



**Standing Committee  
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation  
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

**Proceedings of the 7th Meeting of the COMCEC  
Trade Working Group**

**“STRENGTHENING THE COMPLIANCE OF THE  
OIC MEMBER STATES TO INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARDS”**



**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE  
March 2016**



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**PROCEEDINGS**

**OF THE 7<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP**

**ON**

**“STRENGTHENING THE COMPLIANCE OF THE OIC MEMBER STATES TO  
INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS”**

**(February 25th, 2016, Ankara, Turkey)**

**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE**

**March 2016**

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## Introduction:

- The Seventh Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group was held on February 25th, 2016 in Ankara, TURKEY with the theme of “Strengthening the Compliance of the OIC Member States to International Standards”.
- The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 20 Member States, which have notified their focal points for the Trade Working Group namely, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Mali, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sudan, Uzbekistan and Turkey. Representatives of COMCEC Coordination Office, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (IDB/ITFC), UNIDO and the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC) have also attended the Meeting.
- The Representatives of the Member States have shared their experiences, achievements and challenges in this critical field. Moreover, extensive deliberations were made on the theme with a view to formulate policy advises for strengthening the compliance of the OIC Member States to international standards.
- The Meeting has considered the Studies namely "Strengthening the Compliance of the OIC Member States to International Standards" commissioned by the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) and the "COMCEC Trade Outlook 2015" prepared by the CCO.
- The presentations and deliberations made during the meeting highlighted the importance of the harmonization with the international standards by the Member Countries for especially reaching higher levels of export competitiveness and intra-OIC trade figures. In this regard, the Working Group elaborated on a draft “Room Document” which includes some policy advises in the related session of the Meeting.

## 1. Opening Remarks:

- The Meeting has started with the recitation form Holy Quran. During the opening, Mr. Metin EKER, Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office welcomed all participants to the Seveth Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group and gave a brief account on the COMCEC, its Strategy and COMCEC Trade Working Group. He emphasized that the COMCEC Strategy aims at making COMCEC a knowledge based forum which will produce and disseminate knowledge and provide a platform for the Member States to share their experiences in the cooperation areas.

- Afterwards, Mr. EKER emphasized the importance of standards specifically with respect to trade facilitation. During his opening remarks, Mr. EKER also briefly mentioned on the present state of the OIC Member Countries in compliance to international standards and main actions to be taken in future for the improvement based on the main findings of the Analytical Study prepared specifically to the Meeting.
- Mr. Yousef JUNAID, Consul General, Consulate General of Pakistan in İstanbul was elected as the chairman of the Meeting. Mr. JUNAID firstly thanked all delegates and the CCO for electing him as chairman. He then shortly summarized the programme of the Meeting. Afterwards, he called upon the CCO to make the first presentation of the Meeting.

## 2. COMCEC Trade Outlook

- Ms. Vildan BARAN, expert in the COMCEC Coordination Office has presented some of the key findings of the COMCEC Trade Outlook 2015. In her presentation, Ms. BARAN focused on the recent trends and main characteristics of the trade between OIC Member States and the world and recent trends in intra-OIC trade.
- Concerning the trade between OIC Member states and the world, Ms. BARAN stated that total OIC trade remained at around the same levels of USD 4.1 trillion in the last three years. Ms. BARAN stated that total OIC exports decreased slightly by 3.0 per cent in the second consecutive year in 2014 whereas total OIC imports continued to increase modestly in the last three years. Ms. BARAN pointed out main factors accounted for the weakness of exports in 2014 including the sluggish pace of world demand growth, oil price collapse and fall in prices for other commodities and ongoing political instability in the Middle East. Ms. BARAN also shared some figures about total OIC trade, share of OIC trade in global trade and the breakdown of total OIC exports and imports by countries and sectors.
- Ms. BARAN also stated that country and product concentration in total OIC exports is high which makes them vulnerable to external shocks that might result from decreasing demand in these countries and/or falling commodity prices. She said that in the commodity composition of total OIC exports, the share of mineral fuels, oils and related products was 59 percent in 2014.
- Ms. BARAN also elaborated on the intra-OIC trade. She shared some figures about intra-OIC trade and commodity composition of intra-OIC exports. She expressed that the share of intra-OIC trade peaked at 18.9 percent in 2014 and 20 per cent intra-OIC trade target was surpassed by 30 member states by 2014.

### 3. Rationale for Compliance to International Standards

- Mr. Ben SHEPHERD, Principal of Developing Trade Consultants LLC., made a presentation titled “Rationale for Compliance to International Standards”. His presentation focused on providing answers for the following questions: Why international standards are important, what is the impact of compliance to international standards on global as well as OIC Member Countries’ trade.
- Mr. SHEPHERD began his presentation by providing some key messages of his presentation. He explained that standards are one part of quality infrastructure while compliance with international standards is another part of a broad-based approach to promoting quality. He said that some other key elements of quality infrastructure are Standards bodies, Testing laboratories, Accreditation bodies, Certification bodies and Metrology organizations.
- Mr. SHEPHERD emphasized that among others there are three main rationales for complying with international standards namely; Market access, export competitiveness, and WTO law related to compliance. He added that harmonization with international standards can facilitate trade, and have onward gains for employment and income.
- Mr. SHEPHERD then told that standards could be distinguished in several types such as mandatory vs. voluntary and private vs. public. He identified standards as documents that lay down characteristics that a good, service, or system should meet in order to be considered compliant. He also informed the participants that standards are becoming increasingly important in the world economy, with a shift from mandatory/public standards to voluntary/private standards. He expressed that several reasons for this shift especially in developed economies could be greater room for technological innovation, co-existence of multiple compliant products in the marketplace and ease of updating standards as conditions change.
- Mr. SHEPHERD told that standards can have major effects on international trade, especially in an era tariff rates are at historical lows in many countries. In specific, he argued that even if other market access barriers (such as tariffs and quotas) are lifted, standards remain as a “gatekeeper” of the domestic market. On the other hand, he also stressed that standards are not like other measures that affect trade in a way that they are rarely protectionist in intent, but sometimes have effects in practice. He added that divergent standards in particular can be a source of trade costs.
- In later part of his presentation Mr. SHEPHERD explained that instruments have been developed to try and limit the additional trade costs associated with standards while

two main instruments are namely; harmonization and mutual recognition. He also expressed that some countries have engaged in mutual recognition of conformity assessments to avoid costly retesting. He underlined that harmonization can be taken unilaterally, regionally and multilaterally through the use of international standards.

- In final part of his presentation, Mr. SHEPHERD shared some information on international standards. He argued that international standards are usually not mandatory unless they are translated into mandatory domestic standards and even for voluntary standards, a process of domestic translation is usually undertaken. He then shared some of the main bodies for issuing international standards namely; ISO, IEC and CODEX.
- Mr. SHEPHERD, concluded his presentation by expressing that besides benefits, international standards can also come with challenges. He exemplified by telling that they can be costly to implement, which is a particular barrier for developing countries, while they can unduly reflect the preferences of the countries that were most active in designing them, typically developed countries. In this respect, he emphasized that it is critically important for OIC Member Countries to play an active part in the development of international standards, so that they are set appropriately and reflect diverse circumstances.

#### **4. Compliance of the OIC Member States to the International Standards**

- Mr. SHEPHERD made a second presentation in the Meeting which focused on the standards in the OIC Member Countries.
- Mr. SHEPHERD firstly expressed that the Analytical Study contains only a partial analysis of export barriers faced by OIC member states in third markets since there is no global database of standards, covering public and private, mandatory and voluntary.
- He explained that based on available data three measures were examined for intra and extra OIC exports of three OIC geographical groupings. These measures are; Coverage (% of imports affected by measures), Frequency (% of product lines affected by measures) and Prevalence (Average number of measures per product). Overall, he summarized that the Asian Group faces the overall heaviest standards burden due to product mix. He also explained that TBTs are more of an issue for all groups than SPS, which are primarily important for cocoa (Africa), and oils and fats (Asia).



- Mr. SHEPHERD also shared some information on the standards faced by OIC member states in intra-OIC trade for each geographical groupings of the OIC. He expressed that standards generally cover a lesser proportion of intra-OIC trade compared with extra-OIC trade. On the other hand, he also told that a number of sectors stand out as having relatively heavy coverage such as: Electrical equipment, Machinery and Animal & vegetable fats and oils.
- In second half of his presentation, Mr. SHEPHERD provided some information on OIC Member States' use of international standards. He explained that based on responses of relevant Member Countries as well as other secondary sources, it appears that majority of the OIC Member States are certainly involved in the issue of international standards however practice varies considerably, from almost no use of international standards, to relatively strong use. He added that generally more advanced standards systems in the respected Member Countries use a greater proportion of international standards, while still enabling flexibility for the use of domestic standards when needed.
- Afterwards, Mr. SHEPHERD shared his findings for the three selected case studies namely Bangladesh, Egypt and Senegal. He shared data on; percentage of mandatory and voluntary standards use, participation to international standardization bodies' work and regional cooperation initiatives.
- Mr. SHEPHERD also provided info for all OIC Member Countries' participation of OIC member states in international standards bodies. He told that out of 57 only 2 countries have no relationship with CODEX while this number is 9 and 41 respectively with ISO and IEC. He stated that ISO provides a good example of the potential separation between membership and effective participation. He told that ISO's work is conducted in more than 700 Technical Committees, which work on the substance of standards for particular groups of products. He said that the most active OIC member states participate in Technical Committees are namely: Iran (518), Turkey (391), Egypt (310), and finally Indonesia and Malaysia (over 200). He expressed that there is a regional pattern in participation: the OIC Asian and Arab group countries typically participate more frequently than the African group members.
- Mr. SHEPHERD concluded his presentation by bringing following elements to the attention of the Member Countries;
  - Standards are just one part of quality infrastructure; metrology and accreditation should not be ignored
  - Mutual recognition of conformity assessments is necessary to fully utilize the benefits of international harmonization
  - Promoting membership of international quality institutions—including standards bodies—is important, in particular for lower income developing

- countries and more effective participation increases the chances that international standards will be inclusive, and therefore more widely adopted
- Mobilization of human, technical, and financial resources to support the engagement of developing countries in the technical work of international standards bodies is highly important.

## 5. Policy Options for Alignment to International Standards in the OIC Member States

- The Meeting began with a policy debate for the possible policy actions to be taken to approximate member countries' practices with regards to alignment to international standards.
- Delegate of BANGLADESH, Mr. Abdulhakem AHSAN moderated the session. Discussions were made on topics included in the Room Document which was circulated to delegates prior to the Meeting (Annex 3). As a usual practice, the Room Document is revised based on Member Countries' views and suggestions in the Session and the revised Room Document is sent to delegates in following weeks via e-mail for their approval. Approved policy recommendations in the Room Document will be then submitted to 32<sup>nd</sup> Ministerial Session of the COMCEC for adoption.
- Mr. AHSAN firstly gave the floor to Mr. Ahmet OKUR, Expert in the COMCEC Coordination Office for his presentation. Mr.OKUR made a presentation about a questionnaire circulated to the Member Countries in previous weeks in order to collect data for drafting the Room Document. The questionnaire includes questions to examine problems experienced by the Member Countries for standards, level of existing cooperation among the OIC Member Countries, new improvements, country's standards infrastructure and participation to work of international standardization organizations. Mr. OKUR briefed participants about the answers of the 14 responding Member Countries to the questionnaire and then shared the following draft Policy Advices.
  - ***Policy Advice I: Developing/Strengthening National Quality Infrastructure for Enhancing Export Competitiveness***
  - ***Policy Advice II: Supporting the Member States' Efforts for their Active Participation to work of International Standardization Bodies***
  - ***Policy Advice III: Adopting the Internationally Harmonized Standards of SMIIC for Enhancing Intra-OIC Trade***

- After the presentation, Mr. AHSAN opened the floor to the discussions. Delegates and international organizations' representatives shared their views on each policy advices. In overall, participants agreed upon the policy advices however they also made some minor revisions to improve the advices. First request was about the deletion of "Enhancing Export Competitiveness" in the first advice since it was highlighted that improving National Quality Infrastructure would provide more/ deeper benefits thus it should not be limited by export competitiveness. Secondly, some participants suggested revising the third advice as supporting SMIIC for the adoption of harmonized standards in the OIC. The Revised Room Document was sent to participants in following week of the Meeting for their final observations.

## 6. Utilizing the COMCEC PCM

- Mr. Hasan YENİGÜL, Expert at the COMCEC Coordination Office made a presentation on the COMCEC Project Funding introduced by the COMCEC Strategy.
- Firstly, Mr. YENİGÜL informed the participants about where the COMCEC Project Funding stands in the COMCEC Strategy. Mr. YENİGÜL underlined the basic qualifications of the COMCEC Project Funding as "simple and clearly defined procedures and financial framework", and mentioned that CCO provided continuous support to the member countries during the all stages of the COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism. He stressed that all funds provided in the COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism are grant based. Therefore, project owners don't need to make any repayment for the funds received.
- Mr. YENİGÜL highlighted the potential project owners. It was emphasized that relevant ministries and other public institutions of the Member Countries and the OIC Institutions operating in the field of economic and commercial cooperation could submit projects. He also underlined that member countries have to be registered to respective working group in order to submit their project proposals.
- He continued his presentation with the clarification of "Project Selection Criteria" namely, compliance with Strategy's Principles, targeting strategic objectives of the Strategy, focusing on output areas, pursuing multilateral cooperation among the OIC Member Countries, compliance with sectoral themes and participation of member countries and OIC institutions to relevant working group meeting.
- Mr. YENİGÜL also remarked the importance of the multilateralism for project appraisal and stated that project proposals should focus on common problems of at least two member countries and also should offer joint solutions for these problems.

- During the presentation, three key actors and their responsibilities under the COMCEC Project Funding were identified; Project Owner (Project Submission and Implementation); the CCO (Program Management) and the Intermediary Bank (Project Monitoring and Financing). Moreover, steps and roles of these key actors throughout the project application process were defined.
- Monitoring of projects was another issue explained in the presentation. Mr. YENİGÜL presented that the Bank would be mainly responsible for financial and technical monitoring of projects while the CCO would oversee the overall implementation of the PCM.
- Mr. YENİGÜL also gave information on 2014 and 2015 Projects. He stated that member countries and OIC institutions had shown great interest to the project calls and 209 project proposals were submitted by member countries and OIC institutions. He also stated that 5 successful projects in trade cooperation area were implemented under the COMCEC Project Funding in 2014 and 2015. Ministry of Commerce and Industries of Afghanistan, ICDT, Ministry of Trade of Indonesia, Ministry of Trade, Industry, Regional Integration and Employment of The Gambia, Ministry of Business and Trade of Qatar implemented the projects, respectively, “Capacity Building in Trade Institutions of the Central Asian Countries of COMCEC”, “International Seminar on Developing National & Regional Approaches to Enhancing Innovation Support Commercialization of R&D Results and Patents among the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States”, “SMEs in the Borderless Era, Shaping Opportunity in the Global Value Chain”, “Capacity-Building and Institutional Strengthening of The Gambia Standards Bureau for the Adoption and Implementation of OIC/SMIIC Halal Standards and Related Conformity Assessment”, “Access to Finance for SME and Entrepreneurs in the OIC region; Opportunities and Challenges for the Entrepreneurs”.
- Mr. YENİGÜL underlined that CCO had set up a new online project submission system and member countries could submit their project proposals easily by using this user-friendly system.
- Lastly, Mr. YENİGÜL reminded participants that fourth call for project proposals will start as of as of early September, 2016 and invited all esteemed countries and OIC institutions to submit their project proposals.

## 7. Member Country Presentations

- Delegates of EGYPT, MALI, SAUDI ARABIA and TURKEY made powerpoint presentations regarding their country’s experience and perspectives.

- Delegate of EGYPT, Mr. Ahmed SULTAN, Manager in the International Projects and Training Department of Egyptian Organization for Standardization (EOS) made an introductory presentation on his institution's work on standards. He began his presentation by providing information on the establishment of EOS which goes to 1957. He then shared the main duties/tasks of the organization such as; Preparation and issuing Egyptian Standards, Rendering technical consultancy services in the areas of Standards and Quality, Carrying out laboratory inspections and testing, Representation of Egypt in international and regional organizations working in the fields of Standards & Quality and others. Mr. SULTAN then focused more on standards related activities of EOS. He expressed that standards developed after careful undertaking of preliminary studies to enable collection and review of data by relevant technical committees. He told that based on the review, drafts of standards are prepared and presented for final submission of EOS as the approved standards. Mr. SULTAN also shared some statistics on EOS's standards structure by expressing that at present 9800 standards are established and 170 technical committees actively in work by the participation of 1700 experts. In later parts of his presentation, Mr. SULTAN briefed participants on EOS' quality and conformity assessment related work. He also mentioned that EOS has well functioning testing labs that accomplish a wide range of testing for materials in different industries like chemical, yarn&textile, engineering and food sectors. He concluded his presentation by expressing that EOS has close cooperation with many international organizations such as ISO, CEN, EQO, OIML, AIDMO, WTO and ARSO.
- Representative of MALI, Mr. Amadou DIOP, Accreditation Service Manager in the MALI's Standardization and Quality Promotion Agency (AMANORM) made a presentation on sharing MALI's perspective. Mr. DIOP began his presentation by sharing brief information about AMANORM. He expressed that established in 2013 AMANORM is closely linked with the Minister in charge of the Industry and Trade but at the same time it has its own legal personality and financial autonomy. Mr. DIOP stated that responsibilities of AMANORM that includes leading and coordinating the work on standardization, quality promotion, certification and accreditation; assisting businesses in the certification processes, accompanying laboratories, inspection bodies, managing documentation on Standardization and Quality Promotion and creating National Brand of Conformity to Standards. Mr. DIOP expressed that MALI currently has 12 technical bodies namely Committees Standardization Techniques (NTC) in an array of sub-fields and 259 standards were established through the work of these committees. Mr. DIOP also stated that MALI is actively involved in both regional and international standardization organizations namely UEMOA, NORMCERQ, SOAC, CEDEAO, ECOSHAM, ARSO, ISO, IEC, CODEX and SMIIC. He concluded his remarks by expressing that Mali has taken a big step in standardization and quality

promotion while some obstacles remains especially in financial terms and human resources training areas.

- Delegate of SAUDI ARABIA, Mr. Abdullah ALYABIS, Technical Advisor, Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization (SASO) made a presentation in the Meeting. He told that the institution was established initially in 1972 as an independent government body responsible for all standardization related activities and in 2009 its title has been changed to Saudi Standards, Metrology, and Quality Org., which extends SASO's responsibilities to cover the supervision of introducing/executing quality initiatives in the country. He expressed that some of SASO's main responsibilities are; Preparation, approval and publishing of national standards and technical regulations, promoting awareness for standardization & quality, setting up rules for implementing and granting conformity assessment procedures, representing KSA in regional and international organizations and serving as the enquiry point for TBT (WTO). Mr. ALYABIS provided some key statistics on SASO by expressing that it has 666 employees, 29021 standards/technical regulations were developed & adopted through the work of 19 technical committees and finally 6000 product samples were tested annually by SASO. Mr. ALYABIS also provided some information on SASO's cooperation efforts with equivalent organizations in other countries. He told that around 40 technical cooperation programs as well as 21 Mutual Recognition Programs (MRP's) were effectuated between SASO and relevant parties in other countries. He added that SASO is a member of many international standardization bodies such as ISO, IEC, GSO, BIPM, OIML and SMIIC. He concluded his presentation by stressing the active involvement of SASO in the cooperation between Saudi Arabia and WTO especially in TBT and SPS related matters.
  
- Delegate of TURKEY, Mr. Gökhan ÖRNEK, Head of Department in the Ministry of Economy of TURKEY made a presentation in the Meeting titled "Turkey's Technical Legislation, Quality Infrastructure and Compliance to International Standards". Mr. ÖRNEK began his presentation by expressing that technical regulations and standards in Turkey has three dimensions namely Implementation (standardization, conformity assessment, accreditation, metrology/calibration), Legal (WTO TBT-SPS, EU) and Inspection dimensions (export-import controls, market surveillance). He specifically focuses on Turkey's Customs Union Agreement with the European Union (EU) in 1995 in which Turkey made a commitment to harmonize and implement EU technical regulations and standards and also adheres to EU's external trade policies. He told that accordingly national regulations and standards of Turkey replaced with that of EU's. He expressed that participation to Customs Union with EU provides benefits to Turkey on the issue. As an example an accreditation institute was established after 1995 and Turkish Standardization Institute (TSE) became full member of CEN/CENELEC. Mr. ÖRNEK stated that Ministry of Economy is the main coordinator of the efforts while numerous Ministries, institutions and other bodies have relevant works and initiatives.

In later part of his presentation, Mr. ÖRNEK stated that standardization has critical importance for countries since standardization is a key element to push up the capacities of export and it is a necessary process for ensuring effectiveness /compliance and quality in any product. Mr. ÖRNEK concluded his presentation by stressing the great potential of halal market by arguing that potential global trade volume of all sectors subject to halal certification is around 2,4 trillion USD. On the other hand, he also stated that there are serious obstacles for fulfilling the potential of the OIC Member Countries such as low number of common standards in the Member Countries and inadequate level of mutual recognition of certification. Mr. ÖRNEK told that SMIIC as the only authorized body in the area of standardization, metrology and accreditation is a great platform to overcome the mentioned obstacles. He finally emphasized the need for active support and participation of the Member Countries to SMIIC and its work.

## 8. International Institutions' Perspective

- Representatives of the SMIIC and UNIDO made presentations for sharing their institutions' perspectives on standards.
- Mr. Çağrı CANKURTARAN, expert from the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), gave a presentation on SMIIC and its perspective on the Quality Structure for OIC Member States and its foreseen role for the Strengthening the Compliance of OIC Member States to International Standards. He provided introductory information on the establishment and importance of SMIIC especially for the preparation and harmonization of standards among the OIC Member States.
- Stressing the importance of the quality infrastructure elements as standardization, metrology and accreditation, he introduced the ongoing works being done under the umbrella of SMIIC with respect to the mentioned elements. He briefed the gathering on the main idea of standardization and studies driven by the technical committees (TCs) of SMIIC and emphasized the importance of the participation of experts from OIC Member States in the activities of SMIIC TCs to be able to develop standards for the interest of Muslim world. He gave information on the newly established SMIIC Committee on Standards for Conformity Assessment (SMIIC/CCA) which will work for the preparation of standards on criteria for bodies involved in testing, calibration, certification, inspection, and accreditation. He also informed delegates on SMIIC Metrology Committee (MC) and its recent and planned activities with regards to training on legal and scientific metrology.

- Mr. CANKURTARAN highlighted the accreditation, which is an important pillar of quality infrastructure and an important subject directly relying on the standardization together with the metrology, and the activities driven independently by SMIIC Accreditation Committee (AC) working for supporting actions for establishing a sound international halal accreditation system and raise awareness of accreditation concept within the OIC Member States. He pointed out the capacity building of OIC Member States by means of SMIIC AC with regards to the proper functioning of national accreditation bodies will also have an important/positive effect for encouraging the OIC Member States' willingness to strengthen the compliance to the international standards.
- Mr. CANKURTARAN indicated that SMIIC has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOUs) with GCC Standardization Organization (GSO) and the Arab Industrial Development and Mining Organization (AIDMO) on standardization, metrology and accreditation with a scope of close cooperation and assistance on the mentioned fields at regional and international level. SMIIC General Secretariat also initiated the necessary procedure to sign cooperation agreement with International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and European Committee for Standardization (CEN) to encourage exchange of information and expertise among the national standards bodies of the Member States in the fields of standardization and conformity assessment and to facilitate capacity building among the Member States in the fields of standardization and conformity assessment.
- Mr. CANKURTARAN concluded his presentation with highlighting the objectives of SMIIC as:
  - To promote and undertake harmonization of national standards of SMIIC Member States with a view to removing the technical barriers to trade and facilitate flow of goods and services in the region.
  - To develop SMIIC standards on the products of regional/sub-regional interest.
  - To encourage the use of international standards published by international organizations such as ISO, IEC, etc. through adoption, where appropriate, as SMIIC Standards.
  - To act as a source of information for the Member States on standards, regulations, conformity assessment.
  - To present the common interests of the Member States in the various international standardization organizations.
- Mr. Raymond TAVARES, Industrial Development Officer in the UNIDO made a presentation titled "Contribution of International Standards to Facilitate Trade: UNIDO Perspective."



- Mr. TAVARES began his presentation by providing information on recent approach of UNIDO for standards related work in the highlight of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). He then expressed that “quality cosmos” includes a wide variety of sub topics such as food safety, good governance, environment, trade facilitation, economic competitiveness, sustainability and other.
- Regarding the quality infrastructure, Mr. TAVARES explained that UNIDO adopts a systematic approach that interrelates with various stakeholders like governmental bodies, quality infrastructure institutions, enterprises and consumers. He added that UNIDO’s work for each stakeholder differs from each other.
- Mr. TAVARES also shared UNIDO’s approach on building quality infrastructure that has three main elements; quality policy, quality promotion and quality infrastructure. He explained that Quality starts with the formulation and implementation of the Quality Policy, which sets the legal framework within which the Quality Infrastructure operates. He told that Quality Promotion is the second step, serving to create a quality culture and demand among enterprises (both private and public) for quality services. Finally, he expressed that last item namely Quality Infrastructure (Standardization, Metrology and Accreditation) is vital for internationally recognized conformity assessment of products and services supplied by local enterprises.
- In later parts of his presentation, Mr. TAVARES shared information about UNIDO’s work on Regional Quality Policy by providing details on a three year (2014-2017) project for ECO Region which has an overall objective of achieving good governance and sustainability through quality policy formulation in the ECO region. He explained that project has three phases; i) Awareness creation, Data collection + Analysis ii) Capacity building for Member States through training seminars iii) Preparation of Guidelines on development of National as well as Regional Quality Policy.
- In final part of his presentation, Mr. TAVARES focused on the integration into global trade through the use of international standards and global value chain systems. He also underlined the importance of SMEs inclusion into the process. He told that UNIDO’s approach for standardization process begins with bringing SMEs’ needs to the process followed by helping them to engage in standardization which eventually ensure that established standards could be applied by the SMEs without any major obstacles/problems.
- Mr. TAVARES concluded his presentation by briefing participants on UNIDO’s continuous work named “Rejection Analysis” which focuses on import rejections and the reasons for these rejections through analysis by commodity and geographical regions with a view to facilitate better policy decisions.

## 9. Closing Remarks

- The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. Metin EKER, Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office.
- Mr. Metin EKER thanked all the representatives for their attendance and precious contributions. Mr. EKER expressed that they had a fruitful day of discussion with very valuable participation of the member countries as well as the institutions. He also underlined that the policy debate session was highly beneficial since it was agreed upon several policy options which would not only improve current situation in the OIC Countries but also would serve to policy approximation among the brotherly Member Countries.
- Mr. EKER informed the august house that the next meeting, 8th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group will be held on October 6th, 2016 in Ankara with the theme of “Improving the Border Agency Cooperation among the OIC Member States for Facilitating Trade”. He stated that a research report will also be prepared on this theme and will be shared with the focal points and other participants well ahead the meeting.

## **Annex I: List of Participants of the Sevent Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group**

### **A. INVITED STATES**

#### **PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA**

- Mr. TAREK ALLOUNE  
Chief of Bureau, Foreign Trade, Ministry of Trade
- Mr. YACINE HADJI  
Minister Counsellor, Embassy of Algeria

#### **THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN**

- Mr. ELNUR ABBASOV  
Chief Advisor, Ministry of Economy

#### **PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**

- Mr. A.H.M. AHSAN  
Deputy Secretary, Ministry of Commerce

#### **BRUNEI DARUSSALAM**

- Ms. OSFINITA TAHIR  
Embassy of Brunei Darussalam

#### **THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT**

- Dr. AHMED SULTAN  
International Projects and Training Manager, Egyptian Organization for Standardization (EOS)

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- Ms. DIAH RETNO BAYUMURTHI  
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### **THE REPUBLIC OF IRAQ**

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### **HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN**

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- Mr. MESHAL ALARDHI  
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### **REPUBLIC OF MALI**

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### **THE SULTANATE OF OMAN**

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- Dr. YOUSAF JUNAID  
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- Mr. ZEYAD ABDEL RAHMAN  
Director, Ministry of National Economy
- Mr. AZMI ABU GHAZALEH  
Counsellor, Embassy of Palestine in Ankara

### **THE STATE OF QATAR**

- Mr. BADI AL BADI

Business Promotion Adviser, Ministry of Economy and Commerce

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- Mr. ABDULLAH ALYABIS  
Head and Technical Advisor, Saudi Standards, Metrology and Quality Organization

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**THE REPUBLIC OF SUDAN**

- Mr. SAFAA ABASS  
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**REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

- Mr. GÖKHAN ÖRNEK  
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- Ms. AYŞEGÜL DEMİR  
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- Mr. MURAT ÇALIŞKAN  
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- Mr. İLHAMİ ŞAHİN  
Coordinator, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock
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- Mr. HİLMİ MOLLA  
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- Mr. KÜRŞAT YILMAZ  
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- Mr. SALİH YÜKSEL  
Head of Section, TÜRKAK
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Expert, TSE

#### **REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN**

- Mr. UCHKUN KHUSANOV  
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#### **B. INVITED INSTITUTIONS**

#### **DEVELOPING TRADE CONSULTANTS**

- Mr. BEN SHEPHERD  
Consultant

#### **ITFC**

- Mr. YASSIN MAHMOUD  
Manager, Arab States Office, TCPP

#### **SMIIC**

- Mr. İHSAN ÖVÜT  
Secretary General
- Mr. ÇAĞRI CANKURTARAN  
Expert

#### **UNIDO**

- Mr. RAYMOND TAVARES  
Industrial Development Officer, Business, Investment and Technology Service Branch

#### **C. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE**

- Mr. M.METİN EKER  
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- Mr. MUSTAFA TEKİN  
Head of Department
- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ  
Head of Department
- Ms. VİLDAN BARAN  
Expert
- Mr. KAĞAN AKDOĞAN  
Expert
- Mr. AHMET OKUR  
Expert
- Mr. HASAN YENİGÜL  
Expert, PCM
- Mr. MUSTAFA ADİL SAYAR  
Protocol Relations
- Mr. NAZIM GÜMÜŞ  
Protocol Relations
- Ms. ÖZGÜL YÜKSEL  
Coordinator of Organization
- Ms. HANDE ÖZDEMİR  
Coordinator of Registration Office
- Ms. H.GÜL SAYIN  
Coordinator of Documentation Centre
- Mr. KEMAL ARSLAN  
Coordinator of Meeting Rooms
- Mr. ALİ VURAL  
Coordination of Website
- Mr. OZAN LİF  
Coordinator of Transportation
- Ms. NAZİFE GÜLGEN  
Coordination of Social Programme

## Annex II: Programme of the Seventh Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group



**PROGRAMME  
OF THE  
7<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP**  
(February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Crown Plaza Hotel Ankara-Turkey)

*“Strengthening the Compliance of the OIC Member States to International Standards”*

- |                    |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>08.30-09.00</b> | <b>Registration</b>                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>09.00-09.15</b> | <b>Opening Remarks</b>                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>09.15-09.35</b> | <b>Presentation: COMCEC Trade Outlook</b><br>- <i>Ms. Vildan BARAN</i><br><i>Expert</i><br><i>COMCEC Coordination Office</i>                                                |
| <b>09.35-09.45</b> | <b>Discussion</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>09.45-10.30</b> | <b>Presentation: Rationale for Compliance to International Standards</b><br>- <i>Dr. Ben SHEPHERD</i><br><i>Principal</i><br><i>Developing Trade Consultants</i>            |
| <b>10.30-11.00</b> | <b>Discussion</b>                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>11.00-11.15</b> | <b>Coffee Break</b>                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>11.15-12.00</b> | <b>Presentation: Compliance of the OIC Member States to International Standards</b><br>- <i>Dr. Ben SHEPHERD</i><br><i>Principal</i><br><i>Developing Trade Consultants</i> |
| <b>12.00-12.30</b> | <b>Discussion</b>                                                                                                                                                           |



- 12.30-14.00 Lunch**
- 14:00-14:15 Presentation: Responses of the Member Countries to the Policy Questions on Compliance of the OIC Member States to International Standards**  
- *Mr. Ahmet OKUR*  
*Expert*  
*COMCEC Coordination Office*
- 14:15-15:30 Policy Debate: Policy Options for Alignment to International Standards in the OIC Member States**
- There will be a policy discussion under this agenda item. The discussions will be based on the Analytical Study and responds to the Policy Questions circulated by the CCO. Following the presentation of the CCO, which summarizes the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions, each participant is expected to explain his/her country's experience on alignment to international standards.*
- 15.30-15.45 Presentation: Utilizing the COMCEC PCM**  
- *Mr. Hasan YENİGÜL*  
*Expert*  
*COMCEC Coordination Office*
- 15.45-16.00 Discussion**
- 16.00-16.15 Coffee Break**
- 16.15-17.15 Member Country Presentations**  
- Views and Comments
- 17.15-17.45 Presentation: International Institutions' Perspective**  
- *Mr. Çağrı CANKURTARAN*  
*Specialist*  
*SMIC*  
  
- *Dr. Raymond TAVARES*  
*Officer*  
*UNIDO*
- 17.45-18.00 Discussion**
- 18.00-18.10 Closing Remarks**

## Annex III: Room Document Circulated Prior to the Meeting for the Policy Roundtable Session

### ROOM DOCUMENT FOR THE POLICY ROUNDTABLE SESSION OF THE 7<sup>TH</sup> COMCEC TRADE WG MEETING

A policy debate session will be held during the 7<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Trade Working Group regarding the possible policy actions to be taken to approximate member state policies in the field of standards. The items to be discussed in this session were identified by taking into consideration the analytic study titled “Strengthening the Compliance of the OIC Member States to International Standards”, as well as the responses of Member States to the policy questions sent by the COMCEC Coordination Office specifically for this meeting.

#### **Policy Advice I: Developing/Strengthening National Quality Infrastructure for Enhancing Export Competitiveness**

##### ***Rationale:***

A well-functioning quality infrastructure is a strong component of an enabling trade environment and may greatly facilitate countries’ access to international markets. Therefore, there are strong economic and competitiveness rationales for countries to develop that infrastructure. If important export markets use international standards—particularly mandatory ones—then domestic industries will need to comply with those standards, have their products tested, and have conformity certified before they can enter the export market. Given the widespread use of international standards such as those of ISO, IEC, and the Codex, it is a common requirement for developing country firms to meet international standards as a condition of being able to export to third markets. Development of a national quality infrastructure is not just a question of financial resources, but also involves human and technical capacity that is lacking in many developing countries, including OIC member states. The agenda for building national standards and quality capacity is a broad one, covering institutions and agencies, rules and regulations, and links with global and regional institutions and rules. One way of dealing with this issue may be regional approach, particularly for developing countries where the volume of economic activity may not support the costs of a quality infrastructure. Regional cooperation and the division of labor in the field of quality infrastructure services (measurements, standardization, testing, quality assurance) will allow countries to pool their resources thereby benefit from economies of scale. It is also important that regional initiatives should also facilitate and support adoption of international standards.

#### **Policy Advice II: Supporting the Member States’ Efforts for their Active Participation to work of International Standardization Bodies**

##### ***Rationale:***

International standards bodies are primarily responsible for standardization at the international level. All international standardization bodies have in common that they issue norms that can then be adopted by national standards bodies. The standards issued by these bodies need to be applicable in a wide range of contexts. Countries differ markedly in terms of their level of economic

development, consumer preferences in relation to various issues, level of industrialization, as well as institutional and cultural factors. For this reason, it is important for countries to participate actively in the work of international standards bodies, so that the resulting norms can be applicable to their particular circumstances. However, participation represents a particular challenge for developing countries, especially those where national quality infrastructure is at an early stage of development and standardization is not well advanced at the national level. There is therefore a real risk that international standards may not adequately reflect conditions prevailing in lower income member states. In this regard, it will be necessary to initiate cooperation activities among the countries that need technical assistance and capacity building, and those countries with more developed national quality infrastructure to share experience and support their efforts to take active part in international standardization. Compliance to the international standards would increase export competitiveness of the OIC Member Countries as well as the trade among them thereby enhance the intra-OIC trade.

### **Policy Advice III: Adopting the Internationally Harmonized Standards of SMIIC for Enhancing Intra-OIC Trade**

#### **Rationale:**

Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC) has an important potential for the member states, in particular as it is committed to working towards broader international harmonization goals. In that sense, member states' support and ownership for the work of the SMIIC will be essential for its future success in the area of developing internationally harmonized quality infrastructure. SMIIC's work will be more visible and effective if and when its established standards as well as those to be established in the future is adopted and used by the member states. Furthermore, one of the main obstacles for enhancing trade among the Member Countries is use of different standards and procedures. In this respect, having harmonized standards within the OIC would facilitate the trade of goods & services among the Member Countries which will eventually enhance in the intra-OIC trade.

#### ***Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:***

**COMCEC Trade Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.

**COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard.

**SMIIC:** With its 32 members, SMIIC's mandate is to help develop quality infrastructure among OIC member states, including through the promotion of harmonization, as well as various other aspects of quality policy. Apart from harmonization of standards, through its technical committees, SMIIC is also an important forum for Member States for discussion and exchange of views and experiences on issues of common interest.