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

DOCUMENTS PRESENTED BY

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

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B A C K G R O U N D

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (I.C.D.T) is a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (O.I.C) in charge of Trade Promotion between Islamic Countries, was mandated by the Secretary General of the O.I.C and the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation for Islamic Countries (COMCEC) to follow up in collaboration with the Group of the Islamic Development Bank, the multilateral trade negotiations organised by the World Trade Organisation (W.T.O).

Within this framework, I.C.D.T submits on a regular basis, progress reports on these negotiations to the COMCEC's annual meetings, the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs of the O.I.C and the annual Council of the Foreign Affairs Ministers (CFM).

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

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

SECTION I

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

The total number of the WTO Member reached **160** countries with the accession of the Republic of Yemen on 4th December 2014 on the sidelines of the 9th Ministerial Conference held in Bali, of which 42 are OIC Members, that is to say more than the quarter of the WTO Members. This accession became official on 26th June 2014. The WTO Member States account for about 97% of the world economy.

The number of the OIC Member States that have applied for accession to the WTO is estimated at **twelve**, these are: Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Iraq, Iran, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Libya, Uzbekistan Sudan, Syria and Comoros.

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

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

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

In 2013, six formal meetings of working groups were held including those concerning the following OIC countries: Afghanistan (a meeting); Algeria (a meeting); Kazakhstan (four meetings). Other plurilateral meetings were devoted to technical issues (e.g. agriculture, SPS, TBT, investment and trade-related measures (MIC)) related to the accession of Afghanistan, Algeria and Kazakhstan.

➤ **TRANSPARENCY OF THE ACCESSION PROCESS**

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

Thus, the informal group of accessions (GIA) met nine times in 2013. Consultations focused on the following questions: i) sharing and exchange of information on accessions with Members; ii) Secretariat's reports on technical developments in the

accession process; iii) reports from the Chairs of the Working Groups to Members on the results of their visits to the countries; iv) planning of meetings on accession and related activities based on the progressive calendar of meetings on accession proposed by the Secretariat; and v) response to specific concerns raised by Members and acceding governments .

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

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

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

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

➤ **TOOLS FOR THE ACCESSION:**

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

1. Afghanistan:

The Afghanistan made its application for access to the WTO on 21st November 2004. A working group was established at the meeting of the General Council held on 13th December 2004. Afghanistan's Memorandum on its Foreign Trade Regime was circulated in March 2009.

The Members of the Working Group held their first meeting on 31st January 2011 in order to carry out a special review of the trade regime of Afghanistan. During this meeting, the Minister of Trade and Industry of Afghanistan, Mr. Anwar-Ul-Haq Ahady, recognized the importance and the advantages of the accession of his country to the WTO in so far as it would enable the strengthening of framework of trade and investment and create an environment offering the biggest economic possibilities likely

to contribute reducing poverty.

In addition, Members supported the integration of Afghanistan in the multilateral trading system., That is why they have requested additional information on issues such as investment regime, the requirements registration fees and charges at the border, import licensing, domestic taxes, traffic in transit, export subsidies, quantitative restrictions, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary issues and intellectual property issues to facilitate the work of the negotiations Group.

A the 2nd meeting of the Working Group on the accession of Afghanistan held on 18th June 2012, the Members were favourable to a quick accession of Afghanistan to the WTO and examined the trade regime of this country and its conformity with the rules of the WTO. Noting that Afghanistan belongs to the Least Developed Countries Group, they pointed out that this factor should be taken into account in the negotiations for its accession.

Besides, Members requested more information on Afghanistan in the field of trade regulations especially with respect to state trading enterprises, privatisation, tariff policies, import licences, customs evaluation, export subsidies, agricultural policy, intellectual property, technical obstacles to trade and transparency.

They also urged Afghanistan to submit its first market access offer for goods in order to start negotiations on the opening of exchanges. It should be noted that Afghanistan has already submitted its offer of services in early June 2012.

The third meeting of the Working Group on the Accession of Afghanistan took place on 7 December 2012 and the Members of this group are determined to make this accession a priority for 2013.

In addition, the Vice-Minister of Commerce and Industry of Afghanistan, H.E. Mozammil Shinwari, informed the Working Group of measures taken by Kabul in the field of economic, trade and legislative reforms. He also gave the guidelines of the future legislative proceedings.

During the meeting, Members attentively considered the policies in Afghanistan in the fields of economy and trade and asked for clarification on state property and state trading enterprises, marketing rights and professional licenses and royalties as well as details on sanitary and phytosanitary measures, trade related investment measures and intellectual property rights. Members congratulated Afghanistan for its commitment and determination to join the WTO.

At the fourth meeting of the Working Group, which was held on 25 July 2013, the WTO members congratulated Afghanistan for its high commitment and technical contributions to carry through the negotiations on its accession to the WTO.

Members encouraged Afghanistan to resolve technical issues, to enact some outstanding bills and conclude the last bilateral negotiations in order to stay on track to complete its accession process to the Ninth Conference Ministerial in Bali.

The WTO members have expressed their support for the conclusion of the accession process of Afghanistan in 2013. The Afghan delegation led by H.E Mozammil Shinwari, Vice-Minister of Commerce and Industry, reiterated that his country was determined to complete the accession process for the Ninth Ministerial Conference.

Members agreed that the draft report of the Working Group was well advanced at the

technical level, but there are still several issues to be solved in areas such as state-owned enterprises, government procurement, Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs), trading rights and transitional periods for technical Barriers to trade (TBT) and sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS). Afghanistan has accepted the request of Members to enact all laws relating to the WTO upon accession, in accordance with best practices for accession to the WTO and to endeavour to meet the deadline of the ninth Ministerial Conference.

The negotiations on market access had been signed with Canada and Japan. The President, Mr. Van Schreven, urged Afghanistan to complete the rest of negotiations with the Members of the WTO by mid-August and to deposit at the WTO Secretariat the bilateral agreements.

During the multilateral negotiations on agriculture, chaired by the WTO Secretariat 25th July 2013, Members welcomed the commitment by Afghanistan to consolidate its zero export subsidies and noted with great satisfaction that domestic support was concentrated on the "green box" (domestic support to agriculture is authorized without limitation because its distorting trade effects are nil or at most minimal).

Shinwari reaffirmed the commitment of Afghanistan access to the Agreement on Information Technology (ITA) upon accession.

Three bilateral agreements have been deposited at the WTO Secretariat (Canada, Japan and Korea). The accession of Afghanistan is technically advanced and is rapidly gaining maturity. The next meeting of the Working Group will be convened in the first quarter of 2014

2. Algeria:

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

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

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

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

With respect to bilateral meetings, Algeria has met about ten countries; these are: the United States, Japan, Switzerland, Australia, Canada, the European Union, Cuba, Uruguay, Turkey and the Republic of Korea.

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

The 9th meeting of the working group in charge of the accession of Algeria to the WTO

took place on October 21st 2005 at the headquarters of the WTO.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Bilateral negotiations on market access of goods and services:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The other issues to be tackled concern industrial policies and subsidies, technical barriers to trade, sanitary and phytosanitary measures, Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights and trade related investment measures.

Besides, further to, the future consultations among Members, the Algerian government

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

3. Azerbaijan:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Negotiations on market access:

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

The Working Group held its ninth meeting on 24 February 2012 during which the latest reforms adopted by Azerbaijan to advance its accession to the WTO and bring its trade regime into conformity with WTO rules were discussed. The group also discussed the legislative development and reviewed progress in bilateral negotiations on market access for goods and services.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. Comoros:

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

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

5. Iraq:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Review of trade legislation:

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

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

Bilateral negotiations:

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

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

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

6. Iran:

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

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

7. Kazakhstan:

Kazakhstan's Working Party was established on 6th February 1996. Bilateral market access negotiations in goods and services commenced in October 1997, and are continuing based on a revised goods offer and the existing services offer. Topics under discussion in the Working Party include: agriculture, the customs system (and customs union arrangements), price controls, import licensing, industrial subsidies, SPS and TBT, transparency of the legal system and legislative reform, services and TRIPS.

A revised version of the factual summary of the issues raised (summing up of the discussions within the framework of the working group) was drafted by the Secretariat and considered during the seventh meeting of the working group, which took place in November 2004.

The Chairman of the working group on the accession of Kazakhstan, Mr. Ambassador Vesa Tapani Himanen (Finland), submitted on 7th June 2005 a positive report on the application of Kazakhstan, which adopted fundamental reforms.

The bilateral negotiations in the field of market access are in process on the basis of offers revised concerning goods and services provided in 2004. The last revision of the draft report of the Working Party was distributed in June 2008. The Working Party held its last session in July 2008.

On 10th December 2012, the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan held its 14th meeting to discuss the status of negotiations for its accession to the WTO. Members expressed the hope that Kazakhstan crosses the finishing line in 2013.

Thus, the discussions during this meeting focused on issues related to investment regime, the practices of procurement, application of tariff quotas for import licensing procedures and the protection of intellectual property relating to Afghanistan. The President, Mr. Vesa Himanen (Finland) said that some chapters of the report of the Working Group were being developed through a multi-lateral exercise.

The President also stressed that bilateral negotiations between Kazakhstan and the Members of the WTO on market access for goods and services were at an advanced stage.

Ms. Zhanar Aitzhanova, Minister of Economic Integration of Kazakhstan noted that the meetings of the Working Group in 2012 reflected the positive dynamic that characterized the process of accession of Kazakhstan aiming its completion in 2013.

On 5 June 2013, the President Vesa Himanen (Finland) has called on members of the Working Party on the accession of Kazakhstan to accelerate the pace of technical proceedings and work hard so that this country can actually become WTO member at the 9th Ministerial Conference in Bali.

On 23rd July 2013, WTO Members welcomed the progress in the field of agriculture in the negotiations on the accession of Kazakhstan.

Members requested Kazakhstan to dismantle obstacles to facilitate its accession to the WTO relating to tariff adjustment, regulations and practices concerning sanitary and

phytosanitary (SPS) Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs) which are inconsistent with WTO rules, including those related to State-Owned Enterprises. Several other technical issues remain to be addressed.

The tariff adjustment involves the removal of different bilateral agreements on market access negotiated by Kazakhstan with WTO members, the list of Russia's commitments and the common external tariff of the Customs Union between Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan.

Several other issues to be resolved relating to State-owned Enterprises, the volume and the administration of tariff quotas, export duties, discriminatory preferences VAT, technical regulations and Trade Related Investment Measures (TRIMs).

The multilateral meeting on Agriculture, chaired by the WTO Secretariat, was a positive development. In its revised version on agriculture, which should be confirmed in a set of accession documents, Kazakhstan is committed to keep its export subsidies to zero upon accession and review "down" its aggregate measure of support that distorts trade.

Mrs. Zhanar Aitzhanova, Minister of Economic Integration of Kazakhstan, has reaffirmed her country's will to conclude negotiations for accession by the Ninth Ministerial Conference and pledged to intensify them.

The date of the next meeting of the Working Group is dependent on the submission of technical information required for the unresolved issues under negotiations.

During the year under review, the Working Party on the Accession of Kazakhstan held four rounds of meetings (March, June, July and October). The latest version of the draft report of the Working Group was distributed in September 2013. Draft chapters on "agricultural policies" and "sanitary and phytosanitary measures" have not yet been incorporated into the draft report. They are currently being reviewed under the plurilateral meetings chaired by the Secretariat. With respect to agriculture, the delegation of Kazakhstan presented a revised proposal in September 2013, and Members held talks on the basis of this proposal. Regarding bilateral negotiations on market access, bilateral agreements on goods and 14 bilateral agreements on services have been deposited at the WTO Secretariat.

Moreover, Kazakhstan is currently holding consultations with Member States on technical issues relating to its draft codified list concerning services. When the Secretariat receives from Astana the draft list for services, it will distribute it to all Members and signatories and will convene a meeting of technical audit. The Task Force reached the final stages. One of the main difficulties with this accession remains the question of the tariff adjustment and compensation related thereto. Other issues also remain unresolved, among others, requirements for local content, tariff quotas, preferences VAT, agriculture, export duties, MIC and SPS issues. Finally, the WTO Secretariat is helping Kazakhstan to establish its draft list for the Agreement on Information Technology (ATI).

8. Lebanon:

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

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

Working Party was held in October 2009.

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

9. Libya:

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

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

10. Sudan:

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

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

Two bilateral agreements (with Brazil and China) concerning market access have been deposited at the Secretariat. Updated technical contributions are pending, and especially legislative and constitutional updated information following the independence of South Sudan in 2012. The Secretariat keeps regular technical contacts with Sudan to identify areas in which documents and updated information are required. This accession is pending.

11. Uzbekistan:

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

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

12. Syria:

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

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

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

Conclusion:

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

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

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

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

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

Trade Ministers of Landlocked Developing countries have met on 12 September 2012 in Almaty (Kazakhstan) to discuss ways and means to enhance the commercial potential of these countries and to establish a common position on major current business issues.

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

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

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

Country	Date of the setting up of a working group	Chairman of the working group
Afghanistan	13th December 2004	Netherlands
Algeria	17th June 1987	Uruguay
Azerbaijan	16th July 1997	Germany
Comoros	9th October 2007	-
Kazakhstan	6th February 1996	Finland
Iraq	13th December 2004	Uruguay
Iran	26th May 2005	-
Lebanon	14th April 1999	France
Libya	27th July 2004	-
Sudan	25th October 1994	Morocco
Syria	4th May 2010	-
Uzbekistan	21st December 1994	Mexico

Source: WTO

Summary Table of Ongoing Accessions (as of April 2014)

	Application	Working Party Established	Memorandum	First/Latest* Working Party Meeting	Number of Working Party Meetings *	Goods Offer		Services Offer		Draft Working Party Report **
						initial	latest*	initial	latest*	
Afghanistan	Nov 2004	Dec 2004	Mar 2009	January 2011/July 2013	4	Nov 2012		June 2012		Mars 2014
Algeria	Jun 1987	Jun 1987	July 1996	April 1998 March 2014	12	Feb 2002	Nov 2013	Mar 2002	Oct 2013	February 2014
Azerbaijan	Jun 1997	Jul 1997	Apr 1999	Jun 2002/ Feb 2014	11	May 2005	Sept 2013	May 2005	Oct 2013	Dec 2013
Comoros	Feb 2007	Oct 2007	October 2013	Designation Sept 2013						
Iran	Jul 1996	May 2005	Nov 2009							
Iraq	Sep 2004	Dec 2004	Sept 2005	May 2007/April 2008	2					
Libya	Jan 1999	April 1999	June 2001	Oct 2002/Oct 2009	7	Nov 2003	June 2004	Dec 2003	June 2004	Oct 2009
Kazakhstan	Jan 1996	Feb 1996	Sept 1996	Mar 1997/ Oct 2013	18	Jun 1997	Dec 2004	Sept 1997	Jun 2004	Sept 2013
Uzbekistan	June 2007	Dec 2007	April 2001	July 2002/July 2012	1					
Syria	June 2004	July 2004								
Lebanon	Dec 2004	Feb 2005	March 2005	Oct 2005/June 2013	13	April 2006	Nov 2008	Oct 2006	Nov 2008	Oct 2012
Sudan	Dec 1994	Dec 1994	Oct 1998	Jul 2002/Oct 2005	3	Sept 2005		Sept 2005		

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

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 9th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE Bali, Indonesia, 3-7 December 2013

The Ministerial Conference of the WTO held in Bali from 3 to 7 December 2013, has enabled the convergence to an agreement on a set of questions designed to simplify trade, to provide to developing countries more options for food security, to stimulate discussion of the least developed countries and, more generally, to promote development.

This conference was attended by 3500 participants, 175 delegations, 103 ministers, 349 NGOs and 275 media. Participants examined the following items: Review of WTO activities (statements of Ministers), the arrangements (accession of Yemen adoption of Decisions and Bali Package), date and place of the 10th Ministerial Conference and election of the Bureau

The Bali Package has been described by some people as the first major agreement between the Members of the WTO since the creation of the Organization in 1995 by virtue of the agreements resulting from the Uruguay Round, concluded between 1986 and 1994. The package which is of the utmost importance to world trade concerns trade facilitation, which aims at reducing red tape and speeding up port procedures.

Essentially, the rest of the package is focused on various development issues - including food security in developing countries - and cotton, and a number of other provisions in favour of LDCs.

The package also includes a political commitment to reduce export subsidies in agriculture in order to maintain them at a low level, and reduce trade barriers on import of agricultural products under quotas.

➤ **TRADE FACILITATION:**

The decision relating to trade facilitation is a multilateral agreement aiming at simplifying customs procedures by lowering transaction costs, accelerating and making them more effective. This agreement will be legally binding and will be one of the greatest reforms of the WTO since its creation in 1995 - other agreements since then cover the financial services and telecommunications, while a free trade agreement on information technology products was concluded between a group of the WTO Members.

The aimed objectives are the following: to speed up customs procedures; to make trade operations easier, faster and cheaper; to ensure clarity, efficiency and transparency; to reduce bureaucracy and corruption, and to take advantage of technological progress. The agreement also includes provisions for goods in transit, an issue of particular interest to landlocked countries that wish to trade through the ports of neighbouring countries.

Part of the agreement provides for assistance to developing and least developed countries for the modernization of their infrastructures, training of customs officials, or to support any other costs associated with the implementation of the agreement.

Between 400 and 1,200 billion are estimated as benefits that would accrue to the global economy from a reduction in trade costs from 10 to 15%, increased trade flows and revenue collection, which will create a stable economic environment and attract foreign

investment. For OIC countries, this Agreement has generated total gain of more than USD 75 billion.

The text adopted in Bali is not final, but it does not change the substance. It will be checked and corrected so that the wording is correct from the legal point of view, so as to be adopted by the General Council by 31st July 2014.

➤ **AGRICULTURE AND COTTON :**

The agreement on the agriculture track of the Bali package required the solving of two issues. The emphasis has focused on the protection programs of public stockholding for food security purposes in developing countries so that they are not legally challenged, even if the limits of domestic support with distorting exchanges set for a country are exceeded.

The proposed solution will be temporary, and the discussion has focused on what happens at the end of the interim period. Following the consultations, it was decided that the interim solution would be maintained until a permanent solution is agreed upon with the establishment of a work program to reach such a solution within four years.

The other question was about the «administration of tariff quotas», that is to say, how to treat a certain type of import quotas (a “quota” within which the volumes benefit from lower right) when there is constant under-utilization of the quota. Members agreed to combine consultations and provision of information when quotas are underutilized. The issue that remained to be settled concerns the countries that would reserve the right not to apply the system after six years; it will be in this case, Barbados, El Salvador, United States, Guatemala and the Dominican Republic.

In addition, three texts are unchanged in comparison with negotiated versions in Geneva. One of them adds some programs on development and land use to the list of general services, which upon requests they would be allowed without limitation since they cause little distortions.

Another text is a strong political statement to ensure that the export subsidies and other measures with similar effects are limited. The third paper deals with the improvement of market access for cotton products from least developed countries, and development aid for production in these countries.

➤ **DEVELOPMENT ISSUES :**

Four papers on the following items remained unchanged from the version of Geneva:

- ❖ Duty- free and without quotas access- to the markets of rich countries for exports from least developed countries. Many countries already apply it, and the corresponding decision stipulates that countries that have not done so for at least 97 % of products " shall endeavour " to increase the number of products involved;
- ❖ simplified preferential rules of origin for the least developed countries, which will allow these countries to more easily identify their products and benefit from preferential treatment in importing countries ;
- ❖ A «waiver for services» that will allow the least developed countries to have preferential access to the services markets of the rich countries;
- ❖ A «monitoring mechanism «consisting of meetings and other means of monitoring the special treatment accorded to developing countries.

➤ DECISIONS RELATING TO THE ORDINARY WORK OF THE WTO

The Ministerial Conference adopted five decisions on the regular work of the WTO. These decisions concern the following points:

In the field of intellectual property, Members agreed not to file complaints in cases of "non-violation" in the context of dispute settlement in the WTO - the abbreviated wording "non-violation" is used to denote the technical question of whether there can be legal grounds for complaint for the loss of a right under the WTO agreement on intellectual property, even in cases where there is no breach of the Agreement;

A similar extension was agreed in the field of electronic commerce: Members agreed not to impose import duties on electronic transmissions. The Work Programme also encourages further discussion on electronic commerce in the context of trade, development and new technologies;

Ministers decided to pay particular attention to issues relating to small economies. They instructed the Committee on Trade and Development to examine proposals for small economies and make recommendations to the General Council;

Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to the Aid for Trade initiative to help developing countries - especially the least developed countries - to trade. They welcomed the progress made since the launch of this initiative in 2005, and have assigned the mission to the Director-General to continue to support this program;

Ministers instructed their delegations to Geneva to continue to examine the relationship between trade and technology transfer, and to make any recommendations on measures that could be taken to increase flows of technology to developing countries. The mandate was stipulated in the Doha Declaration of 2001.

The revised Agreement of the WTO Government Procurement (GPA) will come into force on 6th April 2014, two years after the adoption of the Protocol amending the Agreement in March 2012.

➤ IMPLEMENTATION OF BALI PACKAGE :

- Implementation of decisions taken in Bali
- Preparation of a work program on the remaining issues under the DDA

▪ Trade Facilitation :

Mandate:

- ❖ Establishment of a Preparatory Committee for Trade Facilitation under the General Council, open to all Members to exercise such functions as may be necessary for the entry into force of the Agreement and to prepare the efficient operation of the Agreement upon its entry into force.
- ❖ 3 tasks:
 - ✓ Legal review of the Agreement;
 - ✓ Drafting an amending protocol to the Agreement to be included in Annex IA of the WTO Agreement;
 - ✓ To receive notifications of commitments of category A.
- Deadline: no later than 31st July 2014

Preparatory Committee on Trade Facilitation:

- First Meeting: 31st January 2014
- Chair: Amb. Esteban Conejos (Philippines)

- General Council, 14th March 2014:
 - ❖ Report of the Chairman: acceptance of a work program and a program of meetings. Work will begin on the legal review of the Agreement on the basis of Members' proposals.
 - ❖ Some reactions;
 - ❖ To recall that the legal review must be in pure form and does not affect the Agreement as to the substance;
 - ❖ Clarify the position of acceding countries with respect to the agreement

Actions for developing countries:

- ❖ The Secretariat will continue its program of needs assessment;
- ❖ However, developing Members must also identify the essential support they need in a timely manner;
- ❖ Donors and various donor organizations members are preparing to provide broad support for trade facilitation ;
- ❖ The importance of aligning the priorities identified in needs assessments with the financial assistance was highlighted.

➤ **AGRICULTURE :**

- Export Competition :
 - ❖ Improving transparency - the Secretariat's questionnaire
 - ❖ -Annual discussion - June (and also 2015) -
 - ❖ Members should continue the work in the Committee
- Administration of tariff quotas:
 - ❖ Committee on Agriculture shall review and monitor the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding
 - ❖ Monitoring in the context of the mechanism in case of under-utilization of quotas will depend on submissions by Members.
- Public stockholding for food security purposes:
 - ❖ Work program in the Agriculture Committee to make recommendations for a permanent solution;
 - ❖ General Council shall report to the Tenth Ministerial Conference;
 - ❖ Debate already begun in the meeting of 29th January

➤ **DEVELOPMENT / LDC ISSUES:**

- Waiver for services
Actions to follow:
 - Presentation by LDCs of their collective request identifying the sectors and modes of supply of interest with respect to exports;
 - Six months later, high-level meeting at which Members should be prepared to indicate their wish to grant preferences to LDCs;
 - Consulting Services - process to promote the implementation of the exemption; periodic review; recommendations on measures to be taken to strengthen implementation.

Informal Meeting of Council Services, to initiate the process - 12 February 2014:

- Procedural Discussion:

- Request more information from the LDCs in sectors and modes of interest markets;
- Initiate a dialogue on possible preferences before submitting joint applications;
- Presentation of collective applications before the summer.

➤ **Development / LDC issues:**

- Duty free and without quotas access to markets
 - CTD - annual review and submission of a report to the General Council;
 - Secretariat - report on duty-free market access
 - General Council - compared to MC10.
- Preferential Rules of Origin:
 - Notification - consideration by the Committee on Rules of Origin, and report to the General Council
- Cotton:
 - Discussion in the specific context of the Special Session of the Committee on Agriculture twice a year;
 - Periodic Reports of DG on aspects related to the development and progress in the commercial component - each Ministerial Conference.

➤ **Monitoring Mechanism for special and differential treatment:**

- Special Sessions of the Committee on Trade and Development (twice a year)
- Reviewed three years after its first meeting.

The OIC Member States should reflect on the following questions to prepare the post-Bali:

- Single Undertaking or partial results to take into account?
 - What are the core issues of the Doha Development Programme?
 - What are the priorities of the country?
 - What new approaches to elucidate?
 - Basis of negotiations: What modalities?
 - What is the level of our countries' ambition?
 - How to address the new challenges of our countries?
- **Consultative Meeting of Trade Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the OIC Member States, Bali, Republic of Indonesia, 2nd December 2013.**

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade participated in the consultative meeting of trade ministers and heads of delegations of the OIC Member States held in Bali, Republic of Indonesia on 2nd December, 2013. This meeting was organized by the Group of the Islamic Development Bank on the sidelines of the 9th Ministerial Meeting of the WTO. The Centre was represented by Mr. Mamoudou Bocar Sall, Head of Studies and Training Department. It was attended by more than 30 Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the OIC Member States, ICDT, SESRIC, WTO, UNCTAD, South Centre and the Third World Network.

More than 25 Ministers and Heads of delegations of the OIC took the floor to highlight their positions on issues to be discussed during the Bali meeting and stressed the issue of food security, development and the launching of a new round of Trade Negotiations of the TPS OIC Agreement in 2014. They expressed the wish to organize a consultative meeting on the Post Bali.

The representative of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade took the floor to read out the speech of the Director General of ICDDT who emphasized the importance of technical assistance that has been extended to Member States by Centre for several years, the necessity of granting to the Centre the Permanent Observer Status to the meetings of the WTO and the organization of an experts group meeting of the OIC on Post-Bali at the Kingdom of Morocco in 2014.

During this meeting, the representative of ICDDT distributed the report of the Centre on WTO issues to all participants

SECTION II

THE ACTIONS OF ICDT AND THE OIC

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

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

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

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

It should be recalled that the meeting devoted to “the follow up of the resolutions of the OIC Extraordinary Summit” held in Jeddah on 5th March 2006, the OIC General Secretariat and the other OIC institutions, of which ICDT have drawn up a programme for the implementation of the resolutions of the 3rd Extraordinary Summit of the OIC held in Makkah Al Moukarramah in December 2005. In the field of multilateral trade negotiations, the meeting requested ICDT and IDB to ensure the follow up of multilateral trade negotiations within the WTO and to contribute to the adoption of common stances by the OIC Member states in these negotiations.

1. Round Table on “the WTO Negotiations”: What Stakes for the OIC Member States?

ICDT and the Moroccan Committee of the International Chamber of commerce organises in collaboration with the Moroccan Business School (ISCAE) a round table on the “WTO Trade Negotiations: What stakes for the OIC Member States” in Casablanca on 18th September 2007.

The objective of this round table is to gather the actors of the civil society and the representatives of the governmental authorities in charge of the Multilateral Trade Negotiations file in order to take stock of the WTO negotiations and evaluate the potential impact of the Doha Development Round.

2. Inter-regional Workshop on “Geographical Indications”: Ankara, 3-4 April 2008.

Within the framework of their programme of activity to strengthen the Institutional Capacity Building adopted by the 2nd Conference on “Technical Cooperation between the Industrial Property Offices in the OIC member States” held in Casablanca from 11th to 13th July 2007, the Turkish Patent Institute (TPI) and the Islamic Centre for Development of trade (ICDT) have jointly organised with the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the Islamic Development Bank, an inter-regional workshop on the Geographical Indications that was held in Ankara, Republic of Turkey from 3rd to 4th March 2008.

The main purpose of this workshop was to equip participants with the scope of the protection provided by the geographical indications, the details on the international agreements providing protection measures, examples of applications in model countries, introduction of non-governmental organizations working on geographical indications, and establish discussion platform among the national officials of the OIC Member States responsible for registering and administering geographical indications. The Workshop also allowed participants to seek answers to their questions on GIs and share their experiences with participating professionals from relevant international organisations, including WIPO and Institut National de l'Origine de la Qualité (INAO) of France.

A dozen countries took part in this workshop, these are: Bangladesh, Benin, Guinea, Morocco, Mozambique, Uzbekistan, Uganda, Sudan, Senegal, Turkey and Yemen.

3. Training Seminar on the "Use of TRIPS flexibilities by DCS provided for in the TRIPS Agreement": Casablanca-Morocco, 9-12 June 2008.

Within the framework of the technical assistance of IDB extended to the Member Countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) aiming at contributing to the efforts deployed by them to further enhance the capacity building of their human resources and institutions, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), jointly organized a training seminar on the "Use of TRIPS flexibilities by DCS provided for in the TRIPS Agreement". This seminar took place under the auspices of the Ministry of Commerce, Industry and the new technologies of the Kingdom of Morocco and in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization from 9th to 12th June 2008 in Casablanca-Kingdom of Morocco.

The aim of this seminar is to inform participants on the flexibilities provided for in the implementation of the Agreement on the Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights and the means put at the disposal of Developing countries to enable them to benefit from it and hence achieve their developmental goals. The seminar also offered the opportunity to study the impact of the bilateral and regional Free Trade Agreements on the capacity of Developing countries to effectively profit by the indicated flexibilities in the Agreement, notably in the field of the protection of public health and traditional knowledge.

During the proceedings of this seminar, participants examined the practices, which impede competition and the relation of the Agreement with the Treaty of biodiversity, protection of the traditional knowledge, as well as the consequences of the Said Agreement on national policies in the field of Intellectual Property and the needs in the field of technical assistance of DCs and the LDCs.

Fifty officials representing 21 Member Countries of IDB, including Morocco, took part in this seminar as well as experts from the different specialized world international and regional organizations (WIPO) moderated the different topics dealt with during the seminar.

4. Seminar on trade in services: Casablanca, 15-18 June 2009

Upon an invitation by the Cooperation Office of IDB, ICDT participated actively in the seminar organised under the auspices of the Ministry of Foreign Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco by the Cooperation Office of IDB in Casablanca from 15th to 18th June 2009.

ICDT made a presentation on the impact of trade negotiations in the services sector on the OIC Member States.

5. Seminar on Non-tariff Barriers and their impacts on the development of the OIC Member States (OIC): Tunis, 5-7 October 2009.

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade actively participated in the seminar on *“Non-tariff Barriers and their Impacts on the Development of the OIC Member States”*, held in Tunis- from 5th to 7th October 2009. This seminar was organised by the Cooperation Office of IDB in collaboration with the Tunisian Technical Cooperation Agency (ATCT).

The objectives of this seminar consisted on the one hand, of the identification and classification of the NTBs and the development of a strategy aiming at reducing and even abolishing the NTBs in order to facilitate intra-OIC trade.

This seminar was attended by the representatives of thirty six OIC Member States and six regional and international organisations.

- The First day was devoted to a general brief introduction of the NTBs (Definition, typology, classification),
- The Second Day mainly focused on the regional and international experiences
- The Third Day was devoted to the experience of Organisation of the Arab League and Tunisia in the field of NTBs followed by a synthesis of the papers of the seminar.

The ICDT’s Representative recommended to create a follow up committee on the NTBs and to strengthen the observatory on the NTBs set up by ICDT since 2001 following the resolutions of the 17th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC and the recommendations of the seminar organised by ICDT on the NTBs in June 2001.

6. Seminar on “the proliferation of regional and bilateral trade agreements on the Multilateral Trade System”, Casablanca, 16-19 February 2010.

ICDT and IDB’s Cooperation Office organized in Casablanca, a seminar on the proliferation of regional and bilateral trade agreements on the multilateral trade system” in Casablanca from 16th to 19th February 2010.

The aim of this seminar which was to take stock of the interactions between the trends of the regionalism and multilateralism was attended by thirty countries and about a dozen international experts and regional organizations.

7. Regional Seminar on the “Competition Policy in the OIC Member States: Present Status and prospects», Tunis, 22-24 February 2010.

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), a subsidiary Organ of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Ministry of Trade and Handicraft of the Tunisian Republic organised in collaboration with Islamic Research and Training Institute (IDB Group) an inter-regional seminar on **“competition policy in the OIC Member States: present status and prospects” in Tunis, 22nd to 24th February 2010.**

The aim of this seminar is: to take stock of the legal situation and competition policies in the OIC Member States with a view to examining the ways and means likely to promote competition law and facilitate intra-OIC trade and investments, and explore the launching modalities of the cooperation programme among the OIC Member States in the field of competition law and policies.

The aim of this seminar was:

- ✓ Train participants in the implementation of competition Law and policy and the

- application of reforms that prove to be necessary in this field;
- ✓ To explain to participants the need for establishing a national legislation on competition or to adapt the existing rules;
- ✓ To introduce participants to the fundamental principles of a competition policy and the link with the other sectors of national economic policy;
- ✓ To present to participants the instruments and methods of controlling the different aspects and competition rules;
- ✓ To provide participants with the means of getting information on the evolution of their institutional and legal structures;
- ✓ To compare the existing legislation in order to obtain information on the elements and necessary stages for the implementation of the useful reforms in the field of the national competition policy.

Twenty countries participated in this seminar.

It was moderated by international experts (UNCTAD, World Bank, OECD), International Experts of the competition organizations in the OIC Member States and Experts from ICDT.

8. Seminar on “the proliferation of regional and bilateral trade agreements and their repercussions on the Multilateral Trading System”: Abu Dhabi, UAE, 17-19 May 2010.

ICDT participated actively in the moderation of the seminar organized in Abu Dhabi from 17th to 19th May 2010, by the Ministry of Economy and Commerce of the State of the United Arab Emirates and the Cooperation Department of the IDB Group on “the proliferation of the regional and bilateral agreements and their repercussions on the Multilateral Trading System”.

This seminar whose objective was to take stock on the interactions between the regionalism and multilateralism trends was attended by about thirty countries and experts from international and regional organizations.

9. Seminar on Trade Facilitation: Damascus, Syria 6th to 8th July 2010.

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Cooperation Department with the participation of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) organised in Damascus a seminar on “Trade Facilitation among Arab Countries and their integration into the Multilateral Trading System” from 6th to 8th July 2010.

On this occasion, OIC Institutions (IDB, ICDT) and the United Nations Institutions (WTO, UNCTAD, ITC) as well as the League of Arab States and the Syrian Ministry of Foreign Trade presented topics related to the theme of the seminar.

It is worth underlining that ICDT’s presentation untitled “Trade Facilitation among the OIC Member Countries: Realities and Prospects” contained among others recommendations to improve the business climate and facilitate trade between OIC Member States.

During this seminar, the national experiences of Syria and other Arab Member Countries were also tackled.

10. Istanbul Conference on the needs assessment of the OIC Member States in policy and competition law states: Istanbul, 21-22 November 2011.

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), organized jointly with the Turkish Competition Authority (TCA) and in collaboration with the Group of the

Islamic Development Bank (IDB), a conference on "**Needs Assessment Members of the OIC policy and competition law** on 21 and 22 November 2011 in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey.

The Conference was attended by over 50 representatives of the following 28 Member States: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Egypt, the Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, Senegal, Sierra Leone, State of Palestine, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, Uzbekistan and Yemen), 4 observer states (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian Federation, Republic of Turkey of Northern Cyprus and Kosovo (Special Guest), the COMCEC Coordination Office, the IDB Group and SESRIC as well as "guest participants" representing the United Kingdom, Ireland, Pakistan, ICDT, the Consumer Unity and Trust Society (CUTS International).

The purpose of this conference was to provide a platform for the "needs assessment" for the project entitled "Technical Assistance in the field of policy and competition law between the OIC Member States."

11. Seminar on "The proliferation of Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements and their impact on the regional integration process in Arab Countries": Casablanca - Kingdom of Morocco, 4-6 June 2012.

Within the framework of their technical assistance programme relating to the issues linked to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the Islamic Development Bank Group (IDB) and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) organized a Seminar on "The proliferation of Bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements (RTA) and their impact on the regional integration process in Arab Countries" from 4th to 6th June 2012 in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco.

This Seminar aimed to assess the implications of RTAs on the development policies of the OIC Member States and emphasized on practical lessons regarding the various options available to the regional integration process.

It was attended by the following International and Regional Organization: World Trade Organization, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, International Trade Centre, Arab Maghreb Union, Technical Unit of Agadir Agreement and the following OIC Member States: Arab Republic of Egypt, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, State of Kuwait, Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Kingdom of Morocco, Sultanate of Oman, State of Palestine, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Sudan, Republic of Tunisia.

Experts reviewed the following issues:

- Analysis of the relation between Article XXIV of the GATT Agreement and the Rules of the WTO relating to the Regional Economic integration agreements;
- Review of the prospects of the OIC Member States to integrate the multilateral trade system and to meet the commitments with the WTO;
- Study of the adequate conditions and national strategies to be adopted to derive benefit from regional integration;
- Presentation and analysis of the experiences of some regional Arab and African agreements;
- Presentation of national experiences relating to the current negotiations of the regional and bilateral agreements.

12. Seminar in the field of International and Islamic Trade intended to the Officials of the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Iraq: Casablanca - Kingdom of Morocco, 26-30 June 2012.

Within the framework of its program of technical assistance for the benefit of the OIC Member States, ICDT in cooperation with ITFC (IDB Group) organized a training seminar in the field of International and Islamic Trade for the benefit of the Officials of the Ministry of Trade of the Republic of Iraq at ICDT's Headquarters in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, from 26th to 30th June 2012.

On this occasion, the Centre made the following presentations:

- ✓ Activities of the OIC and the Ten Year Program of Action;
- ✓ Intra-OIC Trade: Current situation and prospects;
- ✓ Trade promotion;
- ✓ Role of Trade Information in Trade Promotion;
- ✓ The Trade Preferential System among the OIC Member States;
- ✓ Matters related to trade negotiations and accession to the WTO;

During the seminar, the Iraqi officials expressed their interest in the Agreement TPS/OIC and protocols and committed themselves to sensitize the authorities of the Republic of Iraq to sign and ratify this Agreement and its protocols in the near future.

ICDT has planned to organize more awareness-raising seminars on TPS/OIC and its protocols in Tehran in collaboration with the Organization for Economic Development (ECO) as well as for the WAEMU countries in 2013.

13. Seminar on Foreign Trade Liberalisation and Trade Defense Systems in the OIC Member States: Casablanca, 26-28 September 2012.

In compliance with the 2012 work program adopted by the 28th Session of its Board of Directors, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI) of the IDB Group organized under the aegis of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and New Technologies of Morocco, a seminar on "Trade Liberalization and Trade Defense Systems in the OIC Member States " in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco from 26 to 28 September 2012.

The main objectives of the seminar were, among others:

- ❖ The exchange of experiences between the OIC Member States in the field of trade defense;
- ❖ The presentation of trade defense strategies within the framework of the Trade Preferential System among the OIC Member Countries (TPS/OIC) and those used at the regional and international levels.

The Representatives of the following countries attended the seminar: Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, Tunisia and Turkey and guest countries such as Belgium, Spain, France, and the consulting firm King and Spalding of Geneva.

The following Regional and international organizations also took part in this seminar: the Regional Office of the Islamic Development Bank Group (IDB) in Rabat, the World Trade Organization (WTO), the European Commission (EU), West African Economic and Monetary Union (WAEMU), the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) and the Technical Unit of the Agadir Agreement (AA).

14. Seminar on “Industrial Property Policies in the OIC Member States”: Ankara, - Republic of Turkey, 8-9 November 2012.

the Turkish Patent Institute (TPI), the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the Turkish Agency for Development and International Cooperation (TIKA) and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade organized a seminar on “Industrial Property Policies of the OIC Member States” held in Ankara, Republic of Turkey on 8-9 November 2012.

This seminar was attended by the following organizations: COMCEC, SESRIC, WIPO, the ECO Secretariat, in addition to the following 25 countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Iran, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mali, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda, Bosnia-Herzegovina, (Observer State), Japan, Germany.

After the opening speeches, the participants reviewed the program of the meeting by through following presentations:

- ✓ SESRIC: a presentation on innovation infrastructure;
- ✓ WIPO: a presentation by Dr. Dalila Hammou on political strategies of industrial property for development in the Arab countries;
- ✓ Japan: the case of collaboration Government-Universities and Private Sector in Japan to highlight the results of the research in collaboration with the Government and the private sector;
- ✓ Germany: Strategies for the Protection of Industrial Property in the legal field in Germany
- ✓ WIPO: Recent Activities of WIPO in the field of protection of intellectual property rights: the case of the countries of Europe and Central Asia.

The second day was devoted to the study of the case of the OIC Member States and a special study of Turkey's transfer policy of Technology and Science. This session allowed the experts to exchange national experiences in order to promote capacity building among the OIC Countries and with Countries like Japan and Germany. A visit took place at the Techno Park of the Middle East Technical University. On the sidelines of this seminar, a meeting coordination was held between ECO countries in the field of industrial property

15. Training and Awareness-Raising Seminar on the TPS/OIC and the WTO Matters: Baghdad-Republic of Iraq, 17-19 March 2013.

ICDT organised a Training and Awareness-Raising Seminar on the TPS/OIC and its protocols and the WTO Matters for the benefit of the executives of the Ministry of Commerce and the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Republic of Iraq from 17 to 19 March 2013 in Baghdad.

During the seminar, the presentations of ICDT dealt with the following topics:

- ✓ General Presentation of the main provisions of the TPS/OIC agreement and its Protocols;
- ✓ Structure and Methodology of negotiations;
- ✓ The TPS/OIC Agreement and the WTO agreements;
- ✓ Outcomes of negotiations;
- ✓ The probable impact of the agreement of the Iraq economy.

Several Iraqi executives from the public and private sector attended this seminar.

16. Seminar on the Impact of Multilateral Trade Negotiations on Trade in Services of the Arab Countries: Casablanca, Morocco 22-24 April 2013.

Within the framework of their technical assistance programs on issues related to the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Group of the Islamic Development Bank (Department of Cooperation and Integration) and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) organized under the aegis of Ministry of Commerce, Industry and New Technologies of the Kingdom of Morocco, a Seminar on the "Impact of Multilateral Trade Negotiations on Trade in Services of Arab Countries" 22 to 24 April 2013 in Casablanca.

The seminar was open to the participation of officials from the Ministries in charge of foreign trade of Arab countries and experts from regional and international institutions (WTO, UNCTAD, ITC, EU, Arab League, UMA, UNESCWA, and the Technical Unit of the Agadir Agreement ...).

The objective of this seminar is to review the implications of Regional and Multilateral Trade Agreements on Trade in Services of the Arab countries and to draw conclusions in order to facilitate regional economic integration and expand the sphere of services.

The experts presented the following topics: Trade in Services: Economic Importance and integration in the multilateral system (WTO) on trade in services under the GATS (I): Key Concepts (WTO), Trade in Services within the Framework GATS (II): Key Concepts (WTO), Regional Trade Agreements: positive list approach vs. negative list and Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs) by the WTO, Regionalism in Trade in Services: Comprehensive review of the Article V of the GATS (WTO) Doha Development Agenda and multilateral negotiations (WTO), the exceptions relating to trade in services of LDCs, Trade Policies in the field of services: development areas and challenges in the Arab Countries (UNCTAD) Trade in services between the OIC Member States: Current Status and Future Prospects (ICDT), Arab Prospects on Trade in Services (League of Arab States) and national and sectoral experiences of Arab countries: Morocco; ...

All Arab countries took part in this meeting.

17. Training Seminar on Foreign Trade Liberalization and Trade Defense Systems in Arab Countries: Tunis, Republic of Tunisia, 17-18 June 2013.

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Ministry of Commerce and Handicrafts of Tunisia organized a seminar on "Trade liberalization and trade defense systems in the Arab countries" in Tunis -Republic of Tunisia on 17th and 18th June 2013.

The experts presented the following modules: Anti-dumping, countervailing and safeguard measures, regional experiences (League of Arab states, OIC and ITC), national experiences with the Moroccan, Tunisian and Egyptian cases and prospects for regional cooperation.

More than fifty representatives of the following countries attended the seminar: Algeria, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia and organizations such as the International Trade Centre, the Arab Maghreb Union and the League of Arab States and the King and Spalding consulting firm of Geneva.

The participants proposed the establishment of a regional technical assistance for the Arab States

18. Seminar on the valorization of R&D, Technological Innovation and Intellectual Property in the OIC Member States: Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, 24-25 October 2013.

Within the framework of the implementation of the COMCEC's project on "Technical Cooperation between the Office of Industrial Property of the OIC Member States", the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Moroccan Office for Industrial and Commercial Property (OMPIC) will organise in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), under the auspices of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and New Technologies of The Kingdom of Morocco, a seminar on "*The Valorization of R & D, Technological Innovation and Intellectual Property of the OIC Member States*" from 24th to 25th October 2013 in Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco.

This seminar was open to the participation of executives working in the field of industrial and intellectual property of the OIC Member States as well as Experts of regional and international institutions and academics.

The objective of this seminar was to review the latest developments in the field of the valorization of R & D, technological innovation and intellectual property in the international arena and in the OIC Member States and to promote South-South cooperation in this area.

The seminar covered the following issues:

- ❖ Intellectual property and the valorization of R & D.
- ❖ Management infrastructures of the valorization and the intellectual property.
- ❖ Promotional Tools of technological intelligence and intellectual property.

The seminar's program includes a study visit to the National Institute of Posts and Telecommunications (INPT) and the Moroccan Foundation for Science, Innovation and Advanced Research (MASCIR) of Rabat, which will be followed by a round table on the partnership model between the OIC countries in the dissemination and marketing of technological innovation, notably patents, in a bid to launch the second phase of the technical cooperation project between the Offices of Industrial Property of the OIC Member States.

This seminar was attended by the following countries: Senegal, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia and Morocco.

19. Workshop on the results of the 9th Ministerial Conference of the WTO and Post Bali Work Programme for the OIC African countries: Casablanca, 25-27 March 2014.

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

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

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

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

The experts covered the following topics;

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

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

- ❖ The OIC African Member States should adopt a common position in trade negotiations in compliance with the directions of the Bali Conference, taking into account the different development levels and priorities of each Member State within the framework of the Special and Differential Treatment ;
- ❖ To organize a meeting of the OIC African States in the field of agriculture and cotton in collaboration with ICDT, IDB Group and the relevant United Nations agencies ;
- ❖ To hold a workshop on the results of the 9th Ministerial Conference of the WTO and the post Bali work program for English-speaking OIC Countries in collaboration with ICDT, IDB Group and the relevant United Nations institutions.

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

20. Seminar on the Reinforcement of support for Innovation and commercialization of the R&D Results and Patents in the OIC Member States: Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco, 11-13 June 2014.

Within the framework of the implementation of the project on "Technical Cooperation between the Offices of Industrial Property of the OIC Member States", the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (COMCEC), the

Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Moroccan Office of Industrial and Commercial Property (OMPIC) organized in collaboration with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the COMCEC Coordination Office, a Seminar on the "Reinforcement of Support for Innovation and Commercialization of the results of R & D and Patents in the OIC Member States" from 11th to 13th June 2014 at the headquarters of OMPIC in Casablanca kingdom of Morocco .

The objective of this seminar was to review the strategies and policies in terms of successful dissemination and exploitation of information, commercialization of R & D and patents as well as the role of intellectual property in the value chain.

This seminar was attended by more than 70 representatives from the following countries and organizations: Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, The Gambia, Guinea, Jordan, Libya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco (OMPIC and other local organizations), Pakistan, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Tunisia, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI-French-speaking Countries), the African Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO, English-speaking Countries), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), experts from Ireland, Belgium and Germany.

On the sidelines of the seminar, workshops were held by geographic area (Arab, African and Asian countries) on the needs and expectations of the OIC Member States in relation to access to information and marketing patents.

21. Training Seminar on Exports Techniques in the Context of Globalization, for the benefit of exporters of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire: Abidjan, Republic of Cote d'Ivoire, 17th -19th March 2014.

Within the framework of capacity building in the OIC Member States, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Ministry of Commerce, Handicrafts and SMEs Promotion of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire organized a training seminar on "Export Techniques in the Context of Globalization for the benefit of first-time exporters of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire", in Abidjan from 17th to 19th March 2014 for the benefit of the economic operators of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire.

Previously, the ICDT had sent an expert on 27th February 2014 for the intellectual and logistical organization of the seminar.

The seminar was attended by fifty Ivorian companies from the public and private sectors and officials from the Ministry of Commerce, Handicrafts and SMEs Promotion of the Republic of Côte d'Ivoire, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Association for Exports Promotion of Côte d'Ivoire (APEX-CI) and the General Confederation of Enterprises in Côte d'Ivoire (CGECI).

The seminar was dedicated exclusively to Ivorian traders without experience in exports or having difficulties in exporting products and services in a bid to enable them to acquire a strategic knowledge that will allow them to conquer the international markets.

The seminar was chaired by Mr. AMICHA Alexis, Head of the Cabinet of the Minister of Commerce, Handicrafts and Promotion of SMEs in the presence of Mr. FADIGA Kaladji, Director General of Foreign Trade.

Mr. Amadou Cire Sall, Head of Trade Information & Documentation Department read

out the speech of the Director General of ICDT which was followed by the speech of Mr. Amicha Alexis, Director of Cabinet of the Minister of Commerce, Handicrafts and SMEs Promotion.

After the opening speeches, Mr. Brahim ALLALI, Expert at ICDT presented the seminar and gave the floor to the expert trainers and participants in order to introduce themselves.

During the three days, the experts provided all their experiences through simplified and interactive presentations to facilitate the understanding of foreign market access techniques.

At the end of the seminar, closing remarks were delivered, and the ICDT's expert presented the results of the questionnaire's processing and it was followed by the delivery of certificates of participation to the various participants.

In this context, Participants stressed the high quality of courses and tackled subjects which have enabled them to improve their knowledge of the operations and practices of export procedures and recommended to organise a seminar on the same theme at least once a year, while increasing the training period and the number of participants per structure, in addition to delving more deeply into each tackled topic. They finally suggested addressing future issues, like among others, intercultural negotiation, trade within WAEMU and training in the field of participation in trade fairs and events.

22. Workshop on Export Auditing and Capacity Building of SMEs of the Federation of the GCC Chambers: Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, 1 - 3 September 2014.

Within the framework of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding signed in August 2014 by ICDT and the Federation of the GCC Chambers, the two sides held in collaboration with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Bahrain a training workshop on " **Export Auditing and Capacity Building of SMEs of the Federation of the GCC Chambers**" in Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain, from 1st to 3rd September 2014 in Bahrain Manama-

The objectives of this workshop were to familiarize the participants with exports auditing techniques to helping them to audit exporting enterprises. Over 50 executives from the private and public sectors of the Gulf countries, the Federation of Chambers of the GCC, ITFC and ICDT participated in this workshop.

During the workshop, experts dealt with the following concepts: philosophy of exports auditing, the concept of audit and Enterprises' capacity and the auditing strategy.

23. Training Seminar on the "Trade Preferential System among the OIC Member States" And the International Trade Issues for the Benefit of the Private Enterprises and Public Administrations of Sultanate of Oman: Muscat, 15-16 September 2014.

Within the framework of cooperation strengthening between the Sultanate of Oman and ICDT, the Supreme Council for Planning of the Sultanate of Oman and ICDT, organized a Training Seminar on TPS/OIC and its related protocols in Muscat-the Sultanate of Oman.

The purpose of this seminar was to sensitize public sector executives and the economic operators of the importance of TPS / OIC Agreement and its Protocols in a bid to contribute to boosting trade between Oman and the other OIC Member States.

The seminar was attended by 50 managers from the public and private sector in the Sultanate.

The experts presented the following modules:

- ✓ Presentation of the OIC and the ICDT
- ✓ Overview of the key provisions of the TPS / OIC Agreement and its Protocols;
- ✓ Structure and methodology of negotiations;
- ✓ The TPS / OIC Agreements and the WTO Agreement;
- ✓ Results of Negotiations;
- ✓ The impact of the Agreement on the Omani economy;
- ✓ Economic integration and the legal impact of the TPS / OIC;
- ✓ The accession procedures to TPS / OIC and technical instruments.

24. Training Seminar on the “Trade Preferential System among the OIC Member States for the benefit of the Executives of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Riyadh, 22-25 September 2014.

Within the framework of the implementation of the Memorandum of Cooperation between the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and ICDT, both parties held a national training workshop on TPS / OIC and its Protocols in Riyadh from 22 to 25 September 2014.

The purpose of this seminar was to arouse the awareness of the public sector executives and the economic operators of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia of the importance of TPS-OIC Agreement and its Protocols in a bid to contribute to boosting trade between this country and the other OIC Member States.

On this occasion, the ICDT's experts presented the following modules:

- ✓ Presentation of the OIC and the ICDT
- ✓ Overview of the key provisions of the TPS / OIC Agreement and its Protocols;
- ✓ Structure and methodology of negotiations;
- ✓ The TPS / OIC Agreements and the WTO Agreement;
- ✓ Results of Negotiations;
- ✓ The impact of the Agreement on the Saudi economy and the OIC Countries;
- ✓ Economic integration and the legal impact of the TPS / OIC;
- ✓ The accession procedures to TPS / OIC and technical instruments.

Over 60 executives in the public and private sector of Saudi Arabia took part in the seminar.