



ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

**REPORT ON:
IDB's WTO-RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM**

**30th Session of the COMCEC
(Istanbul, Turkey, 25-28 November 2014)**

IDB WTO-RELATED TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM

I. INTRODUCTION

The IDB WTO-related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program (WTO-Program) was launched in 1997 and has now been under implementation for more than fifteen years. The IDB has regularly submitted progress reports on the implementation of this program to the COMCEC meetings. The last report was submitted to the 29th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC. This report highlights the major WTO-related technical assistance activities undertaken under this program since the 29th Session of the COMCEC held in Istanbul, Turkey, on 17-21 November 2013.

The IDB launched the WTO-Program with the prime objective of helping its member countries upgrade their human and institutional capacities to adjust to the new multilateral trading system. The aim of the Program is to provide greater awareness to the OIC member countries on WTO Agreements and their implementation and facilitate the process of their accession to the WTO. It also serves as a forum where relevant officials from member countries can exchange views and discuss various multilateral trade matters. In the recent years, the focus of the Program has been more on helping the member countries in their accession to WTO, strengthening their negotiation skills and issues related to negotiations within the framework of the Doha Work Program.

The main objectives of this Program are to: (i) assist member countries that are in the process of accession to WTO to negotiate the best possible terms of accession; (ii) upgrade the human and institutional capacities of member countries that are already members of WTO to implement the Uruguay Round Agreements and undertake the necessary economic restructuring to take maximum advantage of the new opportunities; and (iii) assist member countries in harmonizing their positions and to be well prepared for negotiations on new trade-related issues that are likely to emerge in future Ministerial Conferences of the WTO.

II. MAJOR ELEMENTS OF THE PROGRAM

The main elements of the IDB Group's WTO Program include: organizing seminars and workshops on WTO agreements; conducting technical courses on Trade Policy; organizing Consultative Meetings on important issues and in preparation for the WTO Ministerial Conferences; undertaking WTO-related studies; and providing advisory services through financing of experts/consultants to member countries on WTO-related matters. Briefly, the activities that have been undertaken under the IDB Group's WTO Program since its inception are as follows:

Seminars and Workshops: The IDB organizes seminars and workshops covering a wide range of WTO issues with the view to familiarizing the member countries with the contents and provisions of the WTO Agreements as well as the activities of WTO so that they may be in a better position to defend their interests. Since its inception till end-October 2014, 75 Seminars and 38 Workshops have been organized by the IDB under this program.

Trade Policy Courses: Organized in collaboration with the WTO, these courses are short versions of the WTO Trade Policy Course which is a three-month course offered

by the WTO in Geneva. The Trade Policy Course covers a wide range of topics, such as, market access, customs and trade administration, agriculture, textile and clothing, sanitary and photo-sanitary measures, technical barriers to trade, government procurement, general agreements on trade in services, intellectual property rights, anti-dumping, subsidies and countervailing measures, dispute settlement, agreement on trade-related investment measures, trade and competition policy, trade and environment, and regionalism. Since the inception of the Program till end-October 2014, 21 Trade Policy Courses have been organized by the IDB under this program.

Special Studies: The IDB occasionally undertakes in-depth studies on WTO-related issues based on the requests of the member countries. So far, the IDB has undertaken studies on: Agriculture sector, Investment, Services sector, Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), and Electronic-Commerce. Each study included a set of case studies on OIC member countries and contained valuable practical tips and negotiation strategies on the various issues concerning the OIC member countries.

Consultative Meetings: The IDB organizes consultative meetings for the member countries mostly in conjunction with the WTO Ministerial Conferences. These meetings provide a forum for the delegations of member countries to exchange views and, where possible, coordinate their positions on matters related to the WTO, adopt a common stance and act as a group to acquire stronger bargaining power. So far, the IDB has organized eight consultative meetings for both capital-based and Geneva-based officials.

WTO Specific Technical Assistance to OIC Member Countries: The IDB also provides specific technical assistance to member countries through hiring consultancy services or fielding in-house WTO experts on vital WTO issues such as, WTO accession, drafting of national laws, establishing WTO Units and providing capacity building for all general purposes.

III. ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED SINCE THE 29th SESSION OF THE COMCEC

Based on the feedback and requests of the member countries, the current focus of the Program is on three themes: (i) Accession to the WTO (ii) Regional integration and (iii) National Activities. The major activities organized by the IDB since the 29th Session of the COMCEC are the following:

1. Ministerial Consultative Meeting of OIC Member Countries, on the Eve of the 9th WTO Ministerial Conference, 02 December 2013, Bali, Indonesia.
2. National Workshop for Technical Review of the Memorandum of the Foreign Trade Regime (MFTR) of the Accession of Sudan to WTO, 02-06 March 2014, Khartoum, Sudan.
3. Seminar on “The agreed Package and Post-Bali Agenda for Arab Member Countries”, 10 – 12 March 2014, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
4. Seminar on “The agreed Package and Post-Bali Agenda for African Member Countries”, 25 – 27 March 2014, Casablanca, Morocco.

5. Regional workshop on “Trade Remedy Measures and Mechanism for the members of the West African Economic and Monetary Union (UEMOA)”, 05 – 07 May 2014, Abidjan, Republic of Côte d’Ivoire.
6. IDB/WTO Trade Negotiation Skills Course for Arab Countries, 01 – 05 June 2014, Dubai, United Arab Emirates.
7. Seminar on “Doha Negotiations and Accession to WTO” for OIC Member countries, 15 – 17 September 2014, Istanbul, Republic of Turkey.
8. Seminar on “Local content development in the context of Kazakhstan WTO accession”, 20 – 22 October 2014, Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.
9. Seminar on “Non-Tariff Barriers (NTBs) to Trade among African Member Countries”, 19 – 21 November 2014, Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco.

The IDB involves and receives the support of the ICDT whenever the activities are organized in Casablanca. Furthermore, the IDB and the ICDT also collaborate with each other, when required, in the preparation and presentation of the WTO reports to the COMCEC meetings.

IV. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR 2015

Taking into consideration the needs and requests of the OIC member countries, the following activities are planned to be organized in 2015:

1. Regional Seminar on Trade Facilitation for African Countries
2. Regional Seminar on Trade Facilitation for Asian and Central Asian Countries
3. Regional Seminar on Cross border Management for selected Arab countries in collaboration with UNDP
4. Seminar on Proliferation of Regional and mega-regional Trade and Partnerships Agreements and its implications to the OIC countries (African Countries)
5. Seminar on Proliferation of Regional and mega-regional Trade and Partnerships Agreements and its implications to the OIC countries (Arab Countries)
6. Seminar on WTO Accession
7. Joint Activity with OIC institutions to promote intra-OIC cooperation
8. Two Regional Workshops on TPS/OIC and Non-Tariff Barriers
9. Two National WTO-related Activities

V. CONCLUSION

The IDB has been trying to assist the OIC countries in every possible way in building their human and institutional capacities to enable them to address the challenges of the multilateral trading system. The IDB has implemented this program in close collaboration with the WTO and other relevant international, national and OIC institutions and highly appreciates their cooperation and support. The IDB welcomes new ideas and suggestions to further enhance the impact of this program and looks forward to working with them even more closely in the future for the effective delivery of this Program.

**STATUS OF THE OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES IN THE WTO
(as of end-October 2014)**

| WTO Members | Date of Accession | Observers | No Status |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. Albania | 8 September 2000 | 1. Afghanistan | 1. Palestine |
| 2. Bahrain | 1 January 1995 | 2. Algeria | 2. Somalia |
| 3. Bangladesh | 1 January 1995 | 3. Azerbaijan | 3. Turkmenistan |
| 4. Benin | 22 February 1996 | 4. Comoros | |
| 5. Brunei Darussalam | 1 January 1995 | 5. Iran | |
| 6. Burkina Faso | 3 June 1995 | 6. Iraq | |
| 7. Cameroon | 13 December 1995 | 7. Kazakhstan | |
| 8. Chad | 19 October 1996 | 8. Lebanon | |
| 9. Cote d'Ivoire | 1 January 1995 | 9. Libya | |
| 10. Djibouti | 31 May 1995 | 10. Sudan | |
| 11. Egypt | 30 June 1995 | 11. Uzbekistan | |
| 12. Gabon | 1 January 1995 | 12. Yemen | |
| 13. Gambia | 23 October 1996 | 13. Syria | |
| 14. Guinea | 25 October 1995 | | |
| 15. Guinea-Bissau | 31 May 1995 | | |
| 16. Guyana* | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 17. Indonesia | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 18. Jordan | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 19. Kuwait | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 20. Kyrgyz Republic | 20 December 1998 | | |
| 21. Malaysia | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 22. Maldives | 31 May 1995 | | |
| 23. Mali | 31 May 1995 | | |
| 24. Mauritania | 31 May 1995 | | |
| 25. Morocco | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 26. Mozambique | 26 August 1995 | | |
| 27. Niger | 13 December 1996 | | |
| 28. Nigeria | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 29. Oman | 9 November 2000 | | |
| 30. Pakistan | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 31. Qatar | 13 January 1996 | | |
| 32. Saudi Arabia | 11 December 2005 | | |
| 33. Senegal | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 34. Sierra Leone | 23 July 1995 | | |
| 35. Suriname | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 36. Tajikistan | 2 March 2013 | | |
| 37. Togo | 31 May 1995 | | |
| 38. Tunisia | 29 March 1995 | | |
| 39. Turkey | 26 March 1995 | | |
| 40. Uganda | 1 January 1995 | | |
| 41. UAE | 10 April 1996 | | |

Not yet Member of the IDB.