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TIJARIS



THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTRA-OIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT

& CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES IN THE HEALTH INDUSTRY OF OIC COUNTRIES

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The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (I.C.D.T), headquartered in Casablanca, Morocco, serves as a privileged instrument for promoting trade among the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Its objectives include :

- Encouraging the development of regular trade exchanges among Member States.
- Promoting investments aimed at trade development.
- Contributing to the promotion of productions from Member States and facilitating access to foreign markets.
- Promoting commercial information.
- Assisting Member States in the field of trade promotion and international trade negotiations.
- Assisting businesses and economic operators.

I.C.D.T's actions revolve around six main areas :

TRADE PROMOTION

- Encouraging contacts between businessmen from Member States.
- Promoting the products of Member States, including through regular Islamic Fairs and specialized exhibitions.
- Assisting Member States in establishing and organizing Export Promotion Centers.
- Providing advisory and expertise services to Member States in trade promotion matters.

TRADE INFORMATION

- Collecting and disseminating trade data.
- Developing remotely accessible trade databases.
- Assisting Member States in establishing Documentation Centers and Commercial Information networks.

INVESTMENT PROMOTION

- Encouraging intra-OIC investments.
- Promoting foreign investments in OIC Member States.
- Encouraging partnerships among economic operators from Member States.
- Providing advisory and expertise services to Member States, particularly in export-oriented investment promotion.

STUDIES AND RESEARCH

- Publishing an Annual Report on intra-Islamic trade.
- Conducting sectoral studies on products and markets.
- Studying ways and means to alleviate trade barriers among Member States.

TRAINING

- Organizing seminars and training programs.
- Assisting Member States in creating a pool of experts in various fields of trade development.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

- Assisting Member States in trade negotiations.
- Preparing and organizing intra-OIC trade negotiations.

Latifa Elbouabdellaoui,
Managing Director ICDT.



ICDT Invest Days Banjul and a Flood of Investments

Held on May 2-3, 2024, as a prelude to the 15th OIC Summit, the ICDT Invest Days Banjul was a resounding success. Paving the way for increased foreign investment and sustainable economic growth in The Gambia, this event highlighted the immense potential of the host country and reinforced its status as an attractive investment destination within the Islamic world. We dare to believe that these ICDT Invest Days Banjul will play a crucial role in raising awareness of investment opportunities in The Gambia. The connection between potential investors and their local partners is now tangible: contracts and MoUs have already been finalized. Such success is an encouraging sign for the future of the Gambian economy. In this issue, we extensively cover the event, reporting the comments of various stakeholders, and we take an in-depth look at this gathering, highlighting its successes and the investment opportunities in The Gambia. Investors, businesses, and government officials from across the Islamic world were able to explore promising investment opportunities in this country. We are pleased that this two-day event showcased the immense potential of this attractive country, with a particular focus on key sectors such as tourism, agriculture, infrastructure, and information and communication technologies.

One success leads to another, as we announce the upcoming ICDT Invest Days events on September 24-25 in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and then in the Comoros on November 13-14, 2024.

This Special Issue also includes key events and initiatives of the OIC, such as the Paperless Trade Week, the Electronic Payment Module in Nigeria, the 3rd Ministerial Meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC), and a Spotlight on the 15th OIC Islamic Summit in The Gambia. Our magazine also shares the Viewpoint of experts and industry leaders, with Mr. Lucien Leuwenkroon, CEO of Top Class Lavazza, revealing how coffee is much more than just a drink in the Muslim world.

Information on economic and trade trends within the OIC, such as the strong growth of Islamic funds, as well as relevant statistics on the halal industry and the introduction of the ePhyto GeNS system in Togo, are also covered.

Happy reading ! ■

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Procédé de fabrication des produits biopharmaceutiques
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TIJARIS

ÉDITÉ PAR LE CENTRE ISLAMIQUE POUR LE DÉVELOPPEMENT DU COMMERCE

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CIDC Participation in the 6th Edition of the Halal Morocco Forum

THE CIDC PARTICIPATED IN THE 6TH EDITION OF THE HALAL MOROCCO FORUM (FOHAM), ORGANIZED BY THE MOROCCAN INSTITUTE OF STANDARDIZATION (IMANOR), UNDER THE DUAL AUSPICES OF THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND COMMERCE AND THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, MARITIME FISHERIES, RURAL DEVELOPMENT, AND WATER AND FORESTS OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO, ON JUNE 27, 2024, IN CASABLANCA.

The 6th Edition of the Halal Morocco Forum (FOHAM), held on June 27, 2024, in Casablanca and themed “Developing a National Halal Ecosystem in a Perspective of Regional Integration and International Recognition,” featured CIDC’s participation as a sponsoring partner.

A representative from the Center delivered a speech during the opening session and presented an overview of the status and opportunities of halal markets in OIC countries, particularly in Africa.

This 6th Edition highlighted the importance of the regional, especially African, dimension in any strategy to position within the global halal market, with the participation of the African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO). The diverse program included conferences, B2B meetings, and testimonials, covering current topics related to the global halal market as well as the criteria and conditions for market access. The challenges and opportunities of halal certification were also discussed. The Moroccan Institute of Standardization (IMANOR) took the opportunity to award around twenty labels to Moroccan companies.



A VIEW OF THE PLENARY AUDIENCE.



ATtribution OF LABELS TO MOROCCAN COMPANIES.

According to professionals, the 6th Edition of FOHAM, which brought together over 150 participants, was a resounding success. ■

Development of Commodity Trade and Food Security in Africa

AS PART OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE 9TH GLOBAL REVIEW OF AID FOR TRADE BY THE WTO, THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT), IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION (WTO) SECRETARIAT, ORGANIZED A PANEL ON «THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMODITY TRADE AND FOOD SECURITY IN AFRICA» ON THURSDAY, JUNE 27, 2024, AT THE WTO HEADQUARTERS.

Commodity trade can play a significant role in Africa's economic development. Both the WTO and the ICDT hold a crucial role in this sector. These two organizations provide valuable support to African countries, in general, to increase their commodity exports and improve food security. By working together, they aim to contribute to making Africa a more prosperous and secure continent. Alongside the activities of the 9th Global Review of Aid for Trade, the ICDT organized a panel on this subject. Titled «The Development of Commodity Trade and Food Security in Africa,» this panel, attended by the Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations Office and other international organizations in Geneva, the WTO, BADEA, IOFS, and FAO, explored ways and means to ensure food security in Africa through technical and financial support, with the goal of qualitatively and quantitatively enhancing agricultural and agri-food production.

Together to Overcome Challenges

A combination of actions by these various entities will be essential to achieve these goals. The WTO, through its Secretariat, and the ICDT have decided to collaborate to promote commodity trade and food security in Africa.



A VIEW OF THE PANELISTS.



A VIEW OF THE CONFERENCE.

Jointly organized workshops and conferences aim to help African countries better understand WTO rules and benefit from international trade.

The meeting also served as a reminder that despite the efforts

of the WTO, ICDT, and other organizations, the development of commodity trade and food security in Africa remains a major challenge. Among the obstacles are poverty, weak infrastructure, political instability, and climate change. ■



INTERVENTION BY MS. LATIFA EL BOUABDELLAOUI, CEO OF THE ICDC.

16th Biennial OIC-UN Meeting in Astana

THE ICDC PARTICIPATED IN THE 16TH SESSION OF THE BIENNIAL GENERAL COORDINATION MEETING ON MONDAY, JULY 22, 2024, IN ASTANA, REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION FOR FOOD SECURITY (IOFS).

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDC) has developed and maintained close ties with United Nations agencies operating in economic and trade sectors. Indeed, there is a strong collaboration between the ICDC and agencies such as UNCTAD (UN Trade & Development), the International Trade Centre, and the WTO (World Trade Organization). The Centre took part in the 16th

Biennial OIC-UN Meeting held in Astana on July 22, 2024. In the presence of H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Khaled Khiari, Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia, and the Pacific, and H.E. Dr. Ahmad Sengendo, Assistant Secretary-General of the OIC, H.E. Ms. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, Director-General of the ICDC, delivered an introductory speech. During her speech, she highlighted the close ties developed with UN

agencies operating in the economic and trade sectors. She stated that the goal is to strengthen trade capacities, promote industrial development, and support economic growth in OIC member states. The Director-General of the ICDC also revealed that all these entities are working together on trade policies, investment attractiveness, capacity building, and sustainable development initiatives to benefit OIC member countries. ■

ICDT Invest Days Yaoundé A Masterstroke for a First Edition

AFTER DAKAR, NOUAKCHOTT, AND BANJUL, YAOUNDÉ HAD THE HONOR OF HOSTING THE 4TH EDITION OF THE ICDT INVEST DAYS ON SEPTEMBER 24-25, 2024, UNDER THE THEME "INVESTING IN THE NEW CAMEROON: LAND OF ATTRACTIVENESS." THE EVENT WAS A RESOUNDING SUCCESS.



SOLEMN OPENING MOMENTS

Initiated by the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Cameroon Investment Promotion Agency (API), and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, and held under the high patronage of H.E. Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon, the ICDT Invest Days Yaoundé Forum exceeded all expectations. Featu-

ring plenary sessions, panels, B2B, B2C, and B2G meetings within Deal Rooms, as well as a Made-in-Cameroon trade exhibition, the forum served as a vital platform to promote and foster investment and trade among OIC Member Countries. It offered investors a unique opportunity to leverage the opportunities available in Came-

roon, supported by political stability, government commitment, and continuously improving economic indicators.

Significant Commitments

Over 500 participants from around fifteen countries and various international institutions attended this major forum, underscoring its scale and importance in discussions on economic and investment issues. Participating countries included Morocco, Gabon, Togo, Jordan, Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Niger, Tunisia, Chad, Belgium, Spain, France, China, the DRC, and Cameroon. Participant satisfaction was reflected in the partnerships formed or considered, the contacts established, and the business intentions declared. Investment intentions across several strategic sectors amounted to USD 240 million—significant commitments that demonstrate investor confidence in the productive opportunities Cameroon offers. Specific support will be provided over a minimum period of six months to ensure the successful implementation of these projects.



SOUVENIR PHOTO

Building on Gains

Among the recommendations made by participants, the organizers highlighted the need for greater involvement of national experts in the various Deal Rooms. This approach would ensure that discussions are enriched by a deep understanding of the local context and sector-specific nuances. Additionally, the importance of supporting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) was emphasized to facilitate their access to diversified financing sources, such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the African Solidarity Fund (FSA), and the African Guarantee and Economic Cooperation Fund (FAGACE).

Furthermore, it was recommended to strengthen the capacity of SMEs to access international markets, leveraging ICDT's expertise and API support. This effort is crucial to mobilize an increasing number of national and international investors and stimulate economic development across various regions of Cameroon.



VIEW OF THE AUDIENCE

Ms. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, Director-General of the ICDT, stated, "We encourage you to invest massively in this beautiful country, rich in opportunities and resources, and the organizers will follow up with investors for six months to assess their investment in Cameroon."

The ICDT also invites investors to actively participate in upcoming editions of the Investment Forum, which will be held in Chad, Comoros, and Benin in 2025, offering favorable opportunities to explore new avenues for investment and cooperation. ■

ICDT Invest Days Yaoundé

Leveraging Cameroon's High Potential as a Gateway to the Gulf of Guinea Countries

STRATEGICALLY POSITIONED AS A GATEWAY TO CENTRAL AND WEST AFRICA, CAMEROON PROVIDES ACCESS TO A MARKET OF 300 MILLION CONSUMERS. THE COUNTRY ACTIVELY PROMOTES INVESTMENT, OFFERING SIGNIFICANT INCENTIVES TO INVESTORS INTERESTED IN KEY SECTORS SUCH AS AGRICULTURE, RENEWABLE ENERGY, LIVESTOCK, FISHING, INDUSTRY, MINING, CRAFTS, FORESTRY, ICT, AND TOURISM. THIS GOVERNMENTAL COMMITMENT CREATES A SAFE AND PROMISING INVESTMENT ENVIRONMENT, WHICH THIS EDITION OF THE ICDT INVEST DAYS SUCCESSFULLY CAPITALIZED ON.



SPEECH MS. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, DG CIDC

The ICDT Invest Days in Yaoundé reinforced Cameroon's position as a prime destination for investors. The forum offered Cameroon an opportunity to assert its leadership as the economic powerhouse of the Gulf of Guinea countries. Priority sectors were thoroughly reviewed, with meetings between investors and top authorities, as well as «Deal Rooms» for a comprehensive presentation of Cameroon's offerings. This high-level event marked new investment opportunities in Cameroon and strengthened economic ties between the country and the 56 other members of the

Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Fruitful Exchanges in the Deal Rooms

Following the opening ceremony and various panels, simultaneous thematic sessions took place in the form of six «Deal Rooms,» each dedicated to different sectors. In the «Agriculture, Livestock, and Fishing» room, approximately 120 participants discussed investments in coffee, rice, palm oil, cocoa, and maize industries. In the «Infrastructure and Construction» Deal Room, 50 participants addressed projects in

construction, building materials, waterproofing, and insulation. The «Mining and Industry» Deal Room hosted 60 participants who discussed projects related to bauxite and iron ore.

In the «Energy» Deal Room, 30 participants highlighted projects in solar energy, oil, hydropower, and gas, while 50 participants in the «Tourism, Crafts, and Transportation» Deal Room focused on projects in logistics, delivery, road, air, and port transport, as well as hotel and tourism development.

Lastly, in the «Health» Deal Room, 30 participants explored projects for the establishment of hospitals and clinics, the manufacturing of medical supplies and generic drugs, and the certification of medical products and equipment.

These sessions, led by experts and sector representatives, showcased strategic investment projects for the development of these sectors in Cameroon. Each session allowed for the identification of concrete opportunities and promising initiatives, while providing participants with clear insights into the challenges and specific needs of each sector. ■

ICDT Invest Days Yaoundé

Development Strategies for Investment Projects in Cameroon

IN YAOUNDE, THE COUNTRY'S AUTHORITIES EMBRACED THE VISION OF THE ICDT INVEST DAYS YAOUNDE. HIGH-RANKING REPRESENTATIVES FROM VARIOUS MINISTRIES CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE DISCUSSIONS DURING THE PANEL ON STRATEGIES FOR DEVELOPING INVESTMENT PROJECTS IN CAMEROON. THIS PANEL PROVIDED AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE COLLABORATION PROSPECTS BETWEEN GOVERNMENT ACTORS, TECHNICAL INSTITUTIONS, AND FINANCIAL PARTNERS TO SUPPORT KEY SECTORAL PROJECTS.

«Investing in the New Cameroon, Land of Attractiveness,» the theme of the ICDT INVEST DAYS YAOUNDE, came at a timely moment. Cameroonian authorities leveraged this occasion to refine their investment project development strategies and engage their partners. National and international financial institutions, such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the African Guarantee and Economic Cooperation Fund (FAGACE), and the African Solidarity Fund (FSA), showcased their initiatives across the African continent, particularly in Cameroon. Throughout the forum, these institutions reaffirmed their commitment to financing projects in essential productive sectors, thereby enhancing the country's opportunities for economic growth and development.

Through various exchanges, investors gained a deeper understanding of the local economic dynamics and better insight into partnership opportunities. The discussions promoted the sharing of expertise and best practices, strengthening the alignment between the goals of public, private, and international stakeholders to stimulate sustainable growth and development in the country.



THE CAMEROONIAN AUTHORITIES, IN THE FOREGROUND

Focus on Structuring Project Development

As a result of this forum, a total of USD 240 million in investment intentions was mobilized across several strategic sectors. The Agriculture, Livestock, and Fishing sector attracted USD 70 million in commitments, highlighting the importance of industries such as coffee, cocoa, rice, and palm oil in economic priorities. Infrastructure and construction generated USD 50 million, with a focus on developing structuring projects such as building, construction materials, and urban modernization projects. The mining and industry sector, particularly through projects related to the extraction of bauxite and iron ore, attracted USD 40 million,

reflecting a growing interest in exploiting Cameroon's natural resources. The energy sector garnered USD 30 million in commitments, supporting diverse projects in hydropower, solar energy, oil, and gas, all of which are key to addressing the country's energy challenges.

Tourism, Crafts, and Transportation attracted USD 30 million, sparking considerable interest, particularly in logistical infrastructure, hotels, and the air and port transportation sectors. Lastly, the Health sector secured USD 20 million in commitments, covering initiatives such as the creation of hospitals and clinics, the production of medical supplies, and the certification of medical products and equipment. ■



SOUVENIR PHOTO WITH AUTHORITIES FROM CAMEROONIAN MINISTERIAL DEPARTMENTS

ICDT Invest Days Yaoundé An Opportunity to Revitalize Bilateral Meetings

ON THE SIDELINES OF THE ICDT INVEST DAYS YAOUNDE FORUM, INVESTORS AND THE ICDT DELEGATION HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH FOUR CAMEROONIAN MINISTERS FROM THE DEPARTMENTS OF ECONOMY, PLANNING, AND TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT, PROMOTION OF WOMEN AND THE FAMILY, SMES AND CRAFTS, AS WELL AS MINES AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT, THUS STRENGTHENING EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

The bilateral meetings, held alongside the ICDT INVEST DAYS YAOUNDE, allowed for direct discussions on development priorities and investment opportunities in various key sectors of the country. They also facilitated constructive dialogues on ongoing economic reforms and strategic projects. The ministers present, representing portfolios such as Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Infrastructure, Energy, Mines and Industry, Tourism, Health, and Transportation, engaged in in-depth discussions with investors to explore potential partnerships.

These dialogues clarified the expectations of both parties, presented the government's priority projects, and addressed the incentives available for both foreign and domestic investments.

Investment Opportunities by Sector

Each minister outlined specific initiatives within their sector, highlighting government efforts to create a favorable investment environment and support structuring projects that contribute to Cameroon's sustainable development. Discussions covered

areas such as infrastructure improvement, capacity building in productive sectors, optimization of natural and energy resources, and the development of essential services like health and transportation.

These strategic meetings not only reinforced investor confidence in the commitment of Cameroonian authorities but also laid the groundwork for close cooperation to ensure the successful realization of investment projects in the identified sectors. ■

ICDT Invest Days Yaoundé

Made in Cameroon Exhibition

ALONGSIDE THE FORUM, A DEDICATED EXHIBITION FEATURING AROUND FIFTY EXHIBITORS OF LOCAL PRODUCTS AND CAMEROONIAN CRAFTS UNDER THE “MADE IN CAMEROON” LABEL WAS ORGANIZED, SHOWCASING THE RICHNESS AND DIVERSITY OF LOCAL EXPERTISE.

The «Made in Cameroon» exhibition-sale served as a platform to promote artisanal creations and food products that reflect the country’s cultural identity and natural resources. In addition to promoting Cameroonian products and sharing the know-how of local operators, an Awards Ceremony for the Top 3 Exhibitors was held in the evening. This awards event was a highlight of the Forum, celebrating the excellence and creativity of Cameroonian artisans and entrepreneurs who participated in the “Made in Cameroon” exhibition.

The selection criteria for awardees included product quality, originality of creations, and commitment to sustainable practices. A jury, composed of sector experts, representatives from financial institutions, and opinion leaders, evaluated each exhibitor based on these criteria.

Gratitude and Sincere Thanks

At the close of the Forum, participants requested that H.E. Lejeune MBELLA MBELLA, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cameroon, convey to H.E. Paul BIYA, President of the Republic of Cameroon, their profound gratitude and high esteem, as well as to the Government and people of Cameroon for the warm hospitality and facilities extended to them since their arrival in the beautiful city of Yaoundé.

Participants also congratulated and expressed their deep thanks to Ms. Latifa ELBOUABDELLAOUI, Director-General of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), Mr. Donatus SHINWIN SOH BOMA, Acting Director-General of the Cameroon Investment Promotion Agency, the OIC country team, and their staff and experts for their efforts and the excellent conditions under which the Forum took place, ensuring the success of this event. They extended their thanks to the Cameroonian panelists and representatives of the IDB, FSA, and FAGACE for the quality of their presentations.

The organizers, in turn, expressed their gratitude to all the investors for their active participation in the forum. ■



A VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION



A VIEW OF THE EXHIBITION







POINT OF VIEW

INTERVIEW

MRS. MARIE-LAURENCE SRANON

Former Minister of Women's Affairs in Benin, Expert in Women's Empowerment and Personal Development, and Early Childhood Development for Harmonious Growth

Women's Empowerment Breaking Free from Stereotypes

IN THIS INTERVIEW, MRS. MARIE-LAURENCE SRANON, FORMER MINISTER OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS IN BENIN AND AN EXPERT IN WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT, PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FOR HARMONIOUS GROWTH, EXAMINES THE ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT OF WOMEN. SHE HIGHLIGHTS OBSTACLES TO WOMEN'S EMANCIPATION IN OUR COUNTRIES, THE BENEFITS OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE ECONOMY IN TERMS OF PERFORMANCE AND RESILIENCE, THE VALUE OF FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, THE GUARANTEE OF FOOD AND NUTRITIONAL SECURITY, AND EMPHASIZES THE NEED TO FACILITATE ACCESS TO CREDIT, STRENGTHEN SUPPORT, AND FOLLOW-UP FOR WOMEN.

Comments collected by D. MBaye

Tijaris: What does women's empowerment mean to you?

Mrs. Marie-Laurence Sranon:

Empowerment is the process by which an individual or group frees itself from a state of subjugation, gains the ability to fully exercise its rights, and frees itself from social, moral, or intellectual dependence. Empowering African women, therefore, means freeing them from stereotypes that, for centuries, have kept them dependent and alienated.

What are the main obstacles to women's empowerment in our modern societies?

The main obstacles to women's economic empowerment are patriarchy, power imbalances, certain unjust laws, and discriminatory social policies and norms, all of which contribute to gender inequality and women's lack of economic autonomy.

Is empowerment purely economic, or does it also include social, political, and personal dimensions?

The concept of women's empowerment includes multiple dimensions, such as social, political, personal, and family aspects. It can sometimes vary from one region or culture to another.

How do these different dimensions interact with each other?

These dimensions interact to improve women's access to education, social services, asset ownership, and decision-making power. Such interaction can lead to a significant reduction in poverty.

In your view, how does women's empowerment contribute to a society's overall development?

Women are resilient and inven-



L'entière participation des femmes dans l'économie promeut des activités plus performantes et résilientes, tout en soutenant la croissance et des objectifs de développement élargis.

tive economic agents who overcome gender-based obstacles in their efforts to support the health, education, and economic security of their families. Full participation of women in the economy promotes more resilient and effective activities, supporting broader growth and development goals.

What are the benefits for men and children when women are empowered?

Gender equality and women's economic empowerment help eradicate hunger, ensure food and nutritional security, and realize the right to food not only for women themselves but also for their families and communities.



Pour promouvoir l'entrepreneuriat féminin, il faut arrêter les stéréotypes de genre, valoriser l'entrepreneuriat féminin, faciliter l'accès au crédit, renforcer les accompagnements et le suivi.

In terms of education and training, what role does education play in women's empowerment?

Investments in girls' education transform communities, countries, and the world. Girls who receive education are less likely to marry young and more likely to lead productive, healthy lives.

How can we encourage women to pursue higher education and access professional training?

Development professionals should intentionally implement affirmative action in favor of women to better target their aid programs, enabling young women to pursue rewarding digital jobs and gradually access more skilled and better-

paying professions.

What are the main barriers preventing women from reaching leadership positions and earning equal salaries?

The main barriers include wage inequality in some countries, work-family balance, fertility, gender rivalry, unemployment, part-time work, and poverty.

How can we foster a more equal and inclusive culture?

To foster a more equal and inclusive culture, it is essential to assess gender equality within one's organization. Promoting women to leadership positions and ensuring equal pay for equal roles would also be beneficial. Lastly, decision-makers should address everyday sexism.

In your opinion, how can female entrepreneurship be promoted?

To promote female entrepreneurship, we must end gender stereotypes that continue to influence career choices, value female entrepreneurship, facilitate access to credit, and strengthen support and follow-up.

How can professional demands be reconciled with family responsibilities?

The key to balancing professional and family life is to allocate enough time for both in one's schedule. Women must organize their time so that they can fulfill their professional obligations while also attending to family responsibilities. It isn't easy, but they manage, especially when the men in the household lend a hand.

What are the effects of the disproportionate mental load often borne by women?

A woman's mental load involves all the mental demands she faces

BIO SNAPSHOT

Currently an Independent Consultant and International Expert in Women's Empowerment Strategy, Women's Leadership, Female Entrepreneurship, Personal Development, and Harmonious Childhood Development, Mrs. Marie-Laurence Sranon divides her time between her home country of Benin and the United States. A former Beninese Minister of Family, Social Affairs, Disabilities, and the Elderly, and former Minister of Microfinance, Youth and Women's Employment, and Entrepreneurship, she shares her expertise at women's forums such as the Africa Women's Forum and African Women Leaders' Networks. She has received numerous international awards in recognition of her dedicated work for African women and children across the continent.



while working. This mental burden results from a complex interaction of individual, technical, organizational, and social factors. If not addressed seriously, it can lead to more severe physical and mental consequences such as migraines, skin conditions, and stomach pain.

As someone who has served as a minister, what roles do governments, businesses, and civil society organizations play in promoting women's empowerment?

Governments must fully integrate gender considerations into their country's legislation at all levels, particularly in urban planning and policy development.

What are the future prospects for women's empowerment in Africa?

Gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls are prerequisites for achieving the Sustainable Development Agenda ... ■



SNAPSHOT

Family photos during the ICDT Invest Days Yaoundé event





State of the Digital Economy in OIC Countries

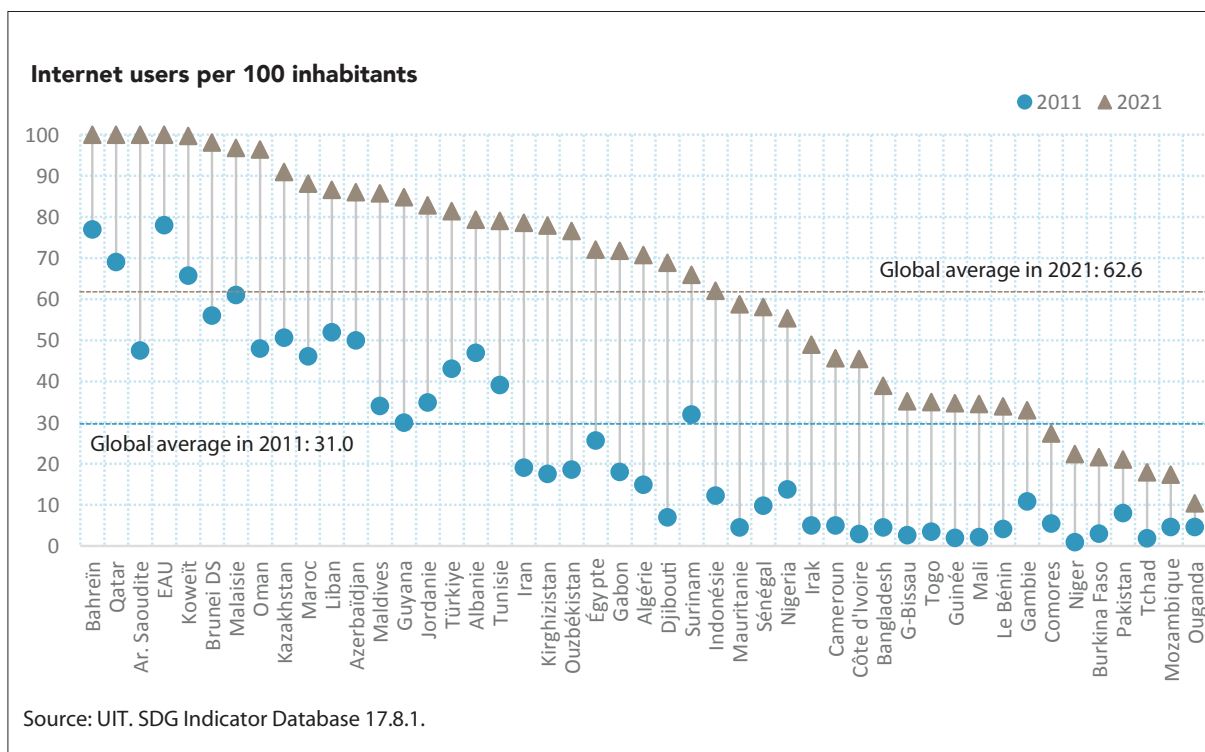
THE 57 OIC MEMBER STATES, WITH A POPULATION EXCEEDING 1.8 BILLION—24% OF THE WORLD'S POPULATION—SHOW HIGHLY VARIED LEVELS OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND DIGITAL MATURITY. WHILE THE DIGITAL ECONOMY IN THESE MEMBER COUNTRIES HAS GENERALLY ADVANCED, IT STILL FACES A NUMBER OF CHALLENGES.

By investing in digital infrastructure, developing digital skills, creating a supportive regulatory environment, and fostering innovation, OIC member countries can fully leverage the potential of the digital economy to drive economic growth, create jobs, and improve their citizens' quality of life. In 2023, over 70% of the OIC population had internet access, up from 30% in 2010. Mobile phone penetration is even higher, with more than 80% of the OIC population having a mobile subscription. Consequently, in recent years, OIC member countries have made significant strides in developing their digital economies. This progress can be attributed in part to increased internet and smart-

phone penetration, the growing adoption of digital technologies by businesses and governments, and the implementation of policies favorable to the digital economy.

Keeping Up to Date

The adoption of digital technologies by businesses and governments marks a significant advancement for the digital economy. Businesses in OIC countries are increasingly using these digital technologies to improve their efficiency, productivity, and competitiveness. Governments are also adopting them to provide services to citizens (teleprocessing, public facility automation, surveillance cameras) and to enhance governance.



Moreover, many OIC member countries have implemented policies to promote the development of their digital economy. These policies include investments in digital infrastructure, the creation of a supportive regulatory environment, and the development of digital skills.

Persistent Challenges to Overcome

Despite the progress made, OIC member countries still face several challenges in fully developing their digital economies. Much remains to be done to address these existing challenges, which will require concerted efforts from governments, businesses, and civil society.

Internet access remains out of reach for a significant portion of the population, particularly in rural and remote areas. Another significant challenge is the high cost of internet access in many OIC countries, which limits accessibility for low-in-



come individuals. There is also a shortage of qualified digital skills in the workforce in many OIC countries, hindering the adoption of digital technologies by businesses and governments.

Additionally, digital infrastructure in some OIC countries re-

mains inadequate, which limits bandwidth and the reliability of internet services. Finally, the regulatory framework for the digital economy is still uncertain in many OIC countries, creating uncertainty for investors and businesses. ■



A Digital Economy Aligned with Global Trends

THE DIGITAL ECONOMY HAS SEEN SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN RECENT YEARS. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE, AUGMENTED REALITY, AND OTHER TECHNOLOGIES ARE INCREASINGLY EXPLORED IN OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES. MANY OF THESE COUNTRIES ARE WORKING TO HARNESS THE POTENTIAL OF THIS TRANSFORMATION (THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, OR INDUSTRY 4.0, SINCE 2010) BY BRIDGING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE.

The global economy is undergoing a new form of transformation characterized primarily by the rise of digitization, automation, and artificial intelligence. These transformative technologies are reshaping industries, supply chains, and the very nature of work. Growing digitization has implications on numerous fronts. E-commerce is reshaping how businesses operate and interact with consumers. Digital Supply Networks (DSN) are a core component of Industry 4.0, leveraging digital technolo-

gies to revolutionize supply chain management and operations. Fintech, the application of digital technology to financial services, is transforming payments, loans, investments, insurance, and other financial products and services. Drones play a critical role in Industry 4.0 by providing transformative solutions across various industries, while artificial intelligence (AI) is the ability of a machine to perform cognitive functions typically associated with the human mind, such as perception, reasoning, learning,

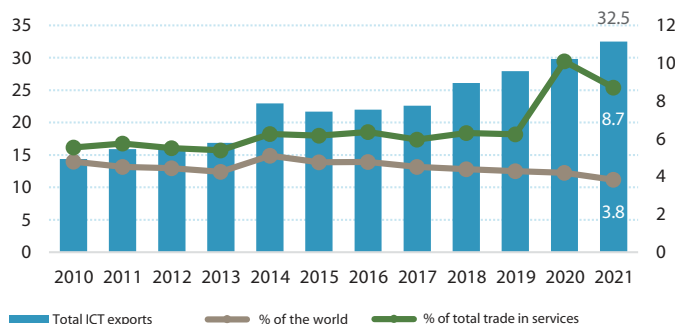
interaction with the environment, and problem-solving. Robotics, autonomous vehicles, computer vision, language processing, 5G, virtual agents, and machine learning are examples of AI technologies. Blockchain, meanwhile, is a technology that enables the secure sharing of information. Cloud computing is transforming economic activities by offering cost savings, improved scalability, and new opportunities for innovation. The wider use of IoT (Internet of Things) can bring fundamental changes to

value chain management. Similarly, big data and analytics allow companies to monitor emerging trends and opportunities in foreign markets, optimizing procurement, production, and distribution activities more effectively worldwide. The future of work is being reshaped in this digital era.

Leveraging Technology and Innovation for Economic Growth

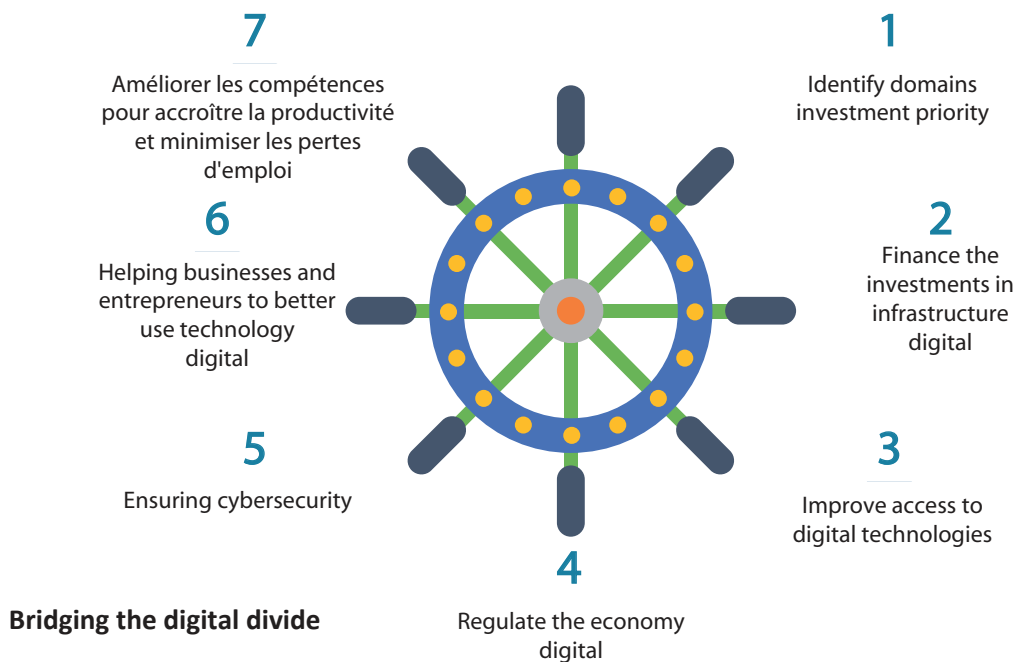
H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the OIC, recently stated that “the digital economy, in particular, has become a key element for many OIC countries, who are seeking to leverage technology and innovation for economic growth, diversification, and inclusion. Increasing digitization and automation offer both opportunities and challenges for OIC countries. On one hand, they have the potential to drive economic diversification, improve competitiveness, and empower young and dynamic populations. On the other hand, they also raise concerns around the digital divide, cybersecurity, and the need for effective governance in the digital age.” The «OIC Economic Outlook 2023: The Rise of the Digital Economy and the Reduction of the Digital Divide» report reveals that, at current prices, the total GDP of OIC countries rose to \$8.7 trillion in 2022 due to the ongoing recovery. With this economic size, OIC countries collectively represented 8.7% of global GDP in 2022, up 0.9 percentage points from the previous year. In terms of purchasing power parity (PPP) expressed in US dollars, the total GDP of OIC countries reached \$24.4 trillion, accounting for 14.9% of global GDP in 2022, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from 2021. In terms of economic growth, OIC countries recorded an average growth rate of 5.6% in 2022, a rate higher than

**Total exports of OIC countries in ICT services
(US dollars at current prices in billions)**



Source: UNCTADstat, CNUCED.





the global average and the highest reached since 2011. Following global trends, economic growth in OIC countries is expected to moderate over the next two years, reaching 3.5% in 2023 and 3.9% in 2024.

A Differentiated Development Trajectory

To adapt to the changing nature of work associated with digitization and automation, OIC countries face both significant opportunities and challenges. There are substantial disparities among these countries in terms of availability, accessibility, quality, and reliability of digital infrastructure and services. Some have well-developed infrastructure and are better prepared for future economic transformation, but overall, these countries lag behind global averages for many

indicators. Major challenges are observed in some OIC member countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa.

To catch up with digitalization, it is essential to determine priority investment areas, fund investments in digital infrastructure, improve access to digital technologies, regulate the digital economy, ensure cybersecurity, help businesses and entrepreneurs better use digital technologies, and improve skills to boost productivity and minimize job losses. To adapt to the increasing digitization of economic activities and leverage its growing importance, OIC countries must consider implementing a comprehensive set of policy options in seven steps, as shown in the table below (Bridging the Digital Divide).



However, it is encouraging to note that OIC countries are experiencing a growing trade surplus in electronic components, an essential component of digital technologies (see the chart on OIC Countries' Total ICT Services Exports). They also have a surplus in consumer electronic equipment and various ICT products. ■

Nigeria : Enhancing Agricultural Trade Efficiency through e-Phyto

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT), IN COLLABORATION WITH THE GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR TRADE FACILITATION, ORGANIZED THE CLOSING EVENT FOR THE NIGERIA E-PHYTO PROJECT IN ABUJA, NIGERIA. THIS EVENT MARKS A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE IN ADVANCING AGRICULTURAL TRADE IN THE COUNTRY.



PHOTO SOUVENIR OF THE EPHYTO PROJECT LAUNCH IN NIGERIA



A VIEW OF THE WORK

The term e-Phyto or ePhyto stands for «electronic phytosanitary certificate,» an electronic version of the certificate

that contains all the information found in its paper counterpart. In Nigeria, the ICDT initiated the ePhyto project in partnership

with the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation. Highlights of the launch included a speech by Mr. Abubakar Kyari, Nigeria's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, and demonstrations of the ePhyto solution implemented in Nigeria. The event provided insights into the project's impact on streamlining phytosanitary certification processes and featured testimonials from key stakeholders. As ePhyto continues to expand globally, the ICDT recognizes and celebrates the transformative impact of public-private cooperation in boosting trade efficiency and promoting economic growth.

The Advantage of PPPs in Implementing ePhyto

From the ICDT's perspective, public-private partnerships (PPPs) are at the forefront of successful trade facilitation initiatives, and ePhyto is no exception. By promoting collaboration between government agencies and private sector stakeholders, the implementation of ePhyto becomes more transparent and efficient.

According to the event's organizers, these partnerships streamline processes, improve communication, and ensure that trade regulations meet the needs of businesses and regulatory bodies. ■

Competitiveness of Family Tourism in OIC Countries

OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE SUBSTANTIAL POTENTIAL TO ATTRACT FAMILY TOURISM, THANKS IN PART TO THEIR RICH CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS HERITAGE, WITH NUMEROUS HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS SITES THAT OFFER EDUCATIONAL AND SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCES, DIVERSE NATURAL LANDSCAPES RANGING FROM DESERTS TO MOUNTAINS, SNOWY PEAKS, COASTS, FORESTS, SAVANNAS, AND NATIONAL PARKS, AS WELL AS A VARIED GASTRONOMY AND LOCAL CUISINES OFFERING UNIQUE CULINARY EXPERIENCES, AND LEGENDARY HOSPITALITY. WHAT, THEN, ARE THE KEY FACTORS FOR COMPETITIVENESS IN THIS SECTOR?

Family tourism is a steadily growing segment globally. For OIC countries, this type of tourism represents a significant economic development opportunity. However, it's essential to understand that families seek destinations that offer safety with secure, controlled environments, a variety of activities for all ages, family-friendly infrastructure (hotels, lodging, transportation), and good value for money. While OIC countries have much to offer, they must address certain challenges and establish essential conditions for success. The best practices and success stories of certain OIC countries can serve as a model. Dubai has become a benchmark for family tourism, thanks to its theme parks, luxurious hotels, and diverse activities. Turkey focuses on its cultural and religious heritage and its coastal areas to attract families, while Malaysia, Egypt, and Morocco combine nature, culture, authenticity, history, and modernity.

Keys to Competitiveness

To attract and retain families, OIC countries should improve tourism infrastructure with suitable lodging, family-friendly hotels, theme parks, and adapted transportation. By developing tailored tourism

products through themed tours, combined offers, and quality labels that guarantee safety and service quality, they have greater potential to succeed in family tourism.

Effective communication is also essential, highlighting the destination's family-friendly assets. Supporting sustainable tourism that promotes environmental protection and natural resources is crucial, as families are increasingly aware of environmental issues and prefer sustainable destinations.

Among the challenges to address, safety is paramount. Ensuring tourist safety, especially in sometimes unstable geopolitical contexts, is essential. To succeed in family tourism, OIC countries should consider enhancing their brand image by countering negative stereotypes that may be associated with them. It's also important to differentiate themselves from competitors by standing out from other family destinations.

This sector is one of the fastest-growing segments worldwide, and OIC countries are no exception. The rise of new middle classes in these countries is driving demand for travel and vacations. Families



FAMILY TOURISM



AMUSEMENT PARKS

are seeking more authentic and immersive experiences connected to local culture and traditions. ■

HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY IN OIC COUNTRIES

UNDERGOING A TRANSFORMATION, THE HEALTHCARE INDUSTRY WITHIN OIC COUNTRIES HAS SEEN NUMEROUS ADVANCEMENTS, YET SIGNIFICANT CHALLENGES REMAIN. TO ADDRESS THESE AND SEIZE OPPORTUNITIES, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH SYSTEMS, INVEST IN RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, PROMOTE REGIONAL COOPERATION, AND FOSTER UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE.

There is some differentiation among OIC countries in terms of economic development, health systems, and health challenges. Despite this diversity, the healthcare industry in these countries is experiencing significant progress and promising prospects while facing specific challenges.

In many OIC countries, significant strides, particularly with increased investments, have been made in healthcare. In recent years, healthcare spending has surged, reflecting a growing awareness of the importance of health for human and economic development. To improve healthcare access for large segments of the population, the development of health infrastructure has become a reality, notably with the construction of new hospitals, clinics, and health centers. Furthermore, large-scale vaccina-

tion campaigns have eradicated or controlled many infectious diseases. Similarly, medical research is progressing. Some OIC countries have established ambitious research programs, particularly in the area of endemic infectious diseases. Rooted in local cultures, traditional medicine has seen a resurgence in interest and is increasingly integrated into health systems.

Promising Prospects

In OIC countries, population growth and aging will increase demand for healthcare. These trends create new opportunities for the pharmaceutical industry, medical devices, and healthcare services. Urbanization and economic development are also driving an epidemiological shift, with a rise in chronic diseases, necessitating health system adaptations and new approaches to prevention and treatment.



In the digital era, information and communication technologies (ICT) offer new possibilities to improve healthcare access, quality, and efficiency through telemedicine, e-health, and artificial intelligence (AI). Notably, in OIC member countries, public-private partnerships can foster innovation, investment, and the development of new health products and services. In the near future, enhanced regional coordination could strengthen health systems, share best practices, and address cross-border health challenges.

Challenges to Overcome

Current conditions and promising prospects highlight the challenges to be addressed. Health inequalities persist in many OIC countries, particularly in terms of access to care, quality of care, and universal health coverage.

For many OIC countries, the lack of qualified healthcare profes-



MODERN MRI SCANNER



OPERATING THEATER AT MOHAMED VI HOSPITAL



nals is a major challenge, while other issues, such as antimicrobial resistance (a growing threat to public health in OIC countries) and the rise in non-communicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer, and diabetes, place a significant burden on health systems.

To improve maternal and child health, strategies should include investing in healthcare infrastructure, training personnel, and improving access to essential medicines and medical equipment. There is also a need for public awareness campaigns on reproductive health, the

importance of breastfeeding, family planning, and prenatal care, as well as combating early marriages. Regarding this last point, OIC countries must strengthen laws prohibiting child marriages and implement education programs for girls, as well as establish referral systems to ensure pregnant women and newborns receive specialized care in case of complications.

Additionally, healthcare financing, the backbone of the system, remains a major challenge for many OIC countries, especially due to rising healthcare costs and budget constraints. ■

The Impact of Covid-19 on the Healthcare Systems of OIC Countries

THE PANDEMIC HIGHLIGHTED THE FRAGILITIES OF HEALTHCARE SYSTEMS WORLDWIDE, AND OIC COUNTRIES WERE NO EXCEPTION. THIS HEALTH CRISIS EXACERBATED PRE-EXISTING CHALLENGES AND REVEALED NEW VULNERABILITIES.



Covid-19 presented a significant challenge for the healthcare systems of OIC countries. It is essential to learn from this crisis to strengthen the resilience of healthcare systems and better prepare these countries to face future pandemics. The main impacts ranged from overburdened healthcare systems and a painful shortage of resources to disruptions in supply chains and socio-economic consequences.

Regarding the overburdening of healthcare systems, the sudden increase in Covid-19 patients stretched hospital and health center capacities, particularly in terms of beds, ventilators, and medical personnel. Additionally, to respond to the urgency of the pandemic, many countries had to postpone

or reduce other essential healthcare services, such as vaccinations, maternal and child care, and the fight against chronic diseases. The consequences were dramatic, with hundreds of deaths recorded.

Exacerbated Inequalities

Concerning resource shortages, the lack of personal protective equipment (PPE) endangered healthcare workers and hindered the ability to care for patients. In certain areas, especially early in the pandemic, the lack of diagnostic tests delayed case detection and complicated the implementation of effective control measures.

In low- and middle-income countries facing supply difficulties, access to Covid-19 medications and vaccines was uneven.

Supply chains, particularly for imports, were disrupted everywhere. Travel restrictions and border closures affected the supply of medicines, medical equipment, and essential goods. Moreover, the socio-economic consequences, including income reduction and heightened inequalities due to lockdowns and economic restrictions, caused substantial losses for many families, limiting their ability to afford healthcare. The pandemic worsened existing healthcare access inequalities, particularly impacting the most vulnerable populations.

Lessons to Be Learned

The Covid-19 crisis highlighted the need to strengthen healthcare systems in OIC countries, notably by investing in primary healthcare and developing health information systems through improved data collection, analysis, and dissemination for better decision-making.

This pandemic calls for enhancing the resilience of healthcare systems by implementing emergency preparedness plans and maintaining reserves of medical equipment.

To support research on emerging infectious diseases and the development of new vaccines and treatments, OIC countries aim to promote R&D, increase the number of qualified healthcare professionals, and improve their skills. ■



The Development of the Pharmaceutical Industry in OIC Countries

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHARMACEUTICAL SECTOR WITHIN OIC MEMBER STATES IS A CRUCIAL ISSUE FOR IMPROVING PUBLIC HEALTH. BY IMPLEMENTING EFFECTIVE PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRIALIZATION POLICIES, SOME OIC COUNTRIES HAVE STRENGTHENED THEIR HEALTHCARE AUTONOMY AND IMPROVED ACCESS TO ESSENTIAL MEDICINES.

In their strategies for pharmaceutical industry development, OIC countries have prioritized improving access to medications. This includes producing generic drugs to reduce costs, negotiating licensing agreements, establishing more laboratories, implementing bulk purchasing policies, and developing innovative financing mechanisms.

To bolster local production capacity, OIC member states have encouraged investments in production infrastructure, developed personnel skills, and implemented incentive policies. Similarly, to support academic and industrial research, international collaborations have been encouraged, and centers of excellence in pharmaceutical research have been established. Many patents have been filed, a significant portion of which have quickly been industrialized.



MODERN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY.

In these strategies, regulation and quality control have been strengthened. Rigorous and harmonized regulatory systems have been implemented, and the capacity for quality control of medicines has been enhanced.

Promising Prospects

The pharmaceutical industry in OIC countries has a bright future. Given the growth and aging of the population, the emergence of new diseases, such as non-communicable diseases and emerging infectious diseases, it is essential to offer solutions that meet the increasing

demand for medications and the development of new drugs. The WHO has simulated responses to a potential «Pandemic X.»

Many OIC countries, such as Morocco and Tunisia, are encouraging local drug production to reduce reliance on imports. Today, given the importance of the sector, partnerships between governments and pharmaceutical companies can foster the development of the local pharmaceutical industry. Across larger regions within the OIC, improved regional coordination can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and technology and support the development of regional supply chains.

In addition to making medicines available and addressing access challenges, efforts are also being made to reduce high medication costs so that a larger portion of the population can receive treatment. ■

Agricultural Sector : A Vital Component of the Economies in OIC Countries

IN DEVELOPING OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES, AGRICULTURE HOLDS SIGNIFICANT IMPORTANCE FOR SEVERAL REASONS. THIS SECTOR SUSTAINS A LARGE PORTION OF THE POPULATION, ESPECIALLY IN RURAL AREAS, AND IS OFTEN THE PRIMARY EMPLOYER IN THESE REGIONS. RECENT STATISTICS INDICATE THAT IN 2021, AGRICULTURE'S SHARE OF TOTAL GDP, THOUGH DECLINING, STILL EXCEEDED 25% IN 11 OIC COUNTRIES.

Agriculture is one of the main economic activities and plays a crucial role in the economies of developing countries. While they possess substantial agricultural resources, most OIC countries heavily rely on imports to feed their local populations. A large portion of land in OIC countries remains dedicated to agriculture, with some countries having over 70% agricultural land in 2020. Over the past two decades, agriculture's share of OIC countries' total GDP has gradually decreased from 11.8% in 2000 to 10.4% in 2021 (see chart: Overview of Agricultural Production). This trend is consistent with other regions: in developing countries, agriculture's share of GDP fell from 9.7% in 2000 to 8.2% in 2021, and in developed countries, it decreased from 1.5% to 1.2% over the same period. However, globally, agriculture's contribution to GDP increased from 3.3% to 4.3% between 2000 and 2021.

A Crucial Role

The relative decline in agricultural value added to the GDP of developing countries can be attributed to structural transformations, instability in agricultural markets, environmental constraints, and the depletion or degradation of land and

water resources. These factors have reduced agriculture's contribution to the economy, allowing other sectors such as services, industry, and manufacturing to play a more significant role in GDP. Nevertheless, agriculture remains crucial in many OIC economies. For example, in 2021, agriculture accounted for more than 25% of the GDP in 11 OIC countries, including Sierra Leone, Somalia, Chad, Comoros, Niger, Mali, Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, Mozambique, and Guinea, many of which are low-income, Sub-Saharan African countries where a substantial portion of the population is employed in agriculture.

Moreover, the agricultural sector in some OIC countries has experienced considerable growth over the past two decades, despite its declining share of GDP. Countries like Chad, Jordan, Tajikistan, Iraq, Qatar, Iran, Mali, Nigeria, Niger, and Kazakhstan recorded the highest compounded annual growth rates in agricultural value added, while Lebanon, Bahrain, the UAE, Turkey, Sudan, Yemen, Suriname, Gambia, Syria, and Libya ranked among the ten lowest (see chart: Compounded Annual Growth Rate of Agricultural Value

Added in OIC Countries, Top and Bottom Ten, 2000-2021). Nearly all OIC countries had positive compounded annual growth rates in agricultural value added, except for Libya and Syria, whose agricultural sectors were neglected due to the impact of climate change and prolonged political instability. The Agricultural Production Index is an essential measure of agricultural production growth in a country. It calculates the production of crops, livestock, and fisheries as the ratio between the value of agricultural production in a given year and the value in a base year, with 2016 being the base year. Based on the analysis, OIC countries as a group demonstrated an improvement in agricultural production performance from 2011 to 2021. Particularly since 2016, OIC countries have shown a remarkable growth rate in agricultural production, increasing by 13.2%. This growth surpasses that of non-OIC developing countries (10.8%), developed countries (0.1%), and the global average (9.9%) (see chart: Gross Agricultural Production Index). This improvement is significant given that agriculture remains a primary source of income and employment in many OIC countries, particularly in rural areas.

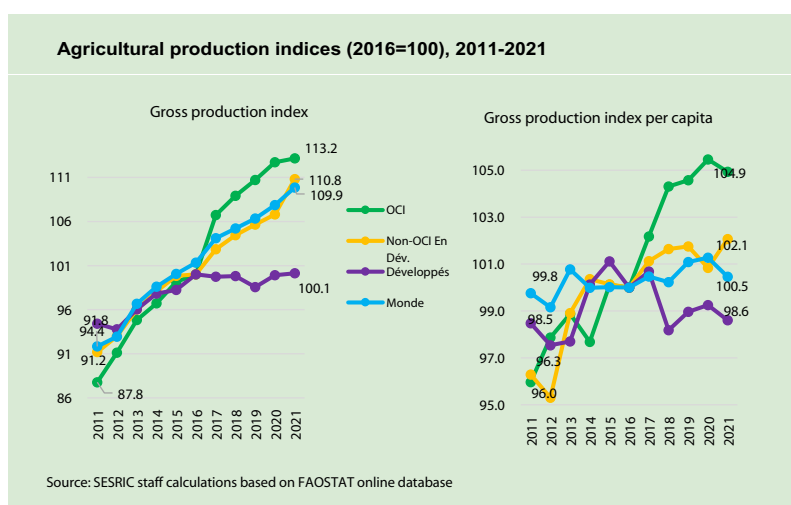
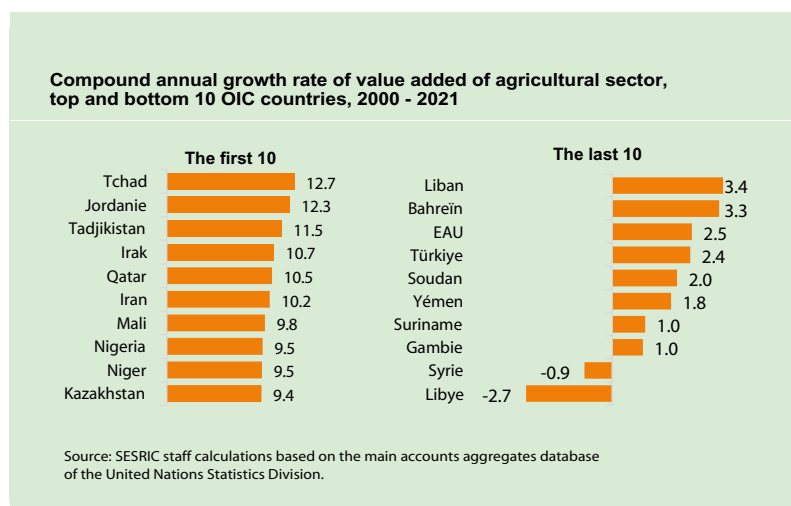
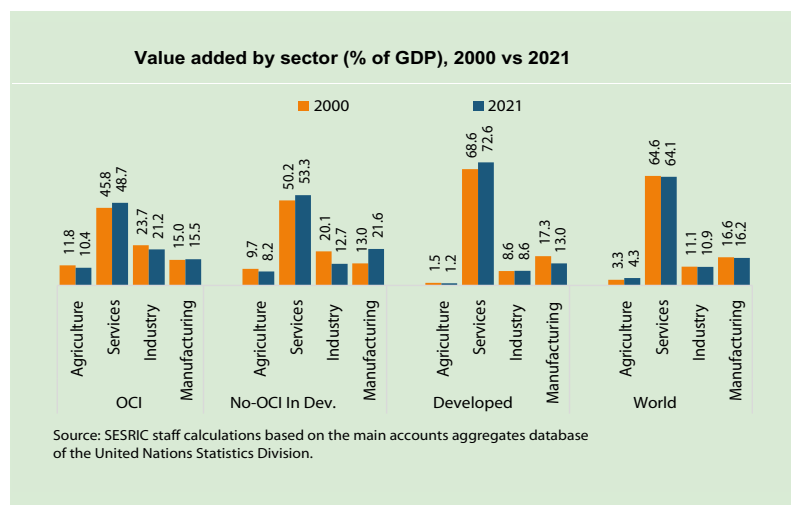
Room for Improvement

Regarding the agricultural production per capita index, average agricultural production per capita in OIC countries showed modest growth over the period compared to non-OIC developing countries, developed countries, and the world as a whole.

At the individual country level, 27 out of 44 OIC member countries with available data reported positive compounded annual growth rates in agricultural production per capita from 2011 to 2021. Among these countries, Guyana (14.3%), Senegal (10.1%), Oman (7.0%), Tajikistan (4.3%), Côte d'Ivoire (3.4%), Qatar (2.7%), Azerbaijan (2.5%), Saudi Arabia (2.5%) and Brunei Darussalam (2.5%) recorded the highest compounded annual growth rates, each over 2%. On the other hand, 17 OIC countries experienced negative compounded annual growth rates in agricultural production per capita, including Maldives, Gambia, Iraq, Jordan, and Kuwait, all of which saw at least two compounded annual declines in agricultural production per capita (see chart: Agricultural Production per Capita Index).

Overall, the poor agricultural performance of many OIC countries indicates insufficient food production capacity to meet growing domestic demand. This situation leaves many OIC countries highly dependent on food imports, which can be costly and have negative economic impacts.

Therefore, the continued efforts of OIC countries and the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), such as the Food Security Program in Afghanistan and the



Food Security Initiative in Africa, aimed at improving agricultural production in OIC countries, are

essential for strengthening food security, reducing poverty, and promoting economic growth. ■

Agricultural Sector Production of Major Crops

IN 2021, OIC COUNTRIES HELD THE HIGHEST GLOBAL SHARES IN THE TOTAL PRODUCTION OF DATES (97%), OIL PALM FRUITS (87.8%), COCOA BEANS (64.3%), CASSAVA (36.7%), AND MILLET (34.9%) COMPARED TO OTHER PRIMARY CROPS, SUCH AS BARLEY, DRY BEANS, COFFEE, MAIZE, OATS, RICE, SORGHUM, SOYBEANS, SUGAR, TEA, AND WHEAT. THESE COUNTRIES RANKED AMONG THE TOP 20 GLOBAL PRODUCERS OF KEY AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES IN 2021.

In the primary sector, fish production in OIC countries significantly increased over the past decade, from 15.5 million tons in 2010 to 19.9 million tons in 2020, representing 21.7% of global capture fish production in 2020. Similar to primary crop production, livestock production is concentrated in only 14 OIC countries, namely Algeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkey, and Uzbekistan.

Grouped as cereals, fruits, vegetables, roots, and tubers, global production of these categories has risen over the past decade. Cereals and roots & tubers were the largest groups of crops produced in OIC countries in 2021, representing 39.9% and 25.1%, respectively, of the total primary crop production in OIC countries. During this period, OIC countries contributed 405.2 million tons to global cereal production, accounting for a 13.2%

share, a slight decrease from 14.6% in 2011. Additionally, roots and tubers production in OIC countries was 254.2 million tons, or 29% of the global production of roots and tubers (see chart: Primary Crop Production by Region, 2011 vs. 2021).

Although fruits and vegetables comprise only about 35% of the total primary crop production in OIC countries, their production grew significantly between 2011 and 2021 by 26.7% and 25.4%, respectively, reaching 188.6 million tons in 2021 and 166.4 million tons in 2021. Together, they represented around 20.7% and 14.4% of global fruit and vegetable production (see chart: Primary Crop Production by Region, 2011 vs. 2021). Overall, OIC countries, non-OIC developing countries, and developed countries all recorded considerable growth in primary crop production. According to the FAO (2022), this global increase is attri-

buted to several factors, including the adoption of better agricultural practices, increased use of irrigation, pesticides, and fertilizers, expanded cultivated areas, and the use of high-yield crop varieties.

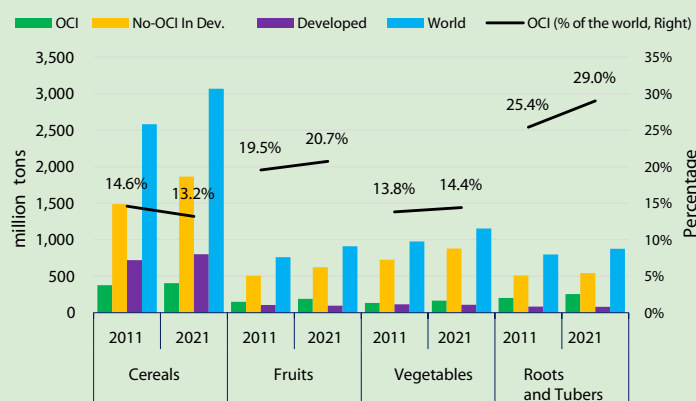
In 2021, primary crop production was concentrated in 17 OIC countries (see chart: Top 10 Primary Crop Producers in Millions of Tons, 2021). For roots and tubers, the top 10 producers accounted for 82.2% of the total production within OIC countries. Similarly, only 10 OIC countries represented 79.9% of total cereal production in the OIC. As for vegetables and fruits, the top 10 producers accounted for 70.5% and 69.9% of total production, respectively, in 2021. This concentration indicates that agricultural production is centered in a small number of countries, with most OIC member states producing relatively small quantities of these key agricultural products.

A Net Importing Region

Agricultural exports contribute to countries' income and balance of payments. OIC countries have experienced growth in their international trade capacities in food and agricultural products. However, they remain a net importing region, with imports exceeding exports. The value of exports rose from \$141.7 billion in 2011 to \$188.1 billion in 2021, while imports increased from \$218.6 billion in 2011 to \$292.9 billion in 2021. Intra-OIC agricultural trade has also shown positive growth, with the value of intra-OIC agricultural products increasing by approximately 85% between 2011 and 2021. Disparities exist among OIC countries in international trade of food and agricultural products, with some having trade surpluses while the majority record trade deficits. These disparities present an opportunity to strengthen intra-OIC trade and promote cooperation among member countries.

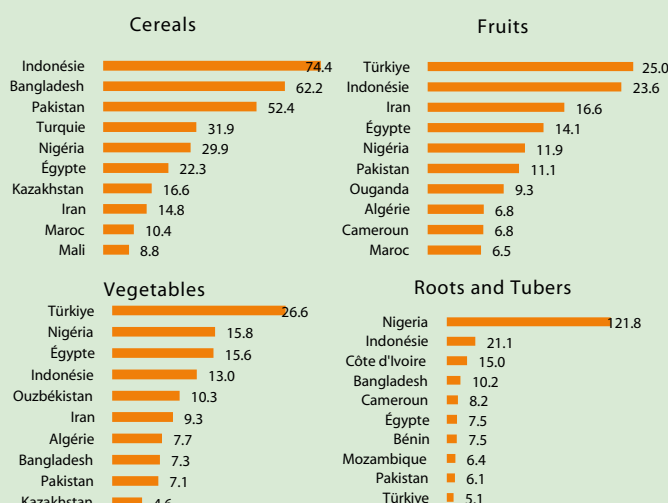
Challenges related to eradicating hunger and food insecurity also persist, with severe socio-economic repercussions. A total of 26 OIC member states have been identified as low-income, food-deficit countries (LIFDCs), and 22 OIC countries were classified by the FAO as requiring external food assistance. Addressing agricultural development challenges, such as inefficient agricultural resource management, lack of infrastructure, micronutrient deficiencies, and climate change impacts, is essential to turn these challenges into opportunities and address the numerous issues affecting the sector. ■

Production of primary crop groups by region, 2011 vs 2021



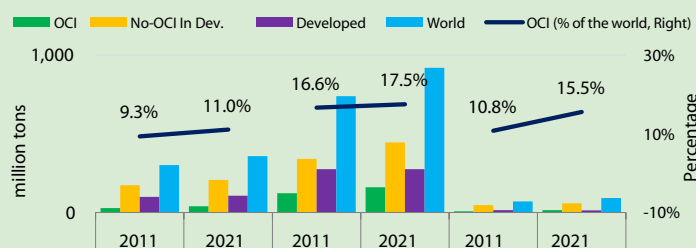
Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on FAOSTAT online database

Top 10 producers of primary crop groups (million tons), 2021



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on FAOSTAT online database

Production of animal products, 2011 vs 2021



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on FAOSTAT online database



10th OIC Halal Expo in Tunis, Scheduled for 2025

THE 10th EDITION OF THE OIC HALAL EXPO, SCHEDULED FOR 2025 AT THE KRAM EXHIBITION PARK IN TUNIS, IS SET TO BE A LANDMARK EVENT FOR THE HALAL INDUSTRY.

A key event for all players in the halal industry, the 10th OIC Halal Expo aims to promote the development of the growing halal sector and strengthen cooperation among member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Organized by the ICDT and under the patronage of the Ministry of Trade and Export Development of the Republic of Tunisia, this specialized trade show is dedicated to halal products and services. It brings together exhibitors from around the world, including food producers, cosmetics manufacturers, logistics companies, certification bodies, and financial institutions.

Key topics will include the latest developments in halal standards and certifications, best practices in halal production to ensure compliance with halal standards, and logistical challenges for halal pro-

ducts. Additionally, financing solutions for businesses in the halal sector will be highlighted.

Latest Trends

The agenda for this 10th edition includes plenary sessions, B2B and B2C meetings, and workshops. The Expo will cover all aspects of the halal value chain, from production to distribution, with a comprehensive range of products and services. Conferences and workshops will delve into various branches of the halal sector to enhance knowledge.

This premier international event will host exhibitors from numerous OIC member countries and other regions worldwide, providing companies with opportunities to form partnerships and expand their business networks. It will be an ideal platform to meet key industry players, exchange insights with professionals from around the

globe, and establish connections and potential new partnerships.

A dedicated innovation space will be available for startups and innovative companies in the halal sector, showcasing the latest trends in the halal market. The Expo will present recent innovations and the most in-demand products on the halal market. This event aims to raise awareness of halal products and services to a broad audience and strengthen consumer confidence in halal offerings.

Participants will have the opportunity to share experiences and insights on halal standards and certifications, exchanging best practices within the industry.

For more information, visit the website:
<https://halalexpo-tunisia.com.tn/>



- ▶ **16th BIENNIAL UN-OIC COOPERATION MEETING**
July 22-24, 2024 • Astana, Kazakhstan

- ▶ **WEBINAR ON «ENHANCING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF HALAL TOURISM IN THE OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES»**
July 29, 2024 • Virtual

- ▶ **ISLAMIC COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (ICECSA)**
July 28-30, 2024 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

- ▶ **PERMANENT FINANCE COMMITTEE (PFC)**
July 31 - August 1, 2024 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

- ▶ **WORKSHOP ON ISLAMIC DIGITAL ECONOMY IN OIC MEMBER STATES**
July 31, 2024 • Virtual

- ▶ **50th OIC COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS MEETING**
August 29-30, 2024 • Yaoundé, Cameroon

- ▶ **22nd COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP MEETING**
September 19-20, 2024 • Ankara, Turkey

- ▶ **INVEST DAYS IN YAOUNDÉ**
September 24-25, 2024 • Yaoundé, Cameroon

- ▶ **10th HALAL PRODUCTS EXPO OF OIC MEMBER STATES**
2025 • Tunis, Tunisia

- ▶ **RESTITUTION WORKSHOP ON THE REPORT FOR EXPANDING ARAB-AFRICAN TRADE AND INVESTMENT POTENTIAL**
October 15-16, 2024 • Casablanca, Morocco

- ▶ **TRAINING FOR WOMEN FROM FRANCOPHONE OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES**
October 21-25, 2024 • Ndjamena, Chad

- ▶ **ICDT INVEST DAYS N'DJAMENA**
October 22-23, 2024 • Ndjamena, Chad

- ▶ **41st SESSION OF COMCEC**
November 2-5, 2024 • Istanbul, Turkey

- ▶ **COP 29 (TRAINING WORKSHOP FOR ASIAN COUNTRIES)**
November 11-22, 2024 • Baku, Azerbaijan

- ▶ **4th CONSULTATIVE FORUM OF REGIONAL COOPERATION ORGANIZATIONS (RCO) OPERATING IN THE OIC ZONE**
November 19-20, 2024 • Marrakech, Morocco

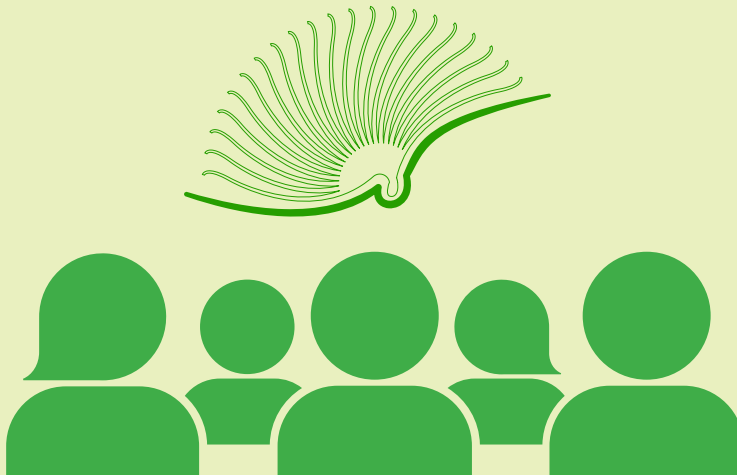
- ▶ **18th OIC TRADE FAIR**
November 29 - December 1, 2024 • Lahore, Pakistan

- ▶ **8th ACMOI**
December 4-5, 2024 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



**TRAINING WORKSHOP
ON MARKET ACCESS AND VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT
FOR WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES AND COOPERATIVES
IN FRENCH-SPEAKING OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES**

OCTOBER 21-25, 2024 • N'DJAMENA, CHAD



THE WORKSHOP ESSENTIALLY AIMS TO HELP SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (SMES) AND WOMEN-LED COOPERATIVES INCREASE THEIR ACCESS TO THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET AND BETTER MANAGE THEIR VALUE CHAINS, WHICH, IN TURN, WILL INCREASE OVERALL FLOWS OF TRADE AND INVESTMENT FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING MEMBER COUNTRIES.

THE WORKSHOP AIMS TO SUPPORT BUSINESS AND COOPERATIVE LEADERS FROM OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES, WITH THE AIM OF ACCESSING THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET, DISCOVERING NEW MARKET TRENDS AND PROVIDING THEM WITH THE NECESSARY SUPPORT IN TERMS OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.





منظمة التعاون الإسلامي
OIC-OCI

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations, comprising 57 member states spread across 4 continents. The Organization serves as the voice of the Muslim world, safeguarding and protecting its interests in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among the world's diverse peoples.

The Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the General Secretariat are the main organs of the OIC. The Organization also includes three permanent thematic committees: the Committee on Science and Technology, the Committee on Economy and Trade, the Committee on Communication and Culture, as well as the Al-Quds Committee. Furthermore, the Organization has specialized institutions operating under its umbrella, such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). These thematic committees, subsidiary bodies, and affiliated institutions of the Organization play a vital and complementary role by working in various domains.

www.oic-oci.org