REPORT

OF

THE OIC SECRETARY GENERAL

TO

THE 37TH SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC (COMCEC)

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I. **INTRODUCTION**

1. The report of the OIC Secretary General features the most recent actions by the General Secretariat and its institutions working in the economic domain, since the convening of the 36th COMCEC General Assembly Session, held virtually, on 25th - 26th November 2020. These actions are aimed at following-up the implementation of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action, the relevant resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers, COMCEC and other ministerial level OIC Meetings.

2. The Report highlighted the series of interventions by the relevant OIC institutions through on-going projects on trade and investment, infrastructure and agro-industrial development, private sector development, tourism sector development and capacity building. The convening of the Eighth Edition of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (MCFSAD), Workshop on Halal Tourism, Seminar on Data collection and analysis of trade in services, Workshop on Trade of Agricultural products, launching of digital trade finance platform, and the elaboration of intra-OIC cooperation framework on the development of strategic agricultural commodities featured prominently on the agenda of the OIC during the period under review.

3. Globally, economies are connected to each other through cross-border flows and bilateral, regional and international relations, COVID-19 pandemic has had and will continue to have an impact on their transactions in goods, services, technology transfer, and project financing, technical assistance, financial capital, direct foreign investment, international banking and exchange rates. In this regard, the report highlighted the activities implemented during the period under review with regard to execution of OIC poverty alleviation initiatives and regional development programmes; economic assistance to the OIC Member States to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic, among others. The report also indicated some of the COVID-19 recovery projects, including the IsDB Group’s R2 “Restore Program” COVID-19 Support in the area of Line of Finance transactions, including the IsDB’s announcement on US$ 1.2 billion in funding commitments as part of its effort to support the post-pandemic economic recovery in our Member States.

4. The report also show-cases activities aimed at attaining the new intra-OIC target of 25% in 2025, including the implementation of the Trade Preferential System (TPS-OIC) as well as signing and ratification of other OIC agreements and statutes. Other programmes elaborated and implemented during the year under review are in the domain of the transport sector, agroindustry, tourism, labour, employment and social protection, the role of the Private Sector, and entrepreneurship development.

5. In addition to the various activities conducted by the General Secretariat during the period under review, this Report highlights the activities of the numerous OIC institutions working in the economic domain. In line with the statutory responsibilities of the General Secretariat on coordination of OIC institutions, the General Secretariat organized the Virtual Consultative Meeting of Trade and Investment Sub-Committee (TISC) of ACMOI, on January 28, 2021. The Meeting reviewed and approved the TISC Structure and Working
Mechanism for the better coordination and cooperation among OIC institutions and the distribution and assignment of joint activities among the TISC members.

II. AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

6. Agriculture remains one of the most important sectors in many OIC member states as a source of livelihood and employment for millions of people. In this regard, during the period under review, the following activities were carried out towards the implementation of OIC policies and decisions in the domain of agriculture, rural development and food security:

(a) Activities of the Islamic Organization for Food Security

- 4th Meeting of the General Assembly

7. The Fourth Meeting of the General Assembly of Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) was conducted on 8th-9th September 2021 via Zoom videoconferencing platform under the chairmanship of the Republic of Kazakhstan. The ministers and high level officials from IOFS and OIC member states, representatives of relevant OIC institutions, specialized regional and international organisations attended the meeting.

8. Under the theme “Food Systems of the OIC in Post-pandemic World”, the Fourth General Assembly Meeting of IOFS discussed various issues relating to budget, activities and projects of the Organisation. At the end of its proceedings, the 4th Meeting adopted several resolutions. Most of these resolutions relate to the budget of IOFS, Strategic Vision of IOFS 2031, celebration of 11th December of each year as the IOFS Anniversary Day as well as projects on development of gene banks and strategic commodities, among others.

9. The General Assembly also decided to convene its 5th meeting in 2022, and to this end, it requested the Secretariat of IOFS to inform IOFS member states on the venue and dates of the 5th General Assembly. The IOFS also signed a Memoranda of Understanding with the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA) and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) on cooperation.

- Accession to IOFS Statute

10. During the year under review, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Republic of Tunisia signed the Statute of IOFS, while the State of Libya ratified and deposited the instruments of ratification of the same Statute at the OIC General Secretariat. As a result, the number of OIC member states, which have signed the IOFS Statute, reached 36, while 16 countries have so far ratified the same.

- International Conference on the Establishment of OIC Food Security Reserve

11. The International Conference on the Establishment of OIC Food Security Reserve was organized by the Secretariat of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) on 6th April, 2021, via Zoom video conferencing platform. The aim of the Conference was to
review the pre-feasibility study prepared by the IOFS Secretariat in collaboration with the Consultancy Company - LA International Cooperation. The experts from relevant ministries from IOFS and OIC member states as well as representatives of the relevant OIC institutions attended the conference.

12. During the Conference, representatives of the LA International Cooperation, outlined the overall purpose of the food security reserves and presented a draft pre-feasibility study of establishing OIC Food Security Reserves, including draft Memorandum of Understanding on creation of OIC Food Security Reserve on regional or sub-regional basis. The presented draft pre-feasibility study provided possible options with regard to: 1) grouping of countries in regional or sub-regional food security reserves; 2) required volume and type of food commodities in regional or sub-regional food security reserves; 3) mechanisms and options for withdrawing and replenishing food stocks; and 4) principles of managing food security reserves, among others.

13. The Conference ended with the understanding that that many aspects of the management of food security reserves, including technical, design, financial, geographical and logistical, as well as grouping of countries in regional or sub-regional basis need further study. It also underlined the importance of strengthening intra-OIC cooperation in agriculture sector, especially trade and investment, capacity building and transfer of technology. It further recommended conducting meetings for proposed grouping of countries, and elaborating fully-fledged feasibility studies for each regional/sub-regional food security reserve.

*First Meeting of Regional Center of Excellence for Asian Sub-Group I for Wheat*

14. The First Meeting of Regional Center of Excellence for Asian Sub-Group I for Wheat was jointly organized by the Secretariat of the IOFS and the Field Crops Central Research Institute under the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry of Turkey, on 7th April, 2021, via Zoom video conferencing platform. The meeting sought to evaluate the current state of wheat production in the OIC member states, review the international practices and research, and discuss ways and means of improving and conserving wheat varieties.

15. During the meeting, delegates from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan and Turkey made presentations on different aspects of wheat production as well as development of modern wheat breeding practices and technologies. On their part, the representatives of such regional and international institutions like International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT) and International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) highlighted their respective activities towards developing high yielding, nutritious, disease- and climate-resilient wheat varieties for the interested countries around the world, including OIC Member States.

16. The format of the event was a knowledge-sharing session and the meeting emphasized that conducting such events for research institutions could provide an opportunity to transfer experience, practice and lessons learnt as well as promote research exchange on wheat production, including developing high yielding wheat varieties, in OIC member states. It was
also recommended that IOFS Secretariat should continue to hold a series of events for agricultural research institutions in OIC member states on wheat and other important food crops.

- **Second Meeting of Centres of Excellence for Asian Sub-Group II for Development of Wheat**

17. The Second Meeting, which was organized virtually by the IOFS Secretariat in collaboration with Barayev Scientific-Production Center for Grain Farming of Kazakhstan on 24th–25th June, 2021, was attended by the experts of research centres from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The representatives of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT), International Center for Biosaline Agriculture (ICBA) and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology (KAUST) also attended the meeting. The meeting was dedicated to discussion of the major biotic and abiotic factors affecting wheat production in the above-mentioned countries, and the role of breeding and genetic engineering in improving wheat’s stress tolerance and resilience.

18. During the meeting, experts discussed threats posed to wheat crop production by plant pests and diseases. They also presented their respective national research experiences on genetic improvement of wheat. Experts also emphasized the need for creation of a Task Force on cooperation and execution of joint initiatives between international organisations and interested Member States on wheat improvement practices. It was also emphasized that IOFS should lead this process within its mandate.

- **First Meeting of Centres of Excellence for Asian Sub-Group I for Development of Rice**

19. The meeting was organized virtually by the IOFS Secretariat in collaboration with Bangladesh Rice Research Institute on 23rd June, 2021. It was attended by the experts from Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Suriname, Guyana, Senegal, Iran and Kazakhstan. The meeting discussed issues relating to rice production, R&D, breed improvement and challenges with regard to sustainable rice crop production. The experts from the Islamic Development Bank, ICBA, FAO, and KAUST also highlighted their respective activities towards developing high yielding and climate-resilient varieties of rice for the interested countries around the world. The participants emphasized that conducting such events for IOFS Member States could provide an opportunity to transfer experience, practice and lessons learnt as well as promote research exchange on rice production, including developing high yielding rice varieties.

- **International Conference “Best Practices for Building Sustainable Food Systems in the OIC Region”**

20. IOFS Secretariat organized online the International Conference on the “Best Practices for Building Sustainable Food Systems in the OIC Region” on 14th July, 2021. The conference was part of the Inter-Regional Dialogue on South-South Cooperation, which was held in
conjunction with the Food Systems Summit 2021. The Conference discussed the issues relating to development of food security systems in OIC Member States as well as came up with conclusions and recommendations on how best to handle some of the existing food security problems in OIC countries. The key recommendations of the Conference are the following:

- The development of comprehensive frameworks with clear vision and objectives that entails the political commitment from the highest levels of leadership to the dimension of policies, strategies and action plans that set out roles and responsibilities of various actors for implementation and achievement of goals.

- It is crucial to have the coherence between frameworks and strategies, as well as the broad approach of coordination among intra- and inter-agencies at national and local levels with the involvement of multiple actors from government, private sector, academia, research organization, smallholder farmers and civil society.

- Digitalization of food supply is essential to improve agricultural and food systems. It includes e-commerce, digital technologies to connect producers/farmers and traders, processors, buyers/consumers. Logistics infrastructure and storing facilities shall be enhanced to ensure the resilience at households, enable vulnerable farmers to be able to realize their activities, and reduce losses that would result in greater availability and accessibility for entire communities.

(b) Eighth OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development

21. After being postponed from 2020 to 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Eighth OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (MCFSAD) was reconvened in Istanbul, Turkey, on 25th - 27th October, 2021, in “face-to-face” format.

22. The 8th MCFSAD considered the implementation of resolutions of the previous Conferences, including the activities of IOFS, and financing of projects in the domain of agriculture and food security in OIC member states. It also considered and approved the OIC Programmes of Action for Development of Strategic Agricultural Commodities (wheat, rice, and cassava), which outline the main objectives and focus areas of intra-OIC-cooperation. In addition, it examined the issues relating to the establishment of OIC food security reserves on regional basis and adopted relevant decisions. Furthermore, the 8th MCFSAD appointed members of the Steering Committee of the MCFSAD, which will follow-up the implementation of the OIC resolutions in the domain of agriculture and food security.

(c) Financing of Agricultural Projects by IsDB

23. The Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and its entities, recognizing the fact that the agriculture sector is a key contributor to economic growth in rural areas in OIC Member States, have made financing this sector one of the priority areas of their operations. The overall vision of the Bank for agriculture and rural development is to assist OIC Member States in their efforts to promote agriculture related rural infrastructure, agro-industry development, climate change adaptation and natural resources management.
24. Within this context, the IsDB and its entities have developed a wide range of financial products, from loans to equity investments, advisory services and guarantees to support national governments in OIC Member States in the implementation of their agriculture and rural development programmes. From inception in 1975 to the end of the first quarter 2021, the total approvals of IsDB and its entities amounted to US$17.21 billion for 1,471 food security, agriculture and rural development related projects from OIC Member States.

25. Within its mandate, SESRIC has continued to organize training programmes in the area of increasing productivity of agriculture sector and sustaining food security for the benefit of OIC member states. Accordingly, during the year under review, SESRIC, within the framework of OIC Agriculture and Statistical Capacity Building Programme, organized the following activities:

1) Online Training Course on “Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries Statistics” for the benefit of the National Institute of Statistics (INS) of Cote d'Ivoire on 30\textsuperscript{th} November – 4\textsuperscript{th} December, 2020;

2) Online Training Course on “Developing Livestock Production and Animal Husbandry to Foster Food Security” for the benefit of OIC Member States on 19\textsuperscript{th}-21\textsuperscript{st} May, 2021; and

3) Online Training Course on “Food Waste Reduction” for the benefit of OIC Member States on 10\textsuperscript{th}-12\textsuperscript{th} August, 2021.

26. In addition, SESRIC has also released the 2020 Edition of the Report entitled “Agriculture and Food Security in OIC Member Countries”. This edition presents the recent state as well as the constraints and challenges of the agriculture sector and food security in OIC member states through the analysis of a wide range of latest available statistics. This report was prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore a special chapter was provided to highlight the impacts of the pandemic on agriculture and food security in OIC member states as of then.

27. Currently, many countries and regions in the various parts of the world are suffering as a result of conflicts, political instability and climate disasters, threatening the food security of millions of people. Some of the OIC Member States are among the category of these countries. To this end, on 31\textsuperscript{st} July, 2021, a joint FAO-WFP Hunger Hotspots: August to November 2021 Outlook was released. This report analyzes countries and situations in the world, where acute food insecurity is likely to deteriorate over the coming months between August and November 2021. According to the above mentioned Outlook, currently 11 OIC Member States are among the countries identified as hunger hotspots, requiring urgent and scaled-up assistance to address food insecurity. These countries are: Afghanistan; Burkina Faso; Chad; Mali; Niger; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Somalia; Sudan; Mozambique; and Yemen. Over 60 million people in these 11 OIC Member States are now at risk of hunger, unless they receive immediate life-saving assistance. The deteriorating
situation of these people are mostly driven by conflicts, as well as the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. These include food price spikes, movement restrictions that limit market and pastoralists activities alike, rising inflation, decreased purchasing power, and an early and prolonged rain season. The prevailing situation indicates the growing need for OIC member states to intensify their collective efforts to further promote intra-OIC cooperation in the agricultural sector in all forms and address food insecurity in a comprehensive manner, including removing production, supply and consumption constraints.

III. EMPLOYMENT AND PRODUCTIVITY

28. Intra-OIC cooperation in the domain of labour, employment and social protection is aimed at improving decent work and occupational safety and health in OIC member states as well as workforce mobility across OIC countries. During the year under review, the OIC and its relevant institutions have continued to carry out activities aimed at helping job-seekers in OIC countries develop their personal and organizational skills, knowledge, and abilities, as well as improving their competitiveness and consequently their performance. This is more so considering the fact that the unemployment rate in OIC member states as a group was 6.7% against the world average of 5.4% during 2016-2019 period. Creating decent job opportunities still continue to be a priority for the majority of OIC countries. Furthermore, due to the COVID-19 pandemic there were unprecedented employment losses in 2020 and global unemployment increased by 33 million during this year. Accordingly, during the period under review the following activities were accomplished:

(a) 5th Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers

29. As it was reported to the 36th Session of COMCEC, the Government of the United Arab Emirates graciously offered to host the 5th Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers (ICLM) during the fourth quarter of 2020. However, due to the spread of COVID-19 virus in the world, including OIC member states, the 5th ICLM was postponed. The General Secretariat is presently working with the relevant authorities in UAE to reschedule the 5th ICLM for a specific date during last quarter of 2021 or first quarter of 2022.

30. It is expected that the 5th ICLM will consider the implementation of resolutions of the previous Conferences, including the activities in the area of occupational health and safety, reducing unemployment and workforce capacity development, and social protection in OIC Member States. It will also consider the impact of COVID-19 on the labour market in OIC Member States and appoint members of the Steering Committee of Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers for the next biennium.

31. In view of the foregoing, the General Secretariat urges Member States to actively participate in the Fifth Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers when it is held.

(b) Accession to the Statute of OIC Labour Centre

32. The General Secretariat has continued to sensitize OIC Member States on the need to sign and ratify the Statute of OIC Labour Centre in order to facilitate its timely operationalisation.
In this regard, it is worth mentioning that during the period under review, the Kingdom of Bahrain ratified the Statute of OIC Labour Centre. In addition, the Republic of Togo signed the Statute of OIC Labour Centre at OIC Headquarters in Jeddah in April, 2021. As a result, the number of OIC member states, which have signed the Statute of OIC Labour Centre, reached eight (08). Two of these countries (Azerbaijan and Bahrain) have so far ratified the same.

33. In view of the foregoing, it should be noted that the Statute of OIC Labour Centre provides that it shall be applied provisionally upon signing by at least ten OIC member states and definitively enter into force when ten member states submit their instruments of ratification.

34. Against this background, the General Secretariat reiterates its earlier call on other OIC Member States to conclude all necessary arrangements to accede to the Statute of OIC Labour Centre at their earliest convenience.

(c) Training courses and publication

35. Within its mandate, SESRIC has continued to organize training programmes in the area of skills development for the benefit of OIC member states. Accordingly, during the period under review, SESRIC organized, in virtual format, the following activities:

1) Workshop on “Emerging Challenges in TVET Sector and Capacity Development Trends in OIC Member States”, 11\textsuperscript{th}-14\textsuperscript{th} January, 2021;
2) Training Workshop on “Institutional Capacity Building for Effective Labour Market Information Systems”, 1\textsuperscript{st}-4\textsuperscript{th} February, 2021;
3) Webinar on “Strengthening Private Sector Involvement in Skills Development”, 11\textsuperscript{th} February, 2021;
4) Training Course on “Advancement and Empowerment of Women’s Entrepreneurial Skills”, 8\textsuperscript{th}-11 March 2021;
5) Training Workshop on “Developing a Successful Employment and Skills Strategy”, 29\textsuperscript{th} March - 1\textsuperscript{st} April 2021;
6) Training Course on “International Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Regulations”, 14\textsuperscript{th}-22\textsuperscript{nd} April 2021;
7) Training Course on “Development of E-learning Curriculum and Relevant E-materials”, 19\textsuperscript{th}-22\textsuperscript{nd} April 2021; and

36. SESRIC, in collaboration with the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), organized online the 3rd Meeting of the OIC Public Employment Services Network (OIC-PESNET) on 2\textsuperscript{nd}-3\textsuperscript{rd} June, 2021. The aim of the meeting was to reactivate the work of this important Network, which was established in 2014. The Meeting brought together 70 representatives from the national public employment services institutions/ agencies of 36 OIC Member States. The participants discussed and adopted two important documents of the Network; namely the “Rules of Procedure” and the “OIC-PESNET Work Plan 2021-2022”.
37. SESRIC has also released the 2020 Edition of “OIC Labour Market Report”. This edition provides an in-depth assessment of the major labour market trends in OIC member states with a view to highlighting and better understanding the current situation and the main challenges in this important domain. This report was prepared during the COVID-19 pandemic, therefore a special chapter was provided to highlight the impacts of the pandemic on labour market in OIC member states as of then.

\[(d)\]  \textbf{IsDB initiatives to support employment generation}

38. IsDB, as part of its COVID-19 response, has launched a SERVE Program aimed at creating/maintaining of 314,000 jobs through financing 150,000 microenterprises and 3,480 small and medium enterprises in OIC Member States. In this regard, 3 projects have so far been approved for Djibouti, Jordan and Palestine under this program during 2020.

39. Within the framework of the IsDB’s BRAVE Women program, which aims to support 480 women-owned/led SMEs by 2021 and 960 women-owned/led SMEs by 2023, three projects have so far been approved for execution in Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Yemen. The total value of the program is US$32.2 million.

40. The IsDB also developed the 5-year Empowering West African Women Small and Medium Enterprises Program (EWASME) aimed at supporting women-owned/led Small And Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) and Very Small Enterprises (VSEs) within the rice value chain in Guinea, Niger, Senegal and Sierra Leone. Under this program, an amount of US$11.25 million has been allocated for investment purposes.

\[IV.\]  \textbf{INTRA-OIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT}

41. Intra-OIC trade activities feature cooperation actions and interventions in the area of trade promotion, financing and facilitation, and export credit insurances. Other areas of activity include halal sector development, investment promotion and capacity building programmes, including outcome of the various consultations and coordination with regional and international partners.

\[(a)\]  \textbf{Recent Outlook of Intra-OIC Trade and Investment}

42. According to ICDT data released in 2021, intra-OIC net trade volume reached US$ 350.4 billion in 2019 compared to US$ 381.4 billion in 2018 i.e. the reduction of 8.1% was due to the fluctuation of commodities prices including oil, mining and food products and also exchange rate of USD an Euro but also the non-implementation of many bilateral and regional trade agreements. Indeed, the share of intra-OIC Trade in the overall foreign trade of Member States decreased from 21.01% in 2018 to 18.95% in 2019 due to the reduction of some key OIC partners intra-OIC during this period.

43. The main intra-OIC trading countries in 2019 were: UAE, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Egypt, Oman, Pakistan, Iraq and Iran. These countries accounted for 70.9% of the intra-OIC trade for a total of US$ 497.2 billion.
44. In 2019, about 29 countries reached the 25% target of intra-OIC trade target set up in the OIC-2025: Programme of Action. These countries are: Sudan, Yemen, Djibouti, Somalia, Afghanistan, The Gambia, Niger, Tajikistan, Lebanon, Togo, Syria, Benin, Sierra Leone, Bahrain, Uganda, Jordan, Oman, Mali, Egypt, Senegal, Pakistan, Kyrgyzstan, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, Saudi Arabia and Chad.

45. As for world trade of OIC countries as a group, the share of OIC countries decreased from US$ 3.9 trillion in 2018 to US$3.8 trillion in 2019, i.e. a 2.3% of regression. This was a result of fluctuating commodity prices, the existence of tariff and non-tariff barriers to trade and investment and the fragile environment of the global economy and trade. The trade share of the OIC countries accounted for 9.3% in 2018 against 9.5% of world trade in 2019, i.e. a 2.1% growth.

46. According to WTO estimations, global trade flows are expected to decline by between 13% and 32% in 2020 due to COVID-19 pandemic. In the optimistic case, global merchandise trade was expected to fall by 12.9% in 2020. To investigate the potential impacts of the pandemic on the trade of OIC member countries, it is worth mentioning that the export structure of these countries is highly concentrated on resource and primary commodity-based products. Therefore, sharp fall in commodity prices will significantly affect the trade flows not only with the rest of the world but also among the OIC countries. Based on the current levels of major commodity prices reported by the IMF, and by making further assumptions on the price levels, the potential changes in trade flows are estimated.

47. When the projected fall in global Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) is taken into account for 2019, and assuming the OIC countries will experience a decline at the same magnitude (40%) in 2020, it is being projected that the FDI flows to OIC countries may fall to below US$ 64 billion in 2020. This is a much greater fall in investment flows as compared to the 2008-09 global financial crises, in which OIC countries experienced a fall from US$ 173 billion in 2008 to US$ 132 billion in 2009, corresponding to around 23% fall in total inflows. To reduce the impacts of the pandemic, many countries across the world are trying to speed up investment approval procedures, promote the extensive use of online tools and e-platforms, and offering incentive schemes for health related R&D to alleviate the impact on investment flows and local firms (UNCTAD, 2020b).

(b) Trade Financing, Investment and Export Credit Insurance

48. The International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), on behalf of the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB) and in coordination with the League of Arab States, hosted a high-level webinar on January 25th, 2021, on the Role of the Second Phase of the Aid for Trade Initiative for Arab States (AfTIAS 2.0) in mitigating the negative effects of COVID-19. The webinar gathered high-level officials and partners, and country representatives, where the discussion evolved around the success of the first phase of AfTIAS Program in 2014 to 2018, and the way forward in regards to designing and implementing the AfTIAS 2.0. The second phase of the Program will be implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic and post pandemic era to mitigate the negative impact on intra-trade among Arab Countries.
49. Under the umbrella of the Arab-Africa Trade Bridges (AATB) Program, three IsDB Group Private Sector Entities hosted a webinar on February 4, 2021, on key trade finance and investment components aimed at fostering regional trade. The entities included the International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC), the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC) and the Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD) in collaboration with IsDB Group Business Forum “THIQAH”. Over 1,000 development institutions, sovereign funds, banks, investment and private equity companies, and key government and corporate sector representatives were in attendance.

50. The event, which focused on the investment, trade and insurance pillars of the AATB program showcased potential business opportunities existing between the two regions particularly in key industries such as agro-food, health and pharmaceutical, building and construction materials and equipment, as well as machinery and electrical equipment. Projects and activities involving the growth of trade related investment and knowledge and technology transfer between the Arab and African countries were explored with the aim of growing AATB member base. AATB is a multi-donor, country and organization program designed to leverage new trade partnerships, strengthen existing ones, and increase trade and investment flows between the Arab and African regions. At present, its partners and members include IsDB, ITFC, ICIEC, Afreximbank, Arab Bank for Economic Development (BADEA), and OPEC Fund with member country representation consisting of Benin, Cameroon, Egypt, Morocco, Senegal, Togo, and Tunisia.

51. The ITFC, in collaboration with the Central Bank of West African States (BCEAO), organized a virtual workshop on February 18, 2021, on the trends and developments in Central bank Digital Currencies (CBDC) and its potential impact on driving inter-regional trade between West African countries and internationally. The workshop highlighted the growing interest of Central Banks in digital currencies across the globe and was aimed at exploring how BCEAO can adopt CBDC into its operations.

\[(c) \ \textbf{Trade Facilitation}\]

52. The General Secretariat has continued to sensitize member states on the need to give effect to the various OIC multilateral trade instruments in force. Although the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) on TPS-OIC could not convene during the period of this report, the status of signing and ratification of OIC economic agreements, including TPS-OIC is annexed to this Report (Annex-I).

53. The following 14 OIC Member States: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Turkey, Malaysia, Syria, Bangladesh, Iran, Pakistan and Jordan have sent to the TNC Secretariat the List of Products for tariff concessions under the TPS/OIC. Further, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Jordan, Morocco and Turkey notified to the TNC Secretariat their internal measures to be undertaken for the implementation of the TPS/OIC Rules of Origin.
The TNC Secretariat requested the concerned Member States to notify the TNC Secretariat of their relevant internal measures to be undertaken for implementation of the TPS-OIC Rules of Origin at their earliest convenience. The Committee welcomed the submission of updated concession lists to the TNC Secretariat by Turkey, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Jordan and Iran.

It is, therefore, appropriate to renew invitation to member states, which are yet to complete the signing, and ratification processes of OIC economic agreements, to endeavour to do so at their earliest convenience. In the same vein, member states who have signed and ratified the TPS-OIC may wish to forward the required documents, in line with the CFM and COMCEC resolutions. This includes the submission of their specific annual installments of reduction along with the list of products (schedules of concessions), sample of certificates and specimen impression of stamps used in their customs and to complete internal legislative, and administrative measures.

Trade Negotiating Committee Meeting. TPS-OIC Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Meeting was held virtually on 1st-2nd June 2021 with the participation of eleven Member States. In the meeting, the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) made a presentation on the historical background of and the recent developments regarding the TPS-OIC. The ICDT, as the co-secretariat of the TNC, also made a presentation on the potential economic impacts of TPS-OIC on the concerned participating States. TNC has taken important decisions regarding the Roadmap for the Implementation of TPS-OIC with the valuable contribution of participating states. The Meeting decided that the CCO and ICDT as the Co-Secretariat of TNC would continue to promote the efforts regarding future joining to this system by other Member States and organise several activities in term of capacity building in order to clarify the technical issues regarding the updating and the implementation of the TPS-OIC.

(d) Trade related capacity building programmes

SESRIC in collaboration with ICDT and Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group organised the “Virtual Training Workshop on Data Collection and Analysis of Trade-in-Services among the OIC Member States” on 23rd - 25th March 2021. About 200 participants from the National Statistical Offices, Central Banks, and Ministries of Trade of 36 OIC Member Countries as well as representatives of international organisations including Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), International Trade Centre (ITC), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), and World Trade Organisation (WTO) attended the workshop.

The Training Workshop aimed at introducing the new methodologies of collecting, harmonizing and analysing trade-in-services data to the participants and to help negotiators in trade-in-services approach new markets by using these data with a view to boosting the intra-OIC services trade while achieving the relevant goals of the OIC-2025: Plan of Action and related SDGs.
(e) Investment Promotion

59. In line with the Resolution of the 47th CFM, the General Secretariat, in coordination with the host country and the relevant OIC institutions, will organize an OIC Investment Forum in Africa in 2022. The General Secretariat, in cooperation with its relevant institutions, has already prepared a Concept Note on the Forum. The General Secretariat is in the process of contacting with the African OIC Member States for hosting the said Forum. The venue and dates will be informed in due course.

60. The main objective of the Forum is to explore investment opportunities in various sectors of the national economies in African OIC Member States, collaborating with leading OIC countries for sustainable development in Africa during the pandemic and post pandemic era. Other critical objectives of the Forum will include, among others: identify the frameworks and drivers, contributing to a favorable business environment in African OIC Member States; create an opportunity for business leaders to explore the challenges and opportunities in key strategic commodity sectors; provide a platform for OIC public and private stakeholders to meet directly with policy makers at national and regional levels with a view to sharing ideas on ways of improving the business climate; generate the opportunity for public and business actors to discuss ways of enhancing competitiveness by exchanging views on issues such as access to finance and external markets.

(f) Establishment of the Permanent OIC Investment Dispute Settlement Mechanism

61. The 43rd Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) mandated the Secretary General (Resolution No. 1/43-E) in consultation with Member States and relevant OIC organs/institutions including COMCEC to propose modalities for the creation of a permanent body for the settlement of disputes arising from the Agreement for Promotion, Protection and Guarantee of Investments among the OIC Member States. In this context, the General Secretariat in coordination with ICDT and IsDB, prepared a Concept Paper on the establishment of a permanent mechanism for the settlement of disputes out of the above-mentioned OIC Investment Agreement. The said Concept Paper was submitted to the 46th CFM, held in Abu-Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on 1st – 2nd March, 2019 as well as distributed among the Member States in February 2019.

62. Consequently, the 47th CFM, held in Niamey, Republic of Niger, in November 2020, noted the Concept Paper contained in the Report of the Secretary General (Resolution No. 2/47-E (B)), which proposed modalities to the creation of a said permanent OIC body and requested the General Secretariat to submit the Concept Paper to an open-ended Intergovernmental Experts Group Meeting, to enable further discussions among Member States and relevant OIC institutions with a view to determining the appropriate modalities towards fulfilling the requirements of the above Agreement. The Expert Group Meeting could not take place in 2021 due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The dates of the Meeting will be agreed upon and communicate in due course.
(g) Halal Sector Development

63. The 20th Board of Directors (BOD) and the 15th General Assembly (GA) Meetings of SMIIC were held virtually on 2nd -3rd November, 2020 respectively. The 20th Board of Directors and the 15th General Assembly Meetings approved the membership of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh, Republic of Chad and the Republic of Yemen as the new members of the SMIIC. The membership were effective from January 1st, 2021.

64. In line with the 47th CFM Resolution, the 8th World Halal Summit was held under the theme “Halal for All, Halal in All Aspects, from Production to Consumption”. This large event was conducted for three full days on 21-23 December 2020 in Istanbul, Turkey, in Pullman Convention Center as well as followed online from all around the world. It was organized by the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC).

65. SMIIC organized the following training courses:

   a) A two-day training for the staff of Standards and Metrology Department of Public Authority for Industry of State of Kuwait (PAI), held virtually on 14th – 15th December, 2020. The training was conducted in Arabic.

   b) OIC/SMIIC 1:2019 - General Requirements for Halal Food- Foundation Training was held virtually on 16th -18th February, 2021. The total 41 experts from SMIIC Member States attended the Training.

   c) Training on “Procedures for the Technical work and SMIIC IS” for its Members, held virtually on 1st March, 2021. SMIIC Technical Committee Secretaries, Chairmen, Committee Members, User Administrators attended the event.

   d) OIC/SMIIC 2:2019 - Requirements for bodies providing halal certification - Foundation Training was held virtually on March 10–11, 2021. The SMIIC General Secretariat organized the event in cooperation with the Halal Accreditation Agency (HAK) of the Republic of Turkey. A total 39 delegates from SMIIC Member States participated at the Training course.

66. SMIIC Metrology Council Task Force Group finalized the 3-year Metrology Council Annual Working Plan via its meeting held virtually on February 3, 2021. The plan includes capacity building and development program for the SMIIC Member States.

67. SMIIC conducted its virtual 9th Technical Committees Week successfully on March 15, 2021 - April 1, 2021. The representatives of IIFA and GSO as the liaison organizations and 780 attendees from 28 SMIIC Member States participated in the TC Weeks.

V. Tourism Sector Development

68. As it was reported to the 36th Session of COMCEC, the 47th Session of Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), commended the celebration of the City of Tourism Award, and encouraged OIC member states to actively participate in the commemorative programmes to be
undertaken in their respective countries. All member states were also encouraged to organize annual events on Islamic tourism in order to promote intra-OIC tourist flow.

(a) 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers

69. The Republic of Azerbaijan graciously suggested to host the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) in 2020 under the theme of “The Role of Local Communities in Tourism Development”. In line with the Resolution of the 47th CFM, the 11th Session of the ICTM was postponed due to COVID-19 pandemic. The General Secretariat is working with the relevant authorities of the Republic of Azerbaijan on the new dates of the 11th ICTM, probably to be held in the first quarter of 2022.

70. The following agenda items are proposed to be reviewed and discussed at the 11th Session of the ICTM: Implementation of the OIC Framework on Tourism Development and the ICTM Resolutions on Tourism Development; OIC City of Tourism Award (2022-2023); Implementation of the Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member States; Islamic Tourism standards; Progress on Tourism Infrastructure Projects; Development and Promotion of Islamic culture and heritage Tourism; OIC Tourism Fairs; Tourism Research, Training, and Marketing.

(b) Commemoration of OIC City of Tourism Award 2021

71. With regard arrangements for the commemoration of Gabala as the OIC City of Tourism 2020, the General Secretariat has communicated with the State Tourism Agency of the Republic of Azerbaijan on this matter. To this end, the Government of Azerbaijan has confirmed that it will organize the commemoration ceremony on the sidelines of the 11th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), to be held in Gabala, Republic of Azerbaijan. All the planned activities on the OIC City of Tourism as well as 11th Session of the ICTM could not take place in 2020 and 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The new dates of the commemoration ceremony of the OIC City of Tourism in 2022 will be agreed upon and communicated in due course.

(c) Tourism Capacity Building Programs

72. Within the framework of its Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB) and in collaboration with ICDT, SESRIC organised an online Training Workshop on “Tourism Destination Marketing Strategies” on 22nd - 26th March, 2021 for the benefit of National Tourism Authorities of 24 OIC Member Countries.

73. Further, SESRIC organised an online Training Course on “Halal Tourism and Muslim-Friendly Hospitality Services” on 22nd -26th March, 2021 for the benefit of participants from the National Tourism Office of Comoros. This was in collaboration with the Islamic Tourism Centre (ITC) of Malaysia.

74. The main objectives of the training course were to provide insights on the new trends of Muslim-Friendly Tourism (MFT) and the role of governments in encouraging this segment,
in addition to discussing the opportunities and challenges in developing and marketing Halal tourism. Participants developed better understanding on the ways and means of attracting Muslim tourists from all over the world by offering facilities and services in accordance with Islamic principles. The training course highlighted the importance of MFT in the OIC member countries and emphasized the need for raising awareness and collaboration among all public and private tourism stakeholders working in the domain of tourism, including tour operators, hotel managements, relevant ministries, religious authorities and academicians. This training course was designed in line with the virtual training solutions undertaken by SESRIC in order to better serve the Centre’s training activities and keep participants motivated and engaged during this difficult time of global crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic.

In addition, within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme and in line with the OIC-TVET Strategic Roadmap 2020-2025, SESRIC organised a Training of Trainers (ToT) Course on “Tourism and Hospitality Services” on 29th March – 02nd April, 2021 for the benefit of participants from the National TVET Institutions of 20 OIC Member Countries. The course was provided by the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education at the Ministry of National Education of Turkey.

Moreover, in line with the Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB), SESRIC organised a Training Course on “Effective Strategic Planning for the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Development” on 24-26th August 2021 through an online video conferencing platform. The training course was provided by a competent expert from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Arts of the Republic of Benin for the benefit of nearly 50 participants from the National Tourism Authorities of 18 OIC member countries.

The main objective of the training course was to strengthen the technical capacities of the participants in developing strategic planning for the advancement of the tourism sector in their respective countries. The course also provided insights into various subjects, including the concepts and implications of sustainable tourism development, the approach, method and tools used in elaborating effective strategic planning for sustainable tourism development at the national and local levels.

(d) Tourism statistics

SESRIC organised 2 online training courses on ‘Tourism Statistics’ provided by National Institute of Statistics (INS) of Tunisia (13th -15th December 2020) and the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) (18th – 21st January 2021) for the benefit of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of 17 OIC countries.

In addition, within the framework of its Statistical Experience Sharing Webinar Series, SESRIC also organised a Webinar on ‘Tourism Statistics’ on 24th February, 2021 with the participation of 70 attendees from 17 OIC countries.

(e) Tourism research and publication

SESRIC prepared and published a comprehensive report on “International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges 2020” as a main technical background document for the upcoming 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM).
VI. COOPERATION IN THE DOMAIN OF TRANSPORT

81. OIC member states recognize that transport is among the key catalysts of economic development and international competitiveness, in view of its role as a critical logistics and service support sector. The improvement of transport and communications facilities among the OIC member states remains an important area of intra-OIC cooperation. In this regard, this section summarizes the recent developments and planned OIC activities in this important sector.

Second OIC Conference of Transport Ministers

82. As it was reported to the 36th Session of COMCEC, the 46th CFM held in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 1st-2nd March, 2019, requested the OIC Secretary General to conclude necessary arrangements with the relevant authorities in the Republic of Sudan for the early convening of the Second OIC Conference of Transport Ministers. To this end, the General Secretariat is presently working with the relevant authorities in Sudan on the rescheduling of the Conference. It is expected that the Conference will evaluate the implementation of the OIC resolutions on transportation and review the progress on execution of OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway project.

83. With regard to execution of OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway project, since the 36th Session of COMCEC no further action has been undertaken from the side of the concerned OIC Member States, which are involved in this project. The General Secretariat has not received any update from the concerned countries on their specific national components of this transport corridor. The role of the General Secretariat is now to continue advocating and following up the implementation of this project with concerned Member States. To this end, the General Secretariat will continue to sensitize the concerned Member States on the need to include the respective national segments along the OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway corridor in their national development plans and submit their well-designed projects for securing adequate technical support and financing from OIC Member States and its development partners.

VII. ROLE OF PRIVATE SECTOR

84. Private sector growth is widely acknowledged to be an essential component in promoting sustainable socio-economic development and providing more economic opportunities in any given society. Recognizing this, the various CFM sessions called on member states to mainstream the role of the Private sector for the advancement of socio-economic development and cooperation within the OIC. Accordingly, this section of report summarizes the activities of the relevant OIC institutions.

(a) 30th Board of Directors and 36th General Assembly Meetings of ICCIA

85. The General Secretariat always sensitizes OIC Member States on the need to increase membership of ICCIA, to improve its image and visibility at all levels. To this end, the 30th Board of Directors and the 36th General Assembly Meeting of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) were held in Karachi, Pakistan on 4th-5th
September 2020, respectively. The meetings approved the planned activities of the Chamber for the year 2021.

86. The major planned activities of ICCIA for 2021 include: Workshops on Strategic Commodities (Cassava, Wheat, Rice, Sugar, Dairy products); Training Program on Digital Transformation; Forum on “Invest in Digital Economy”; Chamber Academy Program for OIC Countries; Forum on Traditional Handicraft; Forum on Entrepreneurship and Start-ups; Investment Forum in Islamic Tourism and Medical Tourism Forum; Investment Forum in Higher Education; Halal E-Commerce; Investment Forum in Organic Agriculture; Sports Investment Forum; and Businesswomen and Woman Executives Forum.

(b) ICCIA’s activities/projects

87. ICCIA’s is proactively creating linkages with the International Organisations that are working within the priority projects and sectors of ICCIA to create partnerships that will enable its objectives to gain global visibility and momentum. In this respect, the ICCIA is developing its knowledge on OIC and UN agencies to better utilize the International Organisations for both technical partnerships, knowledge sharing and funding purposes. Since November 2020, ICCIA has established contact with multiple agencies within the OIC and UN world to collaborate on projects based on mutual objectives. ICCIA is also developing its database on International Organisations and Foundations, which will be an essential tool for its team and its members to be able to tap into these partnerships for their country related projects. The ICCIA has published “A Better World Vol 7: SDG 17-Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development”.

88. The 47th CFM commended the efforts of ICCIA in setting-up the (a) Halal Company and (b) Company for Establishment and Management of the Cross Border Gates (GTI) in collaboration with the Union of Turkish Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB).

(c) Establishment of OIC Arbitration Centre

89. As it was reported to the 36th Session of COMCEC, the 47th CFM welcomed the initiative of the ICCIA in the establishment of the OIC Arbitration Centre in collaboration with the Union of Turkish Chambers and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB) in Istanbul, Turkey, as ICCIA’s affiliated organ, and took note of the signing of the Headquarters Agreement of OIC Arbitration Center, between the Ministry of Commerce of the Republic of Turkey and ICCIA.


91. The Islamic Chamber continues its work in partnership with the TOBB team to prepare for the inauguration and operation of the center through: Continuing to promote the center and explain its importance and advantages to the private sector in the member countries; Conducting meetings with the Institutional arbitration experts around the world to introduce
the center to them and hear their suggestions; Preparing the job description for the Secretary General of the center and his/her deputy; Study systems of similar centers in the world to suggest the appropriate rules for the center; etc.

(d) Activities of Islamic Corporation for Development of Private Sector (ICD)

92. The year 2020 staged a positive shift for ICD, with total approvals improving from USD147.50 million in the previous year to USD306.60 million. More than half of the operations were allocated to high impact sectors (including finance and infrastructure sectors) and in low and lower-middle income countries. The total approvals amount includes a dedicated USD250.00 million COVID-19 stimulus package designed to provide assistance in the form of short to medium-term financial instruments for SMEs and the private sector in ICD’s member countries.

93. ICD’s robust response to COVID-19 has triggered an unprecedented digital transformation that is sure to amplify its development impact and underpin the Corporation’s progress towards the SDGs. A dedicated digital platform called the Bridge was established to help facilitate information sharing among ICD’s partner financial institutions, enhance market and business intelligence analysis, open access to fintech resources and cloud services, reduce financial transaction costs and promote ICD’s advisory services. In addition, the “ICD Finnovation Award 2020” was launched to recognize, showcase and encourage financial institutions that provide an outstanding solution for the financial industry with the opportunity to receive funding from ICD to scale up innovation.

94. ICD remained active in critical policy dialogues including the Finance in Common Summit and the G20 Riyadh Summit. ICD is a proud signatory of the Finance in Common Summit’s joint declaration in which a coalition of public development banks stated their willingness to contribute to the COVID-19 recovery and align with sustainable finance principles. Since Saudi Arabia assumed its G20 presidency in December 2019, ICD has participated in and contributed to supporting the G20 working and engagement groups throughout the year.

95. ICD successfully returned to the public sukuk market and debuted a five-year USD 600 million sukuk, the largest sukuk issuance since inception. Being subscribed to by 37 international and regional investors is testament of the investors’ confidence regarding ICD’s credit story and its initiatives in promoting private sector activity. The capital raised will help ICD in containing the economic and social effects of COVID-19 and building resilient, competitive private sector in its member countries.

(e) Development of Private Sector

96. In line with the 47th CFM Resolution, the General Secretariat, in coordination with the host country and the relevant OIC institutions, will organize an OIC Private Sector Forum in 2022. The General Secretariat has drafted a Concept Note and submitted it to the relevant OIC institutions for their inputs. The General Secretariat is in the process of contacting with the OIC Member States for hosting the said Forum. The venue and dates will be communicated in due course.
The main objective of the Private Sector Forum is to strengthen the role of the private sector in OIC Member States as an engine of growth, while capitalizing on the experiences and lessons learned from different parts of the OIC region; and institutionalizing policy dialogue at OIC level on the development of the private sector. Within this context, the other specific objectives of the Forum, among others, are: mainstreaming the role of the private sector in socio-economic development during the COVID-19 pandemic and post pandemic era; increasing the share of Private Sector in GDP and employment; developing the volume of private sector investment; introducing activities to address labor, innovation, entrepreneurship, youth sustainable development and inclusive growth; strengthening the role of the private sector in the accelerated implementation of national and OIC programmes of economic development through better mobilization of their resources and potential; enabling networking opportunities between the private sector actors from OIC Member States to support the intra-OIC trade and investment.

VIII. POVERTY ALLEVIATION PROGRAMMES

Alleviation of poverty remains a major challenge to the developmental efforts of OIC member states. To this end, the various OIC poverty alleviation initiatives are aimed at creating jobs by fostering skills, competitiveness and entrepreneurship. Accordingly, this segment will highlight the latest developments with regard to OIC poverty alleviation programmes such as Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD) and Special Programme for Development of Africa (SPDA). It also includes activities of relevant OIC institutions in the area of poverty alleviation.

(a) Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD)

The 36th Session of COMCEC reiterated its earlier call on OIC Member States to redeem their respective pledges to the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD) and requested the IsDB Group to report back about the shortfall in reaching the target capital of the Fund.

As of 1st January 2020, the ISFD capital contribution had reached US$2.7 billion, committed by 49 OIC Member States (US$1.7 billion) and the IsDB (US$1 billion). This represents 27% of the targeted capital of the Fund.

The total amount of paid contributions stood at US$2.585 billion, of which US$1 billion was paid by the IDB and US$1.585 billion by member states. Out of 49 OIC member states, 28 have fully redeemed their pledges, 10 partially, and 11 have yet to redeem their pledges. Eight (8) OIC member states (Afghanistan, Djibouti, Guyana, Kyrgyzstan, Libya, Tajikistan, Somalia and UAE) have not made any commitment with regard to ISFD.

Cumulatively, ISFD, since its inception in 2007, has provided a total of US$1.333 billion in the form of concessional loans (US$1.07 billion) and grants (US$263 million) to finance projects and programs in OIC countries. The main sectors of focus have been (i) Agriculture (45%); (ii) Education (24%); (iii) Health (13%); and (iv) Finance (13%). The OIC Least
Developed Countries (LDCs) have been the main beneficiaries, receiving more than 80% of the Fund’s financing.

103. In line with the relevant resolutions of CFM, the General Secretariat has sensitized member states of the need to make in-kind contributions to ISFD through allocation of Wakf landed property for ISFD and through the mobilization of contributions from high net-worth persons and philanthropists from OIC member states. Subsequently, Benin, Burkina Faso, Comoros and Cote D’Ivoire have allocated plots of land to the ISFD within the framework of the Waqf programme.

104. The ISFD is in need of funds to expand its activities towards alleviating poverty and improving social services and infrastructures. Accordingly, the General Secretariat will continue to sensitize the Member States to pay-up their subscribed contributions to the Fund and announce additional pledges to meet the target of US$10 billion set for the Fund by the OIC Leaders in 2005.

(b) Special Programme for the Development of Africa

105. The SPDA is a US$12 billion facility launched in 2008 and aimed at advancing pro-poor socio-economic activities. The sectoral priorities under the SPDA are geared towards promoting economic growth and regional integration. The SPDA focuses on (i) agriculture and food security; (ii) water and sanitation; (iii) power generation and distribution; (iv) transport infrastructure; (v) education; and (vi) eliminating major communicable diseases.

106. In November 2012, when the approval phase of SPDA was completed, the level of funding commitments to the Programme by IDB Group reached US$ 5 billion, while those from other international partners amounted to US$7 billion. A total of 480 projects have so far been approved for financing under the SPDA in 22 OIC African member states.

107. Since the focus has been on deepening the implementation of approved projects to ensure that the expected outcomes are achieved. In this regard, it is noteworthy that the following projects were completed successfully, while other are still under implementation phase:

- Roseires Dam in Sudan (US$53.33 mln);
- Basic Urban Infrastructure for Social Housing Project in Bamako, Mali (US$6.7 mln);
- Social Housing Project in Bamako, Mali (US$5.7 mln);
- Linguere-Matam Road, Senegal (US$12.12 mln);
- Construction of the Dapaong-Ponio-Border Road, Burkina Faso (US$7 mln);
- Construction of Koudougou Dedougou Road Project, Burkina Faso (US$ 10 mln);
- Construction of Bassar- Katchamba Road Project, Togo (US$7.5 mln); and
- Post-Conflict Reconstruction Programme for the Centre-North-West in Cote d'Ivoire (US$20 mln), among others.
108. The implementation of SPDA is getting close to its end and an analysis of projects completed will be undertaken in due course in order to assess achievements under SPDA.

(c) **Support for Development of the Lake Chad Basin Countries**

109. The 46th Session of the CFM, which was held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates on 1st-2nd March 2019, requested OIC Member States and relevant OIC development financing institutions, including IsDB Group and ISF, to support the Transaqua project. In addition, CFM called on OIC Member States and relevant OIC institutions to support the Lake Chad Basin countries’ efforts towards addressing humanitarian and developmental needs of displaced persons and communities in the Lake Chad Basin area.

110. In giving effect to this resolution, SESRIC and the Lake Chad Basin Commission (LCBC) jointly organized a Training Workshop on “Water Governance and Integrated Water Management” on 19th-22nd October, 2020 for the benefit of the national water resource institutions of the Lake Chad Basin countries through an online video conferencing platform. The training workshop aimed at strengthening the technical capacities of the professional staff at the national water resource institutions in Cameroon, Chad, Niger, Nigeria, Libya and Sudan through providing insights on how to analyze, formulate, and implement water policies, plans and programmes by using an Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM) approach. It also aimed at exchanging views and experiences on how to overcome the technical know-how gaps in the domain of water governance and discuss ways and means of increasing cooperation between the national water resource institutions.

IX. **ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO OIC MEMBER STATES AND MUSLIM COMMUNITIES IN NON-OIC COUNTRIES**

111. Development assistance remains an essential tool for growth and reduction of poverty in the needy OIC member states. To this end, some well-endowed OIC Member States have continued to contribute to financing of the various development projects in the needy OIC Member States and other developing countries in line with the ideals of partnership, mutual assistance and solidarity. Accordingly, this section of the report summarizes the assistance provided by some OIC Member States to other OIC Member States as well as non-OIC countries in recent years.

(a) **Economic and Technical Assistance by Saudi Arabia**

112. The Government of Saudi Arabia has continued to extend economic and technical assistance to OIC Member States facing developmental challenges. Specifically, during 2019-2020, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia through King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre has provided humanitarian and relief aid to 33 OIC Member States with the total amount of US$ 1.5 billion. These OIC countries were: Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Gambia, Guinea, Gabon, Jordan, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Syria (membership was suspended in 2012), Tajikistan, and Yemen.
This aid was distributed across a range of sectors, including food security, health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation, protection, shelter and non-food items, and early recovery.

113. By providing humanitarian and relief aid, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia seeks to support the efforts of the needy OIC Member States to promote steady, comprehensive and sustainable economic growth, including eradication of poverty, elimination of hunger, provision of good health and wellbeing, quality education, clean water and hygiene, building resilient infrastructures, and fostering innovation, among others.

(b) Development Assistance by United Arab Emirates

114. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) continues to play a leading role in the area of financing development in other countries. During 2016-2019, UAE provided US$ 20.2 billion in development assistance to OIC Member States in Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa. The UAE spent its development assistance on developmental projects, humanitarian and charitable aid.

115. The sectors to which UAE directed its assistance in African countries included education and training, water supply, health sector, food security, basic infrastructure, humanitarian and relief assistance. The UAE’s assistance to Asian countries included supporting national budgets, building power plants, education and training, construction and city development, trade regulatory policies, supporting religious organization and social welfare services.

116. The UAE assistance to Middle East countries included road transportation infrastructure, social welfare services, and agricultural land development. It further assisted in the reconstruction and development process in war-affected zones in Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and Mali, among others. The UAE also provided support to a number of countries in South America, like Suriname and Guyana, in the areas of education, water supply, road development and the provision of basic food commodities and support for their national budgets.

(c) Official Development Assistance by the Republic of Turkey

117. Turkey conducted assistance activities in OIC Member States in 2019 such as Palestine, Somalia, Libya, Bangladesh, Niger, Kyrgyzstan, Sudan, Afghanistan, Iraq, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Albania, Pakistan, Tajikistan and The Gambia, Benin, Burkina Faso, Djibouti, Chad, Gabon, Mauritania, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, Togo, Uganda, Yemen, are among the foremost partner OIC countries. However, Turkey’s overall development cooperation includes the majority of the OIC Member States.

118. Turkey effectively delivers assistance to meet the basic needs of those affected by humanitarian crises. The restoration of monuments, establishment of cultural and youth centers as well as technical cooperation, infrastructure, scholarships and education supports aimed at sustainable development are also among the priorities of Turkey’s assistance programme.
During 2019, Turkey extended a total amount of US$ 300,683,351.77 to OIC Member States for this purpose.

(d) Economic and Technical Assistance provided by the State of Qatar to other OIC Member States

Qatar continues to help the needy OIC Member States meet their social, economic, health and education needs. During 2019-2020, Qatar provided US$894 million in economic and technical assistance to 37 OIC Member States. These OIC countries were: Azerbaijan, Afghanistan, Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Guinea Bissau, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Lebanon, Mali, Malaysia, Morocco, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Palestine, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Oman, Syria (membership was suspended in 2012), Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Turkey, Uganda, and Yemen. The assistance was allocated to such main sectors as infrastructure, education, healthcare, relief and economic development. By focusing on these sectors, Qatar aims to support OIC Member States’ efforts to promote sustainable development and human wellbeing.

(e) Economic and Technical Assistance provided by the Kingdom of Morocco to other OIC Member States

The Kingdom of Morocco, during 2019-2020, provided medical assistance to more than 20 OIC Member States with a view to supporting their efforts to fight COVID-19. The Kingdom also provided medical, humanitarian and food assistance to Lebanon to help the latter face economic challenges and COVID-19 repercussions. In addition and in connection with the spread of COVID-19, Bayt Mal Al Quds Agency adopted a two-phased US$ 250,000 Emergency Plan to support priority sectors (health, food, education) in Al-Quds Al Sharif. In addition to socio-economic assistance programs, Bayt Mal Al Quds Agency also supported and financed several projects amounting to US$ 3.3 million in education, health, culture, youth and sport sectors in Al-Quds Al Sharif.

(f) Humanitarian Aid provided by the Republic of Kazakhstan to other OIC Member States

The Republic of Kazakhstan supplied more than 11,000 tons wheat flour to nearby OIC countries, such as Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, as humanitarian aid during 2019-2020. It also made voluntary monetary contribution in support of OIC activities, Al Aqsa and Al Quds Funds; OIC Fund for Rohingya; OIC Office in Niger; COMSTECH, and UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), among others.

(g) Economic and Technical Assistance provided by the Arab Republic of Egypt to other OIC Member States

Egypt provided 23 million Egyptian pound in economic and technical assistance to 12 OIC Member States during the year under review. These beneficiary OIC countries were: Cameroon, Chad, Djibouti, Gabon, Uganda, Mozambique, Somalia, Niger, Sudan, Mali,
Comoros, and Burkina Faso. The assistance was allocated to such sectors as education, healthcare, food aid and security.

(h) **Humanitarian Aid provided by the Republic of Iraq to other OIC Member States**

124. The Republic of Iraq supplied food, fuel and medical materials to 3 OIC Member States, such as Lebanon, Sudan and Indonesia, as humanitarian aid during 2019-2020.

(i) **IsDB Group’s Strategic Preparedness and Response Programme for COVID-19 Pandemic**

125. On 4th April 2020, the IsDB Group launched a US$2.3 billion Strategic Preparedness and Response Programme. The programme aims to support Member States’ efforts to protect against the COVID-19 pandemic, curb its impact and promote recovery. It follows a holistic approach in the short, medium and long terms and endeavors to put Member States on the track of economic recovery again by restoring livelihoods, building resilience and resuming economic activity.

126. The following are the contributions of IsDB Group members and partners to the programme:

1. Islamic Development Bank (IsDB): US$1.52 billion
2. Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD): US$50 million
3. International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC): US$300 million
4. Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD): US$250 million
5. Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC): US$150 million

X. **CONCLUSION**

127. The COVID-19 pandemic is a worldwide problem that requires the cooperation of member states, OIC relevant institutions, regional and international organizations to work together. Therefore, the intra-OIC cooperation becomes ever more needed not only to eradicate the results of the COVID-19 pandemic but also to establish effective policies and programmes to mitigate it’s socio-economic impact in the Member States. The COVID-19 pandemic constitutes an unprecedented challenge with severe economic and social consequences for many OIC member countries. The situation is particularly alarming given the continuous weakening of the economic performance of many OIC countries in the last few years.

128. In this regard, the OIC countries should exert more efforts to create an enabling environment to promote production and trade and to attract more foreign investments. This is particularly important in the face of a possible transformation of global value chains due to rising protectionist trade policies. Moreover, OIC countries accounted for only 10% of global intermediate goods exports, reflecting their lower participation in the global supply chains. In this context, the OIC countries need to reduce trade costs, improve technological
capacities and increase their preparedness to meet supply chain risks. Existing capacities in many OIC countries are not conducive enough to attract great investments during the post-pandemic period. However, their geographical proximity to major economic hubs could put them in an advantageous position.

129. The upcoming OIC Ministerial Conferences on Tourism, and Labour will further strengthen intra-OIC cooperation in these important sectors during the post-pandemic period. The outcomes of these conferences are vital for further consolidating intra-OIC cooperation in such critical sectors as developing tourism; promoting productive employment and decent work for all within OIC region, among others.

130. Furthermore, the continuation and expansion of OIC trade and investments related activities remains an effective tool for increasing intra-OIC trade and investment as well as facilitating the integration of OIC member states in the global economy. In the same vein, development assistance by well-endowed OIC member states to needy OIC member states contributes to their economic growth, thus becoming an important component of intra-OIC cooperation and solidarity during the COVID-19 pandemic and post pandemic era. In this regard, the convening of the OIC Investment Forum in Africa will highlight the investment potential of Africa and will attract investments to the region.

131. The creation of a permanent OIC investment dispute settlement mechanism in line with Article 17 of the OIC Agreement for Promotion, Protection and Guarantee of Investments is also on the agenda of the OIC and it will definitely promote and attract foreign direct investments and trade in the Member States of the OIC.

OIC General Secretariat
Department of Economic Affairs,
3rd October, 2021
# Annexure-I

## LIST OF MEMBER STATES

**WHO SIGNED/RATIFIED THE DIFFERENT AGREEMENTS AND STATUTES ON ECONOMIC, COMMERCIAL AND TECHNICAL COOPERATION AMONG OIC MEMBER STATES**

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1st October, 2021