



COMCEC

REPORT THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC



**COMCEC Coordination Office
November 2022**

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

REPORT
THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC

(26-29 November 2022)

COMCEC Coordination Office
November 2022

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PART ONE

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE THIRD ISLAMIC SUMMIT
CONFERENCE ESTABLISHING THE STANDING COMMITTEES
OF THE OIC CHAIRED BY HEADS OF STATE**

I.

**RESOLUTION ADOPTED AT THE THIRD ISLAMIC SUMMIT
CONFERENCE ESTABLISHING THE STANDING COMMITTEES
OF THE OIC CHAIRED BY HEADS OF STATE**

Resolution No. 13/3-P (IS)

The Third Islamic Summit Conference (Palestine and Al-Quds Session), meeting in Mecca Al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, from 19th to 22nd Rabi-Al-Awal, 1401 H. (25-28 January, 1981);

Having listened to the proposals by His Majesty King HASSAN II, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee, that three committees will be established and chaired by the Kings and Presidents of the Islamic States,

Proceeding from a firm belief that joint Islamic action needs to be consolidated in the scientific and technological field, and in the economic and trade sphere,

Prompted by the desire to give information and culture a fresh impetus to help world public opinion understand the basic issues of the Islamic nations, particularly those of Al-Quds and Palestine, and to confront the tendentious campaign launched against Islam and Muslims,

DECIDES:

1. To establish three Standing Committees, the first for scientific and technological cooperation, the second for economic and trade cooperation, and the third for information and cultural affairs;
2. These Committees shall undertake to follow up implementation of the resolutions passed, or about to be passed, by the Islamic Conference in those fields; to study all possible means of strengthening cooperation among Muslim States in those fields, and to draw up programmes and submit proposals designed to increase the Islamic States' capacity in those fields;
3. Each Committee shall consist of the representatives of ten Islamic States, at ministerial level, and shall be chaired by the Head of State of an Islamic State;
4. Members of these Committees shall be elected by the Islamic Foreign Ministers' Conference for a renewable term of three years;
5. A Committee shall hold a meeting, if invited to do so by its Chairman or by a majority of its members; its meeting shall be valid if attended by a majority.

II.

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE
OF THE FIFTH ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE
ENTRUSTING THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION TO
THE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY**

Final Communiqué No. IS/4-84/E/DEC

".... The Conference decided to entrust H.E. Mr. Kenan EVREN, President of the Republic of Turkey, with the Chairmanship of the Permanent Committee on Economic and Commercial Cooperation..." (Page 18, para 40).

III.

**FINAL COMMUNIQUE
OF THE THIRTEENTH ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE
“UNITY AND SOLIDARITY FOR JUSTICE AND PEACE”
REPUBLIC OF TURKEY, ÎSTANBUL
(14-15 April 2016)**

OIC/13TH SUMMIT 2016/FC/FINAL

129. The Conférence attached great importance to multi-modal connectivity to further advance economic coopération among OIC Member States. In this regard, it noted the recent developments on execution of the OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway project and encouraged OIC project owners and stakeholders to continue their efforts towards mobilizing technical and funding support for the successful implementation of this integrative project.

130. The Conférence commended the rôle of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Coopération (COMCEC) under the chairmanship of the Président of the Republic of Turkey in contributing to the realization of OIC objectives in the economic domain.

131. The Conférence expressed its profound appréciation for the successful implementation of the COMCEC revised statute and strategy adopted at the 4th Extraordinary Summit. It called on Member States to enhance the implementation of the revised COMCEC statute and strategy, in close coordination and coopération with the General Secrétariat and in accordance with the OIC Charter, and requested Member States to continue to actively participate in the work of the COMCEC under the chairmanship of H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Président of the Republic of Turkey.

OIC/COMCEC/38-22/REP

PART TWO

**AGENDA, RESOLUTION AND REPORT OF THE
THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC**

AGENDA
OF THE 38th SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(26-29 November 2022)

Original: English



**AGENDA
OF THE 38th MINISTERIAL SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(26-29 November 2022)**

1. Opening of the Meeting and Adoption of the Agenda
2. Report on the COMCEC Strategy and Its Implementation
3. The Implementation of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action
4. World Economic Developments with Special Reference to the OIC Member Countries
5. Intra-OIC Trade
6. Enhancing the Role of Private Sector in Economic Cooperation
7. Deepening Financial Cooperation
8. Improving Transport and Communications
9. Developing a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Sector
10. Increasing Productivity of Agriculture Sector and Sustaining Food Security
11. Alleviating Poverty
12. Cooperation on Digital Transformation
13. Exchange of Views on “Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic”
14. Date of the 39th Session of the COMCEC
15. Any Other Business
16. Adoption of the Resolutions

II

**RESOLUTION
OF THE THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC
(26-29 November 2022)**

Original: English

RESOLUTIONS
OF THE THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, Türkiye, 26-29 November 2022)

The Thirty-Eighth Ministerial Session of the COMCEC (Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation) was held on 26-29 November 2022, in İstanbul;

Recalling the relevant resolutions of the 14th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on 31 May 2019, which commended the role of the COMCEC under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Türkiye, in contributing to the realization of OIC objectives in the economic domain and highly commended the successful implementation of the COMCEC revised Statute and the Strategy adopted at the Fourth Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference;

Recalling the relevant Resolutions of the Islamic Summit Conferences, the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) and the COMCEC, the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, the COMCEC Economic Summit in 2009, the 48th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the 37th Session of the COMCEC;

Reaffirming the commitment of all Member Countries to the OIC-2025: Programme of Action adopted at the 13th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held on 14-15 April 2016 in İstanbul, Türkiye and to the COMCEC Strategy adopted by the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference held on 14-15 August 2012 in Makkah Al-Mukarramah;

Recalling the objectives and mandate of the COMCEC in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the Islamic Summit and the COMCEC Statute including to serve as the central forum for the Member Countries to discuss international economic and commercial issues.

Taking note of the submission of the progress reports, working papers and studies on the different agenda items submitted by the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC Coordination Office, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, the Islamic Chamber of Commerce

Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) and the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC);

Expressing its appreciation to the Member Countries for hosting Ministerial Conferences, Meetings, workshops, fairs and other activities in the cooperation areas;

Commending the efforts made by the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC Coordination Office and the OIC institutions working in the area of economic and commercial cooperation, namely SESRIC, ICDT, IsDB Group, ICD, ITFC, ICIEC, ICCIA, SMIIC, and IOFS.

Report on the COMCEC Strategy and Its Implementation (Agenda Item: 2)

1- **Welcomes** the Progress Report submitted by the COMCEC Coordination Office highlighting the progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy; **commends** the Member Countries and the OIC Institutions for their valuable contributions to its implementation and **requests** the Member Countries and the OIC Institutions to further their full support to the implementation of the Strategy.

2- **Requests** the COMCEC Coordination Office to regularly report the progress in the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy to the COMCEC Sessions, the Follow-up Committee Meetings and other relevant OIC fora.

3- **Welcomes** the successful convening of the 18th and 19th rounds of the COMCEC Working Groups Meetings (17th and 18th rounds for Financial Cooperation WG) in the cooperation areas in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the 37th Session of the COMCEC and **also welcomes** the research reports conducted by the COMCEC Coordination Office for enriching the discussions in the meetings of the COMCEC Working Groups.

4- **Commends** the efforts of the Working Groups towards approximating policies among the Member Countries in their fields of competence and **welcomes** the policy recommendations made by the Working Groups in their meetings in 2022.

5- **Commending** the efforts of the Member Countries and the OIC Institutions for the realization of COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations, **invites** all the Member Countries to exert every effort, to the extent possible, to implement the Policy Recommendations and **requests** the OIC Institutions to support the Member Countries to this end.

6- **Calls upon** the Member Countries utilize the COMCEC Policy Follow-up System to submit necessary information and data on the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations in their respective countries.

7- **Expresses its appreciation** to the SESRIC for the activities, particularly capacity building and training programmes, contributing to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations in the six cooperation areas of the COMCEC Strategy.

8- **Commending** the valuable outcomes of projects financed by COMCEC since 2014, **welcomes** that sixteen projects are being implemented in 2022 and **invites** Member Countries to intensify their efforts to harness the benefits of COMCEC Project Funding particularly with a view to materialize the Ministerial Policy Recommendations.

9- **Welcomes** the 10th Call for Project Proposals made by the COMCEC Coordination Office in October 2022 within the framework of COMCEC Project Funding.

10- **Taking into consideration** the need for increasing the number of projects and expanding their scope within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding and the deliberations held during the Ministerial Working Session, **requests** the COMCEC Coordination Office to undertake the necessary work for mobilizing voluntary contributions from the interested Member Countries for this purpose.

11- **Commended** the efforts of the Member Countries for successful implementation of eight projects in 2021 and initiation of six projects in 2022 under the COMCEC COVID Response.

12- **Invites** the Member Countries to ensure the participation of the COMCEC National Focal Points and COMCEC Working Group Focal Points, to the COMCEC Follow-up Committee Meetings and the COMCEC Sessions, to the extent possible.

13- **Encourages** the Member Countries, which have registered to the COMCEC Working Groups to actively participate in the upcoming Meetings of the relevant Working Groups.

14- **Noting with appreciation** that the number of Member Countries having registered to at least one COMCEC Working Group has reached 50, **requests** the Member Countries, which have not done so yet, to register to the COMCEC Working Groups and actively participate in the upcoming Meetings of the Working Groups.

15- **Taking note with appreciation** that the member countries namely Indonesia, The Gambia, Nigeria and Türkiye have already set up national coordination mechanisms for facilitating the coordination of COMCEC related work particularly the implementation of the COMCEC Resolutions and Ministerial Policy Recommendations at the national level, **encourages** the other Member Countries to set up similar coordination

mechanisms for these purposes.

16- **Calls upon** the working group focal points to be actively involved in the knowledge production efforts of the COMCEC through, among others, assisting in collection and verification of country specific data and providing feedbacks to research studies.

17- **Expresses** its appreciation to the COMCEC Coordination Office, SESRIC, ICDT, IsDB Group, ICD, ICIEC, ITFC, ICCIA, SMIIC and IOFS for their efforts towards the implementation of the COMCEC Strategy.

18- **Reiterates** the relevant resolutions of the COMCEC Sessions, which emphasize the role of COMCEC in ensuring the overall coordination of the activities of the OIC relating to economic and commercial cooperation among the Member Countries, in accordance with its mandate and **also emphasizes** the role of COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) in undertaking activities with the Member Countries, the OIC Institutions and other international organizations in order to realize the objectives of the COMCEC as outlined in its Statute.

19- **Also reiterates** its request to the OIC Institutions working in the economic and commercial domains to continue coordination with the COMCEC Coordination Office, including through the Sessional Committee, in order to ensure progress and complementarity in the implementation of both the COMCEC Strategy and the OIC 2025: Program of Action, especially in the areas of trade and investment.

20- **Adopts** the recommendations of the 38th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC held in Ankara on 24-25 May 2022.

21- **Requests** the concerned Member Countries to actively participate in the activities to be organized by the COMCEC Coordination Office, SESRIC, ICDT, IsDB Group (ITFC), ICCIA, and SMIIC in the cooperation areas of the COMCEC Strategy and **calls upon** these institutions to send invitations to the Member Countries sufficiently in advance of the meetings so as to ensure their participation.

1 Implementation of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action (Agenda Item: 3)

22- **Takes note of** the report presented by the OIC General Secretariat on the implementation of the economic and commercial component of the OIC-2025: Programme of Action (PoA).

23- **Underlining** the importance of the active follow-up of the economic and commercial section of the PoA by the COMCEC, **requests** the OIC General Secretariat to regularly submit comprehensive progress reports on the implementation of the

Programme to the COMCEC Sessions and the Follow-up Committee Meetings.

24- **Commends** the efforts of the OIC General Secretariat for organizing the Sixth Annual Coordination Meeting of OIC Institutions (ACMOI) in Jeddah, OIC Headquarters on 14-15 December 2022.

25- Recalling the relevant resolutions of the COMCEC Sessions, **requests** the Member States, who have not done so yet, to sign and ratify the agreements in the economic domain for furthering economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member States.

World Economic Developments with Special Reference to the OIC Member Countries (Agenda Item: 4)

26- **Takes note of** the findings highlighted in the SESRIC's report titled "OIC Economic Outlook 2022: Achieving Sustainable and Resilient Recovery Post COVID-19 Pandemic", and **acknowledges** the valuable contribution of its special section that highlights a number of non-binding policy measures for strengthening economic resilience to future shocks beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

27- **Noting** the report's emphasis on the growing trend of geopolitical risks and threat of conflicts as well as the challenges associated with climate change, **encourages** the Member States to take into account the highlighted measures while devising appropriate policies and strategies to strengthen their economic resilience to future shocks.

28- **Commends** the OIC Institutions' efforts in helping the member countries in their efforts towards mitigating the adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, among others, publication titled "Socio-Economic Impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic in OIC Countries: Pathways for Sustainable and Resilient Recovery", COVID19 Pandemic Database for OIC Member Countries, and various training and capacity building programs conducted by SESRIC.

29- **Entrusts** SESRIC to continue monitoring world economic developments and their implications on the Member Countries and **also entrusts** SESRIC to continue to report thereon to the annual sessions of the COMCEC.

2 Intra-OIC Trade (Agenda Item: 5)

30- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 18th and 19th Meetings of the COMCEC Trade Working Group on 11 May 2022 and 4 October 2022, respectively in a virtual-only format, with the theme of "Increasing Internationalization of SMEs in the OIC Member Countries", **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Promoting formalization of SMEs and eliminating informality through, among others, reducing the time and cost of registration and reducing administrative burdens,
 - Adopting a uniform SME definition and clearly identifying the objectives of SME-related laws and regulations,
 - Making SME internationalization a part of national policy documents by developing an SME strategy, setting out the strategy in a multi-year document and positioning SME internationalization policies in the context of broader policy frameworks,
 - Supporting the institutional framework by necessary financial means and government guarantees to facilitate SMEs' access to finance as they move into international markets,
 - Categorizing SMEs in terms of their capacity and potential for internationalization and involve them in export assistance programs based on the results of the sorting system,
 - Supporting managerial and human resources of the SMEs in line with the requirements of successful internationalization,
 - Providing guiding mechanisms for SMEs to improve their products according to the market- and product-specific required standards and certifications,
 - Supporting SME branding by creating a national brand and including the SMEs' products in the national brand,
 - Conducting impact analysis of implemented programs regularly and monitoring and evaluation, and share transparently with the relevant stakeholders.
- (Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/.....)

31- **Calls upon** the Member Countries which have registered to the COMCEC Trade Working Group to attend the 20th and 21st Meetings of the COMCEC Trade Working Group to be held with the theme of “Improving e-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries” in 2023.

32- **Commends** the efforts of Palestine, Lebanon, Morocco, Indonesia and SMIIC for the following projects being implemented in 2022 under the ninth project call within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The project entitled “Enhancing Palestinian Limestone-SMEs Internationalization” being implemented by Palestine,
- The project entitled “Developing a Roadmap for Establishing National Trade Facilitation Body in Lebanon” being implemented by Lebanon,
- The project entitled “Accelerating customs clearance of goods between OIC Member countries through the exchange of Electronic Certificate of Origin” being implemented by Morocco,

- The project entitled “Upscaling exports strategy and market access assistance for SMEs” being implemented by Indonesia,
- The project entitled “Promotion of OIC/SMIIC Halal Standards use in the Asian and Arab Region” being implemented by SMIIC with 17 beneficiary Member Countries.

33- **Also commends** the efforts of Senegal for the project titled “Resilience Program against Covid-19 for the Digital Management of Agricultural Markets” being implemented in 2022 within the scope of 2nd Call for COMCEC COVID Response.

34- **Taking into consideration** the vital role of Micro, Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) for our economies in terms of production, investment, employment and growth, **welcomes** the suggestion of the Republic of Türkiye on developing a well-designed MSME Program and **requests** COMCEC Coordination Office in cooperation with the interested Member States and the relevant OIC Institutions to initiate technical studies with the relevant stakeholders and to report the progress thereon to the 39th Follow-up Committee and the 39th COMCEC Session.

35- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 14th Islamic Summit Conference, **calls on** Member Countries to take the necessary measures that would exempt Palestinian goods and commodities from customs duties, duties and taxes of similar effect, without quantitative or qualitative restrictions, which would have a positive effect on strengthening the steadfastness of the Palestinian people on their own territory and supporting the efforts of the State of Palestine to put an end to the Israeli occupation.

36- **Takes note of** the ICDT’s recent data on “Trade among the OIC Member Countries” indicating that the intra-OIC net trade volume reached US\$ 367.9 billion in 2021 compared to US\$ 350.4 billion in 2019 mainly due to the enhancement the intra-regional trade among Member Countries and the soaring commodities prices including oil, mining and food products and thereby the share of intra-OIC Trade in the overall foreign trade of Member Countries increased slightly from 18.95% in 2019 to 19.04% in 2021.

37- **Takes note with appreciation** that the Second TISC Leaders Meeting organized in Marrakesh on 8-9 March 2022 in order to boost their integrated activities in the field of trade and investment for the benefit of OIC Countries on four thematic technical committees: Trade financing and insurance, trade facilitation and investment promotion, Halal Industry including Tourism, and Strategic commodities including COVID-19 products.

38- **Expresses its appreciation** to ICDT and partner countries as well as institutions for organizing the following workshops, webinars, trainings, and Forums in trade domain:

- Webinars organized by ICDT on participating and organizing trade fairs, MSMEs COVID-Resilience, pricing and documentation of export, MSMEs trade negotiation techniques, international trade risks, payment modality, incoterms new rules between January to December 2022,
- A training webinar on exports strategies of food products for SMEs of Cameroon on 2-3 February 2022,
- Forum of the OIC Investment Promotion Agencies on Policy dialogue in Dakar on 15 June 2022 by the Republic of Senegal, ICDT, IsDB CCD, BADEA,
- The OIC Senegal Investment Forum in Dakar on 16-17 June 2022,
- A Training program on Halal Certification for African Countries in Dakar on 15-16 June 2022,
- A workshop was conducted by ICCIA on the Knowledge Economy in Dakar on 14 June 2022,
- The 1st Meeting of Intergovernmental Experts Group on the Establishment of a Permanent Organ & Mechanism for Settlement of Investment Disputes in Casablanca on 3-6 October 2022.

39- **Welcomes** that the relevant member countries will host the following events:

- Kingdom of Morocco will host the Workshop on the digitization of IPA Services in collaboration with ICDT, IsDB in Casablanca on 19-20 December 2022,
- Republic of Uganda will organize with ICDT the OIC Coffee Meet in Kampala on 7-8 March 2023,
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan will host the Pakistan-Africa Business Forum in collaboration with ICDT and other OIC Institutions on the margin of the 18th OIC Trade Fair,
- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire will organize with ICDT the OIC-Cote Invest in Abidjan on 16-17 March 2023,

40- **Requests** the Member Countries to keep on providing the ICDT with data relating to trade and investment statistics and regulations and entrusted IsDB and ICDT to follow up the issue of the expansion of intra-OIC trade and report to the COMCEC and to other OIC fora.

41- **Expresses its appreciation** to SESRIC and ITFC for preparing a joint study on "Impacts of Trade Facilitation and Logistics Performance on Trade Flows: The Case of Landlocked African OIC Countries".

42- **Appreciates** SESRIC for organizing training courses, webinars, and workshops in the trade sector, particularly on international trade statistics within the framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

i) TPS-OIC

43- **Welcomes that** the TPS-OIC has been effectuated as of July 1st, 2022 in line with relevant resolutions of the 37th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC and the decisions of the TPS-OIC Trade Negotiating Committee.

44- **Requests** the Participating States, which have not done so yet, to expedite the completion of their internal procedures and other preparations at the earliest convenience and notify the TNC Secretariat accordingly.

45- **Takes note with appreciation** that the Gulf Cooperation Council would provide its most updated concession lists to the TNC Secretariat at the earliest convenience, on behalf of its six member countries namely; Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman.

46- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 37th Session of the COMCEC, **takes note of** the observations made by some TPS-OIC participating states that once the system becomes operational more advanced trade arrangements need to be initiated immediately within the framework of the TPS-OIC.

47- **Calls upon** the Member Countries, which have not yet signed or ratified the TPS-OIC Agreements, namely the Framework Agreement, PRETAS and the Rules of Origin, to do so at their earliest convenience and complete other procedures for joining the System.

48- **Requests** the ICDT, COMCEC Coordination Office, IsDB and other relevant OIC Institutions to continue organizing awareness-raising and capacity-building activities with regards to the TPS-OIC.

49- **Welcomes** the convening of the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) on November 27th, 2022, on the margins of the 38th COMCEC Session and **takes note with appreciation** of TNC's following decisions: (i) preparation of a checklist in order to track record of implementation (ii) redistribution of concession lists through diplomatic channels, (iii) resolution of HS codes transposition issues with the technical assistance TNC Secretariat, (iv) organization of a follow-up meeting at expert level, (v) clarification of modalities to apply on the preparation of GCC's concession list with its all technical and legal implications by the TNC Secretariat.

50- **Also welcomes** the convening of Ministers of Trade, Finance and Economy on 29th November 2022 on the margins of 38th COMCEC Session where the Honorable

Ministers reiterated the importance of increasing intra-OIC trade particularly through full implementation of TPS-OIC and indicated their willingness to extend the scope of TPS-OIC.

ii) Islamic Trade Fairs

51- **Expresses** its appreciation to the Republic of Senegal for hosting the 17th OIC Trade Fair of the OIC Member Countries in Dakar on 13-19 June 2022, in cooperation with ICDT.

52- **Welcomes** that the following Member Countries will host Islamic Trade Fairs and Exhibitions in cooperation with ICDT and **requests** all Member Countries to encourage active participation of their private sector and relevant institutions in these events:

- The Kingdom of Bahrain to host the “Bahrain Halal Expo “on 4-6 May 2023 in collaboration with ICDT and SMIIC,
- The Republic of Senegal to host the “5th OIC Health Expo” in Dakar on 18-21 May 2023 in collaboration with International Center for Foreign Trade of Senegal,
- The Republic of Tunisia to host the “10th OIC Halal Expo” in Tunis on 31 May-4 June 2023 in collaboration with ICDT and SMIIC,
- The Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the “18th OIC Trade Fair” on the theme of “Women Empowerment through Entrepreneurship” in cooperation with ICDT in Lahore on 16-18 June 2023 in collaboration with Trade Development Authority of Pakistan and relevant OIC Institutions,
- The Republic of Cote d’Ivoire to host the “2nd OIC Cotton, Textiles and Clothing Expo” in Abidjan on 19-22 July 2023.

53- Referring relevant decision of the 48th Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers **invites** the General Secretariat to constitute a coordination committee for the 18th OIC Trade Fair to be hosted by Pakistan in Lahore on 16-18 June 2023 comprising COMCEC Coordination Office, ICDT, ICCIA, IsDB, ITFC, SESRIC and any other relevant OIC Institutions.

54- **Requests** ICDT to continue holding sector specific fairs in cooperation with the Member Countries and submit on regular basis, progress reports on the Trade Fairs of Islamic Countries and the other specialized fairs as well as exhibitions to the COMCEC Sessions and to organize investment promotion activities such as high-level forums and capacity building programs at national and regional level in order to enhance intra-OIC Investment.

iii) WTO Related Technical Assistance

55- **Expresses** its thanks and appreciation to the IsDB Group and ICDT for organizing WTO-related training courses and seminars and **calls on** IsDB and ICDT to continue providing technical assistance to the Member Countries on WTO-related issues and to enhance their efforts in sensitizing the Member Countries to the impact of WTO trade negotiations on their economies by monitoring matters relating to WTO activities and reporting them to the annual sessions of the COMCEC and other concerned fora.

56- **Calls upon** the WTO members of the OIC to assist non-WTO Members of the OIC in their accession process to WTO.

57- **Also calls upon** the Member Countries and the relevant OIC institutions to extend support to the Member Countries who need technical assistance on trade facilitation practices towards the implementation of the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement.

58- **Requests** ICDT and IsDB to develop a technical assistance program for the benefit of the State of Palestine on WTO-Trade Negotiations, Trade Facilitation, Training Local Negotiators, Market Access Strategies of the National SMEs through reverse linkage program with other Member Countries.

59- **Expresses its appreciation** to ICDT and IsDB RCI for organizing a webinar on the preparation of the 12th WTO Ministerial Meeting on May 31st, 2022 in collaboration with WTO Secretariat for the benefit of OIC Member Countries.

60- **Expresses its appreciation** to ICDT and IsDB CCD for organizing a workshop on TIR/eTIR and CMR/eCMR of the OIC African Countries in Casablanca, Morocco on 28-29 June 2022 in collaboration with UNECE and IRU.

iv) Trade Financing Activities

61- **Appreciates** the trade finance, promotion and development activities of ITFC and the mobilization of funds from the international market and development partners for funding the trade operations in the Member Countries, contributing towards the achievement of intra-OIC trade target of 25 percent.

62- **Takes note with appreciation** that ITFC's cumulative approvals and disbursement in trade finance reached, since its inception in 2008 until the end of 2021, USD\$ 66.5 billion and USD\$ 55.7 billion, respectively.

63- **Takes note with appreciation** that ITFC's cumulative funds mobilized from partner banks and financial institutions, since inception, reached US\$ 38.0 billion, reflecting ITFC's critical role as a catalyst to attract funding for large-ticket trade transactions for the benefit of OIC Member Countries.

64- **Welcomes** the efforts of ITFC for assisting the Member States in mitigating the adverse implications of COVID-19 pandemic, where under its Rapid Response Initiative ITFC allocated USD\$ 605 million for the purchase of medical supplies, food staples, and under its Recovery Response Initiative ITFC allocated additional USD\$ 945.0 million in favour of local and regional banks for the recovery of SMEs and the private sector participants from the negative impact of the pandemic.

65- **Welcomes** the efforts of ITFC for expanding the Arab Africa Trade Bridges (AATB) Program – ITFC and partner institutions continue to expand and implement the AATB Program, which is designed to promote trade and investments as a tool to expand economic opportunities and support inclusive and sustainable growth across the Arab and sub-Saharan OIC Member Countries.

66- **Takes note with appreciation** of the efforts of the ITFC in implementing Integrated Trade Solution Programmes, including Indonesia Coffee Development Programme, the Cotton Bridge Programme, and various programmes for Tunisia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, CIS Countries, Maldives, Burkina Faso and Comoros, aiming at improving the productivity, job creation, promoting exports and alleviating poverty through trade.

67- **Takes note with appreciation** of the trade development initiatives being implemented by ITFC under its various flagship programs including Aid for Trade Initiative for Arab States (AFTIAS), Arab Africa Trade Bridge Program (AATB), Trade Development Fund, ITFC Global SMEs Program (a new country is covered which is Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), CIS Region Trade Development Program.

68- **Takes note with appreciation** of ITFC's contributions for the development of Islamic Trade Finance Industry in Member States, supporting training programs and workshops on Islamic finance and promoting Islamic Trade Finance solutions for cross border trade.

69- **Welcomes** ITFC's efforts to expand the scope of its trade finance products (LC Confirmation, SBLC, etc.), which is aimed at facilitating trade flows between the OIC Member States and beyond, enhancing partnerships with local and regional financial institutions for private sector and SME support.

70- **Appreciates** the efforts of the ICIEC as one of the leading multilateral export credit and investment insurance institutions in the world that provides Shariah-Compliant insurance and reinsurance solutions.

71- **Takes note with appreciation** the ICIEC's operations during 2021, which resulted in the amount of USD\$ 9.79 billion as business insured, bringing the

cumulative amount of business insured since inception to USD\$ 83.31 billion and the role of ICIEC in supporting USD\$ 4.49 billion of Intra-OIC business insured, involving 40 countries.

72- **Takes note** of the Progress and the Implementation Plan Reports prepared by ICIEC on OIC Business Intelligence Programme and **requests** the ICIEC and SESRIC to complete the technical preparations for launching the Programme at the earliest.

73- **Also takes note** of the Proposal prepared by ICIEC, SESRIC, ICCIA and ICDT for organizing a Capacity Building Activities for potential beneficiaries of the Programme in the areas covered under the core business of the Programme and **requests** the ICIEC, SESRIC, ICDT, and ICCIA to implement the Capacity Building Activities at the earliest.

v) Trade Related Activities of SMIIC

74- **Welcomes** the activities of Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) in the area of standardization, metrology and accreditation and their impact on trade facilitation and capacity building.

75- **Invites** the concerned Member Countries to become a member of SMIIC and actively participate in its technical committees (TCs), Metrology and Accreditation Councils.

76- **Expresses its appreciation** to the SMIIC for organizing capacity building activities in its field of competence and **invites** Member Countries to support to further increase its visibility in international fora, particularly through its accession as an observer to the WTO-Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Committee.

77- **Invites** the Member Countries to adopt and use the OIC/SMIIC Standards as their national standards with a view to contributing to the harmonization of standards and alleviating technical barriers to trade among the Member Countries and **calls upon** the relevant Member Countries, which use OIC/SMIIC Standards, to officially adopt the standards according to SMIIC adoption guidelines.

78- **Takes note with appreciation** the development of the SMIIC 2021-2030 Strategic Plan and the OIC Global Halal Quality Infrastructure.

79- **Express its thanks and appreciation to the Republic of Türkiye** for hosting the 9th OIC Halal Expo and 8th World Halal Summit in collaboration with SMIIC and ICDT on 24-27 November 2022, in Istanbul.

3 Enhancing the Role of Private Sector in Economic Cooperation (Agenda Item: 6)

i. Private Sector Meetings:

80- **Takes note** of the efforts of ICCIA towards enhancing the capacity and quality of its member chambers through digital transformation.

81- **Takes note with appreciation** the role of ICCIA in the International fora as the representative of the Private Sector of Member Countries, promoting priority sectors such as Halal, Islamic banking, Agri-business, digital transformations, and promotion of women empowerment within the Private Sector.

82- **Takes note of** the new format called as “sector-specific forums” organized by ICCIA and **encourages** the Member Countries, the Chambers of Commerce of the Member Countries, and the relevant OIC institutions to be actively involved in the ICCIA’s activities in the areas of Sustainable Agriculture, Sustainable Tourism, Islamic Economy, Investment, Digital Economy, and Entrepreneurship to support the sustainable development of the OIC private sector for the resilient economic growth of the Member Countries.

83- **Requests** ICCIA in consultations with the Member Countries and the relevant OIC institutions to continue its efforts towards facilitation of ICCIA holding company projects such as a) Islamic Microfinance Bank b) Green Waqf c) Agricultural Incubation d) Agricultural Commodity Exchange Markets, and **also calls upon** the private sector of the Member Countries to consider partnerships in the mentioned projects.

84- **Expresses its appreciation** to SESRIC for organizing training courses and webinars on the private sector, particularly on business registers for business demography and entrepreneurship statistics, and strengthening private sector involvement in skills development within the framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme and the OIC-VET Programme.

ii. OIC Arbitration Center:

85- **Requests** the Member Countries to encourage their Chambers to actively participate in the work of the OIC Arbitration Center with a view to enhance the utilization of Center’s services by their private sector.

iii) Financing Private Sector Development:

86- **Commends** the investment, financing, advisory and development activities of

ICD for supporting the private sector development in OIC Member Countries.

87- **Takes note with appreciation** the efforts of ICD, which efficiently works towards financing private sector projects including SME projects in the Member Countries, and ICD's cumulative approvals stand at USD\$ 6.2 billion as well as cumulative disbursements totals USD\$ 4.1 billion since its inception in 1999.

88- **Commends** the important business synergies captured by ICD with other development finance institutions (including ITFC and ICIEC) during 2022 including co-investments in 9 Sukuk transactions with a total value of more than USD\$ 500 million.

89- **Welcomes** the efforts of ICD for conducting special programs to promote women entrepreneurship including the BRAVE Women Program in Yemen, which enables the women entrepreneurs to obtain access to finance as well as novel e-commerce platform.

90- **Requests** ICD to regularly submit comprehensive reports regarding its efforts on promoting the private sector to the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions and the Follow-up Committee Meetings.

Deepening Financial Cooperation (Agenda Item: 7)

91- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 17th and 18th Meetings of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group virtually on 9 May 2022, and on 3 October 2022, respectively with the theme of "Standardization Efforts in Islamic Finance", and **welcomes** its policy recommendations submitted under the following:

- Developing a comprehensive strategic master plan that clearly defines the standardization and harmonization requirements (at global and local levels),
- Establishing a centralized Shariah governance framework to ensure the compliance of the Islamic Financial Services Industry with standards on Shariah products, dispute resolution, and reporting,
- Ensuring periodical review of the standards so that they reflect current market dynamics and needs,
- Enhancing the legal, regulatory, and supervisory frameworks to create a level-playing field for all market participants,
- Enhancing the coordination among regulatory bodies and with international standard-setting bodies,
- Developing quality human capital by including standardization-related modules in the higher education curriculum/syllabus, conducting training and seminars, and introducing accreditation of Islamic Finance academic programmes.

92- **Calls upon** the Member Countries which have registered to the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group to actively participate in its 19th and 20th Meetings to be held with the theme of “Improving Cooperation among Central Banks in terms of Digital Currencies: Challenges and Prospects for OIC Member Countries” in 2023.

93- **Commends** the efforts of SESRIC for the project entitled “Strengthening Financial Literacy and Promoting Islamic Finance in the OIC Member Countries” being implemented by SESRIC in 2022 in partnership with the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye, Bank Indonesia, and the Financial Services Authority of Indonesia for the benefit of 41 OIC Member Countries.

94- **Expresses its appreciation** to SESRIC for organizing training courses, training workshops and webinars related to financial cooperation, particularly on banking, insurance and financial statistics; government finance, fiscal and public sector statistics; and price statistics within the framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

i) OIC Exchanges Forum

95- **Welcomes** the report of the 16th Meeting of the OIC Exchanges Forum held virtually on October 11th, 2022.

96- **Commends** the efforts of the OIC Exchanges Forum and its Task Forces and **invites** the Member Countries to actively participate in the activities organized under this Forum.

97- **Welcomes** the offer of the Borsa İstanbul, as the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum, to host the 17th Meeting of the Forum in 2023 and **calls upon** the Member Countries to actively participate in this important event.

98- **Commends** the Task Force on Indices for successful completion of the establishment of S&P/OIC COMCEC 50 Shariah Index Fund, which has recently become available to international investors.

99- **Taking note with appreciation** the conduct of a panel discussion on “OIC Capital Markets and S&P/OIC COMCEC 50 Shariah Index Fund” on the sidelines of the 38th Session of the COMCEC, **invites** the Member States to engage in promotional and marketing activities for potential investors in their respective countries to raise awareness about the S&P/OIC COMCEC 50 Shariah Index Fund.

100- **Takes note of** the briefing by Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum on the efforts towards establishing OIC Gold Exchange among the volunteering Member

Countries and **requests** the Forum's Secretariat to advance the technical preparations on the new blockchain based model for the OIC Gold Exchange Project in cooperation with central banks and report the progress to the 39th COMCEC Session and Follow-up Committee Meeting.

101- **Invites** the interested Member States and their relevant institutions to actively support Forum's Task Force on Precious Metals by finding counterparts and designating focal points in their respective countries to lead the OIC Gold Exchange Project in order to contribute to the formulation of the business model for a well-functioning OIC Gold Exchange Market.

102- **Takes note of with appreciation** training course on "Capital Market Operations" organized by the OIC Exchanges Forum in collaboration with SESRIC on 11-12 May 2022.

103- **Taking note of the** Academic Conference titled "Sustainability and Islamic Finance in OIC Countries" held as part of the Forum program on October 12th, 2022, **requests** the Forum to continue to work on awareness raising, capacity building and training activities on sustainability.

104- **Commends** the efforts of SESRIC in organizing training and capacity-building activities on various technical and regulatory aspects related to the work of the Stock Exchanges and **requests** SESRIC, in collaboration with the Secretariat of the OIC Exchanges Forum, to organize such activities for the benefit of the Stock Exchanges and relevant national authorities in the Member States within the framework of SESRIC's Stock Exchanges Capacity Building Programme (SE-CaB).

ii) Cooperation among Capital Markets' Regulatory Bodies

105- **Takes note of** the report of the 11th Meeting of the COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum held virtually on November 1st, 2022.

106- **Welcomes** the offer of the Capital Markets Board (CMB) of the Republic of Türkiye, as the Forum Secretariat, to host the 12th Meeting of the COMCEC CMR Forum, in 2023, calls upon the Member Countries to actively participate in this important event.

107- **Commends** the efforts carried out by the Task Forces of COMCEC Capital Market Regulators Forum namely Capacity Building, Market Development, Islamic Finance and Financial Literacy and **calls upon** the Member Countries to support the efforts of the Forum through participating in its meetings and contributing to the accomplishment of the mandates of the Task Forces.

108- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 37th COMCEC Session, **takes note with appreciation of** the completion of the GEFAS Platform (Real Estate Based and Developing Financial Instruments Information System) designed to be an information hub for real estate themed capital market instruments and **invites** the interested Member Countries to encourage their relevant authorities to join this platform and provide the necessary information to be published in GEFAS.”

iii) OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum

109- **Welcomes** the Communique of the 4th Meeting of the OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum held on September 25th-26th, 2022.

110- **Also welcomes** the offer of the Central Bank of the Republic of Türkiye as the Secretariat of the OIC-COMCEC Central Banks Forum, to host the 5th Meeting of the Forum in 2023, and **requests** all the Member Countries to actively participate in this Meeting.

111- **Commends** the training and capacity building programs, particularly on risk management in Islamic financial institutions, monetary operations, and integration of financial technologies (FINTECH) in Islamic finance, organized by the SESRIC for the benefit of Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of the Member States and **requests** SESRIC to continue organizing such activities for the benefit of the relevant national institutions of the Member States within the framework of its Central Banks Capacity Building Programme (CB-CaB).

4 Improving Transport and Communications (Agenda Item: 8)

112- **Taking note with appreciation of** the convening of the 18th and 19th Meetings of the Transport and Communications Working Group virtually on May 17th, 2022, and October 11th, 2022, respectively with the theme of “Economic and Social Impacts of Transport Infrastructures: An Overview of OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Developing/Improving a comprehensive strategy including the components of development, planning, and programming capacity for better economic and social impacts of transport infrastructure,
- Integrating the transport infrastructure projects with the higher national policies to serve the needs at best,
- Promoting the prioritization of transport infrastructure projects in line with high-quality economic and financial analyses,
- Strengthening the conditions for better risk assessments of transport infrastructure projects.

- Enhancing the quality of transport infrastructure projects' statistics and ensuring transparency in information disclosure,
- Making better use of alternative financing and procurement mechanisms including Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and implementing ex-post analysis for enhancing the economic and social impact of transport infrastructure.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/.....)

113- **Calls upon** the Member Countries, which have registered to the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group, to actively participate in the 20th and 21st Meetings of the COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group to be held with the theme of “Environmental Impacts of Transport Infrastructure in the OIC Member Countries”, in 2023.

114- **Commends** the efforts of The Gambia and SESRIC for the following projects being implemented in 2022 within the framework of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The project entitled “Improving Human and Institutional Capacity for the Development of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in the Transport Sector of the OIC Countries” being implemented by The Gambia,
- The project entitled “Improving the Regulatory Framework for PPPs in Transport Sector in the OIC Member Countries” being implemented by SESRIC with 16 beneficiary Member Countries.

115- **Also commends** the efforts of The Gambia for the project titled “Alleviating the Negative Impacts of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Air Transportation Sub-Sector of The Gambia and OIC Countries” being implemented in partnership with Türkiye in 2022 within the scope of 2nd Call for COMCEC COVID Response.

116- **Also commends** the efforts exerted by Algeria and the IsDB to complete “Trans-Saharan Road Project”, which will link land-locked countries and will be a pillar for integration and consolidation among the countries of the region.

117- **Taking note of** the efforts of the OIC General Secretariat and the IsDB Group to operationalize the OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway corridor, **requests** the General Secretariat and IsDB Group to regularly inform the concerned Member Countries about the progress in the realization of the Project in the relevant OIC fora.

118- **Expresses its appreciation** to SESRIC for organizing training courses in the transport and communication sector, particularly on transport statistics within the

framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

Developing a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism Sector (Agenda Item: 9)

119- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 18th and the 19th Meetings of the Tourism Working Group on 12 May 2022 and 5 October 2022, respectively in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Sustainable Human Resource Management in Tourism Sector”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations:

- Improving/Developing strategic COVID-19 alert and new normal adjustment sustainability policies in human resources,
- Promoting in-service training, tourism schools, certificate programs, international exchange programs, and internship opportunities with a view to improving service and quality in the tourism industry,
- Ensuring the sustainability of Staff/Employee well-being through, among others, rewards, bonuses or raises in salary or possibility for employees to become shareholders and favourable working circumstances,
- Increasing synergy between businesses and partners.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/.....)

120- **Calls upon** the Member Countries which have registered to the COMCEC Tourism Working Group to actively participate in the 20th and 21th Meetings of the Tourism Working Group to be held with theme of “Promoting Entrepreneurship for Tourism Industry Competitiveness” in 2023.

121- **Expresses its appreciation** to Türkiye for hosting the 10th Meeting of the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum held virtually on November 10th, 2022 with the theme of "The Prospects and Challenges for Gastronomy Tourism in OIC Countries".

122- **Commends** the efforts of Nigeria and Uganda for the following projects being implemented in 2022 within the framework of the 9th Call of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The project entitled “A Two-Day Training on Human Resource Management in Tourism Sector” being implemented by Nigeria,
- The project entitled “Risk Analysis and Crisis Planning and Management for Community Based Tourism” being implemented by Uganda.

123- **Also commends** the efforts of Sierra Leone for the project entitled

“Preparation of COVID-19 Hygiene Protocol and Training of Employees within the Tourism, Leisure and Hospitality Sector” being implemented in 2022 within the framework of the 2nd Call for COMCEC COVID Response.

124- **Invites** the Member Countries to encourage their relevant institutions, tourism companies and tour operators etc. to further their efforts through, among others, organizing promotion campaigns and additional tours to Quds Al-Sharif for supporting Palestinians in Al-Quds and to demonstrate solidarity with them.

125- **Also welcomes** the successful implementation of five new interrelated tourism projects by the Ministry of National Economy of Palestine under the COMCEC Al-Quds Program with the following project titles:

- “The Artists’ Identity Path: Tracing Heritage in Al-Quds”,
- “Jerusalemites: Because We Are the Place and Time”,
- “Enjoy the Hidden Jewels of Al Quds”,
- “Old City Bakeries: Food Tourism and Heritage”,
- “Al-Quds: Secrets and Narratives to Unfold”.

126- **Welcomes** the Call for Project Proposals made by the COMCEC Coordination Office in October 2022 within the framework of COMCEC Al-Quds Program covering the following areas; tourism, entrepreneurship, creating job opportunities and empowerment of women and youth, e-trade and e-learning, microfinance and SME's involvement in Al-Quds Economy.

127- **Welcomes** the holding of the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) on 27-29 June 2022, in Baku/Azerbaijan and **commends** the selection of Şanlıurfa/Türkiye and Khiva/Uzbekistan as the OIC Cities of Tourism, for 2023 and 2024, respectively.

128- **Express its appreciation** that Uzbekistan and Qatar will host “the 12th and 13th ICTM” in 2024 and 2026, respectively and **requests** the Member Countries to actively participate in these events.

129- **Takes note with appreciation** of the efforts of the SESRIC for regularly preparing reports and organizing training courses, workshops and webinars on the tourism sector, particularly on Halal tourism industry, hospitality services, health tourism, managing and marketing protected areas, tourism statistics, culture statistics, and sustainable tourism indicators within the framework of its Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB) and Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB)

Programme as well as the OIC-VET Programme.

5 Increasing Productivity of Agriculture Sector and Sustaining Food Security (Agenda Item: 10)

130- **Taking note with appreciation** of the convening of the 18th and 19th Meetings of the Agriculture Working Group on 26 May 2022, and 10 October 2022, respectively in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Transforming Food Systems after COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems in the OIC Member Countries”, **welcomes** its following policy recommendations;

- Developing a sound stakeholder coordinating and consulting mechanism to provide a common framework in which all actors can operate in an aligned and harmonized way,
- Making use of Public-Private Partnerships for effective AKIS governance and financing,
- Investing in new talent for agriculture through developing connections and networks between youth and AKIS institutions to prepare workforce of the future,
- Including seasonal agriculture workers into the AKIS for better harnessing their potential in terms of investment, job creation and agricultural productivity,
- Developing a sound system for effective monitoring and evaluation from the beginning to better understand the impact of AKIS,
- Strengthening the information and communications technology (ICT) Systems for AKIS to address the need for localized and customized information,
- Developing an AgriTech & FoodTech ecosystem for the creation and growth of new companies and supporting the existing ones,
- Developing a virtual network of OIC AKIS institutions to increase collaboration among OIC Member Countries.(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/.....)

131- **Calls upon** the Member Countries which have registered to the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group to actively participate in the 20th and 21st Meetings of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group to be held with the theme of “Mitigating and Complying with the Impact of Economic and Social Issues in Combating Food Insecurity for Sustainable Agricultural Production in OIC Member Countries” in 2023.

132- **Commends** the efforts of Benin, Türkiye, ICCIA and IOFS for the following projects being implemented in 2022 within the framework of the Ninth Call of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The project entitled “Promote Nutrition Sensitive Agriculture to Ensure Food Security and Good Nutrition in West Africa” being implemented by Benin,
- The project entitled “Capacity Building on New Technologies to Reduce Post-Harvest Losses” being implemented by Türkiye,

- The project entitled “Creating Awareness on the Importance of Agriculture Commodity Exchange Markets” being implemented by ICCIA with 7 beneficiary Member Countries,
- The project entitled “Building the Capacity of OIC Member Countries in Food Security Governance” to be implemented by IOFS with 11 beneficiary Member Countries.

133- **Also commends** the efforts of Azerbaijan, Benin and Türkiye for the following projects being implemented in 2022 within the framework of the 2nd Call for COMCEC COVID Response:

- The project entitled “Reduction of Food Loss and Waste (FLOW) during COVID-19 Pandemic through Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Socially Responsible Practices” being implemented by Azerbaijan,
- The project entitled “Increase Rice Productivity to Ensure Food Security and Sovereignty in Benin” being implemented by Benin,
- The project entitled “Resilience in the Seed Sector with the Rising of Risks after Covid-19” being implemented by Türkiye.

134- Welcomes the project proposal of Sudan titled “Achieving Food Security for Arab Countries through Sudan Project” aimed at enhancing food security in the Arab region.

135- Taking note of the IOFS’s different important tools for Member States to increase OIC agri-food production and to build up intra-OIC food supply chains, encourages the Member States, the Islamic Development Bank Group and other relevant OIC Institutions to identify key areas of cooperation and provide necessary technical assistance and financial support to the IOFS in this regard.

136- Taking note of the ongoing programmes within the framework of the Livestock Ecosystem as developed by the IOFS, encourages the Member States to assist the Organization in providing necessary financial resources for the successful implementation of such programmes for the benefit of OIC Member States.

137- Taking note of the of restructuring of the Islamic Food Processing Association (IFPA), an IOFS Subsidiary, encourages Member States to actively participate in providing valuable inputs to establish a mechanism for mutual cooperation with IFPA, and invites their national Chambers of Commerce or Food Unions to consider joining IFPA as honorary members towards facilitating leading private food sector companies to become its corporate members.

138- Takes note of the SESRIC’s virtually held training courses in the agricultural

sector, particularly on cotton, food security through efficient irrigation systems, SDG 2 (zero hunger), and SDG 13 (climate action) indicators, within the framework of its Agriculture and Food Security Capacity Building Programme (Agri-CaB) and Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

139- Takes note of the SESRIC's training courses organized on "Biotechnological Tools and Techniques for Cotton" on 17-28 January 2022, in Dhaka, Bangladesh, and "Enhancing Food Security through Efficient Irrigation Systems" in agriculture and food security sector on 23-25 August 2022 in a virtual-only format.

140- **Takes note with appreciation** ICD's resource allocation of USD\$ 270 million for the period of 2023-2025 to address the food security challenges faced by its member countries as part of the IsDB Group Food Security Response Program.

Alleviating Poverty (Agenda Item: 11)

141- **Taking note with appreciation** the convening of the 18th and 19th Meetings of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group held virtually on 10 May 2022, and 6-7 October 2022, respectively with the theme of "Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic", and **welcomes** its policy recommendations categorized according to the levels of interoperability and integrity of social assistance systems in the OIC Member Countries.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/.....)

142- **Calls upon** the Member Countries which have registered to the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group to actively participate in the 20th and 21st Meetings of the Working Group to be held with the theme of "Effective Vocational Education and Training Strategies to Reduce Youth Unemployment in the OIC Member Countries" in 2023.

143- **Commends** the efforts of Türkiye and SESRIC for the following projects being implemented in 2022 within the framework of the 9th Call of the COMCEC Project Funding:

- The project entitled "Impacts of Digitalization in Social Assistance Program for Forced Migration" being implemented by Türkiye,
- The project entitled "Fostering Information Technology (IT) Solutions to Improve the Effectiveness of Public Employment Services (PES) in the OIC Member Countries" being implemented by SESRIC with 15 beneficiary Member Countries.

144- Appreciates SESRIC for regularly preparing research reports on women, youth,

elderly and people with special needs and the labour market as well as organizing training courses, workshops, and webinars related to alleviating poverty, particularly on poverty reduction policies and strategies, poverty and living conditions statistics within the framework of its Poverty Alleviation Capacity Building Programme (PA-CaB) and the Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

i) Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD) and Special Program for the Development of Africa (SPDA)

145- **Reiterates** its request to the Member Countries, which have pledged to the ISFD to fulfil their commitments and make fresh contributions to finance more poverty alleviation projects in Member Countries.

146- **Welcoming** the efforts of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) for mobilization of resources from different financing institutions for more effective implementation of the SPDA, **requests** the ISFD to enhance its endeavours for resource mobilization and advocacy from different resources including governmental, non-governmental resources, and the private sector in the Member Countries and to report the progress to the 39th COMCEC Session.

147- **Takes note of** the efforts of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development for resource mobilization including from governmental, non-governmental resources, and the private sector in the Member States through its new tools of Ihsan Waqf Investment Funds and Country Funds.

148- **Reiterates** its request to the ISFD to prepare and issue a publication containing the gist of activities and best project implementations throughout the 15 years of its existence.

ii) *OIC-VET Program*

149- **Taking note with appreciation** the progress report of SESRIC on the implementation of the OIC-TVET Strategic Road Map 2020-2025 and requests SESRIC to continue submitting progress reports on the implementation status of the Road Map to the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions and the Follow-up Committee Meetings.

150- **Requests** SESRIC to conduct more capacity building training activities in the field of TVET focusing on the cooperation areas of the OIC-TVET Strategic Road Map 2020-2025, namely, “legislative framework, governance and promotion”, “TVET teacher education”, “occupational standards, qualification and quality assurance system” and “certification and modular training programs”.

151- **Calls upon** the Member Countries to participate in and support the various capacity development activities of SESRIC organized under the OIC-VET Programme.

iii) Implementation of the SDGs

152- **Takes note with appreciation** of the report presented by SESRIC titled “Towards the Achievement of Prioritised Sustainable Development Goals in OIC Countries 2022”.

153- **Expresses its appreciation** to SESRIC for the statistical training activities and webinars conducted with a focus on prioritized SDGs for the benefit of National Statistical Offices of the Member Countries within the framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

154- **Requests** SESRIC to continue preparing annual reports on the progress towards achievement of the prioritized SDGs in the OIC Member Countries, submit them to the COMCEC Ministerial Sessions and continue carrying out statistical training activities with a focus on prioritized SDGs for the benefit of National Statistical Offices of the Member Countries within the framework of its Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

155- **Takes note of** the list of SDGs-related activities of the relevant OIC Institutions compiled by the COMCEC Coordination Office towards the implementation of the SDGs in the Member Countries and **calls upon** the Member Countries and relevant OIC Institutions to actively participate in these activities.

156- **Requests** the COMCEC Coordination Office to compile the relevant OIC Institutions’ activities aligned with the prioritized SDG areas and submit the list to the 39th Session of the COMCEC.

Cooperation on Digital Transformation (Agenda Item 12)

157- **Recalling** the relevant resolution of the 37th COMCEC Ministerial Session on the COMCEC High Level Digital Cooperation Initiative/Programme, **takes note with appreciation** of convening of 1st and 2nd Technical Meetings on September 28th, 2022 and November 1st, 2022, respectively on the High-Level Initiative/Programme and **welcomes** the conduct of the “Concept Report on the Current State of Member Countries Regarding Digitalization” prepared by the Digital Transformation Office (DTO) of the Presidency of Türkiye and COMCEC Coordination Office.

158- **Takes note with appreciation** the Declaration of the High-Level Meeting on “COMCEC High Level Digital Cooperation Initiative/Programme” hosted by Digital Transformation Office (DTO) of Türkiye on November 27, 2022 on the sidelines of 38th

COMCEC Session in particular the commitment of the member countries to continue their cooperation in this field under the “COMCEC High Level Digital Transformation Forum”.

159- **Also takes note with appreciation** the proposal of the Digital Transformation Office (DTO) of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, as the Secretariat of the COMCEC High Level Digital Transformation Forum, to host the first High-Level Forum Meeting in 2023 and **requests** all the interested Member States and the relevant OIC Institutions to actively participate in the activities of the Forum.

Exchange of Views on “Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic” (Agenda Item: 13)

160- **Welcomes** the policy recommendations of the 19th Meeting of the Poverty Alleviation Working Group, which served as the preparatory meeting for the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session, on “*Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic*” held virtually on 6-7 October 2022.

(Ref: Document Code OIC/COMCEC/.....)

Theme of the next Exchange of Views Session

161- **Decides on** “Improving the e-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries” as the theme for the Exchange of Views Session at the 39th Session of the COMCEC and **requests** the COMCEC Trade Working Group in its 21st Meeting, in cooperation with the relevant OIC Institutions, to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report it to the 39th COMCEC Session.

Date of the 39th Session of the COMCEC (Agenda Item: 14)

162- **Decides** that the 39th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee will be held on 23-24 May 2023, and the 39th Session of the COMCEC will be held on 2-5 December 2023, in Türkiye.

Any Other Business (Agenda Item: 15)

163- **Takes note of** the proposal by Palestine recommending Member States of the OIC to assist and strengthen the resilience of Al-Quds and mobilize the necessary funding by adding the smallest unit of national currency for member states to the monthly bill for fixed and mobile phone service subscribers and explore ways to establish a fund to be operated by the Islamic Development Bank under the same

mechanism as Al-Aqsa Fund and Jerusalem Fund, subject to approval by the IsDB.

164- Recalling the relevant resolution of the 37th Session of the COMCEC and the recommendation of the 38th Follow-up Committee Meeting of the COMCEC, **takes note with appreciation** the work done towards identifying a methodology and criteria for the formulation of draft resolutions in a more concise format with actionable points by the COMCEC Coordination Office in cooperation with the relevant OIC institutions **welcomes** the following criteria for the formulation of the COMCEC Ministerial Resolutions and **requests** the CCO to give due regard to these criteria in the preparation of draft resolutions for the upcoming COMCEC Sessions and Follow up Committee Meetings:

- An initiative/ Strategy/Programme/Project/, which requires a decision and was a subject to a previous COMCEC Resolution as well as and on which technical studies have already been completed.
- Setting targets/vision in the areas of cooperation and giving assignments to the Member Countries/OIC Institutions for this purpose.
- Launching/Adopting/Endorsing/Welcoming medium and long-term programs/projects initiated by the COMCEC or on the agenda of the COMCEC.
- Concrete programs/projects developed by the Member Countries towards implementation of the COMCEC Strategy and Policy Recommendations and OIC 2025 Programme of Action.
- Comprehensive, multilateral and large scale Programs/Projects/Initiatives of the OIC Institutions, which are designed for the benefit of the member countries and aligned with the COMCEC Strategy and Policy Recommendations as well as OIC 2025.
- Necessity of the submission of the resolution proposals by the Member Countries

Renewal of the Bureau Members

165- **Elects** the State of Qatar, Brunei Darussalam and Senegal as Vice Chairmen of the Bureau of the COMCEC to represent the Arab, Asian and African Regions, respectively, and Islamic Republic of Pakistan as Rapporteur, to assume their posts as of the 39th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC; as a result of the election, the composition of the Follow-up Committee is as follows;

Country	Status
Republic of Türkiye:	Chairman (Permanent)
State of Palestine:	Vice-Chairman (Permanent)
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia:	Vice-Chairman (Permanent)
State of Qatar:	Vice-Chairman (Representing the Arab Region)
Brunei Darussalam:	Vice-Chairman (Representing the Asian Region)

Senegal:	Vice-Chairman(Representing	the	African
Region)			
State of Kuwait:	Member of the Previous Bureau		
Republic of Indonesia:	Member of the Previous Bureau		
Federal Republic of Nigeria:	Member of the Previous Bureau		
Islamic Republic of Pakistan:	Rapporteur		

III

**REPORT
OF THE THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC
(26-29 November 2022)**

Original: English

**REPORT
OF THE THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC
AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC
(26-29 November 2022, İstanbul)**

1. The Thirty Eighth Ministerial Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC) was held on 26-29 November 2022, in İstanbul.
2. The Session was attended by representatives of the following Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC):

- 1- Republic of Azerbaijan
- 2- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- 3- Kingdom of Bahrain
- 4- People's Republic of Bangladesh
- 5- Benin
- 6- Brunei Darussalam
- 7- Burkina Faso
- 8- Republic of Cameroon
- 9- Republic of Chad
- 10- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- 11- Republic of Djibouti
- 12- Arab Republic of Egypt
- 13- Republic of Gabon
- 14- Republic of The Gambia
- 15- Guinea
- 16- Islamic Republic of Iran
- 17- Republic of Indonesia
- 18- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- 19- The State of Kuwait
- 20- Kazakhstan
- 21- Republic of Lebanon
- 22- State of Libya
- 23- Malaysia
- 24- Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- 25- Kingdom of Morocco
- 26- Mozambique
- 27- Republic of Niger
- 28- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- 29- Sultanate of Oman
- 30- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- 31- The State of Palestine

- 32- State of Qatar
 - 33- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
 - 34- Republic of Senegal
 - 35- Federal Republic of Somalia
 - 36- Sierra Leone
 - 37- Sudan
 - 38- Republic of Tajikistan
 - 39- Republic of Togo
 - 40- Republic of Tunisia
 - 41- Republic of Türkiye
 - 42- Republic of Turkmenistan
 - 43- Republic of Uganda
 - 44- State of the United Arab Emirates
 - 45- Republic of Yemen
3. The Russian Federation, Kingdom of Thailand and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus participated in the Session as observers.
 4. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and the COMCEC Coordination Office, the following OIC Organs/ Institutions attended the Session:
 - 1- Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
 - 2- Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT)
 - 3- Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group
 - 4- International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)
 - 5- Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC)
 - 6- Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD)
 - 7- Islamic Organization of Food Security (IOFS)
 - 8- Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
 - 9- Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
 - 10- Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)
 - 11- Islamic University of Technology (IUT)
 - 12- OIC Arbitration Center
 - 13- OIC Woman Consultative Council (WCC)
 - 14- Woman Development Organization (WDO)
 - 15- Association of National Development Finance Institutions (DFIs) in Member
 - 16- Countries of the Islamic Development Bank (ADFIMI)
 5. Representatives of the following International Organizations and Universities attended the Session:

- 1- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)
- 2- Developing Eight (D-8)
- 3- Economic Cooperation Organization Trade and Development Bank (ECOBANK)
- 4- Organization of the Black Sea Economic (BSEC)
- 5- United Nation World Food Program (UNWFP)
- 6- Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)
- 7- Organization of Turkic States

(A copy of the List of Participants of the Thirty Eighth Session of the COMCEC is attached as Annex I.)

6. The Meeting of Senior Officials of the 38th COMCEC Session that preceded the Ministerial Session was held on 26-27 November 2022 in İstanbul under the Chairmanship of H.E. Abdullah Rıdvan AĞAOĞLU, Vice President of the Strategy and Budget of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. The Senior Officials deliberated on the agenda items and prepared the Draft Resolutions for consideration by the Ministerial Session.
7. The 41st Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the COMCEC was held virtually on November 16th, 2022 as a sideline event with the participation of the relevant OIC Institutions.

(A copy of the report of the 41st Meeting of the Sessional Committee is attached as Annex II)

Opening Session

8. The Opening Session of the Thirty Eighth Session of the COMCEC, held on November 28th, 2022, began with the inaugural speech of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Türkiye and the Chairman of the COMCEC.
9. His Excellency ERDOĞAN, in his opening statement, underlined the importance of being a Muslim and expressed that as members of the Islamic Ummah, “none of us could isolate ourselves from the outside world, from the events happening around us and beyond.”
10. His Excellency ERDOĞAN also stated that “we are the Ummah of a Prophet who treats orphans with compassion, takes care of the oppressed without any discrimination, and takes care of the poor.”
11. Underlining the importance of consultative mechanisms, coordination and cultural events that bring Muslims closer, His Excellency ERDOĞAN expressed that with this understanding Türkiye hosted the 5th Islamic Solidarity Games in August 2022 in Konya and the 12th Information Ministers Conference in Istanbul in October 2022. H.E. ERDOĞAN also pointed out that the programs organized throughout the year contribute to better understanding each other and develop

joint projects. Furthermore, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed his belief to the continuation of this momentum that has been achieved.

12. H.E. ERDOĞAN stated that the difficult pandemic period has shown how critical social assistance is in the people's lives. In this respect, H.E. ERDOĞAN underlined the significance of this year's exchange of views session, which has been devoted to social assistance systems.
13. H.E. ERDOĞAN also highlighted that the programs/projects such as TPS-OIC, OIC Arbitration Center and Islamic Index Fund put into practice within the scope of COMCEC would make significant contributions to the economic and commercial cooperation among the Islamic Countries.
14. Moreover, H.E. ERDOĞAN stated that everyone should feel responsible for all people who suffer from difficulties and distress, especially women and children who are persecuted all over the world, who are victims of political conflicts, and that every effort should be made to solve these problems. H.E. ERDOĞAN also underscored that Türkiye always supports the Palestinian cause and always stands by the Palestinian people.
15. While concluding his speech, H.E. ERDOĞAN expressed his wishes that the Session would yield beneficial outcomes for the member countries and the Islamic World.

(A copy of the text of the Inaugural Statement of H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN is attached as Annex III)

16. Following H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN's opening statement, His Excellency Dr. Hussein Ibrahim TAHA, the Secretary General of the OIC, made his statement. At the outset, H.E. TAHA conveyed his special thanks to H.E. ERDOĞAN, President of the Republic of Türkiye and Chairman of the COMCEC and the Government of the Republic of Türkiye for the excellent preparations made for this meeting.
17. H.E. TAHA stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the strict containment measures, OIC Member States have suffered from adverse effects resulting in massive job losses, economic contraction, falling investments and exports, and declining tourism activities. The adverse impacts of the pandemic have been exacerbated by the conflict between Russia and Ukraine that have disrupted the efforts to recover the economy and led to food insecurity of many OIC Member Countries.
18. H.E. TAHA highlighted that the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers successfully held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 27th - 29th June 2022, provided a unique opportunity for sharing the experiences to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and coming-up the recommendations to speed-up the recovery process of the tourism sector during the post-pandemic

era. H.E. TAHA also underlined that the said Meeting selected Şanlıurfa (Türkiye) and Khiva (Uzbekistan) as the OIC cities of Tourism for 2023 and 2024, respectively.

19. Considering the common challenges and problems faced in the OIC countries, H.E. TAHA enumerated following recommendations that need to be focused on; investing more in critical sectors including agriculture and industries; implementing the OIC-2025: Programme of Action, and mainstreaming its strategies in the national development strategies of Member States; building synergies between the OIC financial and technology-rich countries with those that have natural resources such as arable land but lack finances and technology to exploit them; creating a fund by the Member States for financing startup projects in order to support and promote youth innovative projects in various economic fields; and implementing all the OIC initiatives aimed at promoting intra-OIC trade and investment cooperation.
20. Lastly, H.E. TAHA emphasized the great need to support the rural people in OIC Least Developed Countries (LDCs) especially in Africa. In this respect, H.E. TAHA called upon all OIC Institutions/organs including COMCEC to design programmes aimed at addressing the socio-economic needs of the rural people in the LDCs of the OIC.

(A Copy of the text of the Statement of the Secretary General of the OIC is attached as Annex IV)

21. The Heads of Delegations of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Federal Republic of Nigeria and Brunei Darussalam made statements on behalf of Arab, African and Asian Geographical Groups of the OIC regions, respectively, during the Opening Ceremony.
22. H.E. Dr. Majid Abdullah Al-QASABI, Minister of Commerce, as the Head of Delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia conveyed his special thanks and gratitude to H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, the President of the Republic of Türkiye, for the successfully convening this important Session. H.E. Al-QASABI stressed that the face of the great challenges the world is going through, the convening of the session comes as an opportunity to redouble efforts and expand horizons of cooperation among member states in all economic fields. H.E. Al-QASABI also underlined that achieving economic and development integration among Islamic countries requires maximizing the optimal use of the capabilities as Islamic countries united by the bond of religion, brotherhood, and a common destiny to face the challenges the world is experiencing.
23. H.E. Al-QASABI also emphasized that the Kingdom has played a pioneering role in assisting the countries affected by the Pandemic in various parts of the world and in the Islamic World. Also underlining the importance of the

implementation of OIC Program of Action to 2025 (PoA-2025), H.E. Al-QASABI expressed that the active participation of the all Member Countries to include the OIC programs among their priorities is very crucial.

24. At the end of his remarks, H.E. Al-QASABI congratulated the State of Qatar, the Republic of Brunei, and the Republic of Senegal for their election as the representatives of the regional groups namely Arab, Asia and Africa respectively in the bureau of the COMCEC for the upcoming three years.
25. The Head of Delegation of Federal Republic of Nigeria H.E. ZUBAIRU DADA, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, expressing his condolences to the families of the victim of a recent terrorist attack in Istanbul, underlined that terrorism in all its forms and manifestations is abhorrent and condemnable. H.E. DADA expressed that Africa stands in solidarity with Turkish government and people against the unjustified cowardly act of violence. H.E. DADA also expressed his appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Türkiye for their consistent support of to the activities of the COMCEC over the years in promoting intra-OIC economic and commercial cooperation.
26. Afterwards, H.E. DADA mentioned about the current challenges that the member states face due to COVID-19 and efforts to achieve a resilient post-pandemic recovery. Underlining the relevance of the theme of the exchange of views session in terms of tackling with the mentioned challenges, H.E. DADA expressed that provision of social assistance to the poorest in the society and empowering them should be encouraged by the social welfare systems, support programs for youth and women entrepreneurship, and establishment of survival funds.
27. Furthermore, H.E. DADA emphasized the importance of the recently initiated COMCEC High-Level Digital Transformation Program. H.E. DADA underlined that Africa remains committed to implementation of goals of COMCEC Strategy and attaches utmost importance to the strategic partnership among Member States for the prosperity of people.
28. Lastly, H.E. DADA called upon the IDB to pursue with a renewed vigour, the implementation of the Special Programme for the Development of Africa and revitalize the Dakar-Port Sudan Railway Project due to its huge economic impacts on the African continent.
29. Furthermore, the Head of Delegation of Brunei Darussalam, H.E. Dr. MOHD AMIN LIEW ABDULLAH, Minister of Finance and Economy, underlined that the theme of the 38th Ministerial Session, “Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic” is very pertinent and full fitting with the current problems faced by humanity. H.E. ABDULLAH emphasized that alleviating poverty is an essential part of recovery programs in the post pandemic period. H.E. ABDULLAH also underlined that

digitalization of all processes is of critical importance for the success of the social assistance provision programs implemented. In this respect, monitoring and evaluating the results regularly and increasing the quality of data and information, capacity building and high quality training programs are all important subjects to be taken into consideration for the betterment of the social assistance programs.

30. Afterwards, H.E. Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman AL JASSER, President of the IsDB Group, delivered a statement. H.E. AL JASSER expressed his appreciation to the Republic of Türkiye and Chairman of the COMCEC, for the efforts to convene this meeting. H.E. AL JASSER, in his statement, mentioned that adverse effects of the COVID-19 have gone beyond health, leading to a sharp economic contraction in 2020 and pushing more than 100 million additional people into extreme poverty worldwide. H.E. JASSER expressed that the IsDB Group Strategic Preparedness and Response Program (SPRP) was initiated to support member countries in containing, mitigating, and recovering from the COVID-19 impacts. Additionally, H.E. AL JASSER also informed that in April 2022, total IsDB Group commitments under the SPRP stood at US\$4.67 billion. Furthermore, H.E. AL JASSER stated that the IsDB Group and the Arab Coordination Group (ACG) have jointly committed US\$10 billion toward postpandemic recovery.
31. H.E. AL JASSER also underlined that the Bank has endorsed a US\$10.54 billion comprehensive Food Security Response Program (FSRP) package aimed at supporting member countries in addressing food security in the short term and ensure sustainable food systems in the long term.
32. Lastly, H.E. AL JASSER highlighted that for mitigating the impact of climate change, the Arab Coordination Group has announced a climate action-financing package of US\$24 billion for the next eight years.
(A Copy of the text of the Statement of the IDB Group President is attached as Annex V)

33. Afterwards, the launch ceremony of the COMCEC High-Level Digital Transformation Programme/Initiative was conducted. In this respect, a short-video demonstration on the COMCEC High Level Digital Transformation Program was demonstrated. Then, H.E. Dr. Ali Taha KOÇ, the Head of Digital Transformation Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye delivered a speech about the COMCEC High-Level Digital Cooperation Initiative/Program.
34. H.E. Dr. KOÇ stated that the world is in a structural transformation, called digitalization, through which traditional ways of living and doing business are changing. He also pointed out that the priority cooperation areas were identified by considering the needs of the member countries, namely, Digital State, Cyber

security, Digital Connectivity, Digital Skills, Developing Technologies, Data, and Digital Economy. He emphasized that the cooperation efforts in this important field will be undertaken under the COMCEC High Level Digital Transformation Forum, where concrete projects and activities would be realized.

Ministerial Working Session

35. The Ministerial Working Session of the Thirty-Eighth Session of the COMCEC was held on November 28th, 2022, under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye.
36. The Session adopted the Agenda of the 38th Session of the COMCEC.
(The Agenda of the Meeting is attached as Annex VI)
37. Following the adoption of the agenda, H.E. Abdullah Rıdvan AĞAOĞLU, Vice President of the Strategy and Budget of Republic of Türkiye, as the Chairman of the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), informed the Session of the outcomes of the Senior Officials Meeting as well as the policy recommendations on “Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic” deliberated by the SOM and submitted to the consideration of the Ministerial Session.
38. Following the presentation of H.E. AĞAOĞLU, Prof. Dr. Habib AHMED, Professor at Durham University, delivered a keynote speech on the role of Islamic religious institutions as supporting instruments of social assistance systems. At the outset, Mr. AHMED provided an overview of the issues and challenges faced in social assistance programs. He indicated that the common problems occur mainly at the stages of identification of the beneficiaries and dynamically updating data of existing beneficiaries, receiving compliance and grievances. He added that the lack of technical infrastructure and expertise as well as inclusion and targeting errors are the most common barriers against moving to integrated systems.
39. Afterwards, Dr. AHMED briefed the Session about the Islamic institutions serving to societal well-being such as zakat, sadaqat and waqf, which historically have played important roles in providing basic needs and enhance social welfare. In addition to the the financial aspect, Dr. Ahmed touched upon the operational mechanisms of social assistance systems. Considering that gathering and updating information of beneficiaries centrally is costly and time consuming, he suggested that formally commissioned officials of community-based institutions such as mosques can play an important role in identification of the needy and follow-up phases.
40. Following the speech of Prof. Dr. Habib AHMED, the Exchange of Views Session of the 38th Session of the COMCEC was held with the theme of

“Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic.”

41. Within this framework, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations of the Member Countries made statements and interventions on their country experiences with respect to the theme of the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session. In this framework, they emphasized the actions taken to address the urgent needs of the poor and sectoral supports provided for health services and employment as well as their efforts to strengthen women, youth and the poor in particular. They also stressed that cooperation in the field of information technologies would make a great contribution to reducing poverty and unemployment.

Side Events/Special Sessions

42. Trade Negotiation Committee (TNC) Meeting was held on 27th November 2022 as a sideline event on the margin of the 38th Ministerial Session. TPS-OIC Participating States, namely Bahrain, Bangladesh, Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Oman, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, and Morocco, as well as representatives from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretariat attended the Meeting. In the Meeting, the status of the implementation of TPS-OIC in the participating states, experiences/difficulties faced by the parties in the implementation of the Agreement, possible solutions to the issues for full implementation of TPS-OIC, and roadmap for the future were discussed.
43. Furthermore, COMCEC High Level Digital Transformation Initiative/ Programme Meeting was held on 27th November 2022 as a sideline event on the margins of the 38th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC. The Member States of OIC interested in digital cooperation and high-level representatives of OIC and the relevant OIC Institutions have attended the Meeting. In the Meeting, the concept report on “Current Status of Member Countries on Digital Transformation as well as the outcomes of the 1st and 2nd Technical Meetings” were presented. In addition, the cooperation framework including the thematic areas for cooperation has been identified. Finally, a Declaration has been adopted by Ministers and Head of Delegations of the Member Countries in charge of digital transformation.
44. A special panel on the “OIC/COMCEC International Investment Fund” was held as a side event, on the margins of the 38th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC, on November 29th, 2022, with the participation of the member country delegations, OIC financial institutions, investors, relevant experts and academics. In the panel, the importance of OIC capital markets, digitalization and digital assets were discussed. Particularly, the importance of the Fund, as the halal financial investment instrument that has been developed under the umbrella of the COMCEC, was underscored.

45. A special panel on “Facilitating Young Entrepreneurship on Technology in the OIC” was organized as a sideline event, on the margin of the 38th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC, on November 29th, 2022, by the OIC Youth Forum (ICYF) in cooperation with the Investment Office of the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. Delegations from the OIC member countries, startups, investors, and academics attended to the panel. In the panel, critical success factors in young entrepreneurship were thoroughly discussed with a specific focus on the potential opportunities in digitalization for the youth in the OIC member countries. Furthermore, five successful startups, initiated by young entrepreneurs from various OIC member countries, presented their inspiring stories and lessons learned.
46. On the sidelines of the 38th COMCEC Session, a Ministerial Working Breakfast on TPS-OIC was held on November 29th, 2022. The Ministers welcomed the operationalization of the TPSOIC and indicated their commitments to the full implementation of the System. The willingness to extend the scope of TPS-OIC was also stressed during the event.
47. Furthermore, another special event was organized by Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) on the “2022 Annual OIC Halal Economy Report” on 29th November 2022 on the sidelines of the 38th Session of the COMCEC.

Closing Session

48. The Closing Session of the 38th Session of the COMCEC was held on November 29th, 2022 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye.
49. Mr. Husham AHMED, Counsellor at the Embassy of Pakistan in Ankara, as the Rapporteur, summarized the salient points in the Resolutions.
50. The Session was also informed about the outcomes of the deliberations of the meeting of the TPS-OIC Trade Ministers.
51. Afterwards, the Session adopted the Resolution OIC/COMCEC/38-22/RES.
52. H.E. Dr. Ahmad Kawesa SENGENDO, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, in his closing statement, extended his special gratitude and appreciation to H.E. Recep Tayyip ERDOĞAN, the President of the Republic of Türkiye and the Chairman of COMCEC.
53. H.E SENGENDO stressed that the General Secretariat of the OIC is in the hope that the OIC Member Countries will quickly put in place the effective mechanisms for ensuring speedy implementation of the decision taken in the Session especially with regard to the cooperation areas, namely trade, agriculture, finance, transportation, poverty alleviation and tourism.

54. At the end of his speech, H.E. SENGENDO expressed his special thanks and congratulations to H.E. Fuat OKTAY, the Vice-President of the Republic of Türkiye, for his valuable efforts for the successful conduct of the Session and also expressed his special thanks and appreciations to all heads of delegations, all those who contributed to the Meeting, participating OIC Institutions and COMCEC Coordination Office.
55. The Head of Delegation of State of Palestine, His Excellency KHALID AL-ESSEILY, Minister of National Economy, made a statement on behalf of all participating states, and thanked all of the participants for their contributions to the successful conduct of the meeting and also thanked to the Republic of Türkiye for the generous hospitality extended during this Meeting. Expressing his condolences for those who lost their lives in the terrorist attack occurred in İstanbul H.E. AL- ESSEILY extended his best wishes for the recovery from these difficult times.
56. H.E. AL- ESSEILY underlined the importance of inclusion of digital cooperation in the COMCEC agenda, which is very timely and relevant considering the global trends and requirements towards digitalization.
57. After briefly mentioning the recent economic developments in Palestine, he expressed his special thanks to the all-Islamic countries for their stand by with the Palestinian people stressing the date of November 29 (today) which also marks the International Day of Solidarity with Palestinian people.
58. Finally, H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye, delivered a closing statement. H.E. OKTAY underlined the effects of pandemic across the world and mentioned that global economy is still vulnerable to additional crises due to the increasing concerns for climate change, food insecurity and natural resources crises like water and energy shortages. H.E. OKTAY also underlined that with the increase in input costs in many sectors including energy and agricultural products in which the production has declined during the pandemic, high inflation is being experienced throughout the world. In addition, H.E. OKTAY also stressed that significant developments that are being effective on world politics during recent months bring together heavy economic burdens on many levels.
59. H.E. OKTAY highlighted that the active role Türkiye is playing in the grain corridor in the Black Sea region has enabled the maintenance of the international trade of agricultural products, and facilitated access to these products which are essential for many countries.
60. H.E. OKTAY highlighted that trade, which has a crucial role in fostering cooperation as well as increasing the welfare of countries, has been the central feature in the development of intra-OIC cooperation.

61. In this context, H. E. OKTAY expressed his deepest thanks and appreciations to all member countries of the Trade Negotiating Committee for their cooperation and efforts for making TPS-OIC operational. H.E. OKTAY also stressed that TPS-OIC's effectuation will be a milestone for the beginning of a new era for the economic relations and for expanding the existing cooperation in all areas among the Islamic Countries, which share common historical and cultural values.
62. H.E. OKTAY further stressed that this important initiative shall not be limited to existing participant countries and to the area of trade collaboration, and it shall attract other countries and bring together new opportunities for other areas of collaboration. In this respect, H.E. OKTAY underlined his belief that trade preferential system shall be improved and pave the way for more extensive trade arrangements in which all participating countries shall gain benefits.
63. H.E. OKTAY also stated that the OIC Arbitration Center would provide trustworthy, quick and efficient settlement of trade and investment disputes. He also stressed that the operationalization of the OIC Arbitration Center is an encouraging case point for the other endeavors in various cooperation areas. H.E. OKTAY thanked to all stakeholders who contributed to this process.
64. H.E. OKTAY also underlined the importance of OIC-COMCEC 50 Islamic Index for deepening cooperation among the Stock Exchanges of OIC Member States, in particular the issuance of the OIC/COMCEC 50 Islamic Index Equity Fund under the Index as a concrete investment instrument. In this context, highlighting the completion of technical infrastructure of the Fund in 7 countries, H. E. OKTAY invited all stakeholders to work together in order for using the Fund as an investment tool in the stock markets of other Member States in the coming period.
65. H. E. OKTAY pointed out that expediting of efforts is of significant importance in terms of implementing the initiatives such as the Gold Exchange and Real Estate Exchange as important projects for digital investment products based on precious metals and real estate, and invited all fellow countries to contribute to these projects.
66. H. E. OKTAY continued with underlining the relevance of the subject of "Effective Provision of Social Assistance as a Result of the Covid-19 Pandemic" as the theme of Ministerial Exchange of Views Session. He stated that the importance of social assistance for establishing income justice and particularly for alleviating poverty.
67. Furthermore, H. E. OKTAY expressed that today digital platforms have become an important tool for a faster, more efficient and more transparent provision of public services. In this respect, H.E. OKTAY stated that being aware of this necessity, COMCEC added a new item on its agenda last year and established

the COMCEC High Level Digital Transformation Forum to deepen the cooperation in the field of digital transformation.

68. Lastly, H. E. OKTAY underscored the importance of the subject of next year's Ministerial Exchange of Views Session shall be "Increasing the e-Commerce Capacity of OIC Member States".

69. H.E. Fuat OKTAY concluded his statement by expressing his thanks to all member country delegations, OIC General Secretariat, COMCEC Coordination Office, the Institutions of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation and other international organizations for their active and valuable contributions.

(The text of the Closing Statement of H.E. Fuat OKTAY is attached as Annex VII)

70. All documents submitted to the 38th Session of COMCEC will be available on the COMCEC web site (www.comcec.org).

A N N E X E S

ANNEX

1

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

COMCEC 38TH MINISTERIAL SESSION
(November 26th-29th, 2022)

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

-Mr. M. SOFIANE MIMOUNI

Ambassador, Embassy of Algeria in Ankara

- Mr. TAREK ALLOUNE

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-Mr. JAKHONGÏR KHASANOV

Professional Officer, OIC General Secretariat

D.THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

ISLAMIC CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT)

-H.E. LATIFA EL BOUABDELLAOUI LATIFA

Director General, Islamic Centre for Development of Trade

-Mr. MOHAMED ALI

Expert, Islamic Centre for Development of Trade

-Mr. MAMOUDOU BOCAR SALL MAHMOUD

Director General Assistant, Islamic Centre for Development of Trade

-Mr. MERRI TARIK

In charge of Trade Information, Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT)

ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY (IUT)

-H.E. Prof. Dr. MOHAMMAD RAFÏQUL ISLAM

Vice Chancellor, Islamic University of Technology (IUT)

-Prof. Dr. MD HAMÏDUR RAHMAN

Professor, Islamic University of Technology (IUT)

STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

-H.E. NEBÏL DABUR

Director General, The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)

-Mr. ONUR CAGLAR

Director of Training and Technical Cooperation, SESRIC

-Mr. FADI ABDULLAH FARASIN

Assistant Director General, SESRIC

ISLAMIC CORPORATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR

-Mr. ALİ CAMLIOĞLU

Senior Investment Associate, ICD

-Mr. OSMAN BUYUKMUTLU

Director, Strategy & Policy Department, ICD/

ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION FOR FOOD SECURITY

-H.E. YERLAN BAİDAULET

Director General, Islamic Organization for Food Security

-Dr. ISMAIL ABDELHAMID

Director of Programs and Project Office, Islamic Organization for Food Security

-Mr. ABDULA MANAFİ MUTUALO

Senior Liaison Officer, Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS)

E. SPECIALIZED ORGANS OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (IsDB)

-H.E. Dr. MUHAMMAD ALJASSER

President, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

-Mr. AMER BUKVIC

Acting Director General Global Practice & Partnerships, Islamic Development Bank

-Ms. DİLAN KALİC

Executive Assistant, Islamic Development Bank Regional Hub in Türkiye

-Mr. HAMMAD ZAFAR HUNDAL

Officer in Charge, Islamic Development Bank Regional Hub in Türkiye

-Dr. MOHAMMED ALWOSABİ

Principal Executive Assistant, Executive Office of the President IsDB, Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)

-Mr. MURAD YANDİEV

Senior Executive Coordinator (Partnerships), Islamic Development Bank

-Mr. ÖMER ASLAN

Head of Admin, Islamic Development Bank

-Dr. ZAMİR IQBAL

Vice President & CFO, Islamic Development Bank

-Mr. FARUK ÖZCAN

Protocol Officer, Islamic Development Bank

-Ms. NORA MOZZIN

President's Liaison Officer, Islamic Development Bank

-Ms. ŞEVVAL ERGÜN

Administrative Assistant, Islamic Development Bank

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC TRADE FINANCE CORPORATION (ITFC)

-H.E. Dr. SONBOL HANI

Chief Executive Officer, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)

-Mr. ANVAR NIGMATOV

Manager, Relationship Management for CIS and Turkey, ITFC, IsDB Group

-Mr. HOJAMUROD HOJAEV

Relationship Manager, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)

WOMEN DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION

-H.E. Dr. AFNAN ALSHUAIBY

Executive Director, Women Development Organization

OIC ARBITRATION CENTER

-H.E. ABDULLAH KAMEL

Chairperson of the OIC Arbitration Center, OIC Arbitration Center

-Mr. ADİL SANİ KONUKOĞLU

Board member of OIC Arbitration Centre, OIC Arbitration Center

-Mr. ALİ AL ZAROUNI

Board member of OIC Arbitration Centre, OIC Arbitration Center

-Mr. MOHAMED RİDZA ABDULLA

Board member of OIC Arbitration Centre, OIC Arbitration Centre

-Mr. ABDULRAHMAN ASHMAWI

Personal Assistant of Sheikh Abdullah Kamel, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry & Agriculture

F.AFFILIATED ORGANS OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICULTURE (ICCIA)

-H.E. YOUSEF KHALAWI

Secretary General, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

-Ms. AALIA JAFAR

Director - International Relations, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

-Ms. SAMRAH QURESHI

IR Associate, Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

-Mr. FAYYAD ALQUDAH

Prof., OIC Arbitration Centre Board Member

-Mr. MUHAMMET ALPER ATILLA

Head of Department, Ministry of Trade, Republic of Türkiye

ASSOCIATION OF NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCE INSTITUTIONS IN MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADFIMI)

-Mr. İLHAMİ ÖZTÜRK

Secretary General, ADFIMI

-Mr. OSMAN ARSLAN

Chairman, ADFIMI

**STANDARDS AND METROLOGY INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES
(SMIIC)**

-Ms. İHSAN ÖVÜT

Secretary General, SMIIC

-Mr. YASİN ZULFİKAROĞLU

Specialist, SMIIC

**ISLAMIC CONFERENCE YOUTH FORUM FOR DIALOGUE AND
COOPERATION (ICYF-DC)**

-Mr TAHA AYHAN

President

OIC WOMEN CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL

-H.E. Amb. MAHINUR OZDEMİR GOKTAS

Ambassador of Turkey in Algeria, Embassy of Algeria

G.OIC STANDING COMMITTEES

**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
(OECD)**

-Mr. ACHRAF BOUALİ

Head of Mission, OECD Istanbul Centre

-Ms. DAMLA DABAK

Policy Analyst, OECD Istanbul Centre

**THE ISLAMIC CORPORATION FOR THE INSURANCE OF INVESTMENT AND
EXPORT CREDIT (ICIEC)**

-Mr. ALTAYEB ABBAS FADLALLAH

Specialist, Strategic Planning & Communications, ICIEC/ISDB

-Ms. FATMA GAMZE SARIOĞLU

Senior Country Manager, ISDB GROUP

-Ms. AYSE SELDA KURT

Country Specialist, ISDB GROUP

ISLAMIC SOLIDARITY FUND FOR DEVELOPMENT

-Mr. OULD EMEH MOHAMEDEN

Senior Program Management Specialist, ISDB/ISFD

**I. OTHER INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS
DEVELOPING EIGHT (D-8)**

-H.E. Amb. ISIKA ABDULQADIR IMAM

Secretary General, D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

-Mr. PUNJUL SETYA NUGRAHA

Director, D-8 ORGANIZATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION

ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BANK (ECOBANK)

-Mr. YALÇIN YÜKSEL

President, Eco Trade and Development Bank

-Dr. ABID HAMEED

Deputy Director, Eco Trade and Development Bank

-Mr. SHERYAR TAJ

Vice President, Eco Trade and Development Bank

-Mr. MAHDİ KASRAİEPOOR

Vice President, Eco Trade and Development Bank

GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC)

-Mr. ABDULMALIK SALEH ALASHAIKH

Head of the Economic Affairs Sector, Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)

THE BLACK SEA ECONOMIC COOPERATION

-Mr. KANAN MURTUZOV

Executive Manager, BSEC

K. KEYNOTE SPEAKER

-Dr. HABIB AHMED

Prof. Dr, Sharjah Chair in Islamic Law and Finance

O. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

-Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ

Acting Director General,

-Mr. CAN AYGÜL

Head of Department

-Mr. MEHMET ASLAN

Head of Department

-Mr. MEHMET CELALETTİN AKTAŞ

Head of Department

-Mr. GOKTEN DAMAR

Expert

-Ms. AYTEN AKMAN KACAR

Expert

-Ms. EDA AKÇA

Expert

-Mr. ALİ ORUÇ

Expert

-Mr. MEHMET AKİF ALANBAY

Expert

-Mr. MUSTAFA ADİL SAYAR

Expert

-Mr. NİHAT AKBALIK

Expert

-Mr. YUNUS KAYIŞ

Expert

-Mr. KADİR ALTINTOP

Assistant Expert

-Mr. MUHAMMED ZİYA SARI

Assistant Expert

-Ms. SEYYİDE RAVZA ÇOKSÖYLER

Assistant Expert

-Ms. DİLEK DEMİRHAN

Assistant Expert

-Ms. HİLAL BAŞKARAHAN

Assistant Expert

-Ms. ÖZGÜL YÜKSEL

Coordinator

-Mr. OZAN LİF

Logistic Coordinator

-Ms. HANDE ÖZDEMİR

Translator

-Mr. HAKAN USLU

Translator

-Mr. SELİM UYAR

Translator

-Mr. MUHARREM TEMLİSU

Executive Assistant

-Mr. OĞUZHAN HALİM SAY

Executive Assistant

ANNEX

2

REPORT OF
THE 41st MEETING OF THE SESSIONAL COMMITTEE
(November 16th, 2022, Virtual Meeting)

- The 41st Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the COMCEC was held virtually on November 16th, 2022.
- The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Acting Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office. In addition to OIC General Secretariat and COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), the following OIC Institutions attended the Meeting:
 - Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC)
 - Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT)
 - Islamic Development Bank (IsDB)
 - Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS)
 - International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)-IsDB Group
 - Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC)-IsDB Group
 - Standards and Metrology Institute of Islamic Countries (SMIIC)
 - Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)
- The Meeting agreed on the following agenda items for discussion:
 - Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy: Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the COMCEC Strategy
 - The List of Activities of the OIC Institutions Aligned with the COMCEC Strategy and COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations
Utilizing COMCEC Project Funding for the implementation of COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations
 - Possible Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the Implementation of the SDGs in OIC Member States
 - Preparations for Annual Report on the Progress Towards Achieving the Prioritized SDGs at the OIC level
 - Activities of the OIC Institutions Serving to the Implementation of the SDGs
 - The Proposal on the “OIC Business Intelligence Programme”
 - Possible Contributions of the OIC Institutions for the Benefit of Palestinian People / Al-Quds Sharif as well as Geographically Distant OIC Member Countries and Observer Countries
 - Any Other Business

Implementation of the COMCEC Strategy: Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the COMCEC Strategy

- **The List of Activities of the OIC Institutions Aligned with the COMCEC Strategy and COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations**
 - Underlining the great endeavours and contributions of the OIC Institutions to the realization of the COMCEC Strategy and the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations, the Committee reviewed the completed and planned activities of the relevant OIC Institutions directly serving the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations (Group A activities reported through the COMCEC Policy Follow-up System) and activities serving to the objectives of COMCEC Strategy (Group B activities reported through the COMCEC Activities Follow-up System) for the time since the 37th COMCEC Ministerial Meeting based on the cooperation areas, namely trade, financial cooperation, transport, and communications, tourism, agriculture, and poverty alleviation.
 - The Committee was briefed by the CCO in terms of “Group A” and “Group B” activities, which were reported by the OIC Institutions.
 - Concerning the “Group A” activities, the CCO representative informed the Committee that SESRIC has successfully reported their activities reported through COMCEC Policy Follow-Up System. SESRIC reported 73 activities, of which, 40 were completed and 34 were planned to be organized in the next period. ICDT also reported that 35 activities have been implemented and 50 activities have been planned . The great majority of the completed and planned activities under Group A were reported in the area of trade followed by poverty alleviation.
 - Concerning the “Group B” activities, 364 activities were reported, of which 164 activities were completed, and 200 activities are planned to be organized in the upcoming period. In terms of cooperation areas, more than half of these activities were reported in the trade domain (52 %) followed by poverty alleviation (20 %) and financial cooperation (10 %). The Committee was further informed that with

respect to types of activities, the Institutions specially focused on training with almost 50 % under Group B, followed by meetings, technical assistance, and forum and expo.

- Afterwards, the OIC Institutions have informed about their activities in line with the COMCEC Ministerial Resolutions. The Committee underlined the importance of the contributions of the OIC Institutions to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations as well as the realization of the objectives of the COMCEC Strategy.
- The Committee took note with appreciation of the efforts of SESRIC in contributing to the implementation of the COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations through specifically designed activities such as capacity building and training programs.
- The Committee also appreciated the efforts of OIC institutions for the implementation of the policy recommendations and requested them to intensify their efforts and consider the possibility of organizing joint activities to that end. In this sense, the Committee expressed its appreciation to ICDT, ICCIA, IDB Group and SMIIC for organizing various joint activities such as trade fairs, trainings, webinars, special reports, etc.

• **Utilizing COMCEC Project Funding for the implementation of COMCEC Ministerial Policy Recommendations**

- CCO informed the Committee on the projects implemented under the COMCEC Project Support Programs. It was highlighted that 6 projects were implemented under the COMCEC Project Funding by OIC institutions in 2022. SESRIC implemented three projects in the area of finance, poverty alleviation and transport and communication. SMIIC implemented a project in the area of trade and ICCIA and IOFS implemented projects in the area of agriculture.
- The Committee was also briefed regarding the novelties under COMCEC Project Funding starting from 10th Call for Project Proposals. It was highlighted that Member Countries now have the opportunity to focus on addressing their own challenges

through implementing projects under the CPF. It was also stressed out that, new activity types namely peer-to-peer experience sharing and needs assessment were added to CPF for Member Country benefits.

- Highlighting the importance of the COMCEC online follow-up systems, namely; Activities Follow-Up System and Policy Follow-Up System for simplifying and facilitating the reporting process, the Committee commended the OIC Institutions for utilizing the System in reporting their relevant activities.
- Lastly, the Committee commended the CCO for organizing an online training for the interested OIC institutions on the online reporting systems on 27th September, 2022. Recalling the relevant decision of the previous Sessional Committee Meeting, the Committee appreciated the CCO for preparing a guide on the use of the System and sharing the said guide with the relevant OIC Institutions.

Possible Contributions of the OIC Institutions to the Implementation of the SDGs in the OIC Member States

- The Committee was informed by SESRIC regarding the annual report on “Towards the Achievement of Prioritized Sustainable Development Goals in OIC Countries 2022” to be submitted to the 38th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC. The Committee commended the efforts of SESRIC in conducting annual report indicating the state of implementation of the SDGs in the member countries.
- The Committee was informed by COMCEC Coordination Office about the SDGs-related activities of the relevant OIC institutions and noted that the compiled list of activities will be submitted to the 38th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC.

The Proposal on the “OIC Business Intelligence Programme”

The Committee was also informed by the ICIEC (IsDB Group) on the work being undertaken towards launching the OIC Business Intelligence Center Programme. Within this framework, the Committee took note of the progress therein and requested the ICIEC, in cooperation with SESRIC, ICDT and ICCIA, to implement the Capacity Building Programme for the potential Users of the Center in 1st Quarter of 2023 and

finalize the technical preparations and requirements for the operationalization of the Programme at the earliest.

Possible Contributions of the OIC Institutions for the Benefit of Palestinian People/ Al-Quds Sharif as well as Geographically Distant OIC Member Countries and Observer Countries

- The Committee was briefed by the OIC Institutions regarding their activities, projects and existing and newly launched programs for the benefit of Palestinian people and Al-Quds Sharif and geographically distant OIC member countries such as Guyana and Suriname, and Observer Countries.
- The Committee appreciated the efforts of the OIC Institutions and requested them to continue their efforts including the possible joint activities, projects, and programmes.
- Afterwards, the CCO informed the Committee that the scope of the COMCEC Al-Quds Program was expanded in line with the consultations with Ministry of National Economy of Palestine. Accordingly, it was noted that besides tourism, new thematic areas such as entrepreneurship, creating job opportunities and empowerment of women and youth, e-trade and e-learning, microfinance and SME's involvement in Al-Quds Economy have been included in the Programme.

Any Other Business

- The Committee Meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

ANNEX

3

**INAUGURAL ADDRESS TO THE 38TH COMCEC MINISTERIAL SESSION
(28 NOVEMBER 2022)**

BİSMİLLAHİRRAHMANİRRAHİM.

Dear Ministers,

Dear Secretary General,

Dear Brothers,

ESSELÂMU ALAYKÜM VE RAHMETULLAHİ AND BEREKATUH.

I greet you with my most heartfelt feelings, sympathy and respect.

I send my greetings and sympathy to my brothers and sisters from all over our land of heart and soul through you.

I am very pleased to welcome you in our beautiful Istanbul- the pinnacle of our civilization, the city of history, culture and brotherhood, the meeting point of two continents.

I pray to Allah that the results of our meeting will be beneficial for the Islamic world and all humanity.

At the beginning of my words, I wish Allah's mercy on our brothers who lost their lives in terrorism, natural disasters, conflicts, sectarian tensions and racist attacks motivated by Islamophobia.

As the President of Türkiye and the Chairman of the COMCEC, I would like to thank each of you for your sincere efforts to build a new world where justice, peace and prosperity prevail.

First of all, I would like to underline one point.

Our Holy Book, the Qur'an, states, "You are the most benevolent Ummah raised for mankind."

The Prophet of Allah, on the other hand, said, "The best of people is the one who is beneficial to people."

Being a Muslim means feeling responsible for the society in which one lives, starting with his/her family, and for all humanity.

As members of the Islamic Ummah, none of us can isolate ourselves from the outside world, from the events happening around us and beyond.

Every issue that directly concerns people, the peace and well-being of humanity is also our issue.

From Africa to Asia, wherever there is oppression, if there is conflict, if there is an innocent dying of hunger and thirst, we all have responsibility.

As well as the emaciated children in Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan and Arakan, the infants who were victimized because of the conflicts in Ukraine are our children.

Just as the women struggling to hold on to life in northern Syria are our own sisters, so are the Asian working women who are forced to work for 15 hours under inhumane conditions for the welfare of the Westerners.

We are the ummah of a Prophet who treats orphans with compassion, takes care of the oppressed without any discrimination, and takes care of the poor and the have-nots.

We are members of a civilization that believes in the blessings of sharing and the power of solidarity, and considers that giving is better action than taking.

Although our languages, cultures and lands are different, we are members of the same big family.

With these qualifications, we are responsible for all our brothers and sisters wherever they are in the world, as well as our own society.

Of course, as in every family, sometimes there can be arguments and undesirable tensions between the members.

There may be issues on which we disagree and have different opinions.

As long as we see these as ordinary issues that we encounter in the natural course of life and solve them, there is no problem.

As the Islamic Ummah, our brotherhood has the strength and acumen to overcome all kinds of disagreements and differences of opinion.

I wish Allah to perpetuate this attachment between us and this unity shall prevail forever.

Dear Friends...

Within our organization, we attach great importance to consultative mechanisms, coordination and cultural events that bring our peoples closer.

With this approach, we hosted the 5th Islamic Solidarity Games in Konya in August, and the 12th Information Ministers Conference in Istanbul in October.

We see that the programs we organize throughout the year allow us to better understand each other and develop joint projects.

We believe that this momentum we have achieved should be maintained.

We have determined the theme of this year's Ministerial Session of the COMCEC which we conduct its presidency, as "Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in the light of COVID-19 Pandemic".

During the difficult pandemic period, we experienced together how critical social assistance is in our lives.

In this process, it was better understood that the current system, which puts the welfare and comfort of the rich prior to the rights of the poor, could not generate a cure for people's problems.

We had such days during which hundreds of thousands of people who could not reach the minimum health care services died in desperation.

We have never forgotten the heart-wrenching sights reflected from aged-care facilities, dispensaries and hospitals.

Vaccine and pharmaceutical companies did not give up on making exorbitant profits, even in such an issue that directly concerns the future of humanity.

What happened in this period when humanity needed solidarity the most has become an example that reveals the ugly face of the current global system.

In these difficult days when human values are tested, Türkiye has shared the means at its disposal with all those in need.

Hence, during the pandemic period, we sent medical aid supplies to 161 countries and 12 international organizations who are in request from us.

As we promised, we put our local and national vaccine, TÜRKOVAK, into the service of all humanity as well as our nation.

With our 44 embassies and 22 TİKA offices, we stand by the African peoples in their struggle for development and prosperity.

We extend our hand to people affected by natural disasters and wars with our official institutions and non-governmental organizations.

Not only that, we also make sincere efforts to establish peace and stability in our region.

From the first day we worked hard to end the war between Russia and Ukraine and to stop the bloodshed.

Using our close friendship with both leaders, we brought together Russian and Ukrainian authorities in our country on different occasions.

We have demonstrated that a diplomatic solution is possible by realizing the grain corridor over the Black Sea and the prisoner exchange agreement.

At a time when the energy and food crisis affected the whole world, especially poor countries, we provided the shipment of more than 11 million tons of grain through the Black Sea and the Straits.

We believe that the extension of the Black Sea Grain Corridor Agreement for 120 days as of 19 November will alleviate the suffering of our African brothers to some extent.

Hopefully, we will support this process by carrying out the grain shipment with priority to the African continent.

Dear guests...

The global crisis, which started with the pandemic escalated with the increase in energy and commodity prices, and even worsened with hot conflicts, continues by gaining new dimensions.

Inflation and unemployment figures have reached the peak of the last 50-60 years.

Efforts to control inflation by raising interest rates have not yielded the expected results so far.

Power cuts have become a source of serious perturbation in many European countries.

No permanent solution has been found to the problems caused by the breaks in the supply chains.

We are all affected, more or less, by the economic hardships caused by the cost of living.

Although we, as Türkiye, manage this process successfully with the measures we take and the policies we implement, we also feel some negativities.

The increase in recession expectations all over the world indicates that the light at the end of the tunnel has not yet been seen.

As Islamic countries, furthering our commercial and economic cooperation will contribute to our struggle to turn the crisis into an opportunity.

I welcome the fact that the Preferential Trade System of Islamic Countries has entered into force as of last July.

It is also important to start trade within the scope of the System by issuing certificate of origin documents mutually recognized by our countries.

Likewise, I believe that the decisions taken at the Trade Negotiations Meeting will facilitate the implementation of the System.

I would like to thank the countries included in the System for their efforts, and I invite our fellow countries that have not yet become a party to the System.

With the participation of other COMCEC members in the upcoming period, we can increase the trade between our countries to 25 percent.

In addition to the Preferential Trade System, we are pleased with the implementation of the Arbitration Center and the International Investment Fund.

We find it beneficial to encourage the transfer of savings in Islamic countries to this Fund, which is a halal investment product.

We need to accelerate our efforts together to realize initiatives such as the Gold Exchange and the Real Estate Exchange.

I believe that the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Arbitration Center established in Istanbul will be recognized as a respected institution in international trade and investment disputes with your support.

The issue of digital cooperation, which was decided to be included in the COMCEC agenda last year, is another issue that we need to focus on.

I also find the COMCEC High Level Digital Transformation Initiative, which was launched this year, extremely valuable.

In this context, we can implement concrete projects such as coding, cyber security, digital skills and competence development, and creating a common data infrastructure.

Our Presidency Digital Transformation Office is ready to share with you the vast knowledge and experience that Türkiye has gained in this field.

Dear Guests...

The worsening economic conditions in recent years have seriously fueled Islamophobia and xenophobia, especially in Western countries.

So much so that, anti-Islamism today is one of the tools most frequently used by Western politicians to gain votes or cover up their failures.

When it comes to democracy and freedoms, those who talk big do not hesitate to implement the most fascist practices when it comes to the rights of Muslims, especially Muslim women.

Unlawful restrictions on hijab in school, business and public spaces in some European countries are the most striking examples of this.

The LGBT imposition, which has become a global tool of dictatorship, is another threat that aims to weaken both the notion of the family and Islamic values.

The intense pressure and lynching campaign that brother Qatar, which hosts the World Cup, has been subjected to in this regard has once again shown the danger that awaits us as Muslims.

No matter what garish package it is put in, preventing people from exercising their religion, interfering with their beliefs by tyranny, dictating their own way of life shall mean resurrecting the spirit of the medieval inquisition.

Undoubtedly, other non-Muslims whose have different language, culture, skin color and origin are also affected from this fascist wave together with Muslims.

In the fight against this new form of racism, it is of great importance to strengthen the solidarity within our organization.

The recognition of March 15 as the "International Day Against Islamophobia" by the United Nations General Assembly is a message given to the international community in this direction.

On the other hand, unfair and unlawful practices that have been going on for years against the Muslim Turkish Minority in Greece continue increasingly.

The religious leaders of our brothers in Greece are not recognized, their foundations and property are extorted, they are not allowed to teach their mother tongue, and their identities are denied.

The Islamic world should no longer be a spectator to the plight of our brothers and sisters who were persecuted in Greece.

You are aware of the rights violations that our Turkish Cypriot brothers and sisters, who are an integral part of the Islamic Ummah, are subjected to.

I believe that you will give the necessary support to the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, which is an observer member of the Organization of Turkish States.

We support the settlement of the Palestinian issue, which is the reason for the establishment of our organization, with the establishment of an independent, sovereign and geographically integrated Palestinian State on the 1967 borders, with Jerusalem as its capital.

We are doing our best for the Palestinian people to have their own state and their legitimate rights, and to preserve the status quo in Al-Quds and Masjid al-Aqsa.

One of the important issues that has occupied the Islamic world for more than ten years is the conflict in Syria.

With the pandemic, the socio-economic and humanitarian situation in this country has become more tragic.

As Türkiye, we are duly fulfilling our fraternal duty by hosting more than 3.5 million Syrian refugees on our lands and supporting millions more within the borders of Syria.

In order for Syria to get rid of the spiral of conflict, humanitarian crisis and terrorism, Islamic countries must show a stronger will and actively support the efforts for a political solution.

We will not hesitate to take the necessary steps in this regard.

My brothers...

Many of us are people who have witnessed the brutal face of terrorism.

We sacrificed our citizens in the perfidious attacks of terrorist organizations.

These herds of murderers sometimes appeared as DAESH, sometimes as Boko Haram and Al-Shabab, sometimes as FETO, sometimes as PKK-PYD-YPG.

Although their names, claims and geographies are different, all of these organizations primarily targeted Muslims, spilled the blood of Muslims, and inflicted the most damage on Islam and Muslims.

Only we lost nearly 40 thousand of our people in the attacks of the PKK terrorist organization.

FETO, which is traitor, murdered 252 of our brothers in one night.

Hundreds of our people were taken from us in the bloody actions of DAESH.

The previous week, 8 of our citizens, 3 of whom were children, were killed by the PKK in Istiklal Street and then in our Karkamış district.

Naturally, in this bloodshed, as well as the separatist terrorist organization, those who strangle these terrorists with weapons and support under the pretext of fighting against DAESH have a contribution.

Despite all the warnings of our country, the blood of every innocent who died has been smeared on the hands and faces of those who try to legitimize terrorist organizations with letter games.

The game of supporting the PKK and its affiliates under the guise of fighting against DAESH, which has been known to be a project output from the very first day, must now come to an end.

Türkiye which fought hand to hand against DAESH on the field and defeated this organization, is not buying such arguments.

We are determined to root out this terrorist organization, which poses a threat to the territorial integrity of Syria and Iraq, as well as our country.

I would like to express that we expect the strong support of our brothers and sisters in this struggle we are waging against the enemies of Islam and humanity.

I say Allah be our helper.

With these thoughts, I wish the 38th Ministerial Session of the COMCEC shall contribute to good deeds and once again, I respectfully greet you.

Take care of yourselves...

ANNEX

4

Original: Arabic

**SPEECH OF H.E. DR. HISSEIN BRAHIM TAHA,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)
AT THE 38th SESSION OF THE OIC STANDING COMMITTEE FOR
ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION (COMCEC)
(26-29 November 2022)**

**Your Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Türkiye
and Chairman of COMCEC,**

**Honorable Ministers and Distinguished Heads of Delegation,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatihu

It is a great honour and privilege for me to address the 38th Session of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), which is traditionally holding in this historical and beautiful city of Istanbul.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Türkiye and the Chairman of COMCEC, for supporting OIC activities and programs, especially in the economic domain. I wish also to thank the Government and people of the Republic of Türkiye for the excellent arrangements made for the success of our today's meeting.

This important session is taking place at a time when we continue to feel the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a fact that due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the strict containment measures, our Member States have experienced massive job losses, economic contraction, falling investments and exports, and declining tourism activities. Many people in our member states have been thrown back into poverty and put in a vulnerable situation. Furthermore, before the OIC Member States, and indeed the whole world, could find clear pathways out of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Russia-Ukraine conflict erupted, further complicating efforts towards

economic recovery and healing of the world. The disruptions in the food supply systems caused by the Russia-Ukraine conflict have negatively affected the food security of many OIC Member States and pushed many countries to the brink of internal civil unrest. This conflict has once again highlighted the need for the OIC Member States to have self-sufficiency in food production as well as accumulating sufficient food reserves.

In the face of the foregoing challenges, the OIC Member States need a coordinated and inclusive economic recovery strategy aimed at promoting sustained and inclusive economic growth, creating decent jobs for all and improving living standards.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since the last (37th) Meeting of the COMCEC, the General Secretariat and relevant OIC institutions have continued to give effect to the various decisions and resolutions of the OIC, aimed at consolidating socio-economic cooperation among our Member States. The major of the achievements recorded in this regard are highlighted in my report before this august meeting. However, for the purpose of emphasis, I wish to briefly mention a few of the activities, which have contributed to our collective efforts at scaling up intra-OIC trade and investment promotion, tourism development, as well as addressing food insecurity in a number of OIC Member States.

First, the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers was successfully held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 27th - 29th June 2022. This ministerial meeting was important for sharing the experiences of the OIC countries to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and come-up with the recommendations to speed-up the recovery process of the tourism sector during the post-pandemic era. The Meeting also selected Shanliurfa City in Türkiye, and Khiva City in Uzbekistan, as OIC cities of Tourism for 2023 and 2024, respectively.

Second, the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) in coordination with the Government of Senegal and the OIC General Secretariat, organized the 17th

OIC Trade Fair in Dakar, Senegal, on 13th -18th June 2022. The next, 18th OIC Trade Fair will be held in Lahore, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, on 16th - 18th June 2023. I wish to take this opportunity to call all OIC Member States to actively participate at this important 18th OIC Trade Fair. It is my sincere belief that the staging of OIC Trade Fairs would boost intra-OIC cooperation in this crucial sector.

The third laudable action is a launching by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group of a US\$10.54 billion Comprehensive Food Security Response Program (FSRP) aimed at supporting the efforts of OIC member states to address the challenge of food insecurity in their countries.

Similarly, the impending 5th Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers (ICLM) scheduled for the United Arab Emirates, the OIC Investment Forum in Africa as well as the OIC Private Sector Forum, which is due to take place in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, will further boost joint efforts of our countries towards building resilient economic recovery and fostering economic cooperation among the OIC Member States.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Member States, and indeed the whole world, are going through tough times. For many, economies have been disrupted, food supplies strained, unemployment is at record high, the number of children living on the streets is increasing, health systems stretched beyond capacity, school dropouts are on the rise, and the majority of rural people continue to lack the basic facilities of life. Further, conflicts and natural disasters occasioned by climate change have given rise to millions of refugees and internally displaced persons in many OIC Member States, exacerbating an already fragile situation. The OIC Member States have over 60% of world's refugees with some countries serving as both source and recipient of refugees. Further, 88 million people in OIC Member States need urgent food help. As the realities of climate change become more clear, the floods in Pakistan, Sudan, Nigeria, Sahel Region countries and other affected Member States have left the livelihoods of tens of millions of people in our Member States destroyed. Conversely, drought has left many more millions in need of urgent help.

Given the challenges listed above and many others not mentioned, for OIC Member States to have quick economic recovery from these challenges and guarantee themselves a better future, we need to focus on the following:

1. Invest more in critical sectors like agriculture and industries;
2. Implement the OIC-2025: Programme of Action, and mainstream its strategies in the national development strategies of Member States;
3. Build synergies between the OIC financial and technology-rich countries with those that have natural resources such as arable land but lack finances and technology to exploit them;
4. Create a fund by the Member States for financing startup projects in order to support and promote youth innovative projects in various economic fields;
5. Implement all the OIC initiatives aimed at promoting intra-OIC trade and investment cooperation.
6. Increase cooperation and joint strategic plans and activities aimed at building greater cohesion and coordination among OIC Member States and institutions.

Against this background, the intra-OIC cooperation becomes ever more needed not only to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 pandemic but also to establish effective policies and measures to speed-up the recovery process and attain sustainable and inclusive socio-economic development.

Accordingly, the OIC General Secretariat and its relevant institutions will continue to work closely with its Member States to further a collaborative response to facilitate economic recovery in our countries. I wish therefore to express my sincere appreciation to the relevant OIC institutions, which have continued to collaborate with the General Secretariat for the execution of the various projects under the socio-economic agenda of the OIC. We thank COMCEC for its continued cooperation and congratulate it for the successes gained so far, as we wish them greater success in the coming years.

Before I conclude my remarks, let me emphasise the great need to support the rural people in our Least Developed Countries (LDCs) especially in Africa. Over 70%

of the people in our LDCs live in rural areas and lack basic facilities, yet with a little more care and small funding they could be lifted out of poverty in every short time. I call upon COMCEC and all OIC Institutions to design programmes aimed addressing the socio-economic needs of the rural people in our LDCs.

I wish you a very successful meeting and look forward to the outcome of your deliberations.

Wassalamu Alaykum wa-Rahmatullahi wa-Barakatihu.

ANNEX

5

Original: English

**ADDRESS BY DR. MUHAMMAD SULAIMAN AL JASSER,
PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (IsDB
GROUP) AT THE OPENING SESSION
(26-29 November 2022)**

Your Excellency, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye,
Chairman of the COMCEC,

Your Excellency, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of
Islamic Cooperation,

Your Excellencies, the Ministers,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to begin by extending my sincere appreciation to His Excellency President
Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye and Chairman of the
Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC). I thank
the government and people of the Republic of Türkiye for the warm welcome and
hospitality accorded to us in this beautiful and historic city of Istanbul.

It is a great honor to address the opening of the 38th Ministerial Session of the
COMCEC, the highest platform for economic and trade cooperation among OIC
member countries.

Mr. President,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

COVID-19 adverse effects on our people have gone beyond health, leading to a sharp
economic contraction in 2020 and pushing more than 100 million additional people into
extreme poverty worldwide. It is estimated that half of them are in our member
countries.

In this context, the IsDB Group Strategic Preparedness and Response Program (SPRP)
was initiated to support member countries in containing, mitigating, and recovering

from the COVID-19 impacts. In April 2022, total IsDB Group commitments under the SPRP stood at US\$4.67 billion. In addition, the IsDB Group and the Arab Coordination Group (ACG) have jointly committed US\$10 billion toward post-pandemic recovery. In early 2022, we were optimistic about the prospects of a sustained economic recovery as most countries began to bounce back from the pandemic-induced recession in 2021. However, the crisis that ensued in East Europe last February has fomented uncertainties about economic recovery prospects.

This twin crisis has reduced international trade volumes, diverted some capital flows to developed economies, and slowed tourism. It has also driven up food and energy prices to alarming levels, triggering global food insecurity.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, the Bank has endorsed a US\$10.54 billion comprehensive Food Security Response Program (FSRP) package. It aims to support member countries in addressing food security in the short term and ensure sustainable food systems in the long term.

In response to the emerging challenges, the IsDB has realigned its strategy for 2023-2025. It aims to enhance the impact of social protection and assistance in promoting human capital development, driving green economic growth, tackling poverty, and building resilience.

To mitigate the impact of climate change, the Arab Coordination Group has announced a climate action financing package of US\$24 billion for the next eight years. Of this amount, the IsDB Group will contribute US\$13 billion for 2023-2030.

The Bank is also committed to significantly increasing its climate finance project volume in all its operations and interventions to reach the 35% target by 2025. Our current climate finance accounts for 31% of financing.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Guests,

Besides the pandemic's impacts and the skyrocketing food prices, the upward spiral of interest rates exacerbates the difficulties faced by our member states. Debt levels were already elevated before COVID-19 in most IsDB member countries. The significant increase in interest rates has aggravated the situation regarding higher borrowing costs

for existing and new debts. Higher interest rates have various economic implications, including slowed economic growth, increased unemployment, and higher food prices. Rising debt service costs affect not only the credit ratings of those member countries but also their lenders: banks and other financial institutions.

On a positive note, however, several commodity exporters' macroeconomic outlook has improved, resulting in higher growth and lower public debt projections for IsDB member countries compared to other emerging markets and developing economies.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Guests,

No doubt, the development challenges are far-reaching. Therefore, we must collaborate to offer innovative solutions by strengthening intra-trade, intra-investment, and knowledge-sharing among member countries.

In the afternoon session of today's meeting, insha'Allah, we will launch the first "IsDB Group Integration Report," which analyzes the progress of economic integration among IsDB member states.

The report is an important milestone that brings an evidence-based perspective to policy discussions on intra-OIC integration within the OIC-2025 Program of Action framework. This report will also help us identify the most critical challenges to achieving greater economic integration in the OIC region.

I thank my colleagues from the IsDB Group for preparing this report and invite all the esteemed member countries to share their thoughts on its findings.

I am also pleased to note that the Islamic Development Bank's participation in the G20 Summit in Bali, Indonesia, was an excellent opportunity to meet with partners and stakeholders. It allowed us to highlight the vital role of Islamic finance as an innovative financing mechanism contributing to sustainable development and green transformation.

Mr. President,

Distinguished Guests,

I want to extend my sincere thanks to all member countries for their continued support and commitment to the IsDB Group. I also thank the COMCEC Secretariat for its extensive cooperation, especially during these challenging times.

I look forward to this session's practical recommendations and proposals to further promote and strengthen cooperation among our member states. I assure the honorable COMCEC members of IsDB Group's support to implement these recommendations.

Thank you, Mr. President.

ANNEX

6

Original: English

**SPEECH OF THE VICE PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY MR.
FUAT OKTAY AT THE CLOSING SESSION OF THE 38TH COMCEC
MEETING**

(29 NOVEMBER 2022, İSTANBUL)

BİSMİLLAHİRRAHMANİRRAHİM.

Dear Ministers,

Distinguished Participants,

ESSELAMU ALEYKÜM VE RAHMETULLAHİ VE BEREKATUH.

MAY ALLAH’S PEACE, MERCY AND BLESSING BE UPON YOU.

We are now successfully bringing the 38th COMCEC Ministerial Session to completion after highly fruitful discussions.

I think that all decisions we have agreed upon shall further accelerate our collaboration, and invite all of our fellow countries to meticulously implement these resolutions.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

As you are aware, in the wake of a pandemics which deeply affected the whole world, it unfortunately hadn’t been quite possible to quickly relieve the economic damages and vulnerabilities. With the increase in input costs in many sectors including energy and agricultural products in which the production has declined during the pandemic, high inflation is being experienced throughout the world. In addition, significant developments that are being effective on world politics during recent months bring together heavy economic burdens on many levels.

Created and being carried out upon the proactive approach of our President, the active role we are playing in the grain corridor in the Black Sea region has enabled the maintenance of the international trade of agricultural products, and access to these products which are essential for many countries has been made possible.

In a period which we are facing such challenges, we must use of our economic and trade cooperation more functionally as Islamic countries, and focus on measures that will increase our trade and enable the consistent improvement of our economies.

Within this context, I would like to remark that I consider July 1st, 2022, the date when COMCEC's flagship project, Trade Preferential System of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (TPS-OIC) was effectively put into practice, as the milestone of deepening our trade collaboration.

Here, I hope that the decisions towards the future of the TPS-OIC taken in the Trade Negotiating Committee Meeting held within the scope of our meeting shall contribute to good deeds.

I would like to remark my belief that this important initiative shall not be limited to existing participant countries and to the area of trade collaboration, and it shall attract other countries with its domino effect and bring together new opportunities for other areas of collaboration. On this wise, I hope that the trade preferential system shall be improved and pave the way for better attended and more extensive trade collaborations in which all signing countries shall gain benefits.

Distinguished Participants,

As you know, we organized the 8th World Halal Summit and the 9th OIC Halal Fair on 24-27 November 2022 in Istanbul. I would like to thank the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC) along with our relevant Ministries and organizations including the Turkish Ministry of Trade, all of which have been founded with the purpose of specifying the latest developments and trends in world halal sector and discussing the decisions that will shape the future and have organized important events such as the World Halal Summit and the 9th OIC Halal Fair for their efforts.

Esteemed Delegates,

One of the most significant projects in COMCEC's agenda is doubtlessly the OIC Arbitration Centre. Founded as a platform for the urgent resolution of both commercial and investment disputes among OIC member states, I believe that this Centre will be a

place to be addressed in terms of trade and investment activities of the Islamic countries both among themselves and with other countries. I consider the fact that the Centre is founded in Istanbul, one of the most important trade and finance centres of the world, as a significant opportunity for the functionality and productivity of the Centre.

Distinguished Participants,

With the Investment Fund founded based on OIC/COMCEC 50 Shariah Index that aims to improve and deepen the financial collaboration among Islamic countries, we are happy to develop a concrete product on which the investors from the Islamic world can invest under the COMCEC. I consider providing our investors with a concrete halal investment tool such as this as crucial for capital mobility among our countries.

Within this scope, having completed the technical infrastructure of the Fund in 7 countries is a pleasing development. I wholeheartedly believe that the Islamic Finance Organizations in our country including the Islamic Development Bank shall introduce the said Fund to their investors and carry out the required works in terms of encouraging the investments for the Fund.

Within this framework, I find the discussions towards the promotion of the Fund in the panel organized during our meeting invaluable.

Meanwhile, I think that we should further expedite our efforts with your support in terms of implementing the enterprises such as the Gold Exchange and Real Estate Exchange as important projects for digital investment products based on precious metals and real estate, and invite all fellow countries to make contributions to these works.

Dear Delegates,

I find the fact that the subject “Effective Provision of Social Assistance as a Result of the Covid-19 Pandemic” is addressed during the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session highly meaningful and appropriate against the challenges that the global pandemic has to offer.

We have once again witnessed the importance of social assistance for establishing income justice and particularly for alleviating poverty during the global Pandemic.

Providing assistance to low-income citizens as the most vulnerable social stratum in emergencies such as the Pandemic and making the most of this assistance is regarded as one of the vital parameters of contemporary social state approach as well.

In this regard, I hope that the discussions during the Ministerial Exchange of Views Session would lead us to develop a common understanding and create effective policies in this important area.

With regard to the effectiveness of social assistance, we have observed that many good implementations have been actualized during the Pandemic which can be hold up as examples to the world, particularly among Muslim countries. Therefore I consider the exchange of information and experience between member states regarding the effectuation of social assistance as vital, and would like to remark that we have so many stories to tell in this matter.

Distinguished Participants,

Today digital platforms have become an important tool for a faster, more efficient and more transparent provision of public services. Developing common policies as member states and seizing upon the opportunities that digital transformation provides has now become an obligation in terms of digitalization of which we increasingly feel the effect in all aspects of life. We now see how on-point we have been last year in adding an important and rising area such as digital transformation to our areas of collaboration.

The point arrived by our country and other fellow countries in international scale with the progression in recent years in this area impose upon us the responsibility of sharing the corporate knowledge, experience and skills with our fellow countries.

Within this context, I hope the COMCEC Digital Transformation Program, of which the preparations have been completed in a period as short as one year, finalized at the meeting held with the participation of high-level authorities who are responsible from digital transformation, and which we organized its official launching yesterday shall contribute to good deeds for all fellow countries.

Honourable Ministers,

Another matter I would like to share with you is the Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMAs). As you know, SMAs are the most fundamental factors of economy in Islamic geography. SMAs are the key actors for not only economic and commercial growth, but for the social life as well. With the ability to quickly change and transform and thus to quickly and easily adapt to new market conditions, SMAs are now the driving force for economic development. SMAs constitute the majority of enterprises in our country as are throughout the world.

In this regard, considering the importance of SMAs in our economic and social life, I believe that inquiring the possibilities of collaboration between member countries within the context of SMAs and developing appropriate mechanisms shall provide significant benefits for us. Therefore, I attach great importance to creating an SMA Program under the COMCEC. With the SMA Program in question, existing collaboration between our countries can be carried over to an outcome-oriented, constructive and sustainable ground.

Distinguished Participants,

Another matter I would like to speak of in my address is the COMCEC Working Groups and Financing Mechanisms. Created within the implementation of COMCEC Strategy, the Working Groups carry out their works without slowing down. The Working Groups constitute an important ground for political convergence between member states with the policy recommendations they produce.

I invite all member states to closely follow the implementation of the policy recommendations developed by COMCEC Working Groups and recognized at Ministerial level.

I also invite fellow member states to make maximum use of the project financing tools within the scope of COMCEC's Project Funding Programs. This year in particular, I attach importance to including new types of projects such as the exchange of experience and needs analysis through specialist exchange to the scope of COMCEC's Project

Funding Programs. I would like to thank the COMCEC Coordination Office for their contributions in this regard.

Honourable Participants,

As you know, the subject of next year's Ministerial Exchange of Views Session shall be "Increasing the e-Commerce Capacity of OIC Member States".

In this last couple of years, e-commerce has been an indispensable part of global trade network. As many other industries, the retail industry has undergone a significant transformation with the emergence of internet. Today, consumers from almost all countries can easily procure every product even from the far end of the world.

In this context, we witness the rapid growth of global e-commerce with the rapid prevalence of internet in recent years. According to World E-Commerce Forum, e-commerce sales in retail sales has exceeded USD 5.2 trillion globally in 2021. This number is expected to reach new highs in the upcoming years.

In order to seize the opportunities that emerge in this context, we as OIC member states should complete our preparations both in terms of legal infrastructure and corporate and human capacity. When considered from this perspective, I would like to express that I find the subject of next year's Ministerial Exchange of Views highly relevant and useful, and I wish that the upcoming preparations shall contribute to good deeds.

With these sentiments and thoughts, I would like to reiterate my sincerest appreciation to all country delegations, OIC Secretariat General, OIC Organizations, and other international organizations for their invaluable contributions.

I supplicate from Allah that our discussions, negotiations, and the resolutions taken in the exchange of views session shall bear beneficial consequences for the Islamic world, and deepen our collaboration as the Ummah.

I wish a safe and sound journey back to all of you from İstanbul to your home countries, and I wish you healthy days.

ESSELAMU ALEYKÜM VE RAHMETULLAHİ VE BEREKATUH.

ANNEX

7

Original: English

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE WORKING GROUP MEETINGS

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG) successfully held its 19th Meeting on October 4th, 2022, in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Increasing the Internationalization of SMEs in OIC Member Countries”. During the Meeting, TWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to improving the internationalization of SMEs. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report entitled with the same theme of the above-mentioned meeting. The policy recommendations are as follows:

Policy Recommendation 1: Promoting formalization of SMEs and eliminating informality through, among others, reducing the time and cost of registration and reducing administrative burdens.

Rationale: Throughout the world, especially in developing countries, informal activity by small and medium size enterprises (SMEs) is a significant problem. Given that SMEs are a driver of national economic growth, formalizing informal SMEs is critical to increasing productivity, creating better jobs, and supporting inclusive growth. The OECD has published several documents and guidelines enriched with best practices, such as Best Practice Principles for Regulatory Enforcement and Inspections (OECD, 2014), OECD Regulatory Enforcement and Inspections Toolkit (OECD, 2018), and Formalization of Micro Enterprises in ASEAN: Policy Insight (OECD, 2020). The general recommendation is not to take overly stringent measures to discourage SMEs. Specifically, enforcement mechanisms are recommended, complemented by other reforms such as facilitating formalization. Since the state is the largest procurer of goods and services, governments should use public procurement to either penalize or incentivize local SMEs to support and otherwise promote them. Reducing the time and cost of registration and reducing administrative burdens would encourage formalization. Quick and easy registration would reduce the cost of formalization. Simplifying business registration and making it cheaper or free would be attractive to informal SMEs. Reducing the burden on formal businesses, access to finance, business development services, and public procurement would be the components of incentive-based mechanisms.

Policy Recommendation 2: Adopting a uniform SME definition and clearly identifying the objectives of SME-related laws and regulations.

Rationale: Before taking the steps to improve the SME internationalization, it is important to adopt a uniform SME definition for clarity and comparability. This definition may vary from country to country; however, it is useful if an international standard (when possible) is adopted for comparison purposes. Any kind of political intervention needs a legal basis to be legitimate. The type of laws and regulations may change according to the constitutional structure and needs of each country, but the main premise is the same when it comes to the internationalization of SMEs: It is to comprehensively promote policies for SMEs by establishing basic principles, fundamental policies and other basic issues related to policies for SMEs, and clarify the responsibilities of the state and local public institutions, so as to contribute to the healthy development of the national economy, its integration into the global economy and the improvement of people's quality of life.

Policy Recommendation 3: Making SME internationalization a part of national policy documents by developing an SME strategy, setting out the strategy in a binding multi-year document and positioning SME internationalization policies in the context of broader policy frameworks.

Rationale: As discussed in the Report, internationalization of business, especially SMEs, has far-reaching implications for development, such as higher-value economic growth, better employment opportunities, less poverty, and greater prosperity. Consequently, it is a good candidate to become part of the central government's policy agenda. SME strategy, sometimes referred to as a policy framework, should encompass the various facets of SME development, including but not limited to creating a business-friendly environment, promoting entrepreneurship, providing financial support, building a culture of innovation, e-commerce, and internationalizing SMEs. Setting out the strategy in a binding multi-year document can provide clarity to all relevant stakeholders on the intended course and includes concrete targets and appropriate policy instruments in a variety of SME policy areas. Positioning SME internationalization policies in the context of broader policy frameworks including industrial, innovation or regional policies, is necessary. All such frameworks should reflect the priorities of the national development agenda, the preference for the internationalization approach across the economy, or the institutional division of responsibilities between the central and other levels of government.

Policy Recommendation 4: Supporting the institutional framework by necessary financial means and government guarantees to facilitate SMEs' access to finance as they move into international markets.

Rationale: Access to finance is always a major problem for SMEs, whether they operate domestically or internationally. Entering the international market is a big step for a small business. It takes time for SMEs to build trusted relationships in other countries. It is more difficult for SMEs to receive payments for export within a short period of time. Financial institutions in the country may consider SMEs' business risky and prefer not to lend to SMEs. In this regard, trade finance support and guarantees provided by the government are the most important tools for internationalization. In order to facilitate SMEs' access to finance as they move into international markets, government institutions such as Exim Bank or SME Bank are natural candidates for providing trade finance to SMEs. If these institutions are not available in the country, the central bank would delegate this task to a private institution. Publicity campaigns by public institutions or local banks would inform SMEs about access to trade finance. Banks are reluctant to lend to SMEs because of the cost of loan handling and the risk of default. These barriers can be overcome by providing a guarantee. In doing so, the government should use expert personnel with experience and knowledge of credit transactions. Not all guarantee applications are suitable, and the agency must conduct a credit check. It also needs to develop efficient systems so that loans at banks that could be guaranteed can be processed proficiently. The rate of the guarantee can differ widely from program to program, from close to 50 percent to over 90 percent. A high guarantee rate creates moral hazard by reducing the lender's due diligence and risk. It also allows SMEs to continue to rely on the guarantee and unprofitable businesses to continue to survive and become zombie firms. Applications for guarantees should be considered on their merits and not subject to nepotism for politically connected individuals or companies. Guarantees issued on the basis of political preferences increase the default rate and the size of public subsidies. This can also result in potential borrowers who are worth more being priced out of the market (ADB, 2015).

Policy Recommendation 5: Categorizing SMEs in terms of their capacity and potential for internationalization and involve them in export assistance programs based on the results of the sorting system.

Rationale: In many countries, there are numerous institutions responsible for the growth, capacity building, and export of SMEs. Considering that each institution must review applications for its program, a tremendous amount of manpower is required. To make better use of resources and reduce costs, the main institutions

responsible for SMEs should sort them and make the results available to other stakeholders. The newly established funding programs would require that SMEs receive a benchmark rating as an eligibility criterion based on the nature of the program. In addition, the primary institution conducting the scoring would direct SMEs to different programs based on their needs. Mandatory systems would discourage SMEs from applying or working formally. Therefore, the system should be voluntary. SMEs would participate in the system if there was an incentive to apply for funding programs, e.g., through a priori set criteria. To get the most out of the rating system, share the results with other stakeholders. Each time they design a new program, they will ask applicants for a grading result. Once they have collected the applications, they will use the sorting results for shortlisting.

Policy Recommendation 6: Supporting managerial and human resources of the SMEs in line with the requirements of successful internationalization.

Rationale: The influx of well-educated and experienced workers to SMEs is contingent on the development of robust training organizations and national training networks (ADB, 2015). Graduates enter the labor market seeking employment in both small and large companies. These new workers need training geared toward participation in global markets (e.g., language courses), especially if the companies that employ them are SMEs. In addition, the high degree at which skills become outdated makes it difficult for older workers to find jobs, while demographic aging requires better employability and working conditions for older workers. Automation and digitization are expected to further diminish demand for blue-collar and recurring tasks and increase demand for social and problem-solving skills to ensure complementarity between machines and workers (OECD, 2018). Therefore, improved lifelong learning is essential. Yet, there exists a lack of awareness. Furthermore, it is well known that on-the-job training is particularly costly for SMEs. There is a smaller workforce and fewer resources. Retention rates are meager, and the risk of stealing by other companies is abundant. To bring leadership and human resources to exporting SMEs, the governments must develop and support all levels of education from elementary school to highly qualified higher education and vocational training. To ensure that students receive a high-quality education, the government should implement a system of institutional certification to guarantee that a proper training program is provided through high quality teaching. The training system must provide skills for key sectors and try to anticipate the skills needed for new and emerging sectors. Many SMEs produce for large companies and some directly export. Therefore, they need competent workers to fill their positions. Adaptable training opportunities should be contemplated by SMEs themselves as well as by public and private training providers. For example,

training can be offered on a part-time basis during slow times of the week or month. Language or communication courses can be offered to improve relations with foreign partners. The traditional way to provide training is to send workers to training programs. However, another option is to bring instructors into the company, so that time can be saved, and training can focus on the specific tasks of the individual company. SMEs are often uninformed about state funded training programs, such as schooling support, vouchers, or partial cost grants. Public agencies should provide the necessary outreach to ensure that SMEs know about these programs.

Policy Recommendation 7: Providing guiding mechanisms for SMEs to improve their products according to the market- and product-specific required standards and certifications.

Rationale: SMEs need to understand the standards required for their products in target countries. To prove the standards of the products, certifications are required for many goods. It is costly and time-consuming for SMEs to meet target country requirements for standards and certifications. The government would support MSMEs by providing the necessary information through a well-designed online portal. There are many examples that could be used. When SMEs are ready to export, they are faced with standardization and certification requirements. It is very difficult for them to understand the procedures. They would benefit greatly from semi-formalized government support. There are international institutions that provide consulting services for SMEs' standardization and certification requirements for export. Governments need to refer their SMEs to these institutions for advice. The COMCEC is a large community of governments that have expertise in exporting certain goods. Therefore, the community would help each other in standardization and certification to increase exports of SMEs in the region.

Policy Recommendation 8: Supporting SME branding by creating a national brand and including the SMEs' products in the national brand.

Rationale: Branding is defining a unique name and image for a product or service in the minds of consumers and binding a customer to a supplier. Wendelin, (2004) explains that brand reputation has a psychological impact on purchase. Differentiation from competitors is one of the most important benefits of branding. Penetrating international markets is a difficult process that helps products and services become known worldwide, leading to faster adoption. It is more difficult for SMEs to create their own brands. Instead, the governments can create a national brand and group SMEs under the national brand. SMEs should be grouped under

the national brand based on a list of criteria. Governments should promote the national brand around the world.

Policy Recommendation 9: Conducting impact analysis of implemented programs regularly and share transparently with public.

Rationale: Evaluating the impact of funding programs is very important to better allocate resources. They help the government design better programs each year, and SMEs receive better services from the government when programs are improved based on the results of the impact assessment. Regular evaluation is necessary to further improve the programs. Continuous evaluation of programs allows the government to identify program weaknesses. If a program does not meet its goals over a period, policymakers should redesign it. Impact assessment allows policymakers to make decisions about programs. However, for accountability reasons, they must also be published regularly to the public.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advice:

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 projects to be financed by the COMCEC. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office can support financing the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include training programs, study visits, workshops, organizing seminars, peer-to-peer experience sharing, needs assessments and producing promotinal materials/documents.*

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Transport and Communications Working Group (TCWG) successfully held its 19th Meeting on October 11th, 2022, in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Economic and Social Impact of Transport Infrastructure: An Overview of the OIC Member Countries”. During the Meeting, TCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to the economic and social impact of transport infrastructure. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report entitled with the same theme of the above-mentioned meeting. The policy recommendations are as follows:

Policy Recommendation 1: Developing/Improving a comprehensive strategy including the components of development, planning, and programming capacity for better economic and social impacts of transport infrastructure.

Rationale: For a transport infrastructure to affect the economy, a group of preconditions must be in effect. In addition to the transport infrastructure investments, economic variables such as high quality labour force, convenient local economies, and expectations need to be available in the first place. Moreover, the political and institutional setting must be supporting economic development. All these three major preconditions must be available at the same time. Within this framework, a robust systematic and institutional structure is needed for transport planning, project identification and preparation, ex-ante evaluation, procurement, supervision and monitoring, and ex-post evaluation. However, these specific stages should be well guided first by a strategic medium- or long-term policy framework that sets the macro, local and sectoral priorities.

Policy Recommendation 2: Integrating the transport infrastructure projects with the higher national policies to serve the needs at best.

Rationale: Any investment project should bring benefits to a country and raise the welfare of the citizens. All resource inputs used by an investment project have an opportunity in that without the project they could be used and create value elsewhere in the economy either in the private sector or in a different project on the public side. Ex-ante evaluations of transport projects could provide the government with information on whether the project generates value for money or not. In this regard, project economic analysis is a very critical and useful tool aiming to ensure that scarce resources are allocated efficiently. To this end, several elements/steps should be considered and adopted effectively such as well identification of the

project(s), technical feasibility, economic analysis of the project(s), financial analysis of the project(s), and risk assessments. In this respect, every project should first reflect and meet the priorities of the country, which are identified in the relevant policy documents of the country. For this reason, first, a more macro perspective could be employed by using qualitative/quantitative analysis methods such as multi-factor criteria analysis, etc.

Policy Recommendation 3: Promoting the prioritization of the transport infrastructure projects in line with the high quality economic and financial analyses.

Rationale: To direct the country's scarce resources to the most needed fields, projects need to be appraised according to objective and comparable standards to develop a pool of prospective projects. Then, the projects should be prioritized either within the sector or on a cross-sectoral basis, taking into account some crucial indicators such as the financing capabilities of the country, the marginal benefit of the project, or the urgency of the needs that leads to the project. At this stage, alternative/options analysis, cost-benefit analysis (CBA), wider economic analysis methodologies, sustainability analysis, sensitivity, and risk analysis play critical roles.

In this regard, a multimodal approach should be developed in order to benefit from the synergy effect and network advantages of the transport system. Improvement regarding not only for the project identification and appraisal preparation but also for predicting the economic and social effect of transport infrastructure and services is essential.

Moreover, in the evaluations, all considerations that have the potential to affect the society and economy should be regarded in a wider manner. While doing this, adopting Input-Output analysis providing output, income multipliers, and sectoral forward/backward linkages in the economy, computable general equilibrium methodologies should be utilized in addition to standard CBA methodology to capture the wider social and economic effects. In addition to standard criteria set in evaluating the feasibility of projects, adopting a payback period as an additional measure could also provide the decision makers with practical evaluation perspectives.

Policy Recommendation 4: Strengthening the conditions for better risk assessments of transport infrastructure projects.

Rationale: The identification of risks in the planning phase of a project and the arrangement of impact values has become a fundamental basis for transport

infrastructure projects. Despite robust and well-planned projects, unexpected problems will likely emerge at any stage of the project if possible risks are not identified and assessed beforehand. Therefore, this process may become a requisite in increasing success as well as minimizing the problems of a project. A risk assessment should be included in the CBA. This is critical, as uncertainty always exists in an investment project inherently. In this regard, sensitivity analysis, qualitative risk analysis, probabilistic risk analysis, and risk prevention and mitigation stages should be incorporated into the analyses. The qualitative and quantitative approaches such as Monte Carlo Analysis, Analytical Hierarchy Process (AHP), Technique for Order of Preference by Similarities to Ideal Solution (TOPSIS), Preference Ranking Organization Method for Enrichment of Evaluations (PROMETHEE), Quantified Cost Risk Assessment (QCRA) might be considered for the evaluation systematic.

Policy Recommendation 5: Enhancing the quality of transport infrastructure projects' statistics and ensuring transparency in information disclosure.

Rationale: Reliable transport statistics are key for the development of transport infrastructure. Statistics of transportation should be produced and published in terms of domestic, international, and transit transportation separately in ton-km and passenger-km as well as tons and passengers to make a concrete evaluation on how to improve the existing systems. Besides, statistics about user satisfaction, such as delays in transportation, travel times, and reliability would be beneficial to produce to see the bottlenecks and improve the current situation of transport systems. To provide potential investors with a predictable investment environment, documents about project preparation and relevant processes and else could be shared with the public as well. Furthermore, the project pipeline with its main characteristics should be publicized for better planning for all stakeholders, to attract the private sector, and for better monitoring and public evaluation. To provide potential investors with a predictable investment environment, documents about project preparation and relevant processes must be shared with the public. In this regard, the implementation of a robust Transport Information System may be taken into account for better achievement of this recommendation.

Policy Recommendation 6: Making better use of alternative financing and procurement mechanisms including Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and implementing ex-post analysis for enhancing the economic and social impact of transport infrastructure.

Rationale: Alternative financing mechanisms can be mobilized including the private sector to overcome bottlenecks in transportation and logistics. PPP can be

introduced by a sound regulatory framework and capacity building to assure it brings value for money and is financially sustainable. PPP is a complex procurement mechanism, where project preparation, bidding, and contract management capability of the public is of particular importance. In order to ensure the effective implementation of PPPs, related guidelines for preparing a business case, bidding and contract management should be prepared. On the other hand, to determine if the projects have affected the country as a whole both in economic and social terms, as it was intended before realizing the project, the economic and social impact of the projects should be analysed and measured scrupulously. The forecasts made for a project in the feasibility study could regularly be compared to the realized user volume after the project is put into operation to determine to what extent forecasts deviated from actual numbers. The same case could also be valid for other estimated components of the project such as investment cost or the investment period of the project. This data could be useful for determining the extent of risks for prospective projects, which is of more importance if the project is realized as a PPP.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advice:

COMCEC Transport and Communications 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 projects to be financed by the COMCEC. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office can support financing the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include training programs, study visits, workshops, organizing seminars, peer-to-peer experience sharing, needs assessments and producing promotional materials/documents.

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 19th Meeting on October 5th, 2022, in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Sustainable Human Resource Management in Tourism Sector.” During the Meeting, Tourism Working Group, made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to promoting sustainable human resource management. In the light of the main findings of the report and the intense deliberations during 19th Meeting, the Working Group has come up with the following policy recommendations:

Policy Recommendation 1: Improving/Developing strategic COVID-19 alert and new normal adjustment sustainability policies in human resources.

Rationale: The global epidemic had serious effects on the industry, especially in terms of human capital. Re-establishing human capital's commitment and trust in the tourism industry is critical. Competent and experienced human resources professionals have switched to other sectors or established their own businesses because of the global epidemic paralyzing the sector. It is of great importance to reintroduce these employees to the tourism sector. The crisis plans of the tourism sector must be prepared in a clear, consistent and sustainable manner and shared transparently with all stakeholders, especially with the employees. With the global epidemic, the expectations of customers from employees have also changed. In this context, efforts should be made to raise awareness among employees about changing customer concerns and expectations. After the COVID-19, tourism businesses must adapt to the new global order, use the new normal advanced technologies, meet customer expectations and bring more visitors. Encouraging tourism businesses to adapt to the new global order, preparing clear, consistent and sustainable crisis plans after the Pandemic and sharing, encouraging, guiding and transparently empowering employees so that long-term access to talented sustainable human resources. Therefore, research suggests that a global tourism human resources crisis management plan can be developed against possible crises that may arise in the future. To adopt a mechanism to secure tourism based communities.

Policy Recommendation 2: Promoting in-service training, tourism schools, certificate programs, international exchange programs, and internship opportunities with a view to improving service and quality in the tourism industry.

Rationale: Tourism education increases the level of service by improving the knowledge of the personnel in tourism businesses. For this reason, in close cooperation and collaboration with the private sector, planning for the training of employees should be given priority. Creating industry advisory boards in tourism schools for enhanced collaboration on the contents of tourism education and “train the trainer” programs targeting tourism instructors would help close the gap between what is needed from human resources in tourism and what is provided at tourism schools. In-service training is very significant for employees who lack expertise and training. The goal of improving workforce and service quality should be to improve employee performance. Prepare a locally driven strategy to spread awareness campaign on the importance of tourism activities on the local economy to maintain the involvement of the local people in the tourism activities to provide direct income. In order to increase employee performance, it is important to bring an educated workforce to the industry. Developing in-service trainings, opening tourism schools, expanding language programs, certificate programs and international exchange programs for tourism employees in tourism education, and having access to internship opportunities. Therefore in-service trainings, tourism schools, certificate programs, international exchange programs, and internship opportunities should be expanded to bring educated human capital to the industry.

Policy Recommendation 3: Ensuring the sustainability of Staff/Employee well-being through, among others, rewards, bonuses or raises in salary or possibility for employees to become shareholders and favourable working circumstances.

Rationale: In order to determine customer satisfaction, it is necessary to prioritize personnel satisfaction. Sustainable human resource management should consider strategies and a work environment that promote employee happiness and well-being. The tourism industry can flourish with the use of many internal motivation methods. Encouraging internal motivation techniques such as rewards, bonuses or salary rises to ensure employee satisfaction. In order to have more motivated employees, allowing them to become shareholders in tourism Business Company. Providing favourable working circumstances help human resources to become more sustainable. Therefore, the tourism industry needs to create a system that will increase the overall staff productivity, increase innovation capacity and enable them to provide better service. People can help workplaces achieve their goals and plans by successfully integrating hiring, selection, training, performance reviews, organizational culture teams, and training. It should be give a special interest to the

vocationally training of tourism and hospitality to ensure the sustainability of human resources within the industry.

Policy Recommendation 4: Increasing synergy between businesses and partners through enhanced interaction among travel agencies, tourism companies, hotels and tour operators.

Rationale: It is essential to maintain effective and strong communication and interaction between tourism businesses. For government purposes, there should be a strong and sustainable interaction between travel agencies, tourism companies, hotels and tour operators. For industry leaders as policy planners and makers, accurate benchmarking and a clear definition of issues will be guiding principles. The synergy between tourism businesses helps the industry develop successfully, minimize the problems that may arise and provide quality service in the industry. It also helps promote lifelong learning by developing long-term resources development strategies and organizational knowledge of the country's contribution to the tourism industry.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

COMCEC Tourism 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. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.

OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum: In its future meetings, the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas and the sub-areas from the private sector perspective.

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19th MEETING OF THE AGRICULTURE WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Agriculture Working Group (AWG) successfully held its 19th Meeting on October 10th, 2022, in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Transforming Food Systems After COVID-19: Agricultural Knowledge and Information Systems in the OIC Member Countries”. During the Meeting, AWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to improving agricultural knowledge and information systems. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report entitled with the same theme of the above-mentioned meeting. The policy recommendations are as follows:

Policy Recommendation 1: Developing a sound stakeholder coordinating and consulting mechanism to provide a common framework in which all actors can operate in an aligned and harmonized way.

Rationale: It is important to establish some type of loosely defined coordinating body for the various components of the AKIS to provide a common framework in which all actors can operate in an aligned and harmonized way. Coordination should not be so strict to discourage competition for innovation.

At a minimum level, mechanisms are needed to harmonize policies and strategies such as prioritization of research and innovation. Supreme Council for Science and Technology and Agriculture and Forestry Council of Türkiye and The Plant Congress (Plantekongressen) of Denmark are good examples of coordinating and consulting mechanisms among stakeholders.

Policy Recommendation 2: Making use of Public-Private Partnerships for effective AKIS governance and financing.

Rationale: Managing new challenges agriculture faces such as climate change, geopolitical risk; supply-chain disruptions require good policy design, sustained investments, and sound financing framework. While public is dominant actor in the governance and financing of the AKIS, the private sector plays an increasingly important role in through commercial programs to sell its inputs, products, and its innovative capabilities. The public should improve patterns of interaction among all stakeholders, design and enforce an enabling regulatory framework, provide financing. PPP mechanisms can be instrumental ways in boosting the volume of research, extension, and advisory services for agriculture. PPPs are special arrangements to maximize service quality by exploiting the creativity and synergy

of public and private. Well-designed PPPs bring social benefits by leveraging resources and capabilities of the private actors and the public.

Policy Recommendation 3: Investing in new talent for agriculture through developing connections and networks between youth and AKIS institutions to prepare workforce of the future.

Rationale: While the workforce in agriculture is aging, ensuring the interest and participation of the new generations to come in agriculture is essential for the competitiveness and sustainability of the industry. To increase youth employment in agriculture, new mechanisms are needed to put in place to improve their technical knowledge and skills.

Talent development programs to make attractive for young people to choose a career in agriculture for the postgraduate students as well as young farmers is essential component of transforming the AKIS. Such programs should include new agricultural Technologies such as precision, better data usage and business development techniques. Young farmers and agri-entrepreneurs might be promoted to take part in global forums, which connects and empowers young people to discuss their local priorities and challenges and identify innovative and actionable solutions for a better food future.

Policy Recommendation 4: Including seasonal agriculture workers into the AKIS for better harnessing their potential in terms of investment, job creation and agricultural productivity.

Rationale: While agriculture mostly creates seasonal jobs, the number of seasonal workers is often underestimated. In many countries, seasonal workers are important part of the production of the most the strategic products within the OIC Member Countries. The seasonal farm labour market is growing in the OIC Region. Education and skill levels of seasonal workers vary widely; they are often excluded from extension services. Training programs for them often concentrates on workers right and protecting health. Effective AKIS should include seasonal workers as an important component of the agricultural ecosystem for better harnessing their potential in terms of investment, job creation and agricultural productivity.

Policy Recommendation 5: Developing a sound system for effective monitoring and evaluation from the beginning to better understand the impact of AKIS.

Rationale: Establishment of sound monitoring and evaluation system from the beginning is crucial to see the impact of the system. Reporting matrix of public, private industry, NGO, FO, academic & research institution, development

agencies, INGOs, IFIs through bottom-up and participatory approaches serve to enhance partnerships and build a sense of ownership and consensus among actors. AKIS needs systems that assess its impact and outcome to feed this information back to policy making and coordination units. Reporting mechanism is needed to coordinate mutual interests of AKIS triangle.

Policy Recommendation 6: Strengthening the information and communications technology (ICT) Systems for AKIS to address the need for localized and customized information.

Rationale: ICT Systems allows producers adequate, timely access to technical and marketing information. ICT systems allows more farmers to benefit from existing knowledge and information via creation of local, regional, and global information networks. Such networks allow collaborative and interdisciplinary approaches to problem solving and research practices. ICTs could be integrated into AKIS in many ways such as agricultural radio & television channels, internet portals, social media, and mobile services. Knowledge and information disseminated via these systems include information for climate change, early warning for drought and extreme weather conditions, diseases, and price & market data. ICT systems also brings new opportunities for farmers to share their experiences with each other.

Policy Recommendation 7: Developing an AgriTech & FoodTech ecosystem for the creation and growth of new companies and supporting the existing ones.

Rationale: Developing an AgriTech & FoodTech ecosystem is essential to facilitate the transition of agri-food systems to meet both consumers' demands and sustainable development goals. AgriTech is the intersection products, services, applications derived from agriculture to improve yield, efficiency, and profitability while FoodTech is the intersection of agriculture, food, and technology along the value-chain from harvest, storage, processing to distribution and retail. AgriTech includes field sensors, drones, farm-management software, robotics, vertical farming. FoodTech direct-to-consumer food delivery platforms, products, and services to innovate food processing and improve food ingredients, next-generation food, and drinks such as plant-based milk and meat, waste management and food packaging. Developing such an ecosystem that will contribute to the creation and growth of new companies is necessary to attract growing global investment to agriculture. Volume of investment in AgriTech reached to \$ 5.2 billion in 2021.

Policy Recommendation 8: Developing a virtual network of OIC AKIS institutions to increase collaboration among OIC Member Countries.

Rationale: While different sources of knowledge are needed to deal with vital agricultural issues, agricultural competitiveness depends on collaborative actions for innovation. Cross border collaboration in research and innovation creates a more integrated market for research. Development of a virtual network of OIC AKIS institutions would facilitate experience sharing among the OIC member countries. Such a virtual network can create an inventory of existing projects and expertise, showcase best practices. Virtual OIC AKIS Network may gradually lead to joint project development and execution mechanism where funding institutions, research institutions, universities, private companies, FO interact for innovation projects.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Recommendations:

COMCEC Agriculture Working Group: In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner. Working Group may work on a prioritization and sequencing of the policy areas.

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 projects to be financed by the COMCEC. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office can support financing the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include training programs, study visits, workshops, organizing seminars, peer-to-peer experience sharing, needs assessments and producing promotional materials/documents.

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 19TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC POVERTY ALLEVIATION WORKING GROUP

The 37th COMCEC Session agreed on “Effective Social Assistance Provision and Socioeconomic Empowerment in light of COVID-19 Pandemic in the OIC Member States” as the theme for the Exchange of Views Session at the 38th Session of the COMCEC and requested COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group (PAWG) to come up with concrete policy recommendations on this topic and report them to the 38th COMCEC Ministerial Session. Along with the issues related to social assistance delivery during COVID-19 Pandemic, the PAWG also considered the challenges and possible policy options related to moving to integrated monitoring and information systems in social assistance delivery. In this framework, the Working Group has come up with the following challenges and problems as well as recommendations for facilitating adoption of integrated systems for the OIC Member Countries for their submission to the 38th COMCEC Ministerial Session.

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS FOR SOCIAL ASSISTANCE DELIVERY DURING COVID-19

- The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic erased several years of efforts in poverty alleviation. The economic contraction has been relatively slower in the OIC Member Countries; however, the impact on poverty has been drastic.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has led to a significant increase in poverty and in the number of individuals facing hunger in the OIC Member Countries.
- The policy response in terms of economic support and debt relief have been relatively slower among the OIC Member Countries than in the rest of the world.
- There is a negative relationship between the coverage of social assistance and adequacy of social assistance among the OIC Member Countries.
- As the number of beneficiaries increases, total transfer amount received by all beneficiaries as a share of total welfare decreases, causing resource constraints in the OIC Member Countries.
- Social assistance protection tools are not sufficiently diverse among the OIC Member Countries. While social insurance and labor market support programs are frequently rely upon by many governments, such tools are less common across the OIC Member Countries.

- Social assistance programs were not adequately supported with labor market policies, such as wage subsidies, training and subsidized work time in more than half of OIC Member Countries during the COVID-19 Pandemic. Such labor market policies increase the effectiveness of social assistance by containing unemployment and protecting job matches between the workers and employees.

CHALLENGES AND PROBLEMS WITH RESPECT TO ADOPTION OF INTEGRATED SOCIAL ASSISTANCE SYSTEMS

- With climate change and global warming at alarming levels, natural disasters at a higher frequency and catastrophe levels are expected worldwide.
- Within countries, the poor and fragile sections of the population are typically those who are more exposed to the negative effects of the shocks. Thus, governments need flexible and fast social assistance delivery systems to respond to sudden shocks and protect the most fragile segments of the society.
- While there is a clear trend among the governments around the world to move to integrated systems, adoption of such systems vary greatly across the OIC Member Countries.
- Integrated monitoring and information systems in social assistance are most common across the OIC Member Countries in the MENA Region and Asia Region and least common across members in the Africa region.
- While most OIC members exhibit strong political commitment for adopting fully integrated monitoring and information systems in social assistance delivery, few member countries have effective systems that feature dynamic inclusion of beneficiaries and a single data platform.
- Lack of social registries and existence of unique national identity numbers significantly reduce the speed at which countries can build the basic blocks of integrated systems in social assistance delivery.
- Individual data privacy laws, which are crucial requirements of well-functioning integrated systems, are still at infancy stage in some member countries.
- Lack of technical infrastructure and know-how is the main challenge against building integrated systems.
- Targeting errors, economic uncertainty and coordination problems across government institutions and difficulty of reaching out to minority groups are other important challenges faced by member countries in building effective social assistance programs.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Given the challenges and problems discussed above, a set of general policy recommendations are as follows:

a. General Recommendations

- Launching staff exchange and training programs between member countries with different levels of integration in social assistance systems. Staff exchange and training programs can facilitate coordination across members and allow learning from each other's experience. These programs should be designed at technical levels and policy levels.
- Setting the integrated social protection as the main policy priority.
- Determining the detailed structure of existing social assistance by identifying which organization has what datasets, how they use them, to what purpose, as well as data sharing tools between different programs.
- Identifying the financial, human, and organizational resources currently devoted to the social assistance programs and possible expansion into an integrated framework.
- Investing in data infrastructure, technical skills and human resources to enable better targeting, delivery, and provision of services and cash payments.
- Identifying the population groups in need of social assistance that the existing programs fail to reach.
- Promoting a better coordination between different organizations and institutions responsible for running social assistance programs in a collaborative governance structure at both local and national level.
- Identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each existing program at the stages of outreach, assessment, provision and management.
- Determining the sources of the shortcomings of each program in ensuring dynamic inclusion of the groups insufficiently covered by the existing structures such as rural poor, women, informal workers etc.
- Identifying all the available datasets that should be connected with social programs such as civil registries, tax records, address registers, birth certificates and income status.

b. Recommendations for the countries with low level of interoperability and multiple programs

- Improving the delivery of the existing programs by introducing digital data interface, digital payment systems with better client interfaces.

- Expanding the scope of interoperability between existing programs through data sharing, multiple checks and dynamic data adjustment in a single beneficiary registry or developing binary interoperable data platforms.
- Addressing the insufficient outreach towards the groups that the existing programs fail to cover by complementing on-demand system with administer-driven tools and by tailoring specific outreach strategies for each group, which has special circumstances.
- Developing a single registry system that keep track of “who gets what, when and how”.
- Designing a common grievances system that allows adaptive social protection and dynamic feedback provided by clients.
- Developing a single payment gateway that keeps data on all transactions that is accessible by all organizations.
- Exploring the methods to connect the social protection databases with other institutional databases that can lead to a further integration into a more holistic structure.

c. Recommendations for countries with high level of interoperability but without a fully integrated beneficiary system

- Developing the existing interconnected data platforms into a single beneficiary system by identifying the most crucial obstacles (such as, institutional barriers, insufficient data sharing and lack of technical infrastructure).
- Designing methods to provide all existing and potential beneficiaries with unique IDs, which are typically obtained from social registries, in order to make outreach and assessment of needs more efficient and effective.
- Ensuring that there is a single payment gateway, a working client interface, grievances platform, and data analytics platform with access to all databases of social assistance programs.
- Creating tools to fully exploit the existing databases (paper or digital) which can be turned into an effective social registry.
- Designing small-scale pilot implementation of fully integrated system, validating the results and expanding to national level.

d. Recommendations for countries with an integrated beneficiaries system

- Developing methods to improve the outreach of the social programs by designing specific programs for each social group and expanding the horizon of dynamic inclusion.

- Developing additional data platforms to increase effectiveness, accuracy and validity of the existing social assistance data.
- Providing a fully collaborative environment among all institutions and organizations in the sphere of social assistance.
- Developing sophisticated digital monitoring systems, intelligent early warning tools to better identify the people who need social assistance.

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 18th MEETING OF THE COMCEC FINANCIAL COOPERATION WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group (FCWG) successfully held its 18th Meeting on October 3rd, 2022, in a virtual-only format, with the theme of “Standardization Efforts in Islamic Finance”. During the Meeting, FCWG made deliberations on the policy recommendations related to improving standardization efforts in Islamic finance sector. The policy recommendations were formulated by taking into consideration the research report entitled with the same theme of the above-mentioned meeting. The policy recommendations are as follows:

Policy Recommendation 1: Developing a comprehensive strategic master plan that clearly defines the standardization and harmonization requirements (at global and local levels). **Rationale:** The success of the Islamic Financial Services Industry (IFSI) depends on the development of a comprehensive master plan with a clear strategic direction reflected in the blueprints, strategies, and policies of government agencies and self-regulatory organizations representing the industry stakeholders. Upon institutionalizing standardization, the policies, directives, and guidelines will be geared toward achieving this strategic objective.

Policy Recommendation 2: Establishing a centralized *Sharī‘ah* governance framework to ensure the compliance of the Islamic Financial Services Industry with standards on *Sharī‘ah* products, dispute resolution, and reporting.

Rationale: A two-tier *Sharī‘ah* governance framework would enhance the public trust in the Islamic finance ecosystem through proper checks and balances by ensuring the consistency and uniformity of industry practices and compliance of market operations with the tenets of the *Sharī‘ah*. While the institution-level *Sharī‘ah* boards are responsible for monitoring routine business operations, the role of the jurisdiction-level Central *Sharī‘ah* Board is to issue general and broad *Sharī‘ah* (principle-based) rulings and review the new Islamic Finance contracts and products. The Central *Sharī‘ah* Board would serve the interests of all stakeholders by ensuring that the Islamic financial institutions (IFIs) duly implement the *Sharī‘ah* standards, regulations, and resolutions. Besides, the Central *Sharī‘ah* Board would assist in dispute resolution by providing clarification and proper *Sharī‘ah* interpretation of any controversial issues relating to Islamic commercial law brought before a court or arbitral tribunal.

Policy Recommendation 3: Ensuring periodical review of the standards so that they reflect current market dynamics and needs.

Rationale: In order to ensure that markets are dynamic, efficient, competitive, and innovative, the standardization process should not be rigid. Periodic revision of standards reflecting the industry's demands would benefit all the stakeholders, which could be achieved by introducing a special platform (meetings, periodicals, etc.) for discussion of related issues.

Policy Recommendation 4: Enhancing the legal, regulatory, and supervisory frameworks to create a level-playing field for all market participants.

Rationale: There is a need to create a level playing field for all market participants to ensure tax neutrality so that Islamic financial transactions are not taxed differently from conventional transactions. Additionally, the simplification of Islamic Finance-related legal documentation and harmonization of legal, regulatory, and supervisory frameworks will make standardization more effective.

Policy Recommendation 5: Enhancing the coordination among regulatory bodies and with international standard-setting bodies.

Rationale: An effective system of cooperation among supervisory agencies should be established to coordinate the development of standards and ensure their compliance and enforcement. Developing constructive communication between international Islamic standard-setting bodies (such as AAOIFI, IFSB, and IIFM and any other relevant standard-setting body that may be set up in the future for the purpose of standardization of products and practices in Islamic finance) and national regulators and continuously improving it will ensure smooth adaption and adoption of international standards to the national ecosystem. Moreover, the adequate representation of the member countries in the international standard-setting bodies would be a pre-condition for factoring in the country-specific guidelines for adapting a specific standard. The establishment of national and international research and working committees dedicated to international harmonization and standardization can assist in reducing divergence and achieving greater connectivity by bridging the gap between local and international industry players. The OIC could provide a platform for collaboration, coordination, and discussion of Islamic finance standardization- and harmonization-related activities and offer financial and technical assistance in this direction. This platform would also help design strategic master plans for the development of the IFSI with embedded standardization/harmonization, offering training and policy dialogue programs for regulators. Also, it could play an important role in dispute resolution

for cross-border IFSI-related issues, particularly under the auspices of the newly established OIC Arbitration Centre located in Istanbul.¹

Policy Recommendation 6: Developing quality human capital by including standardization-related modules in the higher education curriculum/syllabus, conducting training and seminars, and introducing accreditation of Islamic Finance academic programmes.

Rationale: The success of standardization in Islamic finance relies heavily on human capital development, which is why experts in Islamic finance, such as *Sharī'ah* scholars, lawyers, and regulators, should be given priority in expanding their knowledge capacity. The minimum qualification requirements should be set for the members of the *Sharī'ah* Advisory Boards, who are also required to attend the continuous professional development modules with a particular focus on standardization-related areas. Also, introducing an international academic accreditation agency for “licensing” the Islamic finance academic programs worldwide will serve the industry's standardization needs as well as ensure that Islamic finance graduates have the knowledge, skills, and attributes required for the field.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

COMCEC Financial Cooperation 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 issues a call for project proposals 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. To realize the above-mentioned policy recommendations, the member countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding facility. These projects may include the organization of seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparation of analytical studies, needs assessments, and training materials/documents, etc.

¹ For details, please refer to: <https://www.mondag.com/turkey/arbitration-dispute-resolution/897458/organization-of-islamic-cooperation-arbitration-center-established-in-istanbul>

ANNEX

8

Original: English

**LIST OF BASIC DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED AND/OR
PRESENTED AT THE THIRTY EIGHTH SESSION OF THE COMCEC
(İstanbul, 28-29 November 2022)**

1.	COMCEC Annual Progress Report 2022.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(1)-CCO
2.	Making Cooperation Work: COMCEC Strategy for Building an Interdependent Islamic World.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(2)-CCO
3.	Report of the OIC General Secretariat	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(3)-OIC
4.	OIC Economic Outlook 2022: Achieving Sustainable and Resilient Recovery Post COVID-19 Pandemic	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(4)-SESRIC
5.	Brief on Trade Cooperation/TPS-OIC.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(5)-CCO
6.	Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(6)-CCO
7.	Policy Recommendations of the 19th COMCEC Trade Working Group Meeting	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(7)-CCO
8.	Executive Summary-Annual Report on intra-OIC Trade.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(8) -ICDT
9.	Report on OIC Trade Fairs and Exhibitions.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(9)-ICDT
10.	Report on the Issues Relating to the Activities of the World Trade Organization (WTO).....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(10)-ICDT
11.	ITFC Progress Report on Enhancing Intra-OIC Trade ...	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(11)-IsDB-ITFC
12.	The IsDB Technical Assistance Program (TAP) for Regional and Global Integration in Trade.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(12)-IsDB
13.	Progress Report on the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD).....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(13)-IsDB
14.	Special Program for the Development of Africa(SPDA)	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(14)-IsDB
15.	OIC Business Intelligence Center Program	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(15)-IsDB
16.	Report of the SMIIC	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(16)-SMIIC
17.	Report on the Activities of the ICCIA.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(17)-ICCIA
18.	Brief on Transportation and Communications.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(18)-CCO
19.	Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the COMCEC Transportation and Communications Working Group Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(19)-CCO
20.	Policy Recommendations of the 19th COMCEC Transportation and Communications Working Group Meeting	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(20)-CCO
21.	Brief on Tourism.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(21)-CCO
22.	Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the COMCEC Tourism Working Group Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(22)-CCO
23.	The Policy Recommendations of the 19th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(23)-CCO
24.	Brief on Agricultural Cooperation.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(24)-CCO
25.	Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the COMCEC Agriculture Working Group	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(25)-CCO
26.	Brief on Poverty Alleviation	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(26)-CCO
27.	Proceedings of the 19th Meeting of the COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(27)-CCO

28.	Policy Recommendations of the 19th COMCEC Poverty Alleviation Working Group Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(28)-CCO
29.	OIC-TVET Strategic Roadmap (2020-2025).....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(29)-SESRIC
30.	Towards the Achievement of Prioritized Sustainable Development Goals in OIC Countries-Progress Report..	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(30)-SESRIC
31.	List of the OIC Institutions' Activities on the Implementation of SGDs	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(31)-CCO
32.	Brief on Financial Cooperation.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(32)-CCO
33.	Proceedings of the 18th Meeting of the COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(33)-CCO
34.	Policy Recommendations of the 18th COMCEC Financial Cooperation Working Group Meeting.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(34)-CCO
35.	Policy Recommendations for the Exchange of Views Session.....	OIC/COMCEC/38-22/D(35)-CCO

Reports are available on the COMCEC website. (www.comcec.org)
