.

Once MRAs are signed, maintaining compliance and risk management would become more effective and would lead to new MRAs. Standardization and harmonization of supply chain security measures are integral part of any effective MRAs.

Expanding the number of MRAs would also serve to form the foundations of regional AEO program which will provide facilitation gains to companies across the OIC Member Countries.

Policy Advice 4: Enhancing the communication with the private sector with AEOs through utilizing client relations management

AEO programs are voluntary-based and heavily depend on open communication channels between the Customs Authority and the stakeholders. Insufficient consultation with the private sector can be challenging as it may cause potential misconceptions about the anticipated benefits, thereby reducing the incentives for companies from becoming an AEO.

Client Relations Management that is used by a number of OIC AEO programs increases the attractiveness and the viability of the AEO programs and improves the communication with the private sector.

Policy Advice 5: Supporting the participation of SMEs in the supply chain in order to benefit from the AEO programs to their full extent

SMEs comprise a backbone and vital part of the supply chain in the economies. However, due to the capacity and financial challenges, SMEs may not benefit from the AEO programs and have difficulties to participate in the supply chain.

Utilizing Customs brokers with AEO status can facilitate participation of SMEs' in AEO program. Hence, SMEs can enjoy almost all procedural benefits of AEO status while diminishing the cost of further investment.

Among the OIC member countries, Jordan offers an AEO-like program called the Silver List to incentivize SMEs to participate in trade practices that are compliant and safe by offering some of the trade facilitations in the Golden List program. Furthermore, successful Silver List participants are invited to apply for the Golden List program.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Trade Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner and also other issues related to trade facilitation.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for project proposals each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas and their sub-areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects. The projects may include seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

2.1. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 11th Meeting on March 15th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Governance of Transport Corridors in OIC Member States: Challenges, Cases, and Policy Lessons”. During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to the governance of transport corridors. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report titled “Governance of Transport Corridors in OIC Member States: Challenges, Cases, and Policy Lessons” and the responses of the Member States to the policy questions sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office. The policy recommendations are as followings:

Policy Recommendation I: Developing/Improving an enabling legal, institutional and regulatory framework for ensuring effective coordination and cooperation among the relevant countries and for achieving reform-demanding objectives.

Rationale:

A strong legal and institutional framework, defining common objectives and plans is a pre-requisite for effective coordination among the countries and implementation of the objectives for the development of the corridor. Ambitious objectives without a sound legal and institutional framework make it difficult to achieve reform-demanding objectives. The legal framework is determined as creating binding or non-binding incentives to reach the identified common objectives. Once the consensus is reached between the different stakeholders on the objectives and management of the corridor, the process of creating a legal basis begins. Legal framework typically cover the overall strategic perspective of the corridor in various levels, institutional arrangements, working principles and financing issues. It can also covers sanctions in case of non-compliance, prioritisation systems or sustainability goals. The commitment and willingness by the members to reach a common objective is expressed through legal and institutional framework. Hence, national reforms and investments are more effective when considered from a regional perspective, ideally coordinated with neighbouring countries.

Policy Recommendation II: Establishing a dedicated corridor secretariat/coordination unit for facilitating corridor governance through ensuring permanent communication and coordination among the relevant countries.

Rationale:

The presence of a dedicated secretariat is critical for the effective corridor governance. The function of the secretariat is to maintain the dialogue among all relevant countries and stakeholders. In this respect, a corridor secretariat has a catalyst function towards improved corridor governance by preparing meetings, ensuring communication and coordination among the countries, transforming the objectives into action as well as fund raising for development of the corridor. Furthermore, a dedicated secretariat is also critical for formulating long-term strategies, analysing the current trends and practices, collecting of data and statistics as well as setting performance indicators and monitors their implementation.

Policy Recommendation III: Promoting the development of transport corridor governance in a holistic way, combining hard measures such as infrastructure and soft measures such as political support, stakeholder consultation and capacity building.

Rationale:

Effective corridor governance is a key factor towards successful development of transnational transport corridors. Corridor governance is a complex process involving various aspects such as legal and institutional matters, as well as multiple stakeholders, often from various countries. Furthermore, governance requires various hard and soft measures that are interrelated and need to be developed in a harmonized way. These measures are; infrastructure, legal and institutional framework, corridor objectives and political support, corridor performance monitoring and dissemination, corridor promotion and stakeholder consultation, and capacity building. Developing transport corridors serves to multiple objectives including facilitation of trade by providing access to markets, regional integration, improving growth prospects, enhancing cooperation and collaboration among countries and related public and private sector agencies.

Policy Recommendation IV: Seeking support of the related international organizations in carrying forward corridor governance, especially in the initial phase of corridor development.

Rationale:

Corridor governance depends on a range of factors, such as maturity of the corridor, political will and support, regional stability, the presence of an international organisation facilitating corridor governance, and funding availability. In this respect, international organisations play a decisive role not only in the establishment of a corridor but also in improving corridor governance. The knowledge, accumulation, resources and the role of international organisations as independent mediators are valuable for consensus building among the relevant countries, providing structure, as

well as some initial funding in the beginning of the process. With the Abidjan-Lagos Corridor (ALC), the World Bank played a key role in initiating the corridor. Both for South-East Europe Transport Observatory (SEETO) and notably Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia (TRACECA), the EU had a prominent role in bringing together the member states, negotiating the legal framework, commissioning studies, hosting training sessions and more. For the Eurasian Central Corridor, UNESCAP is playing a similar role by publishing strategic documents and performance studies to justify the establishment of governance institution on a corridor level. The initial efforts of international organisations are useful to convince the member states on the merits of joint corridor development.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.

2.2. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 12th Meeting on October 11th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of

“Planning of National Transport Infrastructure in the OIC Countries”. During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to the transport infrastructure planning. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report titled “Planning of National Transport Infrastructure in the Islamic Countries” and the responses of the Member States to the policy questions sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office. The policy recommendations are as followings:

Policy Recommendation I: Developing guidelines for the preparation and implementation of national transport master plans by taking into consideration international best practices towards having more integrated and sustainable land and transport plans and solutions.

Rationale:

Transport planning is a comprehensive subject that is linked with various social, economic and environmental factors. Transport planning includes not only road, rail, and other infrastructure but operations and management to ensure that modes of transport do not compete but complement each other. Transport planning is also crucial for ensuring a well functioning urban transport. In addition to motorized transport, the importance of non-motorised transport is becoming clearer, especially cycling and pedestrianization. Smarter planning is achieving more with less. It is a complex process, therefore, developing guidelines, including a template for a national transport masterplan, that take international best practices into consideration, is of vital importance to facilitate successful preparation and implementation of transport master plans in OIC Member States.

Policy Recommendation II: Identifying comprehensive and relevant Key Performance Indicators for the effective monitoring and evaluation of the performance of transport plans and their outcomes, and sharing the results with the relevant public and private sector stakeholders.

Rationale:

Monitoring and evaluation is very important for ensuring smooth implementation of the national transport infrastructure plans. It is about self-learning meant for the project owner. However, this process is carried out by few of the member states only. Nonetheless, only some member countries have a such a system. Identifying and compiling various key performance indicators (KPIs) is critically important for measuring the progress and making sound evaluations. KPIs are also useful for benchmarking, setting targets, raising standards, and the successes/failures. The followings are the most commonly used KPIs for transport master plans;

- Present Value of Benefits (PVB) – total discounted benefits during the appraisal period
- Present Value of Costs (PVC) – total discounted economic costs incurred during the appraisal period
- Economic Net Present value (ENPV) –the absolute size of the project net benefits.
- Benefit to Cost Ratio (BCR) – the ratio between total benefit and costs. This gives the relative size of the project net benefits but is independent of project size
- Economic Internal Rate of Return (EIRR) – Similar to BCR it is independent of project size and gives an indication of the scale of benefits relative to the investment cost.

Policy Recommendation III: Improving the planning capacity of the OIC member states through applying contemporary methods such as setting a vision with a set of social and economic objectives.

Rationale:

The quality and effectiveness of the infrastructure investment plans are of utmost importance for attracting investments and to leverage private sector interest. Improving the capacity for preparing transport master plans and infrastructure investment plans including human skills, processes, and tools is vital for ensuring the adequate quality. In this framework, a mechanism for assessment of the institutional capacity of relevant agencies can be developed and planning tools, including econometric and transport modeling and the use and application of big data can be utilized.

Policy Recommendation IV: Improving national transport infrastructure planning process and encouraging public private partnerships (PPPs) particularly for needs assessment, encouraging investments, well-functioning operations and maintenance.

Rationale:

Involvement of both private and public sectors is vital for the successful design, implementation and evaluation of a national transport infrastructure plan. Active stakeholder involvement would contribute to the success of effective operations and maintenance, as well as sound in all modes of transport. The contribution of public private partnerships to the effective implementation of transport master plan can be revealed through making ex-ante and ex-post evaluations. Furthermore, general public opinion and public consultation during the transport planning process and implementation are vital for better transport infrastructure planning.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.

3. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

3.1. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 11th Meeting on February 15th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies in the OIC Member Countries.” During the Meeting, Tourism Working Group, made deliberations on destination development and institutionalization strategies in the OIC Member Countries in tourism sector. Accordingly, the participants has come up with some policy recommendations.

Policy Advice 1. Encouraging the establishment of/Strengthening local and regional public-private Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) with the assignment of responsibilities related to destination planning, development, marketing and management.

Rationale:

Destinations need a holistic approach in planning, development, marketing and management that would coordinate and lead various stakeholders as well as integrate their efforts effectively. Existence of a governing body (i.e. DMO) to develop, lead and implement destination wide strategies is of particular importance for a destination’s success.

Destinations have different characteristics and their development, marketing and management need to be customized to local needs. Besides a central governing body (e.g. National Tourism Organization); developing, facilitating and empowering regional and local tourism governance structures (e.g. DMOs) lead to a more effective and efficient use of limited resources. This would also improve stakeholder engagement and participation, internalize external costs and create synergies between different actors.

Effective coordination and communication among various stakeholders is of utmost important for the success of a destination. A public-private legal structure of a DMO can facilitate all stakeholders’ involvement, pooling of knowledge and expertise, and cooperation, coordination as well as communication among the various stakeholders. In this respect, a purely public DMO managed by central governments may not have the necessary efficiency, funding, expertise and outcome orientation whereas a purely private DMO might focus on short-term gains while neglecting sustainable development, the needs of locals and environmental costs associated with tourism activity. Thus a combination of two approaches might create necessary efficiency while ensuring sustainability and transparency. In this framework, DMOs can be managed by private sector and audited by public authorities through a public private partnership.

Policy Advice 2. Planning supply and demand as well as identifying and monitoring KPIs for ensuring sustainable tourism development at the destination.

Rationale:

Traditionally, DMOs mainly focus on destination promotion. However, in developed destinations their role has expanded to cover product development, stakeholder coordination, as well as monitoring, evaluation and ensuring sustainability. Stakeholder engagement, carried by local and regional DMOs, requires effective coordination of various stakeholders including local tourism companies, government bodies, professional associations, universities, the local community and tourists. Since the interests of stakeholders differ, it is important for the DMO to balance the needs of different stakeholders. DMOs should create platforms such as stakeholder meetings and seminars, a digital portal etc. that can facilitate engagement of the various stakeholders. DMOs should also allocate sufficient staff to manage stakeholder relations, planning and representation of destination as a whole.

Countries seeking to attract more tourists often overlook the risk it imposes on natural and cultural resources, as well as its negative effect on the quality of life of the locals. In order to preserve natural environment and economic benefits and to distribute the latter equitably, tourism must be planned, developed and managed within step-by-step, ranging from the local to the territorial or provincial, to the national, and even to the international level. The responsibilities at each level must be clearly identified and implemented. Majority of the OIC Member Countries, have national public governance structures and very few of them have DMOs at regional level. Planning supply and demand and conducting impact analysis at the local level will help avoid overuse of shared resources and prevent underutilization during stagnant periods. Destinations at the development stage should therefore prepare master plans defining their vision of desired future state while preserving the resources. Mature destinations on the other hand are recommended to diversify their products and manage supply and demand at optimum prices in order to avoid overcrowding and low per tourist spending. DMOs should also encourage local participation, entrepreneurship and employment in tourism. Key performance indicators (e.g. average spending, occupancy levels, average length of stay, amount of leakages, level of environmental degradation, extent of community participation) should also be developed.

Policy advice 3. Encouraging self-funding of DMOs and improving efficiency as well as transparency in utilization and management of resources.

Rationale:

Funding DMO activities is a major challenge for countries. Many OIC member countries use public resources to finance local DMOs. On the other hand, other resources can also be utilized for this purpose. When DMOs are encouraged to create

their own funds (e.g. membership fees, commissions, marketing contributions, sponsorships, ticket sales, project grants, revenues from attractions and convention centres), the demand for public funds decrease. In this framework, while government incubation funds might be utilized during their establishment phases, DMOs should have the ability to finance some of their activities.

The public funding should also be linked with private funding and major KPIs (e.g. tourism tax revenues). Since DMOs are not profit organizations, they should aim to facilitate increased sales and improved sustainability of the region rather than concentrating on improving their own revenues. Therefore, transparent and fair use of funds raised also need to be ensured.

Policy Advice 4. Promoting destinations through forming OIC country alliances and the alliances with external stakeholders.

Rationale:

Complementary OIC cross-border destinations (e.g. national parks, cultural routes) can pool resources and efforts to promote the region as a whole, even an umbrella DMO can be created which might focus on a specific shared travel theme such as mountain climbing or desert safaris. In this respect, OIC Member countries can collaborate to promote each other's destinations, which would allow them to promote their destination, with limited expenses, to the tourists visiting other complementary OIC destinations.

Additionally, DMOs can form strategic alliances with external stakeholders (e.g. national airlines, sports federations, retail outlets (as in the case of shopping festivals)) for joint projects that would be benefited by both sides. To illustrate, Dubai Department of Tourism and Commerce Marketing formed a strategic alliance with Emirates Airlines to promote the destination. They implemented joint advertising campaigns such as "Hello Dubai" and joint familiarization tours for influencers and journalists. They also jointly offered special promotions aimed at attracting tourists to Dubai, including special airline ticket fares from certain destinations as well as complimentary products such as visas, park tickets etc. They also jointly developed "My Emirates Pass" which offers discounts to tourists for various activities and attractions.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Tourism Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.
- **OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum:** In its future meetings, the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas and the sub-areas from the private sector perspective.

3.2. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 12th Meeting on September 13th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Destination Marketing

Strategies in the OIC Member Countries.” During the Meeting, Tourism Working Group, made deliberations on destination marketing strategies in the OIC Member Countries in tourism sector. Accordingly, the participants has come up with some policy recommendations.

Policy Advice 1. Establishing/Empowering a central body (i.e. DMO) to position the destination at a desirable place among the competing destinations, to create the brand image of the destination, and to promote the destination through utilizing such tools as social media, digital marketing, trade fairs, public relations, and fam-trip organizations.

Rationale:

Destinations are composed of different stakeholders and posses different tangible and intangible resources. Tourist create their own experiences by interacting with these stakeholders and resources, thus every destination might offer different experiences and have some characteristics that might help compete other destinations. As dynamic systems, destinations require complex and sophisticated structures to design and implement their marketing strategies. Such a holistic view of destination marketing can be available at national (NTO) and regional (DMO) tourism organizations. In order to use their competitive advantages, destinations need a holistic approach in identifying these resources, converting them into products and unique selling propositions. A DMO can also create a marketing communications strategy and brand image for itself while matching these resources and desirable target markets.

Because the destination offers an overall experience, individual experiences with stakeholders and their marketing communications should also be aligned and consistent with the position of the destination and its brand image. Once the shared image is created it should be reinforced consistently by joint marketing activities such as Fam-trips, attendance to fairs and exhibitions, advertorial in traditional media, social marketing and web presence. Public relations activities (e.g. international news and event) should also support the shared brand vision of the destinations. In addition to their own marketing efforts, DMOs should also encourage individual marketing efforts of the stakeholders such as offering a percentage of selected marketing activities (e.g. attendance to fairs).

Policy Advice 2. Encouraging new product development (i.e. events, festivals and other suitable products) to mitigate the adverse effects of seasonality and the risks related to dependence on one product or a single market.

Rationale:

The products and services offered at the destination and their quality are major factors that satisfy or dissatisfy tourists. Considering the importance of their loyalty and their potential in promoting the destination, it is important to design the products based on the needs and expectations of target markets. Destinations should be selective in targeting rather than trying to be everything for every one. On the other hand, while doing this, destinations should not focus on only one market but rather on various suitable markets. In this framework, based on tangible and intangible resources at the destination (e.g. alternative tourism, events and festivals), the products and services provided need to attract different tourist markets, thus the seasonality and possible negative impacts of crises can be minimized.

Policy advice 3. Managing and regulating existing distribution channels, developing new distribution channels to prevent dependency and minimize power asymmetry between destination stakeholders as well as international intermediaries, and establishing strategic alliances with external stakeholders that would create synergies for the destination and other collaborators (i.e. airlines, event organizers etc).

Rationale:

Many destinations in the OIC Region are too much dependent on international tour operators and intermediaries (e.g. booking.com). Due to this dependency and in the absence of a representative body to organize and regulate collective responses of stakeholders against these distribution channels, these international platforms can try to improve their position and profits at the expense of the destination itself. Thus, DMOs can regulate stakeholders and set price bases as well as ceilings for commission rates. Besides, DMOs would also empower local and regional intermediaries and promote direct reservations by introducing new distribution channels along with destination webpages. DMOs might also establish strategic alliances with external stakeholders such as airlines (e.g. joint promotion, lower landing fees), event and festival organizers (i.e. venue provision), production companies (e.g. movie sponsorships) to pull direct demand to the destination.

Policy Advice 4. Promoting collection, storage, analyses and dissemination of market data on visitor characteristics, seasonality, distribution channels performance, source markets, trends etc., while respecting confidentiality and privacy of individuals, to improve the marketing effectiveness of the destination stakeholders as well as DMOs.

Rationale:

Tourists provide remarkable information and data for the destination starting from the reservation process, to customs, location based services, credit card expenditures, satisfaction surveys and so on. Yet, the information collected by individual stakeholders is not usually effectively used, because majority of the OIC destinations do not provide the necessary infrastructure to upload and import these data from individual suppliers. On the other hand, this data is invaluable to create a central marketing intelligence about the characteristics of demand, the image of the destination, quality of the products, visitor loyalty and recommendation etc. Thus a central data collection and processing unit can also be suggested at the destination level.

Policy Advice 5. Utilizing digital platforms, mobile applications and allocating special attention on social media channels for improving tourist experience, information credibility and interaction among visitors in destination marketing

Rationale:

Internet has dramatically changed destination marketing, branding and image formation and rapidly emerging digital economy is challenging the relevance of the existing marketing practices. Digital platforms have become widely used instruments in destination marketing. DMOs use internet as a central part of their marketing strategy. In this respect, there is a need to adopt digital marketing approaches and improve the capacity of the relevant personnel in this new area. Social media platforms, which emerged as dominant digital communications channels as tourists increasingly engage with destinations on mobile devices, can also be utilized for this purpose.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Tourism Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.

- **OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum:** In its future meetings, the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas and the sub-areas from the private sector perspective.

4. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

4.1. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG) has successfully held its 11th Meeting on February 22nd, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “*Improving Agricultural Market Performance: Developing Agricultural Market Information Systems*”. During the Meeting, Agriculture Working Group, made deliberations on improving agricultural Market Information Systems. Accordingly, the participants have come up with the following policy recommendations.

Policy Advice I: Designing Market Information Systems (MIS) through assessing and reviewing targeted stakeholders with a sustained budget support and an effective monitoring and evaluation framework

Rationale:

A well-functioning agricultural Market Information System (MIS) requires a careful design which aligns information provided to the identified needs of targeted stakeholders, especially farmers, traders, financial intermediaries and other private actors in the agricultural value chains through regular assessments and reviews. Because of the “public good” characteristics of the market information, sustainability of the MIS implementations can be achieved by governments’ budget support. Furthermore, a well-established monitoring and evaluation framework at the beginning is of utmost importance for the efficiency and sustainability of an MIS and ensuring that the target audience gains the anticipated benefits.

Policy Advice II: Building sufficient capacity for stock monitoring, trend analysis and forecasting as well as other relevant subjects beyond providing price information for a better functioning MIS

Rationale:

Based on evidence found with regards to the expectations of market players, it is clear that the content of MIS should go beyond price information and include reporting trend analysis which can signal supply and demand conditions and allow market players to take positions regarding immediate and future price levels. To achieve this, there is a need to make necessary investments in building output forecasting capacity, which is becoming increasingly more feasible with the advances in ICT.

Policy Advice III: Linking MIS to other market-supporting institutions and/or other risk-management tools to increase the mutual benefits.

Rationale:

Linking the development of MIS to that of other market-supporting institutions such as line ministries, producer unions, farmer and traders' cooperatives, marketing boards, state-owned economic enterprises and other institutions on the supply chain and/or other risk-management tools such as warehousing receipt systems, agricultural commodity exchanges as well as agricultural insurance programs can lead to mutual benefits. On the one hand, such institutional innovations will ensure that price discovery is more transparent and therefore worth accessing. On the other hand, effective and reliable MIS is an important prerequisite for developing these market institutions successfully.

Policy Advice IV: Forming the necessary mechanisms/platforms for an improved coordination among the key stakeholders and ensuring the effective review of the quality of information provided.

Rationale:

The needs of the relevant stakeholders along the agricultural value chains could be mediated by setting up necessary mechanisms/platforms such as specific working groups with representation from government, providers, key stakeholders and donors. These mechanisms facilitate coordination and rationalization of the information collection and dissemination process and thereby contribute to the efficiency. Furthermore, the quality of information provided and its relevance to target users could also be regularly reviewed through these mechanisms/platforms.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Agriculture Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

4.2. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG) has successfully held its 12th Meeting on September 20th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “*Analysis of Agri-food Trade Structures to Promote Agri-food Trade Networks among the OIC Member Countries*”. During the Meeting, AWG made deliberations on promoting inclusive agri-food trade networks among the OIC Member Countries. Room Document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted specifically for the 12th Meeting of AWG and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions were the main input for the discussions. During the Meeting, the participants agreed on the policy recommendations included in the Room Document. The existing document includes these policy recommendations highlighted during the Meeting.

Policy Recommendation I: Developing and implementing preferential market access schemes and intra- as well as cross-regional trade agreements (e.g. TPS-OIC (Trade Preferential System among the Member States of the OIC)) with a view to contributing to collaborative and sustainable agricultural trade development.

Rationale:

Liberalization of agricultural trade within the multilateral system is a long-term goal as no negotiations have been concluded on agriculture since the end of the Uruguay Round in 1994. Agricultural trade flows are the result of a complex interplay between policy, geography, and productivity. Both at the global level and within the OIC, trade networks in agricultural products have a strong intra-regional dimension. Besides, regional trade agreements play an important role in promoting intra-regional dynamics with the effects varied across regions, time periods and product groups. There is also a clear movement in the agricultural sector towards trading with more distant partners, and most regions—both within and outside the OIC—are becoming more geographically diversified in their export patterns. Developing and implementing preferential market access schemes, as well as to conclude more intra- and cross-regional trade agreements/arrangements can help member countries benefit from the strong intra-regional dynamics of agricultural trade by collaborating with regional partners to liberalize agricultural trade on a preferential basis while reducing the potential for trade diversion costs that can arise from the use of preferences or regional agreements. In this regard, Trade Preferential System among the Member States of the OIC (TPS-OIC) gives an important opportunity to initiate such a basis for liberalizing agricultural trade among the OIC Member States.

Policy Recommendation II: Building supply-side capacity and improving demand side capacity through rationalizing non-tariff measures (NTMs) for a sustained agricultural trade structure among OIC member countries.

Rationale:

It is important for OIC Member countries to develop their ability to produce competitively if they are to take full advantage of the opportunities offered by market integration. Dealing with trade barriers within exporting countries—particularly poor infrastructure and trade facilitation—is the key. But NTMs, unlike tariffs, can also have implications for exporters, not just importers. In particular, developing national quality infrastructure as it applies to agricultural products is important. Cooperation through the OIC, as well as through related bodies, can help support this undertaking. Global agricultural markets still remain distorted as evidenced by higher levels of protection and trade costs. Non-tariff measures as factors affecting the ability of exporters to access foreign markets like product standards, certification and technical barriers to trade play a key role in keeping trade costs high. Given the importance of NTMs, a key issue for countries to develop a sustainable trade base is quality and certification. Implementing NTMs only when justified by a rigorous cost-benefit analysis would be a key starting point to rationalize NTMs while collaborative efforts among regional and development partners on standards and certification could be facilitated by COMCEC and other related OIC branches. Supporting national quality infrastructure, including in areas like halal certification as well as infrastructure and trade facilitation would also help importers as well as exporters.

Policy Recommendation III: Developing and increasing economic connectivity as well as physical⁴ and information connectivity to reduce trade costs in agricultural trade markets for a sustainable agricultural trade development.

Rationale:

Bilateral trade is a complex interplay of a number of different economic forces. A major factor is connectivity. This is all the more true in emerging agricultural product sectors like fresh fruits and vegetables, and fish, where cold chain storage is important. There is evidence that some OIC member countries have strong comparative advantages in these sectors. To take advantage of them, however, they need to develop high quality transport connections with consumer markets. Trade agreements often do not address such issues, but broader economic cooperation programs can. Developing connectivity is one way of reducing trade costs in agricultural markets, in addition to lowering tariffs and rationalizing NTMs. In the current information age, access to information and information networks are as important as physical networks. In some cases,

⁴ Physical connectivity refers to physical infrastructure such as ports, airports, road and rail links as well as logistics services all of which enable shipments to move between geographically dispersed parties.

connectivity can be achieved through a hub structure but in other cases, trade links are relatively dispersed due to the tendency for agricultural trade to be in dissimilar goods exploiting geographical differences, and/or influenced by trade policies including regional and cross-regional trade agreements. Establishing and developing comprehensive regional and intra-OIC agricultural trade information networks could be the fastest, lowest cost and possibly the highest valued project in this direction.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Agriculture Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- Future **Joint Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture and Trade Working Groups** on the subject of OIC trade integration opportunities, efforts, policies and experiences.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above- mentioned policy areas, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

5.1. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG) has successfully held its 11th Meeting on April 5^h, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey, with the theme of “Quality of Education in the OIC Member Countries”. During the Meeting, PAWG made deliberations on the efforts for improving education quality. Accordingly, the Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations.

Policy Advice 1: Increasing both the quantity and quality of teachers, particularly who teach in schools serving to disadvantaged and poorest through improving wage rates, pedagogical interventions, performance incentives, training and curricula reforms.

Rationale:

Teachers are the most significant influencer of educational outcomes. However, they are in short supply in many OIC member countries. Efforts should be intensified to make teaching an employment of choice. Income levels are critical for attracting best candidates into the teaching profession. This partly explains why in high performing countries such as Singapore and South Korea, many top graduate students aspire to enter the teaching profession. However, teacher wage rates are very low in many OIC member countries. As indicated in SDG target-4, increasing the supply of qualified teachers must be a priority for the OIC countries.

On the other hand, evidence indicates that the level of competencies and knowledge among teachers remain low in the OIC member countries, particularly in schools serving the most excluded and poorest. Teachers lack the ability to transfer their own knowledge effectively to the students. Available options to improve teacher quality include contract-based appointment or the introduction of performance incentives. Pedagogical interventions that align teaching to student learning levels are also effective at improving student performance. Moreover, curricula reforms and teacher training should focus on the student’s understanding of the subjects and promote analysis instead of rewarding memorization.

Policy Advice 2: Increasing teaching and learning effectiveness through adoption and widespread use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) based new models.

Rationale:

In all assessments, the OIC as a group showed a declining trend in education quality, measured in terms of student achievement in math, science and reading. The use of ICT based teaching and learning models remain a popular choice to aid teachers and students to overcome such shortcomings. Jordan and Malaysia are two examples to OIC member countries which have launched new projects to improve the quality of education by investing in ICT infrastructure in education sector.

While the use of ICT-based teaching and learning models are popular and have some promising features, their success is not always guaranteed. Content design of ICT-based learning platforms is one of the important dimensions of this type of initiatives. Moreover, new ICT-based models should be tried in small-scales and only be scaled up following an evaluation of their impact on learning outcomes. Experiences of the OIC members who have made investments in this area can offer some guide to other members. Examples include distribution of low-cost tablet-PCs, establishing central online school monitoring and reporting systems.

Policy Advice 3: Promoting better early-childhood learning opportunities through accessible and affordable pre-primary schooling

Rationale:

Income poverty and poor health are system-wide problems that also limit early-life learning opportunities. The level of malnutrition is very high in some of the OIC member states; physical illness is a major cause of student absenteeism from school. Therefore, investments in child health and enhancing access to quality pre-primary schooling can go a long way for removing inequalities in learning opportunities at later stages of school education. The importance of early development is already recognized in the SDGs target 4.2 i.e. “ensuring that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education by 2030”.

Country-specific analysis of learning outcomes of Jordan, Malaysia and Nigeria confirm the importance of pre-primary schooling for later success in primary and secondary grades. According to one estimate, providing children with 3 years of Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED) would increase the average secondary and tertiary educational attainment by 0.7 years. However, coverage of ECED differs throughout the OIC members. In many countries, participation rate in pre-primary

education is low. In many instances, reliance on private providers limits access of the children from economically poor families or creates inequality in access to quality pre-primary education.

Policy Advice 4: Ensuring progressive universalism for closing the rich-poor gap in learning outcomes

Rationale:

Despite the reductions in poverty and increases in schooling rates in some OIC member countries, the gap between educational outcomes of students from rich and poor families persists. This socio-economic gap in learning is observed across the OIC region. The wealth gap is larger for the students studying at mainstream government schools in rural areas where the school quality is especially poor.

Findings in the context of all four case study countries of the research report indicate that income level of the family is strongly associated with student performance. Ensuring progressive universalism – allocating more resources to those who need it most – will require identifying children with learning deficits and effective mechanism to target them in the classroom and community. Only a few examples such as Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) in South Asia and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) schools in Jordan are observed to achieve success in providing quality education to students from economically disadvantaged families. More examples shall be identified across the OIC Region so that effective pro-poor education models can be made wide-spread. Madrassahs⁵ may play an important role in pro-poor education, however, some set of reforms and regulations might be needed to improve the prospects of religious seminaries across the OIC Region.

Policy Advice 5: Enhancing and reinforcing accountability through parental engagement and involving parents in the monitoring of their children's education and intensifying the parent-teacher interaction to improve education delivery

Rationale:

The delivery of equitable quality education is a shared responsibility whereby different stakeholders work together and depend on each other. The lack of accountability is a system-wide challenge and key reason for the poor returns to public spending in education in the OIC member countries. Teacher truancy is a significant challenge in OIC countries. According to one survey including OIC countries, on average nearly 20

⁵ While in Arabic, the word Madrasa refers to any type of educational institution (religious as well as non-religious), this refers to a specific model of education in some countries where the focus is on Islamic or Qur'anic education.

percent of teaching time is lost every year due to factors resulting in teachers being away from school.

Evidence indicates a positive association between student performance in PISA and parental engagement. Student achievement is low where school authorities report only a minority of parents applying pressure on academic standards or the pressure being “largely absent”. Parents need to be kept up-to-date with what their children are studying and how they are progressing. This can enable parents to follow-up the progress by regularly consulting the teachers. Moreover, increasing the frequency of parent-teacher interaction can enable the school to provide parents with clear information on how to effectively contribute to their children’s learning. In addition, schools can provide useful information to parents through a variety of communication methods such as home visits, publishing newsletters, and parent’s handbooks.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office issues calls for project proposals each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For realizing above-mentioned policy recommendations, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding facility. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparation of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

5.2. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH MEETING OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

A policy debate session was held during the 12th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG). The Working Group came up with some concrete policy recommendations for improving vocational education, especially for the children from poor families, in the OIC and approximating policies among the member countries in this important issue. The policy advices presented below have been identified in light of the main findings of the research report titled “Skills Development: Vocational Education in the Islamic Countries” and the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questionnaire which was sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office.

1. Policy Advice 1: Improving access of poor student/youth to vocational education through eliminating/reducing school fees, offering monthly scholarship schemes and providing adequate facilities (i.e. accommodation) for students coming from remote areas

1.1 Rationale:

Vocational Education and Training (VET/TVET) primarily focuses on providing skills to the youth in formal/informal sector. These young people are the major workforces in any industrial activities. Therefore, VET system can contribute in equipping youth for occupation, providing necessary skills and meeting the industrial requirements for economic growth. Successful VET system can also play an important role in poverty eradication and reducing the income gap between the rich and the poor.

There is a great number of young unemployed people in the OIC Region and the main constrain is to attract poor young people to skill trainings. The empirical evidence shows that many young people could not be able to enter into skills trainings due to school fees and other related costs. Vocational education and training should be offered free of charge or at lower prices to attract poor youth. Besides, monthly stipend or interest free loan may be provided to poor people for their education. Free vocational training, and monthly scholarship schemes can also enhance enrolment and provide greater opportunities for poor students.

Furthermore, a great number of people in the OIC Region are living in rural areas, and their income level is mostly very low. In order to attract poor youth in skills training for future employment, TVET institutions should be expanded in rural areas or these institutions should have necessary facilities (i.e. provision of hostels) in the OIC Region.

2. Policy Advice 2: Matching the skills thought in TVET institutions with the industrial requirements through job-oriented and demand-driven curriculum update and improving facilities of TVET institutions as well as establishing a training centre inside industrial area.

a. Rationale:

There is a strong relationship between TVET sectors and labour market demand. Vocational education generally provides job focused short and long-term training, which make unemployed people competent to meet industrial demand. Nonetheless, finding a job may not be easy for the graduates of TVET institutions if their education and training do not match the requirements of the industry. For this reason, bridging the gap between TVET and labour market demand is crucial to enhance the productivity of youth, who are well skilled, competent and professional capable in different areas.

On the other hand, there is a lack of industrial linkage with TVET institutions in many OIC member countries. A great majority of the TVET institutions do not have modern machineries. On the contrary, most local industries have modern machineries installed to ensure continuous increase of their production capacity and to compete in global market. Therefore, TVET facilities need to be improved with modern equipment, labs, and machineries for offering updated skill training. In this point, industries should enhance cooperation with TVET institutions in the form of establishing a training centre inside the industrial area that will provide demand driven current skills for the TVET students for a certain period of time.

Furthermore, outdate curriculum and training hinder the graduates to meet the current industrial demand. In order to close the gap between TVET and the industry requirements in the OIC member countries, curriculum update is required to make it more job-oriented and demand-driven.

3. Policy Advice 3: Increasing both the quantity and quality of teachers in TVET sector through providing professional development programs, industrial attachment, and recognition of their work based on performance

a. Rationale:

Teachers are of particular importance since they have direct influence on educational outcomes. Students learning outcome in TVET sectors largely depends on teachers' teaching practices. However, research report conducted for this meeting shows that the level of competency and knowledge of the teachers in TVET sectors is not adequate and teachers do not have enough practical industrial experience in many OIC member countries. Moreover, numbers of specialised teachers (subject specific) are very low in TVET institutions.

In order to address these challenges, three specific strategies are recommended: *firstly*, teacher-training programs for updating instructors' (teachers) skills should be continued in different forms (pedagogic, subjective, and exchange programs); Additionally, teachers should update their pedagogical techniques by means of using modern technologies in case of face-to-face, blended and online teaching approaches in TVET sectors; *secondly*, industrial attachment for technical teachers for a certain period of time (six months) can be practiced in TVET sectors; and *lastly*, achievement of teachers certification (license) for teaching involvement in TVET sectors is necessary before starting regular teaching. In order to attract bright and meritorious competent teachers in TVET sectors, motivational incentives such as attractive salaries can be provided and new teachers having industrial experience can be recruited in TVET sectors of the OIC member countries.

In addition, for enhancing the capacities of teachers and trainers, experts from different industries can be invited as Resource Persons in TVET institutions for sharing their expertise. Both teachers and students should visit industries regularly to observe industrial practices. Furthermore, in order to enhance sustainability of TVET sectors, and to cope up with the current trends, teachers should have provision for life-long learning that would assist them for updating their knowledge and skills.

4. Policy Advice 4: Increasing awareness about TVET and social recognition of its graduates in order to increase enrolment in TVET sectors and create new job opportunities for skilled graduates

a. Rationale:

Skills training is not attractive when finding job is not secure. Evidence shows that job focused skills attract young people towards vocational education. Research evidence shows that due to lack of knowledge and awareness on TVET and relatively low social status of TVET graduates, parents mainly send their children to general education instead of TVET institutions.

In order to attract poor young people towards skill training, a number of job opportunities should be available in OIC member countries. Few initiatives in this regard can be as follows: governments and private sector should create a number of job provisions; donor agencies should work with the government to generate alternative sources of employment for skilled graduates; and TVET graduates should be actively involved in creating jobs through entrepreneurship.

Industry should not recruit any technician and/or any skilled labour force without having relevant certificate from TVET institutions. Furthermore, TVET institutions and the industry need to close cooperation with Employment Agencies.

In this framework, awareness about TVET and recognition of skills training need to be enhanced in the OIC Region through seminars, conferences, and public service advertisements. The promotional activities of TVET sectors can also be extended via all media. Moreover, awareness raising activities can be organized among teachers, students and parents at school level so that they would be encouraged to enter into TVET sectors.

5. *Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:*

- **COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office issues calls for project proposals each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For realizing above-mentioned policy recommendations, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding facility. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparation of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.
- **SESRIC's OIC-VET Programme:** Member countries can benefit from the capacity building/experience sharing opportunities provided within the framework of OIC-VET Programme.

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

6.1. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 10TH MEETING OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group (FCWG) has successfully held its 10th Meeting on March 29th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “The Role of Sukuk in Islamic Capital Markets”. During the Meeting, FCWG made deliberations on the role of Sukuk in Islamic capital markets. Accordingly, the participants have come up with the following policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendation 1: Developing an Enabling Legal and Regulatory Framework for Islamic Capital Markets and Promoting Solid Collaboration among the Key Market Stakeholders to improve the ecosystem for Sukuk issuance.

Rationale: Specific legal and regulatory framework along with robust market and infrastructure conditions play a key role in the development of Islamic Capital Markets (ICM) as well as sukuk as its core component. Based on the findings of the research report, each jurisdiction adopts its own strategy to promote Islamic finance and overcome inherent risks. In order for the smooth development of the ICM and to have a supportive ecosystem for sukuk issuance, the concerted efforts of key market stakeholders are quite important as well.

Policy Recommendation 2: Improving Market Infrastructure and, where needed, the Existing Tax Framework for Enhancing Sukuk Issuance.

Rationale: The existence of a strong market infrastructure coupled with an enabling tax environment is one of the basic building blocks for sustaining long-term capital market growth. The progress of the Islamic capital markets to establish a compelling value proposition for market instruments will create a successful landscape for sukuk issuance as well. Hence, in order to promote sukuk issuance, there is a need for strengthening domestic Islamic capital markets through maintaining Tax neutrality or where needed improving the existing tax framework and the reforms to enhance market infrastructure (e.g. cost competitiveness, listing and approval process, tradability and transparency).

Policy Recommendation 3: Developing a Sustainable Liquidity Base to Support Demand for Shariah-Compliant Assets, and Facilitating Diversification of Market Players on the Demand Side of the Sukuk Market.

Rationale: One of the performance indicators of a healthy financial system is supporting non-bank financial intermediaries (NBFIs) mainly where such institutions are needed to complement the role of the banking sector, to create the liquidity base to promote demand for capital market products. Additionally, development of cornerstone investors with a specific appetite for Islamic assets (e.g. pilgrimage funds, waqf funds)

would create extra demand for Shariah-compliant assets and potentially bring better cost-competitiveness (i.e. access to a wider investor base). Setting the stage to encourage the development of domestic wealth is equally important to develop a strong NBFIs investor base. The responsibility then resides with the respective government to provide the necessary support (e.g. compulsory pension schemes, incentives for retirement investment schemes, etc.) to strengthen wealth creation within its domestic financial system.

Policy Recommendation 4: Promoting a Sustainable Supply of Sukuk Issuance from the Private Sector in order to Foster Diversification of Industry Participants on the Supply Side and Expand the Benchmark Yield Curve.

Rationale: Based on the research report, the performance of the private sector is one of the most important indicators to track the pulse of a local sukuk market. Key to building a sustainable supply of private sector sukuk typically starts with a sovereign benchmark yield curve for corporate issuers to follow. Commercial motivation will always be the compelling reason for issuers to choose sukuk instead of conventional bond issuance. Identification of suitable state-owned entities or government-linked companies to become sukuk champions in promoting innovative structures can be the starting point to support the expansion of the benchmark yield curves.

Policy Recommendation 5: Developing a Seamless Shariah Governance Process for Facilitating Faster Turnaround Time for Sukuk Issuance, Improving Clarity of Sukuk Structures, Promoting Product Innovation, Building Market Confidence and Increasing Market Awareness among the Industry Practitioners.

Rationale: A seamless Shariah governance process incorporated into the financial system is important to make the Islamic capital market products attractive for all market players. There are different methods among countries in terms of the implementation of Shariah governance framework: while some countries adopt a centralized approach where a national Shariah committee is set-up within the regulatory bodies (e.g. central bank, securities commission, etc), some other countries implement a harmonized approach which is accepted by in-house Shariah advisers. Even though reference can be made to AAOIFI and IFSB Shariah standards, the final decision is still based on the domestic Shariah advisers that reside in each OIC member country. Ultimately, key stakeholders would need to decide which method fits industry requirements as well as provides faster turnaround time for sukuk issuance, improves the clarity of sukuk structures, promotes product innovation, builds market confidence and increases awareness among the industry practitioners.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Recommendations:

- **COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office issues calls for project proposals each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For realizing above-mentioned policy recommendations, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding facility. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparation of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

6.2. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 11TH MEETING OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Financial Working Group (FCWG) has successfully held its 11th Meeting on October 25th, 2018 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “*Islamic Fund Management*”. During the Meeting, FCWG made deliberations on improving Islamic fund management in the OIC Member Countries. Room Document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the analytical study conducted for the 11th Meeting of FCWG and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions, was the main input for the discussions. Accordingly, the participants have come up with some policy recommendations.

Policy Advice 1: Development of Key Measures (developing masterplans, promotional activities, etc.) to Support a Viable Ecosystem for Islamic Funds

Rationale: Governments’ presence in promoting successful inclusion of Islamic funds within the financial landscape will boost and aid effective implementation of strategies. In addition, the development of a masterplan at the national level and creation of market demand are vital to support development of an Islamic fund industry. Greater market awareness will also provide the coverage required to support financial inclusion and financial planning. This can be achieved through collaboration between regulators and market players via promotional activities, conferences, and seminars for public education.

Policy Advice 2: Development of a Robust Regulatory, Supervisory and Shariah Frameworks to Ensure Compliance, Growth and Protection of all Stakeholders’ Interest particularly Investors’.

Rationale: The establishment of a robust regulatory framework and ongoing market supervision engender trust in the markets, allowing greater transparency in product development, approval processes and governance while ensuring the protection of all stakeholders’ interests. The governing rules and regulations that are issued by a regulatory body set the tone on the conduct of asset management companies and facilitate the orderly development of the Islamic fund management industry. Equally important is considering the development of a Shariah framework to govern the operations of the Islamic fund management industry. The issuance of guidelines on Shariah screening and purification process provides greater clarity to investors and other market participants regarding business conduct.

Policy Advice 3: Encouraging Establishment of Institutional Funds to Increase Demand for Islamic Funds.

Rationale: The development of a captive market for Shariah-compliant assets is key to building an investor base for Islamic funds. Wealth preservation and capital appreciation start with market awareness on the importance of investing and saving. Some Governments of developing countries have instituted government-linked bodies to manage retirement funds. Furthermore, the level of financial inclusion differs from one country to another. As such, the institutionalisation of public savings goes a long way towards facilitating the development of a local fund management industry. Based on the study, institutional investors that provide seed investment to Islamic funds have helped spur market performance and build the necessary track record for Islamic fund management. Ultimately, institutional funds play a pivotal role to support wealth creation and mobilization of savings to support economic growth, taking into account national plans and priorities.

Policy Advice 4: Encouraging the Development of a Facilitative Tax Framework to Secure Strong Commitments from Supply and Demand Sides to Promote Competitive Positioning for Islamic Funds.

Rationale: A facilitative tax framework is key in attracting commitments from market practitioners, institutional investors, including retail investors to sustain the long-term growth of Islamic fund management industry. The establishment of tax neutrality facilitates the costing of Islamic finance products, so as to be competitive with conventional offerings. Consideration of additional tax incentives to encourage investors to choose Shariah investments would provide another venue for the growth of the Islamic finance market. Some countries also provide tax rebates to individuals vis-à-vis investment in retirement schemes and children's education, all of which help strengthen demand for fund management.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office issues calls for project proposals each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the member countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For realizing above-mentioned policy

recommendations, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding facility. These projects may include organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparation of analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents, etc.

ANNEX

8

Original: English

**LIST OF BASIC DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED
AND/OR PRESENTED AT THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC**

(İstanbul, 26-29 November 2018)

1.	COMCEC Annual Progress Report 2018.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(1)-CCO
2.	Making Cooperation Work: COMCEC Strategy for Building an Interdependent Islamic World.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(2)-CCO
3.	Report of the OIC General Secretariat	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(3)-OIC
4.	OIC Economic Outlook 2018-Annual Economic Report.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(4)-SESRIC
5.	Brief on Trade Cooperation/TPS-OIC.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(5)-CCO
6.	Proceedings of the 11 th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(6)-CCO
7.	Proceedings of the 12 th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(7)-CCO
8.	Policy Recommendations of the 11 th Meeting of the Trade Working Group- Exchange of Views Session	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(8)-CCO
9.	Policy Recommendations of the 12 th Meeting of the Trade Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(9) -CCO
10.	List of TPS-OIC Signatory and Ratifying Countries.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(10) -CCO
11.	Executive Summary-Annual Report on intra-OIC Trade.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(11) -ICDT
12.	Report on OIC Trade Fairs and Exhibitions.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(12)-ICDT
13.	Report on the Issues Relating to the Activities of the World Trade Organization (WTO).....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(13)-ICDT
14.	Report on the IDB's WTO-Related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(14)-IDB
15.	Study on Practical Options Towards Increasing OIC Member States Coordination at the WTO....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(15)-ICDT/IDB
16.	ITFC Progress Report on Enhancing Intra-OIC Trade	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(16)-ITFC/IDB
17.	Report on Business Intelligence Center.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(17)-ICIEC/IDB
18.	Report of the SMIIC	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(18)-SMIIC
19.	Report on the Activities of the ICCIA.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(19)-ICCIA
20.	Brief on Transportation and Communications.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(20)-CCO
21.	Proceedings of the 11 th Meeting of the COMCEC Transportation and Communications Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(21)-CCO

22.	Proceedings of the 12 th Meeting of the COMCEC Transportation and Communications Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(22)-CCO
23.	Policy Recommendations of the 11 th COMCEC Transportation and Communications Working Group Meeting	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(23)-CCO
24.	Policy Recommendations of the 12 th COMCEC Transportation and Communications Working Group Meeting	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(24)-CCO
25.	Brief on Tourism	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(25)-CCO
26.	Proceedings of the 11 th Meeting of the COMCEC Tourism Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(26)-CCO
27.	Proceedings of the 12 th Meeting of the COMCEC Tourism Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(27)-CCO
28.	The Policy Recommendations Highlighted by the 11 th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(28)-CCO
29.	The Policy Recommendations Highlighted by the 12 th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(29)-CCO
30.	ICTM- 10th Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(30)-OIC
31.	Report of the 6 th Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(31)-Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey
32.	Brief on Agricultural Cooperation.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(32)-CCO
33.	Proceedings of the 11 th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(33)-CCO
34.	Proceedings of the 12 th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(34)-CCO
35.	Policy Recommendations of the 11 th COMCEC Agriculture Working Group Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(35)-CCO
36.	Policy Recommendations of the 12 th COMCEC Agriculture Working Group Meeting	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(36)-CCO
37.	Brief on Poverty Alleviation	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(37)-CCO
38.	Proceedings of the 11th Meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(38)-CCO
39.	Proceedings of the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(39)-CCO
40.	Policy Recommendations of the 11th COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(40)-CCO
41.	Policy Recommendations of the 12th COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(41)-CCO
42.	Progress Report on the Activities of the ISFD....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(42)IDB-ISFD
43.	Report on the Special Programme for the Development of Africa (SPDA).....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(43)-IDB-SPDA
44.	Report on the Results of Tendency Survey on SDG Priorities of OIC Member Countries.....	OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(44)-SESRI

45.	Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Related Activities of the OIC Institutions.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(45)-CCO</i>
46.	Brief on Financial Cooperation.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(46)-CCO</i>
47.	Proceedings of the 10th Meeting of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(47)-CCO</i>
48.	Proceedings of the 11th Meeting of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(48)-CCO</i>
49.	Policy Recommendations of the 10th COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group Meeting...	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(49)-CCO</i>
50.	Policy Recommendations of the 11th COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group Meeting...	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(50)-CCO</i>
51.	Final Report of the 12th Meeting of the OIC Member States' Stock Exchanges Forum.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(51)-BİST</i>
52.	Report of the COMCEC 7th Capital Market Regulators Forum	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(52)-SPK</i>
53.	Final Communiqué of the 16th Meeting of the OIC Central Banks and Monetary Authorities.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(53)-TCMB</i>
54.	SESRIC Activity Report towards the Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/34-18/D(54)-SESRIC</i>

Reports are available on the COMCEC website. (www.comcec.org)
