



ISSUE 186 • APRIL - JUNE 2026

TIJARIS



THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTRA-OIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT

SPECIAL REPORT

HEALTH: A NEW ENGINE OF GROWTH AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN OIC COUNTRIES



**KAZAN
FORUM
2026**



**IDB ANNUAL
MEETINGS & PRIVATE
SECTOR FORUM IN
BAKU**



SUCCESS STORIES SUR L'ENTREPRENARIAT
DES FEMMES & DES JEUNES

FADIMA DIAWARA

«Je cherche des alliés stratégiques
qui partagent cette urgence
d'agir en Afrique.»

THE INTERNATIONAL DIGITAL ORDER AT A CROSSROADS
AT THE 14th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

ISSN : 2230-1933





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.

SUMMARY

NO. 186 • APRIL / JUNE 2026

OIC NEWS

- 06** The OIC Launches a Series of Health and Humanitarian Projects for the Benefit of Somalia
- 07** The OIC Reaffirms Its Commitment to Women's Empowerment at the Bukhara Women's Forum
- 08** The OIC at the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026
- 09** 10th Meeting of the OIC Tourism Coordination Committee

ICDT NEWS

- 10** Virtual Workshop on ICDT Trade and Investment Tools for the Benefit of Start-ups, Micro-enterprises, and Trade Support Institutions of OIC Countries
- 11** 42nd Session of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee
- 12** 1st Forum of the Regional Investment Platform for the Development of the Coffee Value Chain in Africa
- 13** Kazan Forum 2026
- 14** «Builders of the African Economy» Forum
- 18** IsDB Annual Meetings & Private Sector Forum in Baku

SPECIAL REPORT

- 20** Health: A New Engine of Growth and Economic Integration in OIC Countries
- 30** The Regional Forum on Investment in the Health Sector in Nouakchott: The Event Shaping the Future of the African Pharmaceutical Industry

ARTICLES & NEWS

- 32** The International Digital Order at a Crossroads at the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference
- 36** Success Stories on Women's and Youth Entrepreneurship: Fadima DIAWARA, a voice heard far beyond her borders

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- 38** G7 Summit in Évian, France
- 39** Gitex Africa Morocco 2026
- 40** Africa CEO Forum Kigali
- 41** Spring Meetings of the IMF and the World Bank: What's at Stake for OIC Countries

COUNTRY BRIEFS

- 42** Pakistan strengthens its position as a global aerospace exporter through expanding south-south partnerships
- 43** Cameroon expands sme financing through blended instruments and financial innovation
- 44** Nigeria strengthens its position as an emerging pharmaceutical hub in west africa
- 45** Azerbaijan and saudi arabia deepen economic and logistical cooperation to strengthen regional connectivity
- 46** Jordan emerges as a green economy hub with major ammonia investment

OIC AND ICDT AGENDA

- 47** Upcoming events

TIJARIS

PUBLISHED BY THE ISLAMIC CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

ISSN : 2230-1933

Director of publication: Mrs Latifa EL Bouabdellaoui • Editorial committee: Mrs Latifa EL Bouabdellaoui, Mr Mamoudou Bocar Sall, Mrs Kadiatou Diallo, Mr Ismael Taqui, Mr Charif EL Hamraoui • Model and Layout: Samir Tebiche • Realization: Afrique Challenge • Editor: Islamic Center for Development of Trade • Habous Tower 11/12th floor 20000 Casablanca-Morocco. • Mail: icdt@icdt-oic.org - www.icdt-cidc.org



EDITORIAL

THE HEALTH SECTOR IN OIC COUNTRIES: NAVIGATING DEMOGRAPHIC CHALLENGE AND STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITY

The health sector today represents one of the major pillars of economic and social development worldwide and in the OIC region, which brings together more than 1.9 billion inhabitants spread across several continents. This sector constitutes both a significant challenge for countries facing rapid demographic growth and recurrent health crises, and a sustainable economic lever for countries with strong investment potential. While some countries already have advanced medical infrastructure and technologies, others continue to face shortcomings in access to care, health financing, or medical personnel training. This diversity creates a highly promising space for cooperation and innovation, which, if properly leveraged, could lead to

sustained economic growth, technological and health sovereignty, job creation, and a lasting improvement in populations' living conditions.

Today, OIC countries are experiencing one of the most significant demographic dynamics in the world. Several member states have young, rapidly growing populations. This trend is driving increased needs for hospital infrastructure, primary care centers, medications, medical equipment, health insurance, and telemedicine services. Furthermore, rapid urbanization is transforming lifestyles and increasing the prevalence of chronic diseases such as diabetes, hypertension, and cardiovascular disease. Given these various factors, along

with lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, the health sector is becoming a strategic market for OIC countries—one in which substantial investment is warranted to mitigate future crises, meet population needs, and improve well-being. In this regard, it should be noted that in recent years, health budgets have progressively increased in several regions with a view to modernizing hospitals, digitalizing health services, improving medical coverage, developing biomedical research, and strengthening local pharmaceutical capacities. Indeed, certain countries such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Türkiye, and Malaysia have, in recent years, invested massively in next-generation medical infrastructure and smart health technologies. This development has paved the way for public-private partnerships and opened up private investment opportunities, particularly in medical tourism, the Halal pharmaceutical industry, digital health, and telemedicine. These various investments made across the OIC region have contributed to increased foreign currency revenues, skilled employment, and improved hospital standards. With regard to the Halal sector, these investments have led to the establishment of Halal certification and accreditation centers, national pharmaceutical laboratories and research centers, and local production chains. Regarding digital health and telemedicine, they have enabled the digitalization of medical records and mobile health applications, as well as the development of artificial intelligence and remote consultation platforms. All of these achievements have contributed to improved access to care, reduced dependence on imports, and strengthened health security in the OIC region, while also fostering the proliferation of startups in several countries, notably in Indonesia, Egypt, Nigeria, and the United Arab Emirates.

Despite these commendable efforts, OIC countries still face numerous challenges in improving the well-being of their populations. Indeed, certain regions continue to suffer from a shortage of hospitals, a scarcity of doctors, a lack of means to access healthcare, and limited access to essential medicines. Some countries also suffer from a shortfall in qualified human resources and remain dependent on imports of medicines, medical equipment, and vaccines. To address this, countries must adopt inclusive policies to ensure healthcare access for all, invest further in the sector to achieve full autonomy and independence, and pool their efforts in investment and skills development. This will help strengthen collective resilience in the face of future health crises. Another key action will focus on addressing urgent financing needs. It is within this framework that ICDT, as the trade and investment promotion center for OIC countries, plans to organize a Regional

Investment Forum on the Health Sector on 13–14 July 2026 in Nouakchott, in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the World Health Organization (WHO), under the aegis of the Ministry of Health of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania. Held under the theme «Strengthening Intra-OIC Trade and Investment in the Pharmaceutical Sector: From Strategy to Action,» this Forum aims to stimulate investment and trade in the pharmaceutical industry and medical equipment sectors within OIC countries. It also aims to provide a privileged platform for sharing expertise and showcasing the potential of this strategic sector, as well as to consolidate the positioning of African countries in the field of health services. Through this event, the Centre wishes to highlight the initiatives that are transforming the healthcare landscape. By encouraging technological innovation and increased public and private investment, it aims to turn this sector into a powerful driver of economic and human development in the OIC region. However, this potential can only be realized through an ambitious strategy based on sustainable investment, training, innovation, regional cooperation, and social inclusion.

In a world where health is becoming a major geopolitical issue, OIC countries, given their growing demographics and considerable potential, have the opportunity to build a healthcare model that is more sovereign, more united, and more competitive for their populations. This is a mission that is close to our hearts, and we remain confident that, through the Nouakchott Forum, we will lay the foundations for a new era and make a concrete contribution to prosperity, well-being, and stability in the region. ■

Mrs. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui
Director General

The OIC Launches a Series of Health and Humanitarian Projects for the Benefit of Somalia

THE OIC REGIONAL OFFICE IN MOGADISHU, IN COORDINATION WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS, HAS LAUNCHED THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A SET OF PROJECTS DESIGNED TO ASSIST THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS IN THE BANADIR REGION, PARTICULARLY DISPLACED PERSONS, PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS, AND ORPHANS.

This initiative falls within the OIC's broader efforts to strengthen health services and alleviate the suffering of the population in the Federal Republic of Somalia. Among these projects is an eye health initiative targeting orphanages in Mogadishu, which provides free examinations, medications, vitamins, and eyeglasses to approximately 1,200 people. There is also a project dedicated to displacement camps in Mogadishu, aimed at providing a range of medical and therapeutic services.

A surgical campaign has also been launched, offering a comprehensive set of services including examinations and diagnosis, the performance of surgical procedures, post-operative care, as well as the provision of dedica-

ted medications and treatments. All of these initiatives, expected to benefit approximately 7,000 people, reflect the commitment of the OIC General Secretariat to supporting the Somali people and standing by the most vulnerable segments of the population during these times of economic and health crises.

Following these actions, the OIC Regional Office in Mogadishu expressed its deep gratitude to the partners, donors, medical teams, and working groups who contributed to the implementation of these initiatives. It also voiced its intention to continue humanitarian and development programs aimed at supporting stability and improving the health and living conditions of the most vulnerable populations in Somalia.■



The OIC Reaffirms Its Commitment to Women's Empowerment at the Bukhara Women's Forum

THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT, REPRESENTED BY MS. AMINA ALHAJIRI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF CULTURAL, SOCIAL, AND FAMILY AFFAIRS, TOOK PART IN THE 2ND ASIAN WOMEN'S FORUM, HELD ON 14–15 MAY 2026 IN BUKHARA, REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN. ORGANIZED UNDER THE THEME «INVESTING IN WOMEN – A FOUNDATION FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH: EXPANDING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL OPPORTUNITIES,» THE FORUM BROUGHT TOGETHER APPROXIMATELY 250 PARTICIPANTS FROM MORE THAN 20 COUNTRIES.

In her opening remarks, Ms. Alhajiri conveyed the Secretary General's gratitude to the Uzbek authorities for organizing this important Forum. She also reaffirmed the OIC's unwavering commitment to strengthening women's participation and leadership, and to enhancing cooperation among member states and partnerships in support of inclusive and sustainable development.

During the Forum, discussions focused on the importance of women's participation at all levels of decision-making in the politi-

cal and governmental spheres, so that their rights and well-being are taken into account legally, institutionally, and in their daily lives. Discussions also revealed that women's contribution to the economy remains limited given their significant presence in the informal sector and their limited access to financial services, credit, and professional networks.

In this regard, the Bukhara Declaration adopted at the Forum calls for enabling women to benefit from existing economic opportunities by directing them toward

emerging sectors such as green jobs, digital markets, and sustainable industries from the outset. It also called for concentrating efforts across several areas, namely women's participation in politics, economic empowerment, education and innovation, as well as social protection and digital security. Finally, through this declaration, participants called on governments, parliaments, international organizations, businesses, and civil society to translate their commitments into measurable actions, backed by adequate funding and coordinated efforts. ■



The OIC at the UN ECOSOC Youth Forum 2026

THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT TOOK PART IN THE 2026 YOUTH FORUM OF THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL (ECOSOC), HELD AT UN HEADQUARTERS FROM 14 TO 16 APRIL, UNDER THE THEME: «INNOVATE, UNITE, AND TRANSFORM: YOUTH CHARTING THE PATH TO 2030.»

The OIC delegation, led by H.E. Ambassador Hameed Opeloyeru, OIC Permanent Observer to the United Nations, held several high-level side events on this occasion. These sessions, organized in collaboration with OIC institutions, member states' permanent missions, and strategic partner organizations, underscored the OIC's commitment to placing youth at the center of socio-economic development programs across the OIC space.

Highlighting the OIC's proactive approach to international coo-

peration, Dr. Boubakari Maiga, Head of the Department of Youth and Sports, joined representatives of the Islamic Solidarity Sports Association (ISSA) for a key meeting with Mr. Elizeu Chaves Junior, Chief of Staff of the United Nations Office on Youth. This dialogue provided an opportunity to exchange best practices and successful frameworks for youth empowerment and sports development across various regions of the world.

Over the course of these two days, the OIC and ECOSOC

identified key synergies for fruitful future collaboration. Both parties explored concrete avenues for aligning their institutional efforts, specifically targeting joint initiatives that bridge the gap between sport and social development. By strengthening these ties, the two organizations aim to accelerate progress toward shared goals, ensuring that young people in OIC countries and other regions of the world are equipped with the tools needed to drive beneficial and promising change by 2030. ■



10th Meeting of the OIC Tourism Coordination Committee

THE OIC TOURISM COORDINATION COMMITTEE, RESPONSIBLE FOR MONITORING THE OIC'S VARIOUS ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM, HELD A MEETING IN TASHKENT ON 22 JUNE 2026 UNDER THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN, WHICH CURRENTLY HOLDS THE PRESIDENCY OF THE 12TH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF TOURISM MINISTERS OF OIC COUNTRIES (ICTM).

The proceedings of the meeting took place in two stages: the first stage covered the implementation of the tourism development program by OIC institutions, and the second stage addressed the methodology and criteria for selecting the OIC Tourism City for 2028, 2029, and 2030.

Implementation of Tourism Development in OIC Countries

Ms. Farha of the Department of Economic Affairs of the OIC General Secretariat presented a brief progress report on the implementation of tourism-related activities by OIC bodies. Representatives of IRCICA, SESRIC, ICDT, ICCD, and SMIIC in turn presented their activities for the 2024–2026 period. In this regard, the ICDT representative highlighted activities

related to the promotion and facilitation of tourism in OIC countries (forums, fairs, exhibitions, investment days, training sessions), as well as the publication of reports on tourism development (family tourism, sustainable tourism, gastronomic tourism, the biannual report on Halal trade and investment), and the tourism-related country profiles featured on the ICDT website.

Selection of the OIC Tourism City for 2028, 2029, and 2030

Mr. Jabbarov, Director General of the Department of Economic Affairs, presented the background and selection criteria for the Tourism City, in line with the recommendations of the meetings of OIC Tourism Ministers. In turn, the OIC institutions

namely SESRIC, ICDT, and IRCICA presented the results of their selections (Togo, Jordan, and Malaysia). Following discussions among participants, the following cities were proposed for nomination over the next three years: Les Lacs, Togo (2028, Africa); Aqaba, Jordan (2029, Arab World); and Dushanbe, Tajikistan (2030, Asia).

At the conclusion of the proceedings, the meeting adopted the meeting report as well as an activity matrix for the implementation of ICTM resolutions, which will be submitted to the relevant OIC bodies and to the 13th session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers of OIC Countries, scheduled to take place in Qatar in December of this year. ■



Virtual Workshop on ICDT Trade and Investment Tools for the Benefit of Start-ups, Micro-enterprises, and Trade Support Institutions of OIC Countries

IN AN ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT MARKED BY THE ACCELERATING DIGITALIZATION OF TRADE AND THE MULTIPLICATION OF MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AT THE REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS, START-UPS AND MICRO-ENTERPRISES ARE PLAYING AN INCREASINGLY STRATEGIC ROLE IN ENERGIZING THE ECONOMIC FABRIC, CREATING JOBS, AND DRIVING INNOVATION.

However, these entities continue to face several constraints, notably in accessing trade information, gaining visibility in markets, identifying reliable partners, and mastering digital tools dedicated to trade and to the promotion of products and services.

Against this backdrop, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) organized, on 22 April 2026, a «Virtual Workshop on ICDT Trade and Investment Tools for the Benefit of Start-ups, Micro-enterprises, and Trade Support Institutions of OIC Countries.» This Workshop, held within the framework of the Centre's Capacity-Building Program and dedicated to economic operators and representatives of Trade Promotion Organizations (TPOs), Investment Promotion Agencies (IPAs), and Chambers of Commerce of

OIC countries, aims to enable participants to make full use of the tools and platforms made available by ICDT, to strengthen the competitiveness of OIC SMEs in foreign markets, and to contribute in a sustained and lasting manner to the development of intra-OIC trade and investment.

At the Workshop's opening ceremony, Dr. Sall Mamoudou, Deputy Director General of ICDT, delivered the address on behalf of the Director General, in which she noted that the choice of the Workshop's topic stemmed from ICDT's firm conviction that mastery of its tools by economic operators from OIC countries is of the utmost importance for their integration into development strategies and access to foreign markets. She further added that the Workshop was particularly timely given the

global economic context marked by digital transformation, market fragmentation, and the growing need for resilience. After outlining the various services offered by the Centre and its contribution to the development of intra-OIC trade and investment over the years, she concluded by affirming that, in an increasingly competitive world, the deployment of the tools made available by ICDT and their adoption by various economic actors is an essential condition for unlocking entrepreneurial potential and strengthening the position of OIC countries in the global economy. On this occasion, ICDT experts presented the following topics to more than a hundred participants from OIC countries:

- An overview of ICDT's role in facilitating and promoting trade and investment in OIC countries

•A presentation of ICDT's platforms/tools & practical exercises: Trade Map, Help Desk, Mac Map, Halal Dashboard, Women's Platform, Country Profiles, ePublications, and ICDT Invest Days.

During the exchanges, discussions focused on the various services offered by ICDT, the use of tools and platforms dedicated to promoting intra-OIC trade and investment, as well as business opportunities and access to foreign markets.

At the closure of the Workshop, Mrs. Diallo Kadiatou, Head of the Department of Institutional and SME Capacity Building at ICDT, took the floor to thank participants for the rich exchanges during the discussions and invited them to propose key topics for inclusion in upcoming training sessions. For their part, participants expressed satisfaction with ICDT's unwavering support for the development of their businesses and activities. They also requested that the Centre organize more training sessions of this kind in order to strengthen their managerial skills and improve their competitiveness in foreign markets.

It should be noted that this Workshop contributed to a better mastery of the digital tools and platforms made available by the Centre, to the strategic use of trade data, to enhanced international visibility for participating companies, to increased networking, partnerships, and export opportunities in foreign markets, and to the sustained and lasting development of trade and investment in the OIC region. ■



42nd Session of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee

THE 42ND MEETING OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF THE OIC STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION (COMCEC) WAS HELD IN ANKARA, REPUBLIC OF TÜRKIYE, ON 12–13 MAY 2026.

In his message to the meeting, His Excellency Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the OIC, presented an overview of recent developments in the economic and commercial fields among OIC member states. In this regard, he noted that the global economy is facing profound uncertainty due to economic, geopolitical, technological, and environmental challenges, which is affecting the growth prospects of several countries, including low-income OIC member states. In this context, he called for strengthened intra-OIC economic cooperation and coordinated policies to boost resilience, inclusive growth, and sustainable development.

The Secretary General further urged member states to actively participate in the Tenth OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development, to be held in the Republic of Chad; the Thirteenth

Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), to be held in the State of Qatar; the Second Ministerial Conference on Energy in OIC Member States, to be held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; and the OIC Investment Forum in Africa, to be held in the Republic of Mali. In this regard, he noted that these events aim to strengthen intra-OIC cooperation in the fields of agriculture and food security, tourism, energy, as well as trade and investment.

During the meeting's proceedings, participants reviewed the status of implementation of various COMCEC projects, with a focus on trade and investment, agriculture, tourism, financial development, transport, private sector development, and poverty alleviation. On this occasion, the Committee noted that intra-OIC trade had not reached the collectively agreed target of 25%. In this regard, it

underscored the urgent need for member states to intensify their efforts toward economic diversification, strengthening trade competitiveness, accelerating the implementation of OIC trade and investment initiatives including the TPS-OIC and encouraging

greater private sector empowerment in order to strengthen trade ties among member states.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Committee requested that trade development institutions organize training workshops under

the theme «Food Security and Supply Chain Resilience in Times of Crisis,» and approved the draft agenda for the 42nd COMCEC Ministerial Session, to be held in Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye, from 31 October to 3 November 2026. ■

1st Forum of the Regional Investment Platform for the Development of the Coffee Value Chain in Africa



MARRAKECH HOSTED, FROM 5 TO 6 MAY, THE 1ST FORUM OF THE REGIONAL INVESTMENT PLATFORM FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COFFEE VALUE CHAIN IN AFRICA, ORGANIZED UNDER THE THEME: «BUILDING COMPETITIVE AND INCLUSIVE COFFEE VALUE CHAINS IN AFRICA: TOWARDS A REGIONAL INVESTMENT PROGRAM LEVERAGING THE AFRICAN COFFEE HUB IN TANGER MED AS A KEY DRIVER.»

This Forum, organized by the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the African Coffee Hub (ACH), and the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Kingdom of Morocco, with the support of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), brought together Ministers, Ambassadors, and economic

operators from Benin, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Madagascar, Nigeria, Uganda, Sierra Leone, and Togo. At the heart of the proceedings was the launch of a regional investment program anchored around the African Coffee Hub-Tanger Med, designed to help the continent move beyond the export of raw beans toward full mastery of the coffee value chain, from cultivation to processing and marketing.

On this occasion, participating countries engaged in structured reflection around a bold ambition: to unlock the potential of African coffee and guide smallholder farms toward international markets through trade integration. At the opening ceremony, attended by the Director General of ICDT, the Director of the IsDB Regional Hub in Rabat, the OIC Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs, the Director General of the African Coffee Hub (ACH), and the Director of the IOFS Projects Department, speakers in turn emphasized the importance of the coffee sector for OIC and African countries, particularly in developing its value chain from production to domestic and export marketing. They also highlighted the importance of establishing an African coffee label incorporating Halal certification.

This was followed by country presentations from Guinea, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Madagascar, Cameroon, Togo, and Côte d'Ivoire on the challenges and opportunities facing the coffee sector, as well as panel discussions on ACH's investment program, during which

the OIC Assistant Secretary General and the ICDT Director General gave presentations on coffee sector development in OIC countries, the potential of African smallholder coffee farms, solutions for strengthening the coffee value chain, and the financing of coffee processing and projects in Africa.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a final joint communiqué was adopted by the participating countries and partners. This document sets out the way forward for fostering cooperation in the development of regional coffee value chains in Africa, in collaboration with the OIC and its institutions—notably IsDB, ICDT, and IOFS—as well as other participating organizations. MOUs were also signed between ACH and Guinea, Sierra Leone, Madagascar, Nigeria, and Uganda to strengthen cooperation and the exchange of experience in various areas related to coffee production and marketing.

It should be noted that an ICDT delegation led by Director General Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui took part in this Forum. On this occasion, she attended all sessions and held bilateral meetings with the heads of delegation from Uganda, Sierra Leone, Madagascar, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, ITFC, ICIEC, ICRAF, UN Women, ACH, and the Solina Group consultancy, with a view to strengthening collaboration in developing the coffee value chain in OIC countries.

The 2nd edition of this Forum will be held in Tangier during 2027. ■



Kazan Forum 2026

THE «RUSSIA – ISLAMIC WORLD – KAZAN 2026» ECONOMIC FORUM WAS HELD FROM 13 TO 15 MAY 2026 IN THE CAPITAL OF THE REPUBLIC OF TATARSTAN, WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF AN ICDT DELEGATION AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM 99 COUNTRIES AND 75 REGIONS OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION.

This gathering featured several major events, including the Kazan Halal Market, held at the Kazan Agro-Industrial Park in the presence of H.E. Rustam Minnikhanov (Raïs of Tatarstan), the Secretary General of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development, and several public figures and officials. This exhibition, which brought together 400 exhibitors and 40,000 visitors, covered an area of approximately 12,000 m² and showcased more than 4,500 Halal products from the Islamic World. On this occasion, the ICDT Director General delivered a speech addressing several topics, including:

- The growth of the global halal ecosystem food, pharmaceuticals, tourism, finance, and innovation — representing approximately USD 2.4 trillion in consumer spending
- The strategic role of the Kazan Market as a platform for partnerships and investment among OIC countries, Russia, and Tatarstan
- ICDT's long-standing cooperation with the Russian Federation, including agreements with Russian trade institutions and efforts to strengthen halal trade, certification, and logistics
- The presentation of the «Report on Halal Trade and Investment in OIC Member States 2025,»



Panel discussion during the Grand Opening of the «Female Perspectives» Track — KazanForum 2026



Group photo of speakers at the conclusion of the «Female Perspectives» Track session

ICDT's flagship analytical publication

- The reaffirmation of ICDT's

commitment to regional integration, entrepreneurship, and sustainable economic development through the halal economy



Mrs. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui delivering her speech at the Kazan Halal Market Opening Ceremony



Bilateral meeting between Mrs. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui and Mr. Artem Zdunov, Head of the Republic of Mordovia

During the Forum, Mrs. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui also took part in several high-level events, including the «Track: Female Perspectives,» dedicated to women's leadership and organized in partnership with the Russian

University of Cooperation. This session brought together senior officials from the OIC, Russia, the BRICS countries, and the Arab World to share best practices and forge collaborative frameworks in support of women's

economic empowerment. During the discussions, the ICDT Director General addressed the following topics:

- The critical importance of women's entrepreneurship for inclusive growth and sustainable development in OIC member states
- The persistent challenges women entrepreneurs face in accessing financing, markets, skills, and technology
- The transformative potential of digital technologies, AI, e-commerce, and STEM education in advancing women's economic empowerment
- The announcement of a dedicated ICDT program to strengthen women's participation in trade and investment in the OIC region, with an open call for institutional partners

The Director General also took part in the «Russia – Arab World Trade Dialogue,» presenting OIC trade tools as a means for Russian businesses to access Arab markets. Key points of her remarks included:

- The OIC Trade Preferential System (TPS-OIC) as a practical tool for facilitating market access, reducing trade barriers, and encouraging sustainable trade cooperation
- Sectors of growing interest to Russian businesses: halal industries, agri-food, pharmaceuticals, logistics, energy, digital technologies, and infrastructure
- ICDT's role in supporting trade exchanges: B2B forums, market intelligence, export promotion, trade facilitation, and digital commerce
- A call for strengthening logistical connectivity and institutional cooperation in order to translate economic complementarities into lasting partnerships

It should be noted that, on the sidelines of the Forum, the Director General held several bilateral meetings, notably with H.E. Mr. Artem Zdunov, Head of the Republic of Mordovia, to discuss investment opportunities, strengthening economic cooperation, and developing partnerships with the Republic of Mordovia. Ms. Elbouabdel-laoui also met with H.E. Mr. Artur Nikolaev, Vice-President of the Tatarstan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. This exchange focused on strengthening trade relations between the Russian business community and OIC member states, improving connectivity and networking, and exploring mechanisms for institutional cooperation.



Bilateral meeting with Mr. Artur Nikolaev, Vice President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Tatarstan

ICDT's participation in the Kazan Forum 2026 helped consolidate the institution's position as a strategic facilitator of trade exchanges and institutional dialogue between OIC member states and the Russian Federation. Through her interventions in high-level sessions and her targeted bilateral meetings, the Director General highlighted concrete opportunities

for investment, women's economic empowerment, and trade development, reaffirming ICDT's role as a key player in promoting trade and economic integration across the OIC space. ■



«Builders of the African Economy» Forum

THE 16TH EDITION OF THE «BUILDERS OF THE AFRICAN ECONOMY» FORUM WAS HELD ON 18 JUNE 2026 IN ABIDJAN UNDER THE THEME: «EXCELLENCE, LEADERSHIP, AND IMPACT: AFRICA BUILDING ITS FUTURE.» THE EVENT BROUGHT TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES OF IVORIAN MINISTERIAL DEPARTMENTS, ACADEMIA, AND CIVIL SOCIETY, AS WELL AS MR. ISMAEL TAQUI, HEAD OF THE TRADE FACILITATION DEPARTMENT AT ICDT, AND BUSINESS LEADERS FROM MOROCCO, GABON, NAMIBIA, CÔTE D'IVOIRE, AND BENIN.

The Forum was organized around three panels dedicated to education and employment; innovation, women's entrepreneurship, and artificial intelligence; and the Libreville-Berthe and Jean International University. Discussions focused on the following points:

- Accelerating African economic integration through continental initiatives, notably the AfCFTA
 - Highlighting public policies that have contributed to the economic transformation of African states
- For his part, Mr. Ismael Taqui took part in the second panel, presenting the Centre's perspective on innovation, the role of women in strengthening intra-African trade, and regional integration. He also highlighted ICDT's programs in these areas.
- It should be noted that, on the sidelines of the Forum, an Awards Eve-

ning was held, at which ICDT—represented by Ms. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui—was honored as Champion of Trade Exchanges, in recognition of her contribution to trade development, regional integration, and South-South cooperation. Twelve African states were also honored that evening, namely:

- Morocco, recognized for the expansion of its healthcare coverage and its industrial pharmaceutical investments, as well as for its energy transition strategies and sustainable development projects
- Kenya, commended for its digital dynamism and AI infrastructure

- Egypt, honored for its urban modernization and transport megaprojects

- The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), recognized for the strategic management and local value creation of its mineral resources

- Algeria, honored for the effectiveness of its energy supply and infrastructure policies

- Côte d'Ivoire, honored for its agricultural performance and local processing initiatives

- Seychelles, recognized for the excellence of its youth professional integration programs

- South Africa, commended for the strength and competitiveness of its industrial base

- Tanzania, honored for its tourism promotion policy and hospitality performance

- Nigeria, recognized for the continental and global reach of its cultural industries

On this occasion, three major special awards were also presented to the following countries:

- Special 20th Anniversary Award (Grand Laureate): Morocco, for the scale and impact of its comprehensive economic and structural transformations over the past two decades

- Special Award for Gender Equality: Namibia, recognized for its pioneering initiatives in gender parity and women's empowerment

- Special Award for Regional Integration: Ghana, honored for its active policy in support of the return of African diasporas and its key role in fostering regional rapprochement ■



IsDB Annual Meetings & Private Sector Forum in Baku

FROM 16 TO 19 JUNE 2026, AN ICDT DELEGATION LED BY MS. LATIFA EL-BOUABDELLAOUI TOOK PART IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR FORUM ORGANIZED ON THE SIDELINES OF THE ISDB ANNUAL MEETINGS IN BAKU.

Elbouabdellaoui took part in the Private Sector Forum organized on the sidelines of the IsDB Annual Meetings in Baku. This Forum is a key initiative supporting private sector development in the Islamic World, serving as a platform for networking and the exchange of experiences, best practices, and success stories, while also exploring trade and investment opportunities among IsDB member countries. It also

showcases the services and initiatives of the IsDB Group in investment, trade, and insurance, and fosters cross-border business ties through B2B and B2G meetings.

This year's edition, held under the theme «Regional Integration for Sustainable Prosperity», focused on strengthening regional cooperation, improving trade and investment flows, and promoting inclusive, resilient, and sustain-



nable growth. On this occasion, the ICDT Director General took part as a panelist in the session dedicated to «From More FDI to Better FDI: Promoting Investment for Sustainable Development.» During the discussions, participants highlighted the crucial role of investment promotion agencies in fostering resilient investment ecosystems, strengthening competitiveness, and supporting sustainable development goals in member countries. ICDT's participation in this session underscored the Centre's significant role in trade facilitation and investment promotion across the OIC region.

The Director General also took part as a panelist in the session dedicated to country experiences. On this occasion, OIC countries and institutions showcased priority investment opportunities, national development plans, sector strategies, and key reforms aimed at attracting private sector participation. This session

enabled governments and investment promotion agencies to present bankable projects, highlight enabling policies, and engage directly with investors, financiers, and development partners.

It should be noted that, on the sidelines of the Forum, ICDT and the Azerbaijan Women Entrepreneurs Association (AQ-SIA), represented by Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui and Ms. Sakina Babayeva, signed a Memorandum of Understanding aimed at expanding opportunities for women entrepreneurs in the OIC region and Azerbaijan, strengthening institutional collaboration to support sustainable economic growth and innovation, developing joint capacity-building programs, trade missions, and B2B networking initiatives, and promoting women's participation in trade, investment, and entrepreneurship at the regional and international levels. The ICDT Director General also held bilateral meetings with interna-

tional organizations and institutions from the Islamic World to explore areas of cooperation, discuss joint initiatives in trade finance, investment promotion, and halal industry development, and strengthen ICDT's partnerships with leading financial and development institutions at the regional and international levels.

ICDT's participation in the IsDB Private Sector Forum strengthened its strategic positioning at the heart of OIC trade and investment cooperation. Through active contributions to panel discussions, a Memorandum of Understanding signing ceremony, high-level bilateral meetings, and a presence at the exhibition, ICDT demonstrated its capacity to serve as a bridge between institutional partners, investment promotion agencies, and the private sector, fully in line with its mandate to promote sustainable trade and economic integration among OIC member states. ■



SPECIAL REPORT

HEALTH: A NEW ENGINE OF GROWTH AND ECONOMIC INTEGRATION IN OIC COUNTRIES



Long regarded as an unavoidable public expense, health is now establishing itself as a strategic economic sector. Pharmaceutical industry, biotechnology, medical equipment, digital health, research and hospital investment: OIC countries are multiplying initiatives to build competitive ecosystems capable of meeting the needs of their populations while strengthening their position in international trade. More than a public health issue, health is becoming a lever for economic diversification, innovation and regional integration

The COVID-19 pandemic profoundly upended long-held certainties. Within a matter of weeks, global supply chains came under severe strain, exposing the dependence of many countries on imports of medicines, vaccines, medical devices and protective equipment. This shock marked a turning point: health is no longer viewed solely as an essential public service, but is now seen as a pillar of economic sovereignty.

In member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), this growing awareness has translated into accelerated investment in health industries. Ambitious national programmes have emerged to strengthen pharmaceutical production capacity, develop biomedical research, modernize hospital infrastructure and foster innovation.

This momentum is unfolding in a particularly favourable context.

OIC countries account for nearly a quarter of the world's population a young, growing population undergoing an epidemiological transition that is increasing the need for care, medicines and medical technologies. This evolution is opening up a considerable market for investors, manufacturers and healthcare providers.

But beyond domestic demand, health is also becoming a powerful vector for economic cooperation. Trade in medicines, hospital investment, industrial partnerships and technology transfers are progressively helping to structure a genuine regional ecosystem, capable of strengthening health resilience while boosting intra-OIC trade.

“Health is no longer merely a budgetary cost: it has become a strategic industry, a driver of innovation and a vector of international competitiveness.”

A New Economy Is Emerging

Several member countries have already embarked on a profound transformation of their health sector.

Saudi Arabia is investing heavily in modernizing its health system through Vision 2030, with the ambition of developing a national pharmaceutical industry and attracting international investment. Türkiye is consolidating its position as an industrial powerhouse in the production of medical devices and medicines while developing an innovative ecosystem around health technologies.

Malaysia continues to specialize in halal pharmaceuticals and biotechnology, while Bangladesh is steadily establishing itself as one of the world's leading producers of generic medicines.

Morocco, for its part, is strengthening its pharmaceutical industry,



expanding its exports to Africa, and steadily asserting its role as a regional platform through the rise of private groups, industrial investment and South-South partnerships.

These initiatives all illustrate a common trend: health is becoming a genuine productive sector, generating value, skilled jobs and business opportunities.

The Health Economy: A Strategic Market Undergoing Rapid Change

Driven by population ageing, technological innovation and rising health spending, the global health economy is undergoing an unprecedented transformation. OIC countries have significant assets to capture a growing share of this added value, provided they strengthen their industrial capacities and regional cooperation.

The health economy is today one of the most dynamic sectors in the world. It encompasses a broad range of activities, from the manufacture of medicines and vaccines to the production of medical devices, as well as biotechnology, digital health, hospital services, clinical research and artificial intelligence applied to medicine.

This transformation is driven by several structural trends. Population ageing, the rise in chronic diseases, urbanization and scientific progress are fueling growing demand for care, innovative treatments and medical technologies. Private and public investment in health is reaching unprecedented levels, making the sector a driver of growth, innovation and skilled employment.

For OIC countries, this momentum represents a major opportunity. With a population exceeding 1.9 billion, rapidly growing health needs and rising demand for me-



dicines and medical equipment, these countries constitute one of the most promising markets in the global health economy.

Several member states have launched major programmes to develop local medicine production, aiming to reduce their dependence on imports while strengthening their health security.

Bangladesh has established itself as one of the world's largest producers of generic medicines through a competitive, export-oriented industry. Türkiye continues to modernize its pharmaceutical industry and is developing a range of high-value-added medical devices. Saudi Arabia, under its Vision 2030 programme, is investing heavily to

attract international manufacturers and boost domestic production. Malaysia, for its part, is strengthening its specialization in biotechnology and halal-certified pharmaceuticals.

In Morocco, the pharmaceutical sector benefits from a solid industrial base and recognized expertise. National laboratories are steadily expanding their exports to several African markets, while investment in the production of medicines and biosimilars is strengthening the Kingdom's competitiveness.

Value Chains That Remain Fragmented

Despite this progress, intra-OIC trade in the health sector remains relatively limited. Supply chains remain heavily dependent on external suppliers for certain active pharmaceutical ingredients, high-technology medical equipment and biotechnology products.

This situation highlights the need to strengthen complementarities between member countries' economies. Better production specialization, cross-investment and the progressive harmonization of standards could foster the emergence of genuine regional value chains, capable of meeting the needs of OIC markets while improving



their competitiveness on the international stage.

Beyond reducing external dependence, such integration would create new opportunities for businesses, stimulate investment and contribute to the creation of skilled jobs.

The development of national industries is a first step. The real challenge now is to connect these production capacities in order to build regional value chains capable of strengthening intra-OIC trade and positioning member countries as major players in the global health economy.

Building Regional Value Chains: A Lever for Strengthening Intra-OIC Trade

The global health crisis served as a reminder of the importance of resilient supply chains. For OIC countries, the challenge is no longer simply to produce more, but to connect their industrial capacities in order to build a genuine regional health market.

For many years, health policies in member countries focused on developing national production capacities. This strategy enabled several states to increase their autonomy

DID YOU KNOW? The Halal Health Products Market Is Growing Rapidly

Global spending on halal pharmaceuticals is estimated at USD 112 billion in 2024 and is expected to reach USD 146 billion by 2029, representing an average annual growth rate of around 5.4%.

Halal medicines meet the growing demand of nearly 2 billion Muslim consumers, while also appealing to non-Muslim consumers owing to their quality, traceability and safety standards.

Several OIC countries, notably Malaysia, Indonesia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Türkiye, are investing heavily in the production of halal-certified medicines, vaccines, dietary supplements and medical devices in order to strengthen their health sovereignty and export competitiveness.

OIC economies imported USD 421.5 billion worth of halal-economy-related products in 2024, illustrating the potential for developing regional value chains and strengthening intra-OIC trade.



in the manufacture of medicines, medical devices and vaccines. However, in a context marked by the fragmentation of global supply chains, the challenge now extends beyond national borders.

The complementarity of OIC economies paves the way for the creation of regional value chains capable of strengthening business competitiveness while reducing dependence on external markets. Some countries have a solid pharmaceutical industry, while others stand out in biotechnology, medical devices or logistics. Better coordinated, these specializations could foster the emergence of an integrated ecosystem serving intra-OIC trade.

Bangladesh, for example, ranks among the world's leading producers of generic medicines. Türkiye has established itself as a major player in the manufacture of medical devices and hospital equipment. Malaysia is developing recognized capabilities in biotechnology and halal pharmaceuticals, while Mo-



rocco is steadily strengthening its position as an industrial and logistics platform towards West Africa. Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, are mobilizing significant capital to finance hospital infrastructure, research and industrial projects.

By encouraging cross-investment, technology transfers and mutual recognition of standards, OIC countries could build a regional value chain covering the entire production cycle: research, manufacturing, packaging, logistics and distribution. Such integration would strengthen not only health security but also the international competitiveness of businesses in the region. Innovation, Investment and Competitiveness: The New Drivers of the Health Economy in OIC Countries

Long focused on expanding hospital infrastructure and improving access to care, health policies are now evolving towards a more comprehensive approach, in which innovation, research and investment are becoming essential factors of competitiveness. In OIC countries, this transformation is accompanying economic diversification strategies and opening up new prospects for businesses, investors and research institutions.

The global health economy is undergoing profound change as a result of scientific and technological progress. Artificial intelligence, biotechnology, digital health, connected medical devices and personalized medicine are redefining care models and creating new high-value-added markets. Investment is no longer directed solely at hospitals or medical equipment, but also at digital infrastructure, research centres, health data platforms and innovative companies capable of developing tomorrow's medical solutions.



Aware of these developments, several OIC member countries have placed health at the heart of their development strategies. Saudi Arabia, through its Vision 2030 programme, aims to transform its health system by developing local medicine production, promoting public-private partnerships and accelerating the digitalization of health services. The United Arab Emirates is strengthening its positioning as a regional hub for medical innovation by attracting companies specializing in health technologies and clinical research. Malaysia continues to develop its biotechnology and halal pharmaceutical industry, while Türkiye is

investing in modernizing its medical device industry and research capabilities.

These strategies reflect a major shift: health is no longer viewed as an isolated sector but as an economic ecosystem that integrates industry, research, innovation, services and investment. Interactions between universities, hospitals, technology companies and investors are fostering the emergence of new industrial sectors, capable of meeting population needs while strengthening the competitiveness of national economies.

Digital health is one of the most promising areas of this transforma-



tion. The development of telemedicine, electronic medical records, data analytics platforms and artificial-intelligence-based applications is improving the efficiency of health systems while facilitating access to care, particularly in remote areas. At the same time, biotechnology is opening up new prospects in the production of vaccines, biosimilars and innovative therapies, offering OIC countries the opportunity to develop high-technology industries and reduce their dependence on imports.

Beyond their health benefits, these investments generate ripple effects across the entire economy. They stimulate research and development, create highly skilled jobs, foster technology transfers and enhance the attractiveness of territories to international investors. By developing innovative ecosystems and encouraging partnerships between the public and private sectors, OIC countries can not only improve their resilience to health crises but also increase their presence in international markets for health products and services.

As care needs increase and technologies evolve, the capacity to innovate will become a decisive factor of competitiveness. For OIC member countries, the challenge is no longer simply to meet growing demand for health services, but to build a health economy grounded in knowledge, innovation and regional cooperation — one capable of sustaining durable growth and strengthening their position in international trade.

Towards a More Integrated Health Economy in OIC Countries

Faced with growing demand for care, evolving medical technologies and lessons learned from recent health crises, OIC member countries have a unique opportu-



nity to strengthen their economic cooperation in the health sector. Beyond public health considerations, this momentum can foster job creation, attract investment, stimulate innovation and increase intra-OIC trade.

Developing a more integrated health economy first requires strengthening regional industrial capacities. Several member countries already have a solid manufacturing base in generic medicines, medical devices, biotechnology and hospital equipment. Better complementarity between these industries would help develop more resilient regional value chains, capable of reducing de-

pendence on imports and responding more effectively to population needs.

Integration also requires greater fluidity in trade. Harmonizing regulations, mutual recognition of certifications, simplifying customs procedures and strengthening logistics infrastructure would all help facilitate the movement of health products between member countries.

Public and private investment will also play a decisive role. Public-private partnerships, sovereign wealth funds, development banks and institutional investors can accelerate the modernization of hospital infrastructure, support research and

foster the emergence of innovative companies.

At the same time, skills development will be a key factor of competitiveness. The need for doctors, pharmacists, biomedical engineers, researchers and medical technology specialists will continue to grow over the coming decades. Strengthening academic and scientific cooperation between OIC countries will foster knowledge transfer and the emergence of a highly skilled workforce.

Finally, innovation must remain at the heart of national strategies. Digital technologies, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and connected health solutions offer OIC countries the opportunity to develop high-value-added industries while improving access to care.

Health: A Sustainable Engine of Growth and Economic Integration

Health is now established as one of the most strategic sectors of contemporary economies. Rising healthcare needs, technological progress, demographic ageing in certain regions and the increase in chronic diseases will continue to fuel sustained demand for medicines, medical equipment, hospital infrastructure and health services.

For OIC countries, this evolution represents an opportunity to turn a public health challenge into a lever for economic development. By strengthening their industrial capacities, developing regional value chains and encouraging investment in research and innovation, member states can build a more competitive health sector one that creates skilled jobs and is more fully integrated into international trade. This ambition, however, requires strengthened cooperation between governments, financial institu-

Morocco: An Emerging Hub for the Health Industry in Africa

Au cours des deux dernières décennies, le Maroc s'est Over the past two decades, Morocco has steadily established itself as one of the leading pharmaceutical hubs on the African continent. Backed by more than sixty years of industrial experience, regulations aligned with international standards, and a proactive policy on health sovereignty, the national pharmaceutical industry today constitutes a strategic lever for economic development.

The Kingdom is now the second-largest producer of medicines in Africa and ranks among the leading pharmaceutical players in the MENA region. The sector comprises more than 50 pharmaceutical manufacturing plants, capable of producing nearly 450 million boxes of medicines per year, covering approximately 58% of national market needs. This industrial base is supported by a particularly dynamic network of national and international laboratories, including Sothema, Pharma 5, Cooper Pharma, Laprophan, Maphar and Sanofi Maroc.

Beyond production for the domestic market, Moroccan companies are steadily expanding their exports to West Africa, Central Africa, the Middle East and certain European markets. This momentum is supported by the free trade agreements concluded by the Kingdom, the quality of its logistics infrastructure, and its geographic proximity to both European and African markets.

The COVID-19 crisis marked an important step in this evolution. Morocco accelerated its health sovereignty strategy by investing in local vaccine manufacturing, biotechnology and pharmaceutical production capacity. Industrial projects launched in recent years aim to reduce dependence on imports while positioning the Kingdom as a regional production and export platform serving the African continent.

At the same time, the rollout of universal Compulsory Health Insurance (AMO) is expected to boost domestic demand for medicines and health services, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of the Moroccan market to investors. Combined with industrial policy, this reform is helping to make health a strategic sector for the Kingdom's economic diversification.





2nd	Largest producer of medicines in Africa
5th	Largest producer in the MENA region
54	Pharmaceutical manufacturing plants
450 M	Boxes of medicines produced per year
58%	Of national needs covered by local production
80,000	Jobs generated by the sector
USD 2.3 Bn	Sector revenue (2024)
+4% / year	Average market growth
87%	Of sector companies are based in the Casablanca-Settat region

In this dynamic, trade and investment will play a decisive role. By facilitating the exchange of pharmaceutical products, medical devices, health technologies and related services, member countries will be able to strengthen their health security while boosting their economic growth.



ICDT intends to support this momentum by promoting trade, productive investment and partnerships between public and private actors. By placing health at the heart of economic integration, OIC countries today have a unique opportunity to build a more innovative, more resilient and more competitive sector, in service of sustainable development and the well-being of their populations. ■

Sources :
•World Health Organization (2024): Global Spending on Health: Emerging from the Pandemic, Geneva, 154p.
•World Health Organization (2025): Global Health Expenditure Database (GHED), Global Health Observatory Database.

tions, businesses, universities and research centres. Public-private partnerships, infrastructure development, the harmonization of regulatory frameworks and support for innovation will be essential conditions for accelerating this transformation.

**«HEALTH IS NOT A SOCIAL COST; IT IS AN INVESTMENT
IN HUMAN CAPITAL »**

Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, Director General of ICDT



THE REGIONAL FORUM ON INVESTMENT IN THE HEALTH SECTOR IN NOUAKCHOTT

THE EVENT SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE AFRICAN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY

THE AFRICAN PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY STANDS AT A DECISIVE TURNING POINT IN ITS HISTORY, AND THE INVESTORS AND INDUSTRY PLAYERS WHO POSITION THEMSELVES IN THIS MARKET TODAY WILL BE TOMORROW'S LEADERS. WITH MORE THAN 1.4 BILLION INHABITANTS, SUSTAINED DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH, RAPID URBANIZATION, AND RISING DEMAND FOR MEDICINES AND HEALTH PRODUCTS, THE CONTINENT REPRESENTS ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING MARKETS IN THE WORLD.



Yet more than 70% of the medicines consumed in Africa are still imported. While this dependency undoubtedly poses a major challenge for health systems, it above all represents one of the most significant industrial and pharmaceutical investment opportunities of the decade.

It is within this context that the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), a subsidiary body of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), is organizing, in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the World Health Organization (WHO), the Regional Health Investment Forum 2026 (RHIF 2026), on 13–14 July 2026 in Nouakchott, Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

A Strategic Gathering for Decision-Makers and Investors

The Forum has been designed as a platform for action and networking aimed at accelerating investment in the health and pharmaceutical industry sectors within OIC member countries.

Over the course of two days, public decision-makers, investors, industry players, financial institutions, and international organizations will come together to identify concrete partnership and investment opportunities.

The Forum will bring together, among others:

- Ministers of Health and senior government officials from 57

countries

- Institutional investors, investment funds, and development banks
- Pharmaceutical laboratories and manufacturers
- Hospital groups and healthcare operators

57
participating countries

More than **10 000**
visitors are expected
visiteurs attendus

100
exhibitors and partners

- Companies specializing in biotechnology and digital health
- Investment promotion agencies and regulatory bodies

A Program Centered on the Sector's Strategic Priorities

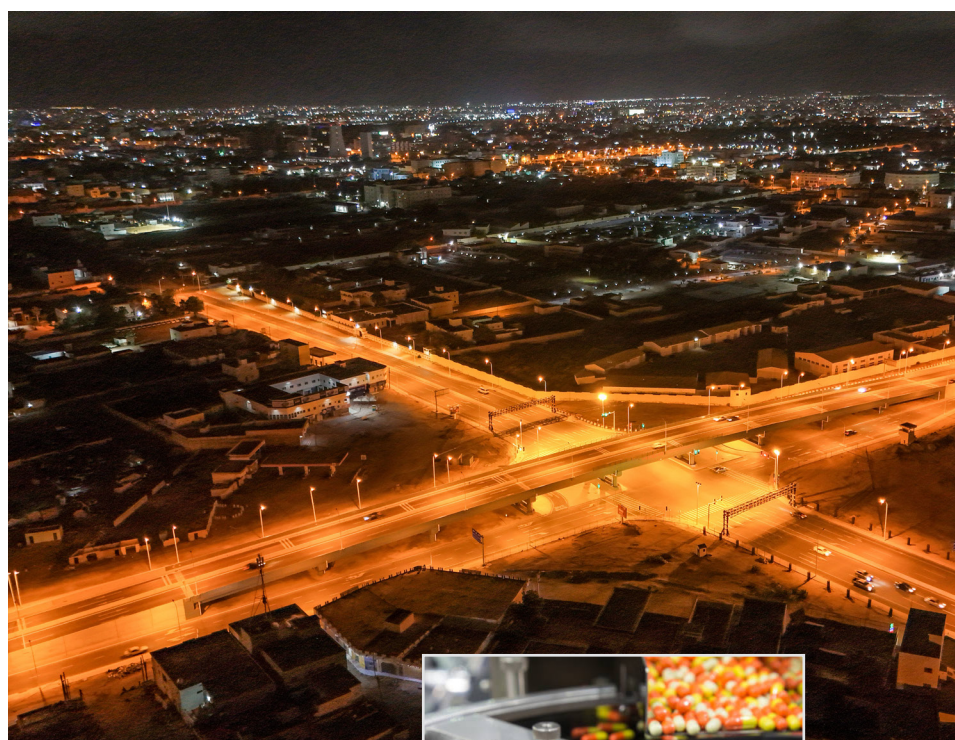
The Forum will offer a high-level program structured around the key issues shaping the sustainable development of pharmaceutical industries and health systems in Africa. Discussions will focus notably on:

- Developing local production of medicines and vaccines, in order to strengthen health sovereignty and reduce dependence on imports
- Integrating regional pharmaceutical value chains, with a view to boosting industrialization, intra-African trade, and sector competitiveness
- Convergence of regulatory frameworks, to improve the quality of health products, facilitate their circulation, and strengthen market confidence
- Mobilizing investment and public-private partnerships, in order to accelerate the development of infrastructure, innovation, and production capacity
- Improving access to quality health products and medical innovation, for the benefit of African populations

Concrete Partnership and Investment Opportunities

Beyond conferences and round tables, the Forum will serve as a premier platform for connecting public decision-makers, industry players, investors, and financial institutions. Participants will notably have the opportunity to:

- Take part in targeted B2B meetings
- Present their projects to investors, investment funds, and financial institutions
- Establish strategic partnerships with public and private sector actors



- Engage directly with regulatory authorities, investment promotion agencies, and government decision-makers
- Identify funding, investment, and cooperation opportunities for the development of the pharmaceutical and health sector in Africa

Why Mauritania?

Located at the crossroads of the Maghreb and West Africa, Mauritania occupies a privileged geostrategic position connecting several high-potential markets.

The reforms undertaken in recent years, the continuous improvement of the business climate, and the authorities' determination to promote private investment make the country an increasingly attractive destination for international investors.

The Forum will thus offer a unique opportunity to discover the opportunities available in Mauritania and to explore its growing role as a regional business and investment hub.

A Call to Action for African Nations

The transformation of African health systems is already underway. The investments made today will determine the continent's ability to meet the needs of its populations and build a competitive, innovative, and resilient pharmaceutical industry.

This Forum offers a unique opportunity to meet the sector's leading decision-makers, identify new business opportunities, and contribute to shaping tomorrow's health ecosystem.

On 13–14 July 2026, Nouakchott will bring together the investors, industry players, and decision-makers shaping the future of health in Africa. Be there! ■



The International Digital Order at a Crossroads at the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference

BY PROFESSOR EL HASSANE HZAINÉ

THE OUTCOME OF THE LATEST WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE COMES AS NO SURPRISE GIVEN THE GEOPOLITICAL CONTEXT, SET AGAINST THE BACKDROP OF THE WAR IN THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ AND THE DIVISIONS WITHIN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN THE FACE OF THIS CRISIS—DIVISIONS THAT REVEAL FAULT LINES BETWEEN THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND THE WEST ON ONE HAND, AND, ON THE OTHER, THE NEAR-COMPLETE RUPTURE BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE UNITED STATES.

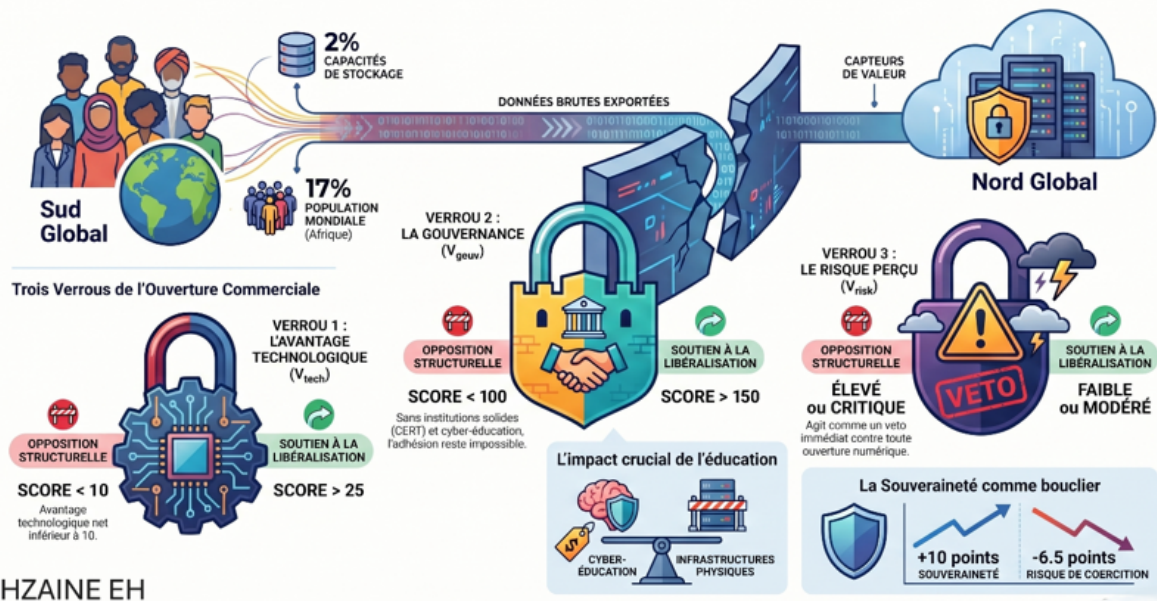
Among the topics discussed at the Conference were institutional reform and the recurring issues of agricultural subsidies and the extension of the moratorium on electronic transactions and e-commerce (software, streaming, e-books, etc.).

Indeed, the architecture of the global digital order also rests on une-

qual exchange. In the past, the Global South exported raw materials and imported manufactured goods; today, it exports raw data while digital value is captured by the dominant centers. The figures are stark: cloud giants (Amazon, Microsoft, Google) control more than 60% of the global market, while Africa, home to 17% of the world's popu-

lation, holds only 2% of the planet's data storage capacity. African data is transmitted, processed, and governed elsewhere, reproducing structural dependency in an immaterial form. This is the new face of unequal exchange and dependency theory—first developed by Latin American economists, including institutional proponent Raúl Pre-

La Grande Muraille Numérique : Pourquoi le Sud résiste à l'OMC



bisch, former Executive Secretary of ECLAC, and later taken up by their African counterparts, notably the Egyptian Samir Amin and the Moroccan Aziz Belal. The medium has changed; the underlying logic remains. In this context, digital nationalism is becoming a historic imperative for the South: to break unequal digital exchange, regain control over data, build local eco-systems, and turn vulnerability into collective strength. But an imperative requires a diagnosis. And a diagnosis requires a tool.

The Invisible Chains of Digital Dependency

To understand digital vulnerability, we developed a proto-barometer: the Cloud Coercion Resilience Index (CCRI), calibrated across 30 countries, which explains 87% of the variance in cloud coercion risk and 74% of vulnerability to cyber-attacks. The CCRI is built on four factors:

1. First, the CSI (Cloud Sovereignty Index) measures the degree of national control over cloud infrastructure: data center ownership,

data localization laws, regulatory oversight, and continuity plans. The higher the CSI, the harder it is for an external provider to cut off access.

2. Second, the CAI (Cloud Alliance Index) assesses provider diversification: relying on a single American or Chinese giant is a structural weakness.

3. The third factor, the MI (Misalignment Index), measures the gap between what a country believes it controls and what it actually controls—an index of digital self-delusion.

4. Finally, Cyber_Edu captures the human factor: the training of citizens and public officials in digital security.

A score close to 100 signals critical vulnerability; below 30 indicates genuine resilience. Most countries of the Global South fall somewhere in the middle range. The empirical analysis yields clear findings. Digital sovereignty is the strongest shield: every 10-point gain in the

CSI reduces cloud coercion risk by 6.5 points. Misalignment acts as a risk multiplier: every 10-point gain in the MI increases vulnerability by 5.5 points. Beyond a certain threshold, the MI automatically adds 8 to 18 points of vulnerability. Cyber-education is only effective as a solution when infrastructure keeps pace: it works fully only once the CSI exceeds 55. The geopolitical context amplifies all of these effects: in conflict zones, sovereignty offers twice the protective effect. The most striking finding is that Cyber-Edu carries the same protective weight as the CSI (0.38 in absolute value). Improving training therefore has as much impact as building infrastructure at lower cost and greater speed.

The Three Determinants of Countries' Positions at the WTO

Analysis of 73 countries representing 98% of global GDP reveals that three key thresholds determine a state's position on the e-commerce moratorium and the extension of the ITA at the WTO. If any one of these thresholds is not met, the

country cannot support liberalization. The correlation between the full model and observed positions reaches 0.93, with a predictive accuracy of 93.2%.

First threshold: net technological advantage ($V_{tech} = CSI - MI$). This ratio measures a country's capacity to compete in the digital sector. The data reveal a clear threshold: above 25, a country supports liberalization; below 10, it opposes it; between 10 and 25, its position is conditional. Finland, with a V_{tech} of +65, firmly supports liberalization. Ukraine, with a V_{tech} of -1, is structurally opposed. The correlation with observed WTO positions is 0.87, and this single indicator alone explains 76% of the variance in national positions.

Second threshold: institutional governance ($V_{gouv} = \text{Cyber_Edu} \times \text{CERT}$). Technology alone is not enough; the institutions that manage it are equally decisive. The CERT (Computer Emergency Response Team) is rated from 1 to 3 based on its operational capacity. The observed thresholds mirror those of the first lock: above 150, a country supports liberalization; below 100, it opposes it. South Korea, with a V_{gouv} of 216, has world-class institutions. Iran, with a V_{gouv} of 25, has no functioning CERT.

Third threshold: perceived risk (V_{risk}). This is a composite score with four levels: LOW, MODERATE, HIGH, CRITICAL. No country with a CRITICAL risk level supports the moratorium, regardless of its scores on the first two thresholds. Russia, Iran, and Ukraine all share a CRITICAL risk rating and structural opposition. This threshold functions as a veto: when risk is HIGH or CRITICAL, the first two thresholds become moot.

WTO MC14: The Moratorium Expires, Three Coalitions Emerge

The WTO's 14th Ministerial Conference, held in Yaoundé from 26 to 30 March 2026, ended in failure on digital issues (ICC, 2026). The moratorium expired for lack of consensus. Three distinct institutional responses emerged, reflecting three different threshold profiles.

- The Declaration of the 23 (2 April 2026): Twenty-three countries issued a joint declaration to voluntarily maintain the practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions among themselves until the General Council meeting in May 2026 (UK Parliament, 2026). Signatories include Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the United States, Japan, Mexico, Norway, New Zealand, Paraguay, Peru, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, Ukraine, the European Union (representing its 27 member states), Uruguay, and Vietnam.

- The 66-Member ECA Agreement (28 March 2026): Sixty-six countries, representing nearly 70% of global trade, announced the conclusion of the Electronic Commerce Agreement (ECA), established outside the WTO framework (Third World Network, 2026). Led by Australia, Japan, and Singapore, it sets out permanent disciplines on data flows, data non-localization, online consumer protection, cybersecurity, and a permanent ban on customs duties on electronic transmissions among signatories. Signatories include China, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Canada, and the United Arab Emirates. Notable absentees include the United States, India,

South Africa, Indonesia, Morocco, Egypt, and Tunisia.

- The Non-Aligned: A third group of countries, including India, South Africa, Indonesia, Morocco, Egypt, Tunisia, Iran, and Russia, joined neither the Declaration of the 23 nor the ECA. Their position: preserving national policy space to develop their own digital industries.

Cross-analysis of the two coalitions emerging from MC14 — the Declaration of the 23 (a transitional moratorium) and the 66-member ECA (a permanent framework) — empirically validates the CCRI Triple Threshold model. The fundamental similarities between the two coalitions confirm the model. No country with a V_{tech} below 10 (apart from Ukraine, which benefits from an explicit national security exemption) appears in either coalition. No country with a V_{gouv} below 100 (apart from Ukraine) appears in either. Countries with HIGH or CRITICAL V_{risk} — India, South Africa, Indonesia, Iran, Russia — are consistently absent from both coalitions. Conversely, all countries meeting all three thresholds — what the model terms «digital sovereigns» — are present in both coalitions: Australia, Canada, Japan, Norway, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Switzerland, the European Union, South Korea, and Taiwan.

It is worth noting that five African countries (Nigeria, Cameroon, Mauritius, Gambia, Côte d'Ivoire) are part of the ECA but absent from the Declaration of the 23, as the ECA includes technical assistance and capacity-building provisions that the Declaration of the 23 does not. This underscores the importance of establishing a special status for digitally vulnerable

countries to encourage their accession to plurilateral agreements on digital trade issues, which are conducted through various modes of service supply — in particular Mode 1 (cross-border supply) and Modes 3 and 4 (respectively, commercial presence and the movement of natural persons, such as IT consulting and expertise).

Thus, the model identifies three cumulative conditions for a country to take part in a digital liberalization dynamic at the WTO. First, it needs a net technological advantage (V_{tech}) of at least 10 — with Ukraine having shown that an explicit safeguard clause can, exceptionally, substitute for this. Second, it needs institutional governance (V_{gouv}) of at least 100, meaning a minimum level of CERT capacity combined with sufficient cyber-education. Finally, its perceived risk (V_{risk}) must not exceed the MODERATE level. If any one of these three conditions is not met, the country's participation is structurally excluded. The excluded countries are always the same: those for whom one of the thresholds remains stubbornly closed — either their technology is too weak, their institutions too fragile, or the risk simply too high. The 23-country and 66-country coalitions are therefore two expressions of the same underlying reality: clubs of «lockable» countries — those meeting all three cumulative conditions for openness: sufficient technological advantage ($V_{tech} \geq 10$, barring a safeguard clause), minimal institutional governance ($V_{gouv} \geq 100$), and moderate-to-low perceived risk. Their differences are strategic variations — choice of forum, accession timeline, inclusion of flexibilities or technical assistance — layered on top of a shared structural foundation. Those excluded are always the countries

for whom one of the thresholds remains closed: V_{tech} too low, V_{gouv} too weak, or V_{risk} too high. In short, the fragmentation observed after MC14 is not chaotic at all. It is, almost mathematically, a reflection of how technological, institutional, and security capacities are distributed across the world. Some countries are able to move forward. Others, for now, remain stuck — not for lack of will, but simply because they lack the means.

The South-South Path and Digital Bandung

Faced with this fragmentation, South-South cooperation offers an alternative. As the South Centre notes, digital sovereignty cannot simply be declared; it must be built step by step, threshold by threshold. A joint report by UNOSSC and the FCSSC adds that Southern countries are now at the forefront of digital transformation, though the challenges remain immense: limited digital inclusion, the absence of formal digital identities, insufficient regulatory frameworks, digital literacy gaps, and limited resources for cybersecurity. The idea of a «Digital Bandung» — a coalition of African, Asian, and Latin American countries working to harmonize their regulations, negotiate collectively with cloud giants, and build shared infrastructure is gaining momentum.

At recent academic and diplomatic forums in Southeast Asia, the call for a «Digital Bandung» has been renewed. As Ignacio Ortiz Vila stated at the 7th Congress of Indonesianists (November 2025), digital sovereignty is not a luxury but a necessity, and the Global South must move from being a passive recipient of global norms to becoming an active architect of a fairer digital order. Indonesian

Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Arrmanatha Christiawan Nasir summed up the urgency, noting that multilateralism is in retreat and protectionism is often replacing collective interest, while the spirit of Bandung continues to inspire the Global South as the voice of the marginalized.

A Recomposition Underway

The international digital order is being reshaped before our eyes. MC14 was the stage for this re-composition: the moratorium lapsed for lack of consensus; 23 countries maintained a transitional arrangement; 66 countries adopted a permanent agreement outside the WTO framework; and a handful of African countries chose to remain outside both in order to preserve their policy space. The three-threshold model empirically validates these positions. The countries participating in liberalization are precisely those that have crossed the minimum thresholds on all three fronts: a net technological advantage of at least 10, institutional governance of at least 100, and a perceived risk no higher than moderate. Those excluded are the ones for whom one of these thresholds remains closed — V_{tech} too low, V_{gouv} too weak, or V_{risk} too high.

In conclusion, it can be said that the fragmentation observed after MC14 is not a defeat in itself; rather, it is the institutional reflection of the unequal distribution of technological, institutional, and security capacities across the world. The question is no longer whether Global South countries will chart their own course elsewhere — the question is what kind of order they will build together, and whether that order will be multipolar, equitable, and freed from the monopoly over data. ■

SUCCESS STORIES ON WOMEN'S AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

FADIMA DIAWARA

A VOICE HEARD FAR BEYOND HER BORDERS



«I am looking for strategic
allies who share this urgency
to act in Africa.»

WITH A BACKGROUND IN LAW AND AN MBA IN DIGITAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP, FADIMA DIAWARA CONTINUES TO DEEPEN HER LEGAL EXPERTISE TODAY BECAUSE BUILDING SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS REQUIRES MASTERING THE FRAMEWORKS THAT GOVERN THEM. IT IS THIS RARE COMBINATION STRATEGIC VISION, GRASSROOTS GROUNDING, AND LEGAL AND ENTREPRENEURIAL EXPERTISE THAT MAKES HER AN ESSENTIAL VOICE ON ISSUES OF DIGITAL SOVEREIGNTY, EDUCATION, AND INNOVATION IN AFRICA.



Fadima Diawara is the founder of Kunfabo and co-founder of Future Seeds for Africa. Her leadership extends well beyond her own ventures, reaching across the borders of the African continent. As President of the Francophone Africa Cluster within the Citiverse Council, she leads the regional strategy on artificial intelligence, digital sovereignty, and women's empowerment in STEAM fields a role that requires her to move fluidly between the technological, political, and academic spheres, drawing on twenty years of hands-on experience. As a member of the Board of Directors of the Agricultural Development Fund (FODA), she contributes to bridging technological innovation and rural development two worlds many see as opposites, but which she views as two sides of the same transformation.

The «Kunfabo» Saga

In 2017, Fadima Diawara did something almost no one believed possible: she launched Kunfabo — a smartphone brand designed for Africans. In doing so, she officially became the first African woman to found a smartphone brand. In 2020, this pioneering achievement was recognized when Kunfabo won the award for most original startup of the year in Spain, and

in 2025, Forbes Africa named her among the continent's 50 most inspiring women — a recognition that speaks, better than any speech could, to the scale and legitimacy of her impact.

From Technology to Transmission: «Future Seeds for Africa»

Determined to continue making an impact across the continent and to develop human capital, Fadima Diawara drew on the experience she had gained through Kunfabo to launch Future Seeds for Africa. This continent-wide technology and education venture is built around five interconnected pillars that together drive a lasting transformation:

❶ Infrastructure — SeedNode One. At the heart of the initiative lies an innovation unmatched anywhere on the continent: a local AI architecture combining models optimized to run without the cloud, vetted educational content, safety filters, and a response logic tailored to the educational context. Functional without a permanent connection and updated via USB key, SD card, or occasional syncing, SeedNode One rests on a simple conviction: learning should not depend on connectivity.

❷ Learning — The AALI Platform. The Africa AI Literacy Initiative offers guided learning paths and micro-learning content carefully tailored to African realities, challenges, and languages — finally making AI accessible to those for whom it had long remained a distant abstraction.

❸ Teachers — Champions on the Ground. No technology will ever replace the human element. Training and certifying educators lies at the very heart of Future Seeds' impact. They are the ones driving this transition every day, in every classroom, in every school.

❹ Participation — the Africa AI Challenge. Through the STEAM methodology and hands-on robotics projects, African children are no longer mere recipients of knowledge — they become creators, researchers, and inventors, actively participating, exploring, and building.

❺ Talent — Pathways to Excellence. Intensive mentoring, bootcamps, and strategic guidance: Future Seeds is propelling the next generation of African leaders toward the opportunities of the future. The talent was already there — what was missing was a system to bring it to light.

Through Future Seeds for Africa, Fadima Diawara aims to build a strategic coalition with Ministries of Education, pioneering private-sector schools, and major international institutions — the African Development Bank, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, the ITU, the Smart Africa Alliance, the OIF, the GPE, and the AU Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) — to build the educational infrastructure that will shape Africa's future. ■



G7 Summit in Évian, France

FRANCE HOSTED THE G7 SUMMIT IN ÉVIAN-LES-BAINS FROM 15 TO 17 JUNE 2026, BRINGING TOGETHER ITS MEMBER COUNTRIES: THE UNITED STATES, FRANCE, THE UNITED KINGDOM, CANADA, GERMANY, ITALY, AND JAPAN.

This major gathering allowed leaders to discuss key international challenges, notably economic growth, global security, climate change, and health issues. Held under the French presidency, discussions centered on the need to strengthen multilateral cooperation amid an international context marked by persistent geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and the accelerating effects of climate change.

On this occasion, member countries reaffirmed their commitment to a more resilient and inclusive global economy and discussed several important issues, including supply chain stability, the energy transition, technological innova-

tion, and the development of artificial intelligence within an ethical and secure framework. The fight against climate change was also central to the talks. Participants stressed the urgency of accelerating investment in renewable energy, strengthening climate finance mechanisms for developing countries, and supporting international efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

On the security front, leaders addressed regional crises and emphasized the importance of diplomatic dialogue, respect for international law, and strengthened cooperation mechanisms to address transnational threats. Regarding the health sector, they recommended drawing

on the lessons of recent health crises and improving prevention, preparedness, and response capacities for future pandemics.

At the conclusion of the meeting, G7 countries adopted a joint declaration reaffirming their commitment to working together to promote sustainable growth, strengthen international security, and jointly address the global challenges of the 21st century.

Although only a few OIC countries were invited as partners to this Summit, the topics discussed are of major interest to the Islamic world as a whole, notably global food security, climate, energy, artificial intelligence, and regional conflicts. ■



GITEX Africa Morocco 2026

THE 2026 EDITION OF GITEX AFRICA, THE CONTINENT'S LARGEST TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION EXHIBITION, BROUGHT TOGETHER THOUSANDS OF PARTICIPANTS FROM AFRICA AND AROUND THE WORLD IN MARRAKECH, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, BUSINESS LEADERS, INVESTORS, STARTUPS, AND DIGITAL EXPERTS, AMONG THEM PARTICIPANTS FROM NUMEROUS OIC COUNTRIES.

Held from 7 to 9 April 2026, the event served as a platform for discussion on the major technological trends shaping the continent's future. Discussions focused notably on artificial intelligence, digital transformation, cybersecurity, cloud computing, fintech, digital health, and digital infrastructure.

Artificial intelligence emerged as one of the key themes of this year's edition. In this regard, participants stressed the importance of developing national and regional strategies to promote responsible and inclusive AI adoption, while strengthening digital skills and local innovation.

Support for African startups also took center stage in the discussions. Numerous young, innovative companies presented their solutions across a range of fields, including finance, agriculture, health, education, and digital services. Investors in attendance highlighted the growing potential of the African tech ecosystem, despite persistent challenges related to financing and market access.



On this occasion, governments and private sector actors emphasized the need to accelerate the digital transformation of administrations and businesses in order to boost competitiveness, foster financial inclusion, and improve access to public services. Issues related to cybersecurity and digital sovereignty also featured prominently among the priority topics discussed. Experts called for strengthened regional cooperation to better

protect critical infrastructure and address the evolving landscape of cyber threats.

It should be noted that several partnerships and cooperation agreements were announced during the event, reflecting the determination of public and private sector actors alike to make digital technology a major driver of growth, innovation, and sustainable development across the continent. ■



Africa CEO Forum — Kigali

HELD IN KIGALI ON 14–15 MAY 2026, THE AFRICA CEO FORUM BROUGHT TOGETHER MORE THAN 2,800 PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING HEADS OF STATE, AFRICAN BUSINESS LEADERS AND INVESTORS, AS WELL AS SEVERAL REPRESENTATIVES FROM OIC COUNTRIES AND INSTITUTIONS. DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED ON INDUSTRIALIZATION, AFRICAN ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, THE ENERGY TRANSITION, AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.

The discussions focused on industrialization, African economic integration, the energy transition, and public-private partnerships. Held under the theme «Grow or Fail,» this year's edition placed at the heart of the debates the imperative of pooling resources and potential and moving forward together to improve the continent's economic competitiveness. In a world marked by trade fragmentation, shifting capital flows, the emergence of new economic blocs, and growing challenges to multilateralism, participants reaffirmed a central conviction: Africa must overcome the fragmentation of its markets, capital, and regulatory frameworks in order to build continental champions capable of carrying real weight in global value chains.

On this occasion, discussions focused notably on accelerating industrialization, strengthening infrastructure, the energy transition,

and digital transformation. Speakers emphasized the importance of creating an investment-friendly environment to drive innovation, support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and foster job creation, particularly for young people. The African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) also featured prominently in the discussions. African leaders and private sector actors stressed the need to accelerate its implementation in order to boost intra-African trade, improve the competitiveness of the continent's businesses, and consolidate regional economic integration.

This year's edition once again confirmed the central role of the Africa CEO Forum, which has established itself as a key platform for mobilizing investment and accelerating the continent's development. During the Forum, nearly \$2 billion in deals, partnerships, and memo-

randums of understanding were signed by several major groups, including the Rwanda Development Board (RDB), Equity Bank, VISA, Spiro, Elsewedy, UNICEF, APIEX (Benin), BNETD, Access Bank, BOAD, Shelter Afrique Development Bank, Baobab, NMB Bank, and Zaria Group. These commitments span a wide range of sectors, including infrastructure, energy, finance, agriculture, industry, and digital technology, and aim to accelerate productive investment, facilitate cross-border projects, strengthen market integration, and mobilize African capital to drive growth across the continent.

At the close of the Forum, participants reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation between governments, businesses, and investors in order to make the private sector a key driver of prosperity and sustainable development in Africa. ■

SPRING MEETINGS OF THE IMF AND THE WORLD BANK

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR OIC COUNTRIES

THE SPRING MEETINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) AND THE WORLD BANK GROUP, HELD IN WASHINGTON FROM 13 TO 19 APRIL 2026, BROUGHT TOGETHER THE LEADING PLAYERS IN INTERNATIONAL FINANCE AGAINST A BACKDROP OF MODERATE GLOBAL GROWTH, PERSISTENT GEOPOLITICAL TENSIONS, AND MOUNTING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES. FOR A WEEK, FINANCE MINISTERS, CENTRAL BANK GOVERNORS, HEADS OF MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS, AND PRIVATE SECTOR REPRESENTATIVES DISCUSSED MAJOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC ISSUES, NOTABLY FINANCIAL STABILITY AND THE EFFECTS OF CLIMATE CHANGE.

During these meetings, debt and development financing were at the center of discussions. In this regard, the IMF and the World Bank reaffirmed their commitment to supporting countries facing fiscal difficulties through concessional financing mechanisms, technical assistance programs, and debt restructuring initiatives. The Bretton Woods institutions also stressed the need to increase investment in infrastructure, education, health, and the energy transition in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

For OIC countries, the outcomes of the Spring Meetings carry particular significance, as several OIC member states face high debt levels and substantial financing needs. The IMF and World Bank's commitments to enhanced support could give these countries access to greater resources to finance their development priorities. Moreover, as part of their broader development strategies, many OIC countries are pursuing economic diversification to reduce their dependence on raw materials; World



Bank programs in infrastructure, digital transformation, and private sector development could help accelerate this transition.

On the issue of climate change, OIC countries are particularly exposed, whether through desertification, drought, flooding, or rising sea levels. Discussions on climate finance at these meetings pave the way for greater mobilization of resources dedicated to climate adaptation and resilience. On another front, debates on digital transformation, artificial intelligence, and cybersecurity also open up new prospects for countries seeking to modernize their econo-



mies, improve public services, and strengthen their competitiveness.

In conclusion, the IMF and World Bank Spring Meetings represent, for OIC countries, an opportunity to strengthen partnerships with international financial institutions, while also promoting South-South cooperation initiatives in areas such as Islamic finance, food security, energy, and sustainable development.

It is worth recalling that all these meetings share a common goal: strengthening partnerships and ensuring sustainable development for all. ■



▶ PAKISTAN STRENGTHENS ITS POSITION AS A GLOBAL AEROSPACE EXPORTER THROUGH EXPANDING SOUTH-SOUTH PARTNERSHIPS

THE GROWING INTEREST IN PAKISTAN'S JF-17 FIGHTER JET REFLECTS A BROADER TRANSFORMATION OF GLOBAL DEFENSE MARKETS, IN WHICH EMERGING ECONOMIES ARE DEEPENING TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION AND EXPANDING THEIR ACCESS TO ADVANCED CAPABILITIES.

Recent discussions between Morocco and Pakistan regarding the potential acquisition of JF-17 fighter jets highlight a growing trend toward South-South cooperation in strategic, high-value-added industries. Beyond a simple procurement process, these exchanges illustrate how emerging economies are increasingly engaging in technological partnerships that combine industrial development, training, and know-how transfer.

The JF-17, developed through collaboration between Pakistan and China, has drawn international attention as a versatile, cost-effective multirole aircraft. Its growing visibility in global markets reflects the ability of emerging countries to design and produce competitive aerospace solutions tailored to the operational and financial realities of intermediate economies. For countries pursuing modernization efforts, these platforms offer access to advanced capabilities while preserving a degree of flexibility in long-term acquisition and maintenance.

This development is part of a broader shift in the global aerospace ecosystem. Historically, access to advanced aviation technologies was concentrated among a small number of suppliers, often tied to specific geopolitical alignments. Today, new industrial hubs such as Pakistan's National Aerospace Science and Technology Park are helping to build local expertise, foster innovation, and support the emergence of integrated defense ecosystems.

For Morocco, ongoing discussions with Pakistan are part of a broader strategy of diversifying partnerships and strengthening technical cooperation across several areas, including training, cybersecurity, and industrial development. The memorandum of understanding recently signed between the two countries reflects a comprehensive approach that goes beyond the mere acquisition of equipment, placing emphasis on capacity building and long-term collaboration.

Furthermore, Pakistan's positioning as an exporter of aerospace solutions underscores the growing role of emerging economies in shaping global value chains. With export agreements reaching significant volumes and growing interest from Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia, the country is contributing to a more diversified and accessible defense market.

This dynamic opens up new prospects for member countries of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), whose shared priorities in industrialization, skills development, and technological sovereignty can be advanced through strategic partnerships. By combining affordability, adaptability, and collaborative frameworks, such initiatives support the development of resilient ecosystems capable of sustaining long-term growth.

Ultimately, the expansion of aerospace cooperation among emerging economies reflects a structural transformation, in which innovation, partnership, and mutual development are redefining access to advanced technologies and strengthening economic ties across the Global South.

Source: Responsible Statecraft,
Al Jazeera, Yabiladi



▶ CAMEROON EXPANDS SME FINANCING THROUGH BLENDED INSTRUMENTS AND FINANCIAL INNOVATION

NEW FINANCING MECHANISMS COMBINING PUBLIC FUNDS, GUARANTEES, AND EMERGING MARKET INSTRUMENTS ARE RESHAPING ACCESS TO CAPITAL FOR CAMEROONIAN SMES, WITH A PARTICULAR FOCUS ON INCLUSION, RISK REDUCTION, AND PRIVATE SECTOR DEVELOPMENT.

Cameroon is implementing a multi-tiered strategy aimed at improving access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), combining targeted public initiatives, international partnerships, and financial innovation. These efforts reflect a broader ambition to strengthen the productive sector while addressing the long-standing structural constraints affecting SME financing.

At the national level, the Caisse des Dépôts et Consignations (CDEC) has launched a pilot program worth 5 billion CFA francs, specifically aimed at SMEs led by young entrepreneurs and women. This initiative seeks to test a new financing mechanism by relying on selected financial institutions responsible for distributing funds according to defined performance conditions. By introducing accountability requirements and detailed reporting, the program aims to close a common gap between announced financing and its actual disbursement.

This approach is reinforced by risk-sharing mechanisms. A memorandum of understanding signed with the African Guarantee Fund introduces a guarantee component designed to reduce the perceived risk associated with lending to SMEs. By easing concerns related to collateral and creditworthiness, this model is expected to encourage broader participation by financial institutions and improve the flow of credit to underserved segments.

At the regional and international levels, additional financing is being mobilized. The African Development Bank has approved a €25 million trade finance facility for Crédit Communautaire d'Afrique Bank (CCA-Bank), enabling it to expand its support for SMEs through transactional guarantees. This mechanism facilitates the import of equipment in key sectors such as industry, agro-industry, and telecommunications, while offering risk coverage of up to 100% for trade finance instruments. This initiative is expected to strengthen the operational capacity of local banks and support job creation through increased economic activity.

Alongside these efforts, financial market reforms are opening up new financing channels. The Central African Financial Market Supervisory Commission (COSUMAF) is preparing to launch a regulated crowdfunding framework across

the CEMAC region. This investment-based—rather than donation-based—model aims to broaden access to capital by leveraging digital platforms, while ensuring transparency, investor protection, and regulatory oversight.

Recent figures reflect both the progress made and the potential still untapped. Public issuances on the regional market reached 361.78 billion CFA francs in 2025, while private placements totaled 6 billion CFA francs, pointing to growing—though still limited—capital market activity.

Taken together, these initiatives signal a shift toward a more diversified financing ecosystem in Cameroon. By combining public funding, guarantees, banking instruments, and emerging digital solutions, the country is laying the groundwork for a more inclusive and resilient SME financing environment.

Source: Business in Cameroon, AfDB Group



▶ NIGERIA STRENGTHENS ITS POSITION AS AN EMERGING PHARMACEUTICAL HUB IN WEST AFRICA

THE GROWING SUCCESS OF PHARMA WEST AFRICA 2026, ALONG WITH A SERIES OF NEW SECTOR INITIATIVES, REFLECTS NIGERIA'S AMBITION TO BECOME A LEADING PHARMACEUTICAL AND HEALTH HUB FOR WEST AND CENTRAL AFRICA.

Nigeria is increasingly consolidating its position as a strategic center for pharmaceutical production, health sector investment, and medical innovation in West Africa. The momentum generated by Pharma West Africa 2026, held in Lagos from 14 to 16 April, reflects both the scale of market opportunities and the country's growing appeal to international investors seeking a gateway into the region.

The event brought together more than 250 exhibitors and participants from Europe, Asia, and Africa, making it one of the fastest-growing pharmaceutical trade shows in the region. The presence of national pavilions from Turkey, China, Egypt, Bangladesh, and Russia underscored the strong international interest in Nigeria's health sector and its role as a platform for regional expansion.

Several factors explain this growing appeal. Nigeria combines a large population, rising healthcare demand, and a rapidly evolving business environment. International companies present at the show consistently highlighted the

size of the Nigerian market and its potential to meet demand not only domestically but also in neighboring West African countries. For many investors, Nigeria represents the most effective entry point into a regional market marked by significant, unmet health needs.

Discussions held during Pharma West Africa also reflected a broader strategic goal: strengthening pharmaceutical self-sufficiency. Stakeholders stressed the need to reduce dependence on imported medicines and build stronger local manufacturing capacity. This challenge remains substantial, with Africa currently importing between 70% and 95% of its medicines, while 30% to 60% of the continent's pharmaceutical production capacity remains underutilized.

Technology and supply chain innovation are expected to play a key role in closing these gaps. Nigerian companies such as DrugS-toc are helping modernize pharmaceutical distribution through digital platforms that improve procurement efficiency, inventory management, and access to reliable suppliers. These innovations are gaining traction as health systems seek greater resilience and operational efficiency.

The country's regional ambitions are further illustrated by the upcoming Nigeria Pharma and Health

Expo 2026, expected to attract more than 100 exhibitors and over 2,500 visitors from at least 10 countries. Designed as a platform for investment, technology transfer, and regulatory dialogue, this event reinforces Nigeria's role as a meeting point for health sector stakeholders across West and Central Africa.

Combined with the opportunities created by the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), which provides access to a market of more than 1.3 billion people, these developments strengthen Nigeria's position as a future pharmaceutical and medical hub, capable of serving an increasingly integrated African health market.

Source: Business Day Nigeria, Guardian Nigeria



▶ AZERBAIJAN AND SAUDI ARABIA DEEPEN ECONOMIC AND LOGISTICAL COOPERATION TO STRENGTHEN REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY

THE STRENGTHENING OF ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN AZERBAIJAN AND SAUDI ARABIA IS CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN TRADE, LOGISTICS, ENERGY, AND INVESTMENT, WHILE CONSOLIDATING CONNECTIVITY BETWEEN THE GULF, THE SOUTH CAUCASUS, AND CENTRAL ASIA.

The relationship between Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia is entering a new phase, marked by expanding economic cooperation, strategic investment, and growing logistical integration. Recent discussions between senior officials from both countries, along with a series of ongoing projects and agreements, reflect a shared ambition to translate common political will into lasting economic value.

A key driver of this partnership lies in the complementary positioning of the two economies. Saudi Arabia is pursuing economic diversification under its Vision 2030 agenda, while Azerbaijan is leveraging its strategic position at the crossroads of Europe, Central Asia, and the Gulf. Together, these strengths create opportunities to develop new trade routes, investment platforms, and sectoral partnerships capable of generating benefits well beyond the bilateral relationship.

Logistics and connectivity have emerged as central pillars of this cooperation. Azerbaijan is actively promoting major transport initiatives, notably the Middle Corridor and the planned Zangezur Corridor. These projects

aim to link Central Asia, the South Caucasus, Turkey, and European markets through faster, more efficient transport networks. For Saudi Arabia, whose logistics strategy seeks to expand its gateways to international trade, participation in these emerging corridors could offer greater access to Central Asian markets while diversifying regional supply chains.

Beyond logistics, investment cooperation is also gaining momentum. Nearly thirty agreements and contracts covering trade, agriculture, investment, and economic development have already been concluded between the two countries. Discussions are also progressing on the creation of a joint investment fund, intended to channel capital toward priority sectors such as infrastructure, food security, tourism, advanced technologies, and logistics services. Such a mechanism could facilitate the implementation of larger-scale projects while strengthening collaboration between the private sectors of both countries.

Energy remains another important dimension of this partnership. Saudi companies, particularly ACWA Power, have become major investors in Azerbaijan's energy transition. The Khizi-Absheron wind farm, valued at \$300 million with a generation capacity of 240 megawatts, stands as the largest renewable energy project in Azerbaijan fully financed by foreign capital. At the same time, Saudi-linked institutions continue to take part

in strategic oil and gas sector projects, reinforcing cooperation in both conventional and renewable energy. For the wider Gulf and Central Asian regions, this partnership is contributing to stronger economic integration and improved connectivity. Enhanced transport corridors, coordinated investment strategies, and expanding trade ties can facilitate trade flows across multiple markets and support regional value chains.

Within the framework of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the growing partnership between Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia also offers a concrete model for deeper economic cooperation among member states. By combining infrastructure development, investment mobilization, and inter-regional connectivity, the two countries are helping open new pathways for trade, sustainable growth, and economic integration across the Islamic world.

Source: Kazinform international, new agency, Asharq Al-awsat



▶ JORDAN EMERGES AS A GREEN ECONOMY HUB WITH MAJOR AMMONIA INVESTMENT

JORDAN'S \$1.1 BILLION GREEN AMMONIA PROJECT MARKS A SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THE KINGDOM'S TRANSITION TOWARD A LOW-CARBON ECONOMY, DRAWING ON ITS NATURAL RESOURCES, STRATEGIC LOCATION, AND INDUSTRIAL CAPABILITIES TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT AND DRIVE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH.

Jordan is strengthening its environmental and industrial ambitions through the development of one of its largest clean energy projects to date. The recently signed 45-year investment agreement for the construction of a \$1.1 billion green ammonia facility near Aqaba reflects the country's growing commitment to sustainable development, while creating new opportunities for economic diversification and international investment.

Led by Jordan Green Ammonia, a consortium bringing together the Emirati Fidelity Group and the Polish company Hynfra, the project is expected to produce 100,000 tonnes of green ammonia per year starting in November 2030. Intended primarily for export to European markets, the project taps into growing international demand for low-carbon industrial products and positions Jordan as a potential supplier within emerging green value chains.

The project draws on one of Jordan's most valuable natural resources: solar energy. With approximately 320 days of sunshine per year, the country en-

joys particularly favorable conditions for renewable energy production. To support this output, the consortium plans to build a dedicated 550-megawatt solar power plant, along with a desalination facility capable of producing 2.5 million cubic meters of water per year. The renewable electricity will be used to produce hydrogen from water, which will then be combined with nitrogen extracted from the air to produce green ammonia.

Beyond its environmental significance, the project carries important economic implications. Jordan has experienced limited foreign investment inflows in recent years, which lends particular weight to a project of this scale. The development is expected to attract additional international investors, particularly from Europe, where sustainability requirements continue to drive demand for renewable energy products. Financing is structured around 30% equity and 70% external investment, reflecting confidence in the project's commercial viability.

This initiative also supports broader industrial development around Aqaba, Jordan's only coastal city. New infrastructure, including dedicated export facilities within the port, will strengthen the city's role as a hub for clean industrial activity and international trade. In addition, the state is expected to benefit directly from taxes and royalties, representing approximately 12% of the project's profits once production is underway.

On the environmental front, the facility is expected to reduce carbon emissions by approximately 200,000 tonnes per year. At a time when global markets are placing growing priority on sustainable supply chains, this project allows Jordan to play a more active role in the transition toward more environmentally responsible industrial production.

Ultimately, the Aqaba green ammonia project illustrates how strategic investment, renewable resources, and export-oriented industrial development can converge to drive economic growth while advancing environmental goals. It also reinforces Jordan's emerging profile as a credible destination for large-scale green investment and sustainable infrastructure development.

Source: The National, GasWorld



OIC AND ICDT **AGENDA**

- ▶ **Regional Health Invest Forum**
13-14 July 2026 • Nouakchott, Mauritania
- ▶ **9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women**
12-13 July 2026 • Islamabad, Pakistan
- ▶ **17th OIC-UN General Meeting on Cooperation**
22-24 July 2026 • Geneva, Switzerland
- ▶ **15th Annual Investment Meeting (AIM)**
7-9 September • Dubai, UAE
- ▶ **OIC African SMEs Forum**
October 2026 • Dakar, Senegal
- ▶ **2nd OIC Ministerial Conference on Energy**
October 2026 • Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
- ▶ **42nd COMCEC Ministerial Meeting**
31st October – 3 November 2026 • Istanbul, Türkiye
- ▶ **11th OIC Halal Expo**
25-28 November 2026 • Istanbul, Türkiye
- ▶ **13th OIC Ministerial Conference on Tourism**
1-3 December 2026 • Doha, Qatar
- ▶ **10th Meeting of the ACMOI**
9-10 December 2026 • 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