



THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTRA-OIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT

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

Its objectives include :

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

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

TRADE PROMOTION

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

TRADE INFORMATION

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

INVESTMENT PROMOTION

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

STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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

TRAINING

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

INTERNATIONAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

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

Latifa Elbouabdellaoui,
Managing Director ICDT.



A Pillar of Solidarity and Development for OIC Member Countries

Economic and commercial cooperation is at the heart of the development and prosperity of OIC member countries. The Permanent Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) plays a crucial role in promoting this cooperation by creating a conducive environment for trade and investment, supporting economic diversification, and strengthening the productive capacities of member states. The numerous events and initiatives organized by the COMCEC and its affiliated institutions testify to its unwavering commitment to making the OIC a dynamic and prosperous economic space. Indeed, the COMCEC tirelessly works to strengthen economic ties between member states and stimulate inclusive growth.

Recent events illustrate this dynamism of a COMCEC that expresses an unwavering commitment to promoting economic and commercial cooperation. In the same vein, the OIC pursues a number of events. In this issue, we look back on the virtual meeting on the launch of the Women's Empowerment Program in Sub-Saharan Africa, the celebration of International Women's Day by the ICDT, and the 15th Islamic Summit in Banjul.

In the «Point of View» section, Ms. Amie Sow Ndiaye, Regional General Director of UBA for Central Africa, discusses the advantages of a pan-African financial institution ready to support all activities related to the financial market, particularly all attractive high-value sectors likely to boost economic and commercial cooperation between OIC countries within its scope.

At the forefront of international economic initiatives, the OIC has actively participated through its General Secretariat in the 2nd AlBaraka Regional Conference. In this issue, we also highlight Russia diversifying its markets towards OIC member countries and the potential cooperation between the ICDT and Guinea.

As for the «Wide Angle» section, it focuses on employment as a key instrument of cooperation within the OIC. As you browse through this issue, you will discover that OIC statistics confirm that employment is an essential instrument of cooperation within the Organization.

Looking ahead, 2024 promises to be rich in major economic events for the OIC. If the 13th WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi and the 12th China Roundtable on WTO Accessions of Arab Countries were resounding successes for member countries, the two major upcoming events, namely the Annual Investment Meeting (AIM) Congress in Abu Dhabi from May 7 to 9, 2024, and the 40th COMCEC Follow-up Committee Meeting in Ankara, covered in the «In the Pipe» section, will further energize economic cooperation.

These events provide important platforms to strengthen economic and commercial cooperation between OIC member countries and international partners.

Happy reading! ■

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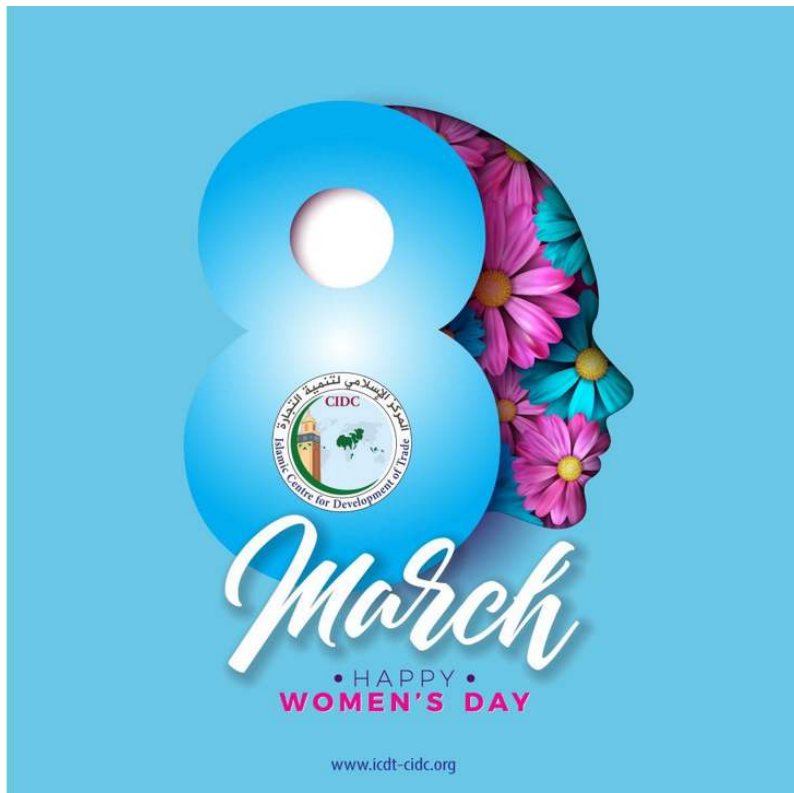
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The ICDT Celebrates Women on March 8

ON THE OCCASION OF INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY ON MARCH 8, 2024, THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT) HIGHLIGHTED ITS UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT.



POSTER FOR THE CELEBRATION OF MARCH 8, 2024

Each year, the ICDT celebrates International Women's Day, sharing its partnership approach that has not only opened doors to inclusive economic opportunities but also played a pivotal role in the economic development of the OIC region.

«Thanks to our strategic partnerships, we will implement initiatives that support women entrepreneurs, facilitate their market access, and enhance their professional skills,» emphasized Ms. Latifa El-bouabdellaoui, Director General of

the ICDT. She noted that these efforts contribute to creating a more resilient and inclusive economy where every woman has the opportunity to realize her full potential.

Before making a solemn call to all stakeholders to join the ICDT in this mission to advance change together, she assured: «We are proud of our journey so far and remain determined to continue our work in collaboration with our partners for a society where gender equality is not just aspired to but achieved.» ■

VIRTUAL MEETING ON THE LAUNCH of ICDT's Women's Economic Empowerment Program in Sub-Saharan Africa

THE VIRTUAL MEETING CHAIRED ON MARCH 7, 2024, BY MS. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ICDT, AND MR. TSHEPELAYI KABATA, BADEA REPRESENTATIVE, WAS PART OF THE LAUNCH OF ICDT'S WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA.

This high-level virtual meeting held on Thursday, March 7, 2024, aimed to present ICDT's Women's Economic Empowerment Program in Sub-Saharan Africa. Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui and Mr. Tshepelayi Kabata, who chaired the proceedings, set the tone for this meeting, which aimed to stimulate collaboration among women entrepreneurs by emphasizing a gender perspective, particularly by promoting promising initiatives that contribute to inclusive growth.

Participants included representatives from the Ministries of Trade of several Sub-Saharan African OIC member countries, namely Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, The Gambia, Guinea, Senegal, and Togo.

It should be noted that besides the four main axes, this ICDT program integrates a transversal gender dimension that aims to ensure that all interventions take into account the specific needs and realities of women.

Women's Economic Empowerment in Four Major Axes

These four major axes on women's economic empowerment in Sub-Saharan Africa revolve around strengthening entrepreneurial capacities, which include providing technical and managerial training to women entrepreneurs considering their specific needs and local context, setting up an individualized support system to help

women start, develop, and sustain their activities, and promoting mentorship by women leaders to inspire and guide new entrepreneurs.

Next, in terms of access to financing, the program facilitates women's access to microfinance services, including creating financial products tailored to their needs, mobilizing investment funds to support high-potential women entrepreneurs, and offering credit guarantee mechanisms to reduce risks and encourage financial institutions to lend to women.

It also takes into account improving market access through commercial promotion by organizing



AUTONOMISATION ÉCONOMIQUE **DES** **FEMMES**

PROGRAMME CIDC

ICDT WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAM

business meetings and exhibitions to allow women entrepreneurs to present their products and services to potential buyers, e-commerce platforms, and enhancing women's participation in public markets

through specific support and training. Finally, ICDT's Women's Economic Empowerment Program in Sub-Saharan Africa advocates to governments and international institutions

for the adoption of policies favorable to women's economic empowerment, supports networking, and organizes awareness campaigns to change mindsets and perceptions about women's role in the economy. ■



SOUVENIR PHOTO OF THE 14TH OIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE IN MECCA

15TH ISLAMIC SUMMIT OIC in Conclave in Banjul, Gambia

COMMONLY KNOWN AS THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) SUMMIT CONFERENCE, THIS SUMMIT IS SCHEDULED FOR MAY 4-5, 2024, IN BANJUL, GAMBIA. IT IS AN INTERNATIONAL MEETING OF THE HEADS OF STATE OF THE 57 OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES, HELD APPROXIMATELY EVERY THREE YEARS, PROVIDING AN IMPORTANT PLATFORM FOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES TO DISCUSS COMMON INTERESTS, PROMOTE COOPERATION, AND MAKE COLLECTIVE DECISIONS.

Following the last Islamic Summit held in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 2019, which focused on the theme «OIC in the Age of Transformations: Challenges and Opportunities,» the 15th Session of the OIC Summit Conference will take place from May 4 to 5, 2024, in Banjul, Gambia. This time, the theme will address «Strengthening Unity and Solidarity through Dialogue for Sustainable Development.»

The main issues expected to be discussed will include the Palestinian question, the Israeli-Arab conflict, ongoing crises in Muslim countries such as Syria, Yemen, and Libya, and the fight against Islamophobia and discrimination, as well as promoting economic and social development in Muslim countries and strengthening scientific and technological cooperation.

The 14th Summit adopted the Mecca Declaration, reaffirming the fundamental principles of the OIC and emphasizing the need to promote unity, solidarity, and cooperation among Muslim countries. The Gambian authorities are already on high alert, intending to go all out for this event. «In preparation for this historic event, our government, led by President Adama Barrow, has planned a series of infrastructure developments to ensure a memorable experience for the delegates,» recently stated the Summit President.

As a reminder, the first Islamic Summit was held in Rabat, Morocco, in 1969 in response to the arson attack on the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. Since then, 14 Islamic Summits have addressed various issues such as Palestine, the Middle East, human rights, economic and social development, and science and technology.

An Important Platform to Find Solutions and Address Common Challenges

Generally, the Islamic Summit plays a crucial role in promoting cooperation and solidarity among Muslim countries. It provides an important platform for Muslim leaders to discuss common challenges and find collective solutions. The upcoming Banjul Summit is expected to continue this dynamic and address crucial issues for the Muslim world, including the Palestinian question, regional crises, and sustainable development.

An important event bringing together leaders of the Muslim world to discuss common interests, the OIC Islamic Summit will focus on

STRENGTHENING SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION BETWEEN MUSLIM COUNTRIES IS ESSENTIAL TO MEET THE CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST CENTURY, PARTICULARLY SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

decisions and declarations aimed at significantly impacting the lives of millions of Muslims worldwide.

The focus will be on supporting the Palestinian cause and the struggle for the creation of an independent Palestinian state, a major priority for the OIC. In Banjul, the Summit is also expected to reaffirm its commitment to the two-state solution and condemn Israeli violations of Palestinian rights.

Regional crises, notably the ongoing conflicts in several Muslim countries such as Syria, Yemen, and Libya, will not be overlooked. The Summit should call for peaceful solutions to these crises and humanitarian support for affected populations.

At the heart of the discussions of this 15th OIC Summit will also be the fight against Islamophobia. Given the increasing Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims worldwide, this is a growing concern. The Summit should promote interfaith dialogue and tolerance and condemn all forms of discrimination.

FOR THE RECORD, THE FIRST ISLAMIC SUMMIT WAS HELD IN RABAT, MOROCCO, IN RESPONSE TO THE FIRE OF THE AL-AQSA MOSQUE IN JERUSALEM.

For the OIC, which plays an important role in promoting economic and social development in Muslim countries, this Summit should identify ways to further stimulate economic growth, create jobs, and combat poverty.

Hundreds of delegates will discuss, in Banjul, ways to strengthen scientific and technological cooperation. Strengthening scientific and technological cooperation among Muslim countries is essential to meet the 21st century's challenges, particularly sustainable development. The Summit should also encourage R&D in key areas such as science, technology, innovation, and education. ■

BANJUL, THE HOST CITY OF THE 15TH ISLAMIC SUMMIT



THE COMCEC : An Important Link in Economic and Commercial Cooperation of OIC COUNTRIES

THE COMCEC (STANDING COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION) IS ONE OF THE FOUR STANDING COMMITTEES THAT THE OIC HAS ESTABLISHED TO ADVANCE CRITICAL ISSUES FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND ITS MEMBER STATES. IN PREPARATION FOR THE 40TH COMCEC FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE TO BE HELD ON MAY 22-23, 2024, IN ANKARA, TÜRKIYE, WE FOCUS ON THIS ESSENTIAL BODY FOR THE OIC.

The COMCEC has essential missions in economic and commercial cooperation of OIC countries. It is responsible for implementing resolutions in economic and commercial areas, exploring possible means to strengthen cooperation among member states, and preparing programs and proposals to enhance capacities in these sectors. The COMCEC is chaired by H.E. the President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

The COMCEC has undertaken a number of important initiatives and programmes

The Trade Preferences System among OIC Member States (TPS-OIC) is one of the most important COMCEC projects aimed at promoting intra-OIC trade. This system is based on three agreements: the Framework Agreement, the Protocol on Preferential Tariff Scheme (PRETAS), and the Rules of Origin.

In 2005, the COMCEC initiated cooperation among the stock exchanges of OIC member states through the S&P OIC/COMCEC Index. The «Forum of Stock Exchanges of OIC Member States» was created in this regard. This Forum focuses on harmonizing market operation rules and regulations and opening communication channels for stock exchanges of OIC member countries and relevant institutions.

SOUVENIR PHOTO OF THE 39TH COMCEC MINISTERIAL SESSION.





As for OCI-VET, it is an initiative officially launched in 2009 during the COMCEC Economic Summit. Its major component relies on capacity-building programs (CBP). It was launched to improve the quality of education and vocational training in member countries to offer individuals the opportunity to develop their knowledge and skills, thus contributing to the development and competitiveness of member countries' economies. Some 9 different areas, namely statistics, agriculture and environment, economy, finance and trade, employment, health, information, communication and transport, labor and social security, social policy, and tourism with numerous sub-themes have been revisited within the OCI-VET.

Alongside these initiatives, a number of programs are launched by the COMCEC (detailed in the rest of the FOCUS).

Follow-up Committee Meeting Ahead of Annual Sessions

During the annual sessions of the COMCEC, delegations from member states and OIC institutions consider and deliberate on a number of agenda items related to various issues with the aim of increasing economic and commercial cooperation among member states. These issues range from increasing intra-OIC trade and investment to coopera-



GRANDSTAND OF THE OCI SUMMIT IN JEDDAH



OCI SUMMIT HALL IN JEDDAH

tion among major economic and political institutions such as stock exchanges, central banks, etc.

During the annual sessions of the COMCEC, the ministers of economy and trade of OIC member countries share their views and work on specific issues to increase and strengthen economic and commercial cooperation among member countries in the face of global economic challenges. Before the annual sessions of the COMCEC, the COMCEC Follow-up Committee meets with the participation of a number of

member countries that are members of this Committee as well as appropriate OIC institutions.

It is worth noting that the COMCEC has met annually at the ministerial level in Istanbul since 1984. Since that date, SESRIC (Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries) has actively participated in the annual sessions of the COMCEC and the Follow-up Committee meetings, submitting and presenting reports and baseline studies on various important agenda items of the COMCEC. ■



POINT OF VIEW

INTERVIEW

MS. AMIE SOW NDIAYE,

Regional CEO Central Africa UBA

Comments collected by D. MBaye

UBA IS A TOP 5 BANK WELL ESTABLISHED IN AFRICAN OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES.

UBA is perfecting its positioning as a pan-African bank. What about your presence in African OIC member countries?

I would like to point out that 11 of the 20 African countries where UBA operates are members of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. As a global bank, we will continue to target countries that allow us to serve our clients wherever they are.

In the Central Africa region, what are your market shares in terms of investment, deposits, and credits?

We have a 20% market share in total balance, which places us in the top 5. We have had an average annual growth margin of 25% over the past three years, and the outlook for this year remains promising.

Are there sectors that you prioritize for financing? If so, which ones?

We finance individuals, SMEs, large enterprises worldwide, and all activities related to the financial market. We generally target all attractive high-value sectors.

UBA has recently synergized with the African Guarantee Fund to support SMEs. What other vehicles do you use to support the financing of SMEs, VSEs, and start-ups in Africa in general, and in the Central African region in particular?

We offer portfolio guarantee lines for SMEs-SMIs. This supports this segment, which often struggles to provide the necessary guarantees to access financing. There is a collaboration platform intended to

facilitate product transformations, trade, and investment in the sub-region and the African continent. This offers an interesting opening for our SMEs that need support to benefit from regional and intercontinental trade.

The Tony Elumelu Foundation works in detecting and supporting entrepreneurship. What does UBA Group do for women-owned businesses to contribute to their emancipation?

We have special conditions for women entrepreneurs. There is a reduction in the interest rate, along with easing the required guarantees. Combined with the available guarantee lines, this gives them more latitude to develop their business





Amie Sow Ndiaye was appointed Regional Director of UBA Group in the CEMAC zone in 2021, responsible for overseeing the group's banking activities in the sub-region. Born in Dakar, Senegal, she holds two master's degrees (public finance and economics) and is a graduate of the High Potentials Leadership Program from Harvard Business School. After eight years at Ecobank, where she held positions such as Head Retail Banking Risk Manager, Executive Director, and Regional Director in charge of the public sector for the UEMOA zone, she joined UBA Group in 2013, becoming the first Francophone woman to join UBA Africa's Executive Committee. She gradually rose through the ranks within the Nigerian bank, holding key positions such as General Administrator of UBA Senegal, Regional Director of three West African subsidiaries (Senegal, Guinea-Conakry, and Mali), and Africa Director for Corporate and Institutional Banking. Under her leadership, UBA Senegal experienced significant growth and became one of the leading banks in the country. Her excellent knowledge of the banking sector and expertise in portfolio management, financial risk management, and corporate and institutional banking allowed her to clean up UBA's portfolios in the West African sub-region. An experienced business development professional, this seasoned businesswoman also played a key role in UBA's expansion in West and Central Africa. As CEO of the CEMAC zone, she supervises the bank's activities in six countries in the region (Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Equatorial Guinea, Central African Republic, and Chad) and is responsible for implementing UBA's strategy in the sub-region, as well as managing relations with regulators and local partners.

Digital banking will gradually replace the traditional banking business model at a much faster pace.

Do you believe in a promising future for fintech in Africa given the rise of M-Banking observed there? Given the recent events shaking the world from north to south, cashless is the future of banking. Many fintechs are developing platforms and gaining more market shares, making it a progressively regulated segment given the financial stakes.

Do you believe that with digitalization, the establishment of physical branches will see a

decline in the medium term in Africa?

One of the advantages of digitalization is precisely to reduce investment in branches and to favor home banking. This is confirmed by the habits of the new type of client who no longer wants to waste time at counters, and banking services are increasingly offered through basic applications. Digital banking will progressively replace the traditional banking business model at a much faster pace. ■



FREEZE FRAME



Virtual meeting of the 41st Ordinary Session of the Board of Directors of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) on April 22, 2024, with the participation of member states.



Participation of the OIC General Secretariat in the 2nd AlBaraka Regional Conference

THE 2ND ALBARAKA REGIONAL CONFERENCE, ORGANIZED UNDER THE THEME «EMPOWERING OIC NATIONS: UNVEILING THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF REMITTANCES IN PAKISTAN» ON JANUARY 29, 2024, IN KARACHI, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN, SAW THE PARTICIPATION OF A DELEGATION FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) LED BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. AHMAD KAWESA SENGENDO, ASSISTANT SECRETARY-GENERAL FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS.

Organized jointly by the AlBaraka Forum for Islamic Economy and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (formerly the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture), the 2nd AlBaraka Regional Conference held under the theme «Empowering OIC Nations: Unveiling the Crucial Role of Remittances in Pakistan» focused on Pakistan's experience and aimed to discuss the role of remittances and their impact on economic growth and the promotion of sustainable development. The meeting also focused on the development and promotion of the Islamic economy and finance and their positive impact on the economies of OIC countries.

In his opening speech at the conference, Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo emphasized that remittances represent a significant flow of foreign currency with considerable impact on local communities and national economies in several OIC member states. He further noted that remittances are becoming the most important source of external financing for low-income countries and, in some cases, a fundamental catalyst for economic growth, representing nearly 20% of their GDP.

Alternative Transactions and Islamic Fintech

The Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs of the OIC did not omit the need to implement effective and planned strategies in terms of

human resource exportation to avoid their loss in respective OIC countries due to brain drain.

Le Secrétaire général adjoint pour les Affaires économiques de l'OCI n'a pas omis la nécessité de mettre en place des stratégies efficaces et planifiées, en termes d'exportation des ressources humaines, afin d'éviter leur perte dans les pays respectifs de l'OCI, en raison de l'exode des cerveaux.

Moreover, Dr. Sengendo highlighted the imperative of collective efforts to reduce transaction costs related to sending and receiving remittances. In Karachi, he concluded by advocating for the introduction of alternative transaction methods, including Islamic fintech, to better serve migrant workers ■

When Russia Diversifies Its Markets Towards OIC Member Countries

IN RECENT YEARS, DRIVEN BY SEVERAL FACTORS, RUSSIA HAS INTENSIFIED THE DIVERSIFICATION OF ITS MARKETS TOWARDS OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES. TO COUNTER SIGNIFICANT ECONOMIC SANCTIONS IMPOSED BY WESTERN COUNTRIES AND MAINTAIN ITS TRADE AND ECONOMIC EXCHANGES, THIS VAST COUNTRY HAS SHIFTED ITS FOCUS TOWARDS OTHER MARKETS, PARTICULARLY OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES..



ON SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2024, THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC), H.E. MR. HISSEIN BRAHIM TAHAR, RECEIVED AT THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT IN JEDDAH, H.E. AMBASSADOR TURKO DAUDOV, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE OIC.

The diversification of Russia's markets towards OIC member countries is an ongoing process. Many analysts believe it will continue in the coming years. But why the OIC region? It should be noted that this area represents a signifi-

cant market with a growing population and an expanding middle class. It is also recognized that OIC member countries offer opportunities in various sectors such as agribusiness, energy, infrastructure, and construction.

Recently, with Russia's support in expanding OIC member countries to the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa), its diplomatic cooperation with these countries has been strengthened. Observers

have noted Russian participation in summits and the signing of bilateral agreements (Morocco, Türkiye, and Egypt) to facilitate trade and investment between Russia and these countries.

Greater Representation of the Developing World

In terms of investments, Russian companies are involved in various sectors of OIC member countries, particularly in infrastructure, energy, and agriculture. Russia is a major energy supplier for many OIC member countries and plays a key role in developing the region's energy infrastructure.

Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE, and Ethiopia, all OIC members, have joined the BRICS economic bloc since January 2024. With the addition of new members, this group of emerging countries, which previously represented about 40% of the world's population and more than a quarter of global GDP, will see its indicators soar with the inclusion of three of the world's largest oil producers: Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Iran. Chinese President Xi Jinping called this expansion historic, demonstrating the BRICS countries' commitment to unity and development. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, expressed his delight that his country has joined an «important group,» welcoming the expansion. He added: «We look forward to continued cooperation for the prosperity, dignity, and benefit of all nations and peoples of the world.»

Trading with the Developing World

It is worth recalling that the BRICS were created in 2009 as



SHANGHAI HEADQUARTERS OF THE NEW DEVELOPMENT BANK (NDB) IN CHINA.

Russia, Observer Member of the OIC since 2005

À Like four other states, the Russian Federation is an Observer Member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. This federation, which has more than 15% Muslims and has eight of its 21 autonomous republics bearing the names of Muslim peoples, has indeed obtained this status.

Note that several Muslim communities around the world benefit from this observer status worldwide.

a group of emerging market economies and have become one of the main advocates for greater representation of the developing world and the South in global affairs. This is the second time the BRICS have decided to expand since their formation in 2009 by Brazil, Russia, India, and China. South Africa was added in 2010.

The inclusion of countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt, and the UAE in this eco-

economic and political organization of the BRICS will undoubtedly boost economic cooperation with Russia.

However, the success of this strategy will depend on several factors, including Russia's ability to overcome logistical and regulatory obstacles, maintain stable relations with OIC member countries, and offer competitive products and services. ■

ICDT-GUINEA COOPERATION A New Momentum

AFTER MS. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT), RECEIVED HIS EXCELLENCY NAMORY TRAORÉ, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA ACCREDITED TO THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO, ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, AT THE ICDT HEADQUARTERS IN CASABLANCA, THE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE ICDT AND GUINEAN INSTITUTIONS RESPONSIBLE FOR TRADE AND INVESTMENT PROMOTION IS LIKELY TO INTENSIFY.

The cooperation between the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and Guinean institutions responsible for trade and investment promotion can be a springboard for Guinea's economic development. The continuation of cooperation between the ICDT and Guinean institutions is essential for promoting trade and investment in Guinea. This collaboration will help create jobs, stimulate economic growth, and improve the standard of living for the Guinean population. In Casablanca, Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui and His Excellency Namory Traoré reviewed ways to develop cooperation between the ICDT and Guinean institutions responsible for trade and investment promotion.

Following such a meeting, it is possible to strengthen the capacities of Guinean institutions in promoting trade and investment through the ICDT's expertise and resources. Indeed, the center can assist them in developing effective trade and investment promotion strategies. This includes staff training, organizing workshops and seminars, and providing technical assistance.

Cooperate for Tangible Results

In terms of promoting investment opportunities in Guinea, the ICDT can work closely with Guinean institutions to identify



MS. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICDT, AND HIS EXCELLENCY NAMORY TRAORÉ, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF GUINEA TO THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO.

and encourage opportunities to potential investors from OIC member countries. Through participation in trade fairs and investment conferences, publishing promotional materials, and connecting investors with potential partners, trade can be facilitated between Guinea and other OIC member countries.

Both leaders agreed that the ICDT can assist Guinean businesses in accessing markets in other OIC member countries by providing information on regulatory requirements, business

opportunities, and potential partners. Recall that the ICDT regularly organizes trade missions and business forums to connect companies from member countries with buyers and investors.

In key sectors such as agriculture, agribusiness, and infrastructure, cooperation between the ICDT and Guinean institutions can lead to concrete and promising results. The ICDT has also contributed to increasing Guinean exports to other OIC member countries. ■

WFA WIDE ANGLE



MC13 SOUVENIR PHOTO

13th WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi

THIS CONFERENCE, HELD FROM FEBRUARY 26 TO MARCH 2, 2024, IN ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, ALLOWED PARTICIPANTS, HIGH DIGNITARIES, AND MINISTERS FROM AROUND THE WORLD TO EXAMINE THE FUNCTIONING OF THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM AND TAKE MEASURES FOR THE FUTURE WORK OF THE WTO. MS. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE ICDT, PARTICIPATED IN THE OPENING CEREMONY.

The 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, concluded on February 26, 2024. It was highly attended, with over 4,000 participants. The various resolutions corroborated the speeches delivered at the opening by H.E. the UAE Minister of Foreign Trade and H.E. Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, WTO Director-General, in the presence of His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the United Arab Emirates. Let us recall that Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director General of the ICDT, participated in the opening ceremony and took part the day before, on February 25, 2024, in Abu Dhabi, in the High-Level Session on Arab Perspectives on WTO Accessions and the Multilateral Trading System with the presence of the WTO Director-General and the participation of Trade Ministers from China, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Comoros, Libya, Lebanon, Iraq, Yemen, Ethiopia, Serbia, Uzbekistan, and Nepal.

Important Resolutions

In addition to renewing their commitment to having a fully operational dispute settlement system by the end of 2024 and improving the use of special and differential treatment provisions for developing countries and LDCs (least developed countries), the ministers from the 166 member states who participated in MC13 approved the accession of two new members, namely the Republic of Comoros, an OIC member country, and Timor-Leste. Some 123 WTO members presented the WTO In-



MC13 A VIEW OF THE AUDIENCE.



ADHÉSION OFFICIELLE DES COMORES ET DU TIMOR-LESTE À L'OMC.

vestment Facilitation Agreement for Development. They called for it to be incorporated into the WTO architecture as a plurilateral agreement under Annex 4 of the Marrakesh Agreement establishing the WTO. A set of decisions aimed at strengthening ties between developing countries and proving the relevance of the WTO for these countries...

Among other decisions, the extension of the customs moratorium on electronic transmissions after intense negotiations. As for the WTO Fisheries Agreement, 11 new states have deposited their instruments of acceptance, knowing that subsidies for agriculture and fisheries have not been the subject of an agreement. ■

WTO MINISTERIAL
CONFERENCE
ABU DHABI - UAE
2024



12th China Round Table on WTO Accessions

ARAB PERSPECTIVES ON WTO ACCESSIONS AND THE MULTILATERAL TRADING SYSTEM

24 - 25 FEBRUARY 2024
Abu Dhabi, UAE



PARTICIPATION OF THE ICDC IN 13TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE

12th China Roundtable on WTO Accessions of Arab Countries

ON THE SIDELINES OF THE 13TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC13) HELD IN ABU DHABI FROM FEBRUARY 26 TO 29, 2024, IN WHICH THE ICDC PARTICIPATED, THE 12TH CHINA ROUNDTABLE ON WTO ACCESSIONS OF ARAB COUNTRIES WAS ORGANIZED ON FEBRUARY 24-25 BY CHINA, THE WTO, AND THE UAE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE IN COLLABORATION WITH THE ICDC, THE IDB, AND THE ARAB MONETARY FUND, WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF ARAB AND ASIAN COUNTRIES IN THE PROCESS OF WTO ACCESSION.

The MC13, organized by the UAE government and the World Trade Organization (WTO), which included the participation of all WTO member and observer states and the ICDC represented by the

Director-General and the Deputy Director-General, was an excellent opportunity for thematic meetings initiated by third countries on specific economic zones. Thus, on the sidelines of this conference, the

12th China Roundtable on WTO Accessions of Arab Countries was organized on February 24-25, 2024, in Abu Dhabi. Initiated by China, this roundtable was endorsed by the WTO and the UAE Mi-



ON THE SIDELINES OF THE 13TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE, ICDT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN THE ACTIVITIES OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION IN ABU DHABI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, SUCH AS THE BUSINESS FORUM, LOGISTICS IN FACILITATION OF CROSS-BORDER TRADE, THE TRADE TECH FORUM, THE SUSTAINABLE TRADE FORUM IN AFRICA AND THE DIGITALIZATION OF TRADE SERVICES FOR THE BENEFIT OF SMES.

nistry of Foreign Trade and benefited from the collaboration of the ICDT, the IDB, the Arab Monetary Fund (AMF), and the Arab and Asian countries in the process of WTO accession.

Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director-General of the ICDT, took this opportunity to present the Centre's program on technical assistance and capacity building for countries in the process of WTO accession. It was reported that over 100 people participated in this roundtable. Additionally, the ICDT, the IDB, and the AMF, in collaboration with the WTO, conducted a study on best practices for WTO accession for Arab countries, the findings of

which were presented by the expert who conducted the study.

On the sidelines of the WTO Ministerial Conference in Abu Dhabi, UAE, Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director-General of the ICDT, and Mr. Walid Farghal, Director-General of the UAE Annual Investment Meeting Congress, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Abu Dhabi on February 26, 2024. The purpose of this agreement is to strengthen their collaboration in organizing investment forums, capacity building programs for investment promotion agencies, startups, and SMEs in OIC countries.

Moreover, on the sidelines of the



13th Ministerial Conference, the ICDT actively participated in the activities of the World Trade Organization in Abu Dhabi, UAE, such as the Business Forum, logistics in facilitating cross-border trade, the Trade Tech Forum, the Sustainable Trade Forum in Africa, and the digitalization of trade services for the benefit of SMEs. ■

STATS



BAKOU (AUN) – LA RÉUNION PRÉPARATOIRE DES HAUTS FONCTIONNAIRES POUR LES TRAVAUX DE LA CINQUIÈME CONFÉRENCE ISLAMIQUE DES MINISTRES DU TRAVAIL A ÉTÉ LANCÉE AUJOURD'HUI, 21 NOVEMBRE 2023, À BAKOU, EN RÉPUBLIQUE D'AZERBAÏDJAN, SOUS LE SLOGAN : «SOLUTIONS INNOVANTES ET NUMÉRISATION DU TRAVAIL ET SERVICES DE L'EMPLOI DANS LES ÉTATS MEMBRES DE L'ORGANISATION DE LA COOPÉRATION ISLAMIQUE»

Employment: A Tool for Cooperation within the OIC

THE OIC HAS SUCCESSFULLY DEVELOPED ITS FRAMEWORK FOR COOPERATION IN LABOR, EMPLOYMENT, AND SOCIAL PROTECTION. AN EXECUTIVE PROGRAM FOR IMPLEMENTING THIS FRAMEWORK WAS LAUNCHED IN 2014 WITH NINE AREAS OF COOPERATION AMONG OIC MEMBER STATES. LABOR ISSUES IN THE OIC ARE ALSO HIGHLIGHTED IN THE OIC TEN-YEAR PROGRAM OF ACTION 2016-2025, PARTICULARLY OBJECTIVE 2.9, WHICH TARGETS SPECIFIC GOALS IN EMPLOYMENT, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND INDUSTRIALIZATION WITHIN THE OIC.

In the labor market field, the OIC has a clear vision, policy, and strategy for cooperation. OIC countries face multiple challenges regarding labor market evolution, including high unemployment rates, low skill levels, lack of investment in new skills, high

informal unemployment rates, and a high prevalence of skill mismatches. Furthermore, labor market analyses in OIC countries show that labor force participation rates, employment-to-population ratios, the share of employment in the services sec-

tor, and the proportion of the labor force with higher education are lower. In contrast, female unemployment rates, the share of vulnerable employment, the share of employment in agriculture, inactivity rates, and the proportion of the labor force with

primary education are higher in OIC countries compared to non-OIC developing and developed countries.

Generally, the structure of the labor market of an economy reflects its capacity to transition to more productive sectors. Higher productivity implies higher well-being and better living conditions. Consequently, improving labor market conditions and prospects can promote economic performance and raise living standards in OIC countries. Given the broad range of labor market challenges in OIC countries, several attempts have been made to address these challenges at the OIC level over the past decade. The regular meetings, held at the OIC ministerial level, and relevant decisions made during these meetings to cooperate in addressing some critical challenges are perhaps the most remarkable initiatives.

A Number of Activities and Initiatives Have Been Taken at the OIC Level

The OIC Ten-Year Program of Action 2016-2025 (OIC-2025), Islamic Conferences of Labor Ministers and Steering Committees, the adoption of the OIC Framework for Cooperation on Labor, Employment, and Social Protection, and other initiatives are among the significant steps taken by the OIC regarding the labor market.

The OIC Ten-Year Program of Action 2016-2025 adopted during the 13th Islamic Summit held in Istanbul from April 10 to 15, 2016, aims to foster cooperation for the exchange of expertise and labor and promote knowledge transfer, experiences, and best practices. In the labor field, it aims to undertake joint actions and training programs to significantly improve labor market conditions in OIC countries, thereby reducing unemployment, increasing labor force productivity, and improving health and safety conditions at work. More specifically, Objective 2.9/v of

the OIC-2025 Ten-Year Program of Action titled «Labor, Employment, and Social Protection» targets several goals.

It promotes the exchange of information and best practices, as well as policy strategies and experiences in the fields of occupational safety and health, employment, social protection, and migration, to promote a culture of occupational risk prevention and control.

This objective also encourages labor protection, which includes decent working conditions, including wages, working hours, safety, and health at work, essential elements of decent work.

Finally, it aims to improve the transparency of employment information statistics and promote vocational training programs.

To improve cooperation in labor and address some common issues faced by OIC member states, regular ministerial meetings in the form of Islamic Conferences of Labor Ministers and Steering Committees have been held since 2011. In many OIC countries, it is necessary to address labor market issues such as youth and female employment, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion.

The first meeting was held in Istanbul, Türkiye, in September 2011. The second meeting was held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in April 2013. The third meeting was held in Jakarta, Indonesia, in May 2015, and a fourth meeting took place in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in February 2018...

During these meetings, important decisions and resolutions were made, including the approval of the OIC Framework for Cooperation in Labor, Employment, and Social Protection, as well as the Executive Program for Implementing the OIC Framework for Cooperation on Labor,

Employment, and Social Protection, the creation of the OIC Occupational Safety and Health (OSHNET) and Public Employment Services Network (OIC-PESNET, see box), the creation of the OIC Labor Center in Baku, and the expansion of the Islamic Development Bank's Youth Employment Support (YES) Program. In addition, the meetings decided to create a steering committee to monitor resolutions and implement the OIC Framework for Cooperation on Labor, Employment, and Social Protection.

As for the OIC Framework for Cooperation in Labor, Employment, and Social Protection, adopted at the second Islamic Conference of Labor Ministers (ICLM) in Baku, it aims to facilitate collaboration and cooperation among OIC member states through several means. It includes six main areas of cooperation: «Occupational Safety and Health,» «Unemployment Reduction,» «Workforce Capacity Development Projects,» «Foreign Migrant Labor,» «Labor Market Information Strategy,» and «Social Protection.»

Occupational safety and health (OSH) has been identified as an extremely important area for developing countries in general and OIC member states in particular. The main focus in OSH is on four different objectives, namely maintaining and promoting workers' health and working capacity, improving the work environment to be conducive to safety and health, protecting against occupational risks, and developing work organizations and cultures.

Unemployment reduction is also a crucial challenge for many OIC countries. The issue of youth unemployment is rapidly becoming a major concern in many parts of the world, including OIC member states. There is also a significant risk that the employment crisis will have long-term social and economic consequences.

Workforce capacity development projects are considered the third area of cooperation in the framework document. It aims to strengthen and promote cooperation among member states in the field of education and vocational training, as well as to ensure information exchange among public employment institutions, among others.

Migrant and foreign contract labor, the focus of the framework document, is not overlooked. Migrant and foreign workers, under contract and in an irregular situation, are generally at high risk of exploitation. Against this backdrop, the framework aims, among other things, to increase the constructive effects of migration for development and accelerate the brain gain.

The labor market information strategy is highlighted as the fifth area of cooperation in the framework document. Employers, businesses, governments, and other stakeholders need access to accurate labor market information. The main objective is to provide timely, relevant, accurate, and updated labor market information to economic actors, enabling them to make informed decisions.

Social protection is another significant area of cooperation highlighted in the framework document. Social protection plays a crucial role in promoting human well-being and broad social consensus, contributing to equitable growth, social stability, and economic performance. The framework document emphasizes the need to implement comprehensive, coherent, and coordinated social protection and employment policies to ensure social services and transfers, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups.

Various Areas of Cooperation

For strategic action, five main areas of cooperation have been identified. The first one is encouraging partici-

pation in the labor market, given that there are various reasons why some people do not participate in the workforce.

Family care, retirement, illness, disability, education, the absence of suitable jobs, and the refusal to work are among the main causes. Particularly, existing negative perceptions towards certain groups of people, such as the elderly, disabled, and ex-offenders, discourage them from being active in the labor market. Given the relatively lower labor force participation rates in OIC countries, more attention needs to be paid to the challenges related to labor market inactivity.

Addressing this challenge would contribute to achieving a more inclusive and productive economy in the OIC region. Reducing economic inactivity not only stimulates economic development but also helps resolve various social issues. The social cost of labor market exclusion can be extremely high in certain contexts. Inactive individuals may lose confidence, motivation, and self-esteem in their society, which can lead to new social difficulties and deprivation, as they are more likely to engage in harmful and illegal activities. Worse still, economic inactivity can trigger social unrest and be a source of conflicts in a society.

In this context, 5 strategic objectives are identified to encourage labor market participation in OIC countries, through the improvement of labor market prospects and outcomes, the promotion of skills development in line with labor market needs, the implementation of inclusive policies to improve the participation of the female population, youth and the elderly, designing policies to reduce the gap between labor market participation in urban and rural areas, or programs and policies to activate the potential of vulnerable groups, including people with disabilities, ex-offenders and displaced persons in the labor market.

To observe the performance at the OIC level in encouraging labor market participation, two key performance indicators are identified: the activity rate (total population) and the gender gap in labor market participation rates.

Next, it is about improving employability, which refers to «transferable skills and qualifications that enhance an individual's ability to take advantage of available education and training opportunities to obtain and retain decent employment, progress within the enterprise and between jobs, and cope with changing technology and labor market conditions,» as defined by the ILO. An individual's skill and qualification levels are essential factors in improving employability in the labor market. However, developing a strategic framework for skill development involves several aspects.

Skill development is necessary to improve employability, increase productivity, align the supply of skills with labor market needs, and facilitate adaptation to technological and market changes. Given the constant evolution of technology and the introduction of innovative production processes and systems, including Industry 4.0, it is also important to develop capacities for anticipating and preparing for future skill needs.

Another area of cooperation relates to the security and well-being of workers. Social security is an important tool to prevent and reduce poverty, inequality, social exclusion, and social insecurity, to promote equal opportunities, and to support the transition from informal to formal employment. The right to social security, in addition to employment promotion, is an economic and social necessity for development and progress. Today, all countries worldwide have some form of social protection program. However, a significant proportion of the

global population (4 billion in 2022) continues to live without adequate social protection coverage, according to the ILO. This means that for the vast majority of people, the fundamental human right to social security is only partially realized or not realized at all. On the other hand, occupational safety and health (OSH) represent a key element in ensuring decent working conditions and maintaining workers' well-being. It involves protecting the safety, health, and well-being of workers. Appropriate legislation and regulations, along with adequate enforcement mechanisms, are essential to protect workers' safety and health. Therefore, OSH can be guaranteed by an adequate and appropriate system.

Promoting labor productivity is the fourth area of cooperation prioritized by the OIC. Workers in OIC countries produce, on average, fewer goods and services than their counterparts in the rest of the world. This implies that OIC countries have a productivity problem. In a broader context, labor productivity can be improved through various macroeconomic policies, including those aimed at promoting innovation, science and technology, investment, and human capital. In the labor market context, promoting labor productivity is more related to the efficient use of existing human capacities. The human capital stock plays an important role in determining the ability to absorb new knowledge and technologies, and thus to increase labor productivity. Productivity growth, in turn, is a key factor in promoting long-term economic growth.

Better education improves production processes in several ways. Educated or skilled workers are capable of performing complex tasks and thus contribute to the production of technologically sophisticated products. Especially in developing countries, skilled workers increase the country's absorption capacity by acquiring and

implementing foreign knowledge and technologies, which is crucial for successful economic diversification and development. Empirical literature documents the role of education in increasing productivity and workforce efficiency by enhancing the cognitive stock of economically productive human capacities.

La réduction du chômage est le 5e domaine de coopération retenu par l'OCI en la matière. Le chômage reste l'un des problèmes les plus difficiles, à travers le monde, et les pays de l'OCI continuent d'avoir des taux de chômage moyens plus élevés que dans le reste du monde. En particulier, les taux de chômage de la population active féminine sont plus élevés que ceux des hommes. Reducing unemployment is the fifth area of cooperation prioritized by the OIC in this matter. Unemployment remains one of the most challenging issues worldwide, and OIC countries continue to have average unemployment rates higher than the rest of the world. In particular, unemployment rates for women are higher than for men.

Youth unemployment rates in OIC countries are also not very promising, as young people (aged 15 to 24) continue to suffer greatly from a lack of decent employment opportunities. Due to a relatively high young population and high youth unemployment rates in OIC countries, unemployed youth continue to pose a significant challenge. This requires urgent policy intervention.

In this regard, the productive capacity of OIC countries must be activated, considering the longstanding structural barriers that keep many young people, women, people with disabilities, and low-skilled workers unemployed. More importantly, policies must be implemented to utilize the productive potential of youth, aiming for higher growth and lower poverty rates. ■

OIC-PESNET

The OIC Public Employment Services Network (OIC-PESNET) is an OIC cooperation platform that brings together representatives of public employment institutions in OIC member states to strengthen technical cooperation between them, facilitating the sharing and exchange of experiences and best practices in this important field, and thereby contributing to their efforts to improve employability and reduce unemployment in their countries.

The OIC-PESNET was created in accordance with the «Resolution on Cooperation in Labor, Employment, and Social Protection among OIC Member States» adopted at the 2nd Islamic Conference of Labor Ministers held in Baku, Azerbaijan, in April 2013. The Conference called for the creation of a forum among public employment authorities in OIC member states to promote collaboration in knowledge and experience transfer as well as to generate joint action to improve employment services and overcome common employment challenges.

L'OIC-PESNET vise à établir un réseau intra-OCI pour le partage systématique d'informations et d'expériences entre les autorités publiques de l'emploi des États membres de l'OCI en vue d'améliorer la qualité et l'efficacité des services publics de l'emploi et d'améliorer l'accessibilité à ces services dans les États membres de l'OCI.

The OIC-PESNET aims to establish an intra-OIC network for systematic information and experience sharing among public employment authorities in OIC member states to improve the quality and efficiency of public employment services and enhance access to these services in OIC member states.

The SESRIC serves as the OIC-PESNET Secretariat and conducts a specific capacity-building program, the Public Employment Services Capacity Building (PES-CaB) Program, to support the efforts of OIC member states in developing institutional and human resource capacities in public employment services.



قمة AIM للاستثمار
AIM CONGRESS

Annual Investment Meeting Congress in May in Abu Dhabi

THE AIM CONGRESS (ANNUAL INVESTMENT MEETING) IS A PREMIER ANNUAL EVENT THAT BRINGS TOGETHER INVESTORS, BUSINESS LEADERS, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS FROM OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES. THIS YEAR'S CONGRESS WILL BE HELD FROM MAY 7 TO 9, 2024, IN ABU DHABI, UAE, UNDER THE THEME «ADAPTING TO A CHANGING INVESTMENT LANDSCAPE: HARNESSING NEW POTENTIAL FOR GLOBAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.»

From May 7 to 9, 2024, Abu Dhabi will host the AIM Congress. This event, themed «Adapting to a Changing Investment Landscape: Harnessing New Potential for Global Economic Development,» will allow OIC member countries to discuss investment opportunities, including FDI in various sectors. The AIM Congress will be a venue for high-level discussions, bringing together top experts to discuss key investment trends and opportunities in sectors such as information and communication technology, renewable energy, infrastructure, agribusiness, future cities, and the digital economy.

An initiative of AIM Global Foundation, an independent international organization committed to empowering the global economy by promoting effective investment strategies and facilitating produc-

tivity and economic expansion opportunities, the Congress has become a must-attend event. Since its inception, the AIM Congress has established itself as a leading investment platform in the Middle East, aiming to trigger positive transformation by creating investment opportunities, promoting solidarity, and developing economic relations between nations while addressing global challenges impacting economic growth.

Each edition of the AIM Congress is an opportune event to address the fundamental challenges facing nations on their journey towards achieving development, and to discuss investment trends and strategies that can be used to maximize the potential of individual companies, countries and regions, thereby fostering economic diversification.

A leading exhibition

The Congress offers an excellent opportunity to network with potential investors, business partners and government officials. Typically, it's also a learning space. The Congress will feature a series of workshops and seminars on investment-related topics such as deal structuring, due diligence and risk management.

Why Attend the AIM Congress?

For OIC member country delegates, it will be an opportunity to discover the latest trends in global investment, meet potential investors and business partners, and learn from top experts on how to structure and manage investment transactions.

The AIM Congress is the place to showcase your business to a global audience, whether it is an SME, startup, etc. ■



ANKARA, TÜRKİYE.

40th COMCEC Follow-up Committee Meeting in Ankara

ANKARA, THE CAPITAL OF TÜRKİYE, WILL HOST THE 40TH COMCEC FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE MEETING FROM MAY 22 TO 23, 2024. THIS SIGNIFICANT EVENT IS EXPECTED TO BRING TOGETHER REPRESENTATIVES OF THE COMCEC MEMBER COUNTRIES, AS WELL AS REPRESENTATIVES FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS, TO DISCUSS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECTS APPROVED BY THE COMCEC GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The 40th COMCEC Follow-up Committee Meeting will be held in Ankara, Türkiye, from May 22 to 23, 2024. This major event is expected to bring together representatives of the COMCEC member countries, as well as representatives from international organizations and regional institutions. The agenda will include reviewing the progress made in implementing the COMCEC programs and projects, discussing the challenges faced by the

COMCEC member countries, and making recommendations to the COMCEC General Assembly.

The agenda of this 40th COMCEC Follow-up Committee Meeting will thus provide an important opportunity to advance economic and commercial cooperation among OIC member countries. This meeting should also contribute to promoting sustainable development in the region.

It is worth noting that the COMCEC Follow-up Committee is a subsidiary body of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). The Committee is responsible for monitoring the implementation of programs and projects approved by the COMCEC General Assembly and making recommendations according. ■



CALENDAR

▶ **OIC HALAL FORUM AZERBAIJAN**

April 24-26, 2024 • Baku, Azerbaijan

▶ **22ND COMCEC TRADE MEETING**

April 25, 2024 • Ankara, Türkiye

▶ **15TH OIC ISLAMIC SUMMIT**

04-05 May 2024 • Banjul, Gambia

▶ **AIM CONGRESS (ANNUAL INVESTMENT MEETING)**

07-09 May 2024 • Abu Dhabi, UAE

▶ **ICDT INVEST DAYS YAOUNDÉ**

July 26-27, 2024 • Yaoundé, Cameroon

▶ **40TH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS**

July 27-29, 2024 • Ankara, Türkiye

▶ **5TH HEALTH FAIR IN OIC COUNTRIES**

04-07 October, 2024 • Dakar, Senegal

▶ **10^{ÈME} OIC HALAL EXPO**

October 8-12, 2024 • Tunis, Tunisia

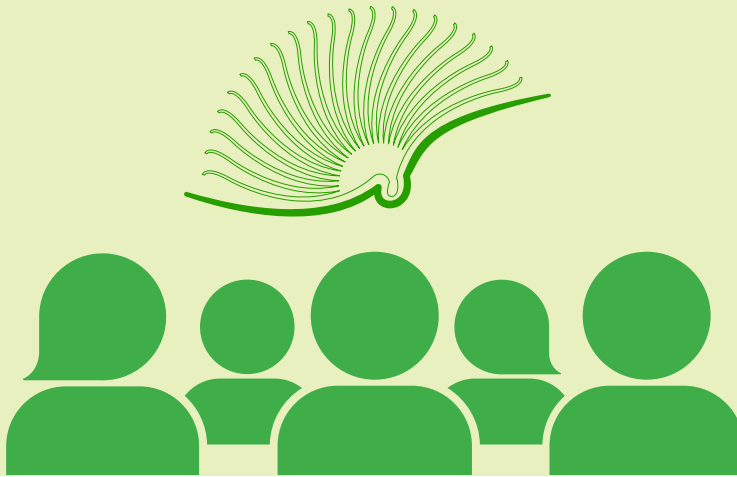
▶ **40TH COMCEC SESSION**

2-05 November, 2024 • Ankara, Türkiye



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

FIRST SEMESTER 2024 • N'DJAMENA, CHAD



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

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





منظمة التعاون الإسلامي

OIC-OCI

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

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



www.oic-oci.org