



Speech of the Director General of the Islamic Centre for Trade Development
The Virtual Meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee
on the Trade Preferential System of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
3–4 February 2026

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.

- First of all, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Government of Türkiye for its invitation to convene this meeting. I also commend the efforts of the members of the COMCEC Coordination Office regarding the activation of the Trade Preferential System of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
- As you know, this meeting is part of the concerted efforts we are undertaking to ensure the optimal implementation of this system and to make it a key instrument for contributing to trade development and strengthening partnership among the Member States of the Organization, thereby laying the foundations for genuine economic integration within the framework of our Organization.
- In light of the current international economic context, characterized by market volatility and increasing difficulties in market access, the importance of considering the expansion of this system in a manner consistent with the requirements of the new generation of economic integration agreements becomes evident.
- Over the past years, a notable increase has been observed in the number of new-generation preferential agreements concluded across different regions of the world. The number of regional trade agreements currently in force and notified to the World Trade Organization has reached about 380 agreements, which reflects the growing importance that preferential trade has come to assume, as a result of a set of factors, most notably:

- ✓ The limitations of traditional (old-generation) agreements, which primarily focused on tariff reductions without addressing modern legal and regulatory issues.
 - ✓ The need to keep pace with the development of global value chains, which has required deeper and more comprehensive rules governing trade, investment, and services.
 - ✓ Rising competitiveness among countries and economic blocs, as states seek to secure advanced positions within regional and international markets.
 - ✓ The desire to attract foreign direct investment, by providing a stable legal environment and clear rules to protect investors.
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- In light of these factors, strengthening investment and promoting intra-trade among the Member States of our Organization requires the effective implementation of the Trade Preferential System, in line with the aspirations and ambitions of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
 - Based on the Centre's awareness of the importance of this matter, it has continued to organize awareness-raising workshops on the significance of the system in partnership with the COMCEC Coordination Office. These workshops have covered all regions of the Organization over the past two years. The most recent workshop targeted Asian countries and the Arab Group and was held last January.
 - We have also developed a dedicated website for the system, providing an opportunity for a clear understanding of the necessary procedures for its implementation. In addition, an open invitation has been issued to the private sector to review the trade-related matters concerning each participating country.
 - We have also ensured that certain sections of the website are accessible to participating countries through dedicated access credentials (passwords) specific to each country, with the aim of improving data related to the adopted procedures, including lists of goods and documents related to export and import operations, in accordance with the applicable requirements. We will present the contents of this website during the next session of this meeting.

- On the other hand, we have conducted a study on the challenges and implications of reviewing the system's legal provisions, through which we sought to highlight the possibilities for expanding the scope of preferential trade and deepening such preferences, in light of international experiences.
- We have also prepared technical papers related to new-generation economic integration agreements, as well as the legal procedures concerning the liberalization of trade in goods and services, in line with the modern vision adopted by many countries.
- The Center also expresses its readiness to continue providing technical support to member countries through workshops, working groups, and conducting the necessary studies for a new understanding of the challenges in improving the system's performance.
- In the same context, and in implementation of COMCEC's recommendations, we would like to recall that the Center invited member states to participate in a preparatory workshop for the 14th World Trade Organization Ministerial Conference, scheduled to be held next week in Casablanca. This workshop will provide an opportunity to review the issues raised within the framework of multilateral negotiations.
- In conclusion, we welcome your constructive comments and proposals, which will facilitate the implementation of this system and enhance the efficiency of the work of the Trade Negotiations Committee in the future, whether in relation to documents, technical consultations, or relevant studies.
- I would like to once again extend my sincere thanks and appreciation.

Peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be upon you.