



**PROCEEDINGS OF
15TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP**

(September 22nd, 2020, Virtual Meeting)

1. The 15th Meeting of COMCEC Trade Working Group was held virtually on September 22nd, 2020 with the theme of “Guidelines for Establishing Effective National Trade Facilitation Bodies in the OIC Countries”.

(The Agenda and Program of the Meeting are attached as Annex-I and Annex-II)

2. The meeting was attended by 19 OIC Member States. The representatives of World Trade Organization (WTO), SESRIC, ICDT, ITFC, ICIEC, and COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) also attended the meeting.

(The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex-III)

3. The Meeting started with a recitation from the Holy Quran.
4. At the outset, Mr. Fatih ÜNLÜ, Acting Director-General of the CCO, delivered his opening remarks. He highlighted that the current novel Covid-19 pandemic has led to unprecedented crises all around the world such as heavy death tolls, as well as disruption of economic activities, global supply chains, and international trade. Mr. ÜNLÜ added that world trade contracted sharply in the first half of this year and world trade is estimated to decline between 13% and 32% in 2020.
5. Highlighting that increased usage of digital means, digitalization of trade services, expansion of e-trade have been emerging trends all around the world to eliminate adverse impacts of COVID-19 pandemic upon trade, Mr. ÜNLÜ stated that the governments have also been focusing on trade facilitation tools to address the challenges. He expressed that trade facilitation has utmost importance as a key component of trade policy at a time of economic turbulence due to the present pandemic. He added that National Trade Facilitation Bodies (TNFBs) have a key importance in designing and implementing trade facilitation measures and they provide a conducive (conducive) platform for all stakeholders in trade community to discuss the challenges in trade and develop solutions to them at the national level.

6. Ms. Aylin BEBEKOĞLU, Deputy Director-General from Directorate General for International Agreements and European Union, Ministry of Trade of Turkey, moderated the sessions during the meeting. Welcoming the participants, Ms. BEBEKOĞLU briefly informed the attendees on the agenda and program of the meeting.

I. General Overview of the National Trade Facilitation Bodies (NTFBs) in the World.

7. Under this agenda item, Ms. Sheri RESENOW, Counselor, World Trade Organization (WTO), made a presentation on WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and National Trade Facilitation Committees in the world. Ms. ROSENOW started her presentation with Article 23.2 of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement saying that each member state is required to establish and/or maintain a national committee on trade facilitation or designate an existing mechanism to facilitate both domestic coordination and implementation of the provisions of the agreement.
8. Ms. ROSENOW indicated that current worldwide implementation rate of WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement is at the rate of 66%. While the implementation rate of TFA of Developed countries is 100 %, the rate of Developing Countries is 65% and the rate of least-developed country (LDCs) is 34% based on ABC notifications of WTO.
9. Furthermore, Ms. ROSENOW informed the participants about WTO Trade Facilitation Committee in relation to all trade facilitation notifications submitted to WTO. In the last part of her presentation, she mentioned Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility, which is created to help developing countries and LDCs to support accession to the available resources from donors.

II. COMCEC Handbook for High Performing NTFBs: Guiding Principles and Recommended Practices

10. Under this agenda item, Mr. Richard CHOPRA, Senior Trade Facilitation and Organizational Development Specialist, presented the “COMCEC Handbook for High Performing NTFBs”. Mr. CHOPRA started his intervention by presenting the background, overall objective, specific objective and target audience of the Handbook. He briefly mentioned the objective of the Handbook as to “provide NTFBs in the OIC Region and beyond with innovative solutions to commonly identified problems hampering them, as well as overall guidance to ensure their organizational effectiveness and sustainability.”
11. Concerning the methodology of the Handbook, Mr. CHOPRA underlined four main activities: (i) the review of existing literature on NTFBs, (ii) undertaking of a survey and structured interviews with OIC and non-OIC Members, (iii) undertaking a field visit to the Kingdom of Morocco, and (iv) the designing of the Handbook. Mr. CHOPRA informed that over 50 senior trade facilitation practitioners (including chairs of National Trade Facilitation Bodies) from International Organizations, OIC and non-OIC Member

Countries and private sector representatives have been consulted to develop the Handbook. The survey received 45 responses including 31 from representatives of 22 OIC Member Countries.

12. Mr. CHOPRA then introduced the innovative organization effectiveness framework for National Trade Facilitation Bodies, which includes 7 dimensions/areas: (i) Political Will and Leadership, (ii) Legal and Administrative Framework, (iii) Organizational Framework, (iv) Strategy, (v) Operations and Management, (vi) Performance Management, (vii) Human Capital.
13. Mr. CHOPRA then proceeded with the presentation of Guiding Principles under each NTFB organizational effectiveness area. He also presented a new definition of political will, recognized best practices from showcased OIC Member Countries (Cameroon, Cote d'Ivoire, Turkey, Morocco, Oman and Burkina Faso) in the Handbook. His presentation also included the presentation of examples of a NTFB strategy, a NTFB Performance Management Dashboard and NTFB Competency Framework.
14. Mr. CHOPRA presented the roadmap for the establishment of a National Trade Facilitation Body and indicated that the roadmap presented in the Handbook is based on the Kotter Change Management model.
15. Finally, Mr. CHOPRA concluded his presentation by thanking his team for the development of the Handbook as well as all the development partners, OIC and non-OIC Countries as well as the COMCEC Secretariat for their contribution and support throughout the development of the Handbook.

III. Experiences of the Member Countries on NTFB

16. **Ms. Jamaliah Hamzah, Director of Investment Policy and Trade Facilitation** from Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) made a presentation on Malaysia's National Trade Facilitation Bodies (NTFBs) under the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI). Ms. Hamzah started the presentation with an overview of MITI's involvement in trade facilitation bodies in Malaysia. Stating that Malaysia's National Trade Facilitation Bodies (NTFBs) are guided by WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (WTO TFA), she expressed that Malaysia has Trade Facilitation Cluster Working Group and National E-Commerce Strategic Roadmap at the domestic front and National Single Window to facilitate all import and export documents' movement.
17. Furthermore, Ms. Hamzah pointed out that Malaysia established Technical Working Group on Trading Across Border (TWGTAB) in 2008, whose members are relevant government agencies and industry representatives. Ms. Hamzah added that chaired by MITI and Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers, TWGTAB has some main objectives such as being a platform to engage and consult with all stakeholders in trading community before implementing any reforms and improving Malaysia's ranking in Trading Across Borders. On the other hand, Ms. Hamzah emphasized on another

working group named as Trade Facilitation Cluster Working Group (TFCWG), which was established in 2015 with the aim of being a platform to streamline action items under ministries/agencies that focus on enhancing the efficiency of trade facilitation mechanism.

18. In the last part of the presentation, Ms. Hamzah mentioned trade facilitation initiatives undertaken by the Malaysia in terms of simplification, elimination, modernization and harmonization of export and import processes to ease trade processes (birisi procedures olabilir mi? and boost international trade and the global economy. Ms. Hamzah stated that in terms of simplification, halal certification approval time has been improved from 50 days to 10 days.
19. Mr. Mohammed BENAGUID, Head of Logistics and Procedures Department, the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Green and Digital Economy of Morocco, made a presentation titled “The National Coordination Commission for the Facilitation of Foreign Trade Procedures” to share the experience of Morocco with the attendees to the meeting. Mr. BENAGUID started his presentation with the overview of partnership between the Kingdom of Morocco and OIC Member Countries in terms of Trade Facilitation. Then, he briefed the participants about the history of trade facilitation in Morocco by expressing that Morocco created initially National Commission for the Simplification of Foreign Trade Procedures with the aim of liberalization of Moroccan foreign trade in 1986, which would be institutionalized as the National Coordination Commission for the Facilitation of Foreign Trade Procedures that is a high level decision making platform.
20. Underlying that the creation of commission as a unique body is not enough to execute the action plan of trade facilitation, Mr. BENAGUID stated that specialized technical committees are very essential for monitoring and executing the action plan and therefore, he added, four technical committees are established for dematerialization of procedures, simplification of procedures, international cooperation, and monitoring and evaluation.
21. He concluded his presentation by stressing the keys to success for an integrated trade facilitation policy such as continued political commitment or support, inclusive cooperation between the public and private sectors, placing the operator at the heart of the process and aligning facilitation actions with the interest of real client, not only with certain communities or actors, and lastly highlighting the results and communicating the success to the public opinion.
22. Mr. Hakkı GÜRKAN, Expert, Ministry of Trade, the Republic of Turkey, made a presentation on Turkish experience regarding NTFBs. He started his presentation with the importance of NTFBs by stating that they provide a platform that government agencies responsible for trade facilitation or foreign trade at large and private sector come together, discuss the trade-related issues and find solutions to the problems. Expressing that Turkey is a party to WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement, WCO Revised

Kyoto Convention, and International Convention on the Harmonization of Frontier Controls of Goods, Mr. GURKAN pointed out that Turkey has high implementation rates on trade facilitation measures when OECD Trade Facilitation Indicators 2019 and UN Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation 2019 are examined.

23. Mr. GURKAN briefed the representatives about the establishment of Coordination Committee on Trade Facilitation in 2016, which is the name of national trade facilitation body of Turkey. He expressed that the Committee whose chairman is the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Trade, has twenty-two members from both the public sector and private sectors. He pointed out the objectives of the Committee such as overseeing implementation of Trade Facilitation Agreement in the Turkish Customs Area, coordinating implementation procedures among related government agencies, and being a platform for public-private sector partnership in the area of trade facilitation. He also mentioned the structure of the Committee, which is comprised of working groups, technical committees and general board coordinating and establishing a trade facilitation strategy and work plan.
24. In the last part of the presentation, Mr. GURKAN highlighted that Coordination Committee on Trade Facilitation of Turkey is a platform for facilitating policymaking and solving problems arising from customs transactions for private sector, and coordinating the joint operations of government agencies. He added that Trade Facilitation Strategy would bring new action areas for overcoming bottlenecks in customs and foreign trade transactions of the Republic of Turkey. He ended his presentation with highlighting some challenges related to trade facilitation. In this respect, he expressed that there exists lack of awareness on trade facilitation among government agencies and the role that they can play in this field.

IV. 8th Call for Project Proposals under COMCEC Project Funding and Introducing COMCEC COVID Response Program

25. Ms. Eda AKÇA, Program Coordinator at the COMCEC Coordination Office, briefed the participants regarding the COMCEC Project Funding and COMCEC COVID Response Program.
26. At the outset, Ms. AKÇA informed the participants on the 8th Call for Project Proposals started on September 1st, 2020. In this regard, she stated that the Member Countries can submit their project proposals through the Online Project Submission System until the end of September and they can reach all documents on the System by using the username and password, provided for the focal points.
27. She also reminded the participants to read the application documents particularly the Project Preparation and Submission Guidelines as well as supported sectoral themes before designing and submitting their project proposal. Moreover, Ms. AKÇA invited the Member Countries and OIC Institutions to submit their project proposals and wished all the success in the project submission period.

28. Furthermore, Ms. AKÇA informed the participants regarding the new CCO initiative to address the current and future negative impacts of the pandemic, which is COMCEC COVID Response Program. The Program was designed based on the feedback received from member countries during COVID Consultative Meetings and the questionnaire sent in July 2020. The Program will directly address the needs and demands of member countries in order to alleviate the situation in certain sectors.
29. At the end, Ms. AKÇA briefed the participants that the modus operandi of COMCEC COVID Response Program would be finalized and the call for project proposals under this Program would start in October 2020. She also announced that the CCO will organize a training program regarding the CCR program and inform the focal points about its details and novelties when its procedures complete.

Closing Remarks

30. In his conclusion remarks, Mr. Fatih ÜNLÜ, Acting Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), expressed his thanks to all presenters and participants for the fruitful deliberations and discussions conducted with regard to National Trade Facilitation Bodies (NTFBs) during the meeting. He stated that the COMCEC has made a project call within the framework of COMCEC Project Funding at the beginning of September 2020. He also underlined the importance of receiving the multilateral cooperation projects from the Member Countries and relevant OIC Institutions under this project call in trade domain.

Annex I



15th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

“Guidelines for Establishing Effective National Trade Facilitation Bodies in the OIC Countries”

*(September 22nd, 2020, Virtual Meeting)**

AGENDA

Opening

1. General Overview of National Trade Facilitation Bodies (NTFBs) in the World
2. COMCEC Handbook for High Performing NTFBs: Guiding Principles and Recommended Practices
3. Experiences of the Member Countries on NTFBs
4. Utilizing COMCEC Project Funding

Closing

* The internet link for participation will be communicated to the COMCEC Trade Working Group Focal Points prior to the Meeting.

Annex II



COMCEC

15TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

“Guidelines for Establishing Effective National Trade Facilitation Bodies in the OIC Countries”

*(September 22nd, 2020, Virtual Meeting)**

PROGRAMME

(Ankara Time - GMT+3)

13.15 – 13.30	Joining the Online Meeting
13.30 – 13.45	Opening Remarks
13.45 – 14.10 14.10 – 14.20	General Overview of the National Trade Facilitation Bodies (NTFBs) in the World <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Presentation: Ms. Sheri ROSENOW Consuller WTO</i>• <i>Discussion</i>
14.20 – 15.00 15.00 – 15.15	COMCEC Handbook for High Performing NTFBs: Guiding Principles and Recommended Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Presentation: Mr. Richard CHOPRA Consultant</i>• <i>Discussion</i>
15.15 – 15.45	Experiences of the Member Countries on NTFBs <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i><u>Member States Presentations (10 minutes max)</u></i>
15.45 - 16.00	Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding
16.00 - 16.15	Closing

* *The internet link for participation will be communicated to the COMCEC Trade Working Group Focal Points prior to the Meeting.*

Annex III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

15th MEETING OF COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP 22 September 2020

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF AFGHANISTAN

- Mr. AHMAD TARIQ MATEEN

Head of Regional Trade Agreement, Ministry of Industry and Commerce

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Ms. SABRINA HAMIDI

Head of Office, Ministry of Trade

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Ms. GULCHIN ALASGAROVA

Deputy Head, Ministry of Economy

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- Mr. MD ABDUS SAMAD AL AZAD

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce

- Ms. SYEDA NAHIDA HABIBA

Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce

REPUBLIC OF BENIN

- Mr. RENE AKOWANOU

Director of Foreign Trade, Ministry of Industry and Commerce

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

- Mr. AMALINA MURAD

Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economy

REPUBLIC OF COTE D'IVOIRE

- Mr. MAX-BERTIN DJACORE

Chief of Service, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- Mr. HAYTHAM ABDELGHANY

Trade Consul, Egypt Consulate in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF GAMBIA

- Mr. FABBA JAMMEH

Director, Ministry of Trade

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

- Mr. ABDULRAHEEM AL-HYARI

Economic Researcher, Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply

REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

- Ms. ROLA NASRALLAH

Head of Quality Unit, Ministry of Economy and Trade

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

- Mr. MOHAMMED BENAGUID

Head of Service, Ministry of Industry

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- Mr. ASADULLAH LARIK

Secretary, Federal Board of Revenue

THE STATE OF PALESTINE

- Mr. JAVAD ALMUTI

Director, Ministry of National Economy

STATE OF QATAR

- Mr. HASAN ABDULLA AL MOHANNADI

Consultant, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- Mr. SALMA ABDULLA AL DOSARI

Researcher, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Mr. ABDULAZIZ ALSAKRAN

General Manager, Saudi General Authority for Foreign Trade

- Mr. ABDULMALIK BINOBAID

Advisor, General Authority for Saudi Customs

- Mr. FAWAZ ALGHAMDI

Commercial Attache, Commercial Attache Office in Istanbul

REPUBLIC OF TOGO

- Mr. KOSSI ABIGUIME

Chief of Service, Ministry of Trade

REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

- Mr. MOHAMED DALDOUL

Head of Service, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. MOHAMED JAMEL EL IFA

Deputy General Director, Ministry of Trade and Exports Development

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- Ms. AYLİN BEBEKOĞLU

Deputy Director General, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. NURULLAH ASIM AKBULUT

Expert, Ministry of Trade

B. THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC TRADE FINANCE CORPORATION (ITFC)

- Mr. AMADOU CIRE SALL

Senior Associate, ITFC

C. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER
FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

- Mr. THIerno BALDE

Assistant Project Officer, SESRIC

- Mr. EDEMA MUZAMIL

Data Registrar, SESRIC

D. OIC STANDING COMMITTEES

THE ISLAMIC CORPORATION FOR THE INSURANCE OF INVESTMENT AND
EXPORT CREDIT (ICIEC)

- Mr. AL TAYEB FADLALLAH

Associate, Strategic Planning and Communication, ICIEC

E. CONSULTANT

- Mr. RICHARD CHOPRA

Consultant

- Mr. ERCAN SAKA

Academic Consultant

F. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. Fatih ÜNLÜ

Director General

- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ

Head of Department

- Mr. MEHMET ASLAN

Head of Department

- Mr. NİHAT AKBALIK

Expert

- Ms. BİLGE ÖZBAY

Expert

- Ms. EDA AKÇA

Expert

-Mr. YUNUS KAYIŞ

Assistant Expert