

**THE TPS-OIC TRADE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE MEETING
(3-4 February 2026, Virtual Meeting)**

Inauguration Speech

Distinguished Delegates,
Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to welcome you all to Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) Meeting. It is a great pleasure for me to host and chair this meeting. I also express my sincere gratitude to all delegates for their attendance.

At the outset, let me reiterate Türkiye's unwavering commitment to peace and stability, both in the region and the world at large.

Distinguished Delegates,

Recently, rising geopolitical tensions and the escalation of protectionist policies have created numerous risks and uncertainties for global trade. According to the latest forecasts, these uncertainties are continuing to weigh on trade activity, even as global growth projections have shown modest stability. In its October 2025 World Economic Outlook, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects global growth at 3.2 percent in 2025 and 3.1 percent in 2026, highlighting a still challenging environment for global economic activity.

Furthermore, the World Trade Organization (WTO) has revised its global trade outlook, projecting that world merchandise trade will grow by 2.4 percent in 2025, following stronger-than-expected trade activity in the first half of the year, but warns of slower momentum ahead due to ongoing policy uncertainties.

In other words, we are unfortunately navigating a period in which global trade figures respond quickly to daily developments, underscoring the volatility of the current international economic landscape.

Honorable Delegates,

On the other hand, OIC member countries collectively saw around a 45 percent rise in merchandise trade value from 2020 to 2024 (from about \$3.3 trillion to \$4.8 trillion). This expansion was propelled by booming exports of strategic commodities and a resilient recovery despite global crises.

Intra-OIC trade has become an increasingly significant part of this story: it expanded by roughly 18 percent over the same period and now is around 16,6 percent. Notably, intra-OIC exports peaked at around 576 billion US Dollars in 2023 followed by a sharp 30 percent decrease in 2024.

Together, these figures highlight the imperative for sustained cooperation and reform to ensure that recent gains in merchandise trade are maintained and further increased. Hereby, steps to lower tariffs and non-tariff barriers, deepen trade agreements or reduce barriers to trade in services would benefit wealth of our countries.

Annex II

That is why we have to make use of TPS-OIC in a forward-looking way to better locate our countries in the future economic order. I believe that this two-day meeting will be a stepping stone in that direction.

Dear Colleagues,

As you would kindly recall, we had seven Trade Negotiating Committee Meetings since 2020, one of which was at Ministerial level where honorable Ministers focused on enhancing the TPS-OIC.

No doubt, the implementation of the TPS-OIC since July 2022, represents a precious milestone to be taken in the trade liberalization process of OIC Countries. Still, it is not an end in itself.

As we have expressed several times before, TPS-OIC, as the most concrete outcome of our trade collaboration thus far, represents also the most pragmatic tool to start with for a deeper, bolder and forward-looking trade cooperation among our countries. The discussions that we had at the previous meetings showed that our experts as well as our ministers agree on a need to expand the scope of the Agreement.

Our ministers at the last meeting we had on June 2024 and the subsequent COMCEC meeting in November 2024 have mandated us to continue technical engagement on the expansion of TPS-OIC. At our last meeting in October 2025, with a view to explore the possibilities of the expansion of the TPS-OIC, we decided to initiate preliminary discussions on (i) challenges in implementation of PRETAS, (ii) possible expansion areas and objectives, (iii) legal considerations and (iv) institutional matters. This decision was also welcomed by COMCEC at its meeting in November 2025.

Thus, our task today is to start discussion to fulfill this mandate. Here we proposed, as you may see at the agenda, to start with expansion topics then delve into challenges of implementation.