

Original: English

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

**CLOSING ADDRESS OF
H.E. DR. CEVDET YILMAZ, MINISTER OF
DEVELOPMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
AT THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE
TWENTY-EIGHTHTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC**

(İstanbul, 11 October 2012)

Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Delegates,
Esteemed Guests,

I would like to start my closing remarks by expressing my satisfaction for the successful conclusion of the 28th Session of the COMCEC. I would like to thank all the delegations and the relevant OIC and international institutions and the COMCEC Coordination Office for their efforts and valuable contributions to the success of this Session.

Dear Ministers,

The resolutions, we have just adopted today, demonstrate our willingness for cooperation. As we are all aware, today's world is more competitive and rapidly changing. Thus, the countries which optimize their resources and respond to the demands of their people are those able to achieve higher economic growth, alleviate poverty, create more jobs and thereby enhance prosperity in their territories.

Our cooperation mainly aims at creating synergy among our countries to enhance prosperity in the Islamic World. I hope and believe that, with the continuous contributions and support of the brotherly countries, COMCEC will help intensify and consolidate economic and commercial cooperation among our countries and play an important role in our economic development. While doing so, we will continue to cooperate with all possible partners, including the international institutions to benefit from their expertise and experiences. In this context, I wish to reaffirm, once again,

that my country will spare no effort exert every possible effort in providing every possible full support to our cooperation efforts, as we have done in the past.

Honorable Ministers,

During the 28th Session of the COMCEC, we have discussed very important issues to further expand our economic and commercial cooperation. With your valuable contributions, we have reviewed the recommendations of the technical meetings, held throughout the year in our cooperation areas, shared our views on world economic developments, deliberated on possible ways to enhance the competitiveness of the SMEs in our countries and adopted resolutions accordingly. I believe that decisive implementation of these resolutions by the Member States and relevant institutions will further our cooperation.

It is worth noting some successes of this important Session; in this context, I would like to highlight the two projects which were launched by this Session. Firstly, I attach particular importance to the new COMCEC Strategy, which will be very instrumental in creating a common understanding and approximating policies among the Member States.

This Strategy, as presented yesterday, brings a country-driven COMCEC and aims at the easier movement of goods, capital and people among our countries. The Strategy will help us incorporate our resources and efforts and share our experiences to address the common problems of the Islamic World. Furthermore, I strongly believe that it will help improve the quality of public services in order to reach more efficient, transparent, inclusive and accountable governance. I would like to underline once again that the Strategy envisages a member-driven COMCEC and is designed to ensure active and direct involvement of the Member States in the COMCEC Cooperation exertions.

I am pleased to state that, within the framework of this Strategy, as the host country of the COMCEC, Turkey will provide grants for COMCEC projects to realize the objectives set by the Strategy. It should be highlighted that the new Strategy does not place financial burdens on the Member States nor does it include a change in the decision-making procedures of the COMCEC.

Secondly, the developments in the area of financial cooperation are quite promising. The cooperation endeavors under the OIC Stock Exchanges Forum have borne their

fruits. I attach great importance to the successful conclusion of the S&P OIC/COMCEC 50 Shariah Index. I believe this Index will be a trademark and will be very instrumental in addressing the growing demand for Islamic financial instruments worldwide.

Apart from the launching of these two significant projects, we have also successfully completed our deliberations on the cooperation areas.

In accordance with the provisions of Istanbul Declaration, adopted by the COMCEC Economic Summit, held in 2009, we have been revitalizing our cooperation in our prioritized areas of agriculture, transport and tourism. In the area of transport we have the İzmir Document identifying our objectives regarding the cooperation in this field. In tourism sector we have established the OIC/COMCEC Tourism Private Sector Forum. The Forum will hold its first meeting in December 2012 in Izmir, Turkey. I would like to call upon all our Member States to ensure active participation of their private sector to this important event. In agriculture, we developed a framework cooperation. I believe that these exertions would deepen our cooperation in the priority sectors.

Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Participants,

Despite these positive developments, we are also aware that, extra efforts are still needed to finalize some of our ongoing programs and projects. The Trade Preferential System among the Member States (TPS-OIC), which is the milestone project of the COMCEC, has almost become operational; few issues yet remain. Now we have nine Member States which completed the ratification procedures of the TPS-OIC Agreements and submitted their List of Concessions. However, we still need one more country for this system to become effective. Therefore, here, I would like to call upon our Member States to complete the ratification processes of the TPS-OIC agreements and submit their list of concessions at the earliest to make the system operational.

Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Participants,

Yesterday, we have conducted fruitful deliberations on “Enhancing the Competitiveness of the SMEs in the OIC Member States”. The valuable comments of Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Member Countries and the presentations by the Keynote Speakers at the session have enriched the discussions. I believe that these discussions will contribute to the COMCEC’s efforts in enhancing the competitiveness of the SMEs.

To conclude, I reiterate my thanks to all participants for their contributions. I extend my best wishes of health, happiness and prosperity to all the peoples of the brotherly Islamic Countries.

Hoping that you will carry happy memories from Istanbul, I wish you a safe trip home.

