

**REPORT**  
**OF THE MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP**  
**ON COMCEC PROJECTS**  
(Ankara, 25-27 March 2003)

1. In accordance with the recommendation taken by the 5<sup>th</sup> Consultative Meeting of the concerned OIC Institutions working in the fields of economic and commercial cooperation, held on 13 January 2003 at the IDB Headquarters in Jeddah, the Working Group Meeting on COMCEC Projects was convened on 25-27 March 2003 in Ankara, to review the preparations and progress on some COMCEC projects.

2. The representatives of the General Secretariat and the following OIC subsidiary organs, specialized and affiliated institutions and also other concerned institutions attended the Meeting:

- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC)
- Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT)
- Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
- Organization of the Islamic Shipowners Association (OISA)
- COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)

(A copy of the list of participants is attached as Annex I.)

**Opening Session**

3. The Meeting was opened by H.E. Lütfi ELVAN, Deputy Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization of the Republic of Turkey (SPO). H.E. Lütfi ELVAN, in welcoming the participants, stressed the importance of the new supplementary mechanism for the implementation of the OIC Plan of Action, effective implementation of the Framework Agreement on Trade Preferential System Among the Member States of OIC (TPSOIC) which has already entered into force and implementation of the

recommendations of the Workshop on “Private Sector Investment and the Role of IDB” held on 14-16 September 2002 in Istanbul.

3. The message of H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed BELKEZIZ, the OIC Secretary General was then read out by H.E. Nabika DIALLO , Assistance Secretary General of OIC. In his message H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed BELKEZIZ expressed his thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Working Group Meeting. H.E. BELKEZIZ emphasized the importance of the implementation of the OIC Plan of Action, and, particularly, the TPSOIC Agreement. H.E. BELKEZIZ has also stressed the need to create a conducive environment for the private sector activities in OIC Member Countries. H.E Secretary General of the OIC also called on Member States and concerned OIC Institutions to exert all necessary efforts with the view of ensuring speedy and effective implementation of the recommendations of the Workshop on “Private Sector Investment in the Member Countries and the Role of IDB” held in Istanbul on 14-16 September 2002 which were also taken note of by the 18<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC.

### **Working Sessions**

5. The working sessions of the Meeting were chaired by Mr. Ahmet CAFOĞLU, Director General of the Foreign Economic Relations in the State Planning Organization of the Republic of Turkey and Head of COMCEC Coordination Office. The Draft Agenda of the working group meeting was adopted by the Participants.

(A copy of the Agenda as adopted by the Meeting is attached as Annex II.)

6. Under Agenda item 2, the COMCEC Coordination Office presented two draft documents, namely, “Rules of Procedure of the Sessional Committee for Conducting Activities in Implementation Process of the OIC Plan of Action ” and “ Project Cycle Management for the OIC Plan of Action (PCM-OIC-PoA)” which were prepared with a view to further elaborating the proposed supplementary mechanism as requested by the 18th Session of the COMCEC.

While the representatives of the participating OIC institutions expressing their initial views and comments as well as providing inputs, they suggested that in view of the importance of the said documents in terms of their technical and legal aspects, both documents need to be examined thoroughly by the concerned authorities of the institutions involved. In this respect, they have requested that they be allowed a period of three weeks to convey their comments to the COMCEC Coordination Office, prior to their circulation to the members of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC.

(Copies of the said documents, as revised by the Working Group, are attached as Annex III and IV).

7. Under Agenda item 3, the Working Group (WG) discussed the implementation of the Framework Agreement of TPS-OIC, and reviewed the preparations made, in this regard, by the COMCEC Coordination Office and the ICDT.

The WG discussed the following issues to facilitate the preparations being made by the concerned institutions:

- The preparations for the first round of the trade negotiations, and work of the Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC) shall be organized by a secretariat. The WG proposed to include in the draft rules of procedure of the TNC a paragraph dealing with the composition of the TNC Secretariat as follows:

“The COMCEC Coordination Office and the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) shall assume the functions of the Secretariat of the Trade Negotiation Committee.”

- The WG discussed the options available for the financing of the trade negotiations, and agreed to explore the possibility of sending an official letter at a senior level by the Government of the Republic of Turkey, which will be

hosting the first round of negotiations, to the President of IDB, to request financial support for the activities of the TNC.

- The COMCEC Coordination Office, the ICDT and the national authority of the host country (The Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade of the Republic of Turkey), held a separate meeting to discuss the preparatory work of the first round of trade negotiations. These institutions exchanged initial views on the preparations and documents made so far, and agreed to coordinate their work as follows:

The institutions agreed on a preliminary list of the preparations to be made prior to the EGM on the Framework Agreement to be held in Casablanca on 24-25<sup>th</sup> of June, 2003, and the 19th COMCEC Ministerial Session to be held in İstanbul on 20-23<sup>rd</sup> of October, 2003. The institutions also agreed to produce jointly four major documents to be submitted to the EGM in Casablanca, in order to harmonize their work and perspectives on the subject matter. In this context, the COMCEC Coordination Office submitted its document on ‘draft rules of procedure’ of the TNC and views on the documents prepared by the ICDT. The ICDT also submitted documents of technical content to the meeting, and made a presentation of the preparations made so far. It was agreed that ICDT shall submit the English versions of the draft documents (draft rules of procedure of TNC, draft ministerial declaration, technical note on trade negotiations and draft work program) to the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC Coordination Office and the national authority of Turkey, as soon as possible, in order to produce a joint document for the consideration of the participants of the EGM meeting in Casablanca. (A table outlining the steps of the preparations by the concerned institutions is also attached).

Through the oral presentation made by the representative of the ICDT, the COMCEC Coordination Office noted that the draft rules of procedure prepared by the ICDT foresees attendance to the TNC to cover not only the Participating States, but the representatives of the Groups of Participating States (Art. 2/4), international organizations and Contracting States as observers as well. The COMCEC Coordination Office noted that attendance to the TNC by the international organizations and Contracting States may complicate the trade negotiations for a number of reasons. First, from the legal point of view, while the membership of the Participating States and Groups of Participating States to the TNC is foreseen in the Framework Agreement, participation or attendance by the

international organizations and Contracting States as observers are not provided for. Second, attendance to the Trade Negotiating Committee by the international organizations and Contracting States will increase the number of the representatives substantially, which may lead a lengthy and complicated process of the trade negotiations. Lastly, from the financial standpoint, the increase in the number of attendance to the TNC will lead a considerable rise in the cost of each session of the trade negotiations. Nevertheless, the ICDT's representative is of the view that the invitation of the Contracting States to the TNC meetings is of great importance to encourage them to join the trade negotiations as Participating States. To this end, the COMCEC Coordination Office suggested, periodical reports and news about the activities of the TNC can be disseminated to all the COMCEC members including the Contracting States.

The COMCEC Coordination Office and the national authority of Turkey took note of the possibility of organizing an informal session of the TNC prior to the 19th COMCEC Session to speed up the preparations for the trade negotiations.

**Preliminary List of the Preparations to be Made Prior to EGM On TPS-OIC (June '03) and the 19<sup>th</sup> COMCEC Session (Oct '03)**

<b>Preparation</b>	<b>Responsible Party</b>	<b>Approx. Time of Submitting the Draft Work</b>
1. Notification of the Member States of the OIC of the entering into force of the Framework Agreement.	OIC General Secretariat	End of March, 2003
2. Notification of the Participating States of the Framework Agreement, and of the establishment of the TNC (OIC General Secretariat) , including the submission of trade data at the EGM. (ICDT)	OIC General Secretariat / ICDT	April, 2003
3. Notification by the President of Turkey, the host country of the trade negotiations, and the Chairman of the COMCEC, of the participating states, about the launching of the trade negotiations, including date and venue of the first round.	The President of TURKEY, CCO, The National Authority of host Country	Before 19 <sup>th</sup> Session of COMCEC
4. * Drafting the Rules of Procedure document of the TNC, which will be adopted by the COMCEC (Art. 13).	The TNC Secretariat**	Before EGM
5. * Drafting the Work Programme of the TNC, which will be endorsed by the COMCEC (Art. 4). The Work Programme may also be annexed by a recommendation to the TNC of the objectives and procedures of the first round of the trade negotiations.	The TNC Secretariat	Before EGM
6. * Drafting a COMCEC resolution regarding the functions of the COMCEC under the Agreement to be delegated to the TNC (Art. 13/8). [Can be formulated as part of Ministerial Declaration]	The TNC Secretariat	Before EGM
7. * Drafting a COMCEC resolution regarding the official starting date and location of the first round of the trade negotiations (Art. 13/3) [Can be formulated as part of Ministerial Declaration]	The TNC Secretariat	Before EGM

\* Further improvement may be needed after EGM

\*\* ICDT, COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) shall assume the functions of the Secretariat of the TNC

8. Under agenda item 4, the Working Group considered the modality for the implementation of the recommendations of the Workshop on “Private Sector Investment in the Member Countries and the Role of IDB” that convened on 14-16 September 2002 in Istanbul and agreed upon the following points:

- The implementation of these recommendations is a continuous process, at least in the medium term, and requires a permanent follow-up within this period.
- The Working Group was also of the view that the follow-up of the implementation of the recommendations of the Workshop may be a permanent agenda item of the coordination meetings of the OIC Institutions.
- The Working Group made a preliminary draft work division for each recommendation, where OIC Member Countries or OIC institutions are proposed to become either responsible party or related parties for their implementation.
- The proposed preliminary draft work division will be circulated to the concerned OIC Institutions for their consideration and further contribution.
- This preliminary draft work division may be considered by the forthcoming coordination meeting of the OIC Institutions.

(A copy of the preliminary draft work division for the implementation of the recommendations of the Workshop is attached in the Annex 5)

9. Under Agenda item 5, Identification of Format and Technical Preparations for the OIC Trade and Finance Ministers – WTO Policy Dialogue Meetings within the Framework of the COMCEC Sessions was discussed by the Meeting. The Working Group recommended that the matter would be referred to COMCEC Follow-up Committee during its 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting. IDB has been requested to liaise with the WTO in order to get the latest position regarding this proposal. IDB is expected to inform the forthcoming Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC accordingly.

10. Under Agenda item 6, “Any Other Business” The ICDT’s representative informed the meeting on the activities assigned by the 18<sup>th</sup> session of the COMCEC to the ICDT.

- As far as the preparation of the exchange of views of the 19<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC is concerned, he informed the participants that a preparatory meeting of the workshop on “The Impact of e-commerce and the NIT on intra-OIC trade promotion” was held in Tunis on 20 and 21 February 2003. This meeting, which was chaired by the Ministry of tourism, commerce and handicrafts of the Republic of Tunisia, was attended also by the Ministry of telecommunications and information technology of Tunisia, SESRTCIC and ICDT.

The meeting decided that the workshop will be held in Tunis on the first half of June 2003 , examined all the aspects of the organization and has made a division of work between the concerned institutions.

- As concerns the first Tourism Fair of Islamic Countries, scheduled to be hosted by the Republic of Turkey in 2003, the ICDTs representative announced to the participants that this fair was postponed until spring 2004 instead of 2003 due to the recent events in the middle east.
- The ICDTs representative informed also the meeting that the ICDT approached the Government of the Republic of Guinea in order to organize at the end of april 2003 the first preparatory meeting of the 10<sup>th</sup> Trade Fair of Islamic Countries to be hosted by this country in 2004.

### **Closing Session**

11. Closing Session of the Meeting was held under the chairmanship of Mr. Ahmet CAFOĞLU, Director General of the Foreign Economic Relations in the State Planning Organization of the Republic of Turkey and Head of COMCEC Coordination Office. The participants reviewed the report of the Meeting, and expressed their thanks and appreciation to the people and the Government of the Republic of Turkey for hosting the Meeting as well as the hospitality extended to the participants.

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