



TJARIS



INTRA-OIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT MAGAZINE

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SPECIAL ISSUE: ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT



The 47th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)



Women Economic Empowerment in OIC Countries

ICDT: More than 35 Years at the Service of Trade and Investments Promotion among the OIC Member States

ICDT, established in Casablanca since 1984, is the Subsidiary Organ of the OIC entrusted with the mission of promoting Trade & Investments in OIC Countries. Its activities revolve around the following axes:



Trade Promotion

- To encourage regular trade exchanges within the OIC Region;
- To Promote production in OIC Countries by regularly organizing the OIC Member States' Fairs (TFOIC) and Trade Exhibitions;
- To help Member States set up and organize Export Promotion Centres;
- To extend advisory and expertise services to Member States in the field of trade promotion.

Trade Information

- To collect and disseminate trade information;
- To develop trade databases and facilitate their remote access;
- To help Member States establish and organize documentation and information centres and trade information networks.

Investment Promotion

- To encourage Intra-OIC Investment;
- To promote foreign investment in OIC Member States;
- To encourage partnerships between economic operators in OIC Member States;
- To extend consultancy and expert services to Member States in the area of investment promotion, particularly, export-oriented investment.

Training

- To organize seminars and training workshops;
- To help Member States establish expert groups in the various field of international trade promotion.

International Trade Negotiations

- To assist Member States in trade negotiations;
- To prepare and organize intra-OIC negotiations;

Studies and Research

- To publish an Annual Report on Intra-OIC Trade;
- To undertake market research and sector studies;
- To examine ways and means likely to alleviate obstacles to trade among Member States.

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MESSAGE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICDT

Madam Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director General of ICDT, took office in February 2020. She was before Director of the international trade relations at the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Green and Digital Economy of the Kingdom of Morocco.



The year 2020 was marked by the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacted the health, economic and financial systems, including production and employment in several priority sectors of the OIC Member Countries such as tourism, air transport, agri-food and oil.

Since the advent of the pandemic, OIC Member States have shown a great fraternity towards the countries in need by providing them with essential medical and protection products and by developing corridors to facilitate the transport of food so as to avoid market shortage. The OIC and its institutions have also deployed considerable financial efforts and have taken urgent initiatives to help the Member Countries in need.

To measure the effects of the pandemic in the OIC Member Countries, ICDT conducted a study on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on intra-OIC trade and investment. ICDT also organized a series of webinars on the occasion of which experts from regional and international agencies discussed the impact of the pandemic on trade financing, regional integration, trade promotion strategies, investment and export credit insurance, digitalization of business procedures and of the certification of protective medical equipment, and food products in OIC Member Countries.

During these meetings, the experts stressed both the slowdown effects on trade financing and the food and medical supplies shortage in some OIC Countries. On the other hand, they commended the emergence of some sectors such as digitalization, in particular, e-commerce, which has known a very significant growth during the pandemic.

These webinars allowed to identify the actions to be undertaken so as to accompany Member States, and notably SMEs, to face the economic crisis' effects caused by the covid-19 pandemic.

ICDT, with the collaboration of regional and international partners, will support and accompany the OIC Member States in such a transitional phase with the aim to revitalize trade and promote intra-OIC investments. ▢

Latifa Elbouabdellaoui

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OIC NEWS IN BRIEF

«United against Terrorism for Peace and Development»

Theme of the 47th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers

Niamey, 27 - 28 November 2020

Opened by His Excellency Mr. Mahamadou Issoufou, President of the Republic of Niger, the 47th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was held in Niamey, the capital of the Republic of Niger, on 27-28 November 2020, under the theme: “United against Terrorism for Peace and Development”.



The Council's agenda covered topics and issues of concern to the Muslim world, namely, the Palestinian cause, the fight against violence, extremism and terrorism, Islamophobia and defamation of religion.

The Council also discussed the situation of Muslim minorities and communities in non-member states, and the promotion of dialogue among civilizations, cultures and religions, in addition to other emerging matters.

Discussions were also extended to political, humanitarian, economic, social, cultural and other issues related to science and technology, the media and the progress made in the implementation of the “OIC-2025:

Plan of Action” document.

In his speech, H.E. Dr. Al-Othaimeen emphasized that the choice of the theme for the session, “United against Terrorism for Peace and Development”, is a strong reminder that “terrorism is the single most serious threat to the region and the world, given its

negative impact on growth rates and cooperation ties, in addition to worsening Human Development Indices (HDI) ranking.” He also valued the role assigned to the OIC Sawt al-Hikma (Voice of Wisdom) Center, which acts in coordination with the International Islamic Fiqh Academy to bring reason to bear and promote modera-

THE 47TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) WAS HELD IN NIAMEY, THE CAPITAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF NIGER, ON 27-28 NOVEMBER 2020, UNDER THE THEME: “UNITED AGAINST TERRORISM FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT”.

tion and tolerance.

A brainstorming session on Security and Humanitarian Challenges confronting African Sahel States Members of the OIC was featured on this occasion. The session was marked by the speech delivered by Mr. Kalla Ankourao, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation, African Integration and Nigeriens Abroad, who presided over the session, with the participation of ministers and heads of delegations of the Member States.

In their interventions, the participants renewed their condemnation of all forms of terrorism and extremism, exchanged views on ways and means to combat terrorism and stressed the importance of adopting preventive policies to curb the spread of terrorist groups. Appreciation was extended to the states which provided humanitarian aid to the Sahel countries to strengthen their capabilities in this area. The meeting urged further strengthening of cooperation among the Member States for the benefit of the Sahel region, in order to implement programs and plans aimed at addressing this phenomenon. The role of the Islamic Development Bank Group in providing aid to the countries of the region was also commended.

With regard to the Covid-19 pandemic, it should be emphasized that the holding of the 47th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers was an ideal

opportunity to call for more solidarity among the Islamic populations so as to overcome the repercussions of this pandemic, commending the crucial role that the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and its various bodies play with a view to overcoming the current challenges.

It should be noted that on this occasion, His Excellency Mr. Hussein Brahim Taha, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Chad, was

unanimously appointed as the new Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for a five-year term that will begin on 17 November 2021.

The Council concluded its proceedings by accepting the offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 48th session of the CMAE in 2021, while noting that the Islamic Republic of Mauritania has proposed to host the 49th CMAE Session.

□



A BRAINSTORMING SESSION ON SECURITY AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES CONFRONTING AFRICAN SAHEL STATES MEMBERS OF THE OIC WAS FEATURED ON THIS OCCASION.

The OIC, the United Nations and other International Organizations strengthen partnership to mitigate the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic

New York, 23 November 2020

His Excellency the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Dr. Yousef A. Al-Othaimeen, participated in the virtual meeting of the High-Level Interactive Dialogue held by in New York by the United Nations Secretary General, Mr. António Guterres, with the heads of regional and other organizations, on 23rd November 2020.

The meeting focused on the need to strengthen the collective response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and to find ways to mitigate its impact on peace and security, combating terrorism, human rights and the other aspects of life.

In his speech, H.E. Al-Othaimeen welcomed the United Nations Secretary General's call for a global ceasefire, and referred to the urgent appeal made by the OIC Secretariat General to all parties to conflicts in the geographical areas of the OIC Member States in order to establish an immediate ceasefire, stop violence, protect their people,



preserve lives and focus their attention on combating and preventing the spread of the Coronavirus, while seeking peaceful solutions to conflicts.

H.E. Dr. Al-Othaimeen expressed the OIC's readiness to strengthen its partnership with the United Nations and other regional organizations to support the values of multilateralism,

THE MEETING FOCUSED ON THE NEED TO STRENGTHEN THE COLLECTIVE RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AND TO FIND WAYS TO MITIGATE ITS IMPACT ON PEACE AND SECURITY, COMBATING TERRORISM, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE OTHER ASPECTS OF LIFE.

international cooperation and solidarity in combating the pandemic and facing global challenges to peace, security and development. □



The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest Organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among the various people of the world.

The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, on 12th Rajab 1389 Hijra (25 September 1969) following the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem.

In 1970 the first ever meeting of Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister (ICFM) was held in Jeddah which decided to establish a permanent secretariat in Jeddah headed by the Organization's Secretary General. Dr. Yousef Ahmed Al-Othaimeen is the 11th Secretary General who assumed the office in November 2016.

The first OIC Charter was adopted by the 3rd ICFM Session held in 1972. The Charter laid down the objectives and principles of the Organization and fundamental purposes to strengthen the solidarity and cooperation among the Member States. Over the last 40 years, the membership has grown from its founding members of 30 to 57 states. The Charter was amended to keep pace with the developments that have unraveled across the world. The present Charter of the OIC was adopted by the Eleventh Islamic Summit held in Dakar on 13-14 March 2008 to become the pillar of the OIC future Islamic action in line with the requirements of the 21st century.

COVER STORY

Women Economic Empowerment in OIC Countries



In a modern society where more and more women support their families, empowering women economically has become critically important to achieve sustainable economic growth worldwide.

According to a recent study, the share of women-owned businesses in international trade is around 20%. Although this is highly encouraging women-owned businesses, particularly, SMEs, or the informal sector, women have not reached their full potential because of their limited access to education and training opportunities, combined to the lack of financial support and legal constraints.

The Covid-19 pandemic disrupted in an unprecedented way, impacting the health, economic and financial systems. Accordingly, one fifth of SMEs were risking a permanent shutting down within the three months

following the pandemic. A survey indicates that 64% of women-led businesses declared their business operations as strongly affected by the crisis, while 25% of informal enterprises feared bankruptcy.

In response to the crisis, most governments are implementing programs to alleviate the negative effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on their economies, while addressing issues relating to the health crisis.

As concerns the recovery measures taken to the benefit of women entrepreneurs, some governments elaborated several programs aiming at :⁽¹⁾ Improving education, training opportunities and developing digital skills for women; ⁽²⁾ Creating new gender-responsive trade and government policies (i.e quotas) to provide new opportunities to women as employees and entrepreneurs; ⁽³⁾ Providing

government grants to startups created by women and facilitating access to direct financial support; ⁽⁴⁾ Seeking more equality in all economy sectors; ⁽⁵⁾ Conducting awareness-raising campaigns aiming at involving men and boys in household and family duties to enable women develop their activities, which will help them to achieve their economic independence; ⁽⁶⁾ Putting women entrepreneurs at the heart of the Covid-19 recovery plans.

As concerns the Covid-19 pandemic's impact on OIC Countries, the recent webinars organized by ICDT revealed that it mostly affected the sectors of tourism, air transport, oil, logistics and agri-food, while digitalization, and more particularly, the e-commerce sector, has on the contrary experienced a significant growth.

The experts who took part in these webinars also indicated that the OIC's SMEs are in need of urgent support from governments and financial institutions, especially, in developing countries, like Nigeria, where about 36% of MSMEs are said to be partially or fully owned by women.

In recent years, the OIC has made women empowerment a top priority and has paved the

way for the elaboration of the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW). Along the way, many OIC Countries have established dedicated institutions and programs to address more effectively the challenges relating to women economic empowerment and related issues such as family structure.

Besides, OIC ministerial conferences, experts meetings, work-shops, and consultative meetings helped policy-makers to identify cooperation opportunities within the OIC group and served as platforms for exchange of views and the best-practices sharing on gender related issues.

To contribute to the implementation of the OPAAW, ICDDT and WIEF Malaysia have launched a joint training program on E-Commerce for the benefit of OIC Women Entrepreneurs. This four days training program aims at assisting the recipients in creating their websites, while providing them with the latest online marketing tools to expand their businesses internationally.

ICDDT has already organized regional and national training sessions in Morocco, Senegal, Jordan, Guinea, Gabon and Côte d'Ivoire. Consequently, and owing to the success of this program, the Centre has received several requests for the organization of this training session in other OIC Countries.



It is worth mentioning that, ICDDT organizes each year several trade events such as trade fairs, specialized exhibitions, training seminars, forums and conferences that highly contribute to the promotion and development of women-led businesses.

To alleviate the negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women entrepreneurship in OIC Countries, ICDDT plans to implement the following activities :

- organization of a specialized fair and a buyers/sellers meeting dedicated to women entrepreneurs' products and services;
- organization of an investment forum on the products commercialized by women-led cooperatives in OIC Countries;
- conduct of a study on the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on women-led businesses in OIC Countries, the findings of which

will enable our Governments and Institutions to elaborate tailored policies and programs that will accelerate the development of Women-led businesses.

To conclude, we believe that it is crucial to put OIC women entrepreneurs at the center of our policies and programs to achieve the rapid recovery of our economies and build resilience to face upcoming crisis. The upcoming 8th Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in the Development of OIC Member States, to be held in Cairo, will be an opportunity for elaborating the guidelines which will allow to achieve such an objective. □

Source :

- ITC Report « Covid-19 : The great lockdown and its impact on small business, SME Competitiveness Outlook 2020 »

OUR ACTIVITIES

Virtual training workshop on WTO Agricultural Negotiations and their Impact on agricultural products trade among the OIC Member States

Casablanca, 26th - 28th October 2020

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Country Strategy and Cooperation Department of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Industry, Trade, Green and Digital Economy of the Kingdom of Morocco, a Virtual Training Workshop on “WTO Agricultural Negotiations and their Impact on Agricultural Products Trade among OIC Member States” in Casablanca on 26th-28th October 2020 via Zoom Platform.

The workshop aimed to: (a) contribute to the capacity building of the OIC Member States’ Negotiators and Managers operating in the field of trade negotiations and the agreements related to agricultural products; (b) learn about the recent developments in agricultural trade negotiations; (c) share national experiences in the field of negotiations and the technical and financial assistance provided by regional and international institutions; and (d) promote intra-OIC trade and investment in the OIC Zone.



THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT) AND THE COUNTRY STRATEGY AND COOPERATION DEPARTMENT OF THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (ISDB) ORGANIZED IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY, TRADE, GREEN AND DIGITAL ECONOMY OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO, A VIRTUAL TRAINING WORKSHOP ON “WTO AGRICULTURAL NEGOTIATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS TRADE AMONG OIC MEMBER STATES” IN CASABLANCA ON 26TH-28TH OCTOBER 2020.

After the presentation of the workshop axes, Mrs. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director General of ICDT and her guests, namely, Mr. Mohamed Benjelloun, Director of Multilateral Commercial Relations and Re-

presentative of the Minister of Industry, Trade, Green and Digital Economy of the Kingdom of Morocco and Mr. Syed Hussain Quadri, Director of the Country Strategy and Cooperation Department of the IsDB, while

taking the floor, underlined the importance of both the market and the trade negotiations in agricultural products, as well as their impacts on the development of intra- OIC Trade and Investments.

They also emphasized the importance of the development of regional agricultural product value chains in the programs set by governments and the regional and international institutions with a view to avoiding food insecurity and eradicating poverty in OIC Member Countries. The Speakers also recom-

mended, among others, that OIC Member States should actively participate in agricultural trade negotiations at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels in collaboration with the private sector and that the Member States in need should be granted technical and financial assistance from regional and international organizations.

The themes tackled on this occasion related mainly to: (1) the WTO agricultural negotiations: state of progress and regional impacts; (2) the impact of the green box subsidies; (3) the

safeguard measures; (4) the public foodstuffs stocks; (5) the Countries' commitments while acceding the WTO; (6) the provisions of intellectual property, e-commerce, public procurement and investments in agricultural products; (7) the OIC Member Countries' experiences as regards agriculture negotiations (Malaysia, Morocco, Tunisia, Bangladesh, Nigeria, Turkey, Senegal); (8) the technical and financial assistance provided by OIC Institutions and other International partners for the benefit of Member States. □



THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

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OUR ACTIVITIES

Virtual meeting between ICDT and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture

Casablanca, 28 december 2020

To make the private sector at the centre of ICDT's activities was the focus of the virtual meeting that Mrs. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director General of ICDT, held with Mr. Yousef Hasan Khalawi, Secretary General of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) on 28 December 2020 with delegations of both institutions.

Relying on the large experience of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA) at the service of the private sector, ICDT intends to get ICCIA involved with the Centre's activities so as to be able to benefit from ICCIA's experience and raise to the private sector's expectations.

The importance of ICCIA acceding to the Sub-Committee on Trade and Investment (TISC) as a full member seems to be beneficial as it will make the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture respond adequately to the private sector's interest in Islamic Countries.

So as to create a close cooperation relationship between ICDT and ICCIA, other mee-

tings will be held to support the development of the private sector in Islamic countries through the organization of activities that are likely to meet the needs of the economic operators and target new emerging and priority sectors such as Halal and plastic in-

dustry sectors.

Such a cooperation relationship will certainly be fruitful as it translates both managers' wish to tackle other issues of common interest as the setting up of arbitration centres in OIC Countries. ▢

**TO MAKE THE PRIVATE SECTOR
AT THE CENTRE OF ICDT'S ACTI-
VITIES WAS THE FOCUS OF THE
VIRTUAL MEETING THAT MRS.
LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, DI-
RECTOR GENERAL OF ICDT, HELD
WITH MR. YOUSEF HASAN KHA-
LAWI, SECRETARY GENERAL OF
THE ISLAMIC CHAMBER OF COM-
MERCE, INDUSTRY AND AGRICUL-
TURE (ICCIA) ON 28 DECEMBER
2020 WITH DELEGATIONS OF
BOTH INSTITUTIONS.**

Virtual Forum and Exhibition of Arab-African OIC Member States on Agri-Food Products

February, 23rd-25th, 2021

ICDT will co-organize with the BA-DEA a virtual Forum and Exhibition of Arab-African OIC Members on Agri-Food Products, from February 23rd to 25th, 2021.

These events will be organized within the framework of boosting cooperation and technical and financial assistance with a view to promoting trade and investment between OIC Countries as regards the agri-food industries sector.

In view of the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic which led to the cancellation of the physical holding of fairs, the organization of such activities falls within the Ten-Year Plan of Action of the OIC 2016/2025 adopted by the 13th Islamic Summit held in Istanbul in April 2016. They also fall within the relevant Resolutions of the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC held in Abu Dhabi in March 2019; as well as within the COMCEC resolutions which aim to increase trade in goods and services and promote investments between OIC Countries with a view to increasing the share of intra-OIC trade in the global trade to 25% by 2025.

The events are also part of the BADEA 2030 strategy and its five-year plan 2020-2024 based on axes aiming at strengthening economic and commercial cooperation between OIC Arab and African Countries, which are as follows: the private sector; trade infrastructure; SMEs; women and youth entrepreneurship; agricultural value chain development; and capacity building.

This forum will gather businessmen from the Arab and African region and will be held in conjunction with interactive B2B meetings and a virtual exhibition on agri-food products and services. The events will enable OIC African and Arab agriculturists not only to promote their products and services, mainly, food products, beverages, supply, packaging, transporters, distributors, investors etc., but, also to establish business partnerships and share experiences in food technology and innovation.

Such events aim at seeking new customers and joint venture investors. They also tend to present exportable supply, market potential and food marketing channels between African and Arab countries, helping thus to overwhelm food insecurity in the OIC Arab and African Countries.

To exchange food production and processing experiences according to the new industry technologies is another objective of the virtual forum and exhibition, which will be an opportunity for presenting food industry «success stories» in the OIC Arab and African zone.

Agri-food industries' operators

are highly interested in overcoming the obstacles to the industrial development of food products in both regions (tariff barriers and non-tariff barriers), and are expecting the mutual recognition of the agri-food production standards by the Standards Institutes in the OIC Member States.

The events will recommend that: ⁽¹⁾ways and means to be found to avoid inefficiency in agri-food supply chains; ⁽²⁾increase domestic production in collaboration with local, regional and international financial institutions; ⁽³⁾encourage the implementation of integrated PPP projects in Arab and African countries; ⁽⁴⁾exchange views and share successful national experiences in the production and marketing of agri-food products; ⁽⁵⁾encourage public and private partnerships in agri-food trade; ⁽⁶⁾and point out the major and common challenges and obstacles facing the public and private investors in producing and marketing agri-food products.

The events will be an opportunity to commend the role of the private sector in developing the agri-food industry in the OIC zone which is considered as a promising market. ▣

SPECIAL ISSUE :



THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

H.E. ABDEL FATTAH EL-SISI



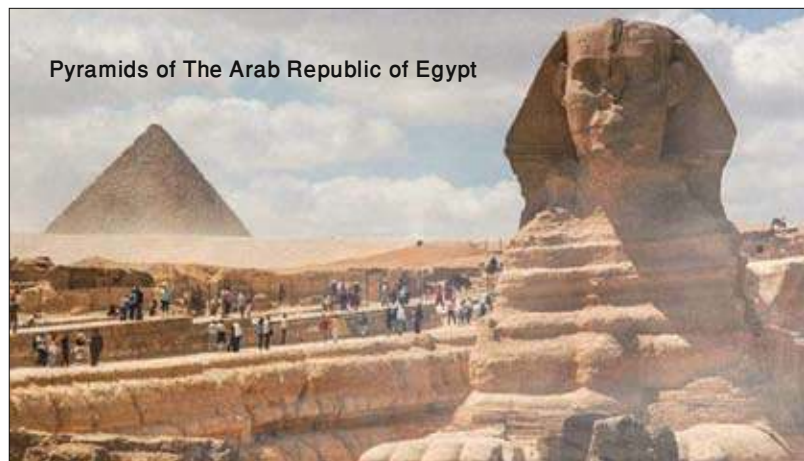
**PRESIDENT OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC
OF EGYPT**

SPECIAL ISSUE :



THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

BACKGROUND



- **Official name:** Arab Republic of Egypt.
- **Head of State:** President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi.
- **Location:** Egypt is located in the north-eastern corner of the continent of Africa, and has an Asian extension of the Sinai Peninsula. Egypt is bordered by the Mediterranean on the North, by Sudan on the South, by the Red Sea on the East, and by Libya on the West.
- **Main Cities:** Alexandria, Port Said, Esmaya, Suez...
- **Population:** 101 millions up to 17 October 2020.
- **Area:** The Arab Republic of Egypt has an area of

about 1,002,000 square kilometers and a populated area of 78,990 square kilometers, 7.8% of the total area.

- **Density:** 1422 inhabitants / km².
- **GDP:** 47,11 361.9 \$US.
- **GDP/capita:** 3043 \$US.
- **GDP growth:** 5.6% in 2019.
- **Climate:** Egypt's climate is generally mild. Dominated by the Mediterranean basin in its northern half, the weather is changing depending on the four seasons. The climate is dry in Western Sahara, prevailing with humidity. Egypt's summer is hot and its winter is cold and rainy.
- **Official languages:** The country's official language is Arabic, but English and French are used as foreign languages and in business.
- **Currency:** The Egyptian pound which equals 0.0638297 \$US.
- **National Day:** 15 March 1922.

SPECIAL ISSUE :



THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

OVERVIEW OF THE ECONOMY OF EGYPT

The economy of Egypt has been stable and growing steadily, averaging 4-5 over the past quarter century. The country has gone through various stages of development and reforms in which the public and private sectors have played different roles.

Egypt's Vision 2030

It is a national agenda launched in February 2016 that reflects the country's long-term strategic plan to achieve the principles and objectives of sustainable development in all economic fields. Such objectives are included in the Egypt's Vision 2030 which is based on the principles of "inclusive sustainable economic, social and environmental development" and "balanced regional development".

Egypt decided in early 2018 to update its sustainable development agenda with the participation of all development partners in order to keep pace with the occurring changes in the local, regional and global context.

Egypt's Vision 2030 focuses on improving the Egyptians' quality of life and improving their living standard. It also emphasizes the consolidation of the principles of justice, social integration and the participation of all citizens in the political and social life. This comes in conjunction with the achievement of high economic and sustainable growth, building capacities and promoting knowledge, innovation and scientific research in all areas.

Egypt's Vision 2030 is important for addressing the impacts of the climate change through an integra-

ted and sustainable ecosystem that enhances resilience and faces natural hazards. The vision also focuses on the governance of the State institutions and society through administrative reforms, the establishment of transparency, support for the follow-up and evaluation systems and the empowerment of local administrations. All these objectives fall within the framework of ensuring Egyptian peace and security and strengthening Egyptian leadership regionally and internationally.

Economic sectors

- Agriculture: The Arab Republic of Egypt has been associated with agriculture, making the agricultural activity the pillar of civilization and economy through successive historical ages. In accordance with the law issued by His Excellency President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi in relation to granting insurance coverage to farmers, the Ministry of Agriculture and Land Reclamation has limited the number of

farmers to be insured, on a first stage, to 350,000. The ministry has also implemented the electronic tenure system with the aim to fa-



cilitate the procedures so as the winner farmers would be provided with fertilizers.

In order to achieve the stability necessary to advance economic development, the State Development Plan was set up to modify and develop

SPECIAL ISSUE :



THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT



Giant projects serving current and future generations.

Egypt is expected to be among the top 30 economies in the world by 2030, most notably by the construction of 5,000 new factories and giant industrial cities; in addition to the reconstruction of one and a half million acres.



Large industrial projects in the petrochemical sector set in Egypt

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agricultural policy during the period 2014-2018. It is considered as one of the most important mechanisms leading to achieve the sustainable development goals and develop the Egyptian farmers' living conditions, in the short, medium and long-terms. Such a development plan defined the private sector's role in attracting investment so as to develop the agricultural sector, based on integrative and participatory development policies. His Excellency President Abdel Fattah Al-Sisi has launched several giant projects, mainly, the 1.5 million acres project, the 10,000-acre project in the new Farafra, the Toshki project in east Aweinat, and the Salam Canal Project (North Sinai Development).

- Fisheries: Ambitious plans have been made to develop fish production and increase the fish stocks potential, inducing Egypt to achieve a production volume of 2 million tons in 2018 through the development of fresh and salt lakes, particularly, Lake Nasser, the development of farms and aquaculture hatcheries and the modernization of their infrastructure to provide high quality and affordable fish. New fishing ports have been established nationwide and the overfishing banned.

The Arab Republic of Egypt, represented by the Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, has managed to meet the water needs through the development of the 2050 Strategy and the National Water Resources Plan 2017-2037 with the aim of achieving water security for all. It should be noted that Egypt's water resources are represented by its fixed share of the Nile water, which is estimated at 55.5 billion m³ per year, as the Nile is the main source of fresh water which supplies Egypt with about 97% of its water needs. The available water

resources are estimated at 59.25 billion m³ per year, including available rainfall, deep groundwater and desalination of seawater.

- Industry: Egypt witnessed an industrial renaissance, with the rise of the industrial textile confection and the manufacturing of sugar, oil and rice. The military industries have also flourished and an arsenal of ship industries and chemical factories have been established.

The industrial sector is considered as the backbone of the economic development in Egypt, being one of the most important sectors which have realized high growth rates; owing to its role in supporting the national product and contributing with about 17.7% to the GDP. The sector's labor force represents about 30%, estimated at 2.5 million workers in about 38,000 industrial establishments.



The country aims to promote industry with a view to making Egypt one of the leading industrial countries in the Middle East and Africa. By expanding domestic manufacturing and adopting high value added industries and technological components, the country has created an attractive climate for Arab and foreign investments and has made the industry's growth rate raise to 8% and the industry's contribution to the GDP by 21%, while annual exports increased by 10%.

Egypt's industrial sector enjoys abundant and cheap labor, available capital and safe investment climate, added to investment opportunities and facilities.

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The country has a diverse transport network that facilitates the transfer of goods and products to local and international markets. Egypt also enjoys available vegetables, fruit, cotton and sesame manufacturing. It relies on its animal wealth to manufacture leather and extracts minerals, such as copper, zinc, lead, chromium, iron, nickel, tungsten, phosphate, basalt, aluminum, coal, sulfur, table salt, manganese, kaolin, tin, graphite, quartz, cascade, lysium and potash for industrial use.

Egypt's industrial investment map in the various governorates includes all the investment opportunities launched on a competitive basis. Such an integrated investment map represents one of the most important outputs of the industrial development strategy. It links the local supply chains to the existing industries, identifies food and complementary industries and makes the industrial sectors contribute to filling the market gaps and rationalizing imports. To increase the local products' added value is a competitive interactive platform for domestic and foreign investors.

Within the framework of the modernization of the National Petrochemical Industry Plan and the implementation of a new 2020-2035 Development Strategy, Egypt has invested \$US 19 billion in 11 new petrochemical production projects and has continued to increase the added value of petrochemical production in Egypt with a view to meeting the domestic market needs in petrochemical products, which are key production inputs for many industries. Reducing imports and creating new export opportunities has contributed to improving the country's trade balance and providing new sources of foreign exchange.



Minerals: Egypt has a huge mineral wealth consisting of the large reserves located close to the main and secondary roads, to the export points and to the various ports. These consist of oil and natural gas, solid energy, thermal, non-ferrous, precious and semi-precious materials.



Energy: Egypt relies on electricity, oil and natural gas. Recent expansions of electricity production in Egypt depend on several sources, including thermal plants that use oil and natural gas, water plants for electricity production, such as the Aswan reservoir, the High Dam, the Esna arcades, the Nag Hammadi and Assiut dams, and the new and renewable energy of solar, wind, biomass and generating power.

The electricity sector has succeeded in connecting Egypt's unified electricity grid with the Arab and African countries' networks and with the European countries. One of the most important Egyptian electrical interconnection projects is the seven-way interconnection project, which includes Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Syria and Turkey.

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The possibility to link Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco with 220 to 400/500 kilovolts was studied as part of technical cooperation between Egypt and the Maghreb countries to increase the energy capacity transferred among these countries. Egypt has also set up a 2017-2027 electricity sector development strategy that focuses on increasing electricity generated from all sources by 5% to 7%, so as to meet the growing needs in different sectors. Four reactors have been planned in Al-Najila area, 80 km west of Dabaa. They will conduct research and studies on renewable energy and increase energy efficiency in cooperation with the EU countries so as to stimulate the private sector to invest more in new and renewable energy production projects with BOOT system and other new management and operating systems.

- Transport:

. Air transport: The civil aviation sector in Egypt is qualified as a model to follow in sustainable development. Performance and quality improvement of air transport services and aviation safety are important to ensure aircrafts and passengers' safety, in accordance with the international agreements and legislations. There is quality, price, flexibility and time competitiveness at the level of the civil aviation sector in line with internal and external environmental variables so as to ensure customers' satisfaction, targeting thus the State sustainable development objectives.



Airport capacity has been expanded in line with the steady increase in the number of passengers and the aircraft traffic.

The Arab Republic of Egypt hosts several airports: Cairo International Airport, Hurghada Airport, Sharm el-Sheikh Airport, Aswan Airport, Luxor Airport and Burj Al Arab Airport.

. Railways: The Arab Republic of Egypt has 28 railwaylines with a length of about 9,435 kilometers through 796 passenger stations and 1,800 working trains moving round and forth along 135,000 kilometers.

Egypt Railways plays an active role in transporting passengers and goods to and from all parts of the Republic. All major ports have been connected to the necessary railways and interior piers and harbours. Egypt's National Railway Authority is one of the largest economic institutions in the country and the Arab world.

. Subways: Egypt is the first country in Africa and the Middle East to implement subways on the Egyptian road map, one of the most important projects that contributed to connecting three governorates: Cairo, Giza and Qalyubia. The metro transports about 3 million passengers and its lines span 64.6 kilometers across two main lines: the 43-kilometer-long Helwan Al-Marj and the 21.6 km-long al-Khaimah.

. Roads and bridges: The national road projects in Egypt are among the most important projects to consider in the country, namely, the Shatt/Ayoun Musa Road, Wadi Al-Natroun Road/ Al-Alamein, and the Road of Upper Egypt/Red Sea.

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. River transport: The river transport consists of several basic elements, including the shipping lines network, the river ports and the river transport fleet.

The State managed to develop river transport and increase its participation in the transport system, making it suitable for navigation for both cargo and passenger transportation. In this perspective, the state has taken measures to promote this sector and make the volume of river trade move from 3% to 10% of the total movement of goods annually, which is estimated at approximately 600 million tons, which makes trade transactions increase.

- Communication and information: The state has managed to make the communication services available to all through the setting up of a strategy that has contributed to a qualitative shift in the communication network. Due to a close cooperation and a strong partnership with many stakeholders, namely, the public and private sectors, non-profit organizations and the civil society, Egypt has developed its telecommunication sector.

The private sector's participation in the telecommunication sector is undoubtedly of strategic importance, as its role consists not only in innovating and providing technical expertise, but also in leading the involved partners to respond to market needs, invest in infrastructure and participate in the ICT related initiatives. The Ministry of Communication and Information Technology has led a broad national campaign for technological literacy in the society, in respect with how to use computers and the highly progressed communications network displayed in all cities and villages.

The state has striven for the support of global and domestic investments in the ICT sector with the aim to increase Egypt's share in the global software exports. The e-government has been another tool used by the State aiming at providing services to citizens, companies and investors quickly and efficiently through the use of the available and accurate updated information networks to support decision-making, encourage investments and enable information exchange effectively.

The State has further created new communities for the development of the ICT industry, namely, the Technology Valley Project, the Smart Village and the Documentation Centre for Natural and Cultural Heritage.

- Post: The government has developed and modernized all Egyptian post offices. It has come to provide citizens with the new following services: extraction of official papers, renewal of car licenses, payment of taxes, cash payments, pensions payment, pensions delivery, and parcels delivery.

- Tourism: Tourism can be considered as the engine of the economic development in the Republic. Indeed, Egypt enjoys its mild weather throughout the year, its archaeological treasures which reflect the depth and excellence of its civilization throughout ages and its beautiful beaches. All induced the state to provide facilities with a view to attracting investments in such a vital sector, making the country the privileged destination for tourists from all over the world.

The tourism sector in Egypt accounts for nearly 40% of the total services exports, exceeding all

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service receipts. It provides 19.3% of foreign exchange earnings and contributes with about 7% to GDP; in addition to the indirect contributions (travel and hotel related services) of about 3.5%. Tourism also endeavours to create jobs with an average of about 12.6%.

- Investment climate: The investment climate in Egypt is improving significantly, though the state is facing some challenges because of the Coronavirus Covid-19 pandemic.

Egypt has been one of the fastest growing emerging markets which has made investors confident about the Egyptian interbank foreign exchange, the foreign portfolio investments and the increased foreign exchange reserves.

The Government of Egypt is also convinced that to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) is primary to address many of its economic challenges and has declared its intention to create a more conducive environment for FDI.

The country has also implemented regulatory reforms, including a new investment law in 2017; new company and bankruptcy laws in 2018; and a new customs law in 2020. These aim to improve the investment and business climate in Egypt. The 2017 Investment Law is designed to attract new investments, consolidate investment rules and facilitate procedures. The 2020 customs law aims to streamline some aspects of import and export procedures, including the 'single window' facilities, electronic payments and customs clearance.

The government hopes to attract investment in

several «mega-projects», including the construction of a new national administrative capital. Egypt also intends to capitalize on its location linking the Middle East, Africa and Europe to become a regional trade and investment gateway and energy hub, and hopes as well to attract investment in the information and communication technology (ICT).

Investment Incentives

The new investment law protects foreign investors by providing them with:

- the same treatment as Egyptian nationals;
- avoidance of discriminatory decisions or arbitrary procedures;
- no investment project will be nationalized.
- no administrative authority can revoke or suspend investment project licenses without warning.
- residence in Egypt is granted to foreign investors during the project term.
- profits transferred abroad.
- Investors' projects may include up to 10% foreign employees.
- Foreign employees have the right to transfer their compensation abroad.

Foreign investors are also granted with:

- General Incentives: Companies will receive a 2% overall customs tax exemption on the value of imported equipment and machinery. They will also be exempted from stamp tax and registration fees on: making associations, mortgages, loan agreements and land notarized contracts.

- Special Incentives: The new law provides deductions from taxable net profits according to a forthcoming investment map that will identify investment

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THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT HAS DEVELOPED A STRATEGY THAT INCLUDES A PACKAGE OF ACTIONS AND PLANS FOR TOURISM PROMOTION. THIS INCLUDES THE USE OF MODERN-DAY METHODS AND TECHNIQUES SUCH AS ONLINE PROMOTION AND THE PRODUCTION OF FILMS BY THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM TO BROADCAST THROUGH SOCIAL AND VISUAL MEDIA AND INVITE FAMOUS ARTISTS TO VISIT EGYPT.

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areas, as Sectors A and B. Investors will receive a 50% discount on investment costs in Sector A and relating to specified priority activities.

- Additional Incentives: Egypt's Council of Ministers may decree additional incentives, which will be awarded by the head of the General Authority for Investment and Free Zones (GAFI). These may include subsidized utilities, the allocation of lands free of charge...

Free zones in Egypt

Free zones are one of the regulations approved by the new investment law. They were granted several advantages by the State, which have had a good impact on the national economy, through their contribution to increasing export rates.

There are nine free zones in Egypt, the most important of which are located in the governorates of Alexandria, Cairo, Port Said, Suez, Ismailia, Damietta, Shabin al-Kum and the City of October 6.

The Free zones have been granted with the following advantages:

- freedom to choose the investment area;
- freedom to transfer profits and the money gained;
- freedom to import from domestic or foreign markets;
- free product and service pricing;
- freedom to import and export with no enrollment fees;
- no restrictions on national capital;
- no limits on the capital size;

- exemption from the import and export customs rules applied on nationals;
- foreign investors are granted accommodation facilities within the country;
- foreign workers are also granted residence permits at their requests;
- exemption from taxes and customs duties on project's capital assets and production requirements;
- exemption from taxes and customs duties on imports and exports;
- exemption from customs duties on sale to the local market.

Impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the business climate

Egypt's economic growth knew a slowdown because of the Covid-19 pandemic which disrupted in March 2020. Yet, it is expected that the economy will continue to achieve a positive growth of about 3.5% in 2020. Following the pandemic, the government has established a 100 billion pound (1.7% GDP) emergency response programme to increase spending in the health sector. It also strengthened social protection and provided financial assistance to individuals and companies.

The main measures included cash grants for irregular workers, expansion of existing money transfer programmes, delayed tax payments and loan repayments. The State has also supported the private sector activity and addressed Egypt's long-standing structural challenges in order to create better jobs and improve livelihoods. □

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**TO INVEST IN EGYPT'S RENEWABLE ENERGY SECTOR
IS VERY PROMISING**

**FOREIGN INVESTORS ARE OPTIMIZED TO
INVEST IN SUCH A SECTOR**

**FOREIGN INVESTORS ARE GREATLY CONFIDENT IN THE
BUSINESS FRIENDLY POLICIES IMPLEMENTED BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC EGYPT
IN THIS RESPECT**

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INTRA-OIC TRADE OF THE ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

Membership to the OIC:

The Arab Republic of Egypt has become Member State of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in 1969.

Bilateral Investment Treaties within OIC:

Egypt has Bilateral Investment Treaties with the following OIC Member States: Albania, Algeria, Bahrain, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

The TPS/OIC Agreement and its protocols (PRETAS and Rules of Origin):

Egypt has signed and ratified the TPS/OIC

agreement and signed the PRETAS.

Regional Agreements:

Egypt has established regional agreements with the OIC, LAS, Agadir Agreement and COMESA.

Free Trade Areas:

- Pan Arab Free Trade Agreement
- Greater Arab Free Trade Agreement (GAFTA),
- Agadir Free Trade Agreement,
- African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)
- EU Association Agreement,
- EFTA Free Trade Agreement,
- Turkey Free Trade Agreement and
- MERCOSUR Free Trade Agreement.

	2016	2019
World Exports (\$US Billion)	22.51	30.63
World Imports (\$US Billion)	58.05	78.66
Market size (\$US Billion)	80.51	109.29
Intra-OIC Exports (\$US Billion)	12.00	13.11
Intra-OIC Exports share	53.31%	42.79%
Top 15 OIC Customers	UAE, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Libya, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria, Sudan, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Syria, Kuwait and Pakistan.	

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Major Intra-OIC exported products	Gold, Petroleum oils; Petroleum gas and other gaseous hydrocarbons; Monitors and projectors; Mineral or chemical nitrogenous fertilizers; Citrus fruit, fresh or dried; Polymers of propylene or of other olefins; Cheese and curd; Flat-rolled products of iron or non-alloy steel; Furniture and parts thereof; Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic uses; Sanitary towels (pads) and tampons, napkins and napkin liners for babies; Organic surface-active agents (excluding soap); Wheat or meslin flour; vegetable oils; Chocolate and other food preparations containing cocoa; fabrics of synthetic filament yarn; Unglazed ceramic flags and paving, hearth or wall tiles; Cement, incl. cement clinkers; Copper wire; Insulated «incl. enamelled or anodised» wire, cable; Polyacetals, other polyethers and epoxide resins; Onions, shallots, garlic, leeks and other alliacious vegetables, fresh or chilled and Woven fabrics of cotton.	
	2016	2019
Intra-OIC Imports (\$US Billion)	11.67	17.18
Intra-OIC Imports share	20.10%	21.84%
Top 15 OIC Suppliers	Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Kuwait, UAE, Indonesia, Malaysia, Algeria, Bahrain, Oman, Sudan, Jordan, Libya, Morocco, Iraq, Lebanon.	
Major Intra-OIC imported products	Petroleum oils and oils; Petroleum gas and other gaseous hydrocarbons; Palm oil and its fractions; Polymers of ethylene; Polymers of propylene or of other olefins; Motor cars and other motor vehicles; Iron ores and concentrates; Crustaceans, whether in shell or not, live, fresh, chilled, frozen, dried, salted; Flat-rolled products of iron; New pneumatic tyres, of rubber; Acyclic hydrocarbons; angles, shapes and sections of iron; Cartons, boxes, cases, bags and other packing containers, of paper, paperboard; Medicaments consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic uses; oil seeds and oleaginous fruits; Paper, paperboard, cellulose wadding and webs of cellulose fibres, coated, impregnated; Cotton yarn other than sewing thread; Articles of iron or steel; Cotton, neither carded nor combed; Carbonates; peroxocarbonates; Gold; Woven fabrics of cotton and Refrigerators, freezers and other refrigerating or freezing equipment.	
	2016	2019
Intra-OIC Trade volume (\$SD Billion)	23.67	30.29
Intra-OIC Trade Share	36.70%	32.32%
Referring to OIC TYOPA goal, Egypt's Intra-OIC Trade share reached more than 25% in 2016.		

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MEET WITH

General Authority For Investment and Free Zones (GAFI)

The General Authority for Investment (GAFI) is an affiliate of the Ministry of Investment of the Republic of Egypt and the principal governmental body which regulates and facilitates investment in the country.

GAFI's functions could be summed up in easing the way for domestic and international investors who are interested in the opportunities offered by Egypt's growing economy; promoting investment; facilitating business match-making, ensuring investors' well-being; settling disputes; and making market intelligent research.

GAFI is continuously committed to enhancing Egypt's investment climate by transferring investors' feedback to government agencies, adop-

ting new investment regimes and supporting entrepreneurship as a driver for the economic growth.

Vision

GAFI's vision consists in positioning Egypt as a business location.

Mission

GAFI has been endowed with the mission to enable and sustain Egypt's economic growth through investment promotion, facilitation, efficient business services and advocacy of investor friendly policies.

Mandate

GAFI is to promote Egypt's promising economic sectors with a view to attracting foreign investments and reinvestments. It is also called upon to facilitate and provide services



to investors through GAFI's "single window", support and speed up the development of competitive strategic clusters and investment zones.

GAFI endeavours to stimulate investment entrepreneurship in all sectors. □

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ICDT's PARTICIPATION IN THE COMCEC'S MEETINGS

The Thirty Sixth Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC

Virtual Meeting, Ankara, 25-26 November 2020

ICDT participated in the proceedings of the 36th Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC held virtually in Ankara, on November 25th-26th, 2020 under the chairmanship of H.E. Fuat OKTAY, Vice President of the Republic of Turkey.

The theme of the 36th session of the COMCEC revolved around: "Promoting Entrepreneurship for Tourism Industry Competitiveness".

Within this framework, the Member Countries' ministers and heads of delegations made statements on their country experiences with regard to promoting the tourism industry competitiveness and entrepreneurship in their respective countries.

Thus, they emphasized the tourism industry's crucial role in the global and national economies being interlinked with the transportation and agriculture sectors and mentioned the suffering of the member countries which are heavily dependent on the tourism sector.

Participants also recommended that global tourism brands in the OIC region should be developed and that support is to be extended to the SMEs being



THE 36TH SESSION OF THE COMCEC WAS HELD UNDER THE THEME: "PROMOTING ENTREPRENEURSHIP FOR TOURISM INDUSTRY COMPETITIVENESS" WAS VIRTUALLY CONVENED ON NOVEMBER 25TH-26TH, 2020.

the backbone of the tourism sector. They also laid stress on both the promotion of tourism entrepreneurship and the compensation for the jobs loss caused by the Covid-19 Pandemic. Adoption of the new hygiene norms relating to the tourism sector along with the new certifications and insurance schemes were also tackled, as well as the transfer to digitalization and the granting of financial support to entrepre-

neurs. Tax exemptions and credit support programs were also recommended.

On this occasion, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) presented the Executive Summary of its Annual Report on Intra-OIC Trade. It also introduced the OIC Fairs and Exhibitions that it will organize, as well as the Report on the issues relating to the activities of the World Trade Organisation. □

TRENDING TOPICS

The health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is impacting many industries, while others are getting the best of it



The Covid-19 pandemic has affected several sectors, notably, tourism, catering, hotels and entertainment; yet, the e-commerce sector is taking off. So, what are the sectors that have emerged due to the crisis around the world, including the OIC Member Countries ?

The economic shock caused by the coronavirus covid-19 pandemic has caused an unprecedented crisis. The GDP has collapsed in almost every country and the unemployment rate has gotten to be worried about, despite the partial unemployment scheme

which has saved some jobs. Yet, it has been noticed that some economic sectors, e-commerce notably, have recorded a great success despite the difficult constraints; while others such as the physical organization of events, the tourism and culture sectors were badly impacted. So what are the crisis' impacts on OIC Countries ?

E-health, personal service: increasing needs

The e-health sector has been developing for several years relying on all the communication and information techno-

logies used in the health and research fields. During the containment period, the remote medical consultations have been numerous; consequently, and in response to such a need, several teleconsultation tools are currently being developed by health professionals.

Personal service, especially to the elderly, has also «benefited» from the crisis, in the sense that these isolated persons were able to connect with their families due to the technological tools developed for this purpose. In this context, some OIC Members are to consider the

possibility of developing such devices to the benefit of the elderly and encourage the creation of telemedicine interfaces to reduce the stress of moving to medical consultations in private and public hospitals during the pandemic.

The cleaning services have also experienced a strong rebound as cleaning companies are being in great demand so as to disinfect public places such as hospitals, schools or offices with a view to reducing the contamination risk.

E-commerce & Tech

E-commerce experienced an unprecedented craze during the sanitary containment with the exception of the travel sales which collapsed. Thus, to purchase online has become among the growing basic needs. Although supermarkets have remained open, fear of contamination and the various practical aspects have led many citizens from OIC Countries and the rest of the world to make online grocery shopping with home delivery, which has positively impacted the e-commerce platforms.

The tech sector will also flourish in the coming days, thanks to the development of teleworking. Both teachers and students benefited from the distance education launched by the ministries in charge of education after the closure of schools and universities. Businessmen, employers and employees also took advantage of the teleworking devices.

ALTHOUGH SUPERMARKETS HAVE REMAINED OPEN, FEAR OF CONTAMINATION AND VARIOUS PRACTICAL ASPECTS HAVE LED MANY CITIZENS FROM OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES AND FROM THE REST OF THE WORLD TO MAKE ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING WITH HOME DELIVERY, WHICH HAS POSITIVELY IMPACTED THE E-COMMERCE PLATFORMS.

Financial Transactions:

Financial organizations have all managed to protect their clients and help them conduct their day-to-day banking remotely.

Entertainment and leisure:

Online video games and streaming platforms have emerged since the pandemic disruption, which has made several global streaming platforms (Netflix, premium video...) attract millions of new paying subscribers. The social networks are increasingly been used also.

Tele-marketing:

As customers switched to digi-

tal channels during the crisis period, they have been compensated for the physical sales decline due to tele-marketing which has become a primarily growth tool for them.

Virtual tours:

The crisis has particularly highlighted the digital transformation of the world's fairs and exhibitions organization, which has increased sharply in recent months. The fairs' sector professionals have created ways to continue to connect supply and demand by organizing virtual tours that allow buyers to make their search at home.

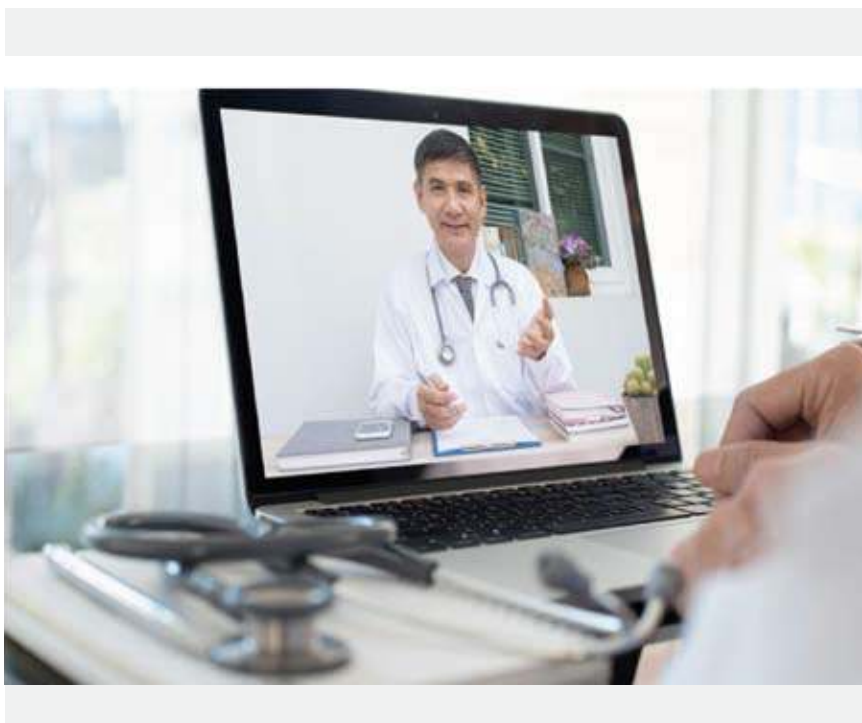
TRENDING TOPICS

In short, the technological solutions have become part of the daily life. Many digital tools have been developed to enable people to work, heal, learn, pay bills, make shopping or have fun remotely. So, to know how to use the Internet has become very important.

In this respect, some OIC Member States' companies should hurry up to adopt new digital telecommunication strategies which would suit all times but not the crisis period only. The companies should also adopt a website content that will help them boost their brand image and reputation with a view to retaining customers and preserving jobs. They should regularly audit their online communication media: website, referencing, on-line advertising...

The companies which have not yet created their websites, have to catch up the digital technology.

Moreover, governments in OIC Members are called to prioritize the health sector's digitalization and to be self-sufficient in producing gloves, disinfectants, medical equipment ... They are also called upon to help the Least Developed Countries build the necessary health infrastructure so as to provide quality health care to patients (tele-medicine, electronic processing of health records, digital images, electronic enrolling



TO REDUCE THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, GOVERNMENTS IN MANY OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE TAKEN FINANCIAL MEASURES TO SUPPORT FAMILIES AND BUSINESSES DURING THE CRISIS.

services, development of pharmaceuticals and medical equipment).

Economically, almost all OIC Member Countries have suffered from the Covid-19 pandemic, which seems to worsen considerably all over the world. Its impact has been reflected on the decline of the global value chains, the sharp collapse in commodity prices and financial revenues, and the application of

travel restrictions and social distancing measures, all had a negative impact on production and employment in some OIC Member Countries. The tourism, air transport and oil sectors have been badly affected, which has made supply and demand in goods and services decline.

To reduce the socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, governments in many OIC Member Countries have taken



financial measures to support families and businesses during the crisis.

Deeply aware of this situation, the OIC General Secretariat is endeavouring to help Member States mitigate the effects of the pandemic, in particular, by effectively implementing the recommendations of the final communiqué of the extraordinary

DEEPLY AWARE OF THIS SITUATION, THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT IS ENDEAVOURING TO HELP MEMBER STATES MITIGATE THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC, IN PARTICULAR, BY EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENTING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FINAL COMMUNIQUÉ OF THE EXTRAORDINARY VIRTUAL MEETING OF THE OIC EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE, HELD ON 22 APRIL 2020.

nary virtual meeting of the OIC Executive Committee, held on 22 April 2020. □

REGIONAL TRADE AGREEMENTS

THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA : opportunities to be seized to establish trading partnerships

Trading under the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is set to begin on 1st January 2021. It is an important step in strengthening African economic integration.

AfCFTA will grant the following advantages:

- liberalize trade between African countries through the gradual elimination of customs duties on 90% of products for a 5 years period.
- remove non-tariff barriers, especially with the introduction of an online mechanism for reporting import and export problems.
- speed up the continent's industrialization process through the creation of common value chains; and
- develop infrastructure and logistic circuits which will constitute real investment opportunities.
- continue the process of trade negotiations on trade in services in 2021: (ICT, transport, financial services, professional services and tourism), boosting and liberalizing trade in the African continent. Other sectors

such as health or education will be introduced in a second phase.

Intra-African trade will revive due both to the access to the services markets and to the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, as such trade is considered the lowest in the world with a rate of about 16%.

AfCFTA IS LIKELY TO PROMOTE FOREIGN CAPITAL ATTRACTIVENESS AND BOOST DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION, GIVEN THAT THE AFRICAN CONTINENT ALONE REPRESENTS A MARKET OF 1.2 BILLION CONSUMERS WHICH WILL REACH 2.5 BILLION BY 2050, E.G. 26% OF THE WORLD'S ACTIVE POPULATION.

It should be noted that the AfCFTA is likely to promote foreign capital attractiveness and boost domestic consumption, given that the African continent alone represents a market of 1.2 billion consumers which will



reach 2.5 billion by 2050, e.g. 26% of the world's active population.

The Economic Commission for Africa estimates that AfCFTA could lead to the increase of intra-African trade by 52.3% or even double it, if non-tariff barriers are reduced.

According to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the AfCFTA area includes 50% of OIC Member Countries, with 26 African members. So its entry into force will be a major opportunity for the African continent to boost its economic integration within the Islamic world. □

AGENDA 2021

DATE	ACTIVITY
9-10 February 2021	Virtual Investment Forum Sudan-OIC
21 February 2021	ICDT-COMCEC meeting: preparatory consultation on TPS/OIC implementation
21 February 2021	Workshop on the OIC Countries' operationalisation of AFE's 'C category'
21 February 2021	TPOs French speaking countries
23-25 February 2021	Virtual OIC Arab-Africa Expo, Forum and B2B meetings on agri products
2-4 March 2021	Virtual training workshop on Tourism destination marketing strategies
9-10 March 2021	Investment Forum in Guyana
16-18 March 2021	Forum on the analysis of OIC Countries' trade in services data
21 March 2021	Participation in the TPS/OIC Trade Negotiations Committee
21 March 2021	TPOs Arabic speaking countries
24-25 March 2021	Virtual Investment Forum Guyana-Suriname
25 March 2021	Virtual Investment Forum Central Asia
5-6 April 2021	Workshop on access to the OIC's SMEs' International market
12-13 April 2021	Workshop on trade diplomacy and economic intelligence
15 April 2021	OIC Investment Forum for the benefit of women-led cooperatives in West Africa
21 April 2021	TPOs English speaking countries

NB: Given the Covid-19 pandemic, some of our activities may be postponed, while others may take place virtually. For more information, please contact our secretariat at: icdt@icdt-oic.org

The websites of the OIC and the Institutions relating to it

NAME OF INSTITUTIONS	WEBSITES
GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC)	www.oic-oci.org
SUBSIDIARY ORGANS	
Statistical, Economic, Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRTC)	www.sesrtcic.org
Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)	www.ircica.org
Islamic University of Technology (IUT)	www.iutoic-dhaka.edu
Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT)	www.icdt-oic.org
International Islamic Fiqh Academy	www.fiqhacademy.org
Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) and its WAQF	www.isf-fsi.org / www.isf-fsi.com
The Real Estate Union in Islamic States (REUOS)	www.reuos.org
SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS	
Islamic Development Bank (IDB)	www.isdb.org
Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)	www.isesco.org.ma
Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU)	www.isboo.org
International Islamic News Agency (IINA)	www.islamicnews.org.sa
Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC)	www.icic.oic.org
The Science, Technology and Innovation Organization (STIO)	www.stio.comstech.org
Islamic Organization for Food Security	www.oicfso.org
AFFILIATED INSTITUTIONS	
Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA)	www.icciaonline.com
Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC)	www.oicc.org
Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF)	www.awalnet.net.sa
Organization of the Islamic Shipowners Association (OISA)	www.oisaonline.com
World Federation of Arabo-Islamic International Schools (WFAIS)	www.wfais.org
Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC)	www.icyf.com
International Union of Muslim Scouts (IUMS)	www.iums.net
Federation of Consultants from Islamic Countries (FCIC)	www.fcic-org.com
Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS)	www.ias-worldwide.org
OIC Computer Emergency Response Team (OIC-CERT)	www.oic-cet.org
Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC)	www.smiic.org
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)	www.iium.edu.my
Association of Tax Authorities of Islamic Countries (ATAIC)	-
Organization of Islamic Cooperation Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum (IBRAF)	www.rtuk.org.tr
STANDING COMMITTEES	
Alquds Committee	www.bmaq.org/eng/page/al-quds-committee
Bayt Mal Alquds Agency	www.bmaq.org
Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC)	-
Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC)	www.comcec.org
Standing Committee for Scientific & Technological Cooperation (COMSTech)	www.comstech.org
ISLAMIC UNIVERSITIES SPONSORED BY THE OIC	
Islamic University of Technology (IUT)	www.iuiu.ac.ug
Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU)	www.universite-say.ne
Islamic University Niger (IUN)	www.universite_say.ne
International Islamic university Malaysia (IIUM)	www.iium.edu.my

TIJARIS

Tijaris, the quarterly magazine on inter-islamic and international trade is disseminated to 57 Member States. It is used by ICDT as a trade information tool so as to promote trade and investment flows between OIC Member States.



We want indeed to make this magazine a suitable space for economic operators to get their products well known and to generate more trade opportunities in such a manner as to meet market requirements in the the OIC region, which constitutes a market of 1.5 billion of consumers.

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