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# info REPORT

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## ANKARA CENTRE UPDATE

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### THE 9<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE OIC STANDARDISATION EXPERTS GROUP ON "STUDYING AND DEVELOPING OF HALAL FOOD STANDARDS"

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The 9th Meeting of the OIC Standardisation Experts Group, which was entrusted by the 23rd Session of the COMCEC with the task of studying and developing the OIC Halal Food Standards, was held in Ankara, Republic of Turkey on 16-18 April 2008 at the Headquarters of the Turkish Standards Institution (TSI).

The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 24 OIC member countries, the COMCEC Coordination Office, ICCI, ICDT and SESRIC. The representative of Bosnia Herzegovina attended the Meeting as observer. The OIC General Secretariat was represented by the SESRIC and the ICDT. The objective of the Meeting was to discuss modalities of cooperation and structure for establishing an OIC system for Halal food certification based on an acceptable base of general guidelines for food standards agreed by its beneficiaries within the OIC community.

Mr. Kenan Malatyali, President of the Turkish Standards Institution (TSI), inaugurated the Meeting, and Mr. Yavuz Mollasalihoğlu, Director General of Standardisation for Foreign Trade of the Under-secretariat for Foreign Trade of the Republic of Turkey, was elected as the Chairman. After the adoption of the Agenda and the Work Programme, a Drafting Committee was set up comprising the representatives of Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Sudan, Turkey and ICCI.

The representatives of the following OIC member countries, and Bosnia Herzegovina as observer, made presentations on the institutional structure of standardisation and standardisation practices in their countries:

Azerbaijan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Sudan, Uganda and Turkey. The representatives of the ICCI and ICDT also expressed their views and made comments on the subject.

The Meeting unanimously agreed to establish a committee for preparing Halal Food Standards, consisting of the following members: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indonesia, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sudan, Turkey, COMCEC Coordination Office and the ICCI.

The Committee on Halal Food Standards convened in the morning session of the second day of the Meeting and designated Turkey as the Rapporteur and the coordinator for preparing the draft text on OIC Halal Food Standards. In so doing, Turkey will, within a time-table set for the planned work ending on 1 February 2009, collect all the necessary information on current Halal Food Standards available in the OIC member countries and in other relevant sources, and communicate and discuss with the other members of the Committee regarding all the related issues. The final text will be submitted to the 10th Meeting of the OIC Standardisation Experts Group for approval. In its capacity as the Rapporteur of the Committee, Turkey will present an interim report on the subject to the 24th Session of the COMCEC in October 2008.

The Meeting also agreed to establish another committee for determining the methodology for certification and accreditation procedures. The Committee on Certification and Accreditation Procedures for Halal Food Standards, which was then approved by the Meeting, consisted of the

following members: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Indonesia, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sudan, Turkey, Uganda, COMCEC Coordination Office and the ICCI.

The Committee on Certification and Accreditation Procedures for Halal Food Standards convened in the afternoon session of the second day of the Meeting and assigned Turkey, within a time-table set for the planned work ending on 1 February 2009, to collect all necessary information regarding the current certification and accreditation procedures and practices of all OIC member and to prepare by merging

inputs, in collaboration with the other members of the Committee, proposals on an OIC-based certification and accreditation scheme or system.

The Report of the Meeting, including the time-table set for the planned work of the Committee on Halal Food Standards and that of the Committee on Certification and Accreditation Procedures, was prepared by the Drafting Committee and adopted by the Meeting. The 10th Meeting of the OIC Standardisation Experts Group, which will be hosted by the ICCI, has been decided to take place in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia in February 2009.

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## SEMINAR ON DEVELOPMENT OF E-TOURISM TECHNOLOGIES IN ISLAMIC COUNTRIES

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Considering the importance of e-tourism technologies and the status of the OIC member countries in this regard, a proposal for organising an International Seminar on “Development of E-Tourism Technologies in Islamic Countries” was discussed in the 5th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan in September 2006. In this connection, the said Seminar was organised by the Department of Computer Science and Information Technology of the Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Dhaka, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the OIC General Secretariat, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Republic of Azerbaijan and the Ministry of Civil Aviation & Tourism of Peoples’ Republic of Bangladesh, and held at the campus of the Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Dhaka, Bangladesh on 22-24 April 2008.

Representatives of 10 OIC member countries, namely Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Indonesia, Niger, Pakistan, Senegal, Sudan and Uganda attended the Seminar. The representative of

the SESRIC and those of 7 universities and 3 institutes in Bangladesh also attended the Seminar, bringing the total of the participants to 54.

The Seminar aimed at discussing the available e-technologies that can be used in enhancing the development of the tourism sector in the member countries. In so doing, the Seminar reviewed the experience of the participating member countries in the field of e-tourism. Among other related issues, the participants discussed the benefits of a possible common platform for tourism among OIC member countries with the aim of exchanging technological views, ideas and experiences among the member countries. During the working sessions of the Seminar, a total of 25 papers, including country presentations by the representatives of the 10 participating member countries, have been discussed.

The representative of the SESRIC Mr. Nabil Dabour, Senior Researcher and Acting Director of the Research Department, presented a paper titled “International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects

and Challenges”, which attempted to assess the performance and the economic role of the international tourism sector in the OIC member countries. It examined the traditionally used indicators in measuring international tourism (i.e. international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts). The analysis was made at both the individual country and the OIC regional levels. The paper also shed light on some issues and problems of tourism development and cooperation in the OIC countries and proposed a set of recommendations to serve as policy guidelines to which the attention of the member countries needs to be drawn.

Following a general deliberation on the different topics included in the presentations, the Seminar adopted a set of recommendations to be implemented at both the national and OIC-regional cooperation levels. The final report, including the recommendations, of the Seminar will be submitted to the 6th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), which will be held in Damascus, Syria on 29 June to 2 July 2008 and to the 24th Session of the COMCEC, which will be held in Istanbul on 19-24 October 2008.

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## TRAINING COURSE IN KAZAKHSTAN

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The Centre organised a training course on “Agriculture Statistics” at the Kazakhstan Statistical Agency of the Republic of Kazakhstan on 24-26 June, 2008. The course was provided by an expert from the Turkish Statistical Institute and was attended by 20 staff members of the Kazakhstan Statistical Agency.

The training course on “Agriculture Statistics” mainly covered the following subjects:

1. Agriculture statistics obtained from administrative records
  - Purpose, coverage and methodology
2. Agriculture statistics obtained from surveys
  - Purpose, coverage and methodology
  - Preparatory works (determining variables, preparing questionnaire and documents)
  - Field application and organization

- Data analysis and dissemination of the findings

### 3. Agriculture census

- Purpose, coverage and methodologies of agriculture census applied in Turkey
- Preparatory works (determining variables, preparing questionnaire and documents)
- Field application and organization
- Data analyzing studies and announcing results

### 4. Other studies

- Methodologies of other studies done on agriculture statistics

The participants of the workshop organised by the SESRIC expressed their thanks and satisfaction with the training programme which allowed them to improve their statistical capacity and performance on “Agriculture Statistics”.

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## THE 1<sup>ST</sup> MEETING OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OIC COTTON COOPERATION PROGRAMME

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The First Meeting of the Steering Committee for the implementation of the OIC Cotton Cooperation Programme was held on 12 May 2008 in Antalya, Republic of Turkey.

The following OIC member countries attended the Meeting as members of the Steering Committee: Burkina Faso, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Republic of Turkey. In addition to the OIC General Secretariat and the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), the following OIC Institutions attended the Meeting as members of the Steering Committee; Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), Islamic Development Bank (IDB), Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT).

The Meeting was chaired by Mr. Mehmet Vehbi Günan, General Director, Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Republic of Turkey, the Chairman of the Steering Committee. In its capacity as the Chairman of the Committee, the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Republic of Turkey briefed the Meeting on the background and the progress so far achieved regarding the OIC Cotton Cooperation Programme.

The Meeting adopted and considered an eight-item Agenda on different implementation and organisation matters regarding the OIC Cotton Cooperation Programme. During the Meeting, the participants adopted a number of important decisions, including the date of the 1st Project Committee Meeting to consider and evaluate the so far submitted project proposals, and to decide on the project proposal format, project proposal approval, financing and implementing procedures. The Meeting also discussed the activation, improvement, translation and finance issues related to the OIC Web Portal on Cotton Sector.

During the Meeting, the six Centres of Excellence representing the three OIC regions

have been defined as follows: Asia: Turkey (Nazilli Cotton Research Institute) and Pakistan (Central Cotton Research Institute); Arab: Egypt (Cotton Research Centre) and Syria (Cotton Research Institute); and Africa: Nigeria (Ahmadou Bello University Agricultural Research Centre) Senegal (Experimental Unit of Velingara). In its capacity as the Coordinator of the Centres of Excellence, Nazilli Cotton Research Institute of Turkey expressed its willingness to organise and host a meeting of the Centres of Excellence in order to come up with specific project proposals to be implemented in the member countries.

The Meeting decided that the Steering Committee prepare an Implementation Plan in collaboration with the Nazilli Institute, ICDT and other related international institutions such as the FAO, ITC, and others. The IDB was requested to prepare a project proposal format to be included in the Implementation Plan. The Implementation Plan shall specify the implementation period in the short, medium and long run as well as, where possible, the executing agencies.

The Meeting decided that the OIC Cotton Fair be organised in 2009 and requested the OIC General Secretariat to make the necessary contacts with the Government of Benin to confirm Benin's offer to host the First Cotton Fair in 2009. The ICDT, in collaboration with the IDB is invited to organize the Fair along with the buyer/seller workshop on cotton and textile at the appropriate time and place and will inform the Steering Committee members of the date of the Fair.

The Meeting requested the OIC General Secretariat to call upon all the OIC Cotton Producing Countries to organise and host the upcoming 2nd OIC Cotton Forum in 2009 and inform the Steering Committee of the name of the potential host country and the date of the Forum. The Meeting decided that the final report of the 1st Meeting of the Steering Committee be presented to the 24th

Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC on 13-15 May 2008 in Antalya. If necessary, the Steering Committee will

convene again on the sidelines of the 24th COMCEC Meeting in October 2008.

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## THE 24<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF THE COMCEC

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The 24th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC was held on 13-15 May 2008 in Antalya, Turkey with the participation of 10 member countries of the Committee. Iraq, Uganda, United Arab Emirates and Yemen also attended the Meeting as observers. Malaysia attended the Meeting as the Chairman of the 10th Islamic Summit. The OIC General Secretariat and the subsidiary, affiliated and specialised organs SESRIC, ICDT, IDB, ICCI, IUT, ITFC, OISA and ICYF-DC attended the Meeting. The SESRIC was represented at the meeting by its Director General Dr. Savaş Alpay and Mr. Nabil Dabour, Senior Researcher/Acting Director of the Research Department.

The Committee reviewed and discussed the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the 23rd COMCEC Session, which was held in November 2007 in Istanbul. It also prepared the Draft Agenda of the 24th COMCEC Session, which will be held in Istanbul in October 2008. In so doing, the Committee reviewed and discussed a set of common issues of concern to the member countries with a view to enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among them.

These issues were discussed under the following Agenda Items of the Meeting: Review of the implementation of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action relating to economic cooperation and the Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation among the OIC Member States, Expansion of intra-OIC trade and investment, progress in the establishment of Trade Preferential System among the OIC

Member States (TPS-OIC), Matters related to the World Trade Organisation activities, Cooperation among the stock exchanges of the OIC member countries, Poverty alleviation and capacity building programmes, preparations for the exchange of views on “Improving Investment Climate in the OIC Countries”.

Under Agenda Item “Poverty Alleviation and Capacity Building Programmes”, Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of the Centre, briefed the Committee on the proposal of the Centre for the implementation of its initiative of Vocational Education and Training Action Programme for the OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET). The Committee took note of the proposal of the implementation of the Centre’s Vocational Education and Training Action Programme for the OIC Member Countries and of the willingness and readiness of the Centre to initiate, by simulating the EU experience in this area, vocational training programmes such as OIC Exchange Projects for Professionals, OIC Placement Projects for Graduates and OIC Placement Projects for University students and others.

In this context, the Committee requested the SESRIC to prepare a full-fledged report on the proposal and submit it to the 24th Session of the COMCEC for consideration by the Member States, noting that the proposed implementation procedures should not include a central budget but instead should be based on financing by the beneficiaries. The proposed system may include financial support for some of the least-developed member countries by different OIC institutions. In this

connection, the Committee recommended that the vocational training activities offered by IDB, IUT and other OIC institutions be incorporated within the OIC-VET Programme, thereby, generating a common OIC platform in this area.

Under Agenda Item “Preparations for the Exchange of Views on the theme: Improving Investment Climate in the OIC countries”, the representative of the IDB briefed the Committee on the preparations for the Workshop on the said theme to be organised by the IDB, in collaboration with the SESRIC as the coordinator institution of the Exchange of Views sessions of the COMCEC, and held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia at the end of July 2008. Under the same Agenda Item, the Committee took note of the following proposals as possible themes for the exchange of views sessions to be held during the subsequent COMCEC Sessions: (1) E-government applications; (2) The impacts of rising commodity prices on the economies of OIC countries; and (3) The impact of exchange rate policies and currency harmonisation on intra-OIC trade.

The 24th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC was preceded by two-related meetings on 12th May.

The 12th Meeting of the Sessional Committee of the COMCEC was attended by the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC

Coordination Office, SESRIC, ICDT, IDB, ICCI, IUT and some of the Turkish institutions, which are owners of the proposed cooperation projects of the COMCEC. The Meeting mainly reviewed and discussed the progress so far achieved in the implementation of 8 cooperation projects of the COMCEC. In this connection, it is worth mentioning that the Committee designated the SESRIC as the Coordinator of the project proposal entitled “Cooperation in the area of Technical Development: Medium Range regional Turbofan Airliner” with the School of Civil Aviation of the Anadolu University of Turkey as the new project team leader.

The 1st Meeting of the Task Force to increase Intra-OIC Trade was attended by the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC Coordination Office, SESRIC, ICDT, IDB Group (IDB, ITFC and ICIEC) and ICCI. The aim of the Meeting was to explore the views, plans and activities of the said institutions regarding the achievement of the target stipulated by the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action of reaching the desired intra-OIC level of 20% by 2015. Considering some concluding remarks on the subject, the Meeting decided that a draft Road Map and Terms of Reference (TOR) of the Task Force should be prepared and that the Task Force to meet at least twice a year prior to COMCEC Sessions and Follow up Committee Meetings.

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## TRAINING COURSE IN TAJIKISTAN

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The Centre organised a training course on “Quality in Statistics” at the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan on 26-28 May, 2008. The course was provided by an expert from the Turkish Statistical Institute and was attended by 20 staff members of the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan.

The training course on “Quality in Statistics” mainly covered the following subjects:

1. Sources of non-sampling errors and measurement
  - Coverage, Non-response, Measurement, Processing Errors
2. Response reliability surveys
  - Index of crude agreement

- Index of crude disagreement
- Index of inconsistency
- Measure of disagreement between marginals
- Index of inconsistency

3. Statistical process control

4. EUROSTAT quality components:

- Relevance
- Accuracy
- Timeliness and punctuality
- Accessibility and clarity

- Comparability
- Coherence

The participants of the training course organised by the SESTRIC expressed their appreciation and satisfaction with the programme which aimed to improve the statistical capacity and performance of the State Committee on Statistics of the Republic of Tajikistan in the area “Quality in Statistics”.

## TRAINING COURSE IN UGANDA

The Centre organised a training course on “Agriculture Statistics and Food Safety Analysis” at the Uganda Bureau of Statistics in the Republic of Uganda on 26-27 May, 2008. The course was provided by an expert from the Turkish Statistical Institute and was attended by 15 staff members of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics of the Republic of Uganda.

The training course on “Agriculture Statistics and Food Safety Analysis” mainly covered the following subjects:

- Basic concepts and definitions in agricultural statistics
- Use of administrative sources and quality issues
- Statistical farm registry – needs and priorities
- Agricultural census and surveys – importance and needs

- Basic agricultural statistics
- Supply balance sheets of agricultural products – basic concepts and definitions
- Economic accounts for agriculture – theoretical background
- Agriculture statistics in Turkey – experience of Turk Stat
- Food safety – basic concepts and definitions
- Food safety statistics – scope and developments

The participants of the course expressed their thanks and appreciation to the SESRIC for organising the workshop which aimed to improve the statistical capacity and performance of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics on “Agriculture Statistics and Food Safety Analysis”.

## TRAINING WORKSHOP ON TOURISM STATISTICS

The Tourism Statistics Workshop was held on 16-18 June 2008 in Ankara, Turkey. It was jointly organized by SESRIC, Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, Turkish Statistical Institute and

World Tourism Organization. 36 participants from ten OIC countries, namely Azerbaijan, Brunei, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia and Turkey attended the workshop.

The workshop started with the opening speech of Dr. Savas Alpay, the Director General of SESRIC. The workshop adopted the proposed agenda and proceeded in 10 Sessions.

Mr. Nabil Dabour, Acting Director of Research Department of the SESRIC, gave an overall picture about the current situation of international tourism in OIC countries. Following this presentation, Mr. Erdem Acir, the representative from Ministry of Culture and Tourism of Turkey, informed the participants about the accommodation and border statistics while the experts from the Turkish Statistical Institute (Arzu Semati, Cenker Burak Metin, Gulser Yilmaz, Hidir Altinbulak, Imran Kotan) summarized the methodology and contents of the tourism related surveys they have been conducting. Juan Falconi, consultant and coordinator at World Tourism Organization, focused mainly on the Tourism Satellite Accounts (TSAs) and the Accommodation Kit developed by UNWTO as a preliminary attempt to solve the data problems about tourism.

Within this framework, the participants exchanged views and emphasized the need and importance of sharing country-wise experiences in the tourism statistics field, especially about the transition and implementation process of TSAs in various OIC countries.

Throughout the discussions, a deep interest was expressed on the continuation of these workshops for the benefit of the concerned staff in member countries. In this context, a Tourism Statistics Workshop email group (tsw@sesric.org) was formed as a basic platform of coordination in the future.

After the last session on 18 June 2008, the participants were invited to the SESRIC headquarters and briefed about the activities and future plans of the Centre.

The participants expressed their satisfaction with the workshop and thanked SESRIC for organising the training course.

## OIC NEWS

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### THE 35<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS (CFM)

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The 35th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) was held on 18-20 June 2008 in Kampala, the capital city of Uganda and was attended by representatives from 53 Member States, the General Secretariat of the OIC and its subsidiary, specialised and affiliated institutions. Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General of the SESRIC, represented the Centre thereat.

In the Opening Session, His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the President of the Republic of Uganda, addressed the Meeting. This address was followed by a

speech of His Excellency Mr. Makhdoom Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Chairman of the 34th ICFM.

During the opening session, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, began his address by thanking H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda for hosting the 35th Session of the CFM and for gracing the opening ceremony of the meeting with his personal presence. He stated that the reform of the OIC had taken roots by the adoption of the

Charter which had heralded a new dawn for the Organization. He, therefore, appealed to Member States to urgently sign the news Charter. He further spoke of the rising profile of the Organization and pointed out that the Organization had emerged as an indispensable international player.

Elaborating on the need to strengthen intra-OIC cooperation, he identified the Ten Year Programme of Action as a key framework for achieving sustainable economic and social development. He strongly emphasized the commitment of the OIC in addressing poverty alleviation, food security and agricultural development in its Member States, and for combating the issue of defamation of Islam and the scourge of Islamophobia.

The Meeting then unanimously elected H.E. Hon. Sam Kutesa, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uganda, as Chairman of the 35th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers. It also approved the composition of the Bureau as follows: Islamic Republic of Iran, Syrian Arab Republic and the State of Palestine as Vice-Chairs, and Islamic Republic of Pakistan as Rapporteur.

The Council adopted the report of the preparatory Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) for the current session, held in Jeddah from 17 to 19 May 2008. It also adopted the Draft Agenda and Work Program submitted to it by the SOM as well as the reports of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Social and Cultural Affairs.

Guided by the Final Communiqué of the 11th Summit held in March 2008 in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, a wide range of issues of interest to Member States were discussed including the situation in Kosovo. The Council has adopted various resolutions, inter alia, in the following areas:

The Cause of Palestine, the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the Arab –Israeli Conflict, the Implementation of the OIC Ten Year Programme of Action, the Situation in Iraq, the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute, the Peace Process between India and Pakistan, the Situation in Somalia, Solidarity with the Republic of the Sudan, the Situation in Cyprus, Aggression of the Republic of Armenia against the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Situation in Afghanistan, the Situation in Cote D'Ivoire, Assistance to the Union of Comoros, Combating International Terrorism, Combating Islamophobia and raising awareness of its implications on global peace and security, Rejection of the Unilateral US Sanctions imposed on the Syrian Arab Republic, Imposition of Unilateral Economic Sanctions on Member States Negative impact of economic and financial sanctions on the full enjoyment of Human Rights by people of the targeted country, Right of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya to Reparation for the Losses Caused by the 1986 American Military Aggression, Lifting of sanctions against the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, United Nations Reform, Disarmament issues, Cooperation by the Islamic Republic of Iran with IAEA, Security and Solidarity among Member States, Situation at the border between Djibouti and Eritrea, Questions of Muslim Communities and Minorities, Legal and Organic Information, Cultural, economic, Science and technology, and Administrative and Financial Affairs.

The Council decided to hold the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) in the Arab Republic of Syria in the second half of May 2009. It also took note of the proposal made by Tajikistan to host the 37<sup>th</sup> CFM Session in Dushanbe, in 2010. The Council further supported the proposal of

the Republic of Kazakhstan to host the 38th CFM in 2011 in Astana.

On behalf of all the participants, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the OIC, addressed his thanks to H.E.

Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda, for hosting the CFM and for the facilities extended to the delegates, which highly contributed to the success of its 35<sup>th</sup> Session.

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## **THE 31<sup>ST</sup> SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (ICECS)**

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The 31<sup>st</sup> Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs of the OIC was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 20-21 May 2008 with the participation of delegates from various member states and representatives of the OIC General Secretariat and its subsidiary, specialised and affiliated organs.

The Commission convened first in its capacity as the Joint General Assembly of the OIC subsidiary organs. As such, it reviewed the activities of these organs during the elapsed year and commended their efforts to strengthen economic cooperation among the member states, in particular their follow-up and implementation of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action.

The Commission then took up its technical agenda whereby it reviewed and discussed a number of issues of concern to the member states on the economic activities related to the implementation of the Ten-Year Programme of Action, to the implementation of the decisions of the COMCEC, to the Economic Assistance to the Member States and Non-OIC Countries and Muslim Communities. The Commission also reviewed and focussed on activities related to other Ministerial Conferences and Fora in the economic sectors, on “Sustainable

Tourism Development in a Cross-border Network and Protected Areas in West Africa”, on the development of International Halal Standards, on the food security of the OIC Member States and finally on the new economic partnership of the Ummah. In this connection, the Centre presented two technical reports on prominent issues of interest and concern to the OIC countries, namely 1) Annual Economic Report on the OIC Countries 2007 and 2) Economic Problems of the Least-developed and Landlocked OIC Countries 2007. The commission expressed its appreciation of the work accomplished by the SESRIC and encouraged it to continue with its outstanding performance.

The agenda included other important issues of concern related to affairs and matters on Science and Technology, higher education, environment, on the role and activities of the OIC institutions in the Promotion of Science and Technology in the OIC Member Countries, on the role and activities of the OIC Universities in the promotion of higher education in the OIC Member Countries.

After the deliberations, the Commission adopted the draft resolutions on economic affairs, science and technology, cultural and social affairs and Dawa activities for submission to the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

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## **THE 3<sup>RD</sup> COORDINATION MEETING OF HEADS OF SUBSIDIARY ORGANS, SPECIALISED AND AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OIC TEN-YEAR PROGRAMME OF ACTION**

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Within the framework of the implementation of the OIC Ten-year Programme of Action, adopted by the 3rd extraordinary Islamic Summit, the OIC General Secretariat organised a meeting of the heads of the OIC subsidiary organs, specialised and affiliated institutions in order to follow up the implementation of this Programme.

The meeting was held on the sidelines of the 31st Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs on 22nd May 2008 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It was chaired by H.E Prof Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Secretary General of the OIC and attended by all heads of the OIC institutions and executive staff of the General Secretariat.

In the opening session, statements have been made by H.E Prof Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Secretary General of the OIC and some of the heads of OIC institutions. In his statement, the Secretary General noted with satisfaction the special interest that the OIC institutions are showing to the implementation of the Ten-year Programme

of Action and requested all the OIC institutions to pursue their efforts in carrying out the implementation of the said programme.

Following the opening session, the participants discussed the progress and the planned actions for the implementation of the various provisions of the Programme of Action. During the discussion, Dr. Savas Alpay, the Director General of the Centre briefed the meeting on the Centre's activities concerning the implementation of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action.

The Meeting took note of the significant importance of analysing the implications of the global food crisis in the OIC Member States. It also welcomed the initiative of the Secretary General to organise the Food and Agriculture Ministers Meeting of the OIC to address the issue of food security and food production. It requested the OIC institutions, in particular SESRIC, IDB and ICDT to contribute in the organisation of the Food and Agriculture Ministers Meeting.

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## **REVIEW MEETING OF THE TRADE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE (TNC) OF TPS - OIC**

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The Review Meeting of the Trade Negotiating Committee was held in Ankara from the 17th to the 19th of June 2008 with the participation of delegates from 16 countries of the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC), with 7 OIC member countries attending the meeting as observers. The SESRIC represented the OIC General Secretariat, and representatives of the COMCEC Coordination Office, ICDT, IDB,

SESRIC and WAEMU also attended the meeting. The Meeting was chaired by Mrs. Ulker Güzel, Deputy Undersecretary of Foreign Trade of the Republic of Turkey.

In the opening session of the meeting, the message of H.E. Kursad Tuzmen, Minister of State, in charge of Foreign Trade in the Republic of Turkey was read out by Mr. Attila Kizilarslan, Head of Department, Directorate General of Agreements,

Undersecretariat of Foreign Trade of the Republic of Turkey. Mr. Halil Ibrahim Akca, Acting Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization of Turkey presented an inaugural statement. The message of H.E. Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the OIC was read out by Mr. Nabil Dabour, Senior Researcher and Acting Director of the Research Department at SESRIC. The meeting was then addressed by heads of delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In the working session, the TNC adopted the agenda and the work program of the meeting. A presentation was made by the TNC Secretariat on the background and the working programme of the TNC prior to the target date of 1st January 2009. The Secretariat stated the necessity of the ratification of the PRETAS and the Rules of Origin before the end of 2008 if the target date of January 2009 to establish the TPS-OIC is to be adequately met. The Undersecretariat of Customs of the Republic of Turkey made a presentation giving information about the actions needed for the implementation of the TPS-OIC Rules of Origin. The Committee also laid focus on the necessity of a unified interpretation of the TPS-OIC Agreements. In this context, ICDT, in collaboration with the COMCEC Coordination Office, was requested by the Committee to prepare explanatory notes on the issue of a unified interpretation and to circulate these notes among the OIC member. ICDT was also requested to continue organizing workshops in collaboration with the IDB and the ICCI. The Committee stated that the concessions list of countries should be prepared and submitted to the Secretariat so as to be ready for circulation when the TPS-OIC enters into

force. The Committee also stated that it is important to circulate the concessions lists all at the same time. The Committee further pointed out that, necessary arrangements should be made at the custom offices of the member states to allow the smooth and speedy movement of goods when the TPS-OIC becomes operational.

Regarding the products that will be subject to tariff reduction as stated in Article 3 of the PRETAS, except Bangladesh, Jordan and Libya which stated that they would report their decision on the matter later, the majority of the countries expressed their views in favor of adopting an 8 digit level HS codes. In case there is no reply from the three mentioned countries within the following two months from the date of the end of the review meeting, the 8 digit level will be accepted. For appropriate circulation of information related to the TPS-OIC Agreements, the member countries were requested to exploit information through the Trade Information Network among OIC member Countries (TINIC).

The Committee welcomed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as a new member of the TNC. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed the PRETAS and the Republic of Turkey ratified the PRETAS. Several countries stated their intention to sign the PRETAS and TPS-OIC Rules of Origin prior to or before the 24th Session of the COMCEC.

The Committee adopted the report and annexes of the Review Meeting of the Trade Negotiating Committee (TNC) of TPS-OIC. The participating states expressed their gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey and the TNC Secretariat for a successful meeting.



The Sixth Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) was held in Damascus, Syrian Arab Republic, on 29 June - 2 July 2008. It was preceded by a two-day Meeting of the Senior Officials on 29-30 June. Representatives from 32 member countries, the World Tourism Organisation (WTO), the Arab Tourism Organisation, Iran Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organisation, the General Secretariat of the OIC and its subsidiary, specialised and affiliated institutions attended the Conference. Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General, and Mr. Nabil Dabour, Acting Director of Research Department, represented the Centre at the Conference.

After adopting the Agenda and the Work Programme of their meeting, the Senior Officials reviewed and discussed the progress achieved in the implementation of the resolutions and decisions of the 5th Session of the ICTM, which was held in Baku on 9-12 September 2006. They also reviewed and discussed a set of common issues of concern to the member countries with a view to enhancing their cooperation in the field of tourism.

The representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Republic of Indonesia and Malaysia made their respective presentations prepared for the Conference on three main themes of Tourism Research and Training, Tourism Facilitation and Tourism Marketing, respectively. Meanwhile, the representatives of the IRCICA, SESRIC, ICDT, IDB, ISESCO and ICCI also made their respective presentations on the background reports prepared for the Conference. The representatives of Bangladesh, Senegal, Turkey, Syria, Palestine, Malaysia and Egypt made country presentations on tourism activities in their respective countries.

Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General of the Centre, made a statement at the Senior Officials' Meeting, in which he highlighted the activities of the Centre in the areas of

statistics, research and training related to the tourism sector in the OIC countries. In particular, he mentioned the latest version of the Report titled "International Tourism in the OIC countries: Prospects and Challenges", which has been recently prepared by the Centre in a new format. He also mentioned the recently organised training workshop on tourism statistics by the Centre in Ankara on 16-18 June 2008, in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish Statistical Institute and the World Tourism Organisation (UN WTO).

Following the Statement of the Director General, Mr. Nabil Dabour, Acting Director of the Research Department, presented the Report entitled "International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges". The Report assesses the performance and the economic role of the international tourism sector in the OIC member countries. It employs the traditionally used indicators in measuring international tourism (i.e. international tourist arrivals and international tourism receipts). The analysis is made at both the individual country and the OIC regional levels. The Report also sheds light on some issues and problems of tourism development and cooperation in the OIC countries, and proposes a set of recommendations to serve as policy guidelines to which the attention of the member countries needs to be drawn.

During the Meeting, the Senior Officials examined the Strategic Plan for Development of Tourism in OIC Member States, which was developed by the OIC Second Experts Group Meeting on Tourism Development, held in May 2007 in Istanbul. The Meeting approved the document with amendments and by changing its title as "Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States". It also approved the Draft Resolution on Tourism Development. The Senior Officials also examined and approved the Draft Agenda

and Work Programme of the Ministerial Sessions of the 5th ICTM.

After adopting its own Agenda and Work Programme, the Ministers considered and adopted the report of the Senior Officials, the Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States and the Draft Resolution on Tourism Development. In the general debate, statements were made by representatives of several member countries and the Conference took note of a number of issues and proposals raised during the discussion concerning the ways and means of strengthening cooperation among OIC countries in this vital field of economic and

social activity. They also welcomed the offer of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the Seventh Session of the ICTM in 2010.

In their Resolution on Tourism Development, the Ministers of Tourism paid tribute to the SESRIC for its valuable contributions to the sessions the ICTM and various OIC experts group meetings and seminars on tourism, and entrusted it with the task of following-up the developments in this sector and reporting thereon to their next Session.

## **OTHER MEETINGS**

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### **THE 24<sup>TH</sup> GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING AND 5TH BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING OF THE ICCI**

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The 24th Session of the General Assembly of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the 5th Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Chamber was held on 24 April 2008 in Jeddah 2008.

H.E Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, governor of Makkah province, patronized the opening ceremony of the 24th General Assembly of the ICCI. He was received by H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

In a statement he delivered at the opening Session of the 24th Session of the General Assembly, the Secretary-General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, stated that the 11th Islamic Summit Conference held in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, gave a prominent place to the economic issues in view of the important role played by the economic dimension in joint Islamic Action in the advancement of the Ummah in the area of human development. In his statement, the

Secretary-General commended the efforts made by the ICCI in this regard and reiterated his full support for the ICCI Board of Directors. In conclusion, of his statement, the Secretary-General mentioned that the government of Uganda would host an OIC Business Forum on 16-17 June 2008 prior to the 35th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

At the meeting, the Chairman of the board of directors of the ICCI, H.E. Saleh Kamel, announced that there were two parts of Islamic heritage they wanted to revive: Zakah (Islamic taxation) and Waqf (endowments), which he called an essential Islamic institution. The Chairman added that they had established a number of endowment offices in North and West Africa.

The Chairman also called on Businessmen to provide more support for the chamber saying that executives view the chamber as

charity and not as an investment opportunity.

Following a general deliberation on various issues, the Members spoke of the importance of investing in crops due to the world food shortage and boosting their imports in the world market to new levels.

The Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) announced the establishment of International Zakah Commission and Waqf (endowments) Commission.

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## **THE 33<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (IDB)**

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The 33rd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors for the Islamic Development Bank Group concluded its sessions in Jeddah, with the major announcement of the Jeddah Declaration launch, which aims to allocate a sum of money to support efforts to meet immediate, medium and long term food crisis in its least developed member countries (LDMCs), through programs that will benefit other members as well.

Twenty-six least developed Muslim countries including Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Palestine, Senegal, Sudan and Yemen would benefit from the landmark food initiative of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group that was announced.

IDB President, Dr. Ahmed Muhammad Ali made the announcement while addressing a press conference at the conclusion of the three-day annual conference of IDB's Board of Governors at Jeddah Hilton. Finance, economy, planning and agriculture ministers of 56 countries attended the Conference.

The IDB initiative is significant as many Muslim countries, especially those in Africa,

have been hit by an unprecedented food crisis as a result of growing commodity prices including rice and other foodstuff. Under the five-year initiative, the IDB would give soft loans to member countries to increase their agricultural production and make adequate stock of food grains.

Other beneficiaries of the initiative are: Uganda, Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Togo, Gambia, Djibouti, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Comoros Islands, Kyrgyzstan, Cameroon, Maldives, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique and Niger. The IDB President hoped that the bank could attract more funds from the market to meet the growing development requirements in the Muslim world.

The IDB Group Board of the Governors has approved that the 37th Annual Meeting of the Board will be hosted in Sudan pending approval on location and timing in cooperation with the authorities in Sudan. The upcoming 34th Annual Meeting for the Board of Governors will be hosted in the city of Ashgabat in Turkmenistan.

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## **ABCDE CONFERENCE 2008, WORLD BANK**

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One of the world's best known series of conferences on development, the Annual Bank Conference on Development Economics Conference took place at the

International Convention Centre in Cape Town (South Africa) on 9-11 June 2008. It was jointly organized by the World Bank and the National Treasury of South Africa.

Many participants from the OIC Member Countries attended the Conference.

Prominent speakers such as the Nobel Prize Economics Laureate and the Chair of the World Bank's Commission on Growth Michael Spence gave a speech on how The United States and European Union made it more attractive for their farmers to plant crops for fuel instead of for food. He added that as a result of this, the food supply had decreased and did not meet the demand, which resulted in higher food prices. He added that developing countries, African states included, are hardest hit by the food crisis. According to Spence, people in poor countries use a large part of their household income on food, which make them the prime victims. But he emphasised that the situation

was not all doom and gloom for there was a huge opportunity for Africa, a resource-rich compared with other parts of the world. He concluded that the wealth could be invested in and used for programmes that promote job creation and boost agricultural production.

The Conference held the title of "People, Politics & Globalization", focusing on three broad themes:

- Globalization, Investment and Growth
- Human Development for Equitable Growth
- The Political Economy of Shared Growth

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## THE 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

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11th Annual Conference on Global Economic Analysis was held on 12-14 June, 2008 at Marina Congress Centre, Helsinki, Finland, with the theme "Future of Global Economy". The goal of the conference was to promote the exchange of ideas among economists conducting quantitative analysis of global economic issues.

The themes of the Eleventh Annual Conference were:

- Globalization and economies in transition;
- Development, poverty and vulnerability;

- Energy and environment; and
- Wealth, aging and income distribution

The SESRIC staff prepared a paper to be presented in this Conference, titled as "South – East Asian Integration in the Context of the OIC : Implications of Free Trade among Malaysia, Indonesia and Bangladesh". The paper looks into the likely consequences of an economic integration among three OIC member countries. This could be seen as a first step to investigate the possible gains from more comprehensive economic integration initiative including all members of the OIC.

## UPCOMING EVENTS FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2008

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### JULY

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- First Symposium on Muslim Communities and Minorities in East and Southeast Asia, July 4-6, 2008, Seoul, Republic of Korea
  - Regional Workshop on DevInfo, July 7-10, 2008, Beirut, Lebanon
  - OIC-UN Biennial General Cooperation Meeting, July 8-10, 2008, Geneva, Switzerland
  - 30th Executive Committee and 22nd General Assembly Meetings of OISA, July 8-10, 2008, Dubai, United Arab Emirates
  - First Meeting of the Committee on the Dakar-Port Sudan Railways Line Project, July, 19-20, 2008, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
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### AUGUST

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- World Health Organisation (WHO) E-Health Conference, August 3-8, 2008, Italy
  - The Sixth Meeting of the OIC SME Task Force, August 14-17, 2008, Bangkok, Thailand
  - Asia Microfinance Forum, August 26-29, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam
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### SEPTEMBER

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- 19th Meeting of the Board of Trustees of the AIC, September 6, 2008, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia
- UN General Assembly, 63rd Session, September 6, 2008, New York, the United States of America
- Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) Meeting, September 10-12, 2008, Tunisia