

## *SPECIAL SESSION on NGOs in DEVELOPMENT*

### *“The Role of NGOs in the Development Efforts of the Islamic Countries”*

<i>Brief Note</i>	<p><i>Introduction</i></p> <p>COMCEC is the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC). As one of the four standing Committees within the OIC, COMCEC is chaired by the President of the Republic of Turkey.</p> <p>30th Session of COMCEC will be held on 25-28 November 2014 in Istanbul with the participation of Ministers responsible from trade and economy in the member Countries. On the occasion of the COMCEC’s 30th anniversary along with the regular sessions, two special sessions will be organized. One of these side events will be the special session on <i>“The Role of NGOs in the Development Efforts of the Islamic Countries”</i>.</p> <p>Islamic Countries have a strong tradition of NGOs and voluntary institutions. Throughout the history, especially Waqfs have contributed substantially to economic development, social solidarity, education and training in the Islamic Countries and beyond.</p> <p>Despite the absence of a standard definition of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), they can be recognized as organizations apart from formal governmental structures as well as profit oriented business models. NGOs work in a wide array of areas but mostly concentrate on issues like humanitarian aid efforts, health services, poverty alleviation and regional development (including infrastructure and employment). With their dynamic and operational structure and highly motivated, volunteer labor force, NGOs are acknowledged as key partners of the governments in social works. NGOs also play a catalyst role in countries’ development exertions through contributing policy making and policy implementation phases. Since the views of business world, academicians, women organizations, and many other groups in the society are reflected to some extent in the work of NGOs, they can also be recognized as an intermediary between the governments and the society. In this respect, NGOs are of particular importance in raising awareness of different social groups on development issues.</p> <p>It should also be noted that era of globalization brought new visions to the NGOs, whose occupation is not limited with national borders. Many NGOs undertake cross-country programmes around the globe. It is also noteworthy that NGOs can play a facilitator role in enhancing multinational cooperation efforts if benefited rightly manner.</p> <p>The current status of NGOs in the OIC Member States is far below the potential. In this respect, building an enabling environment for the development of NGOs in line with norms and traditions of Islamic Culture significantly contribute to the development efforts in the Islamic World.</p>
-------------------	--

<i>Objectives and Expected Outcome</i>	<p>The main aim of this special session would be to evaluate contributions of NGOs to national and international development efforts, review the current level of NGOs in the Muslim Countries and discuss that the relationship between the common culture of the Muslim Countries (specifically related to social solidarity and waqfs) and the economic and social development.</p> <p>The panelists' perspectives and opinions on the current situation in Islamic Countries will be introduced.</p> <p>This special session will also introduce new insights while discussing present or potential relations between traditional social welfare mechanisms (such as waqf) and development exertions in the Muslim Countries.</p>
<i>Program Format</i>	<p>During the special session valuable views of globally renowned experts in the field will be shared with participants. The session will be attended by the Ministerial-level delegations participating in the COMCEC Session, eminent scholars and experts.</p>
<i>Issues and Topics</i>	<p>The session will start with presentations from eminent panelists which will be followed by a lively discussion on the special session's topic. Possible points of discussion include but not limited to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What contributions could be made by NGOs to national and international development efforts?</li> <li>• What is the current status of the NGOs in the Muslim Countries? What are their contributions to development and cooperation processes in the OIC Region?</li> <li>• What roles can NGOs play in improving economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member Countries?</li> <li>• How the historical NGO implementations in Islamic Countries may constitute a model and inspiration for contemporary NGO practices?</li> <li>• Within the scope of UN Post-2015 which foresees higher level of global cooperation, how higher participation of Member Countries' NGOs to the process can be ensured in a way to contribute Islamic Countries' development efforts?</li> </ul>
<i>Participation</i>	<p>All delegations of OIC Member States attending the ministerial COMCEC Session are invited to participate to the special session. NGOs, the OIC Institutions, representatives of International Organizations, businessmen, academicians and other relevant stakeholders will also be invited to attend the event to share their perspectives.</p>
<i>Venue &amp; Date</i>	<p><b>Date:</b> November 28th, 2014</p> <p><b>Venue:</b> Istanbul Congress Center, Istanbul/Turkey.</p> <p>For further information, please contact:</p> <p><i>Ahmet OKUR</i></p> <p><i>Expert</i></p> <p><b>COMCEC Coordination Office</b></p> <p><b>Address:</b> Necatibey cd. No:110 Çankaya- ANKARA</p> <p><b>Ph:</b> +90 312 294 57 17 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:aokur@comcec.org">aokur@comcec.org</a></p>