



ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK

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

29th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC

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I. INTRODUCTION

The IDB Group has been implementing the WTO-related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program for the last fifteen years and has regularly submitted progress reports on this program to the COMCEC meetings. The last report was submitted to the 28th Session of the COMCEC which was held in Istanbul, Turkey on 8-11 October 2012. This report highlights the major WTO-related technical assistance activities undertaken by the IDB since the 28th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC.

The WTO-related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program was launched by the IDB in 1997 to help 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 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 with the activities of WTO so that they may be in a better position to defend their interests. Since the inception of IDB Group's WTO-related Technical Assistance and Capacity Building Program till end-April 2013, more than 64 Seminars and 37 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-April 2013, 18 Trade Policy Courses have been organized by the IDB under this program.

Special Studies: Occasionally, the IDB undertakes in-depth studies on different 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. In this regard, the IDB obtained the services of experts in these fields and collaborated with UNCTAD in supervising some of these studies. 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. As of end-April 2013, the IDB has organized seven 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 28th MEETING OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF THE COMCEC (MAY 2012 - APRIL 2013)

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) Negotiation skills. The major activities organized by the IDB since the 28th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC are the following:

1. Seminar on “the Proliferation of Regional and Multilateral Trade Agreements and their Impact on Regional Integration of Arab Countries”: Casablanca, Morocco, 4-6 June 2012.
2. Seminar on “Doha negotiations and accession process to WTO for the ECO Member States: Experience of the Republic of Turkey”: Istanbul, Turkey, 18-20 June 2012.
3. Seminar on "Aid for Trade: Leading Towards Poverty Alleviation": Tunis, Republic of Tunisia, 25-27 June 2012.
4. Seminar on “Dispute Settlement Understanding (DSU) and the Developing Countries”: Istanbul, Turkey, 1-3 October 2012.

5. Workshop on “Concessions and Commitments by Arab Acceding Countries to WTO”: Algiers, Algeria, 14-18 October 2012.
6. Seminar on “Trade Facilitation among Arab Countries and their Integration into the Multilateral Trading System”: Dubai, U.A.E., 15 –17 October 2012.
7. Seminar on “the Impact of Non Tariff Measures (NTMs) on Arab Maghreb Union countries”: Casablanca, Morocco, 24-26 December 2012.
8. Training Course for Senior Iraqi officials on accession to WTO: Ankara, Turkey, 24 Feb- 01 March 2013.
9. Seminar on “Trade and Development”: Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 25-27 March 2013.
10. Workshop on “Trade Facilitation and Trade Cost within the Arab Region”: Dubai, U.A.E., 8-10 April 2013.
11. Seminar on “Multilateral Negotiations on Trade in Services as leverage to promote intra-trade in the Arab Region”: Casablanca, Morocco, 22-24 April 2013.

IV. ACTIVITIES PLANNED FOR THE REMAINING PART OF 2013

The following activities are planned to be undertaken during the remaining part of 2013:

1. Seminar on Accession to WTO in collaboration with the ECO and the Ministry of Economy in Turkey.
2. Workshop on Trade and Environment.
3. Seminar on EPAs and regional Integration in ECOWAS region.

V. CONCLUSION

The needs of the member countries, especially the least developed member countries, in the area of WTO are enormous. The IDB, with its limited resources, has been trying to assist these countries 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 and OIC institutions and highly appreciates their cooperation and assistance. It 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-April 2013)**

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. Tajikistan	
12. Gabon	1 January 1995	12. Uzbekistan	
13. Gambia	23 October 1996	13. Yemen	
14. Guinea	25 October 1995	14. Syria	
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. Togo	31 May 1995		
37. Tunisia	29 March 1995		
38. Turkey	26 March 1995		
39. Uganda	1 January 1995		
40. UAE	10 April 1996		

Not yet Member of the IDB.