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TIJARIS



THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTRA-OIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT

FOCUS

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HEALTH SECTOR IN THE WORLD AND IN 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.

Mrs Latifa Elbouabdellaoui
Director General



Investing in Health: A Strategic Necessity

In the wake of post-COVID 19 worldwide supply chain disruptions, member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) are grappling with significant health security challenges, including issues related to access to healthcare, attracting foreign direct investment for local pharmaceutical production, securing infrastructure financing, driving technological innovation, and building medical staff capacity. These are all issues that call for a strategic vision, but more importantly for targeted sectoral investment.

To this end, we have devoted this issue of our magazine to trade and investment in the healthcare sector. Health is at the heart of our concerns, as it directly influences the prosperity of our nations and the resilience of our economies.

While health was traditionally viewed as a separate sector, it is now recognized as a key pillar of economic growth. The establishment of a national pharmaceutical sector, the organization of supply chains for medical equipment, the growth of telemedicine and the digitization of medical services present great economic prospects. Investing in these sectors not only improves access to healthcare but also creates jobs, reduces disparities, and enhances the health independence of OIC member countries.

Furthermore, the recent global health crisis has highlighted the need to enhance health system infrastructure, foster regional collaboration to manage emergencies and prevent future crises, and ensure countries are more responsive. As a result, OIC countries have developed public-private partnership strategies to invest in structuring projects in the healthcare industry, decentralizing certain specialties to the regions of certain states.

In the field of trade promotion and investment facilitation, IC

organizes the 5th edition of the OIC Health Expo in Dakar, Senegal, from April 15 to 19, 2025, in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Social Action, the Ministry of Trade, CICES and BADEA. Indeed, this event aims to foster partnerships among OIC countries in the sector and serve as a meeting point for meaningful interactions between stakeholders from both the public and private sectors. The goal is to stimulate synergies between governments, companies, investors and international organizations, in order to inspire a new dynamic tailored to the realities of our countries.

This issue aims to spotlight the initiatives reshaping the healthcare landscape in our countries and foster discussion on the strategies required to accelerate investment and strengthen partnerships.

We are fully committed to this mission, as we strongly believe that healthcare should not be seen as a mere budgetary handout, but rather as a long-term investment that promotes prosperity and stability. On the occasion of this fifth edition of the OIC Health Expo, with the Kingdom of Morocco as country of honor and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as special guest, under the theme: Health, a vector for economic development in OIC countries, we would like to reiterate our determination to promote constructive discussion between stakeholders in the field. Our ultimate goal is to contribute to the best of our abilities, in creating practical solutions to build more efficient and accessible healthcare systems.

The ability to innovate, collaborate, and invest sustainably will shape the future of healthcare in our nations. Together, we have the chance to turn this moment into a transformative journey.

Welcome to Dakar!! ■

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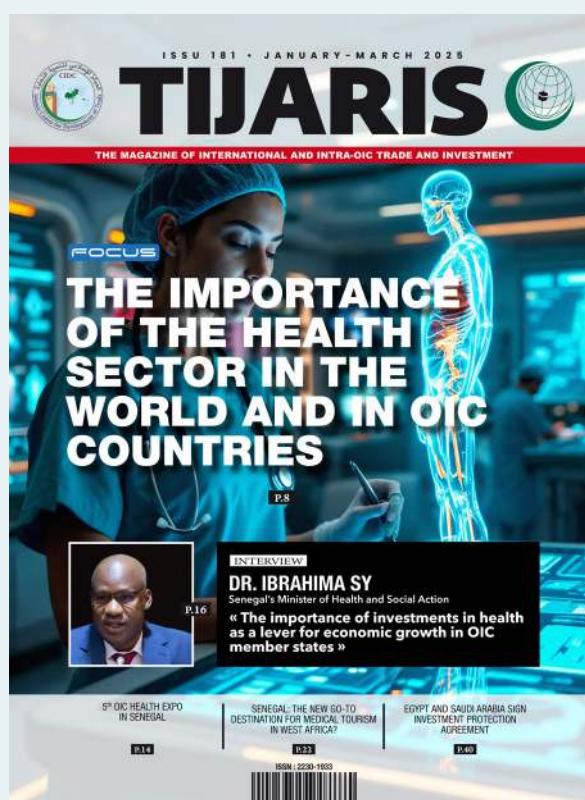
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OIC General Secretariat Welcomes the Reintegration of All Syrian State Institutions

This decision is the result of the signing of an agreement between President Ahmad Al-Sharaa, President of the Syrian Arab Republic, and Mr. Mazloum Abdi, Commander of the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) on March 10. On this occasion, the OIC General Secretariat welcomed this initiative aimed at preserving Syria's unity and sovereignty, and meeting the aspirations of all the Syrian people. ■



OIC Commemorates International Women's Day



On March 8, the OIC joined the international community in commemorating International Women's Day. On this occasion, H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the OIC, highlighted the need to accelerate the em-

powerment of women to achieve sustainable progress in the OIC region. He further noted that the OIC remains committed to its mission of promoting gender equality in line with Islamic principles, and ensuring that women are the main catalysts of development, peace and prosperity.

In this respect, it is worth noting that the empowerment of women is a cornerstone of the OIC Charter, the OIC-2025 and OIC-2035 Program of Action, as well as the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAOW). The creation of the OIC Women's Development Organization (WDO) in Cairo in 2021 is a concrete sign of the General Secretariat's commitment to advancing women's causes and promoting their active participation in the economic, political and social spheres of OIC countries. ■

The OIC at the 29th Edition of FESPACO



At the invitation of the authorities of Burkina Faso, the OIC Secretary General, His Excellency Mr. Hissein Brahim TAHA, was represented by his Special Envoy for Africa, His Excellency Mr. Nassirou Bako-Arifari, at the 29th edition of the Ouagadougou Pan-African

Film and Television Festival (FESPACO). The festival, held from February 22nd to March 1st, 2025, was organized under the patronage of the President of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Captain Ibrahim TRAORE, and His Excellency Marshal Mahamat DECO.

This year's edition featured 1,351 films from 48 countries, with a notable presence from OIC member states.

On the sidelines of the festival, His Excellency Mr. Nassirou Bako-Arifari met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Burkina Faso, His Excellency Mr. Karamoko Jean-Marie Traoré, to convey a message of brotherhood and congratulations from the OIC Secretary General to the President of Faso, His Excellency Captain Ibrahim Traoré, on the success of FESPACO, held under the theme "African Cinema and Cultural Identities." ■

OIC Participates in Navruz International World Youth Festival in Dushanbe, Tajikistan



Upon the invitation of His Excellency Gulahmadzoda Zulfiqor Ahmad, Chairman of the Committee of Youth Affairs and Sports of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan, Dr Boubakari Maiga, Head of the Youth and Sports Department represented the OIC General Secretariat at the Navruz International World Youth Festival in Dushanbe, organized from March 15 to 21, 2025. The Festival brought together the relevant authorities from Uzbekistan,

youth delegates from both OIC member and non-member states, as well as representatives from international organizations and pertinent UN agencies.

On this occasion, Dr. Maiga delivered an opening address on behalf of the OIC Secretary General, commending Tajikistan's key role in supporting the efforts of the OIC and the international community to achieve their goals by enhancing youth participation at local, national and international levels. He further noted that the OIC, through its 2025 Programme of Action and the resolutions adopted by the Islamic Summit, the CFM and the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers, places great importance on youth empowerment and capacity building.

On the sidelines of the Festival, Dr. Maiga met with the Chairman of the Youth Affairs and Sports Committee of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. He also discussed with other heads of delegations the ways and means of strengthening cooperation and partnership for the benefit of young people from OIC countries. ■

Webinar on the Role of the OIC Trade Preferential System (TPS-OIC) in Strengthening Economic Integration For OIC African Group Member States

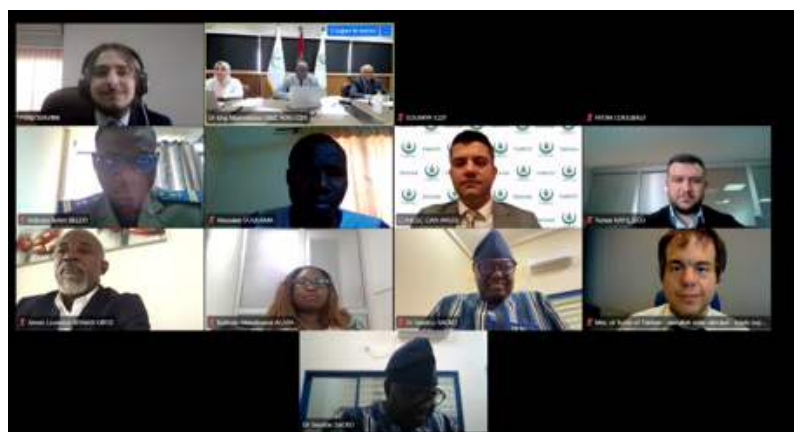
IN LINE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 42ND SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (COMCEC), HELD IN NOVEMBER 2024 IN ISTANBUL, ICDT ORGANIZED WITH THE COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE, A WEBINAR ON THE ROLE OF THE OIC TRADE PREFERENTIAL SYSTEM (TPS-OIC) IN STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC INTEGRATION FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE OIC AFRICAN GROUP MEMBER STATES, ON FEBRUARY 19, 2025.

The aim of the webinar was to raise awareness among OIC countries belonging to regional groupings such as CEMAC, ECOWAS, COMESA and SADC on the importance of joining the TPS-OIC, and to introduce participants to the following aspects:

- The legal provisions of the system and the practical details of its implementation;
- The legal requirements of this system with regard to commitments within the framework of the Regional Economic Communities (RECs);
- The experience of the Republic of Türkiye in implementing the system.

On this occasion, discussions covered the following:

- It is important for OIC African Group countries to join this system, as it would allow them to become full members of the Negotiating Committee rather than remaining as observers.
- The commitments of OIC African Group member countries at the level of the RECs constitute no explicit legal impediment to membership of the TPS-OIC.
- The RES countries could engage in internal discussions to better ma-



nage the individual membership of OIC countries that are members of the RES to the TPS-OIC.

- The necessity to leverage the favorable and preferential treatment accorded to LDCs under the TPS-OIC provisions, within the framework of the accession process to this system.
- The readiness of the TPS-OIC Secretariat (ICDT and CCO) to assist African Group countries in the process of drawing up schedules of tariff concessions, including accession impact studies. The Secretariat will seek contributions from other partners such as the IsDB, UNCTAD and the WTO.
- Countries are invited to formulate their requests for technical assistance, for consideration by the ICDT and the CCO.

- The organization of in-person workshops in Casablanca or at the headquarters of ECOWAS and CEMAC for the benefit of the countries of these two groupings, with a view to examining in detail the technical aspects of accession to the TPS-OIC.

The meeting brought together representatives from Benin, Burkina-Faso, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Togo, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Türkiye, as well as from trade ministries and customs administrations, and representatives from the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). ■



Political Dialogue Forum of OIC African and Asian IPAs

ICDT AND THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (ISDB) ORGANIZED FROM FEBRUARY 20 TO 21, 2025, THE 2TH POLICY DIALOGUE FORUM OF INVESTMENT PROMOTION AGENCIES (IPAS) OF AFRICAN AND ASIAN OIC COUNTRIES. THE EVENT OFFERED PARTICIPANTS A PLATFORM FOR EXCHANGING VIEWS ON THE BEST STRATEGIES FOR ATTRACTING FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) AND ADDRESSING TODAY'S ECONOMIC CHALLENGES. IN ADDITION, IT LAID THE FOUNDATIONS FOR THE CREATION OF THE OIC IPA NETWORK.

The Forum was attended by participants from Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Mauritania, Malaysia, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Senegal and Türkiye, as well as representatives from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the World Association of Investment Promotion Agencies (WAIPA) and the World Economic Forum (WEF).

On this occasion, the agenda included the following points:

- The state of investment flows and institutional needs

- Presentations on FDI trends, the role of investment agreements and the impact of digital technology on investment facilitation
- National experiences in investment promotion
- Proposed framework for the creation of the OIC IPA Network.

The following are some of the Forum's recommendations:

- **Networking and information exchange:** Creation of a digital platform to share investment projects.
- **Capacity building:** Training and support for IPAs to upgrade their services through digitalization.

- **Policies and reforms:** Modernization of investment codes and investment facilitation.

- **Digitalization and communication:** Development of digital tools to promote investment opportunities.

- **Joint initiatives:** Organization of investment forums and cooperation between IPAs on joint projects.

- **OIC IPA Network:** Statutes to be drafted by ICDT, ISDB in collaboration with IPAs, UNCTAD, WEF and WAIPA. ■



APIGA Annual Conference

UPON INVITATION FROM THE AFRICAN SOLIDARITY FUND (ASF), THE CENTRE TOOK PART IN APIGA'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2025, HELD ON FEBRUARY 27, 2025 IN NIAMEY (NIGER) UNDER THE THEME: "THE ROLE OF GUARANTEE INSTITUTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFCFTA". THE MEETING EXAMINED THE ROLE OF GUARANTEE INSTITUTIONS IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AFRICAN CONTINENTAL FREE TRADE AREA (AFCFTA).

The conference discussions centered around three key themes::

- Mechanisms offered by guarantee institutions to reduce the risks associated with productive investment and infrastructure development in the context of the implementation of the ZLECAF;
- The role and instruments offered by guarantee institutions in facilitating intra-African international trade transactions;
- Instruments offered by guarantee

institutions to support SMEs (processors and traders) in implementing the FTAA.

The conference proceedings culminated in the adoption of the Niamey 2025 Declaration.


While ICDT is not directly involved in the guarantee mechanisms, its presence at this meeting was essential, as 27 African countries are members of the OIC. This strong African representation

within the OIC places ICDT as a strategic partner for the development of intra-African trade and continental economic integration.

The Professional Association of Guarantee Institutions in Africa (APIGA) comprises 19 member institutions from 13 African countries, whose mission is to strengthen the role of guarantee institutions in economic development and financial inclusion in Africa. ■

Health

FOCUS



The importance of the health sector in the world and in OIC countries

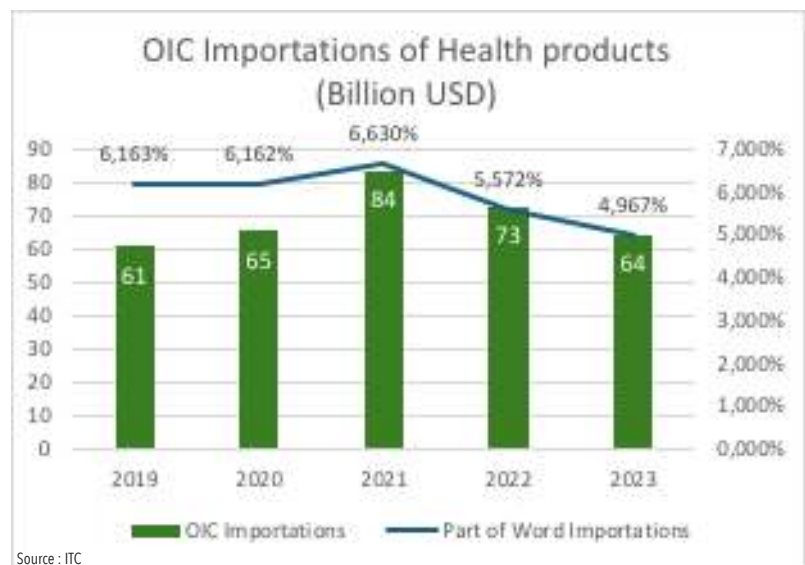
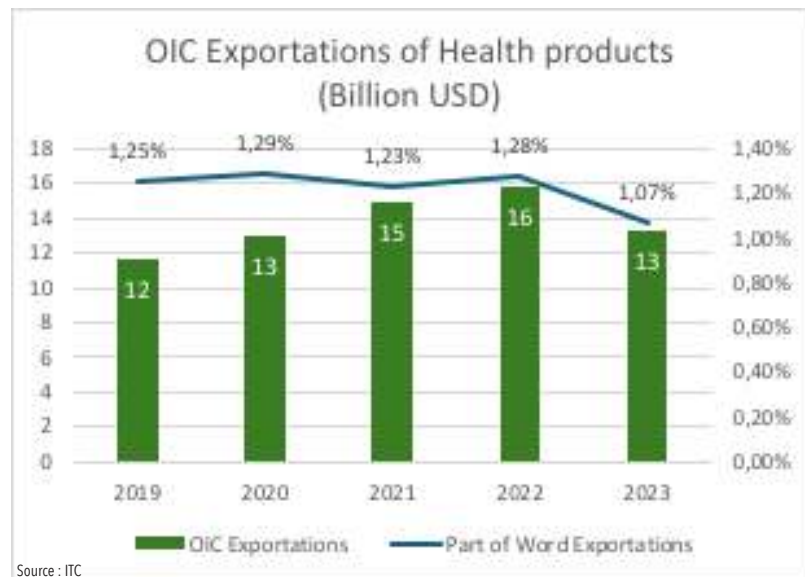
HEALTH HAS BECOME A GLOBAL PRIORITY, AND THE MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) POSSESS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO TRANSFORM THIS SECTOR INTO A POWERFUL ECONOMIC ASSET. BY INVESTING IN MODERN HEALTHCARE INFRASTRUCTURES AND FOSTERING TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATION, OIC NATIONS ARE ABLE NOT ONLY TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THEIR CITIZENS, BUT ALSO TO STIMULATE TRADE AND ATTRACT FOREIGN INVESTMENT.

Artificial intelligence and telemedicine, in particular, can revolutionize access to healthcare in remote areas, opening up new prospects for companies specializing in health technologies. Greater standardization of pharmaceutical regulations and quality standards among member countries could also facilitate trade in medicines and medical equipment, reducing costs and improving the efficiency of supply chains.

Cooperative initiatives, such as joint research projects and know-how exchanges, can stimulate innovation and strengthen local capabilities. By focusing on prevention and wellbeing, countries reduce long-term healthcare costs and create a more attractive environment for investors. A healthier population is generally more productive, which can drive economic growth and enhance trade connections within the OIC.

In this context, many member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) face challenges such as limited domestic production of medicines and medical technologies. Trade helps these countries to import essential healthcare goods, thereby guaranteeing better public health outcomes. Moreover, it supports industrial growth by encouraging investment in local manufacturing and innovation.

Cooperation between OIC members can reduce dependence on external suppliers, promoting regional self-sufficiency. Strengthening trade in healthcare also boosts resilience to crises like pandemics, while supporting the shared goal of advancing health equity and sustainable development within the OIC.



Healthcare Products: OIC Focuses on Medical Tools and Medicines

Exports of healthcare products from the countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) demonstrate a clear predominance of essential medical tools and pharmaceutical products, which make up the lion's share of the sector. Imports, on the other hand, are mainly dominated by medicines and human blood, underlining a strong dependence on these products. To strengthen their competi-

tiveness in the global healthcare market, OIC countries should diversify their production and develop exports in categories that are still under-represented. By doing so, they could increase their autonomy and expand their presence on the international market.

Intra-OIC Trade in Healthcare Products: Steady Imports, Volatile Exports

Intra-OIC trade in healthcare products displays a relatively stable trend on the import side, whereas exports are subject to

significant fluctuations, particularly in 2021 and 2022. This volatility could be attributed to increased trade barriers between member countries.

On the other hand, declining trade could also be the result of increased competition, falling demand or readjustments in global healthcare supply chains.

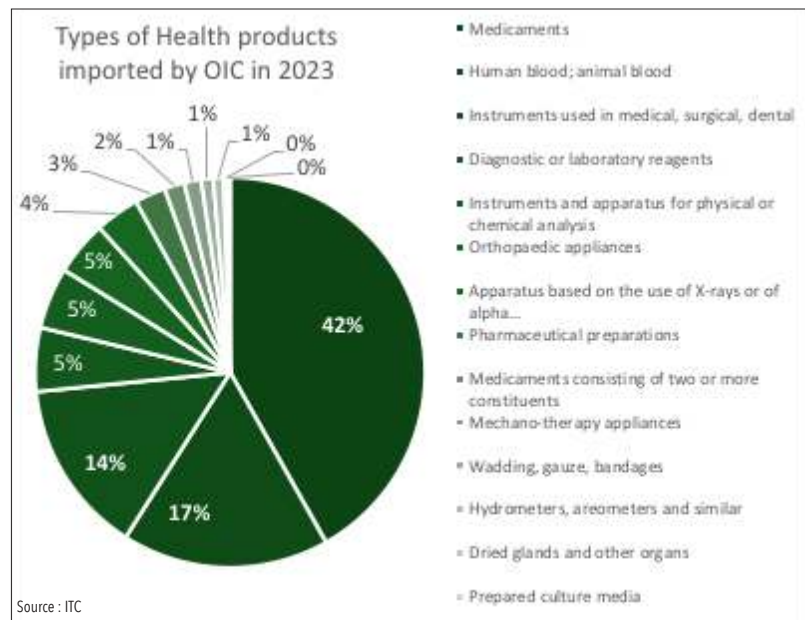
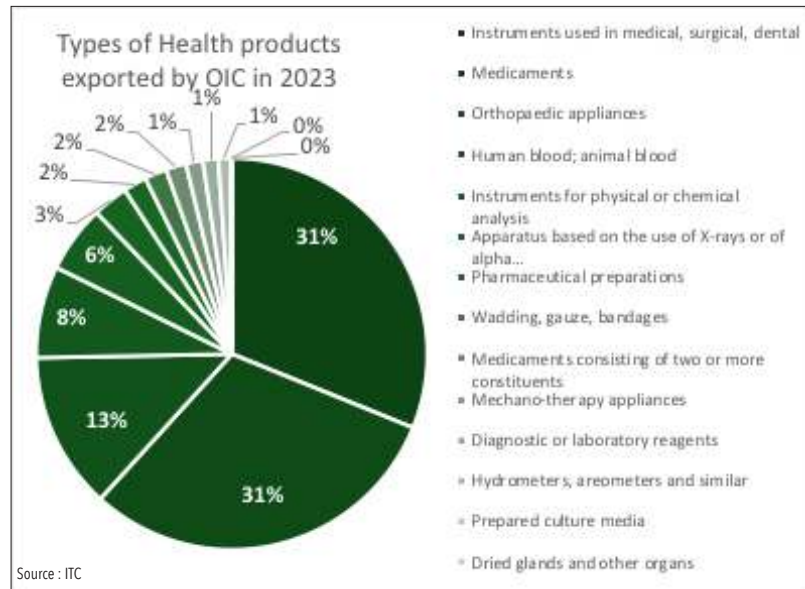
Strengthening Trade in Health Products Among OIC Countries: Guidelines and Recommendations

To strengthen trade in healthcare products among OIC countries, a number of strategic measures need to be implemented. Regulatory standardization is essential, with the development of unified standards and certifications for medicines, medical devices and other healthcare products. The establishment of mutual recognition agreements would remove trade barriers and accelerate approval processes.

In the same vein, the promotion of partnerships between member states would encourage joint ventures in manufacturing, research and development, as well as the exchange of know-how and best practices. Such initiatives would help stimulate innovation in the pharmaceutical and medical technology sectors.

Investment in research and development is a key factor in producing accessible, competitive healthcare solutions tailored to OIC markets. The integration of new technologies, such as telemedicine, artificial intelligence and bioinformatics, could improve access to care and boost its effectiveness.

Optimizing supply chains is equally crucial. The development of high-performance logistics



tics networks and the establishment of specialized regional hubs would guarantee rapid, efficient distribution of medical supplies, at reduced cost.

The market for halal healthcare products represents an outstanding opportunity. By exploiting the growing demand for halal-certified pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics, OIC countries could position themselves in a specific, competitive

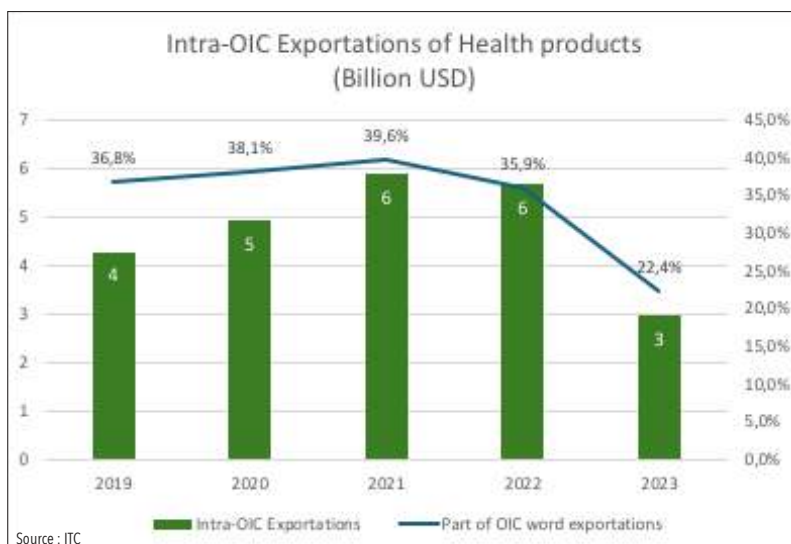
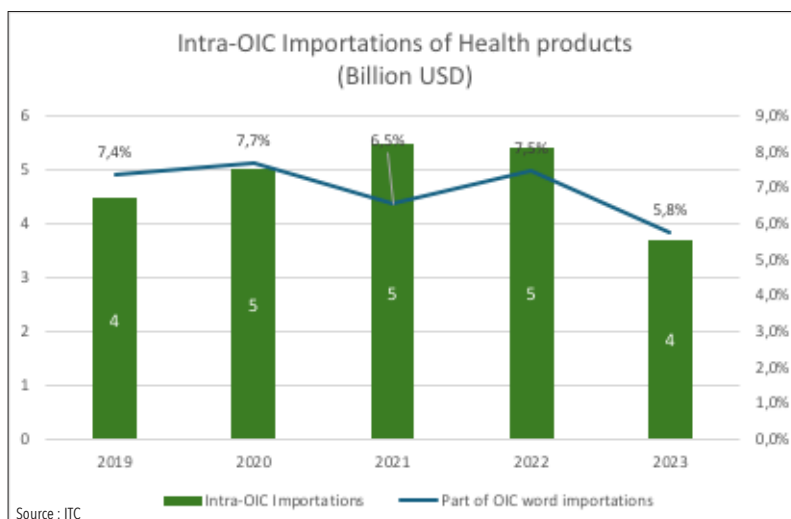
segment. OIC-approved standardization of halal certifications would ensure greater consistency and international recognition.

Human resources development constitutes another strategic priority. The development of specialized training courses would strengthen technical expertise in the production of healthcare products and ensure compliance with global standards. Besides, exchanges of healthcare

professionals between member countries would reinforce the sector's expertise.

Additional support for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) active in the healthcare sector, as well as the exploitation of digital commerce, are equally essential. Financial incentives and subsidies to SMEs would facilitate production and export, while the creation of online platforms would promote exchanges among suppliers, manufacturers and distributors. The development of e-commerce for healthcare products would expand outlets and reduce costs.

Finally, the creation of a dedicated OIC health fund would support the development of the sector, by financing initiatives linked to trade, production and emergency supply chains. By combining these measures, OIC countries could not only strengthen their health autonomy, but also assert their presence on the global health products market. ■



Egypt Enhances Health Security by Encouraging Local Production of Health Equipment.

On the sidelines of the Arab Health Expo, held from January 27 to 29 in the United Arab Emirates, Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Health and Population of the Arab Republic of Egypt, met Dr. Elie Chaliot, Chairman and CEO of GE Health Care, and representatives of the international medical device technology company "Nihon Kohden", to consolidate joint cooperation frameworks to support and develop the healthcare sector.

Indeed, after GE Healthcare had announced its intention to open a manufacturing plant for ultrasound scanning devices (sonar) in Egypt, the Egyptian government promised to offer all the necessary incentives for the success of such initiatives, and to encourage any company to consider manufacturing other medical devices as well as ultrasound.

This new project is the latest milestone in the pharaonic "Medicine City" project. Located 170 km from the Charqiya district, Gypto Pharma, also known as Medicine City, covers an area of 180,000 m² and is considered to be the largest pharmaceutical city not only in Egypt, but also in the Middle East. It is designed to meet the aspirations of the country's 150 pharmaceutical companies, and will ultimately unlock an export potential of over 712 million dollars to the world.

Source : Egypt Information Service, EgyptToday

Arab Health Expo 2025 a resounding success transforming into World Health Expo (WHX).

The 50th edition of Arab Health, under the theme "Where the World of Healthcare Meets", was held from January 27 to 30 at the Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), attracting over 60,000 visitors. The event brought together over 40 national pavilions, with exhibitors from more than 80 countries, covering the Middle East, the USA, Europe, Africa and Asia. A true global crossroads for medical innovation, it enabled industry experts and professionals to discover the latest technological advances in healthcare, reinforcing the UAE's position as a leading medical hub.

Since its inaugural edition in 1979, featuring some forty exhibitors, Arab Health has evolved considerably. Initially dedicated to medical equipment, over the decades it has established itself as one of the region's most prestigious healthcare trade fairs, acquiring international recognition as early as the 2000s.

From 2025 onwards, Arab Health will embark on a new phase, becoming the World Health Expo (WHX). This transformation aims to bring together several healthcare events under a single brand banner, with the ambition of strengthening collaboration opportunities, boosting commercial projects and fostering lasting synergies between players in the medical industry.

Source : Gulf Business

Nigeria: a \$1.07 billion investment to revamp the health sector

Nigeria's Federal Executive Council (FEC) has approved \$1.07 billion in funding for health sector reform under the Human Capital Opportunities for Prosperity and Equity (HOPE) program, part of which has been allocated to HIV treatment, marking a strong commitment to improving healthcare in the country.

The announcement was made by Wale Edun, Minister of Finance and Coordinator of the Economy, who stated that the funding includes two \$500 million concessional loans from the International Development Association (IDA), the financial arm of the World Bank, as well as a \$70 million grant from international organizations.

As part of these reforms, the government has also approved the purchase of 150,000 HIV treatment kits for a period of four months, an investment aimed at guaranteeing access to care for vulnerable populations and reducing treatment costs. According to the Minister of Health, Muhammad Ali Pate, these measures are part of a broader strategy designed to strengthen sector governance and improve primary healthcare services nationwide.

Thanks to this massive investment, Nigeria is committed to modernizing its healthcare system and ensuring better access to healthcare for its citizens.

Source : News Central . Africa

The 5th Health Fair of OIC Member States in Senegal

THE 10TH EDITION OF DAKAR INTERNATIONAL EXPO ON HEALTH AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT (SISDAK) WILL BE ORGANIZED BY CICES AND THE SENEGALESE MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL WELFARE, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE 5TH OIC HEALTH EXPO, ORGANIZED BY THE ISLAMIC CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT).



The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) is the Subsidiary Organ of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) based in Casablanca–Morocco, which has been entrusted with trade promotion and investment among the 57 OIC Member States.

In addition to the organization of fairs and exhibitions and its huge experiences and achievements in the economic and trade fields, the Centre also organizes seminars, forums and conferences and follows up the trade negotiations on the Trade Preferential System among the OIC Member States (TPS/OIC) as well as the trade negotiations in the framework of

the World Trade Organization (WTO). Furthermore, it conducts sector-based studies with the major aim of boosting trade among the 57 OIC Member States and publishes annually the report on Intra OIC Trade.

Motivations and Expects

Medical equipment manufacturers:

- Meet medical equipment suppliers.
- Gain new market shares.
- Promote new products and services.
- Find trade partners.
- Increase one's visibility with decision-makers.

- Position oneself in comparison to competitors.
- Maintain contact with consumers.

Medicines manufacturing companies and laboratories:

- Position one's product range in the market.
- Establish professional and commercial contact with physicians.
- Promote improvements and innovations in the product ranges you represent.
- Present new product ranges.
- Position oneself in comparison to the competition.
- Forge commercial partnerships with major international laboratories.

Health training schools, institutes, universities, and health organizations:

- Communicate with health professionals and the general public through various activities.
- Conclude partnership agreements with health support institutions.
- Meet suppliers of medical equipment, drugs, and their partners.
- Discover innovations in health technology.
- Promote your health institutions.
- Meet service providers and establish useful partnerships. ■

10th

**DAKAR INTERNATIONAL
EXPO ON HEALTH AND
MEDICAL EQUIPMENT**

5th

OIC HEALTH EXPO

THEME :
**Health as a tool for the
economic development
of OIC Member States**



**15-19 April 2025
AT CICES**

Special Guest

Kingdom of Saudi

Arabia

Honour Guest

Kingdom of Morocco





INTERVIEW

DR. IBRAHIMA SY

MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL ACTION OF SENEGAL



«The Importance of Investing in Health as a Driver of Economic Growth for OIC Member States»

DR. IBRAHIMA SY, MINISTER OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL ACTION, IS ALSO THE AUTHOR AND CO-AUTHOR OF NUMEROUS PUBLICATIONS AND REPORTS IN THE FIELDS OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE, SPATIAL EPIDEMIOLOGY, AND PUBLIC HEALTH. HE IS A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR ECOLOGY AND HEALTH (IAEH) AND SERVES AS A PEER REVIEWER FOR SEVERAL SCIENTIFIC JOURNALS.

DR. SY HAS OVER 13 YEARS OF EXPERIENCE AS AN INTERNATIONAL EXPERT IN THE AREAS OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE, AND HEALTH, WORKING WITH MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO), THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT MALARIA, HIV/AIDS, AND TUBERCULOSIS, THE UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF), THE GLOBAL ENVIRONMENT FACILITY (GEF), THE FRENCH DEVELOPMENT AGENCY (AFD), SAVE THE CHILDREN INTERNATIONAL (SCI), AND SENEGAL'S MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL ACTION (MSAS).

As Senegal's Minister of Health and Social Action, how would you describe your Ministry's vision for strengthening the national healthcare system? What key initiatives or flagship programs are being prioritized this year?

The Ministry of Health and Social Action's strategy, outlined in our 2025–2029 Sectoral Policy Letter, is centered on strengthening the healthcare system through several key focus areas:

First of all, we need to improve governance and proceed with the

complete digitization of services. This will involve the introduction of performance-based and transparent management, with the use of information and communication technologies (ICT), notably through the deployment of the single shared computerized patient record (DPUP) and the use of telemedicine. Our territorial approach to health care will be based on decentralization. The aim is to bring health care services closer to remote populations, while further strengthening the leadership of local authorities in the management of health care structures.

Subsequently, we intend to diversify and improve the range of healthcare services by developing specialized care in particular, thereby positioning Senegal as a medical hub. In addition, we will improve infrastructure and equipment - paying particular attention to maintenance - while extending the availability of medicines and other healthcare products. Promoting local production of medicines and medical equipment is a key part of our strategy to strengthen the healthcare system. In this way, we will reduce our dependence on imports through strategic reforms.

Our next step is to strengthen prevention and the promotion of public health, by adopting a paradigm shift involving the integration of health into sectoral public policies. To this end, immunization campaigns and disease prevention activities will be stepped up, along with community awareness campaigns to encourage the adoption of health-promoting behaviors.

Finally, strengthening social protection, notably by offering medical and social coverage to vulnerable populations and by developing mechanisms for socio-economic and health inclusion, constitutes another key area for action.

These strategic orientations aim to build a resilient, inclusive healthcare system accessible to everyone, while addressing current challenges such as inequalities of access, climate change and health crises.

On the occasion of the 5th OIC Health Expo, set to take place in Senegal from April 15 to 19, 2025, could you share with us the key challenges involved in organizing such a significant event? Additionally, what inspired the decision to designate

**THIS EVENT ALSO OFFERS THE OPPORTUNITY
TO PROMOTE MEDICAL TOURISM, STRENGTHEN
COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE ACTORS,
AND SHARE KNOWLEDGE AND GOOD PRACTICES.**

the Kingdom of Morocco as the “Guest of Honor” and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as the “Special Guest”?

The 5th OIC Health Expo, held alongside the 10th edition of the International Health and Medical Equipment Fair of Dakar (SIS-DAK), serves as a key platform for enhancing collaboration among the member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Set against the backdrop of the global challenges highlighted by the Covid-19 pandemic, this event seeks to reinforce intra-OIC cooperation by fostering trade and strategic partnerships within the healthcare sector. It also shed the light on member countries' pharmaceutical products, medical equipment, and health services. The main theme of the event, “Health, a vector for economic development in OIC member states”, underlines the importance of investment in health as a driver of economic growth.

At the same time, it provides an opportunity to promote medical tourism, strengthen collaboration between public and private players, and foster networking and knowledge-sharing.

The Kingdom of Morocco, a fraternal country, has been named “Guest of Honor” in recognition of its ever-growing role in the healthcare field and its active cooperation

with African countries, particularly Senegal. Morocco is a key player in pharmaceutical production and medical innovation, and its participation will highlight its expertise and initiatives in these fields, inspiring other countries in the region.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the “Special Guest”, is a leader in the health sector within the OIC, and plays a central role in the development of medical infrastructures and cutting-edge technologies. Its presence mirrors its commitment to strengthening partnerships and sharing its advances in the medical field.

All in all, this event is bound to be a veritable crossroads of innovation and collaboration, positioning Senegal as a strategic hub for exchanges in the healthcare sector.

As a founding member of the OIC, could you highlight the initiatives your country is pursuing to strengthen collaboration with other OIC member states in the field of health?

Senegal, as a founding member of the OIC, is deploying a series of coordinated actions in the health sector to strengthen cooperation with other member countries. We are dedicated to playing a leading role in regional health cooperation, creating synergies that strengthen both the resilience of health systems and the economic compe-



WE ARE COMMITTED TO PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN REGIONAL HEALTH COOPERATION BY CREATING SYNERGIES THAT STRENGTHEN BOTH THE RESILIENCE OF HEALTH SYSTEMS AND THE ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS OF OIC MEMBER STATES.

titiveness of OIC member states. Consequently, through regular exchanges and the establishment of effective coordination mechanisms, Senegal is actively contributing to the implementation of a shared vision of an inclusive, innovative and interconnected healthcare system on a regional scale.

The actions adopted are essentially based on the organization of large-scale international events; the promotion of economic and commer-

cial partnerships; capacity-building and harmonization of standards; the establishment of coordination and governance mechanisms; and a policy of support for innovation and technology transfer.

In your view, what areas of cooperation should be prioritized and strengthened between your esteemed Ministry and the OIC institutions—particularly the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT)?

As a founding member of the OIC, Senegal is committed to strengthening its cooperation with all OIC institutions and, in particular, with the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT).

I believe that the areas of cooperation to be strengthened are as follows: trade and investment in the health sector; standardization and pharmaceutical industrial development; research, training and skills transfer.

By integrating trade, standardization, technology, economic and academic aspects, these areas of cooperation guarantee a holistic approach that will not only enable us to better respond to current health challenges, but also to build a resilient and inclusive health development model within the OIC.■

▷ INTERVIEW

M. Justin Correa

GENERAL DIRECTOR, CICES SENEGAL

1. As the Director General of CICES, could you tell us more about your Center and the vital role it plays in fostering business and economic opportunities in Senegal? Additionally, what are some of CICES' flagship initiatives planned for this year?

The International Center for Foreign Trade of Senegal (CICES) is a strategic institution that plays an essential role in promoting economic and commercial activities in Senegal and the sub-region. Since its inception, it has served as an essential platform for trade, organizing national and international fairs and exhibitions. It plays an integral role in creating commercial and economic opportunities, offering a unique platform for Senegalese and foreign companies to meet, exchange ideas and forge partnerships. We organize the International Fair of Dakar -FIDAK-, annually between November and December. The B2B sessions held during this event enable investors to find potential business partners. Some operators and even some countries prefer not to wait for this major event to take advantage of

the business networking opportunities offered by CICES. Algeria, for example, has already set up a permanent exhibition of goods and services at the CICES in order to reach the West African market.

This year, our leading actions include the organization of the 10th edition of the International Health and Medical Equipment Exhibition in Dakar (SISDAK), in conjunction with the 5th edition of the OIC Health Expo, from April 15 to 19. Our innovative virtual platform, SISDAK Connect, will enable visitors to enjoy the show from a distance. Along the lines of Senegal 2050, the vision of the new authorities, the first edition of the Regional Hubs Fair will be held. In November, the Dakar International Book and Teaching Materials Fair (FILDAK) will be held, followed by the International Fair of Dakar (FIDAK) to conclude 2025.

2. As you know, the collaboration between ICDT and CICES spans several decades. Could you share with our readers some of the key achievements of this longstanding partnership and its impact on Senegal as well as other OIC member countries?

The collaboration between the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the CICES is indeed a long-standing partnership, marked by significant results. This cooperation has facilitated trade between Senegal and other OIC member countries, and promoted Senegalese products and services in OIC markets. In addition, for the second time, we are hosting the OIC HEALTH EXPO, the leading healthcare trade exhibition for OIC member countries. In 2022, thanks to this fruitful collaboration between CICES and ICDT, Dakar also hosted the OIC Member States Trade Fair for the second time, after the 11th edition in 2007. Thanks to this partnership, other sectors have also benefited from the organization of trade fairs such as the OIC Higher Education Fair and the OIC Real Estate and Construction Fair.

3. On the occasion of the 5th OIC Health Expo, scheduled to take place in Senegal from April 15 to 19, 2025, could you elaborate on the main challenges involved in organizing this major event and the role that CICES is playing to ensure its success?



CICES launched SISDAK in 2008. After five editions, we hosted the OIC Health EXPO for the first time. Therefore, over the years, we have capitalized on the necessary expertise. It should be noted that the CICES mission revolves exclusively around the organization of trade fairs and exhibitions, and its infrastructure was designed accordingly.

4. In your opinion, what are the areas of cooperation to be strengthened between the CICES and OIC Institutions, and more particularly ICDT?

WE WILL MAKE AVAILABLE TO THE PUBLIC «SISDAK CONNECT», AN INNOVATIVE VIRTUAL PLATFORM THAT WILL MAKE IT POSSIBLE TO LIVE THE SHOW REMOTELY.

E-commerce is a field worth exploring. CICES has a platform, Foire-Connect, enabling thousands of exhibitors to access a market of 300 million consumers. In addition, various events and forums could be co-organized, focusing on high-

potential sectors for OIC member states. We are confident that by strengthening our cooperation, we can make a significant contribution to the economic development of Senegal and other OIC member countries. ■

Sénégal: The New Go-To Destination for Medical Tourism in West Africa



By Dr. Philippe Ndiaga BA

AS DEFINED BY UN TOURISM, TOURISM INCLUDES ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN BY PEOPLE DURING THEIR TRAVELS AND STAYS IN PLACES OUTSIDE THEIR USUAL ENVIRONMENT FOR A CONSECUTIVE PERIOD NOT EXCEEDING ONE YEAR, FOR LEISURE, BUSINESS AND OTHER PURPOSES NOT RELATED TO THE EXERCISE OF A REMUNERATED ACTIVITY IN THE PLACE VISITED. MEDICAL TOURISM, ON THE OTHER HAND, IS A TYPE OF TOURIST ACTIVITY BASED ON THE THERAPEUTIC RESOURCES AND SERVICES (BOTH INVASIVE AND NON-INVASIVE) OF MEDICAL SCIENCE. IT CAN INCLUDE DIAGNOSIS, TREATMENT, CURE, PREVENTION AND REHABILITATION.

In West Africa, Senegal, previously known as a coastal destination, is increasingly positioning itself in this segment, emerging as a true hub for medical tourism. Key events, such as the country's exemplary management of the Ebola virus in 2014 and the Senegalese health authorities' effective strategy in the fight against COVID-19, have finally convinced neighboring countries of Senegal's healthcare expertise.

The progress made by Senegal in this field is the result of a rigorous commitment to health issues in the education system. In addition to several state universities with medical faculties, such as the Université Cheikh Anta Diop de Dakar (UCAD), whose medical faculty is one of the most renowned in Africa, the Gaston Berger University (UGB) in Saint-Louis, Assane Seck University (UASZ) in Ziguinchor, Iba Der Thiam University (UIDT) in Thiès and Alioune Diop Univer-

sity (UADB) in Bambey. There are also numerous private schools and universities offering high-quality higher education in the health sector. Today, many foreign students seek training in the country.

In the same vein, Senegal has made remarkable progress in improving its healthcare infrastructure. In almost all of the country's regional capitals, this progress is reflected in substantial investment in modern hospitals with state-of-the-art equipment and highly qualified staff. In recent years, new specialized care centers have been opened in cutting-edge fields such as magnetic resonance imaging, functional visual field exploration, laser treatment of ophthalmic pathologies and laser refractive surgery.

In addition to state-run facilities, there are also hospitals, health centers, doctors' surgeries, clinics, paramedical practices, company facili-

ties, health posts, dental surgeries, biomedical analysis laboratories, radiology and medical imaging centers, as well as private pharmacies and drug depots.

Today, cities such as Ziguinchor, Saint-Louis and Dakar, in particular, have become popular destinations for those seeking specialized treatment. A growing number of patients are coming from neighbouring countries: Guinea-Bissau for Ziguinchor, Mauritania for Saint-Louis, Mali, Gambia and Côte d'Ivoire for Dakar. Among the medical services in high demand are surgery, cardiology, oncology, gynecology, pediatrics and other treatments unavailable in patients' home countries.

According to a recent study, Mauritians account for almost 42% of patients, followed by nationals of Guinea Bissau (36%) and Gambia (16%)(See Graph 1).

These patients are interested not only in the high-quality, affordable care offered by Senegalese hospitals, but also in the country's accessibility, political stability, use of Wolof, a language shared with other countries in the sub-region such as Gambia and Mauritania, as well as the use of French, as shown in the attached graph : The wide variety of Senegalese gastronomy, notably its signature dish, ceebu jën, listed as a UNESCO intangible heritage site, adds to the comfort of patients' healing process as shown in Graph 2.

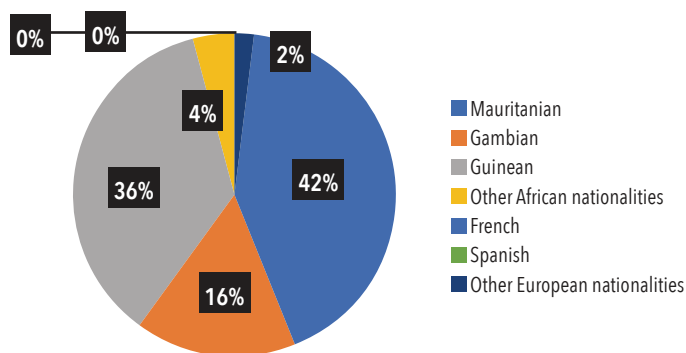
As far as accommodation is concerned, the country offers a varied range of hotels, residences, furnished apartments and other types of housing for all budgets. The table 1 below illustrates the current accommodation offer in Senegal.

Beyond this, the other advantage of healthcare in Senegal is that, after treatment, patients can enjoy the benefits of Senegal's rich and varied tourist offering, including magnificent beaches, iconic islands such as Gorée, museums, theaters and recreation areas accessible to every visitor to the Land of Teranga.

Building on this momentum, enhancing its infrastructure, creating specialized accommodations, expanding its medical specialties, and actively marketing its services, the Land of Teranga could soon emerge as a strong contender among both African and global leaders in medical tourism.

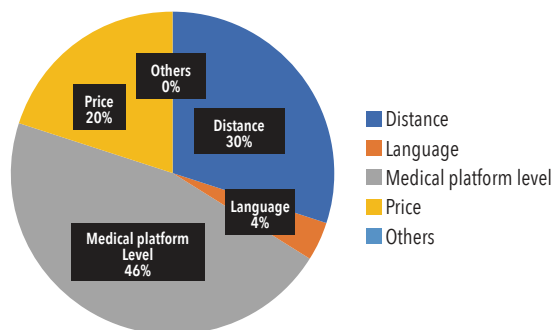
To conclude, tourism holds a prominent place in the national transformation agenda " Senegal 2050 vision", as shown opposite in Table 2. ■

Graph 1: Distribution of tourists by nationality



Source (DIONE, 2023)

Graph 2: Reasons for travelling to Senegal for medical purposes



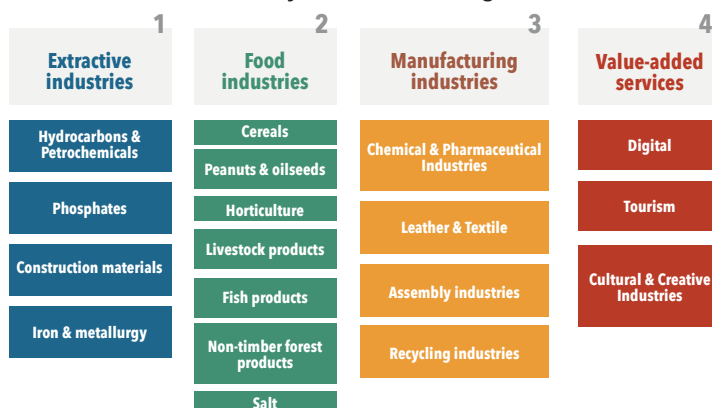
Source (DIONE, 2023)

Table 1: Housing options in Senegal

TYPES OF RECEPTIVES BY REGION														
Regions	DAKAR	DOUBREI	FATICK	KAFFRINE	KAOLACK	KÉDOUGOU	KOLDA	LOUGA	MATAM	SAINT-LOUIS	SÉDHIU	TAMBA COUNDA	THIES	ZIGUINCHOR
Types of accommodation														
AUBERGE	89	2	21	3	18	8	3	6	2	33	3	4	69	66
HOSTEL	10	2	62	2	2	26	11	5	0	14	2	29	14	49
HOTEL	161	2	26	2	6	17	8	6	6	31	2	20	92	44
RESIDENCE	243	5	8	2	8	1	1	1	2	13	2	4	282	32
TOTAL	507	11	117	9	34	52	23	18	10	91	9	57	457	191

Source: Ministry of Tourism and Crafts/Tourism Regulation Directorate, January 2025

Table 2: Priority areas of the Senegal 2050 vision



Source: Vision Senegal 2050 - National Development Strategy 2025-2039



Discover ADA Voyages: The Leading Name in Medical Tourism in Senegal

ADA VOYAGES IS TODAY THE UNDISPUTED LEADER IN MEDICAL TOURISM IN SENEGAL. THROUGH SENMEDTOURS BY ADA VOYAGES, WE OFFER TAILOR-MADE STAYS THAT COMBINE HIGH-QUALITY MEDICAL CARE WITH UNIQUE TOURIST EXPERIENCES. OUR MISSION? TO PROVIDE DISCERNING INTERNATIONAL CLIENTS WITH COMPREHENSIVE AND SECURE CARE.

▣ A Customized Offer for Every Need

Whether you are a member of the African diaspora or a resident of West Africa, we offer all-inclusive packages that include:

- ▶ Personalized medical care
- ▶ Comfortable accommodation
- ▶ Safe transportation and transfers
- ▶ Tourist and leisure activities

A Trusted Medical Network

The safety and quality of care are at the heart of our commitment. We collaborate with top-tier medical institutions, including: Hôpital Fann, Hôpital Principal de Dakar, Clinique de la Madeleine, Clinique Pasteur, the International Cancer Center of Dakar, and many more.

Each partner is carefully selected to ensure excellence and reliability.

▣ Our Various Health Packages

1. Health Package

- ▶ Comprehensive medical care
- ▶ Transfer to healthcare centers
- ▶ Accommodation and assistance

2. Prestige Health Package

- ▶ All services from the Health Package
- ▶ Accommodation in a luxury hotel
- ▶ Exclusive leisure activities

3. Plus Health Package

- ▶ Medical care and personalized follow-up
- ▶ Standard accommodation included
- ▶ Transportation and assistance

4. Custom Health Package

- ▶ Fully personalized stay
- ▶ Flight tickets, hotel selection, and private car
- ▶ Dedicated support

▣ How Does SENMEDTOURS by ADA Voyages Work ?

A 7-step process to guarantee personalized support:

1. Initial Contact: Fill out a questionnaire, assign an assistant, and prepare a medical file.

2. Review of the File: Send a detailed quote with tailored interventions.

3. Choosing a Travel Date: Confirm availability and finalize the trip.

4. Medical Care: Pre-consultation, connect with specialists, personalized follow-up.

5. Arrival in Dakar: Welcome at the airport and assistance according to the selected package.

6. Payment Management and

Planning: Organize medical appointments and additional services.

7. Discovery and Relaxation: Shopping, sightseeing, and cultural immersion after hospitalization, provided the patient's health allows.

▣ Why Choose SENMEDTOURS by ADA Voyages ?

• Expertise and Reliability: With years of experience, ADA VOYAGES ensures a smooth and seamless medical journey.

• Guaranteed Quality Care: Access to the best specialists and medical facilities in Senegal.

• Comfort and Recovery: Stay in luxurious and soothing convalescence locations such as Saly.

• Ongoing Support: Our team remains at your disposal throughout your medical journey.

With **SENMEDTOURS by ADA Voyages**, Senegal stands out as a top destination for quality healthcare, combining medical expertise with exceptional tourist comfort.

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The Inspiring Story of Mme Marie Sy Mbengue,

CEO of ADA Voyages: From SONATEL to the Pinnacles of Travel

A Senegalese success story that connects people beyond the virtual world, transforming the travel industry with passion and innovation

Dakar, Early 2000s

The telecom industry is abuzz with activity, networks are rapidly expanding, and amidst it all, one woman — Marie Sy Mbengue — is forging her own path in this complex, tech-driven world. A former SONATEL professional and a seasoned expert in telecom networks, she has a firm grasp on data flows and connectivity. Yet, her vision reaches far beyond wires and signals — it's a dream that transcends technology.

2004: The Idea That Changed Everything

«What if I connected people... but not just virtually?»

Fueled by a true entrepreneurial spirit, she began with modest ventures: a telecenter, then a photocopying and printing service. Small steps? Hardly. They marked the first sparks of a quiet revolution in the making.



Telecenter:

The first step towards human connection



Photocopying Service

Expanding community services



Printing

Meeting local needs

The Birth of ADA Voyages: Where Passion Meets Boldness

Travel is more than just a ticket. It's an emotion, an adventure, a story.

In 2004, she founded ADA Voyages, and the agency quickly gained recognition:



Hajj Organization

Meticulous planning, serene pilgrims



Major Events

From the FESMAN to Youssou Ndour's legendary concert at Bercy, and the AFCON—ADA Voyages was everywhere!



Summer Camps

Destinations like Dubai, Las Palmas, Morocco—unforgettable experiences for thousands of young people.



2018: Innovation Continues with SENMEDTOURS

«What if Senegal became a leading destination for medical excellence?»

With **SENMEDTOURS by ADA Voyages**, Marie Sy Mbengue once again transformed the industry, championing medical tourism in Senegal. A visionary initiative that not only heals but also attracts and inspires.

Today? ADA Voyages is Among the Top Agencies in Senegal

But at the heart of this success stands one woman — a fighter, a visionary.

Because true success is about courage, persistence, and above all, unwavering belief in your dreams.

And Tomorrow? The Adventure Has Only Just Begun...

Fondation

Humble beginnings with a telecenter and printing services

Expansion

Growth of ADA Voyages and the organization of major events

Innovation

Launch of SENMEDTOURS and establishing leadership in the market

Future

New innovations ahead with ADA FUN PARK

Focus on Healthcare Reforms in the GCC

SOARING MEDICINE AND MEDICAL EQUIPMENT PRICES, COMBINED WITH SUPPLY CHAIN DISRUPTIONS, HAVE HINDERED THE GROWTH OF THE HEALTHCARE SECTOR, DESPITE ADVANCEMENTS IN HEALTHCARE INFORMATICS AND CYBERSECURITY. HOWEVER, THE AGING POPULATION, GREATER AWARENESS OF CHRONIC DISEASE MANAGEMENT, AND THE GROWING ACCEPTANCE OF TELEMEDICINE IN PRIMARY CARE HAVE KEPT THE SECTOR RESILIENT. THESE FACTORS, ALONG WITH GOVERNMENT-BACKED STRATEGIES, WILL CONTINUE TO DRIVE INDUSTRY GROWTH.

Moreover, with local equity markets preparing for IPOs of pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers, and regional governments pushing for the localization of pharmaceutical and medical equipment production, numerous opportunities are emerging for the healthcare life sciences industry in the region. The private sector is increasingly recognized as a key partner in the long-term development of healthcare, particularly regarding the quality of medical services. Collaborations between the private sector and governments have enhanced infrastructure and manpower for medical care and vaccination efforts. There has also been a significant rise in the integration of digital healthcare solutions, such as telemedicine, artificial intelligence, blockchain, and robotic technologies.

The healthcare sector in the region is experiencing heightened demand for various infrastructures, while also facing a shortage of healthcare professionals. Education and innovation are essential for the success of the healthcare sector in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region. Strategic planning, developed in par-



tnership with the private sector, is necessary to improve health system delivery across the GCC. This includes implementing solutions and focused programs to enhance primary healthcare and promote health, while mitigating health risks. Achieving these goals requires the collaboration of all stakeholders, including governments, policymakers, hospitals, and healthcare providers, to address challenges and seize the vast opportunities to improve the health of the GCC population. Additionally, the positive reforms introduced by GCC governments following the COVID-19 pande-

mic continue to play a critical role, while private sector participation is on the rise through public-private partnership (PPP) initiatives, mandatory health insurance, and other collaborations designed to address the demand-supply gap. Simultaneously, innovative technological solutions have expedited the digital transformation of the healthcare industry.

Health sector evolution:

According to Alpen Capital data from 2023, healthcare expenditure (CHE) in the GCC is projected to reach US\$ 135.5 billion by 2027, growing at a compound



annual growth rate (CAGR) of 5.4% from 2022. This growth is expected to be driven by factors such as the expanding population, high incidence of non-communicable diseases (NCDs), rising treatment costs, medical inflation, and the increasing penetration of health insurance. As a proportion of GDP, CHE in the GCC is anticipated to grow from 5.0% in 2022 to 5.8% in 2027.

The annual average growth rates of CHE across the GCC countries are projected to range between 4.4% and 7.4% during the forecast period, with variations largely due to country-specific population projections, economic conditions, healthcare costs, and the prevalence of underlying diseases. The UAE is expected to experience the highest growth rate at 7.4% CAGR, surpassing its GCC peers. Market rankings are predicted to remain stable, with Saudi Arabia and the UAE dominating the region's CHE, holding a combined share of 79.6% by 2027.

Given the anticipated population increase, the GCC is expected to require 12,207 new hospital beds by 2027, resulting in an estimated annual average growth rate of 1.9% since 2022. This will bring the total bed capacity in the region to 133,731 by 2027. Saudi Arabia is projected to see the highest demand for new beds in the region, with over 8,197 additional beds needed to accommodate its growing population, accounting for approximately 67.2% of the region's total bed additions during the forecast period. The UAE, on the other hand, is expected to require more than 1,584 new beds over the five-year forecast period.

Key growth drivers:

GCC governments are actively encouraging private sector involvement through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model as part of their long-term strategies aimed at expanding capacity and improving healthcare delivery. These strategies are designed to reduce cost burdens, bridge the growing

demand-supply gap, and enhance the quality of care. In line with this, and due to the high demand for complex healthcare services and the increasing need for quality improvements, specialized Centers of Excellence have steadily gained prominence in the region.

As a result, GCC governments have been making significant investments in technology, recognizing it as a key enabler for healthcare advancements. The integration of technology is expected to foster inclusivity, improve accessibility and affordability, and drive overall growth in the healthcare sector.

Moreover, the rapid response to mitigate the dual economic impacts of the pandemic has sparked a broad-based recovery in the GCC economies. Growth is also being fueled by large-scale infrastructure investment programs and rising purchasing power, both of which are expected to contribute to increased healthcare spending in the region.



Key demographic factors such as rising life expectancy, improvements in infant mortality rates, and an aging population are driving the region's healthcare needs. The GCC's population is projected to grow at an annualized rate of 1.9% between 2022 and 2027, reaching 66.2 million by 2027. The elderly population (50+ years) is expected to comprise 20.8% of the total population by 2027, compared to 15.8% in 2022.

Given the high costs and prolonged treatment durations associated with lifestyle-related ailments, healthcare expenditure in the region is expected to rise. National health insurance strategies are anticipated to increase the adoption and utilization of private hospitals and healthcare services, alleviating the pressure on public sector infrastructure. The implementation of mandatory health insurance schemes is also expected to reduce out-of-pocket expenditures for medical services.

In line with this, GCC countries will continue to position the region as a hub for medical tourism as part of their broader economic diversification plans. The UAE, in particular, remains a leader in the medical tourism industry, with cities like

Dubai and Abu Dhabi attracting a significant number of tourists seeking medical care in the region.

GCC Countries Health Sector Strategies:

As part of its Vision 2030 strategy launched in 2016, Saudi Arabia aims to increase private sector involvement in healthcare from 40% to 65% by 2030. This includes the privatization of 290 hospitals and 2,300 primary health centers. The Saudi Ministry of Health (MoH) also plans to establish health clusters across the Kingdom to promote preventive and integrated care, improving access to healthcare services. Other MoH priorities include expanding the number of internationally accredited hospitals, doubling primary healthcare visits per capita from two to four, reducing the prevalence of lifestyle-related diseases, enhancing the quality of preventive and therapeutic services, and driving digital innovation.

In 2022, Saudi Arabia launched the Health Sector Transformation Programme, which aims to provide inclusive health services to 88% of the Kingdom's population and establish a unified digital medical records system for 100% of the population by 2025. As part

of Vision 2030, Saudi Arabia plans to build 20,000 hospital beds and 224 healthcare centers across the Kingdom, with projects totaling SAR 48 billion (US\$ 12.8 billion).

Meanwhile, the UAE is developing approximately 700 healthcare projects with a total investment of US\$ 60.9 billion, the majority of which are being led by the private sector. The private sector is expected to take on a significant portion of the healthcare burden, including projects involving public-private partnerships (PPPs). These partnerships also support the MoH's Emirati Genome Program, which seeks to better understand the genetic makeup of the UAE population and improve patient outcomes for local residents. Additionally, the collaboration has led to the establishment of the region's first dedicated contract research organization, Insights Research Organization and Solutions (IROS), for conducting clinical research. The Dubai Healthcare Corporation (DHC) has also published a roadmap for PPPs in new hospital projects and is currently in discussions with healthcare investors to meet the growing demand, particularly for rehabilitation clinics, mental health facilities, and dialysis centers.



Qatar continues to prioritize healthcare, with the government consistently working to enhance the quality of its healthcare infrastructure and services through various reform initiatives. As part of its National Health Strategy (2018-2022) within the Vision 2030 Plan, Qatar identified 12 key focus areas, including the development of integrated health systems and the expansion of preventive and curative healthcare to improve overall health outcomes. Under its Healthcare Facilities Master Plan, the government aims to establish 48 new facilities, including primary healthcare centers, diagnostic and treatment centers, as well as specialized hospitals. In addition, Qatar plans to invest QAR 337 million (US\$ 92.5 million) in a healthcare

public-private partnership (PPP) project.

Moving to Kuwait, the government's National Development Plan (2020-2025) focuses on building healthcare infrastructure and facilities to meet international standards while improving the quality of care in existing treatment centers. Healthcare has been a consistent priority in the country's budget, consistently accounting for over 11% of the total since 2019, with a focus on expanding primary and tertiary care centers across the nation.

Oman has also made significant investments in the healthcare sector over the last decade, with the aim of developing a modern

healthcare ecosystem. The Sultanate's Health Vision 2050 development plan, initially launched in 2012 and frequently updated, highlights the need to expand specialist services, reduce costs, adopt results-based project funding, foster private sector collaboration, decentralize management, and increase transparency. As part of these efforts, Oman has announced plans to build the OMR 479 million (US\$ 1.24 billion) Sultan Qaboos Medical City Complex under a PPP model. Additionally, Oman has rolled out several healthcare projects, including a dialysis center, secondary hospitals, and a central laboratory, all developed under the PPP model.

Over the years, Bahrain has significantly increased its efforts to enhance healthcare services through infrastructure development and the adoption of technology. The Ministry of Health (MoH) has strengthened its role in policy-making and governance to ensure sustainability, while also focusing on resource development, financing, and encouraging greater private sector participation through public-private partnership (PPP) projects.

Medical tourism has also been gaining momentum in the region as part of the governments' broader strategy to diversify their economies. In collaboration with private operators, GCC governments are implementing targeted initiatives to improve healthcare infrastructure and bring it in line with global standards and key performance indicators. This has resulted in the establishment of several specialized and multidisciplinary hospitals and clinics across the region, further bolstering the growth of medical tourism. ■

Source: Alpen Capital, 2023

Türkiye's Halal Beach Resorts: A Model for the Muslim World



By Mrs Reem El Safaki,
DInarStandard

AS I STOOD ON THE ROOFTOP POOL DECK OF BERA ALANYA HOTEL, OVERLOOKING THE SHIMMERING MEDITERRANEAN SEA, I COULDN'T HELP BUT REFLECT ON HOW FAR THE HALAL TRAVEL INDUSTRY HAS COME. THE SCENE AROUND ME—MUSLIM WOMEN RELAXING COMFORTABLY IN A PRIVATE, SERENE SETTING, FAMILIES ENJOYING THE BEACH IN A FAITH-CONSCIOUS ENVIRONMENT—WAS SOMETHING I HAD ANALYZED IN REPORTS FOR OVER A DECADE. BUT SEEING IT FIRSTHAND WAS DIFFERENT. TURKEY'S HALAL-FRIENDLY BEACH RESORTS ARE NOT JUST AN INDUSTRY SUCCESS STORY; THEY ARE A TESTAMENT TO HOW SEAMLESSLY FAITH AND LEISURE CAN COEXIST.

Since 2013, I've closely followed the evolution of halal beach resorts as part of my work with DinarStandard. We've studied their growth, measured their market potential, and advised industry leaders on how to tap into the growing demand of Muslim travelers. Yet, nothing compares to actually experiencing the thoughtful hospitality, meticulous attention to Islamic values, and commercial success of these resorts.

Turkish halal-friendly beach resorts have not only proven the economic viability of catering primarily to the Muslim market but have also set a precedent that OIC countries and investors should take note of.

While many Muslim-majority destinations continue to debate how to accommodate Muslim travelers without alienating mainstream tourists, Turkey has quietly built an entire ecosystem of halal-friendly resorts that seamlessly integrate religious values with leisure—without compromise.

The Business Case for Halal Resorts

The halal resort sector in Turkey has emerged as a lucrative industry, with HalalBooking.com playing a pivotal role in its global expansion. Initially, these resorts catered primarily to domestic travelers, but today, they attract a growing number of Muslim tourists from Eu-

rope, the Middle East, and beyond. A testament to this success, HalalBooking recently secured \$8 million in a Series B angel funding round, valuing the company at \$125 million, and is currently in talks for a larger Series C round in 2025. Their ability to attract significant investment underscores the commercial viability of halal tourism and highlights the strong and growing demand for Muslim-friendly travel options.

The Halal Resort Experience

Our first stop was Bera Alanya Hotel, where I was joined by a small group of women from the UK. The hotel features a rooftop women-only pool, a fully private



space where guests can wear regular swimsuits without worry. The women-only spa and hamam facilities enhance the experience, providing a relaxing, faith-conscious environment. Even the beach follows a modesty policy, ensuring a family-friendly atmosphere while allowing guests to enjoy the stunning Mediterranean coastline. Evening entertainment is also family-friendly, catering to all age groups. The following day, after a morning visit to Alanya Castle and the city's famous Red Tower, we headed to Adin Beach Hotel. A more boutique-style resort, Adin provides an upscale halal-friendly experience with separate pools for men and women, a strong focus on wellness, and a commitment to preserving an authentic Islamic hospitality.

Adin Beach Hotel also features a fully secluded women's-only beach and pools, which include water slides, cleverly enclosed with strategically placed giant retractable sails for privacy. As an all-inclusive resort, Adin offers lavish buffets, poolside snack bars, and even a pastry shop within the hotel. Guests can enjoy virgin mojitos, Turkish coffee, and a variety of non-alcoholic drinks on a spacious beachfront terrace, which becomes a popular gathering spot for families in the evenings.

A Visionary Approach to Islamic Hospitality

What sets Turkey's halal resorts apart isn't just their facilities, but the deep-rooted philosophy behind them. Many of these resorts are family-owned, ensuring a commitment to Muslim-friendly values and exceptional service.

The General Manager of Bera Alanya Hotel, Ruhayılgen Cengiz, is one of the few female GMs in the industry. She shared her perspective on what makes halal resorts

unique, emphasizing that these resorts are not just about business—they are about providing Muslim families with a space where they can relax, have fun, and stay true to their faith.

When asked about their marketing approach, she noted that guest satisfaction is their biggest marketing tool, with word-of-mouth being the primary driver of new business. About 40% of their guests are repeat customers, demonstrating the strength of the guest experience and brand loyalty.

Sustainability and Ethical Considerations

Sustainability and ethical considerations are key priorities for Bera Alanya Hotel. A major focus is reducing food waste. Excess food is donated to animal shelters, and the hotel is developing a project to convert food waste into animal feed, ensuring a responsible approach to waste management.

In support of Palestinians in Gaza, Bera took a bold stance in 2023 by ensuring that no boycotted products were used on its premises. This decision, driven by guest expectations and a strong ethical stance, aligns with the broader trend of Muslim travelers seeking businesses that align with their values.

Following the 2023 Türkiye earthquake, the hotel chose not to hold concerts, redirecting the entertainment budget to relief efforts and direct financial contributions to victims. This reflects a commitment to corporate social responsibility, recognizing that hospitality businesses play a role beyond just providing travel experiences.

A Business Success Story with Global Implications

Even amid economic fluctuations

and rising prices, the demand for halal travel in Turkey remains robust. The GM of Bera Alanya noted that while domestic bookings have increased due to economic shifts, international travelers—particularly from Germany and the UK—continue to be a major market.

This reinforces the notion that Muslim-friendly travel is not a niche segment—it is a mainstream and rapidly growing global industry.

Lessons for the Industry

Turkey's success with halal beach resorts is not just a tourism success story—it serves as a blueprint for OIC countries looking to tap into the global Muslim travel market.

- Muslim-friendly travel is not a niche—it's a mainstream opportunity. Turkey's resorts prove that faith-based travel can be both profitable and sustainable.
- Women's leadership strengthens the sector. Bera's female GM has played a crucial role in enhancing the guest experience, particularly for female travelers.
- Investment in halal tourism yields strong returns. HalalBooking's expansion, including its \$125 million valuation, is a clear indication of the sector's strong financial potential.
- Sustainability and ethics matter. Bera's approach to ethical procurement and disaster relief shows that halal hospitality can integrate social responsibility while remaining commercially viable.

Conclusion: A Model for the Future of Halal Tourism

Turkey's halal-friendly beach resorts in Alanya have successfully balanced faith-based tourism principles with high-quality service and economic success. Their pioneering role in halal tourism serves as a model for OIC countries aiming to grow their Muslim-friendly travel markets. ■





Brunei Records Its Highest Growth Amid Economic Diversification

BRUNEI RECORDED ITS HIGHEST GDP GROWTH IN 25 YEARS IN 2024, WITH AN INCREASE OF 4.2%, EXCEEDING FORECASTS. THIS WAS THE BEST PERFORMANCE SINCE 1999 (WHEN REAL GDP GREW BY 4.3%), AND WAS MAINLY DRIVEN BY SUSTAINED GROWTH IN THE DOWNSTREAM OIL AND GAS SECTOR.

Indeed, the oil and non-oil sectors respectively grew by 5.5% and 3.1% year-on-year, underlining the need to accelerate economic diversification with a tangible impact on public finances.

Downstream activities - categorized in the non-oil sector - have been a key driver of Bruneian economic growth since 2020. This dynamic is expected to continue in 2025. This growth is due to the surge in petrochemical production, which jumped by 12% in 2024. Exports of

petrochemical products regularly outstrip those of oil and gas, and now account for 61% of total exports.

The development of the Pulau Muara Besar petrochemical complex, whose US\$9 billion extension is due to come on stream in 2029, should further reinforce this trend. At the same time, urea-based fertilizer production at the Sungai Liang Industrial Park, launched in 2022, is diversifying Bruneian exports beyond the upstream oil and gas sector.

In 2024, the non-oil sector accounted for 53% of GDP, supported by steady growth in several sub-sectors, including air transport (+18.9%), shipping (+7.7%), communications (+6%) and wholesale and retail trade (+4.3%).

The ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office forecasts that revenues from the non-oil sector will increase by an average of 10.8% per year up to 2028, while the energy sector's share of GDP is set to fall from 15.5% in 2023 to 12.6% in 2028.

The government has made economic diversification a central pillar of its national development policy to ensure the country's future growth and prosperity. Within the framework of Wawasan Brunei 2035, tourism has been identified as one of the five priority sectors for economic diversification.



A thriving tourism sector not only draws foreign visitors and generates foreign exchange revenues but also fosters the growth of related industries and creates job opportunities. The encouraging rebound in the number of foreign visitors since 2022, is justified by the country's focus on preserving its rich cultural and natural heritage. As a result, the country is uniquely positioned to attract visitors seeking an authentic cultural experience.

Wawasan Brunei 2035 focuses also on diversifying and modernizing the country through a plan to promote and develop the banking system and fintechs.

To this end, the government has played a key role in the development of the financial sector. Between 2014 and 2016, it introduced a real-time gross settlement system and an automated clearing house. Meanwhile, in 2020, the government also announced the Digital Economy Master Plan 2024, designed to complement the Financial Sector Roadmap.

Thanks to the government's firm commitment and a nationwide vision, Brunei is on track for a successful transformation. ■

Source : the fintech time

Significant Growth in Trade Between Jordan and the GAFTA

AMMAN - JORDANIAN EXPORTS TO THE COUNTRIES OF THE GREATER ARAB FREE TRADE AREA (GAFTA) RECORDED AN ANNUAL INCREASE OF 15.6%, REACHING NO LESS THAN \$4.58 BILLION, COMPARED WITH \$3.96 BILLION OVER THE SAME PERIOD THE PREVIOUS YEAR. AMONG THE MAIN PRODUCTS EXPORTED WERE FERTILIZERS, PHARMACEUTICALS AND AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES.



Meanwhile, Jordanian imports from the free-trade zone increased by 8.5% to \$6.62 billion. These imports mainly comprise crude oil and its derivatives, jewelry, food products, as well as various industrial materials such as plastic foils, titanium oxide, polystyrene, iron and steel. Saudi Arabia has emerged as Jordan's leading GAFTA

trading partner. Exports to the Kingdom climbed 13.7% to 1.07 billion dinars.

In this respect, the Jordan Enterprise Development Corporation (JEDCO) and the Saudi Arabian Export Development Authority (SEDA) signed a memorandum of understanding last February to

strengthen bilateral relations and foster cooperation in export development. Saudi Arabia's aggregate investment in Jordan is estimated at around \$15 billion, covering various sectors such as transport, infrastructure, energy, finance, trade and tourism-related construction. This strong growth occurs in a context marked by a concentration of industrial exports dominated by six products in Jordan in 2024, representing 57% of national exports, or a total value of around 12.1

billion dollars. The clothing and accessories sector emerged as the export leader, with a market share of 19.4% and impressive year-on-year growth of 25.6%.

The second largest sectors were chemical fertilizers and pharmaceuticals, accounting for 11.1% and 7.1% of exports respectively.

However, the performance of Jordan's exports varied from sector to sector. While clothing and pharmaceuticals recorded consi-

derable growth, other key sectors experienced declines: chemical fertilizers fell by 2.3%, jewelry dropped by 21.5% and crude potash recorded a sharp decline of 28.4%.

Despite ongoing challenges, particularly the trade deficit, expanding markets and diversifying exports are expected to further strengthen trade relations with GAFTA countries. As a result, Jordan is positioned as a major player in the international trade market. ■

Source : Arab News; Jordan News Agency



Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan sign founding agreement for Green Energy Corridor

THE OPERATORS OF THE MAIN POWER GRIDS IN UZBEKISTAN, KAZAKHSTAN AND AZERBAIJAN - AZERENERGI (AZERBAIJAN), KEGOC (KAZAKHSTAN) AND THE NATIONAL GRID OF UZBEKISTAN - HAVE ESTABLISHED A JOINT VENTURE TO IMPLEMENT THE GREEN ENERGY CORRIDOR PROJECT. THIS AGREEMENT REPRESENTS THE CULMINATION OF A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP AMONG THE THREE COUNTRIES.

The agreement involves the joint construction of a clean energy cable under the Caspian Sea, enabling renewable energy to be exported to European markets. This cable will be connected to

another line running along the bottom of the Black Sea.

The combination of energy systems will have a major impact on the global energy landscape, as well as on the three participating

nations. Under Azerbaijan's national energy policy, the transition to renewable energies is one of the country's top priorities, with the aim of generating 30% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2030. The technical potential for renewable energies in Azerbaijan is estimated at 135 GW for onshore and 157 GW for offshore, with plans for 6 GW of solar, wind and hydroelectric capacity by 2030.

By 2030, Uzbekistan intends to export its surplus green electricity to Europe via Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, a surplus that could reach 10 to 15 billion kWh per year.

In its quest for carbon neutrality, Kazakhstan is making green energy a priority, working to reduce its dependence on fossil fuels. The country is developing technological innovations and an infrastructure capable of supporting environmental sustainability. It has signed agreements on green projects with a total capacity of 43 GW.

This project marks an important milestone in regional energy cooperation and in global efforts towards a sustainable energy transition. ■

Source : Trend News Agency , News.az



BAHRAIN

A Thriving Economy Set to Gain from its FTA with the United States

BAHRAIN EMERGED AS THE SECOND BEST-PERFORMING ECONOMY IN THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL (GCC) IN 2024, JUST AFTER THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES. THIS REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE, WHICH IS EXPECTED TO BE MIRRORED IN 2025, ILLUSTRATES THE COUNTRY'S STEADY EFFORTS TO DIVERSIFY ITS ECONOMY BEYOND THE OIL SECTOR.

Financial services recently overtook crude oil and natural gas extraction as the main contributors to Bahrain's GDP. This economic diversification is a central pillar of the country's growth strategy.

By 2025, Bahrain could further improve its economic performance thanks to its free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States. This agreement offers Manama a unique opportunity to at-

tract foreign capital and diversify its merchandise exports.

Bahrain's local aluminum sector remains competitive despite current tariffs. As one of the 20 countries benefiting from an FTA with the United States, Bahrain is unlikely to be affected by new tariff policies.

Bahrain's non-metallic exports amount to around \$430 million,

representing around 1% of GDP. The main non-metallic industries include refined petroleum, plastics and textiles, neither of which have particularly high value-added or great potential for expansion.

Bahrain has been concentrating on attracting manufacturers from friendly countries that export extensively to the US and are geographically nearby, but do not benefit from the protection of a Free

Trade Agreement (FTA). By locating factories and other elements of the supply chain in Bahrain, these countries could legally avoid tariffs that might otherwise impede their exports to the US.

Among the target countries are India (\$82 billion in exports to the USA), Saudi Arabia (\$24 billion), Bangladesh (\$12 billion), Iraq (\$10 billion), the United Arab Emirates (\$7 billion), Pakistan (\$6 billion) and Sri Lanka (\$4 billion). For example, India

exports \$14 billion worth of pharmaceuticals and \$10 billion worth of textiles to the United States. The presence of over 300,000 Indians in Bahrain, as well as numerous Indian companies and strong historical ties, would facilitate the conclusion of a cooperation agreement between Bahrain and India.

Since the start of the new millennium, Bahrain has secured over \$15 billion in foreign direct investment. There are a num-

ber of factors that have shaped this success, including the ease with which non-Bahrainis can purchase property and obtain licenses to operate businesses, as well as the stability offered by a fixed exchange rate against the US dollar operating for over four decades.

In conclusion, Bahrain stands out as a key economic player in the Gulf region, thanks to its diversification strategy and advantageous trade agreements. ■

Source : Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, Zawya

Pakistan and UAE Collaborate to Modernize Pakistan's Railway Infrastructure

PAKISTAN RAILWAYS IS PARTNERING WITH ETIHAD RAIL TO IMPROVE ITS RAIL NETWORK AND STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH IN PAKISTAN.



The collaboration aims to enhance the connectivity and operational efficiency of Pakistan's rail system, and support economic development through a modernized infrastructure.

Projects will focus on the freight line linking the port of Karachi to

Pipri, with logistics facilities managed by DP World in Dubai.

In this respect, the heads of the two entities signed two memorandums of understanding aimed at modernizing Pakistan's existing rail infrastructure while exploring new project opportunities.

This partnership forms part of a wider strategy, which builds on a landmark agreement reached in January 2024, guaranteeing \$3 billion in funding from the UAE to significantly modernize Pakistan's rail systems.

Under the terms of these joint efforts, Pakistan Railways expects to modernize its operations and increase its freight capacity, enabling companies to benefit from faster access to markets.

For Etihad Rail, this alliance represents an opportunity to extend its influence beyond the borders of the Emirates, consolidating its position as a leader in global rail advances.

This investment reflects a growing trend towards international cooperation in infrastructure projects. ■

Source : Railway supply



Iran-Eurasia Free Trade Agreement Set to Take Effect in 60 Days

THE IRANIAN EMBASSY IN MOSCOW HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT BETWEEN IRAN AND THE EURASIAN ECONOMIC UNION (EAEU) WILL ENTER INTO FORCE IN 60 DAYS, FROM MARCH 14, 2025.

As reported, Iran's ambassador to Russia, Kazem Jalali, officially confirmed the agreement's approval during a telephone conversation with Andrei Slepnev, the EEU's trade minister. Mr. Jalali announced the official conclusion of the legal procedures relating to the free trade agreement between Iran and the member countries of the EEU. The agreement is currently under review by all signatory countries.

Both parties expressed their satisfaction with the forthcoming implementation of the agreement, considering it to be a key factor in boosting trade in the region.

Under the terms of the agreement, the free trade agreement between Iran and the EEU member states will be applicable 60 days after all the participating countries concerned have completed their legal procedures, the Iranian embassy added. Signed in December 2023 in Saint Petersburg, the agreement will exempt 87% of goods traded between Iran and EEU member states from customs duties.

The free-trade agreement between Iran and the Eurasian Economic Union represents an important step in the region's economic integration. The EEU, which includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan,

Kyrgyzstan and Russia, represents a strategic regional grouping.

The agreement aims to improve bilateral trade and strengthen economic ties by reducing tariffs and easing trade barriers. With 87% of traded goods currently duty-free, Iranian companies should benefit from lower export costs, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, industrial goods and energy. Similarly, EEU countries will benefit from easier access to Iranian markets, known for their growing demand in various sectors, including construction materials, consumer goods and energy resources. ■

Source : Tehran Times

ON MARCH 12, 2025, THE EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENT APPROVED A BILATERAL INVESTMENT PROTECTION AGREEMENT WITH SAUDI ARABIA, AIMED AT BOOSTING CAPITAL FLOWS, CREATING JOBS AND STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN THE TWO NATIONS.



Egypt And Saudi Arabia Sign Investment Protection Agreement

The agreement figures among a series of economic agreements signed during Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's October visit to the North African country, putting in place the Saudi-Egyptian Supreme Coordination Council as well.

Both the Crown Prince and Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi attended the initial signing, as reported by the country's parliamentary news agency.

A report by a committee of Egyptian parliamentarians described the

agreement as a key step towards strengthening economic cooperation, encouraging investment opportunities and promoting sustainable development between the two countries.

In addition, the report highlights the efforts deployed to facilitate technology transfer, create jobs and develop human resources.

Economic ties between the two countries have strengthened considerably in recent years. The joint committee's report states that the value of trade between

Egypt and Saudi Arabia increased to \$6.5 billion in the first eight months of 2024, compared with \$4.9 billion in the same period of 2023, an increase of 32.7%, according to the Egyptian Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics.

The agreement supports Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 - an economic diversification strategy aimed at reducing dependence on oil revenues by increasing non-oil exports and strengthening regional trade alliances, including those with Egypt. ■

Source : Arab News



AGENDA

▶ **ANNUAL INVESTMENT MEETING CONGRESS 2025**

07-09 April 2025 • Abu Dhabi, UAE

▶ **42nd BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ICDT**

09-10 April 2025 • Casablanca, Morocco

▶ **TRAINING ON STRENGTHENING EFFORTS TO FACILITATE TRANSPORT IN OCI MEMBER LANDLOCKED COUNTRIES**

29-30 April 2025 • online

▶ **ISLAMIC COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

15-17 April 2025 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

▶ **5th OIC HEALTH EXPO**

15-19 April 2025 • Dakar, Senegal

▶ **PERMANENT FINANCE COMMITTEE**

20-23 April 2025 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

▶ **WORKSHOP ON DEVELOPING PERTINENT MARKETING STRATEGY FOR THE DESTINATION SENEGAL**

6-7 May 2025 • online

▶ **51th SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS**

20-21 June 2025 • Istanbul, Türkiye

▶ **ICDT INVEST DAYS - MORONI**

26-29 August 2025 • Moroni, Comoros

▶ **11th EDITION OF THE HALAL EXPO**

September 17-20, 2025 • Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

▶ **OIC TOURISM FAIR / AFRICA TOURISM EXPO**

23-25 October 2025 • Kampala, Uganda

▶ **42nd SESSION OF COMCEC**

01-04 November 2025 • Istanbul, Türkiye

▶ **WORLD HALAL SUMMIT**

26-29 November 2025 • Istanbul, Türkiye

▶ **OIC INVESTMENT FORUM IN AFRICA**

2-4 December 2025 • Bamako, Mali

▶ **9th ACMOI**

10-11 December 2025 • Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



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