



COMCEC

REPORT THIRTY FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC

İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019



**COMCEC Coordination Office
Ankara, November 2019**

OIC/COMCEC/35-19/REP

COMCEC

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

REPORT THIRTY FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC

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**COMCEC Coordination Office
Ankara, November 2019**

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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 FIFTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC**

AGENDA
OF THE THIRTY FIFTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC

(İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019)

Original: English



**AGENDA
OF THE 35th SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019)**

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 “Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries”
13. Date of the 36th Session of the COMCEC
14. Any Other Business
15. Adoption of the Resolutions

II

RESOLUTION OF THE THIRTY FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC

(İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019)

Original: English

**RESOLUTION
OF THE THIRTY FIFTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019)**

The Thirty-fifth Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) was held on 25-28 November 2019 in İstanbul, Turkey;

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the 14th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 31 May 2019, 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 highly commended the successful implementation of the COMCEC revised Statute and the Strategy adopted at the Fourth Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference;

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 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the 34th Session of the COMCEC;

Reaffirming the commitment of all Member States 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 and to the COMCEC Strategy adopted by the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference held on 14-15 August 2012 in Makkah Al-Mukarramah;

Celebrating the golden jubilee of OIC in the year 2019 in commemoration of Fiftieth Anniversary of its establishment and highlighting the noble objectives of OIC enshrined in its Charter towards enhancing political, economic, commercial, social, cultural and scientific cooperation and solidarity among its Member Countries.

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 34th 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 2019.

5- **Calls upon** the relevant Member States to utilize COMCEC Policy Follow-up System, which has been established by the COMCEC Coordination Office for the

effective follow-up of the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

6- **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 every effort, to the extent possible, to implement the Policy Recommendations and **requests** the OIC Institutions to support the Member States to this end through implementing capacity development and training programmes for implementation of policy recommendations.

7- **Expresses its appreciations** to the SESRIC for the activities, particularly capacity building and training programmes, contributing to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations in the six cooperation areas of the COMCEC Strategy.

8- **Taking note** of the valuable outcomes of projects previously financed by COMCEC since 2014, **invites** Member Countries to intensify their efforts to harness the benefits of COMCEC Project Funding particularly with a view to materialize the Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

9- **Welcomes** the finalization of seventeen projects funded under the COMCEC Project Funding in 2018 and twenty two new projects implemented under the sixth project call in 2019 and **also welcomes** the seventh project call made by the COMCEC Coordination Office in September 2019.

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

11- **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.

12- **Encourages** the Member States, which have registered to the COMCEC Working Groups to actively participate in the upcoming Meetings of the relevant Working Groups.

13- **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.

14- **Welcomes** the holding of the Seventh Annual Coordination Meeting of the COMCEC Working Group Focal Points, organized by the COMCEC Coordination Office on 15-17 July 2019 in Istanbul, Turkey.

15- **Takes note with appreciation** that the member countries namely Indonesia, the Gambia, Nigeria and Turkey have already set up national coordination mechanisms for facilitating the coordination of COMCEC related work particularly the implementation of the COMCEC Resolutions and Ministerial Policy Recommendations at the national level and **encourages** the other Member States to set up similar coordination mechanisms for these purposes.

16- **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.

17- **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.

18- **Reiterates** the relevant resolutions of the 34th COMCEC Session, **which emphasize** 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 and **also emphasizes** the role of COMCEC Coordination Office (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.

19- **Also reiterates** its request to 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.

20- **Adopts** the recommendations of the 35th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC held on 24-25 April 2019 in Ankara, Turkey.

21- **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 cooperation areas of the COMCEC Strategy and **calls upon** these institutions to send invitations to the Member States sufficiently in advance of the meetings so as to ensure their participation.

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

22- **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.

23- **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.

24- **Commends** the efforts of the OIC General Secretariat for organizing the Fourth Annual Coordination Meeting of OIC Institutions (ACMOI) in Jeddah, OIC Headquarters on 3-4 December 2018.

25- **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)

26- **Takes note of** the findings highlighted in the SESRIC's report titled "OIC Economic Outlook 2019: Mobilizing Financial Resources for Development", and acknowledges valuable contribution of its special section in identifying policies pertinent to financing economic development and prosperity in the Member States. Considering that growing development needs of Member States are seldom accompanied by the financial resources that are necessary to meet them:

- **Invites** Member States to take into consideration the set of proposals contained in the report that can ensure more effective mobilization of domestic and external financial resources, including Islamic finance, which offers a significant potential in mitigating the annual investment gap in major socio-economic sectors.
- **Recommends** to Member States to better utilize Sukuk (Islamic bonds) as a relevant instrument for financing largescale infrastructure investments in the areas such as water and sanitation, sustainable and affordable energy and transportation.
- **Encourages** Member States to improve the governance, administration, regulations and effective and transparent distribution of Islamic Social funds - zakat, sadaqa, qard al-hassan and awqaf – from which tremendous gains can be achieved in supporting socio-economic empowerment and development.
- **Calls upon** Member States to improve the coordination between various national actors dealing with financing for sustainable development, and ensure that

available financial resources are better linked with country development strategies. In this regard, developing the Integrated National Financing Frameworks and focusing on channeling financial resources to productive sectors and to poverty eradication would be essential.

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

Intra-OIC Trade (Agenda Item: 5)

28- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 13th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group on March 7th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Enhancing Public Availability of Customs Information in the OIC Member States”, welcomes its following policy recommendations:

- Encouraging the establishment of a formal consultation mechanism between regulatory authorities and trade community towards ensuring an efficient trade environment for the interest of various stakeholders at the national level,
- Utilizing Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) effectively for the dissemination of trade, especially customs related information,
- Encouraging the development of an effective Advance Ruling System in order to enhance the certainty and predictability of customs operations,
- Promoting integrated Single Windows (SW) Systems and Trade Information Portals for combining the transaction processing functions of SW Systems with a comprehensive repository of trade-related laws, regulations, rules and procedures,
- Leveraging international and regional cooperation and making use of successful country experiences for promoting trade information availability.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(6)-CCO)

29- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 14th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group on October 24th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Improving Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member States”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Designing an appropriate legal and procedural framework for national customs administrations through, among others, utilizing international conventions on customs transit regimes,
- Establishing/Developing an efficient electronic exchange of information system among all relevant agencies, particularly among neighboring countries,

- Developing an efficient guarantee management and monitoring system for Customs Transit Regimes
- Simplifying the formalities and documentary requirements for facilitating transit operations
- Developing integrated risk management systems to manage and facilitate transit customs procedures
- Ensuring a well-coordinated border management through enhancing cooperation among different border control agencies and with the neighboring countries as well as assigning a national transit coordinator.
- Developing necessary mechanisms (i.e. a Customs-Business Partnership programme) for promoting partnership with private sector while designing policies and procedures related to transit.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(9)-CCO)

30- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Trade Working Group to attend the 15th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group to be held on April 2nd, 2020 in Ankara with the theme of “Guidelines for Effective National Trade Facilitation Committees in Islamic Countries ” and the 16th Meeting to be organized with the theme of “Facilitating Trade: Guidelines for Improving Internal Border Management for OIC Member States” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Trade Working Group.

31- **Commends** the efforts of Indonesia, Lebanon, Palestine and SMIIC for the following projects successfully implemented in 2019 under the sixth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Empowering Halal Industry to Boost Intra-OIC Trade” implemented by Indonesia in partnership with five other Member States,
- The Project titled “Supporting Cooperatives to Enhance Their Access to OIC Markets” implemented by Lebanon in partnership with Turkey and Jordan,
- The Project titled “Introduction of Palestinian Export Products to Selected OIC countries” implemented by Palestine in partnership with Jordan and Indonesia,
- The Project titled “Increasing Public Halal Awareness in OIC Countries” implemented by SMIIC in partnership with Turkey and Malaysia.

32- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 14th Islamic Summit Conference, **calls on** Member States to take the necessary measures that would exempt Palestinian goods and commodities from customs duties, duties and taxes of similar effect, without quantitative or qualitative restrictions, which would have a positive effect on strengthening the steadfastness of the Palestinian people on their own territory and supporting the efforts of the State of Palestine to put an end to the Israeli occupation.

33- **Expresses its appreciation** to the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire for hosting and ICDT and WIEF for organising the workshop on "Online marketing for Business women" on 15-18 April 2019 in Abidjan.

34- **Welcomes** the offers of Benin, Mali and Tunisia to host and ICDT to organize a Workshop on "Online Marketing for Businesswomen" in 2020.

35- **Welcomes** the offer of Gabon to host, and ICDT and ITFC, to organize Buyers/Sellers Meeting on Wood Industry in Libreville in 2020 under Arab Africa Trade Bridge Programme (AATB) of the ITFC.

36- **Welcomes** the offer of the State of Kuwait to organize the workshop on "Online Marketing for Businesswomen" and Forum for OIC Women Entrepreneurs on 19-22 December 2019 in Kuwait-City.

37- **Calls upon** the relevant OIC Institutions to organize capacity building and training activities etc. for the Member States in trade facilitation domain and encourages member states and relevant OIC institutions to support the realization of projects regarding the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement.

38- **Appreciating** experience sharing by various member countries during the Session particularly in trade, single window applications, customs risk management etc., **calls upon** the volunteering member countries to extend technical assistance to the member countries in need in these fields.

i) TPS-OIC

39- **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.

40- **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.

41- **Requests** the concerned Member States to expedite their efforts for the submission of the concession lists to the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Secretariat in the standard format circulated by the TNC Secretariat for the operationalization of the TPS-OIC at the earliest.

42- **Requests** the participating Member States, who have not done so yet, 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.

43- **Commends** the Republic of Sudan for hosting and ICDT, COMCEC Coordination Office and ICCIA for organizing “Regional Workshop on TPS-OIC and the Multilateral Trading System” in Khartoum on 17-18 December 2018 and also commends the Republic of Turkey for hosting and the COMCEC Coordination Office for organizing the TPS-OIC Training Seminar for the relevant authorities of Cameroon, the Gambia, and Somalia on July 18th, 2019 in İstanbul, Turkey.

44- **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

45- **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 “6th OIC Halal Expo” in Istanbul on 29 November-2 December 2018,
- The Republic of Cote d’Ivoire for hosting the “4th OIC Health Expo” and “Medical Expo Cote d’Ivoire” concurrently in Abidjan on 7-9 December 2018,
- The Republic of Iraq for hosting the “16th OIC Trade Fair” in Baghdad on 7-13 April 2019,
- The Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the Expo and Forum on Transportation and Logistics of the OIC Member States concomitantly with LogisMed 2019 in Casablanca on 9-11 April 2019;

46- **Takes note** that World Expo “EXPO 2020 Dubai” will be hosted by the United Arab Emirates, in Dubai, from November 2020 to April 2021 and **invites** the OIC Institutions to actively participate in the event.

47- **Welcomes** the offer of the following Member States to host Islamic Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in cooperation with ICDT in 2019-2020 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 “7th OIC Halal Expo” in Istanbul from November 28 to December 1st, 2019 and “8th OIC Halal Expo” in Istanbul on 26-29 November 2020 in Istanbul in coordination with SMIIC,
- The State of Kuwait to host “Exceptional Edition of the Tourism, Handicrafts and Interior Decoration Exhibition of the OIC Member States” in Kuwait-City on 18-23 December 2019,
- The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the 11th Exhibition of Agribusiness Industries of the OIC member States in Jeddah on March/April 2020,

- The Republic of Senegal to host 5th OIC Health Expo in Dakar on 18-20 June 2020 and to host “17th OIC Trade Fair” in 2020,
- The Republic of Pakistan to host “18th OIC Trade Fair” in 2022.

48- **Requests** ICDT to circulate the calendar of activities well in advance through utilizing all channels efficiently in order to ensure larger and active participation of the private sector from the member countries.

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

50- **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.

51- **Takes note with appreciation** for the invitation of Malaysia to the 17th Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS) to be held on 1-4 April 2020 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and **calls upon** the Member States to actively participate in this event.

iii) WTO Related Technical Assistance

52- **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.

53- **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.

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

55- **Also 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 towards the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

56- **Expresses its appreciation** to the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting and ICDT and the IDB Group for organizing a Workshop on Post-WTO Eleventh Ministerial Conference (MC11) in Casablanca on 26-27 June 2019.

iv) Trade Financing Activities

57- **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.

58- **Takes note with appreciation** that ITFC's cumulative approvals and disbursement in trade finance reached, since its inception until now, USD 49.4 billion and USD 39.8 billion respectively, and its total approvals and disbursement in 2018 reached USD 5.2 billion and USD 4.6 billion respectively.

59- **Commends** the efforts of ITFC in financing SMEs and the Least Developed Member Countries and intra-OIC trade 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.

60- **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.

61- **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), Arab Africa Trade Bridge Program (AATB), Trade Development Fund and West Africa SMEs Program.

62- **Takes note** of the efforts of the ITFC in implementing Integrated Trade Solution Programmes, including Indonesia Coffee Development Programme, Guinea Reverse Linkage Programme, the Cotton Bridge Programme, Program for the Development of Dates Sector in Medina Region, Rapid eTrade Readiness Assessment of Iraq, the Gambia Aflatoxin Mitigation Programme, and various programmes for Tunisia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, CIS Countries, Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Comoros and Djibouti.

63- **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.

64- **Congratulates** ITFC for the reconfirmation of the Assignment of Credit Rating by Moody's long-term issuer rating of A1 reflecting the ITFC's strong capital position, moderate leveraging scenarios and adequate liquidity management policies and **also**

congratulates ICIEC for its 12th consecutive years for having maintained its Aa3 standalone Rating by Moody's, which confirms ICIEC's financial sustainability of its operations.

65- **Takes note** of the ITFC's high level Capacity Building Program provided to CIS countries and Afghanistan on Islamic Finance, 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.

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- **Congratulating** the ICIEC for its 25th Anniversary as a unique Multilateral Company providing Takaful credit and investment insurance services among the OIC Member Countries, **acknowledges** the ICIEC's role in supporting USD 8.5 billion of Intra-OIC business involving 35 countries with a cumulative insurance approval since its inception in 1994 which has reached USD 41.5 billion to end-2018; with business insured exceeding USD 52 billion.

68- **Commends** the ICIEC for the two prestigious awards received at the recent Project Finance International Awards which is one of the most distinguished events that brings together the world's project finance industry to celebrate excellence.

69- **Takes note** of the launching of new edition of the Annual Development Effectiveness Report (ADER) which encompass the ICIEC performance throughout the last 25 years.

70- **Welcomes** the mutual arrangement between IDB Group, in particular ICIEC and SESRIC regarding the allocation of space location and other relevant resources by SESRIC for technical instruments for the OIC Business Intelligence Programme.

71- **Takes note** of the Report prepared by ICIEC on OIC Business Intelligence Programme and **requests** the ICIEC and SESRIC to complete the technical preparations for launching the Programme at the earliest.

72- **Also requests** ICIEC in cooperation with SESRIC to conduct a survey for assessing the commercial data and credit information sharing systems of the Member Countries in order to ensure the operationalization of the Programme in line with the priorities and regulations of the Member Countries.

v) Trade Related Activities of SMIIC

73- **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.

74- **Invites** the Member States to become a member of SMIIC and actively participate in its technical committees (TCs), Metrology and Accreditation Councils.

75- **Welcomes** the Republic of Indonesia and State of Kuwait as the new members of and Russian Federation as observer to SMIIC, which has increased the number of SMIIC Member States to 39 along with 3 Observers and invited the concerned Member States to become a member of SMIIC and actively participate in its technical committees (TCs), Metrology and Accreditation Councils.

76- **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.

77- **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.

78- **Expresses its appreciation** to the Republic of Turkey for hosting and SMIIC for coordinating the organization of the World Halal Summit (WHS) on 29 November-02 December 2018 in Istanbul, with the theme of “Halal and Healthy Life: Awareness and Sustainability” in coordination with the ICDT and **calls upon** the Member States to participate in the 5th World Halal Summit to be held on 28 November – 01 December 2019 under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey.

79- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 46th Meeting of the CFM, **welcomes** the efforts of SMIIC Metrology Council for the establishment of an Excellence Metrology Center for Islamic Countries.

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

80- **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.

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

82- **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:

- Workshop on “Promoting Green Growth and Technology in Food-Water and Energy Nexus for OIC Countries – Challenges and Opportunities” in Karachi, Pakistan on December 2-4, 2019,
- Workshop on spreading the Model of Family Bank in G-5 Sahel Countries, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia – 19th – 20th January 2020,
- The 10th Businesswomen Forum in Islamic Countries to be held in the United Arab Emirates in 2020,
- Specialized Workshops/Training Programs to be held in 2020 on Promotion of Cottage Industries through SMEs; scaling-up existing Enterprises through Skill Development and exploring destinations for Health Tourism, Workshops on Strategic Commodities, Training Program on Digital Transformation in 2020.
- Forum on “Invest in Digital Economy”, Amman, Jordan, 5-6 April 2020,
- Forum on Traditional Handicraft, Kingdom of Morocco, 2020
- Forum on Entrepreneurship and Start-ups, 2020

83- **Recalling** the relevant resolutions of the COMCEC and Council of Foreign Ministers and the relevant decision of the 35th Meeting of General Assembly of the ICCIA regarding approval of the Statute of the OIC Arbitration Center, **welcomes** the progress in the operationalization of the Center in Istanbul affiliated to ICCIA and **requests** the Member Countries to encourage their Chambers to actively participate in the activities of the Arbitration Center.

84- **Welcomes** the “OIC High-Level Public and Private Investment Conference” to be hosted by the Republic of Turkey on 8-9 December 2019 in İstanbul, in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat and IDB Group and **calls upon** the Member States to actively participate in this important event.

85- **Welcomes and applauds** the establishment of the OIC Arbitration Center in Istanbul with the Signing of the Host Country Agreement of the Center between the Republic of Turkey and ICCIA after the intensive efforts of ICCIA and TOBB under the umbrella of the COMCEC.

Financing Private Sector Development

86- **Takes note with appreciation of** the efforts of the ICD, which efficiently works towards financing private sector projects in the Member Countries.

87- **Takes note with appreciation** that ICD's cumulative approvals and disbursement in private sector financing reached, since its inception in 1999 until the end of 2018, US\$6.4 billion and US\$3.2 billion.

88- **Requests** the ICD to regularly submit comprehensive reports regarding its efforts on financing private sector to the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions and the Follow-up Committee Meetings under a separate sub-item titled "Financing Private Sector Development."

Improving Transport and Communications (Agenda Item: 7)

89- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 13th Meeting of the Transport and Communications Working Group held on March 21st, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Improving Transport Project Appraisals in OIC Member Countries", **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Designing a systematic framework for transport project appraisals, indicating the objectives, types and the utilized methodologies.
- Developing/ Improving manuals and guidelines for ensuring having effective and harmonized transport project appraisals as well as effectively implementing the existing ones.
- Applying transport project appraisals as a main part of a full project cycle and making use of quality data/information as well as the lessons generated from the implementation of the previous project(s).
- Encouraging the enhancement of Improving transport project appraisals capacity through a system of official certification of competences, exchange of experience, training programs, seminars, conferences and workshops etc.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(24)-CCO)

90- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 14th Meeting of the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group on October 3rd, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Risk management in Transport PPP projects in the OIC Member Countries", **welcomes** its policy recommendations:

- Encouraging to develop/improve the legal framework through adopting a PPP tailored legislation.

- Allocating clear responsibilities for the management of PPPs over the course of their life-cycle and establishing/strengthening a unit/department within the government to that end.
- Supporting the use of appropriate technical tools, analyses etc., and development of strong database and competences for minimizing risks during the implementation of the PPP projects.
- Developing/Improving risk management guidelines and checklists for the betterment of the implementation of the PPP projects.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(25)-CCO)

91- **Calls upon** the Member States, which have registered to the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group, to actively participate in the 15th Meeting of the Transport and Communications Working Group to be held on March 5th, 2020 with the theme of “The Pricing of Transport Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries”, as well as its 16th Meeting to be with the theme of “The Economic and Social Impacts of Transport Infrastructure: An overview of the OIC Member Countries” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group.

92- **Commends** the efforts of the Gambia, Iran and Jordan for the following projects successfully implemented in 2019 under the sixth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Improving Human and Institutional Capacity for Integrated Database Management System in the OIC Countries” implemented by the Gambia in partnership with Senegal, Nigeria and Turkey.
- The Project titled “Increasing Seaborne Transport and Trade within the Framework of the TPS-OIC” implemented by Iran in partnership with Oman, Qatar, Pakistan and Turkey.
- The Project titled “Reconstructing the Old Ottoman Hejaz Railway Line – Phase 2” implemented by Jordan in partnership with Egypt and Turkey.

93- **Commends** the efforts of the SESRIC in organizing the following capacity building activities in the field of transport and communications:

- Regional Workshop on “Electronic Postal Service Payments” held on 26-28 February 2019 in Tunis, Tunisia,
- Training on “Philately and International Reply Coupon” held on 16-18 April 2019 in Tunis, Tunisia.

94- **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.

95- **Emphasizing** the importance of transport infrastructure projects for developing regional integration among the Member Countries, **calls upon** the relevant OIC Institutions to organize capacity building and training activities in the field of transport, specifically transport infrastructure.

96- **Takes notes** with appreciation the IDB's efforts to promote regional cooperation and integration, in particular its planned launch of the Regional Cooperation and Integration Policy and Strategy (RCI); and therefore **calls on** IDB to organize workshops to sensitize the Member States on the RCI Strategy and its possible positive effects.

97- **Also calls on** IDB, within the RCI, to give due attention to transborder infrastructure as well as other connectivity projects in a way to enhance intra-OIC trade and economic interactions among the Member Countries.

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

98- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 13th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group on February 15th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of "Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries", **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Improving community participation fair representation by offering human resources training, capacity building and certification programs, enhancing local value chain, integrating local production into procurement and minimize leakages, encouraging local entrepreneurship in tourism, conducting media campaigns as well as raising tourist awareness about tourism sustainability,
- Identifying KPIs for sustainable tourism development based on international standards and climate change agreement to monitor each country's performance against a set of pre-determined indicators and to encourage remedial actions when targets are not met,
- Identifying current and potential tangible and intangible tourism resources by taking into consideration destinations carrying capacity, and their long term protection and survival while avoiding over tourism,
- The required mechanisms (e.g. voluntary contribution, tourist tax, environmental fees) might be introduced to fund the sustainability activities that aim to protect, preserve the local quality of life and minimize the costs associated with tourism,

- Ensuring effective destination planning and marketing in such a way that the supply and demand meet at the optimum level and diversified.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(29)-CCO)

99- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 14th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group on October 31st, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Developing Multi-Destination Tourism Corridors in the OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Planning corridors based on thorough SWOT analysis, infrastructure assessment, and social value analysis and identifying assets through expert-led research,
- Making use of public-private partnership models for the effective planning and management of Tourism Corridors and encouraging the participation of and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders,
- Identifying a comprehensive set of indicators, promoting harmonized tourism related data collection as well as analysis for monitoring the corridor performance effectively and feedback into the corridor strategy to create synergies,
- Improving branding and marketing of the tourism corridors in the OIC Region through among others, joint interactive marketing platforms and user-generated content (storytelling) in ICT platforms to create unique brands,
- Creating and Diversifying funding sources of tourism corridors with a view to ensure the sustainability of their management and marketing.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(30)-CCO)

100- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Tourism Working Group to actively participate in the 15th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group to be held on April 9th, 2020, in Ankara, with theme of “Health Tourism: Developing Medical Tourism in the OIC Member Countries” and its 16th Meeting to be held with the theme of “Promoting Entrepreneurship for Tourism Industry Competitiveness” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Tourism Working Group.

101- **Commended** the efforts of Azerbaijan, the Gambia, Mali, Mozambique and ICDT for the following projects successfully implemented in 2019 under the sixth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Establishing a Destination Management Organization: Conceptual Framework for Azerbaijan, Cameroon and Iran” implemented by Azerbaijan in partnership with Cameroon and Iran,

- The Project titled “Training of Accommodation Providers in the OIC Member Countries on Muslim Friendly Tourism Standards and Quality Service Provision” implemented by the Gambia in partnership with Senegal, Nigeria and Malaysia,
- The Project titled “Capacity Building on Destination Management Organizations of OIC Member Countries” implemented by Mali in partnership with other seven Member States,
- The Project titled “Improving Human Capacity on Muslim Friendly Tourism for Regulating Accommodation Establishments in the OIC Member Countries” implemented by Mozambique in partnership with four other Member States,
- The Project titled “Developing Muslim-Friendly Tourism in Guyana and Suriname” to be implemented by the ICDT in partnership with Suriname, Turkey, and Malaysia in cooperation with Guyana, SESRIC and SMIIC.

102- **Takes note** of the report of the 7th Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum held on September 5th, 2018 in İstanbul, with the theme of “Prospects for the Development of Health Tourism in the OIC Member Countries” and **calls upon** the Member States to participate in the 8th Meeting of the Forum to be held with the theme of “Al Quds as a Special Destination” in the last quarter of 2020 in İstanbul, Turkey.

103- **Takes note with appreciation** of the efforts of the SESRIC for organizing training courses and seminars in tourism sector, particularly on halal tourism and tourism statistics within the framework of the OIC Capacity Building Programme (OIC-CaB).

104- **Commends** the efforts of the ICCIA for setting-up a portal on tourism to create awareness of potential visitors in tourism attractions in the Member Countries.

105- **Expresses its appreciation** to Turkey for hosting and ICDT and SESRIC for organizing the Training Workshop for the Managers of West African Cross-Border Parks and Protected Areas on 5-7 November 2019 in Ankara/Turkey.

106- **Considering** the low level of tourist arrivals to Quds al-Sharif from the OIC Member Countries, **invites** the Member Countries 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 demonstrating solidarity with them.

107- **Takes note with appreciation** for the invitation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the following tourism-related events to be held in 2020 and calls upon member states and relevant OIC institutions to actively participate in the following events:

- 13th International Exhibition of Tourism and related Industries in February
- 3rd Tourism Fair of OIC Member States
- 5th Health Tourism Conference of the Islamic Countries

108- **Invites** the Islamic Republic of Iran to further enhance collaboration with relevant OIC institutions to conduct these events successfully.

109- **Encourages** the member states to focus on sustainable tourism and eco-tourism and to develop projects to that effect.

110- **Also encourages** the member countries to organize capacity building events for the promotion of tourism in the member countries with low volume of tourist arrivals.

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

111- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 13th Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group on February 21st, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Reviewing Agricultural Trade Policies to Promote Intra-OIC Agricultural Trade”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations;

- Promotion of Niche Agricultural Products and Halal Certification through product diversification, trademarking, marketing strategies and advertising campaigns.
- Promotion of Commercial Cooperation (e.g. enhancing agricultural investments, removal of business visas, etc.) and Non-Commercial Cooperation (e.g. sharing best practices and technical expertise, developing safety standards, etc.) among the OIC Member Countries in the areas related to agricultural trade.
- Promotion of Tariff Reductions and Bilateral Arrangements in key products (e.g. sugar, meat, feeding stuff for animals, oil-seeds, live animals)
- Developing and implementing multilateral trade arrangements (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.
- Enhancing the capacity of the Member Countries in collection, management and dissemination of agricultural trade data with a view to designing sound and evidence-based agricultural trade policies.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(35)-CCO)

112- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 14th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group, which also serves as a preparatory meeting for the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session, held on 9-10 October, 2019 with the theme

of “Increasing the Resilience of the Food Systems in the OIC Member Countries in Face of Future Food Crises”, **welcomes** its policy recommendations submitted under the following headings;

- Legal and regulatory framework
- Improving agro-production and agricultural productivity
- Development of Infrastructure
- Financing and Investment
- Market performance and market access
- Promotion of intra-OIC agricultural trade/ Reducing barriers to trade
- Human and institutional capacity
- Monitoring and evaluation of food security
- Adaptation and mitigation strategies for reducing the adverse effects of climate change, man-made disasters, etc.
- International and regional cooperation

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(36)-CCO)

113- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group to actively participate in the 15th Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group to be held on March 19th, 2020 in Ankara with theme of “Good Governance for Ensuring Food Security and Nutrition in the OIC Member Countries” and its 16th Meeting to be held with the theme of “Developing Livestock Production and Animal Husbandry to Foster Food Security” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group.

114- The Committee **also commended** the efforts of Malaysia and Turkey for the following projects successfully implemented in 2019 under the sixth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Capacity Building on Warehousing and Storage Management” implemented by Malaysia in partnership Indonesia, Bangladesh and Turkey,
- The Project titled “Reduction of Food Loss and Waste in the OIC Countries” implemented by Turkey in partnership with five other Member States.

115- The Committee **took note of** the SESRIC’s activities on agriculture including the Statistics Course titled “Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Statistics” held on 11-12 April 2019 and Training Course titled “Design and Engineering of Cold Storages and Design and Engineering of Hydroponic Greenhouse” held on 22-26 April 2019.

116- The Committee **also took note of** the efforts of the IDB Group in agriculture sector including the launch of the Regional Rice Value Chain Development Program for the benefit of 10 OIC countries (Benin, Burkina Faso, Cote D’Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea,

Mali, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Sudan) in Sub-Saharan Africa and the support for the Regional Soil Fertility Mapping Project of West Africa involving six OIC counties (Cote D'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Senegal and Sierra Leone) in West Africa with the aim of improving crop production and productivity in the targeted areas.

117- **Welcomes** the renewed offer of the Republic of Turkey to host the Eighth OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development and concurrently the next General Assembly of Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) in 2020 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)

118- **Taking note with appreciation** the convening of the 13th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group on April 4th, 2019 with the theme of “Access to Health Services in the OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Developing a strategy/policy including a well-designed payment and health insurance schemes to achieve universal health coverage,
- Strengthening primary healthcare particularly in poorer areas through encouraging skilled health staff to work in rural and remote areas and enhancing integrated health promotion and prevention interventions,
- Promoting the engagement of private sector in the provision of safe and quality healthcare in close partnership with public authorities and with well-designed monitoring mechanisms,
- Encouraging development and upgrade of health information management systems through designing an online-integrated health information system, allocating required resources to health IT infrastructure and strengthening multi-sectoral coordination mechanism.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(40)-CCO)

119- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 14th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group held on November 6th, 2019 in Ankara, with the theme of “Child and Maternal Mortality in Islamic Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Developing a strategy/policy to improve access to maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH) care, and to provide equitable distribution of health providers,

- Improving health system functioning and quality of MNCH care through training and practice of recommended standard of care protocols, and regular monitoring of standards,
- Improving continuum of maternal, neonatal and child health care for assuring uninterrupted services before and during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum period through among others developing specific conditional cash transfer programs,
- Developing/Improving integrated health information management systems for monitoring MNCH care level and reporting births and deaths, including maternal deaths, nationally and locally,
- Developing sustainable educational programs on women and child health care delivered to community with a view to eliminating the inequities linked to low education levels.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(41)-CCO)

120- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group to actively participate in the 15th Meeting of the Working Group to be held in March 26th, 2020 in Ankara with the theme of “Eradicating Urban Poverty in the OIC Member Countries”, as well as its 16th Meeting to be held with the theme of “Decent Housing for the Poor 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.

121- **Commends** the efforts of the Afghanistan, Nigeria, Suriname, Turkey and SESRIC for the following projects successfully implemented in 2019 under the sixth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Improving the Quality of Education through Information and Communication Technologies in the OIC Countries” implemented by Afghanistan in partnership with Iran, Turkey and Palestine.
- The Project titled “Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education for Grassroots Empowerment in the OIC Countries” implemented by Nigeria in partnership with Turkey and The Gambia.
- The Project titled “Increasing the Capacity of Vocational Education Centers for the Disabled in the Selected OIC Countries” implemented by Suriname in partnership with Turkey and Guyana.
- The Project titled “Developing Guidelines on Social Safety Net Systems for the OIC Countries” implemented by Turkey in partnership with five other Member States.

- The Project titled “Digital Skills Development in OIC Countries” implemented by SESRIC in partnership with 16 Member States.

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

122- **Reiterates its request** to the Member Countries which have pledged to the ISFD to fulfill their commitments and requests the IDB Group to report back to the 36th COMCEC Session about the shortfalls in reaching the target capital of the ISFD.

123- **Recalling** the relevant resolutions of the recent COMCEC Sessions on the observations of the Member Countries for improving the performance of the ISFD, **requests** the ISFD to focus on the areas directly related to poverty and improving the lives of the disadvantaged segments of the society to generate a direct impact on poverty reduction, especially through grant based small/medium sized projects.

124- **Taking note of** the reports of the IDB on ISFD and SPDA, **acknowledges** the progress achieved in SPDA and **requests** the 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.

125- **Requests** the ISFD to intensify its efforts for resource mobilization and advocacy from different resources including governmental, non-governmental resources and the private sector in the Member States.

126- **Recalling** the relevant resolutions of the previous COMCEC Sessions regarding the capacity building project to be funded by the IDB Group and implemented by SESRIC for finalization of the OIC Cotton Programme, **welcomes** the announcement of the IDB Group that the allocation of funding to the capacity building project of SESRIC will be finalized soon within the scope of “IDB Reverse Linkage Cotton Capacity and Technology Transfer Programme.”

ii) OIC-VET Program

127- **Appreciates** the continuous efforts of SESRIC with a view to enhancing the capacities and quality of human resources in the member countries and **calls upon** SESRIC to mobilize more financial resources towards the OIC-VET Programme.

128- **Expresses its appreciation** to SESRIC and ISESCO for the preparation of the OIC-TVET Strategic Roadmap 2020-2025 in cooperation with the Member States, and **welcomes** cooperation and priority areas contained in the Roadmap developed to improve the quality of implementing technical and vocational education and training programs in the Member States.

129- **Invites** Member States to exert efforts in the implementation of the Roadmap in order to ensure a common framework that will support cooperation between the relevant institutions in establishing and maintaining sustainable TVET policies and programs.

130- **Requests** the OIC General Secretariat, SESRIC, ISESCO, IDB Group and other relevant OIC institutions to continue providing technical assistance to the Member States on TVET related issues, and **also requests** SESRIC to monitor the implementation of the Roadmap within the framework of its Vocational Education and Training Programme (OIC-VET) and submit the progress report to the COMCEC Sessions and to the Follow-up Meetings.

iii) Implementation of the SDGs

131- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 34th 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.

132- **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.

133- **Takes note with appreciation** of the report presented by SESRIC titled “Towards the Achievement of Prioritized Sustainable Development Goals in OIC Countries”, **requests** SESRIC to prepare annual reports on the progress towards achievement of the prioritized SDGs in the OIC Member Countries and submit to the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions and **also requests** SESRIC to continue to carry out statistical training activities with a focus on prioritised SDGs for the benefit of National Statistical Offices of the Member States within the framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.”

Deepening Financial Cooperation (Agenda Item: 11)

134- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group on March 28th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Infrastructure Financing through Islamic Finance in the OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations;

- Developing Legal and Regulatory Framework to Provide an Enabling Environment for Realizing Large Infrastructure Investments through Islamic Finance,

- Increasing the Number and Share of Islamic Nonbank Financial Institutions to Enhance the Contribution of Islamic Finance in Infrastructure Investments,
- Developing the Islamic Capital Markets Infrastructure to Facilitate the Issuance of Different Types of Project Sukuk and other Instruments as Appropriate for Infrastructure Projects,
- Encouraging Innovative Models to use Islamic Social Sector (i.e., Zakat, Waqf and Sadaqah) to Provide Social Infrastructure Services (such as Education and Health) provided that they are Shariah-compliant,
- Improving Capacity and human capital for increasing the use of Islamic Finance for infrastructure financing.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(50)-CCO)

135- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 13th Meeting of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group on October 17th, 2019 in Ankara with the theme of “Improving the Takaful Sector in the OIC Member Countries”, welcomes its following policy recommendations:

- Developing a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for the Takaful industry to facilitate the operations, transparency, and governance in this sector,
- Promoting product customization in Takaful Sector and introducing new products in accordance with the changing needs of the market,
- Encouraging the talent development through training and professional certification programs and increasing the awareness of stakeholders in Takaful sector,
- To provide incentives to the Takaful industry to enhance its competitiveness and business sustainability, thereby creating the level-playing field for the industry.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(51)-CCO)

136- **Calls upon** the Member States which have registered to the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group to actively participate in the 14th Meeting of the Financial Cooperation Working Group to be held on March 12th, 2020, in Ankara, with the theme of “Improving Shariah Governance Framework in Islamic Finance”, as well as its 15th Meeting to be held with the theme of “Standardization Efforts in Islamic Finance” and **also calls upon** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group.

137- **Commends** the efforts of Mozambique, Nigeria and Turkey for the following projects implemented in 2019 under the sixth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The Project titled “Capacity Building on Islamic Finance in Mozambique, Gambia and Nigeria” implemented by Mozambique in partnership with the Gambia and Nigeria,
- The Project titled “Islamic Liquidity Management Instruments for Sustainable Development of Islamic Financial Institutions” implemented by Nigeria in partnership with the Gambia, Togo and Malaysia,
- The Project titled “Assessment of COMCEC Real Estate Securities Markets and Regulatory Landscapes for Strengthening Capital Markets” implemented by Turkey in partnership with ten other Member States.

i) OIC Exchanges Forum

138- **Welcomes** the report of the 13th Meeting of the OIC Exchanges Forum, which has been hosted by Borsa İstanbul on September 26th, 2019 in İstanbul and **welcomes** the organization of “Certificate Training on Islamic Capital Markets and Sukuk” on 27-28 September 2019.

139- **Takes note** of the briefing by Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum on the efforts of the Forum’s Task Force on Precious Metals for the realization of the OIC Gold Exchange Project and **requests** the Forum’s Secretariat to finalize the necessary preparations for the establishment of the OIC Gold Exchange.

140- **Invites** the interested member states to actively support Forum’s Task Force on Precious Metals through, among others, by finding counterparts and designating focal points in their respective countries to lead the OIC Gold Exchange Project.

141- **Also invites** all Exchanges (including stock, commodity, derivatives and precious metals) and other relevant parties of interested member states to actively support Forum’s Task Force on Precious Metals, to engage in discussions and to help formulation of the business model for a well-functioning OIC Gold Market.

142- **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, its potential sub-indices and to develop effective products and services based on the Index.

143- **Welcomes** the efforts of the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum for the establishment of the Fund towards the operationalization of the S&P OIC/COMCEC Shariah 50 Index.

144- **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, products and services based on the Index.

145- **Welcomes** the offer of the Borsa Istanbul as the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum, to host the 14th Meeting of the Forum in 2020, in İstanbul, and **requests** all Member States to actively participate in this Meeting.

ii) Cooperation among Capital Markets' Regulatory Bodies

146- **Welcomes** the report of the 8th Meeting of the COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum, hosted by Capital Markets Board of the Republic of Turkey on September 26th, 2019 in Istanbul.

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

148- **Takes note** of the briefing by 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 **requests** the Forum's Secretariat to finalize the necessary legal, administrative and technical preparations for the establishment of the COMCEC Real Estate Electronic Platform/COMCEC Real Estate Exchange.

149- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 34th COMCEC 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 **invites** them to identify their authorized bodies as well as notify them to the Forum's Secretariat for enhancing coordination.

150- **Welcomes** the offer of the Capital Markets Board of Turkey as the Secretariat of the COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum, to host the 9th Meeting of the Forum in 2020, and **requests** all the Member States to actively participate in this Meeting.

iii) OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum

151- **Welcomes** the Communique of the 1st Meeting of the OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum hosted by the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey in Bodrum/Turkey on 22-24 September 2019.

152- **Also welcomes** the offer of the Central Bank of the Republic of Turkey as the Secretariat of the OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum, to host the 2nd Meeting of the Forum in 2020, and **requests** all the Member States to actively participate in this Meeting.

153- **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 “Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries” (Agenda Item: 12)

154- **Welcomes** the policy recommendations of the 14th Meeting of the Agriculture Working Group on “Increasing the Resilience of the Food Systems in the OIC Member Countries in Face of Future Food Crises” organized on 9-10 October 2019 in Ankara, Turkey.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(36)-CCO)

Theme of the next Exchange of Views Session

155- **Decides** on “Promoting Entrepreneurship for Tourism Industry Competitiveness” as the theme for the Exchange of Views Session at the 36th Session of the COMCEC and **requests** the COMCEC Tourism Working Group in its 16th Meeting, in cooperation with the relevant OIC Institutions, to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report it to the 36th COMCEC Session.

Date of the 36th Session of the COMCEC (Agenda Item: 13)

156- **Decides** that the 36th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee will be held on 20-21 April 2020 in Ankara, Turkey and the 36th Session of the COMCEC will be held on 23-26 November 2020 in İstanbul, Turkey.

Any Other Business

i) Renewal of the Bureau Members

157- **Elects** the State of Kuwait, Republic of Indonesia and Federal Republic of Nigeria as Vice Chairmen of the Bureau of the COMCEC to represent the Arab, Asian and African Regions, respectively, and Islamic Republic of Pakistan as Rapporteur, to assume their posts as of the 36th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC; as a result of the election, the composition of the Follow-up Committee is as follows;

<u>Country</u>	<u>Status</u>
Republic of Turkey	: Chairman (Permanent)
State of Palestine	: Vice-Chairman (Permanent)
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	: Vice-Chairman (Permanent)
State of Kuwait	: Vice-Chairman (Representing the Arab Region)
Republic of Indonesia	: Vice-Chairman (Representing the Asian Region)
Federal Republic of Nigeria	: Vice-Chairman (Representing the African Region)
State of Qatar	: Member of the Previous Bureau
Malaysia	: Member of the Previous Bureau
Republic of Gabon	: Member of the Previous Bureau
Islamic Republic of Pakistan	: Rapporteur

III

REPORT OF THE THIRTY FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC

(İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019)

Original: English

**REPORT
OF THE THIRTY FIFTH SESSION
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC
(İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019)**

1. The Thirty Fifth Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) was held on 25-28 November 2019 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 Chad
- 11-Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- 12-Republic of Djibouti
- 13-Arab Republic of Egypt
- 14-Republic of Gabon
- 15-Republic of The Gambia
- 16-Republic of Guinea
- 17-Republic of Indonesia
- 18-Islamic Republic of Iran
- 19-Republic of Iraq
- 20-Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 21-Republic of Kazakhstan
- 22-The State of Kuwait
- 23-Republic of Lebanon
- 24-Libya
- 25-Malaysia
- 26-Republic of Mali
- 27-Islamic Republic of Mauritania

- 28-Kingdom of Morocco
- 29-Republic of Mozambique
- 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 Somalia
- 38-Republic of Sudan
- 39-Republic of Suriname
- 40-Republic of Tajikistan
- 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
- 47-Republic of Yemen

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- Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH)
- 2- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
- 3- Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT)
- 4- Islamic Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
- 5- Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
- 6- Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group
- 7- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
- 8- Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association (OISA)
- 9- Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)
- 10- Federation of Contractors from Islamic Countries (FOCIC)
- 11- Islamic University of Technology (IUT)
- 12- Islamic Organization of Food Security (IOFS)

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- Accounting and Auditing Organization for Islamic Financial Institutions (AAOIFI)
- 5- Association of National Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) in Member Countries of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) (ADFIMI)

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

7. The Meeting of Senior Officials of the 35th COMCEC Session that preceded the Ministerial Session was held on 25th and 26th November 2019 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Salih Mutlu ŞEN, Ambassador 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 Five Session of the COMCEC was held on November 27th, 2019 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 humanity in general. H.E. ERDOĞAN celebrated the 50th Anniversary of the OIC, which aims to increase political, economic, commercial and cultural cooperation and solidarity among Islamic countries.

10. H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed that as the international community, we are gradually losing the ability to produce lasting solutions to problems such as terror, hunger, misery, regional turmoil, forced migration and climate change.

11. H.E. ERDOĞAN continued his statement by highlighting the current international system, shaped by the extraordinary conditions of the post-World War II era, lacks the capability to achieve the desired justice and order.

12. H.E. ERDOĞAN stressed that Turkey would continue her efforts to bring fair solutions to the problems of Muslim world with an entrepreneurial and humanitarian

foreign policy approach. Emphasizing the importance of ensuring peace and justice in the Islamic world, H.E. ERDOĞAN stated that Islamic World should not allow internal turmoil in our region and develop its own ability to solve our problems.

13. H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined the significance of the relevant countries to update their concession lists and to complete other procedures for the implementation of the Preferential Trade System of Islamic Countries, which is the most important project of COMCEC for strengthening economic and commercial cooperation.

14. In the face the negative impacts of rapid environmental changes and political problems on world societies increases, H.E. ERDOĞAN pointed out as OIC member countries, we are unfortunately among the countries that most affected by food crises.

15. In this respect, H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined the significance of the theme of this year's exchange of views session which is "Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries"

16. H.E. ERDOĞAN also mentioned the importance of some COMCEC projects such as the Trade Preferential System (TPS-OIC), the Gold Exchanges, the Real Estate Exchange, S&P/OIC COMCEC 50 Shariah Index and the OIC Arbitration Center. H.E. ERDOĞAN also stressed the need for accelerating the operationalization process of these projects and pointed out that that Turkey has established a high level National Coordination Committee on COMCEC affairs.

17. H.E. ERDOĞAN also stated that the COMCEC Policy Follow-up System, which was designed to follow the implementation of the policy recommendations adopted at the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions, would become more productive with the valuable contributions of the member countries.

18. While concluding his speech, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed his hope for realization of all 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.

19. H.E. ERDOĞAN congratulated Saudi Arabia for undertaking the Presidency of the OIC Summit, which covers the 14th Summit with the 2019-2021 period, and expressed that the political, economic and commercial cooperation between Islamic countries would be further developed.

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

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

21. 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 the importance of cooperation in the areas of intra-OIC trade, halal food, Islamic tourism. In this respect, he stated that the implementation of the Strategic Roadmap for development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member States would give an additional impetus for the promotion of Islamic tourism in the Member Countries. H.E. Al-OTHAIMEEN also commended all the Member States that have continued to support the activities of the OIC, including the contribution to OIC various projects, hosting of OIC several events, signing and ratification of the OIC economic agreements.

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

22. The Heads of Delegations of Qatar, Gabon and Tajikistan made statements during the Opening Ceremony. They appreciated the strong 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. The Head of Delegation of Qatar stressed the lack of progress in WTO Meetings due to more protective measures taken by several countries and underlined the necessity of increasing the intra-OIC investments. The Head of Delegation of Gabon highlighted the availability of arable lands in Africa and the investment opportunities in agriculture, fisheries and wood industries in the African countries. The Head of Delegation of Tajikistan underlined the importance of eliminating trade and investment barriers as well as investing in Islamic banking and digital economy.

23. 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 pointed out that the OIC member countries represent nearly one third of the world's agricultural land and produce about 15% of the world's production in the cereal, horticultural and livestock sectors, including fisheries. H.E. Dr. HAJJAR stressed the need to increase agricultural production and establish value-added chains in the manufacturing and to prioritize investment in rural and marketing infrastructure to improve market performance for reducing post-harvest losses and waste with support of agricultural research and the use of modern technology.

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

24. 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 solidarity and cooperation among the Islamic countries. Considering this, he emphasized the role of trade as a source of peace in OIC countries. Mr. HİSARCIKLIOĞLU also stated that OIC Arbitration Center would be operationalized in this year. Mr. HİSARCIKOĞLU underlined that the OIC Arbitration Center would boost the intra-OIC trade and investment.

25. Afterwards, a signing ceremony was held. The Headquarters Agreement of OIC Arbitration Centre was signed between the Ministry of Commerce of the Republic of Turkey and Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA).

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

Ministerial Working Session

27. The Ministerial Working Session of the Thirty-Fourth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 27th, 2019 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey.

28. The Session adopted the Agenda of the Thirty-Fifth Session of the COMCEC.

29. 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 “Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries” deliberated by the SOM and submitted to the consideration of the Ministerial Session.

30. Mr. Daniel J. GUSTAFSON, Deputy Director General of FAO, has delivered a keynote speech on various dimensions of the sustainable food systems. Mr. GUSTAFSON underlined the importance of the role of different stakeholders, consumer education, cooperation among different institutions regarding to policy of food in national level. He also mentioned the examples from Bangladesh, Jordan and Morocco.

31. Following the presentation of Mr. Daniel J. GUSTAFSON, the Exchange of Views Session of the 35th Session of the COMCEC was held with the theme of “Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries.”

32. Afterwards, the Ministers and heads of delegations of Member Countries made presentations on their country experiences with regards to sustainability of food systems in their respective countries.

Side Events/Special Sessions

33. The 35th Meeting of the Sessional Committee was held on November 24th, 2019 as a sideline event with the participation of the relevant OIC Institutions.

(A copy of the report of the 35th Meeting of the Sessional Committee is attached as Annex V.)

34. The side event on the “COMCEC Project Funding: Experiences of the Project Owners” was made on November 26th, 2019. During the event, the owners of the successful projects funded under the sixth project call of the COMCEC Project Funding made presentations with respect to the implementation of their projects.

35. The side event on the “Launch of COMCEC Policy Follow-up System” was held on November 26th, 2019. During the event, newly established Policy Follow-up System was presented to the participants.

36. The special session 1 on “Sustainable Food Systems in The Islamic World: Ongoing Dynamics and Constraints” was held on November 28th, 2019. The session was moderated by Prof. Hami ALPAS, Department of Food Engineering, Middle East Technical University. The speakers for this special session were as follows: Mr. Jamie MORRISON Strategic Programme Leader at FAO, Dr. Bashir JAMA, Global Management Food Security Specialist in Agriculture Infrastructure Division of Islamic Development Bank, and Mr. Turgut AĞIRNASLIGİL, Investment Project Manager at the Union of Sugar Beet Growers Cooperatives (PANKOBİRLİK).

37. The special session 2 on the “Adaptation Strategies to Minimize the Adverse Effects of Climate Change on Sustainable Food Systems in the Islamic World” was held on November 28th, 2019. The session was moderated by Prof. Dr. Gökhan ÖZERTAN, Head of Department of Economics Bogazici University. Mr. Ashraf HAMOUDA, Head of Office United Nations World Food Programme, Prof. Dr. M. Levent KURNAZ, Center for Climate Change and Policy Studies Bogazici University and Ms. Begüm MUTUŞ, General Manager Yıldız Holding, were the speakers of this special session.

38. The special session 3 on “Strengthening Governance for Food Security in The Islamic World” was held on November 28th, 2019. The session was moderated by Prof. Dr. Serdar SAYAN, Dean of the Graduate School of Social Sciences TOBB University of Economics and Technology. The speakers of this special session were as follows: Mr. Daniel J. GUSTAFSON, Deputy Director General at FAO, Mr. Ahmet GÜLDAL, Chairman of the Executive Board Turkish Grain Board (TMO) and Ms. Janet K. NGOMBALU, Regional Program Coordinator Eastern Africa Grain Council (EAGC).

39. The special session 4 on “Food and Agriculture in Times of Crisis: NGO’s Emergency Response” was held on November 28th, 2019. The session was moderated by Ms. Yvonne FORSEN, Chief of Food Security Analysis Service Research, Assessment & Monitoring Division UN World Food Programme. Dr. Rajali MAHARJAN, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering Tokyo Institute of Technology, Mr. Mohammed ABDUS SALAM Programme Head Humanitarian Crisis Management Programme BRAC, and Mr. Niyazi Özgür YÜCE, Executive Board Member IHH Humanitarian Relief Foundation, were the speakers of this special session.

40. The special session 5 on “Innovative Financing and Investment Opportunities for Sustainable Food Systems” was held on November 28th, 2019. The session was moderated by Assoc. Prof. Remziye YILMAZ, Department of Food Engineering, Hacettepe University. The speakers for this special session were as follows: H.E. Hani Salem SONBOL, Chief Executive Officer, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), Ms. Ayşe Ayşin IŞIKGECE, Director General, The General Directorate of Agricultural Enterprises (TIGEM) and Mr. Abdelkarim SMA, Economist, Near East and North Africa & Europe Division of International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD).

41. The special session 6 on “The Role of Arbitration in Enhancing Trade and Investment in The Islamic World” was held on November 28th, 2019. The Keynote speaker of the session was H.E. M. Rifat HISARCIKLIOĞLU, Chairman, TOBB. The session was moderated by H.E. Yousef Hassan KHALAWI, Secretary General, ICCIA. The speakers of this special session were as follows: Prof. Ziya AKINCI, President, Istanbul Arbitration Centre Turkey, Prof. Khawar QURESHI, QC, Serle Court Chambers, and Mr. Mehmet Celal SAVAŞ, Chief Legal Officer, SOCAR Turkey Enerji A.Ş.

42. The Forum on Sustainable Food System was held on November 28th, 2019. The session was moderated by Prof. Dr. Serdar SAYAN. The speakers of the Forum were Mr. Jamie MORRISON, Prof. Dr. Gökhan ÖZERTAN, Ms. Yvonne FORSEN and Mr. Abdelkarim SMA.

43. As a sideline event of the 35th Session of COMCEC, COMCEC Project Funding Exhibition took place on 25-28 November 2019.

Closing Session:

44. The Closing Session of the Thirty-Fifth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 28th, 2019 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey.

45. Mr. Bilal Khan PASHA, Consul General of Consulate General of Pakistan, Rapporteur, summarized the salient points in the Resolutions.

46. The Session adopted Resolution OIC/COMCEC/35-../RES..

47. H.E. Ahmed SSENYOMO, 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 thanks and appreciation to the Republic of Turkey for hosting the 35th Session of the COMCEC and to all participants for the successful conclusion of the Session.

48. H.E. Zubairu DADA, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of Nigeria made a statement on behalf of all participating States. H.E. the Minister thanked the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting successfully the 35th Session of the COMCEC. He underlined the importance of enhancing intra-OIC trade and investments as well as ensuring active engagement of private sector in the cooperation efforts.

49. H.E. Iya TI DJANI, Ambassador of Cameroon to OIC also made a statement and thanked the Government of the Republic of Turkey for successful arrangements made for the 35th Session of the COMCEC.

50. H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey, made a closing statement at the Session. H.E. OKTAY underlined the importance of sustainable food systems especially for the Islamic world. He stressed that with the increasing global population, providing healthy and nutritious food within safe environmental limits is one of the biggest global concerns. H.E. OKTAY expressed that, the OIC Group has a significant trade deficit in food and agricultural trade although over a quarter of world's agricultural area belongs to the OIC Member Countries.

51. H.E. OKTAY underlined the importance of achieving 25 percent intra-OIC trade volume. Then he touched upon the significance of trade preferential system among the OIC countries (TPS-OIC) for reaching the 25 percent intra-OIC trade volume and expressed his hope for the operationalization of the TPS-OIC soon. He also stressed that establishment of the OIC Arbitration Center is an encouraging case point for our other endeavors in various cooperation areas.

52. H.E. OKTAY underlined that the set of policy recommendations adopted by Ministers on “Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries” would enlighten Member Countries’ way towards reducing the disequilibrium between food supply and demand, and improving the sustainability of the food systems in the OIC Member Countries.

53. 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.)

54. All documents submitted to the 35th 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
35th COMCEC MINISTERIAL SESSION
(Istanbul, 25-28 November 2019)**

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

- Mr. RIAZ SEDIQI
Acting Director, Ministry of Economy
- Mr. ASADULLAH HAMDARD
Deputy Director General for Economic Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Mr. ALILI DJAMEL
Director, Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. TAREK ALLOUNE
Assistant Director, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. KHIATI MED
Responsible for Studies and Synthesis, Ministry of Agriculture

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Mr. SAHIB MAMMADOV
Deputy Minister, Ministry of Economy
- Mr. NAMIG SHALBUZOV
Deputy Director
- Mr. IRADA
HÜSEYNLİ Member,
Food Safety Agency

KINGDOM OF BAHRAIN

- H.E. ESSAM BIN ABDULLAH KHALAF
Minister, Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning
- Dr. IBRAHIM YUSUF AHMED
Director, Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning
- Mr. HUSSEIN JAWAD AL LAITH
Director, Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning
- Mr. MOHAMED SALAH ASHIER
Director, Ministry of Works, Municipalities Affairs and Urban Planning
- Mr. FAROOQ RASHAD AL SHAIKIH
Counsellor, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. AHMED ALI YUSUF ARRAD
Counsellor, Embassy of the Kingdom of Bahrain in Ankara

- Mr. YAQOOB MOHAMED AL ABDULLA
Attache, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. YOUSIF MOHAMED AL MOATAZ

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- Dr. MD JAFAR UDDIN
Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. ABUBAKAR SIDDIQUE
Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
- Mr. A.H.M. SHAFIQUZZAMAN
Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. PRANAB KUMAR GHOSH
Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Commerce
- Mr. SHEIKH MAREFAT ISLAM
Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Mr. BIDOSH CHANDRA BARMAN
Consul, Consulate General of Bangladesh in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

- H.E. ALIMATOU ASSOUMAN
Minister, Ministry of Industry and Trade
- H.E. Amb. ISSIRADJOU I. GOMINA
Ambassador, Embassy of Benin in Ankara
- Mr. HYACINTHE M. MONTCHO
Poverty Alleviation Focal Point
- Mr. RENE AKOWANOU
Trade Focal Point
- Mr. ROGER GHAHO
COMCEC Focal Point, Embassy of Benin in Ankara

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

- Dr. MAY FAEZAH HAJI AHMAD ARIFFIN
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economy
- Ms. SHARIFAH AMALINA MURAD
First Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Economy
- Ms. NURUSSAADAH MUHARRAM
Acting Director, Ministry of Finance and Economy

BURKINA FASO

- H.E. Amb. BRAHIMA SERE
Ambassador, Embassy of Burkina Faso in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

- H.E. Amb. Dr. IYA TIDJANI
Ambassador, Embassy of Cameroon in Riyadh

- Mr. BOUBA AOUSSINE
Technical Advisor, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. AYOUBA DAMBA
Chief of Service, Ministry of Economy
- Ms. OUMIA PABA SALE
Chief of Service, Ministry of External Relations
- Mr. ANGWAFO FRU
Chief of Service, Ministry of Finance

REPUBLIC OF CHAD

- H.E. ACHTA DJIBRINE SY
Minister, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Private Sector Promotion
- H.E. MADJIDIAN PADJA RUTH
Minister, Ministry of Agriculture
- Mr. BAKHIT HAYAR DIGAI
Deputy Director, Ministry of Trade, Industry and Private Sector Promotion
- Mr. BATEDJIM NOUDJALBAYE
Technical Counsellor, Ministry of Agriculture

REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE

- Dr. N'GUETTIA RENE YAO
Deputy Minister , Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
- H.E. Amb. YACOUBA ATTA
Ambassador, Embassy of Cote D'ivoire
- Mr. ADINGRA PRINCE FLORENT MENZAN
First Counsellor, Embassy of Cote D'ivoire Ankara
- Mr. PIERRE FRANCIS BOLOU
First Secretary, Embassy of Cote D'Ivoire in Ankara
- Mr. DRISSA TRAORE
Assistant to the Director General, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

- H.E. HASSAN HOUMED IBRAHIM
Minister, Ministry of Trade
- Ms. OULOUBA ISMAIL ABDO
Director, ODEPIC
- H.E. Amb. DYA EDDINE SAID BAMAHRAMA
Ambassador, OIC Representative in Saudi Arabia, Embassy of Djibouti in Riyadh
- Mr. ABOUBAKER HACHIM GUELLEH
Counsellor, Embassy of Djibouti in Ankara

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- H.E. TAREK KHALİL
Consul General, Consulate General of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Istanbul

- Mr. BASSEM ABDELHADI
Consul, Consulate General of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Istanbul
- Mr. HAYTHAM ABDELGHANY
Commercial Consul, Consulate General of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF GABON

- H.E. BIENDI MAGANDA MOUSSAVOU
Minister, Ministry of Agriculture
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KEYNOTE SPEAKER

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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 FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 27 November 2019)**

BİSMİLLAHİRRAHMANİRRAHİM.

Esteemed Ministers,

Valuable Secretary General,

Dear Guests,

Precious Brothers and Sisters,

ESSELAMU ALEYKÜM VE RAHMETULLAHİ VE BEREKATUH.

MAY ALLAH’S MERCY AND BLESSING BE UPON YOU.

In opening the 35th Ministerial Session of Organization of Islamic Cooperation, Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Collaboration, I would like to greet you all with my most endearing affection and respect.

As the Chairman of COMCEC, I would like to welcome all you valuable guests to our country.

I am very happy to host you, my brothers and sisters, in İstanbul, which is the convergence point of civilizations, continents and cultures from different corners of the Islamic world.

With this opportunity, I would like to convey my deepest affection to our brothers, sisters and friends from all around the world, as well as to the victims and the aggrieved who have been following our conference with great excitement.

I send my greetings from this beautiful province embellish with the call of “Allah’u Ekber” echoing through the skies for exactly 566 years, to the mother of cities, Mecca and also Medina, which has been graced and illuminated by the arrival of our Revered Prophet.

I greet glorious Jerusalem which once stirred the heart of love-struck poets, but today is weeping under occupation and oppression.

I send my greetings especially to the courageous Palestinian people who have been defending Jerusalem and the Temple Mount for decades, at the cost of their lives.

I wish quick recovery from Allah for our martyrs who were brutally killed while defending their beliefs and motherland.

I call upon Allah for this conference to serve for the salvation of all our brothers and sisters groaning under the oppression of occupiers and persecutors.

Dear guests...

We in the Islamic World have been facing countless threats ranging from terror to civil strife, from sectarian hostility to the anger and ignorance which our Revered Prophet commanded us to 'crush under our feet.'

These threats are aggravated with new ones rising from the West, such as hostility to Islam and xenophobia.

It is becoming increasingly more difficult for our brothers and sisters who are living in minorities in other countries to live according to their faith.

Terror organizations that serve well-known purposes and circles are transforming our mosques, schools and market places into bloodbaths.

Unfortunately, those countries suffering the most from problems such as hunger, poverty, drought and income inequalities are Islamic countries.

28 out of 54 low-income countries of the world experiencing food deficits are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

While we as Islamic countries comprise of 24 percent of the world population, we represent only 9,7 percent of global trade.

The proportion of high technology products in our exports barely reaches 4 percent.

As Muslims, we still need to shake off the lethargy that has enveloped us.

Our natural resources bestowed by Allah enrich not our own people, but rather Western countries.

As the Islamic world has yet to unify in order to act in full solidarity, it is easily manipulated.

Despite the economic power, population and the means we have at our disposal, we are not taken seriously enough in the international arena, thus, we fail in finding common ground.

What you will see in our lands is mostly tragedy, pain and fight, it is a huge mass of 1.7 billion people that wastes its energy with artificial agendas.

Most of the blood shed by the guns sold by Western weapons dealers is the blood of Muslims.

Once again, the people massacred by proxy terror organizations that bear 'Islam' in their names are usually Muslim.

In today's world, unfortunately there is no material as cheap as Muslim blood and Muslim life.

Some people view the one million Syrian brothers and sisters who have lost their lives beneath barrel bombs as merely statistical data.

Except for a couple of countries and associations, nobody genuinely cares about the tragedies of children in Yemen who are nothing but skin and bones due to famine.

The cries of little kids who were recklessly killed while playing ball on the Gaza Strip were not heard by any organization, including that of the United Nations Security Council.

Wherever we look, from Somali to Afghanistan, from Arakan to Turkestan and Libya, we encounter similar sorrow and tragedies.

Wherever it is Muslims at stake, those who are dying or suffering under persecution are not regarded as living beings, but unfortunately simply as photographic frames.

Dear brothers and sisters...

Of course, the weaknesses of organizations that have an obligation to preserve global peace and stability, such as the UN Security Council, play a big role in this hypocritical double standard.

Rather than upholding justice and righteousness, these organizations take arbitrary resolutions that are dependent upon the interests of five countries.

The fate of all humanity, including the Islamic world, hangs in the balance of the conscience of five member countries of the Security Council.

The Islamic World does not have the unfettered right to take and implement resolutions regarding its own future.

It is not possible for this unjust system that was built by the victors of World War II to continue forever.

Rearranging the international security architecture from scratch, according to today's requirements has gone from being a preference to an obligation.

As was once stated by the Renown Companion of the Revered Prophet, Omer, "Justice is the Foundation of the State."

An order that favors the strong over the righteous, and those who wield power over the weak cannot generate welfare, peace and prosperity under any circumstances.

As the backdrop to our call that "THE WORLD IS BIGGER THAN FIVE," it is these very facts that we as Turkey emphasize at every given opportunity and on all platforms.

It is essential that the international community confront these realities now.

Global injustice will deepen, conflicts will increase and the world will continue to suffocate in warfare with each day that we delay in taking action.

The United Nations, which was unable to come up with solutions to the recent tragedies of Bosnia, Ruanda, Iraq and today in our neighbors Syria, Palestine and Myanmar cannot bring a solution to the problems of humanity.

Here, once more, in taking into account the structure of the United Nations Security Council, the geography and religious distribution of the world's population, I want to repeat my appeal for redetermination.

As our brothers and sisters, I would like to call on you to support this appeal of ours.

Dear guests...

This horrific situation in which we are the victims has aggravated the burden on our shoulders even further.

Muslims have to defend justice, righteousness and peace under all circumstances.

When we witness any evil, we are obliged to confront it first by action, then by our words and if we cannot do so either way, we are obliged to confront it by our heart.

The commands of Allah in our holy book Quran are very explicit:

"ALLAH ORDERS JUSTICE, GOODNESS, RIGHTEOUSNESS, SOLIDARITY AND PROHIBITS IMMORALITY, EVIL AND INJUSTICE."

Yes, nobody who obviously violates these holy orders can serve Islam and be benevolent to Muslims.

We cannot pretend as if nothing happened in the face of the persecution surrounding us.

Unlike others, we do not have the luxury to watch from the distance any injustice we have witnessed.

Instead of getting angry with the darkness and expecting help to come from foreigners, we are obliged to light a candle to pierce the darkness.

Like the ant carrying water to the fire that surrounded the Prophet Abraham, we must struggle with all our might and capacity to eliminate injustice.

Otherwise, we cannot give an account of ourselves on that great day of Last Judgment, as even mothers will not know their children, when even the tiniest benevolence and malignancy shall be brought in front of us.

Undoubtedly, as long as the persecution continues, there will also be the “DEFENDERS OF JUSTICE” who have faith in justice and strive their utmost in order to establish it.

And as Muslims, we are obliged to be the ‘21ST CENTURY DEFENDERS OF JUSTICE.’

As Islamic countries and as Muslims who are members of the religion of peace, the more we are embroiled in conflict with each other, the more agony those innocent people who have vested their hopes to us will suffer.

We should not leave brotherly love only in statements, but we must realize it in a real sense with all its dimensions including technical, commercial, economical, cultural and social.

To this end, we have to seek for ways for the finest and most efficient utilization of our available means, such as corporations, institutions and organizations.

The problem is that right now, we are not aware of our power, capacity and potential. We should be aware of them.

One of those available instruments, the Organization for Islamic Cooperation celebrates its 50th anniversary this year and represents the Islamic world.

With 56 members and five observer-status members, this organization is the 2nd largest international organization after the United Nations.

Turkey has been actively engaged in the activities of this organization since its establishment, and it has made a great deal of effort so that it can become even more effective.

We have strived especially hard during our Term Presidency and have acted with an approach of responsibility to respond to the expectations of the Islamic World.

We took immediate action to counter the assault against the legal status of Jerusalem by organizing two Extraordinary Summits in December, 2017 and May, 2018.

As the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, we announced from Istanbul altogether our reaction against the tyranny suffered by our brothers and sisters and the fait accompli and imposition on Jerusalem, the city of Prophets.

Not deeming this to be sufficient, we also brought the matter onto the agenda at Urgent Special Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

The resolutions we took during the summits were also ratified by the conscience of international community with overwhelming majority vote.

I want to underscore a reality here once more.

Any cruelty that is unresponsive will only serve to encourage the oppressor.

Disrespecting the Palestinians' right to live, to own property and to work, Israel puts the future of the world as well as the region into jeopardy.

Those who ravage Jerusalem, the holy city of three major religions, in an effort to turn it into the center of only their beliefs are committing a dire mistake.

That the western countries spoil Israel to such extent does not serve anything other than adding fuel to the fire, either deliberately or unintentionally.

As Turkey, we are determined and committed to continue to defend the rights of our Palestinian brothers and sisters and the privacy of Jerusalem at all platforms.

Dear brothers and sisters,

Hostility against Islam and xenophobia is spreading like a plague, particularly in western societies.

We witness hate crimes that target houses of worship, workplaces and Muslim women walking in the streets practically every day.

Those who speak haughtily of democracy and human rights just play the deaf, dumb and blind kid whenever Muslims and immigrants are abused in their territories.

The insults to the personality of our Prophet are just treated as insignificant and swept under the rug under the pretext of 'freedom of thought.'

Racist massacres that cost the lives of our citizens are being trivialized with careless expressions such as ‘gyro murders.’

If we fail to adopt a common attitude against such attacks, I fear an even darker future awaits the Muslim Diaspora.

During our Term of Presidency for Organization of Islamic Cooperation, we took some measures after the Christchurch terrorist action in which 52 Muslims lost their lives.

Based on the importance of the issue, we as the Term President of the Summit appealed to the Organization for Islamic Cooperation to convene an Ad Hoc Executive Committee.

In the final declaration we ratified at the conclusion of the meeting, we appealed to other international and regional organizations to adopt March 15th as the ‘International Day of Solidarity Against Islamophobia.’

We have made an intense effort in the Islamic world and the international community at large in order for this problem to be brought onto the agenda.

We called the United Nations General Assembly to convene, whereby we pioneered the acceptance of the resolution regarding this issue.

While assuming the Summit Term Presidency in 2016, we focused on some issues and identified some tangible targets on certain issues.

We laid the foundations of many important mechanisms during our Summit Term Presidency, which commenced with the acceptance of the 12th Ten-Year Action Plan of the Organization.

Among these include; the Youth Strategy, Advisory Women Council, Arbitration Contact Group, Network of National Red Crescent of Member Country Associations, as well as a Police Collaboration and Coordination Center.

On behalf of myself and my country, I would like to present my gratitude to all member countries who have not abstained from assuming responsibility and have responded immediately to all our appeals without withholding their support during our Term Presidency.

In taking this opportunity, I would like to wish success to Saudi Arabia, which has undertaken the 14th Term Presidency until the year 2021.

I want to thank Mr. Secretary General El-Useymin and his team members for the joint effort they have made.

We are definitely aware of the fact that such efforts by Turkey disturb some circles that are nourished by the inertia and lethargy of the Muslims.

Those who want to see an Islamic world that has low self-esteem, weak solidarity, disunity, infighting, have made some incredible accusations against us.

Those who want to see an Islamic world that lacks self-esteem, frail solidarity, rather than acting in unity and solidarity, have hurled unbelievable accusations in an effort to wear us down.

They accuse a country like Turkey, which has lost 304 citizens due to ISIS terror attacks, of supporting ISIS.

They did not hesitate to embrace FETÖ supporter terrorists responsible for the deaths of 251 and injuries of 2,193 citizen on the night of 15 July, 2016.

They provided this terror organization with tens of thousands of trucks and thousands of aircrafts full of guns and ammunition in order to establish a terrorist state along our Syrian border.

Not only did they slam their doors in the faces of the aggrieved who fled the conflict in Syria, they also abandoned our country in the face of the refugee crisis Turkey has been exposed to.

As if that wasn't enough, they manipulated our economy and foreign exchanges markets in an effort to collapse our economy through currency speculation.

Thank God we have defeated all the asymmetrical attacks with the help of Allah, with the support of our nation and you, as our dear friends, together with the prayers of the innocent and the aggrieved.

With Operation 'Euphrates Shield,' we cleared the terrorist organization ISIS out from El Bab and Cerablus.

Thus, we incapacitated over 3,000 ISIS members and struck the biggest blow against ISIS.

Then, with Operation 'Olive Branch,' we cleansed Afrin from the PKK-YPG terror organization components.

With the Operation 'Peace Spring' which we initiated this October 9th, we struck another devastating blow upon the terror corridor desired to be created in northern Syria.

We gave our response to the scenarios designed to besiege Turkey with those determined steps we took in the field.

I hope we will continue to preserve both the security of our country and the territorial integrity of Syria.

Dear Delegates,

Today COMCEC, 35th Ministerial Session of which has convened this here this week, is another prominent organization we must leverage in order to reinforce our economic and commercial cooperation in particular.

As member countries of COMCEC, we must increase our savings and direct them toward productive investments at home and abroad.

We need to develop programs on a continual basis in order to bolster trade and economic collaboration with each other.

In this context, I would like to highlight the importance we attribute to the target of boosting trade amongst the members of organization to 25%.

Taking this opportunity, I call upon the relevant countries to update their concession lists and other procedures so that the System of Preferred Trade for Islamic Countries can be validated.

As the President of COMCEC, let me reiterate our commitment and resolve to sustain the necessary activities.

I believe it will be very effective to discuss the issue of ‘Promotion of Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries’ during this year’s COMCEC opinion exchange session.

Furthermore, apart from the Opinion Exchange Session, I invite all our participants to join the panels to be held.

COMCEC Working Groups provide us with the opportunity to discuss our sector-related problems and come up with common solutions by means of tangible policy recommendations.

Regarding the implementation of these policy recommendations, COMCEC Project Financing is also a significant instrument.

I call all the member countries to benefit from such financing.

It is also necessary to follow up to what extent the policy recommendations adopted during the Ministerial Sessions of COMCEC are implemented by the member countries.

In this regard, we have realized the ‘COMCEC Policy Monitoring System’ as of this year.

The new system is going to deepen our existing cooperation with your support.

Experiences have indicated that without science and technology, there cannot be any value-added high quality production.

And for this, we need to do intense, correct and well-targeted investments especially in future technologies, strategic industries and services.

I believe that we need to reinforce our cooperation within the framework of COMCEC in all these areas and develop dedicated programs and projects.

The platform where the commercial and investment disputes arising among the countries member to the Organization is the Istanbul Arbitration Center.

The initiatives and primary documents for the establishment of this center in Istanbul are about to be finalized.

Hopefully, we are going to put the Arbitration Center into operation.

I'm pleased to see that such center has been finalized by COMCEC in such a short term as three years.

I would like to thank everyone who has made an effort for this and especially to the COMCEC Secretary Office, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture, the Turkish Union of Chambers and Stock Exchanges, as well as to all member countries who have contributed to the process.

On the other hand, I would like to state that I appreciate the recent initiatives of Stock Exchange Istanbul for the actual realization of the Joint Index, which is a significant COMCEC project.

With your support and contributions, we will inaugurate the index to the service of our member countries, upon the development of a fund that will soon be tradable and upon completion of the other technical studies.

In the upcoming period, I believe that we should concentrate on Helal Food.

As for Helal Food, it is very critical that an accreditation system compatible with international standards is established among the member countries.

I invite all the parties to expedite efforts regarding this issue in a spirit of collaboration.

We will organize the World Helal Summit in Istanbul between 28 November and 1 December, 2019 under the auspices of the Turkish Presidency.

I congratulate all those who have contributed to this significant organization.

While ending my words with such thoughts, I would like to repeat once again the gratitude I feel for hosting you in Istanbul.

I wish that Allah enables us to realize the resolutions we are going to ratify at the conclusion of all the negotiations we conduct today.

I wish that the 35th COMCEC Conference serves as auspicious opportunity for our country.

Thank you very much indeed, may you be entrusted to God.

Take good care of yourselves.

ANNEX

3

Original: Arabic

**SPEECH OF H.E. DR. YOUSEF BIN AHMAD AL-OTHAIMENN,
THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANISATION
OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)
AT THE OPENING SESSION
OF THE THIRTY FIFTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 27 November 2019)**

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

Honorable Ministers and Distinguished Heads of Delegation,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatihu

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the 35th Session of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC). I wish to express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey, for supporting OIC activities and programs during his tenure as the chair of COMCEC. In the same vein, I wish also to thank the Government and people of Turkey for their traditional hospitality and excellent arrangements made for the success of this annual event.

I am particularly pleased to note the far-reaching measures and initiatives, which set the pace for advancing socio-economic development of OIC Member States. In this connection, I wish to inform this august meeting that our economic cooperation profile has witnessed a slight increase in the various indices, compared to the figures earlier reported at this meeting. According to ICDT data, intra-OIC net trade volume reached US\$ 381.4 billion in 2018 compared to US\$ 322.2 billion in 2017, and the share of intra-OIC Trade in the overall foreign trade of Member States increased by 7% from 19.8% in 2017 to 21.2% in 2018.

Therefore, the General Secretariat and the relevant OIC institutions have taken action on the implementation of the resolutions of the 46th Council of Foreign Ministers, which was held in Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on 1-2 March 2019. These actions include preparations for the convening of the 5th Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers, the 11th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, and the 8th Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development in 2020. We are yet to hear from Sudan for the convening of the Second OIC Conference of Transport Ministers in

2020 in order to evaluate the implementation of the OIC resolutions on transportation and review the progress on execution of OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway project.

In line with the implementation of the above-mentioned CFM resolutions, the Republic of Turkey, the OIC General Secretariat and its relevant institutions are organizing the OIC High Level Public and Private Investment Conference in Istanbul, Turkey, on 8-9 December 2019. As you know, trade and investment barriers in OIC Member States have not been completely eradicated and a number of required procedures to complete custom formalities remain as challenge both for exporters and importers. As a result, OIC Member States attract relatively limited volume of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows that is far below their potentials. OIC Member States need therefore to introduce conducive internal procedures for foreign investors and to exert more efforts to create a business friendly environment where businessman can easily engage into international trade. In this regard, I wish to urge all public and private sector entities of the Member States to actively participate at this important OIC Investment Conference in order to discuss all investment obstacles at international, regional and national levels.

Excellency Mr President,

Honorable Ministers,

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 various economic sectors. In this connection, I commend the relevant OIC institutions and organs, including COMCEC Coordination Office, 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 (IsDB) Group. While mobilization of the private sector has continued to be positive due to the efforts of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA), the operationalization of the ICCIA's affiliated arbitration center will also benefit our countries for dispute settlement and mediation in private sector.

In the Halal Food, Standardisation and Islamic Tourism, I am also pleased to note the positive effect of the annual HALAL EXPO, jointly 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. The implementation of the Strategic Roadmap for development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member States will also give an additional impetus for the promotion of Islamic tourism in our countries.

Similarly and within the implementation of the decision to promote intra-OIC tourism through the OIC City of Tourism Award, I wish to inform this august assembly that commemoration the OIC City of Tourism 2019, which is Dhaka, capital city of Bangladesh, was held in Dhaka on 11-12 July 2019. Accordingly, efforts are being consolidated to ensure that the commemoration of the OIC City of Tourism Award in the next awardee city for 2020, which is the city of Gabala in Azerbaijan. In the like manner, the next 11th edition of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, which is scheduled to hold in Azerbaijan in 2020, will nominate the new awardee cities for 2021 and 2022. In this context, I wish to call upon all Member States to actively participate in the commemoration activities in awardee cities.

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 activities of the OIC, including the contribution to OIC various projects, hosting of OIC several events, signing and ratification of the OIC economic agreements. We are convinced that the partnerships, which we seek to consolidate in the relevant socio-economic fields, would serve the interests of our Member States, much as we also seek to continue to support the global efforts for a more stable sustainable development and a prosperous world.

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

Wassalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu.

ANNEX

4

Original: Arabic

**ADDRESS BY H.E. DR. BANDAR M. H. HAJJAR,
PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (IsDB GROUP),
AT THE OPENING SESSION
OF THE THIRTY FIFTH MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 27 November 2019)**

In the name of Allah, most gracious and merciful, Lord of the Worlds, and peace and blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad and his family and companions.

Your Excellency, Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Turkey, Chairman of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC).

Your Excellencies, Ministers

His Excellency Dr. Yousef bin Ahmed Al-Othaimeen, Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation,

Distinguished delegates,

Brothers and Sisters,

Peace, mercy and blessings of God

I am pleased to participate in the 35th Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) in the historic city of Istanbul. At the outset, I would like to extend my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government and people of the Republic of Turkey for their warm welcome and sincere thanks and appreciation to President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey, Chairman of the COMCEC, for his tireless efforts to strengthen the bonds of solidarity and cooperation among the Member States of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC).

This morning, the President's speech included many practical ideas and proposals aimed at raising the level of economic cooperation among Member States and achieving the sustainable development of their peoples, which we all seek.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Brothers and Sisters,

The (COMCEC) meeting is held under the slogan “Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic Countries”, which is the 57 member countries of the Islamic Development Bank. The agricultural sector contributes about 20% to the Gross

Domestic Product (GDP) of 18 Member States and more than one third in 9 Member States and about 50% of the population is employed in the agricultural sector in low-income countries with food shortages.

Our member countries represent nearly one third of the world's agricultural land and produce about 15% of the world's production in the cereal, horticultural and livestock sectors, including fisheries.

Moreover, 85% of our member countries are located on the oceans and seas, a source of food, investment and labor. The participation of sea and ocean products in the total output of the global economy is estimated at \$2.5 trillion, and our member countries have important human capital, especially in the youth sector, where more than 10 million people enter annually labor market in our member states.

However, there are many challenges facing agricultural and food systems in our member countries, including social, economic, institutional, environmental and technological challenges.

Mr. President, Your Excellencies, Brothers and Sisters,

The IDB Group has supported the efforts of member countries to increase food production and improve its quality while maintaining environmental, economic and social considerations in light of the increasing population and increasing demand for food products. As is known, the population of member states in 2015 reached 1.7 billion and is expected to reach 2.2 billion by 2030.

In view of the limited time, I will highlight the most important initiatives adopted by the Bank. A more detailed paper on the Bank's programs in this area will be distributed and will be available for consultation. Some of these initiatives are:

1. Rice value chains in ten West African Member States. These include Senegal, Gambia, Sierra Leone, Niger, Guinea, Côte d'Ivoire, Mali, Cameroon, Benin and Burkina Faso, which are highly dependent on rice imports and the program aims to help these countries achieve rice self-sufficiency by 2025.
2. In partnership with the Government of the United Arab Emirates, IDB established the International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) in 1996. The Center has so far produced a number of seeds technologies that are highly adaptable to salinity.
3. Establishment of a 500 million \$ transformation fund to support science, technology and innovation innovators, which was launched shortly to develop innovative solutions that address the challenges faced by Islamic countries in several areas including food security and agriculture.
4. Investment in infrastructure, which represents 70% of the total credit of the Bank Group, which exceeded 60 billion \$, which is necessary for the development of other

productive sectors. Given the importance of agriculture and food security, the Bank Group has invested more than 13 billion \$ since its inception.

5. The Bank's policy on agriculture and rural development was approved in 2018. The Bank's investments will support member countries in this area, giving priority to building sustainable food systems by investing in smart agriculture, linking farmers' markets, supporting private sector investments and promoting science, technology and innovation.

6. Adopting climate policy and issuing green checks. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) announced during its two-week sukuk conference in Luxembourg that the first green checks will be issued this month. This year, the Bank's Board of Executive Directors adopted the Bank's first climate change policy.

7. Sharing experiences, knowledge and successful experiences from one country to another to improve rice production and quality in Guinea and Suriname using Malaysia's experience and knowledge as well as the project to raise the capacity of the Kyrgyz Republic to improve livestock productivity while using knowledge and technology in Indonesia.

8. Improving transport routes across the borders of the Member States. Transport routes have been given high priority by the IDB Group, in the context of the Group's strategy for regional cooperation and integration. Our Bank has provided considerable funds to the financing of international transport routes. The 'Railway Linking Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan-Iran' and 'Trans-Kalahari Corridor' are among them.

9. Supporting trade among member countries in the field of agriculture and food systems, where the Bank Group has invested heavily in the trade of strategic agricultural commodities such as wheat, rice, cotton, palm oil, sugar, coffee, cocoa, and fish. Indeed, the International Islamic Trade Finance Company (ITFC) - this organization is a subsidiary of our bank group - financed 150 agricultural products' trade, totaling up to 5.4 billion \$.

10. Supporting the establishment of the Islamic Food Security Organization based in Kazakhstan. I am pleased to inform you that tomorrow the Bank will sign a memorandum of understanding with this organization to strengthen partnership and cooperation.

11. The Bank will launch a regional cooperation and integration strategy, which will adopt sub-regional programs based on the Bank's new development model, which strengthens the value chains and competitiveness of member countries. These programs have been implemented and are expected to accelerate implementation following the Bank's decentralization policy, the opening of additional regional offices and the relocation of a large proportion of staff from headquarters to the regional offices.

Before concluding, allow me to address three important issues that we need to work on collectively to achieve sustainable food systems in our Member States, thus ensuring food security for our peoples and I hope that you will give them enough time to discuss in specialized sessions over the next two days.

1. The need to increase agricultural production and establish value-added chains in the manufacturing and processing of such production to ensure food for the growing population of our member countries - which today reaches 850 million people in the world who are chronically undernourished, one third of whom are in our member countries.
2. Prioritize investment in rural and marketing infrastructure to improve market performance, reduce post-harvest losses and waste, support agricultural research, and develop the use of modern technology.
3. Work to improve the investment environment, encourage the private sector to improve food systems, remove obstacles, and adopt stimulating policies.

In conclusion, I have the honor to inform you that Turkey will host the Islamic Development Bank Forum for Public-Private Partnership at the end of February 2020 in Istanbul under the patronage of His Excellency the President of the Republic of Turkey. The Bank looks forward to the participation of all Member States in this forum to exchange experiences and information and benefit from Turkey's leading experience in this field.

I would like to thank all Member States for their continued support to the Islamic Development Bank Group and wish the work of the 35th Session of the (COMCEC) a success, hoping to come up with practical recommendations and proposals for further economic and social advancement of the peoples of the Member States.

Peace, mercy and blessings of God.

ANNEX

5

Original: English

**REPORT OF THE 35th MEETING OF
THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE
(Istanbul, 24 November 2019)**

1. The 35th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the COMCEC was held on November 24th, 2019 in İstanbul, on the sidelines of the 35th Meeting of the COMCEC.
2. The Meeting was chaired by Mr. M. Metin EKER, Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office. In addition to the 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 (IsDB) Group
 - International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)-IsDB Group
 - Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC)- IsDB Group
 - Islamic Corporation for the Development of Private Sector (ICD)- IsDB Group
 - Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
 - Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
 - Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS)
 - Organization of the Islamic Shipowners' Association (OISA)
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
 - Establishing an e-platform to monitor the implementation of the planned activities of the OIC Institutions
 - Possible Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the Implementation of the SDGs in OIC Member States
 - Preparations for Annual Report on the Progress Towards Achieving the Prioritized SDGs at the OIC level
 - 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 “OIC Business Intelligence Programme”
- 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 of the relevant OIC Institutions directly serving to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations (Group A activities) and activities serving to the objectives of COMCEC Strategy (Group B activities) for the period of December 2018-November 2019 as well as for the period November 2019-November 2020 based on the cooperation areas, namely trade, transport and communications, tourism, agriculture, poverty alleviation and financial cooperation.

(Group A and Group B activities are attached as Annex 1 and Annex 2 respectively.)

5. The Committee was informed by the CCO that in terms of Group A, 89 activities were reported as completed by the OIC Institutions. In terms of cooperation areas, approximately 70 percent of the activities were implemented in trade domain followed by tourism (9%) and financial cooperation (8%). The Committee was also informed that with respect to types of the activities, the Institutions specially focused on trainings and technical assistance programs (37 %), workshops (28%) and meetings (15%).

6. In terms of Group B activities, CCO representative informed the Committee that 156 activities have been completed since the 34th Session of the COMCEC and 114 activities are planned to be organized in the upcoming period by the respective OIC Institutions. Most of the completed and planned activities were reported in the area of trade.

7. The Committee underlined the importance of contributions of the OIC Institutions to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations as well as realization of the objectives of the COMCEC Strategy. In this respect, the Committee commended the efforts of SESRIC in contributing to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations through specifically designed activities such as capacity building and training programmes in the six cooperation areas. The Committee requested the relevant OIC institutions to do the same for the implementation of the policy recommendations and also continue reporting their list of activities in two groups in accordance with the agreed template/forms.

8. The CCO informed the Committee about the sectoral themes to be supported by the COMCEC Coordination Office in the 8th Project Call to be made in September 2020, under the COMCEC Project Funding. The Committee appreciated the efforts of SESRIC in submitting projects in six cooperation areas through the COMCEC Project Funding in the 7th project call in 2019. Moreover, the Committee underlined the importance of the submission of the project proposals by the OIC Institutions through COMCEC Project Funding and invited the relevant OIC Institutions to utilize this mechanism more efficiently for the realization of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

9. Regarding the proposal for establishing an e-platform to monitor the implementation of the planned activities of the OIC Institutions, the Committee was informed by the CCO representative of the preparations for launching such platform. The CCO representative briefed the Committee that CCO has already launched the COMCEC Policy Follow-up System for the benefit of Member Countries and similar window will be opened for the benefit of the OIC Institutions with a view to simplifying and standardizing the reporting process. The Committee requested the CCO to complete the preparations before the 36th Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC.

10. Furthermore, the Committee discussed the ways and means of improving the mentioned e-platform. The Committee appreciated the efforts of the CCO and requested the CCO to incorporate a section on the major programmes/projects/activities of OIC Institutions which are not within the scope of the COMCEC Strategy and Ministerial Policy Recommendations to the mentioned e-platform.

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

11. The Committee was informed by the SESRIC of the annual report on the progress at the OIC level towards achieving the prioritized SDGs as decided by Member States to be submitted to the 35th Ministerial Sessions of the COMCEC.

12. The Committee was informed by the CCO that in line with the relevant resolution of the 34th COMCEC Session, “the List of Activities of the OIC Institutions Related to the SDGs for the period of 2019 and 2020” have been compiled by the CCO and submitted to the 35th COMCEC Session.

(The List of Activities of the OIC Institutions related to the SDGs for the period of 2019 and 2020 is attached as Annex 3)

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

13. The importance of the contributions of the OIC Institutions to the implementation of the OIC-2025 Programme of Action was highlighted.

The Proposal on the “OIC Business Intelligence Programme”

14. The Committee was informed by the ICIEC (IsDB Group) and SESRIC on the preparations towards the launching of “the OIC Business Intelligence Programme” initiative. The Committee noted the recent efforts and requested the ICIEC in cooperation with SESRIC to finalize the technical preparations for the operationalization of the Program.

Any Other Business

15. Recalling the relevant resolutions of the previous COMCEC Sessions and Sessional Committee Meetings, the SESRIC and IsDB Group informed the Committee of the recent developments regarding the finalization of the OIC Cotton Programme and stressed the establishment of a constructive dialogue between the relevant parties. The Committee reiterated its request from the IsDB Group to expedite the process towards the realization of the project.

16. The CCO raised the issue of possible contributions of the OIC Institutions for the benefit of Palestinian people and Al-Quds Sharif and proposed to discuss the ways and means of doing this under a separate agenda item in the forthcoming Meetings of the Sessional Committee. The Committee welcomed the proposal of the CCO and extended it to include the distant OIC member countries such as Guyana and Suriname and Observer Countries. The Committee decided to include the issue as a separate agenda item in the next Sessional Committee Meeting.

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

ANNEX

6

Original: English

**ADDRESS BY H.E. FUAT OKTAY,
VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE
35TH SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 28 November 2019)**

Esteemed Ministers,

Distinguished Participants,

Essalamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barakatuh.

We have successfully concluded the 35th Session of the COMCEC after fruitful discussions. We have adopted a set of resolutions along with policy recommendations on the theme "Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in Islamic States" of our Exchange of Views Session.

With the increasing global population, providing healthy and nutritious food to populations within safe environmental limits is one of the biggest global concerns. Regional conflicts, wars, natural and man-made disasters, climate change and decreasing agricultural areas lead to a disequilibrium between food supply and demand. Global food supply will have to increase dramatically in order to meet the world's population that will reach approximately 9.1 billion by 2050.

This situation is also a grave concern. Around 200 million people which is approximately 25 percent of all undernourished and food insecure individuals of the World live in member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Distinguished Guests,

As underlined by H.E. President Erdoğan during his opening address, the Islamic world have been facing serious threats such as terror, civil unrest, sectarian strife, as well as anger and ignorance. Furthermore, these threats are aggravated in other parts of the world as hostility to Islam and xenophobia.

Regrettably, those countries suffering the most from problems such as hunger, poverty, drought and income inequalities are also Islamic countries. 28 out of 54 low-income countries of the world experiencing food deficits are members of the OIC. Despite the fact that the Islamic countries comprise 24 percent of the world population, they represent only 9,7 percent of global trade.

Distinguished Participants,

Meanwhile, over a quarter of world's agricultural areas belong to the OIC Member Countries, we produce 20 percent of world's agricultural products. Yet as the OIC Group, we have a significant trade deficit in the trade of food and agricultural products.

In 2018, we have exported 117 billion dollars of food and beverages while importing 184 billion dollars of food with a huge deficit of 67 billion dollars. Meanwhile intra OIC food imports accounted for 34 billion dollars which is only 18 percent of our food imports. With positive interventions as contained in our policy recommendations we can easily enhance our agricultural production, increase food trade volume and reduce our trade deficit substantially in a short span of time.

I believe that our exchange of views and experience sharing we had, will contribute to the improvement and sustainability of the food systems in our countries.

Distinguished Participants,

The more we have firm economic relations and trade with each other, the stronger we can resist to external threats. In this respect, I would like to once more underline the importance of increasing the intra-OIC trade. We attach great importance to achieving the target of having 25 percent intra-OIC trade volume. For achieving this significant target we will definitely need effective instruments and targeted programs.

One of these instruments is the trade preferential system, TPS-OIC in short, for which we have exerted intense efforts for many years. As discussed during the Working Session, we are close to the operationalization of the system. If the relevant technical documents are updated and completed in the same standard format, I hope we can start to implement this crucial system soon and reap the benefits of freer trade among our countries.

Distinguished colleagues,

Unfortunately, some of the Islamic countries are embroiled in conflict. From Somalia to Afghanistan, Yemen, Palestine, Syria and Libya, the Islamic world have been suffering from sorrow and tragedies. Muslim communities and minorities all over the world from Rohingya, to Uygurs, Turkish Muslim minority in Western Thrace need our care and protection. Turkish Muslim Cypriot people suffer from inhuman isolation and embargoes and deserve our solidarity. While Palestinian people still struggle for their national rights and dignity they need our economic assistance.

Meanwhile, natural disasters in the Muslim World require our active solidarity and urgent action as well. We are sorry to see that the recent earthquake in Albania has caused human and material losses. Yesterday, H.E. President Erdoğan called upon the

OIC Member States and Institutions, including the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Solidarity Fund to mobilize their urgent humanitarian assistance to show effective solidarity with our Albanian brothers and sisters. Taking this opportunity, I would like to reiterate H.E. President Erdoğan's call.

Given our capacity and potential, we have to look for effective solutions to our problems by means of utilizing available instruments. In this regard, as the second largest international organization after the United Nations, the OIC celebrates its 50th anniversary this year. During our OIC Summit Presidency, we spent every effort and took responsibility to respond to the expectations of the Islamic World.

During the OIC Extraordinary Summits held in Istanbul, the OIC Member States strongly reacted against the tyranny imposed on our Palestinian brothers and sisters, and rejected the fait accompli on Al-Quds. The resolutions adopted at those summits were also endorsed by the urgent Special Sessions of the UN General Assembly with overwhelming majority. Turkey is determined to continue defending the rights of Palestine and the sanctity of Al Quds at all international fora.

As His Excellency the President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan states frequently "the world is bigger than five"; and the United Nations bodies and other international organizations need to be reorganized accordingly.

Distinguished Participants,

It is also pleasing that the efforts on establishment of the OIC Arbitration Center have come to the final phase and fruition after completion of necessary studies. As you may kindly recall, the proposal for the establishment of the Arbitration Center was raised by His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdoğan during the 13th Islamic Summit held in this hall in 2016. After a three years period, which is relatively a short span of time, we are on the eve of launching this crucial Center for our future cooperation efforts. This is an encouraging case point for our other endeavors in various cooperation areas.

I would like to thank to all stakeholders who contributed to the process including the COMCEC Coordination Office, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) and The Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB) and all Member States who have contributed to this success.

Esteemed Delegates,

I would also like to underline the benefits of the activities carried out within the scope of the COMCEC Working Groups for deepening development cooperation among our countries. Working Groups are important experience-sharing platforms that address key development issues at the technical level. The policy recommendations formulated by

the Working Groups provide us a good opportunity to overcome in a spirit of cooperation for the challenges we face.

The COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism provides us with an important opportunity to implement the policy recommendations that we adopt in the Ministerial COMCEC Sessions. At the present year, 22 multilateral cooperation projects have been implemented by the Member Countries. While noting the increasing interest of the Member Countries in this important mechanism I hope the numbers of the projects will be much more in the following years. There exist a positive correlation between economic development and poverty alleviation. However, high growth may also increase inequalities and poverty if a country lacks an inclusive and equitable vision for every single citizen.

Over decades, economists struggled to formulate policies that promoted growth and development. Unfortunately those "one size fits all" type orthodox policies failed repeatedly and did not help close the development gaps between the club of rich and poor countries.

In Turkey, while we realize higher growth rates over the years, we have also made significant progress in eradicating extreme poverty, increasing access to universal education, reducing child and maternal mortality by formulating our own domestic policies, setting our own priorities and strong leadership.

According to the 2017 Atlas of Sustainable Development Goals published by the World Bank, Turkey has been the country that reduced poverty rates the most in the last 15 years. People who are living under 4.3 us dollars daily has been successfully reduced to 1.58 percent in 2015.

China is another good case. As a very interesting and successful case point, China, along with

its huge economic progress, was able to reduce its poverty headcount ratio from 66.2 percent to 0.7 percent in the course of 25 years, from 1990 to 2015.

Esteemed Delegates,

We need to understand that alleviating poverty requires more than high growth. Alleviating poverty requires careful planning of a change in mindset. While high growth pulls millions of people out of poverty, growth does not necessarily imply that a country is on a sustainable development trajectory.

Development is all about setting inclusivity, equality of opportunity and social justice as policy priorities.

Under the auspices of the COMCEC we are trying to produce development ideas and policy recommendations that may touch the lives of our people positively, especially poor and deprived segments of the society. Also the projects that have been financed by the COMCEC Project Funding mechanism and implemented during the last six years by the member countries themselves will directly or indirectly contribute to our poverty alleviation efforts. We need to further strengthen this unique peculiarity of COMCEC in the forthcoming years.

As I highlighted before, as we enhance our cooperation and solidarity under the umbrella of COMCEC and implement our projects expeditiously, we will be able to contribute to economic and social development of our region, and through that, contribute to peace and stability in the OIC region as well as the world.

Esteemed Ministers

Distinguished Delegates,

I also deem it very timely and appropriate the selection of the next year's Ministerial Exchange of Views theme as "Promoting Entrepreneurship for Tourism Industry Competitiveness".

I hope that our discussions, deliberations and resolutions of our Session will bear beneficial results and deepen our cooperation as the Islamic Ummah. I will personally follow-up the implementation of the resolutions that pertains to my country.

Before concluding,

I would like to thank H.E. the President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN for his leadership and his support for the whole Muslim World and the 35th COMCEC Ministerial Meeting.

I would also 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 active and valuable contributions.

I would like to thank the delegations of member countries, the representatives of international organizations and our panelists for their contributions to the 35th Session of COMCEC.

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.

During the course of our session, I have heard various words of thanks to His Excellency President Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN. Indeed, we would all like to express our heartfelt thanks and gratitude to H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of COMCEC for his wise and active leadership towards enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among Islamic countries and his continued support for the whole Islamic World and to the 35th COMCEC Ministerial Meeting.

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

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 13TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 13th Meeting on March 7th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Enhancing Public Availability of Customs Information in the OIC Member States.” During the Meeting, Trade Working Group, made deliberations for policy approximation among the Member Countries regarding enhancing public availability of customs information. The room document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted specifically for the 13th Meeting of the TWG and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions sent to the TWG focal points by the COMCEC Coordination Office before the Meeting. 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 establishment of a formal consultation mechanism between regulatory authorities and trade community towards ensuring an efficient trade environment for the interest of various stakeholders at the national level.

An effective, efficient, and permanent consultation and feedback mechanism not only ensures the success of any trade facilitation initiative but also enhance the predictability of the trade-related regulatory environment.

Developing effective consultation mechanisms with private sector (when new laws and regulations that have the potential to affect trade flows are being prepared and before their entry into force) is crucial to allow the private sector to provide their inputs, comments or suggestions prior to implementation and enforcement.

Providing advance notice about legislation submitted for public consultation can pave the way for enhanced capacity of stakeholders to react promptly and efficiently. National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) can also be utilized as an efficient consultation mechanism.

Policy Advice 2: Utilizing Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) effectively for the dissemination of trade, especially customs related information.

The supply of the trade and customs related information and the access to this information through ICT can play a vital role in trade facilitation as well as an important stepping-stone for other more ambitious trade facilitation reforms. Through the digitalization of the information flows, customs and trade-related data can be

disseminated to all the relevant actors easily, continuously and expeditiously. This technology also allows the regulatory bodies to provide up-to-date information timely with low-costs. This information flow can be more easily done by utilizing the internet or other ICT tools. Development of a user-friendly ICT is the key factor of the expected utilization and benefit from such an investment.

Through using ICT tools, such as virtual Single Window Systems, all rules and regulations can easily be accessed, forms can be downloaded and filled in, and necessary paperwork can be filed electronically. Some level of digital infrastructure is required before such a system can become reality, both in terms of user access to ICTs and the necessary legal framework covering the use of electronic documents and digital signatures.

Policy Advice 3: Encouraging the development of an effective Advance Ruling System in order to enhance the certainty and predictability of customs operations

Advance ruling system is a proven trade facilitation tool for both traders and customs administrations that enhance the certainty and predictability of customs operations.

An advance ruling is binding official advice prior to importation or exportation, issued by a competent customs authority in writing, which provides the applicant with a time-bound ruling on the goods to be imported or exported. This ruling enables traders to obtain precise and binding information in advance of the actual transaction and for analogous ones during a specified period in future, and processes are often quicker and delays reduced at the time of clearance of the good in question. Moreover, disputes with the customs authority on tariff, valuation and origin issues are reduced because the process of deliberation among officials has taken place before the issuance of the advance ruling. For an effective advance ruling system clear and robust regulations, and procedures should be in place along with a strong commitment by the customs administrations. Creating public awareness and knowledge of the program also enhances the effectiveness of the system.

Policy Advice 4: Promoting integrated Single Windows (SW) Systems and Trade Information Portals for combining the transaction processing functions of SW Systems with a comprehensive repository of trade-related laws, regulations, rules and procedures.

An important principle in the publication of information is its consolidation in one location or as few locations as possible. Trade Information Portals in this regard serve as a single platform utilized for aggregating and disseminating all trade-related information of various agencies. On the other hand, Single Window Systems enable traders to make all trade and customs-related procedures through a single facility. The responsible body for operating SW systems varies across the Member Countries. While customs authorities are in charge of operating SW Systems in many member countries, in some cases Ministry of Economy/ Trade or other national authorities fulfil this task.

In the post-TFA environment, many developing countries work simultaneously on Single Windows—preferably virtual—and Trade Information Portals. There is a strong argument for combining these efforts to produce a single online interface that combines the transaction processing power of a Single Window with a comprehensive repository of trade-related laws, regulations, rules, procedures, and documents, as is commonly associated with a TIP. The synergy between PortNet and TradeSense in Morocco is an example of this process in action. As a second best, piecemeal online sources can link to other relevant material, so that navigation is simplified for the trade community.

Policy Advice 5: Leveraging international and regional cooperation and making use of successful country experiences for promoting trade information availability.

There are examples of OIC member countries using regional agreements as an "anchor" to support upgrading their trading environment, including chapters on transparency in trade agreements, as well as extending regional initiatives, where applicable, for Single Windows to cover TIPs. Given the trade links and other connections among the OIC member countries, there is a scope for the member countries to make use of successful experiences elsewhere to develop home-grown initiatives to improve the public availability of trade-related information. Knowledge transfer from high performing OIC countries can help other members improve information availability, and ultimately promote trade within the group. On the other hand, it should be noted that trade facilitation is an ongoing worldwide effort and not limited to the OIC or developing countries. The world is also the witness of the continuous review and renewal of trade facilitation programs by the developed countries. Therefore, the best practices and lessons learned in trade facilitation outside the OIC countries should also be seen an opportunity, and knowledge transfer can be even achieved through administrative arrangements such as MOU, internship, exchange of experts, workshops.

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.
- **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.

1.2. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE TRADE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 14th Meeting on October 24th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Improving Customs Transit Systems in the OIC Member States.” During the Meeting, Trade Working Group, made deliberations for policy approximation among the Member Countries regarding customs transit systems. The room document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted specifically for the 14th Meeting of the TWG and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions sent to the TWG focal points by the COMCEC Coordination Office before the Meeting. 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: Designing an appropriate legal and procedural framework for national customs administrations through, among others, utilizing international conventions on customs transit regimes

One of the preconditions for an efficient international transit application is to have an appropriate legal and procedural framework assigned to and enforced by the relevant national authorities, in particular national customs administrations. Besides national legal framework, the relevant international organizations (i.e. WTO and WCO), international conventions and standards (i.e. WCO Revised Kyoto Convention (RKS), WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and WCO SAFE Framework of Standards (SAFE FoS)) encourage governments to conclude and implement bilateral and regional agreements with other governments/customs administrations for cooperation on Customs Transit Regimes (CTR).

As long as these agreements in line with the relevant international instruments, standards and recommendations, they would facilitate international transit. This is particularly important due to;

- Low participation of OIC MS in international organizations related to CTR
- Lack of full implementation of the international instruments, standards and recommendation arising from international organizations;
- Inconsistency between national legislations, customs codes and regulations related to CTR with the International standards and recommendations;
- Most of the current bilateral, regional, and multilateral agreements are not in line with the transit provisions identified in international instruments, standards, and recommendations.

Policy Advice 2: Establishing/Developing an efficient electronic exchange of information system among all relevant agencies, particularly among neighboring countries

The efficient exchange of information, without prejudice to national security, among all relevant agencies involved en route, including customs, transport control units, security authorities, particularly among neighboring countries, is a crucial element for management and monitoring of transit operations.

In order to maximize the positive impact of exchange of information among the national relevant authorities, in particular among the national customs authorities related to CTR, it is a must to establish of a common concept - standard for the electronic and automatic exchange of pre-arrival information in (near) “real-time” between CAs. This is particularly important due to:

- Existence of different ICT technological development level (some of the member countries having technologically obsolete IT Systems),
- Use of different Customs Declaration Processing Systems,
- Lack of national regulatory basis for exchange of information with other customs services.

Policy Advice 3: Developing an efficient guarantee management and monitoring system for Customs Transit Regimes

The amount of CTR guarantees should be as low as possible and not exceed the sum of the highest rates of customs duties that would be applicable to the transit Customs territory. Customs should be flexible in the form of security required by not insisting on cash deposits, or by accepting general security instruments covering single or multiple transit operations.

It is highly recommended for customs administrations to develop a standard procedure for granting a comprehensive guarantee, in which they calculate the guarantee amount on the basis of the volume of transit operations carried out by the applicant in the earlier period.

When calculating the guarantee amount, the followings should not be taken into account:

- Any potentially chargeable penalties;
- Any interest for delayed payment;
- Other concerns that would increase the guarantee amount or hinder transit operations unnecessarily.

According to the evaluation of the risk, the authorisation to use the comprehensive guarantee with full guarantee amount shall be granted only to a person who satisfies the conditions set up by the national authorities.

Additionally, according to the recognized risks level, governments can set up a list of high risky goods where the specific minimum rates for calculation of guarantee are published. Usually, on an annual basis, governments may regularly evaluate the actual risk level and the list of high risky goods.

One of the essential requirements of any transit system is a valid guarantee for a single or multiple transit operations, which covers the full amount of Customs duty and other charges applicable. To increase the security in the national or international/regional CTR, it is recommended to develop the Guarantee Management System (GMS), which could be used for CTR and for other customs procedures. The Guarantee Management System (GMS) shall be managed by the Customs office of Guarantee. The Guarantee Management System (GMS) checks and monitors whether the amount of guarantee or the reference amount of comprehensive guarantee or guarantee waiver is not exceeded when a new customs declaration is lodged.

Policy Advice 4: Simplifying the formalities and documentary requirements for facilitating transit operations.

Customs administrations (CA) and other government agencies (OGA) need to reduce the data required for the transit declaration and may request the data necessary to identify the goods and means of transport. In this respect they may review the formalities and documentary requirements for transit with a view to minimizing their complexity.

Customs administrations are also encouraged to provide enabling conditions and requirements, including submission of data, and simplified forms for transit operations, for all business enterprises. Customs administrations and OGAs may also review the formalities and documentary requirements for transit with a view to harmonizing them with the regional and international requirements.

Upon application, the customs authorities may authorize any of the following simplifications regarding the placing of goods under the CTR or the end of that procedure at the inland customs offices:

- a) The status of Authorised Consignor, allowing the holder of the authorization to place goods under the CTR without presenting them to customs at the customs office of departure;
- b) The status of Authorised Consignee, allowing the holder of the authorization to receive goods moved under the CTR at an authorized place, to end the procedure on behalf of the customs office of destination;

- c) The use of seals of a special type, where sealing is required to ensure the identification of the goods placed under the CTR;
- d) The use of a customs declaration with reduced data requirements to place goods under the CTR;
- e) The use of an electronic transport document as customs declaration to place goods under the CTR, provided it contains the particulars of such declaration and those particulars are available to the customs authorities at departure and at the destination to allow the customs supervision of the goods and the discharge of the procedure.

Policy Advice 5: Developing integrated risk management systems to manage and facilitate transit customs procedures

Governments need to set up integrated risks management systems between all border control agencies involved both within a country and between neighbouring countries who are parties to regional integration initiatives. This integrated risk assessment service would facilitate the decision-making procedures. The risk for each transit movement can be estimated with precision, and the decision would be dependent on this risk. This way, the exercise of discretionary powers by customs officers and agencies would be minimized. Furthermore, the transit operations need to be included in the Customs Risk Management framework.

Policy Advice 6: Ensuring a well-coordinated border management through enhancing cooperation among different border control agencies and with the neighboring countries as well as assigning a national transit coordinator.

There is a need to foster mutual cooperation between customs administrations and other relevant government agencies responsible for border controls and procedures related to the transit of goods. An adequate organizational scheme of the customs authorities at all levels is needed to ensure effective allocation of the necessary human and technical resources for the transit system.

Border agencies should also cooperate with neighbouring countries to coordinate procedures at border crossings and facilitate transit operations. Therefore, governments are encouraged to coordinate transit operation activities between different border control agencies.

Governments can also appoint a national transit coordinator to steer all inquiries and proposals from other countries related to the good functioning of transit operations.

Policy Advice 7: Developing necessary mechanisms (i.e. a Customs-Business Partnership programme) for promoting partnership with private sector while designing policies and procedures related to transit.

When governments design, modify and review policies and procedures on transit, they need to take into consideration to provide micro, small, medium-sized, or similar

operators with enough opportunity to reflect their views on the policies and procedures. The private sector should have sufficient opportunity and time to comment on the proposed regulations related to the movement of goods in transit.

Therefore, Customs Administrations are encouraged to develop a Customs-Business Partnership programme to improve the effectiveness of transit in accordance with the WCO Customs-Business Partnership Guidance. It is also recommended for governments to develop mechanisms/procedures to review and appeal against administrative decisions related to transit.

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.

- 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 13TH MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 13th Meeting on March 21st, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Improving Transport Project Appraisals in the OIC Member Countries”. During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to the transport project appraisals. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report titled Improving Transport Project Appraisals 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: Designing a systematic framework for transport project appraisals, indicating the objectives, types and the utilized methodologies.

Rationale:

A consistent framework for identifying, coordinating, evaluating and implementing public investments is quite important for having better outputs of the project(s) implemented. As a long and multifaceted process, project appraisal for public investments would be embedded into a wider framework for decision-making. The transport project appraisal framework must indicate:

- For what types of project appraisal should be carried out and when;
- What is the objective of the appraisal and how the appraisal is expected to facilitate the decision-making process;
- What type of analysis and methodologies are applied (Cost-Benefit Analysis, Multi-Criteria Analysis, Cost Effectiveness Analysis).

Furthermore, one of the main aims of project appraisal is to define the social benefits of a project. Cost-Benefit Analysis is a commonly preferred methodology for this purpose, especially for large transport projects. This methodology is also useful in case of PPP funding, where it can complement the financial evaluation.

Policy Recommendation II: Developing/Improving manuals and guidelines for having effective and harmonized transport project appraisals as well as effectively implementing the existing ones.

Rationale:

Providing clear guidelines is significant in terms of how to carry out project appraisals. Development of mode-specific appraisal manuals facilitates whole project appraisals processes. International guidelines and manual can be taken into consideration for the

general principles and rationale, while country-specific parameters and procedures can be developed to better reflect the national context. The manuals are expected to provide clear guidance on how project appraisal is to be carried out, including:

- A description of the appraisal process, with clearly defined steps, including project identification, demand analysis, options analysis, options for financial sustainability, return on the project and on private capital, economic analysis and risk analysis.
- Methodological standards, such as typical costs and benefits to be included, techniques to deal with the monetization of benefits, etc.
- Standard input parameters, such as project duration, discount rate, values of time, the value of statistical life, etc. can be periodically reviewed.

The standardization and harmonization in transport project appraisals contribute to the credibility of the results. Furthermore, it contributes to the ability to compare appraisal results, which may be beneficial for the prioritization of projects.

Policy Recommendation III: Applying transport project appraisals as main part of a project cycle and making use of quality data/information as well as the lessons generated from the implementation of the previous project(s).

Rationale:

While project appraisal is a wider process, it is commonly used as an ex-ante evaluation of a project for justifying an investment decision. Far from being confined to an ex-ante dimension in the pre-feasibility stage, project appraisal should also be performed in itinere and ex-post phases. Furthermore, project appraisals necessarily rely on appropriate data and information. In order to improve the quality of the appraisals, project data and information should be collected and made available to the relevant national authorities for monitoring purposes and next project generation as benchmark studies.

In addition, monitoring the implementation process of a project and carrying out a systematic ex-post evaluation of a project is critically important to compare planning and implementation. This will allow benchmarking the performance achieved during the implementation of the project and providing lessons learned for the next project appraisals.

Policy Recommendation IV: Encouraging the enhancement of transport project appraisals capacity through a system of official certification of competences, exchange of experience, training programs, seminars, conferences and workshops etc.

Rationale:

Adequate institutional and human capacity is of utmost importance for underpinning the better transport project appraisals. It is also essential for having above-mentioned

wider appraisal framework and facilitating the decision-making process. The capacity in transport project appraisals can be strengthened, among others, by:

- Developing and implementing training programs, seminars, conferences and workshops for public officials and private sector representatives.
- Consolidating project appraisal knowledge and experience in expertise centers. Bundling knowledge and expertise will enhance the ability to mainstream project appraisal in the investment decision-making process.
- Encouraging the exchange of good practices among the agencies and bodies involved in transport project appraisal.
- Encouraging a system of official certification of competences at the national level, both for public officials and external experts.

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 14TH MEETING OF THE TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 14th Meeting on October 3rd, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Risk Management in Transport Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Projects in the OIC Member Countries”. During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to the risk management in transport PPP projects. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report titled “Risk Management in Transport PPP Projects 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: Encouraging to develop/improve the legal framework through adopting a PPP tailored legislation.

Rationale:

PPP projects shall preferably be identified as part of the elaboration of relevant national development and transport strategy plans. Depending on the number of PPP initiatives implemented or foreseen to be implemented in a country, a PPP dedicated regulatory framework can be adopted. Tailored to PPPs, the legal framework, inter alia, would more appropriately address the specificities related to this type of procurement method, also providing a standard set of provisions potentially mitigating risks of contractual disputes and renegotiations. Islamic finance solutions would also be considered for the positive implications these might have on the mitigation of macroeconomic and financial credit risks. For the adoption of Islamic finance in countries where it is not already in use, the COMCEC research report suggests some basic steps, i.e. amending the legislation and regulatory framework of the banking and financing system, undertaking sensitizing campaigns on Islamic finance at the institutional level, and training programs dedicated to the improvement of the competences and skills of the human resources etc.

Policy Recommendation II: Allocating clear responsibilities for the management of PPPs over the course of their life-cycle and establishing/strengthening a unit/department within the government to that end.

Rationale:

A unit/department within the government or within the authority in charge of state budget monitoring and control would be identified that can be responsible for the appropriate management of the accounting liabilities deriving from the involvement of the public sector in PPPs. Depending on the number of PPPs implemented or expected to be implemented in a country and the existing institutional setting concerning foreign investment promotion and public procurement, PPP units may also be set up that could

be involved at least in PPP policy definition and implementation, identification, planning, promotion and appraisal of PPPs. Furthermore, additional PPP units/departments may also be formed, as appropriate, within the Ministries involved in the planning, development, implementation, and monitoring of transport PPP projects as well as within the established Regulatory Authorities. Adequate regulations and institutional settings would also be considered to ensure an optimal level of competition in the market as the presence of a small number of operators dominating in the market may reduce in the long-term efficiency in the provision of transport services, by taking into consideration national priorities and sector specificities.

Policy Recommendation III: Supporting the use of appropriate technical tools, analyses etc., and development of strong database and competences for minimizing risks during the implementation of the PPP projects

Rationale:

Pre-feasibility and feasibility studies would be preferably prepared by the public sector following the identification of the PPP initiatives as part of national and sector-specific transport plans. In-depth analysis shall be performed at this stage by the public side through using dedicated software and models. This is crucial to avoid public acceptance risks which ultimately lead to financial sustainability risks. Least Present Value of Revenues (LPVR) approach, share-in-profit/Joint Venture approach or shared implementation responsibility are some of tools to mitigate financial sustainability risks.

Independent consultants or engineers may be utilized for due diligence and auditing procedures of feasibility studies as well as technically well-designed documentation, project implementation, and monitoring. Furthermore, in order to mitigate fiscal risks, the authorities in charge of state budget need to estimate and monitor the impact of PPPs related contingent liabilities and fiscal risks on the budget. This can be done on a project-by-project basis and the reports on all direct fiscal commitments and contingent liabilities would be elaborated on a periodic basis depending on the number of PPPs.

Policy Recommendation IV: Developing/Improving risk management guidelines and checklists for the betterment of the implementation of the PPP projects

Rationale:

Risk management guidelines and checklists should be considered for adoption, where not already in place for the overall improvement of risk management practices with reference to all types of risks. These should be country if not transport/mode specific in order to reflect peculiarities in the policy, institutional and regulatory settings. Guidelines should preferably be tailored to PPP initiatives and not generally applicable to infrastructure investments as PPPs are more complex than the projects developed and implemented under the conventional public procurement models. Further to the

identification of the main risks applicable to the PPPs over the course of the different stages of project life-cycle, the entities responsible for their assessment, monitoring and treatment should be indicated where appropriate. As of supervision and monitoring activities the scheduling/frequency of the reporting tasks should also be specified. Standard templates for collection of project relevant information should be preferably adopted.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advice:

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 13TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 13th Meeting on September 13th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Sustainable Destination Management Strategies in the OIC Member Countries.” During the Meeting, Tourism Working Group, made deliberations on sustainable destination management strategies in the OIC Member Countries in tourism sector. Accordingly, the participants has come up with some policy recommendations.

Policy Advice 1. Improving community participation fair representation by offering human resources training, capacity building and certification programs, enhancing local value chain, integrating local production into procurement and minimize leakages, encouraging local entrepreneurship in tourism, conducting media campaigns as well as raising tourist awareness about tourism sustainability.

Rationale:

When a tourism culture is established in the destination, locals are likely to participate more in decision-making processes and because they are the real owners of the destination, they are more likely to protect it. When for example, tourism investments are taken over by foreigners, who employ outsiders and import the inputs and raw materials, locals would be alienated with the destination and the resources. Thus, the local involvement at every possible channel should be encouraged and facilitated while continuously improving tourism’s direct and indirect benefits and value chain for locals. Such tools include percentage of local employment rules, incubation, credit facilities and support for potential local entrepreneurs, integrating local products to tourism supply chain and promoting a sustainable tourism culture while minimizing leakages from the local economy.

Policy Advice 2. Identifying KPIs for sustainable tourism development based on international standards and climate change agreement to monitor each country’s performance against a set of pre-determined indicators and to encourage remedial actions when targets are not met.

Rationale:

One of the most important factors for achieving sustainable outcomes at the destination level is effective and independent monitoring of current practices on site. Since destinations will vary considerably, it is important that monitoring protocols are developed in context-specific and locally meaningful ways. Each member country needs to determine its position regarding its overall tourism climate, based on where it

sits in destination life cycle models, what its tourism resources are, and what its total tourism budget is based on the suggested list of KPIs. This involves an on-going process of acquiring valid and reliable data across these sectors in ways that, ideally, lead to cross-country comparisons.

Policy advice 3. Identifying current and potential tangible and intangible tourism resources by taking into consideration destinations carrying capacity, and their long term protection and survival while avoiding over tourism.

Rationale:

Destinations have different natural and cultural attractions that have different levels of vulnerability to different types and volumes of touristic activity. The current and potential resources of destinations should be identified, threats should be eliminated, and their exposure to tourism activity should be managed. Their allocation needs to be limited with their capacity to handle tourist volume. This not only applies to natural resources and species but also cultural resources such as locals' way of life. Over tourism is important challenge for many tourism destinations. There are concerns about the energy consumption, resource depletion, waste management, impacts of tourism on wildlife and global warming. In this respect, carrying capacities, green certification and legislations would be tackled in the OIC region to create a more environmentally responsible tourism.

Policy advice 4. The required mechanisms (e.g. voluntary contribution, tourist tax, environmental fees) might be introduced to fund the sustainability activities that aim to protect, preserve the local quality of life and minimize the costs associated with tourism.

Rationale:

The negative side effects of tourism should be compensated by the actors who are responsible or benefiting from it. Because different tourism activities create pressures on local quality of life, the deterioration and use of resources that normally belong to locals should be paid for while the benefits of tourism towards locals should be enhanced. Tourist taxes, landing fees, entrance fees to the sites, waste taxes and so on can be introduced to create the finances needed to invest on sustainability and correct negative consequences.

Policy advice 5. Ensuring effective destination planning and marketing in such a way that the supply and demand meet at the optimum level and diversified.

Rationale:

Mass tourism involves huge numbers of tourists with relatively low spending capacity. According to Tourism Statistics, though the number of tourists is increasing, their spending has not increased as desired. Current spending in the OIC is around 750 USD

per tourist which is well below the global average. Therefore, the product development and marketing activities need to target less price sensitive markets. The OIC have various potential tourism products that can attract diverse markets through an effective planning and marketing.

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 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 14TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 14th Meeting on October 31st, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Developing Multi-Destination Tourism Corridors in the Member Countries.” During the Meeting, Tourism Working Group, made deliberations on multi destination tourism corridors. Accordingly, the participants has come up with some policy recommendations.

Policy Advice 1. Planning corridors based on thorough SWOT analysis, infrastructure assessment, and social value analysis and identifying assets through expert-led research.

Rationale:

Analyzing tourism trends and current tourists’ profiles for destinations along the corridors, and the size as well as nature of the domestic markets are needed to assess whether a corridor would attract potential tourists, and increase the number of tourists and/or tourist nights/spending.

From a logistical perspective, assessing feasibility of a corridor also entails considering the enabling infrastructure in terms of transport networks along its various nodes. Tourism Corridors (TC) should ensure the mitigation of the negative impacts of tourism as well as increasing the economic benefits for local communities, which need to be ascertained through research and collaboration with local stakeholders starting from the planning phase.

The formulation of TC themes necessitates an effective cooperation among various stakeholders in the destinations along TCs on several fronts in the planning stage, including the corridor’s proposed theme and name as well as the decision on the tourism assets to be included in the corridor. This requires extensive research with the aid of experts from historical, cultural, and practical perspectives as well as a thorough assessment of the tourism assets that can be included and their potential appeal to tourists.

Policy Advice 2. Making use of public-private partnership models for the effective planning and management of Tourism Corridors and encouraging the participation of and collaboration with all relevant stakeholders.

Rationale:

Public-Private Partnership Models can be utilized for encouraging higher levels of collaboration between public and private entities needed for Multi Destination TCs to thrive. Public-private partnerships should allow for higher levels of participation from the civil society and ensure, to a greater extent, the support of the private sector for corridor development and management policies and strategies. Establishing formal

platforms for collaboration can ensure timely and efficient interaction and involvement in the management of the corridor as well as ensuring all relevant stakeholders' support for the policies and strategies related to the concerned corridor.

It is recommended to have board of directors responsible for coordination among the corridor partners, whether permanently located at one of the corridor nodes, or shifting between different nodes along the corridor according to the site of the entity in charge of its management. Local steering committees with members from various stakeholder groups, including public and private entities as well as NGOs and professional associations, may be responsible for strategic planning and implementation of local strategies.

Policy Advice 3. Identifying a comprehensive set of indicators, promoting harmonized tourism related data collection as well as analysis for monitoring the corridor performance effectively and feedback into the corridor strategy to create synergies.

Rationale:

Complementary approaches need to be used to effectively monitor the performance of TCs, which include the use of visitor metrics, the measurement of organizational effectiveness of the corridor management entity as well as the effectiveness of its marketing communications activities, the examination of changes in consumer-based brand equity as a result of the corridor's management entity operations, stakeholder evaluation of TC management performance, and assessment of the sustainability of tourism along the corridor. Identifying common indicators would facilitate the measurement of success of a corridor in the OIC Region.

Policy advice 4. Improving branding and marketing of the tourism corridors in the OIC Region through among others, joint interactive marketing platforms and user-generated content (storytelling) in ICT platforms to create unique brands.

Rationale:

MDTC themes can be used as a framework for positioning and differentiating corridors. Theme-based branding involves creating a story or narrative to be associated with the corridor and communicating this story across the various channels to all relevant stakeholders. The creation of a unified branding message is a crucial task for TCs to increase awareness. Branding also involves ensuring content and design consistency for marketing messages across the various platforms used to promote the corridor.

With the rise of social media, brand identity is becoming increasingly affected by consumers' narratives or their "storytelling." To harness the power of storytelling, there's a need to choose the stories that suit the brand narrative and engage emotions and amplify them through joint interactive marketing platforms. The tourism corridors' marketing strategy should also include segmentation, targeting, differentiating and

positioning the corridor under a single brand and aligning marketing efforts based on this brand strategy including managing public opinion.

Policy advice 5. *Creating and Diversifying funding sources of tourism corridors with a view to ensure the sustainability of their management and marketing.*

Rationale:

Identifying various funding streams is needed to ensure the sustainability of management and marketing of TCs. The required financing may come from various sources, internal (public or private) and external. Membership fees, whether from public or private entities, may also be an important source of funding, especially as they promote a sense of ownership.

Assistance from and collaboration with external sources, whether international or regional, can be sought out to complement internal funding. However, it must be ensured that a tourism corridor is not over-reliant on external funding as this might influence its sustainability in the long term. It may also be decided to change the financing framework over time. For example, a corridor could be launched with shared public financing to build a critical mass of participating stakeholders, and this can then be transferred to private-sector stakeholders to manage.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advice:

- **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 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. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG) has successfully held its 13th Meeting on February 21st, 2019, in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “*Reviewing Agricultural Trade Policies to Promote Intra-OIC Agricultural Trade.*”

During the Meeting, AWG made deliberations on sound agricultural trade policies to promote intra-OIC agricultural trade. Room Document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the research report conducted specifically for the 13th 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 Recommendations I: Promotion of Niche Agricultural Products and Halal Certification through product diversification, trademarking, marketing strategies and advertising campaigns.

Rationale:

The OIC Member Countries face competition from each other in certain agricultural products and in certain markets around the globe. This makes the promotion of intra-OIC agricultural trade a particularly challenging issue. Trade facilitation policies, which range from product diversification and trademarking to marketing strategies and advertising campaigns, need to be designed and implemented in the member countries. More specifically, the OIC Member Countries need to promote the niche agricultural products of their fellow OIC countries under a reciprocal understanding of benefits.

There exist key product groups that can be critical in promoting intra-OIC agricultural trade, but are not subject to high tariff protection. For these products, standardization and certification issues are of prime importance for the policy makers. As such, the process of establishing Halal certification for meat products, across the OIC region is a critical policy dimension that could be used effectively to promote intra-OIC agricultural trade in meat products. Halal certification issue also needs to be tackled within a broader perspective of labelling, advertisement and standardization. In this respect, OIC Member Countries need to think of efficient marketing and promotion strategies for niche and halal agricultural products since producing these products requires special effort.

Policy Recommendations II: Promotion of Commercial Cooperation (e.g. enhancing agricultural investments, removal of business visas, etc) and Non-Commercial Cooperation (e.g. sharing best practices and technical expertise, developing safety standards, etc.) among the OIC Member Countries in the areas related to agricultural trade.

Rationale:

The OIC member countries differ in relative abundance of land and natural resources and of financial resources. This type of diversity is a source of complementarity and opens a window of opportunity in commercial cooperation. There already exist some joint ventures among the OIC countries. Policies should be designed and implemented to incentivize commercial cooperation among the OIC member countries in the field of agricultural investment as it directly increases trade among at least two OIC member countries. Removal of business visas, for instance, may be a concrete policy action that could contribute to commercial cooperation.

Non-commercial cooperation among the OIC member countries in terms of technical expertise, skills, and safety standards would also facilitate intra-OIC trade in agricultural products. Naturally, the OIC member countries have a diverse set of safety standards, market information systems, market institutions and human capital stocks. For this reason, the OIC member countries should pay particular attention to policies that would support the effective sharing of best-practice cases in agriculture and agricultural trade.

Moreover, this topic is in line with the rules in the WTO Agreement on Agriculture (AoA-WTO). Therefore, all OIC member countries who are also members of the WTO need to pay attention to the aspects of Commercial and Non Commercial Cooperation.

Policy Recommendations III: Promotion of Tariff Reductions and Bilateral Arrangements in key products (e.g. sugar, meat, feeding stuff for animals, oil-seeds, live animals)

Rationale:

In accordance with the WTO agreement, tariff reduction is a necessity for multilateral, regional and bilateral trade. With a view to achieving a more conducive trading system, OIC member countries need to comply with the global rules of trade.

High tariff protection is observed within the OIC for the key product divisions and products (identified in the research report as sugar, meat, feeding stuff for animals, oil-seeds, live animals) that would otherwise be highly effective in boosting intra-OIC agricultural trade. The OIC member countries would benefit from tariff reductions, particularly in key product divisions and products identified based on both the growth of the intra-regional demand and the existing low intra-regional trade share.

In the research report, it is pointed out that a large fraction of exporter-importer country pairs matched as potential partners for mutually beneficial trade does not have trade agreements with each other yet. There is therefore significant room for improvement in trade performance of, and associated benefits for member countries through bilateral agreements to be initiated to cover the products (live animals, meat, sugars, feeding stuff for animals and oil-seeds) identified in the analysis.

Policy Recommendations IV: Developing and implementing multilateral trade arrangements (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:

Developing and implementing preferential market access schemes, as well as to concluding 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 Recommendations V: Enhancing the capacity of the Member Countries in collection, management and dissemination of agricultural trade data with a view to designing sound and evidence-based agricultural trade policies.

Rationale:

Limited availability of timely, reliable and consistent data on agricultural trade hampers evidence-based decision making by both public and private sector actors in the Member Countries. There are some important initiatives under the OIC umbrella such as the OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom) and ICDT's web portal called "OIC Trade Map." Besides utilizing more effectively from the existing instruments, new projects may be designed and conducted to identify the data availability and reliability problems in agricultural trade policy measures all across the OIC.

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 Agriculture and Trade Working Groups may conduct joint meetings/ research on agricultural trade policies.

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.

SMIIC and SESRIC: The facilities of SMIIC and SESRIC (e.g. OIC Statistical Commission, Technical Committees of the SMIIC, etc.) can be utilized.

4.2. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 14TH MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP FOR EXCHANGE OF VIEWS SESSION OF 35TH COMCEC SESSION

The 34th COMCEC Session agreed on “Promoting Sustainable Food Systems in the OIC Member States” as the theme for the Exchange of Views Session at the 35th Session of the COMCEC and requested the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG) to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report it to the 35th COMCEC Ministerial Session. The AWG, in its 14th Meeting held on 9-10 October 2019 in Ankara, considered the current level of development of OIC food systems and the challenges as well as possible policy options related to various aspects of sustainable food systems. After intensive deliberations, the AWG has come up with a set of challenges and the policy options for strengthening food systems in the member countries.

CHALLENGES

Agriculture Working Group highlighted the following possible challenges and problems in increasing the resilience of the food systems in the Member Countries:

- Low level of agricultural and labor productivity
- Expensive input costs for plant and animal production
- Small and fragmented land structure
- Decrease in arable lands
- Inefficient use of agricultural machinery and technologies
- Weak market performance and challenges in access to market
- Lack of reliable and up-to-date data on food security
- Inadequate agricultural planning and strategy development
- Political instabilities (i.e. forced movement of farming population, insufficient institutionalization, etc.) in some parts of the OIC geography
- Poor infrastructure and related services
- Limited agro-industry investment
- Poor legal and regulatory framework
- Low priority accorded to the agricultural sector, particularly in the young population, in most of the Member States
- Rapid and uncontrolled urbanization
- High subsidies and protective measures in the agricultural sectors of developed countries
- Price fluctuations of food products

- Limited/low level of intra trade for food products in the OIC region due to high tariff and non-tariff barriers, non-compliance of food products to required food safety and quality standards
- Adverse effects of climate change on agriculture and food systems (drought, water scarcity)
- Poor risk management of natural disasters
- Increasing risk of food adulteration and limited food defense systems in the OIC geography
- Insufficient international branding in food industry and agriculture in general
- Insufficient veterinary services for animal husbandry and fisheries
- Insufficient financing instruments in agriculture
- Difficulties arising from different practices of land tenure system (i.e. women lack land ownership, etc.) in some parts of the OIC region
- Insufficient extension services
- Lack of adequate institutional and human capacity
- Lack of women empowerment in agriculture sector in some parts of the OIC region

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Legal and regulatory framework

- Developing national strategies/plans based on robust and country-level data for ensuring food system stability
- Harmonizing standards on agricultural products for enhancing agricultural trade
- Strengthen regulatory activities to ensure food can be certified in accordance with global standards – spanning safety and religious certifications such as Halal – which is essential to enabling exports
- Creating legal and regulatory frameworks that provide an enabling environment for the FDIs and encourage the private sector to invest in more sustainable agri-business operations.
- Developing legal infrastructure that promotes and allows member countries to use non-conventional financing modalities especially Islamic finance.

2. Improving Agro-production and Agricultural Productivity

- Developing policies/programs/mechanisms to improve farmers' timely access to quality inputs (e.g. seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, animal feed and other key ingredients) with a view to increasing quality, quantity and marketability of end products,
- Improving and ensuring the safety and quality of food at all stages of the food chain with constant monitoring
- Developing the storage infrastructure / equipment of regional reserves for food products so as to meet the shortage of strategic and staple products and create regional production industries of selected fertilizers and seeds (seeds banks) in collaboration with the national and regional financial institutions of the OIC Countries as well as with international financial institutions
- Launching programmes for reducing pre-harvest, processing and post-harvest losses and food waste in the member countries through campaigns, technological applications, cultural and social approach, etc.
- Enhancing cooperation and coordination in the whole food chain to reduce food losses and waste
- Encouraging youth participation and women empowerment in agriculture sector
- Encouraging innovation and Research and Development in agriculture and improving access to efficient extension services in agricultural activity and food production.
- Introduction / Employment of best practices in agricultural activity and food production.

3. Development of Infrastructure

- Investing in infrastructures capable to ensure a better conservation and better storage so as to avoid post-harvest losses. Improving logistics infrastructure to facilitate transport and the distribution of food products among the Exporting and Importing Member States.
- Developing infrastructure in rural areas with a view to increasing access to food supply in rural areas and farmers' motivation to survive with their families in local areas.
- Encouraging the development of both physical infrastructure (i.e. irrigation, renewable energy, ICT, etc.) and social infrastructure (schools, hospitals, etc) at the local level to support agro-production and processing.

4. Financing and Investment

- Increasing access of producers to sufficient finance and diversifying credit opportunities
- Encouraging FDI flows in the OIC Region for increasing investments in Agriculture and facilitating technology transfer.
- Formation of a farmer cooperatives and producers' unions to accumulate capital for financing new investments
- Encourage the organization of investment promotion forums/conferences on sub-sectors of agriculture which bring together relevant stakeholders to mobilize the resources among OIC Member Countries.

5. Market Performance and Market Access

- Establishing/improving a Farmer Registry System for farmers/farmer organizations to provide customized supports and assistance as well as extension and market information for farmers,
- Providing need based capacity development support and training to farmers and farmer associations for increasing their access to warehousing and storage capacity,
- Establishing/improving the ingredient and input traceability as well as marketing oriented product standardization and certification to enhance safety and marketability of agricultural products in both domestic and international markets
- 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,
- Encouraging the development of retail markets to ensure physical access of consumers to the products
- Promoting agricultural cooperatives, unions and associations among small farmers for enhancing input quality, marketing performance and market access.

- Developing and promoting online platforms and e-trade applications in the Member countries to improve market access of producers and to enhance competitive power.

6. Promotion of intra-OIC agricultural trade/ Reducing barriers to trade

- Promoting intra-OIC agricultural trade through tariff reductions, Non-tariff measures (NTMs) and bilateral arrangements/partnerships among the Member Countries across different product segments of food and agriculture
- Strengthening and implementing multilateral trade arrangements (e.g. TPS-OIC - Trade Preferential System among the Member States of the OIC)) with a view to strengthening the OIC-wide food systems and reducing the risk of food crises particularly for the vulnerable member countries, taken into consideration the existing smaller/regional preferential trade arrangements.

7. Human and institutional capacity

- Improving the institutional and human capacity of farmers, farmer organizations, relevant government agencies and other possible stakeholders through introducing innovative management and organizational systems.
- Developing strategies for the long-term skill development in agriculture sector through proper education systems and training centers.
- Enhancing the capacity of the Member Countries in collection, management and dissemination of food security data with a view to designing sound and evidence-based food security policies.
- Strengthening IOFS to conduct research and development activities in food sector across the OIC and raise awareness of opportunities and challenges in the OIC regarding food security

8. Monitoring and evaluation of food security

- Encouraging Member Countries to take steps towards establishing an integrated comprehensive online database for agricultural statistics.
- Fostering better understanding of the specific gaps and the required actions in a given country's food system through encouraging member countries that have been most at risk to conduct in-depth studies at the country/regional level.
- Supplementing internationally agreed food security indices with detailed monitoring and rating of the Member Countries.
- Developing consistent and comparable KPIs for monitoring food system stability to develop early warning systems at the OIC level.

9. Adaptation and mitigation strategies for reducing the adverse effects of climate change, man-made disasters, etc.

- Developing emergency assistance mechanisms at the national level to mitigate the adverse effects of food crises and natural disasters and strengthen intra-OIC cooperation to that end.
- Utilizing early warning systems (i.e UNFAO's Early Warning- Early Action (EWEA) System) particularly in the member countries being vulnerable to natural disasters and food insecurity.
- Enhancing disaster risk reduction and management capacities of the member states for better adaptation and mitigation of agriculture sector to climate change particularly through:
 - Adopting modern irrigation technologies to improve the efficiency of irrigation systems.
 - Introducing suitable plant /crop varieties to cope with water scarcity and soil degradation.

10. International and Regional Cooperation

- Promoting experience sharing and technology transfer among the OIC Member Countries in the areas related to in sustainable food systems and food security.
- Developing pilot national and sub-regional food security programs and projects for increasing the efficiency of the agricultural production in partnership with the OIC and other international institutions specialized in agriculture sector.
- Developing food security funds (e.g. Sovereign Wealth Funds, Zakat Funds etc.) with the support of the governments, the relevant OIC institutions (i.e. IDB), other multilateral organizations (e.g. World Bank, UNFAO) and private investors.
- Encouraging the IOFS to develop viable projects towards addressing the needs of the member Countries and the implementation of the policy recommendations of the COMCEC.
- Enhancing private sector cooperation in all areas of sustainable food systems and ensuring the engagement of the all relevant stakeholders including the private sector in finding solutions to a more sustainable and nutritious food system.

5. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

5.1. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

A policy debate session was held during the 13th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG). The Working Group came up with some concrete policy recommendations for improving access to health services, especially for the poor, 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 “Access to Health Services in the Islamic Countries” and the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questionnaire which was sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office.

Policy Advice 1: Developing a strategy/policy including a well-designed payment and health insurance schemes to achieve universal health coverage.

Rationale:

Access to health services is critical for human beings. However, access to health without having financial risks is even more challenging. In this respect, universal health coverage is an important asset enabling people's, particularly the poor, access to health services without having a risk of facing any financial hardship. To ensure that all people access to quality health services they need, universal health coverage involves services in promotive, preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative health services.

For a detailed analysis and to understand the dimensions of universal health coverage, widely monitored indicators such as life expectancy, maternal mortality and under-5 mortality rate need to be carefully examined. As a key indicator, life expectancy at birth signifies how well a country's health system is working in the provision of preventive, curative, rehabilitative and palliative care. Life expectancy at birth has steadily increased for OIC countries over the period. However, the OIC average is still behind the global average. The same situation is observed in maternal mortality and under-5 mortality rates. In all these indicators, the OIC member countries are quite behind the world average. Moreover, the life expectancy achievements vary remarkably across the member countries.

In this context, there is a strong correlation between access to health services and the welfare of citizens. Universal health coverage, by ensuring that all have access to health, is one of the critical components in achieving Sustainable Development Goals and eradicating poverty. As a way of pooling risks and expanding health service coverage, health insurance schemes are needed to be designed carefully.

Policy Advice 2: Strengthening primary healthcare particularly in poorer areas through encouraging skilled health staff to work in rural and remote areas and enhancing integrated health promotion and prevention interventions.

Rationale:

As the cornerstone of health systems worldwide, primary healthcare is fundamental for the physical, psychological and social well-being of the people. Strengthening primary healthcare mechanisms increasingly comes to governments' agenda as global experience proves them successful. However, there are ongoing challenges that affect negatively the health status of communities. Non-communicable diseases are on the rise globally. Ensuring sustainable mechanisms for maternal and child health are still challenging for many countries.

Access to primary health care services is a serious challenge in many OIC countries due to inadequate health infrastructure, physical inaccessibility accompanied by the high out-of-pocket spending and/or inadequate health workforce. In this context, interventions that will ensure cost-effective healthcare service are needed to be considered including encouraging skilled health personnel to provide services in rural and remote areas and enhancing community awareness and integrated primary healthcare (promotive and preventive) mechanisms. Moreover, as the key component of primary healthcare, regular screenings need to be performed.

Policy Advice 3: Promoting the engagement of private sector in the provision of safe and quality healthcare in close partnership with public authorities and with well-designed monitoring mechanisms.

Rationale:

Public financing is crucial to achieve universal health coverage sustainably. In order to ensure financial protection for all people and equitable access to quality health services, the allocation of considerable share in government budget is essential without prejudice to other national plans or priorities. However, considering the budget constraints in many countries, additional domestic resources are needed to be mobilized to achieve universal health coverage. In this manner, private initiatives can play a significant role to complement the public efforts. For example, in order to fill the gaps and shortcomings in public health service delivery (e.g. inadequate human resources and physical infrastructure), the government of Indonesia has started to actively encourage the private sector to contribute to health service delivery. In his framework, the private healthcare providers currently cover up to 60 per cent of health care in Indonesia (in particular hospital care).

On the other hand, there is a need for a well-designed monitoring mechanism. Outdated legislation, lack of enforcement of public health regulations and a widely unregulated private sector may leave consumers unprotected. Therefore, governments would need

to put forward effective regulatory schemes to guide private sector and avoid the market failure in order to (i) assess whether private health care services are safe, effective and of good quality, (ii) examine to what extent patients from different socio-economic and socio-cultural backgrounds can access these services and how barriers could be reduced, and (iii) investigate how private health providers affect the larger health system, e.g. with respect to availability of trained health workforce, the extent to which private providers work with relevant public authorities, and how positive links can be strengthened as well as negative impacts can be mitigated.

Policy Advice 4: Encouraging development and upgrade of health information management systems through designing an online-integrated health information system, allocating required resources to health IT infrastructure and strengthening multi-sectoral coordination mechanism.

Rationale:

Monitoring key health data is crucial to identify challenges and priorities in providing quality health services. Strengthening health information systems facilitates planning and allocation of resources as well as contributes to accountable and transparent public health management. Integrated health information systems would enable government officials give sound and timely decisions based on reliable data towards enhancing access to health services.

Many OIC Member Countries face challenges regarding health information management such as reporting quality and timeliness, duplication and fragmentation of data collection as well as lack of rigorous validation within different programmes. Some member countries do not have sufficient registration of births and deaths as well as reporting complete and accurate causes of death is lacking. Therefore, allocating required resources to IT infrastructure to enhance a well-designed health information management system with a special emphasis on the poor is needed to be taken into consideration. In this respect, data analysis, which is made at sub-national level to address pockets of poverty, should be ensured. Moreover, in order to ensure uniformity in aggregating data, collaborating with different stakeholders such as statistical departments, relevant ministries and organizations is crucial to achieve a strong multi-sectoral coordination mechanism.

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 14TH MEETING OF THE POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

A policy debate session was held during the 14th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG). The Working Group came up with some concrete policy recommendations for reducing maternal and child mortality 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 “Child and Maternal Mortality in Islamic Countries” and the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questionnaire which was sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office.

Policy Advice 1: Developing a strategy/policy to improve access to maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH) care, and to provide equitable distribution of health providers

Rationale:

Although proven and cost-effective interventions are available to prevent maternal, newborn and child deaths, the utilization and coverage of MNCH care interventions are low in many settings. Supply related health system factors – such as access to and availability of services, quality of care, emergency transportation – and demand related factors – such as income, education, social norm factors – affect the utilization of obstetrical and child health care services.

High inequity in MNCH care exists among the poorest segments of the population. Reaching the poorest population remains a challenge in many countries. Improving access to high-quality MNCH services, assuring high-quality services in public facilities, and improving the availability of skilled providers to poor segments of the population are very critical for substantially reducing maternal and child mortality at the national level. Life threatening maternal complications need emergency transportation and in many settings, especially in rural areas, ambulance services are not available. Often the nearest facilities may not have trained service providers, especially in rural and remote areas. Improving physical accessibility and financial affordability through health insurance programs and vouchers are likely to help women and families to overcome the economic barriers. Improving the availability of trained health workers and affordable, high quality, easily accessible services in poor settings and rural areas are critical for reducing inequity. Policy will be needed to improve workforce capacity and to develop incentive strategies for equitable distribution of health providers.

Sociocultural beliefs and practices also affect women from seeking care. Identifying local sociocultural barriers and developing culturally sensitive intervention programs would help in raising awareness and improving acceptability of MNCH services.

With the recent UN declaration of universal health coverage, there is growing recognition that universal health care access to MNCH services will be critical for countries to accelerate the progress towards achieving the SDG-3.1 (to reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100 000 live births by 2030) and SDG-3.2 (all countries to reduce neonatal mortality to at least as low as 12 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality to at least as low as 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030) goals.

Policy Advice 2: Improving health system functioning and quality of MNCH care through training and practice of recommended standard of care protocols, and regular monitoring of standards

Rationale:

Improving delivery rates with skilled birth attendants (SBA) at health facilities is one of the key strategies for reducing maternal and perinatal mortality. However, many OIC member countries with high SBA have very high maternal mortality ratios and child mortality rates. There are concerns that quality of care in health facilities is poor. A recent estimate suggests that half of all maternal deaths and 1 million neonatal deaths could be prevented by ensuring high quality of health care delivery system.

Stakeholders suggest to improve the quality of care through good governance and ensuring accountability. Standard protocols are available for the management of normal delivery and for the treatment and referral of women for maternal complications. However, the practice of such protocols and monitoring of practice are often poor in low and middle-income countries. Results-based financing programs were instituted in some settings for improving quality of health services. Studies also suggest that often the competency level of health providers is low and needs improvement through refresher training. Doctors are often not available at health facilities or engage in moonlighting, which also affect the quality of care at health facilities.

Essential drugs or medical equipment are often not available or functional in many public health facilities. Assuring financing and timely planning for procurement and distribution of supplies will help to avoid stock-out challenges.

Providing safe, effective, women-centered, timely, efficient and equitable MNCH care will be critical for improving its acceptance and utilization.

Policy Advice 3: Improving continuum of maternal, neonatal and child health care for assuring uninterrupted services before and during pregnancy, delivery and postpartum period through among others developing specific conditional cash transfer programs

Rationale:

Although antenatal care (ANC) is high in many OIC member countries, often more than 90% for at least one visit, the continuum of maternity and postpartum child care is low. In spite of receiving ANC from a health facility, many women do not deliver at a health facility or under a skilled birth attendant and receive medical care during postnatal period, when mortality risks are highest. The World Health Organization now recommends conducting ANC visits 8 times and initiating early in the first trimester. In many countries, however, the visits of at least four antenatal care (ANC4+), which was

recommended earlier, are even substantially low (often less than 50% of one ANC visit rate); reaching 8 visits will need more efforts, resources and programmatic interventions.

Similarly, the immunization coverage for the selected vaccination or the first dose is high in many countries, but the coverage of “all recommended doses for the basic vaccinations” is low. These are missed opportunities: each contact with a health provider provides the opportunities of counseling women for delivering at a health facility, seeking immediate postpartum care for them and their newborns, and completing age-specific full doses of vaccination. Community based outreach programs are also needed for maintaining continuum of care. Rapid expansion of mobile phone technology opens new opportunities for contacting women and families for reminding and assuring continuum of care. It is imperative to identify the barriers of continuum of care and provide remedial solutions. Identifying the scopes and challenges of integrated programs for the continuum of maternal, neonatal and child health care also needed to develop appropriate MNCH policy and action plans. In this respect, specific conditional cash transfer programs can be developed targeting pregnant women to ensure their continuum of maternity and postpartum child care.

Policy Advice 4: Developing/Improving integrated health information management systems for monitoring MNCH care level and reporting births and deaths, including maternal deaths, nationally and locally

Rationale:

Monitoring key health data is crucial to identify challenges and priorities in providing quality health services. Strengthening health information systems facilitates planning and allocation of resources as well as contributes to accountable and transparent public health management. Fully functional health information systems would enable government officials give sound and timely decisions based on reliable data towards enhancing access to health services.

Many OIC Member Countries face challenges regarding health information management such as reporting quality and timeliness, duplication and fragmentation of data collection as well as lack of rigorous validation within different programmes. Some member countries do not have sufficient registration of births and deaths as well as reporting complete and accurate causes of death is lacking. This adversely affects the estimations of maternal and child mortality indicators. The most recent mortality estimates for the developing countries are based on model based estimates, which are available at a national level. These estimates are not helpful for tracking sub-national situations. Knowing causes of deaths is critically important for developing and planning appropriate public health interventions. It is possible to provide such information from a good, functional HMIS system.

Therefore, allocating required resources to develop and maintain infrastructure to enhance a well-designed health information management system is highly important. Moreover, in order to ensure uniformity in aggregating data, collaborating with different stakeholders such as statistical departments, relevant ministries and organizations is crucial to achieve a strong multi-sectoral coordination mechanism. Coverage of information will be needed from both health facilities and communities.

Policy Advice 5: Developing sustainable educational programs on women and child health care delivered to community with a view to eliminating the inequities linked to low education levels

Rationale:

As a long-term investment and strategy, improving female education is critical for reducing maternal and child mortality. A large inequity in maternal and child health care was observed by education level, wealth quintile, and urban-rural areas. Education is also a key factor for inequity in socioeconomic status and urban-rural residence. The elimination of inequity due to education may increase maternal and child health care considerably. In many of the OIC member countries that have high maternal and child mortality and low utilization of MNCH care, female education level is low.

Education is also likely to improve women's empowerment and decision making for health care for themselves and their children. Lack of permission is cited in the literature as one of the main causes of not delivering at a health facility. Improving women's empowerment is likely to reduce such barriers. Therefore, activities towards raising awareness among mothers and pregnant women can be encouraged by the high-level country strategy documents and regulations.

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.

6. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

6.1. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 12TH MEETING OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group (FCWG) has successfully held its 12th Meeting on March 28th, 2019, in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “*Infrastructure Financing through Islamic Finance in the OIC Member Countries*”. During the Meeting, FCWG made deliberations on infrastructure financing through islamic finance in the member countries. Accordingly, the participants have come up with some policy recommendations.

Policy Recommendation 1: Developing Legal and Regulatory Framework to Provide an Enabling Environment for Realizing Large Infrastructure Investments through Islamic Finance.

Rationale:

Infrastructure projects are large and complex with long maturity periods. There is a need to mitigate the legal and regulatory risks arising from investments in these projects for encouraging the financial sector to invest in the infrastructure sector. This can be done by providing a sound PPP legal framework that would outline the key principles on how the infrastructure projects are procured and implemented. Given the uniqueness of various infrastructure sectors, sector-specific laws (e.g., energy, airports, railways, etc.) may be needed to cater to their individual features. Furthermore, financial laws and regulations for different islamic financial sectors (i.e., banking, non-banking, and capital markets) are needed to provide an enabling environment for islamic finance to grow and contribute to infrastructure development. Finally, the tax laws need to be adjusted to level the playing field of islamic finance and conventional finance, where appropriate.

Policy Recommendation 2: Increasing the Number and Share of Islamic Nonbank Financial Institutions to Enhance the Contribution of Islamic Finance in Infrastructure Investments.

Rationale:

The balance sheet features of nonbank financial institutions (constituting takaful operators, investment banks, pension funds, etc.) are more suitable for financing long-term infrastructure projects. However, islamic nonbank financial institutions are relatively small and not contributing much to the investments in the infrastructure sector. There is a need to establish more islamic nonbank financial institutions and increase their share in the overall nonbanking sector. In particular, enhancing the shares of Shariah compliant pension funds and sovereign wealth funds has the potential of increasing the size of contribution of infrastructure financing by the islamic financial sector.

Policy Recommendation 3: Developing the Islamic Capital Markets Infrastructure to Facilitate the Issuance of Different Types of Project Sukuk and other Instruments as Appropriate for Infrastructure Projects.

Rationale:

Capital markets facilitate raising funds for infrastructure projects from various types of investors. The investors can range from large institutional investors, to nonbank financial institutions and retail investors. Furthermore, financial institutions, such as islamic banks, prefer to invest in tradable project sukuk rather than financing in infrastructure projects directly since they are illiquid. To encourage the development of islamic capital markets and increase its role in infrastructure development would require a sound and enabling legal and regulatory framework for sukuk issuance. In addition, since project sukuk structures are complex, provision of templates for various types of sukuk can further increase their issuances.

Policy Recommendation 4: Encouraging Innovative Models to use Islamic Social Sector (i.e., Zakat, Waqf and Sadaqah) to Provide Social Infrastructure Services (such as Education and Health) provided that they are Shariah-compliant.

Rationale:

A key untapped source that has potential to provide social infrastructure services is the islamic social sector such as Zakat, Waqf and Sadaqah. In some countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia innovative models of these institutions have been used to provide certain social infrastructure services to the poorer segments of the population. Since the size of zakat, waqf and Sadaqah is potentially large and many member countries face financing constraints to fund infrastructure projects, the islamic social finance can be mobilized to provide some of the social infrastructure services such as education and health, provided that they are Shariah-compliant.

Policy Recommendation 5: Improving Capacity and human capital for increasing the use of Islamic Finance for infrastructure financing

Rationale:

One of the key issues of involving islamic finance in infrastructure projects is having appropriate Shariah-compliant products. Since the projects are large and involve complex contractual arrangements, there are many intricacies that need to be resolved from a Shariah point of view. However, there are a limited number of islamic financial institutions that understand the complexities of project financing and Shariah advisory services on these can also be scant and costly. There is, thus, a need to reduce the knowledge gap and build capacity on the use of islamic finance for PPP projects and enhance the awareness among stakeholders to increase the use of islamic finance for infrastructure projects.

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.

6.2. THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 13TH MEETING OF THE FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Financial Working Group (FCWG) has successfully held its 13th Meeting on October 17th, 2019 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Improving the Takaful Sector in Islamic Countries”. During the Meeting, FCWG made deliberations on improving Takaful sector in the OIC Member Countries. Room Document, prepared in accordance with the main findings of the analytical study conducted for the 13th 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: Developing a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework for the Takaful industry to facilitate the operations, transparency, and governance in this sector.

Rationale:

A robust and comprehensive regulatory and legislative frameworks for the Islamic finance industry, including the Takaful sector, would ensure stability, clarity, competitiveness, discipline, prudence, and safety in the market.

The regulatory requirements such as capital, risk governance, transparency, and disclosure are in place to ensure stability and sustainability of the financial institutions, including TOs. Also, there are prudential standards and requirements which specifically cater to the distinct features of Islamic finance. These standards would strengthen the governance of TOs, and provide greater transparency on the use of various Islamic contracts in the models and structures, as well as safeguarding the interests of Takaful participants. It is worth noting that all the regulatory and legal reforms need to be undertaken gradually to allow smooth transition and adjustments in the Takaful market.

The institutionalisation of Shari’ah committees, whether centralised and/or decentralised, is a requirement for the Takaful industry. The presence of the Shari’ah committee is vital to ensure the Shariah-compliance of Takaful products and services. The committee also develops the Shariah standards to guide the TOs to apply them in their product development and innovation. The competencies of these Shariah committee members should be enhanced from time to time through continuous training programmes.

There is also an increasing demand from the industry for more extensive Islamic investment instruments. This demand would require improvements in the Islamic capital markets to allow the TOs and RTOs to diversify their investment portfolios (COMCEC, 2018). Hence, regulators should continue to provide the necessary infrastructure for the growth of *Shari’ah*-compliant instruments.

Policy Advice 2: Promoting product customisation in Takaful Sector and introducing new products in accordance with the changing needs of the market.

Rationale:

The unique value propositions of *Takaful* is a niche for the competitiveness of the industry. The value proposition is based on the Takaful principles of mutual assistance, risk-sharing, and *tabarru'* (donation). Based on these principles, the TOs are able to offer participants products and services unique features such as sharing of underwriting surplus and inheritance planning.

With impactful use of technology to improve the efficiency of delivery, innovative *Takaful* solutions can be offered with expanded outreach in a manner that provides a seamless experience to participants. The range of attractive product offerings to participants could also be widened with the introduction of new products and innovation in protection solutions supported by technology. With the employment of big data analytics, artificial intelligence and online channels, TOs are would be able to anticipate risks and demands with far greater precision. This allows for enhanced product customisation by TOs to suit the rapidly changing needs of the market, thus, improving the participant experience when consuming Takaful products and services. For example, wearable computing devices that collect real-time data make underwriting process and managing on-going health claims more integrative and convenient to participants. Based on the participant's behaviour, lifestyle and Takaful plan that are monitored using the technology, the Takaful operator will be able to customise and price their products. Participant experience can also be enhanced with value-added services, as technology enables new business models through new and improved forms of distribution. For example, TOs can develop mobile/tablet financial planning apps which help illustrate Takaful more clearly and vividly to customers. It enables customers to understand the product features better and make informed decision when choosing a *Takaful* product or service.

Diversity in products and services, powered by technology adoption, has significant potential to increase the competitive edge of the Takaful industry to serve consumers better. Besides, new coming TOs can adopt InsurTech and other technology-based products and services as an entry-strategy to the market. With technology, the new entrants would be in a position to expand the market.

The growth in the Takaful products and services would create demand for other related Islamic finance industries such as Islamic banks and capital markets, which in turn would further stimulate demands for products and services of the Takaful industry. Thus, the Takaful sector can contribute to the growth of the Islamic finance industry (COMCEC, 2019).

Policy Advice 3: Encouraging talent development through training and professional certification programmes and increasing the awareness of stakeholders in the Takaful sector.

Rationale:

Strategies for human capital development should focus on attracting highly skilled talent. This would include competitive remuneration and continuous up-skilling and building competencies of employees across all levels. Therefore, the TOs should set a clear vision and culture of continuous learning and development. Specifically, the Takaful industry workforce should be equipped with an understanding of the principles of Islamic finance and Takaful specificities through various certification and training programmes.

Employees should also be encouraged to acquire and develop their technical knowledge and competencies on risk management, underwriting and regulatory framework. Talent development in Takaful is also required for agents, brokers, and bank partners (offering bankatakaful services) who are also important players of the Takaful ecosystem. Enhancing the competencies of these Takaful players is imperative for supporting business growth, outreach and diversification.

To support the development of the Takaful industry, it is also essential to have a strong and dynamic association that charts the strategic direction for the market, establishes the best practices for Takaful players who are able to raise relevant industry issues with various stakeholders and deliberate on opportunities.

Policy Advice 4: To provide incentives to the Takaful industry to enhance its competitiveness and business sustainability, thereby creating the level-playing field for the industry.

Rationale:

The penetration rate of Takaful in OIC member countries is still very low. Yet, the continuous growth of the Takaful industry and its potentials remain promising. The industry continues to operate in a highly competitive and challenging environment with the rapidly evolving business and economic landscape. It is imperative for the TOs to strive and address the protection gaps in the OIC member countries and continue to design and offer the protection solutions that meet the needs of the economy and participants rather than merely replicating the existing mainstream insurance. Takaful's unique features would strengthen the value proposition and business sustainability of the industry. The Takaful potentials, its continuous growth and the evolving innovative products would create a level-playing field and a competitive edge for the industry. This competitiveness can also be enhanced by creating MegaTakaful that would realise the

economy of scale and provide huge capital base for the Takaful companies. Moreover, provision of both tax and non-tax incentives, especially for new entrants in emerging Takaful markets, would take the industry to a new height. The tax incentives could include the standardisation of tax regime for both Takaful and conventional insurance. The non-tax incentives could be in the form of liberalisation of capital adequacy requirements and promotion of Takaful products to customers through third parties (e.g, through rebates or discounts).

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 realising above-mentioned policy recommendations, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding facility. These projects may include the 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 FIFTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC**

(İstanbul, 25-28 November 2019)

1.	COMCEC Annual Progress Report 2019.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(1)-CCO</i>
2.	Making Cooperation Work: COMCEC Strategy for Building an Interdependent Islamic World.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(2)-CCO</i>
3.	Report of the OIC General Secretariat	<i>OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(3)-OIC</i>
4.	OIC Economic Outlook 2019-Annual Economic Report.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(4)-SESRI</i>
5.	Brief on Trade Cooperation/TPS-OIC.....	<i>OIC/COMCEC/35-19/D(5)-CCO</i>
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