



الغرفة الإسلامية للتجارة والصناعة والزراعة

Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture
La Chambre Islamique de Commerce, d'Industrie et d'Agriculture

**Progress Report on the Activities of the
Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture (ICCIA)
for submission to 31st Meeting of the COMCEC**

**Istanbul, Turkey
23-26 November 2015**

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Introduction:

The OIC Countries need a strong Private Sector that can lead to create vital links amongst the Member Countries through trade and investment. It has a fundamental role to play in harnessing these links, to contribute in achieving greater level of Intra Islamic Trade. The global economic environment is pitted against greater challenges as well as opportunities. It is now upto the private sector to best utilize the opportunities and at the same time channelize the challenges towards their advantages.

Since the OIC countries cover a diverse economic group, some of them have a dynamic and resilient private sector. Whereas, some OIC Countries are not fully benefiting from the opportunities that can be generated by the Private Sector. There is a dire need to encourage Private-Sector-led economic growth. On the other hand, the Public-Private Partnership can be a most effective tool, when they work together. They have a significant role to play in creating a healthy environment for trade and investment promotion in OIC Countries.

The General Secretariat of ICCIA has been undertaking activities in line with its objective by holding the following activities:-

- Organization of business forums for private sector
- Workshops, Training programs on capacity building, poverty alleviation, upgrading marketing and managing skills, value-addition, gender development, economic empowerment of women, promotion & development of Small & Medium Enterprises, utilization of microfinance, developing Entrepreneurship, particularly in women and the youth.
- Playing a role for increasing the overall level of Intra Islamic Trade.
- Promotion and training for the regional and international agreements and encouraging the Member States to join them such as: TPS-OIC.
- Implementing the relevant aspects of the OIC Program of Action
- Cooperation with OIC & other related International Organizations on common goals and objectives.
- Setting-up of the Islamic Corporate Masfaq (International Business Development Centre):
- Halal Issues
- Excellence Awards Project
- Project for establishment of Islamic International Commercial Center for Reconciliation and Arbitration
- ICCIA Website

Mentioned hereunder are the broad areas and salient aspects of the activities:

ENHANCING THE ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR IN ECONOMIC COOPERATION:

Towards this end, the Islamic Chamber has been holding numerous activities since its establishment. These activities are in line with the needs and requirements of the private sector and enable the private sector, to strengthen their base and expand their business ties.

Private Sector Meetings/Businesswomen Forums:

The Islamic Chamber will be organizing the 8th Forum for Businesswomen in Islamic Countries, in Kampala-Uganda on 26th – 27th October 2015. The said event is organized in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Uganda National Chamber of Commerce & Industry under the theme of “Empowering Women Enterprises for Inclusive Growth”.

Innovation and Excellence Award:

In addition to holding Private Sector Forums, Workshop and Seminars, the Islamic Chamber has also set-up the Excellence Award Project. The working paper was submitted to the General Assembly of the ICCIA held in Uganda in April 2015 and thereafter studied by the Special Committee. The Special Committee made some recommendations which would add more value to the Excellence Award. The final approval will be made by the 22nd Board of Directors Meeting of the ICCIA to be held in Cairo on 9th November 2015.

Project for Establishment of Islamic International Commercial Center for Reconciliation and Arbitration

With regard to the establishment of Arbitration Center, the working paper was submitted to the General Assembly of the ICCIA held in Uganda in April 2015 and thereafter studied by the Special Committee. The Special Committee made following recommendations:

- a. Cooperation (in all forms) with one of the actual existing centers, such as the Islamic International Center for Reconciliation and Arbitration.
- b. To sign cooperation protocols with the reputed Arbitration and Reconciliation Centers, which actually exist in most of the Member Countries, particularly those operating under the umbrella of the Chambers of Commerce.

Final decision on adopting the above recommendations will be taken by the 22nd Board of Directors Meeting of the ICCIA to be held in Cairo on 9th November 2015.

The Islamic Corporate Masfaq (International Business Development Centre):

The first implementation of the idea commenced in collaboration with the Jeddah Chamber of Commerce & Industry (JCCI). The ICCIA major objective is to replicate this model with numerous OIC Member States.

Al-Masfaq is a Business Development Center, presently established in Jeddah in collaboration and partnership between the ICCIA and Jeddah Chamber of Commerce & Industry. This model could be executed in collaboration with any interested Chamber of Commerce from OIC Member States. Its main goal is to develop the economy and to provide job opportunities by way of developing an investment map of the city, where Al-Masfaq operates, so as to give a clear picture to the potential investors to explore the real and feasible investment opportunities. It also aimed at being the one-stop-shop that provides all the needful permission, licensees and NOCs that are needed from the all the investment concerned governmental authorities. Al-Masfaq will be a place where youth with creative ideas can meet entrepreneurs who are willing to assist in investment and wellbeing of the community. The major role of Al-Masfaq is not only the investment, but also to gather people under one roof and to facilitate procedures and create development in the various fields of economic activities.

Development of Halal Industry and Trade:

ICCIA strives to develop the Halal Industry and Trade in the world, with an objective of adding real value to this emerging market. Towards this end, the ICCIA through its strategy designed to suits the status of the market and to provide a role that is appropriate to the ICCIA status, and ensure good performance that is adequate to sustain its ability to undertake its role in befitting manner. The ICCIA intends to establish international entities and projects on Halal, Ethics and Quality. The presentation was made before the 31st General Assembly of the ICCIA held in Uganda on 27th April 2015. The General Assembly welcomed the idea and called for its implementation through phases. The ICCIA will be organizing an annual Global Conference on Halal, which will be launched from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan during the first half of next year.

ICCIA Website:

- ICCIA endeavors to utilize the information technology and the internet by operating a dynamic portal that interacts with the locals and international clients, taking into consideration the various categories/interests of users/clients in accordance to the services that are provided to them in an interactive and user-friendly approach. ICCIA's portal is a comprehensive source of updated contents that highlight the economic affairs in the Islamic World, which aims to play a major role in enhancing the intra OIC-trade through the information and services that it offers. The portal also provides detailed investment profiles about the members. This will help the potential investors to make right decisions about their investment options. The goals and objectives of the website are:
 - To be a reference point for the key economic information related to the member countries
 - To be a source of statistics and related reports, covering the member countries
 - To be a platform for launching new projects and ideas
 - To be a communication medium between members while fostering their common grounds and interest
 - To introduce the chambers, their countries and projects
 - To be a platform for marketing and advertising
 - To Facilitate communication between ICCIA and the general public

Cooperation with International Organizations:

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

- Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF);
 - United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation (UNOSSC));
 - United Nations Industrial Development Organization, Investment & Technology Promotion Office (ITPO), Bahrain
- As a result of this cooperation, the above Institutions, whenever possible, extend technical support in organizing Training Programs and Workshops and by sponsoring the participants and resource persons.
 - In view of the above cooperation, the ICCIA was invited to represent the OIC Member Countries at the High-level Multi-stakeholders Strategy Forum on Scaling-up Global Support for South-South and Triangular Cooperation in the Context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda, held in Macao, on 25-26 August 2015, wherein the ICCIA informed the representatives of the General Assembly of the UN of its activities and objectives.
 - In order to promote women-led business enterprises in OIC Member Countries, the ICCIA, in collaboration with Perez-Guerrero Trust Fund (PGTF) for South-South Cooperation, would be organizing a programme on 'Development of a Mechanism for Joint Ventures and partnerships

among Women-led Enterprises through South-South Cooperation’ which would be held in Kampala, Uganda on 28-29 October 2015. The objective of the Workshop is to strengthen the partnership amongst the women entrepreneurs through Business Development Centers, to mobilize resources with similar entities to strengthen economic cooperation, transfer of technology, technical know-how, expertise and best practices. The Workshop will be very beneficial for the women-led enterprises, women organizations working for the economic and social empowerment of the women as well as the institutions working towards women empowerment.

Challenges and recommendations:

The ICCIA is working with the private sector through the National Chambers of Commerce. However, out of the 57 Member Chambers, only around 50% are active. It has been noted that despite the fact that in order to encourage these Chambers, the ICCIA sponsors the participation of these Chamber, but the interest of the chamber is limited only to the duration of the event.

Therefore, there is a need to call upon the Member States to encourage their Member Chambers to play a proactive role in the activities of the Islamic Chamber. In this context, the General Secretariat of the OIC had also approached the Member States requesting them to secure the accession, where necessary, of their respective National Chambers of Commerce to the Membership of ICCIA, as well as their active participation in its activities. It is therefore hoped that the Chambers that are not benefitting from the services of the Islamic Chamber, will come forward to be an active member.

Given the resources, of the 57 member states of OIC, the level of economic cooperation, is not reflective of the potentials. This can be attributed to the geographical placement and the diverse and varied socio-economic level of development of the said member states. Perhaps a cross the board approach for the member states is not feasible and applicable. Therefore, member states are encouraged to work out bilateral arrangements on granting concessions for establishing businesses and expanding trade.

In order to have an easy flow of entrepreneurs from one country to the other, all requirements for the private sector need to be facilitated. Communication between the private sector should be enhanced so that there is a free flow of information.

Upcoming Activities:

- The 17th Private Sector Meeting, in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, alongwith the 15th Islamic Trade Fair from 22-23 May 2016.
- 9th Businesswomen Forum in Islamic Chamber in May 2016, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- Senior Managers Leadership Training Program (transforming Good Managers into Great Leaders. (Dates/Venue to be determined).
- Food Trade Exchange Forum among Islamic Countries
- Annual Halal Conference
- Excellence Award
- Specialized Workshop on (Food Security/Entrepreneurship Development/Promotion of Tourism Opportunities/Development of SMEs)
- Conference on Muslim Business-owners’ Union
