



ISSUE 185 • JANUARY - MARCH 2026

TIJARIS



THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTRA-OIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT

SPECIAL REPORT

TRANSPORT AND TRADE FACILITATION IN OIC MEMBER STATES

FROM STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS TO STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES



INTERVIEW

H.E MR. FRANCIS MUGOGA
CEO DE « UTALII AFRICA TOURISM
& INVESTMENT EXPO »



SUCCESS STORIES IN WOMEN'S AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

DR FATOUMATA SACKO
FOUNDER AND PROMOTER OF KAIRA-MA

FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC STABILITY:
CHALLENGES OF GLOBAL SHOCKS AND POLICY COORDINATION IN OIC MEMBER STATES

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.

EDITORIAL



Transport: A Strategic Pillar of Intra-OIC Trade

In an era defined by the sweeping reconfiguration of global supply chains and the relentless intensification of international competition, transport has emerged as one of the most powerful strategic levers for economic competitiveness. For the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) — spanning Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America — the development of high-performing transport systems represents a critical imperative for stimulating intra-OIC trade. Strengthening infrastructure, modernising logistics services, and advancing regulatory cooperation are decisive factors in fostering deeper economic integration within the OIC.

Despite encouraging progress achieved in recent years through targeted initiatives to stimulate trade and investment, intra-OIC commerce continues to fall well below the region's considerable potential. Persistent barriers — prohibitively high logistics costs, fragmented regional connectivity, and deep-rooted infrastructure deficiencies — continue to suppress trade volumes and constrain economic opportunity. This must change. Roads, railways, seaports, and airports are not merely physical assets; they are the vital arteries through which prosperity flows.

Across many OIC member states, significant investments have been undertaken to modernise ports, develop logistics corridors, and upgrade road and rail networks — whether in Asia, the Middle East, or Africa. Transformative projects, such as trans-African transport corridors, new railway routes across Central Asia, and the modernisation of major port hubs throughout the Muslim world, are steadily strengthening market interconnectivity.

Among the most noteworthy recent initiatives is Morocco's development of the Port of Dakhla — a compelling demonstration of the Kingdom's ambition to establish itself as a major logistics hub bridging Africa, Europe, and the Atlantic.

By coupling such initiatives with concrete measures — including enhanced efficiency in transport and logistics services, streamlined customs procedures, digitalisation of transport documents, the deployment of integrated port and border management systems, and improved coordination across transport modes — OIC member states can substantially reduce delays and transaction costs. These reforms will lay the foundations for modern transport systems capable of generating sustained, long-term dynamism in intra-OIC trade.

In this regard, cooperation between OIC member states is of paramount importance, for both the public and private sectors alike. The Organisation's institutions are called upon to play a driving role by supporting joint projects, facilitating the exchange of best practices, and mobilizing the financing necessary for transport infrastructure development.

The stakes extend far beyond economics. Transport networks are, at their core, instruments of human connection. By deepening connectivity across member states, the OIC can forge a more cohesive, integrated economic space — one that not only facilitates the movement of goods, but brings people closer together, attracts transformative investment, and underpins a model of sustained and inclusive development for generations to come.

To this end, ICdT is actively working to reinforce road connectivity between countries within the same region across the OIC space. As a first step, the Centre is targeting Atlantic Africa through the launch of a pilot project linking Morocco, Mauritania, and Senegal — within the framework of the Morocco–Gabon Corridor. ■

Mrs. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui,
Director General of ICdT

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TIJARIS

PUBLISHED BY THE ISLAMIC CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE

ISSN : 2230-1933

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NEWS



H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha takes part in the Ministerial Council of the Organization for the Development of Women

THE THIRD REGULAR SESSION OF THE MINISTERIAL COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOMEN, BASED IN CAIRO, WAS HELD ON FEBRUARY 9, 2026, WITH THE PARTICIPATION OF HIS EXCELLENCY MR. HISSEIN BRAHIM TAHA, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION.

In his opening remarks, His Excellency expressed his gratitude to the Arab Republic of Egypt for its continued support to the General Secretariat and for the assistance provided to the Organization in fulfilling its mission. On this occasion, he emphasized the central role of the Organization in the women empowerment, noting that it reflects the commitment of member states to promote women's participation in public life and to protect their rights, in line with the religious, cultural, and traditional values of Islamic societies. He also stressed the need to accelerate efforts toward women's empowerment in order to make them genuine partners in sustainable development and to build inclusive and just societies. To achieve this, he said, greater investment is needed in women's education and capacity building, along with facilitating

equitable access to resources, with a view to improving family incomes and combating poverty. During the meeting, participants reviewed the items on the agenda, including the approval of the 2026 work plan, financial matters, and periodic audit reports.

The meeting concluded with the appointment of Ms. Sarah bint Ismail bin Ibrahim Al-Shouri from the Arab Republic of Egypt as Executive Director of the Organization. On this occasion, His Excellency the Secretary-General of the OIC wished her every success in her new role and commended the efforts and essential role of Dr. Afnan Abdullah Al-Shuaibi, the outgoing Executive Director from Egypt, in the establishment and consolidation of the Organization for the Development of Women. ■



Meeting of Transport Ministers in Istanbul

THE 2ND ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF TRANSPORT MINISTERS WAS HELD ON FEBRUARY 12, 2026, IN ISTANBUL, UNDER THE THEME “STRENGTHENING TRANSPORT CONNECTIVITY TO DEEPEN BROTHERHOOD AMONG OIC MEMBER STATES.”

This high-level meeting, bringing together ministers and delegations from Organization of Islamic Cooperation member countries, aimed to harmonize resolutions related to the transport sector and promote greater economic integration.

The opening session featured a virtual address by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, who emphasized that improving connectivity is the foundation of sustainable development in the OIC region. He urged Member States to move toward the concrete implementation of the various resolutions adopted in this field. He also called for the promotion of cross-border corridors and joint OIC projects that generate added value, transform geographical advantages into strategic opportunities, and strengthen solidarity on international platforms.

In a statement delivered by H.E. Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, the OIC Secretary-General stressed

the need to build robust and resilient transport networks to connect OIC countries. In this regard, he highlighted the OIC Dakar–Port Sudan railway project, a transformative initiative expected to revolutionize trade facilitation and connectivity across 13 African Member States.

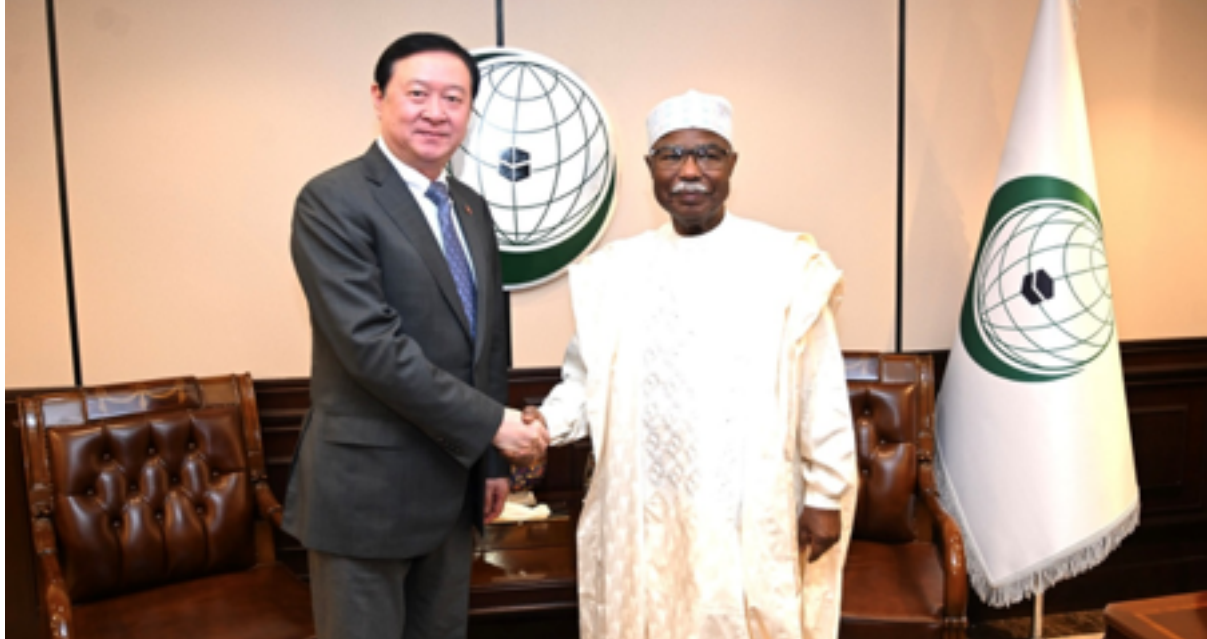
For his part, H.E. Abdulkadir Uraloğlu, Minister of Transport and Infrastructure of the Republic of Türkiye, outlined his country’s numerous achievements in large-scale infrastructure projects and reaffirmed Türkiye’s commitment to sharing its technical expertise. He also announced that Türkiye will host the headquarters of the “Land Transport Center” and organize the third OIC Transport Ministers Conference in 2028.

On this occasion, the Ministers highlighted the significant progress achieved by their respective countries in the road, rail, mari-

time, and air transport sectors. They also advocated for the development of regional transport corridors as essential drivers of peace and prosperity. In this regard, the ICDT representative delivered a presentation on the impact of transport in facilitating intra-OIC trade.

The Conference concluded with the adoption of a resolution to strengthen intra-OIC cooperation in the field of transport.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the ICDT representative met with delegations from Morocco, Mauritania, and Senegal to inform them about the ICDT initiative on land connectivity through the TIR program. In this regard, it was indicated that official communications would be sent to the Ministers of Transport of the concerned countries to support the implementation of this important project. ■



The Special Representative of the People's Republic of China Received by the OIC Secretary-General

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha received, on Monday, January 19, 2026, H.E. Mr. Chang Hua, Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Special Representative to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The two sides explored prospects for strengthening cooperation between the OIC and the People's Republic of China, while exchanging views on issues of mutual interest. They expressed their satisfaction with the excellent state of bilateral relations and reaffirmed their commitment to sustaining this strategic dialogue. ■

48th Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs (ICECSA)

THE 48TH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC COMMISSION FOR ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (ICECSA), A SUBSIDIARY BODY OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION, WAS HELD ON JANUARY 20, 2026.

On this occasion, the representative of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade presented the Centre's activity report for 2025 and its projects for 2026. The Assembly reviewed and approved the

ICDT's report and work program as recommended by the 42nd session of its Board of Directors, and urged Member States to regularly fulfill their mandatory contributions to the ICDT budget to enhance and

strengthen its performance.

The Commission also examined the report of the OIC General Secretariat and draft resolutions covering economic issues, science and technology, education and health,



environment, culture, as well as social, family, and youth affairs. The key draft resolutions adopted and submitted to the 52nd Council of Foreign Ministers, particularly those concerning the ICDT, include the following:

Agriculture:

- The signing of a letter of intent to establish the French-speaking branch of the FAO Regional Leadership Academy for the transformation of agricultural and food systems in Morocco.

Trade and Investment:

- Upon the proposal of the Pakistani delegation, Member States were urged to actively participate in the 18th OIC Trade Fair to be held in Lahore in 2026;
- The Commission welcomed the request of the Kingdom of Saudi Ara-

bia to host the 15th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC15) in 2028;

- A call to accelerate technical discussions within the Trade Negotiating Committee on expanding the OIC Trade Preferential System by exploring additional areas, and to submit concrete recommendations to OIC bodies;

- The importance of continuing experience-sharing activities and capacity-building efforts on regional integration, as well as multilateral and regional negotiations, including the TPS-OIC and OIC countries' accession to the World Trade Organization.

Tourism:

- The Commission welcomed the offer by Qatar to host the 13th session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers in Doha from December 1 to 3, 2026;

- It also took note of the election of Tunis as the "Arab Tourism Capital" for 2027.

Transport:

- The organization of the 2nd OIC Transport Ministers Conference in Istanbul on February 11–12, 2026.

Assistance to the State of Palestine:

On the sidelines of the session, the ICDT representative participated in a coordination meeting among OIC institutions regarding an action program to support the Palestinian economy, chaired by Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs of the OIC. The discussions focused on several initiatives in support of Palestine, particularly strengthening the private sector and enhancing institutional capacity in the fields of trade and investment. ■

Signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bangladesh Foreign Trade Institute



The Director General of ICDT and H.E. Ambassador MJH Javed, Permanent Representative to the OIC signed, on March 26, 2026, a Memorandum of Understanding on the development of cooperation in the fields of trade and investment.

The signing of this MoU took place at the ICDT headquarters in the presence of H.E. Ms. Sadia

Faizunnisa, Ambassador of the People's Republic of Bangladesh to the Kingdom of Morocco. On this occasion, the Bangladeshi representatives emphasized that trade promotion and the revival of investment are among the priorities of the Prime Minister, H.E. Mr. Tarique Rahman. They also called for greater involvement of their country in the ICDT's research and activities and expressed their

hope that this agreement would mark the beginning of a strong and lasting partnership between Bangladesh and the Centre.

For her part, Mrs. Elbouabdel-laoui, while welcoming the signing of this memorandum, expressed the Centre's intention to make Bangladesh one of the key platforms for trade and investment within the OIC's Asian region. ■



Brief on the 43rd Meeting of the ICDT Board of Directors

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE HELD ITS 43RD MEETING ON JANUARY 8-9, 2026 IN CASABLANCA.

The meeting was attended by the representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, as well as delegates from the following Member States of the Board: the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republic of Cameroon, the Kingdom of Morocco, Malaysia, and the Republic of Türkiye.

At the opening of the Board, Mr. Youssef Zahoui, Director of International Trade Relations at the Ministry of Industry and Trade of

the Kingdom of Morocco, commended the ICDT's efforts in promoting intra-OIC trade. He noted that this session provided an opportunity to review and assess the various activities carried out by the Centre in collaboration with its partners. He also emphasized the responsibility of Member States to intensify their efforts in addressing economic, political, and trade-related challenges, particularly through active participation in the Centre's initiatives, in line with the recommendations of the previous session of the COMCEC.

For his part, Mr. Naghi Jabarov, Director General of the Economic Affairs Department of the OIC, delivered a message on behalf of H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha.

On this occasion, he expressed high appreciation for the Centre's contribution to the development of intra-OIC trade and thanked the Kingdom of Morocco for its continuous support. He also noted that, despite global economic challenges, economic prospects remain favorable for OIC countries.



To address these challenges, he underscored the imperative of aligning ICDT programs with the strategic priorities of Member States, particularly in key sectors such as agriculture, tourism, energy, the halal industry, digitalization, and advanced technologies. In this regard, he called on Member States to continue their efforts and commitments to mobilize adequate resources for the effective implementation of OIC programs and initiatives. He further urged Member States to actively participate in the sectoral ministerial meetings scheduled for 2026 and to work collectively toward achieving the objectives of the new OIC Ten-Year Programme for 2026–2035.

Ms. Latifa El BOUABDELLAOUI, Director General of the ICDT, expressed her profound gratitude to

the Government of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco — may God assist Him — and to His Excellency the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for their unwavering support for the Centre's activities. She further reaffirmed the Centre's steadfast commitment to developing innovative, high-impact initiatives aimed at accelerating intra-OIC trade and stimulating joint investment flows, with a view to advancing the economic and social development objectives of member states.

In this regard, she emphasized that all programmed activities are fully aligned with the objectives of the new OIC Programme for Economic Development 2026–2035, and fall within the framework of its four pivotal programmes — encompassing the promotion of

trade and investment, trade facilitation, institutional capacity-building and SME development, as well as economic intelligence.

The Council subsequently reviewed the performance report on the Centre's activities carried out under the 2025 work programme. It then proceeded to examine and formally adopt the work programmes for 2026 and 2027, designed to fully harness the trade and investment opportunities available across the markets of the OIC's 57 member states.

Following deliberations and discussions, the Board commended the efforts of Mrs. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, Director General of the ICDT, and all her staff for their dedication to improving the quality of the Centre's services and fulfilling its noble mission. ■



Holding of the 24th Meeting of Economic Counselors of OIC Member States' Embassies Accredited to the Kingdom of Morocco

AS PART OF ITS PERIODIC MEETINGS WITH THE EMBASSIES OF MEMBER STATES OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION ACCREDITED TO THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO, THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE ORGANIZED THE 24TH MEETING OF ECONOMIC COUNSELORS ON FEBRUARY 24, 2026, IN RABAT.

The objective of this annual meeting was to exchange views on the Centre's programs with the economic counselors of OIC Member States' embassies and to propose joint initiatives for the coming years.

The meeting brought together economic counselors and representatives from 30 OIC Member States, as well as observers including the Russian Federation and

Thailand. Representatives from key Moroccan institutions and partner organizations—such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the Islamic Development Bank, Bayt Mal Al-Qods Acharif, AIDMO, IMANOR, and the Arab Maghreb Union—also participated.

Opening the proceedings, Ms. Latifa EL BOUABDELLAOUI,

Director General of the ICDT, emphasized the importance of collective efforts to boost trade and investment among the 57 OIC Member States. She highlighted that the current global context—marked by market instability and rising production costs—has led the Centre to implement concrete initiatives with direct positive impacts on the socio-economic development of member countries. She also

stressed that 2026 represents a pivotal year for achieving OIC economic objectives, particularly in light of preparations for launching the new OIC Ten-Year Programme (2026–2035). In this regard, she called upon economic advisors to raise awareness among their respective countries of the importance of aligning with the OIC's new vision and of actively participating in the Centre's activities throughout the current year. Ms. El Bouabdellaoui further stressed the necessity of seizing the opportunities presented by the ongoing reconfiguration of global value chains, through concrete actions aimed at diversifying partners and markets — particularly by strengthening the integration of least developed countries into intraregional trade. She called for a deepening of regional integration in order to foster productive interdependence among member states, while placing particular emphasis on high-potential sectors, most notably digitalisation and innovation.

For his part, Mr. Youssef ZAHOU, Director of International Trade Relations at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of the Kingdom of Morocco, took the opportunity to reaffirm the Kingdom's firm commitment to strengthening trade cooperation among OIC member states. He further commended the Centre for its tireless efforts and reiterated Morocco's full readiness to support all initiatives aimed at promoting intra-OIC trade.

During the meeting, representatives of the Centre, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), and the Ugandan authorities responsible for tourism presented their respective programmes and planned activities for the cur-

rent year. These presentations highlighted the Centre's strategic objectives and the flagship events scheduled for 2026, including the following:

- UATE Tourism Expo & Africa Franchise Expo — 25–27 June 2026, Kampala, Republic of Uganda

- Business Forum: Africa and Arab Countries — 6–7 July 2026, Abidjan, Republic of Côte d'Ivoire

- OIC Forum on Investment in Africa — Bamako, Republic of Mali (date to be confirmed)

- 2nd Cotton, Textile and Clothing Fair & 3rd Handicrafts Fair of OIC Member States — 23–25 September 2026, Cameroon

- 11th OIC Halal Expo — 26–29 November 2026, Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye

- Business Forum on the Healthcare Sector — 9–10 June 2026, Dakar, Republic of Senegal

Member states were invited to participate actively in the activities organised by ICDT, while several expressed their interest in hosting future promotional events.

The various delegations subsequently took the floor to convey their satisfaction with the excellent collaboration maintained between their respective authorities and the Centre. With regard to joint activities planned for this year, Ms. Ekambi Priso Lydie Eveline, Minister Plenipotentiary and Second Counsellor for Economic Affairs at the Embassy of Cameroon in Rabat, addressed participants to provide an update on the latest preparations for the 3rd Handicrafts Fair and the 2nd Cotton, Textile and Clothing Fair, both scheduled to take place

IN CLOSING,
THE DIRECTOR
GENERAL OF THE
ICDT EXPRESSED
HER PROFOUND
GRATITUDE TO
THE KINGDOM OF
MOROCCO FOR
ITS STEADFAST
AND UNWAVERING
SUPPORT FOR THE
CENTRE'S INITIATIVES.

in Cameroon later this year. Mr. Sacko Samba, Second Secretary at the Embassy of Mali in Rabat, also took the floor to express his appreciation to the Director General for the strong and productive collaboration between the Malian Government and the Centre, and seized the occasion to formally invite member states to actively participate in the OIC Forum on Investment in Africa, to be held in Bamako this year.

In closing, the Director General of the ICDT expressed her profound gratitude to the Kingdom of Morocco for its steadfast and unwavering support for the Centre's initiatives. She also extended her sincere thanks to member states and partners for their invaluable contribution to the success of the ICDT's programmes aimed at advancing economic cooperation within the OIC space. She concluded by underscoring the critical importance of continued support for the Centre, particularly through the settlement of outstanding contribution arrears owed by member states to the Centre's budget. ■



Regional Preparatory Workshop for the 14th WTO Ministerial Conference for the Benefit of OIC Member States

IN LINE WITH THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE 41ST SESSION OF THE COMCEC ON TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE IN MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS, THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE AND THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SECRETARIAT OF THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION AND THE MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE OF THE KINGDOM OF MOROCCO, ORGANIZED A REGIONAL PREPARATORY WORKSHOP FOR THE 14TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE (MC14) ON FEBRUARY 9–10, 2026, IN CASABLANCA.

The objective of this workshop was to better prepare Organization of Islamic Cooperation Member States for their participation in MC14 by providing an in-depth understanding of the key issues, updates on the progress of ongoing negotiations by theme, and

an overview of the draft agenda. It also aimed to foster the exchange of experiences among Member States and help align their positions ahead of the conference.

The workshop brought together 31 representatives from OIC

Member States and international organizations, including the International Trade Centre, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the League of Arab States, and the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa.

In her opening remarks, Mrs. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui emphasized the importance of MC14 for OIC Member States and reaffirmed the Centre's commitment to continuing technical assistance in WTO-related matters. She highlighted the need to preserve an inclusive multilateral trading system and to reaffirm the central role of the WTO as a key framework for regulating global trade.

Mr. Nazar Mohamed Eltahir Diab, representing the IsDB, underlined the particular significance of MC14, noting that under Cameroon's presidency, Africa has a strategic platform to voice its interests at the international level. He also reiterated the IsDB's commitment to supporting trade negotiation initiatives in partnership with the ICDT.

Furthermore, Mr. Mohamed Mouhtadi, Head of the Division of Multilateral Trade Relations at the Ministry of Industry and Commerce of the Kingdom of Morocco, underscored his country's firm attachment to the multilateral trading system, to the predictability of rules, to managed trade openness, and to the vitality of the WTO as a matter of major strategic importance. He further affirmed that the strengthening of multilateralism must go hand in hand with the greater integration of African economies into world trade, in alignment with the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA).

The interventions of experts from the WTO, UNCTAD, and the ITC, as well as representatives of OIC member states, addressed the various subjects currently under discussion at

the WTO, notably: the Yaoundé Roadmap, WTO reform, and the state of play of negotiations in the areas of agriculture, fisheries subsidies, electronic commerce, and investment facilitation for development.

At the conclusion of the workshop, participants formulated several recommendations, notably:

- To continue strengthening the capacities of OIC member states through the organisation of thematic workshops addressing WTO issues, regional integration, and the implementation of regional trade agreements — in partnership with the WTO, the Islamic Development Bank, and the ICDT — with a view to facilitating the participation of OIC countries in future WTO negotiations.

- To organise a dedicated workshop on the outcomes of MC14, enabling OIC member states to contribute more effectively to multilateral negotiations at the WTO.

- To hold regular thematic workshops to analyse the key issues at stake in WTO negotiations, with particular emphasis on the Agreement on Investment Facilitation for Development.

- To encourage the OIC member states most advanced in discussions on new negotiating subjects to share their experiences with fellow OIC members at the WTO. Such exchanges could encompass joint initiatives in areas including electronic commerce, investment facilitation for development, support for Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSMEs), domestic regulation in the services sector, as well as trade and environment issues, among others.

- To pursue ongoing consultations among OIC member states

SUCH EXCHANGES
COULD ENCOMPASS
JOINT INITIATIVES IN
AREAS INCLUDING
ELECTRONIC
COMMERCE,
INVESTMENT
FACILITATION FOR
DEVELOPMENT,
SUPPORT FOR MICRO,
SMALL AND MEDIUM-
SIZED ENTERPRISES
(MSMES), DOMESTIC
REGULATION IN THE
SERVICES SECTOR,
AS WELL AS TRADE
AND ENVIRONMENT
ISSUES, AMONG
OTHERS.

in order to bring their positions closer together and to harness WTO instruments as drivers of economic and social development across the OIC space.

- To invite OIC member states to keep the ICDT informed of their activities relating to the WTO and other international trade negotiations, so as to ensure more effective support — particularly for countries currently in the process of acceding to the WTO.

- The participants, in extending their sincere appreciation to the ICDT, the IsDB, the ITC, UNCTAD, and the WTO, expressed their satisfaction with the substantive and technical contributions that enriched the workshop.■

TRANSPORT AND TRADE FACILITATION
IN OIC MEMBER STATES

FROM STRUCTURAL CONSTRAINTS TO STRATEGIC OPPORTUNITIES





Global trade continues to expand at an unprecedented pace, reaching a record level of USD 33 trillion in 2024, driven largely by the rapid growth of services, which accounted for nearly 60% of total trade expansion.

Within this evolving landscape, OIC Member States have demonstrated notable progress, with intra-OIC trade rising from around 15% in 2015 to over 21% in 2024. Trade in services has followed a similarly dynamic trajectory, increasing from USD 477 billion in 2010 to USD 1,450 billion in 2024, representing approximately 30% of total trade among OIC countries. Notably, transport and travel services alone account for more than one-third of this volume, underlining their central role in economic exchanges.

Transport services in OIC countries have grown significantly, reaching an estimated USD 522 billion in 2024 compared to USD 160 billion in 2010. These trends confirm a structural transformation of trade patterns, where connectivity, logistics efficiency, and mobility have become key determinants of competitiveness and integration across the OIC region. Trade flows rarely depend solely on production capacity or market demand. They are, more fundamentally, shaped by the ability of goods to move—smoothly, predictably and at competitive cost—across borders and regions. In this regard, transport constitutes the invisible infrastructure of trade, the system that ultimately determines whether economic potential can translate into real exchanges.

Across the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), this reality has become increasingly evident over the past decade. The steady rise of intra-OIC trade, which increased from approximately 15% in 2015 to over 21% in 2024, reflects not only policy efforts and trade agreements, but also gradual improvements



Trends in Trade in Services Among OIC Member States Between 2016 and 2023 (in billions of U.S. dollars and as a percentage)

Year	2016	2023	2024	Trends 2016-2024
OIC trade	2,991.17	4,611.74	4,929.72	64.8%
Intra-OIC trade	556.32	883.87	1,003.72	80.4%
Share of intra-OIC trade	18.6%	19.2%	20.4%	9.5%
OIC trade in services	846	1336	1450	71.4%
OIC share of trade in services	28.3%	29.0%	29.4%	4.0%
OIC trade in transport services*	321.48	467.60	522.00	62.4%
Share of transport services in OIC trade in services	38.0%	35.0%	36.0%	-5.3%

Sources : WITS, UNCTAD, WTO, OECD, ICDT calculations, 2025.

(*) Estimates

At the same time, global trade dynamics have evolved in ways that further elevate the role

and services accounting for the majority of growth, the boundaries between logistics, mobility



and economic competitiveness have become increasingly blurred. Transport services alone now represent a significant share of trade in services, both globally and within OIC economies, confirming that transport is no longer a supporting function, but a central economic sector.

A Structural Transformation of Trade: The Centrality of Transport

The expansion of trade in services within OIC Member States illustrates this structural transformation. Between 2010 and 2024, services trade increased from USD 477 billion to USD 1,450 billion, representing around 30% of total trade within

the OIC. Within this expansion, transport and travel services have consistently accounted for more than one-third of the total, highlighting their centrality in trade ecosystems. Transport, in this context, plays a dual role. It is both a sector of economic activity and an enabling framework for all other sectors. The efficiency of transport systems directly influences export competitiveness, the cost structure of imports, and the integration of national economies into regional and global value chains.

However, this centrality also exposes structural vulnerabilities. In many OIC Member States, transport costs represent a disproportionately high share of total trade costs, often exceeding tariffs. Delays linked to administrative inefficiencies, fragmented procedures and congestion can account for a substantial portion of both time and financial costs associated with trade.

This reality is particularly constraining for countries seeking to diversify their exports or integrate into time-sensitive value chains, where reliability and predictability are as important as cost.

Uneven Progress in a Fragmented Transport Landscape

While the OIC region has made undeniable progress in developing transport infrastructure and logistics systems, performance remains highly uneven. A group of countries, particularly in North Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia, have achieved relatively advanced levels of logistics performance, supported by sustained investments in ports, airports, corridors and digital systems.

These countries have been able to position themselves as logistics platforms and regional hubs, benefiting from strong maritime connectivity and efficient customs environments. Their performance in international indicators reflects improvements not only in infrastructure quality, but also in governance, digitalization and service delivery.

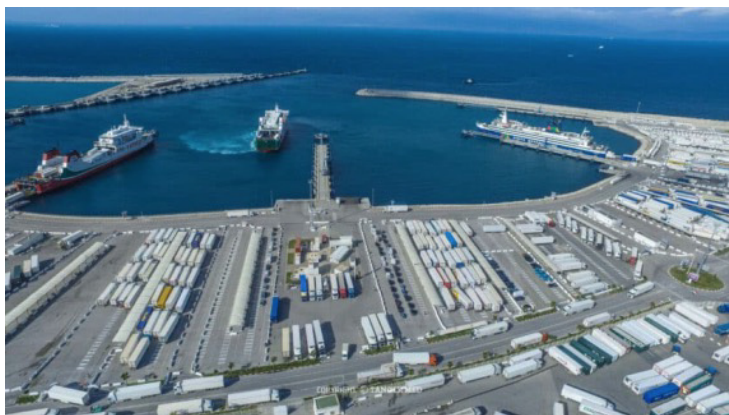
In contrast, many other OIC Member States continue to face structural constraints that limit the effectiveness of their transport systems. Infrastructure gaps, insufficient maintenance, weak intermodal connectivity and limited digitalization remain persistent challenges. These constraints are compounded by inefficiencies in border procedures and regulatory fragmentation, which reduce the fluidity of trade flows and increase uncertainty for economic operators. The result is a fragmented transport landscape, in which disparities in performance translate directly into disparities in trade competitiveness.

The geography of the OIC region makes transport corridors a central element of trade facilitation. In many cases, trade does not depend on a single country's infrastructure, but on the continuity and efficiency of entire cross-border routes. This is particularly evident in West and Central Africa, where several OIC Member States are landlocked and depend almost entirely on transit through neighboring countries to access international markets. In such contexts, transport corridors function as vital economic arteries. Any disruption, whether administrative, infrastructural or operational, can lead to significant increases in trade costs and delays.

TANGER MED PORT – AFRICA’S GATEWAY TO GLOBAL AND INTRA-OIC TRADE

Over the past decade, Tanger Med Port has emerged as the most strategic logistics hub of the OIC in Africa, fundamentally reshaping trade flows between the continent and global markets. Located at the crossroads of the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, the port handled approximately 8.6 million TEUs in 2023, positioning it as the largest container port in Africa and the Mediterranean basin. Its maritime connectivity extends to more than 180 ports across over 70 countries, allowing direct and frequent access to European, American, African and Middle Eastern markets.

Tanger Med’s strategic value lies in its high level of integration between port infrastructure, industrial zones and logistics services. The port is directly connected to extensive free zones hosting more than 2,000 industrial and logistics firms, notably in automotive, aeronautics, agri-food and textile industries. This integrated ecosystem, supported by advanced digital customs procedures and multimodal road and rail connections, significantly reduces transit times and logistics costs. For OIC Member States, particularly in North and West Africa, Tanger Med functions as a primary gateway to global value chains and as a replicable model of port-led development aligned with trade facilitation and industrial competitiveness objectives.



Transport Corridors as the Backbone of Regional Trade

Conversely, when transit procedures are harmonized and supported by coordinated border management and digital tools, these corridors can significantly improve trade predictability and reduce transaction costs. The development of inland logistics platforms and dry ports further enhances this dynamic by decentralizing customs operations and

bringing services closer to production zones.

In North Africa, transport corridors play a different but equally strategic role. Countries in this region serve as interfaces between Africa, Europe and Asia, leveraging their geographic position to facilitate intercontinental trade flows. The effi-

ciency of connections between inland production areas and port infrastructures becomes a key determinant of competitiveness and attractiveness. In the Middle East, the concept of corridors is closely linked to the development of global logistics hubs, where intermodality and digital integration enable high-volume, high-speed trade flows. These hubs not only facilitate national trade but also structure interregional exchanges across the broader OIC space.

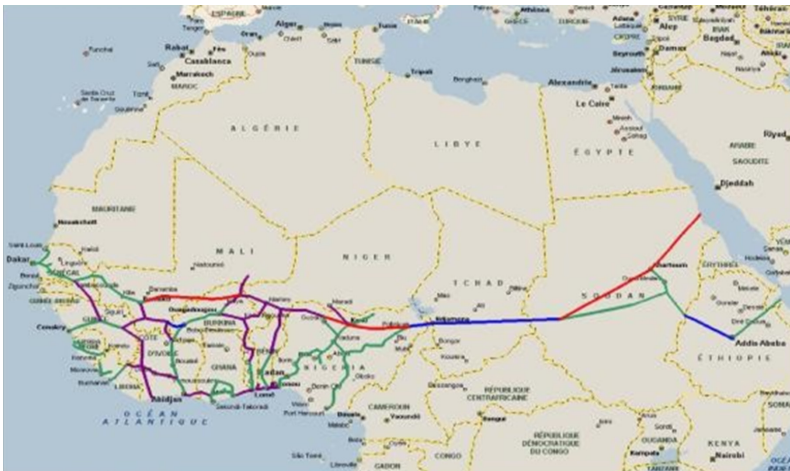
Landlocked Economies and the Challenge of Access

The situation of landlocked OIC Member States highlights, perhaps more than any other context, the decisive role of transport in shaping trade outcomes. For these countries, transport is not merely a facilitator of trade, it is a prerequisite.

Access to international markets depends on the efficiency of long-distance corridors, the reliability of transit systems and the quality of cooperation with neighboring transit countries. Multiple border crossings, administrative procedures and infrastructure gaps can significantly increase both costs and uncertainty.

Efforts to address these challenges have focused on the development of dry ports, rail connectivity and coordinated transit frameworks. By relocating part of the logistics and customs processes inland, dry ports reduce congestion at seaports and improve the overall efficiency of supply chains.

However, these solutions require strong regional coordination and sustained investment, as well as alignment of regulatory fra-



OIC Dakar Sudan Port Railway
networks and operational practices across countries.

Digitalization as a Transformative Force

One of the most significant developments in recent years has been the growing role of digitalization in transport and trade facilitation. The transition from paper-based systems to digital platforms has the potential to fundamentally transform the efficiency, transparency and predictability of trade processes.

Digital tools enable the creation of continuous information flows along transport corridors, reducing administrative burdens and minimizing delays. They also enhance coordination between different stakeholders, including customs authorities, port operators, logistics providers and transport companies.

Within the OIC, initiatives aimed at promoting the digitalization of transport and customs procedures illustrate the transformative potential of these technologies. By ensuring interoperability between national systems, digitalization can create integrated trade environments that transcend borders and facilitate seamless exchanges.



Training Workshop on TIR/eTIR and CMR/eCMR in the IGAD Region, 1–2 March 2023 in Djibouti

At the same time, digitalization contributes to improved governance by reducing opportunities for fraud and increasing the traceability of transactions.

Persistent Structural Constraints

Despite these advances, significant structural constraints continue to limit the performance of transport systems across the OIC region. These constraints are multidimensional, encompassing infrastructure, regulation, human capital and environmental factors.

Aging infrastructure and insufficient maintenance remain critical issues in many countries, leading to congestion, inefficiencies and increased operational costs. Regulatory fragmentation and lack of harmonization across borders further complicate trade processes, creating uncertainty and delays.

Human capital constraints also play an important role. The lack

of trained professionals in logistics, transport management and customs operations affects the quality and efficiency of services, limiting the impact of infrastructure investments.

Environmental challenges add another layer of complexity. Rising energy costs, urban congestion and increasing pressure to reduce emissions are forcing countries to rethink their transport systems and invest in more sustainable solutions.

Towards a More Integrated Transport Ecosystem

Addressing these challenges requires a shift towards a more integrated and coordinated approach to transport development. The report highlights the importance of aligning transport policies with broader trade, industrial and development strategies, ensuring that infrastructure investments are complemented by institutional and regulatory reforms.

The development of multimodal transport systems, combining road, rail, maritime and air transport, is essential to improving connectivity and efficiency. At the same time, the modernization of ports, airports and logistics platforms must be accompanied by improvements in last-mile connectivity and inter-modal integration.

Regional cooperation plays a central role in this process. The effectiveness of transport corridors depends not only on infrastructure, but also on governance mechanisms that enable coordination between countries, harmonization of procedures and monitoring of performance.

Financing, Governance and the Role of Partnerships

The scale of investment required to modernize transport systems across the OIC region calls for innovative financing mechanisms and stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors. Public-private partnerships, in particular, offer opportunities to mobilize additional resources, introduce technical expertise and improve operational efficiency. At the same time, development banks and international financial institutions play a crucial role in sup-



porting large-scale infrastructure projects and providing technical assistance.

Beyond financing, governance remains a key determinant of success. Effective transport systems require not only physical infrastructure, but also institutional capacity, regulatory coherence and operational efficiency.

“From Vision to Action: ICDT’s Role”

Within the OIC institutional framework, ICDT has progressively positioned itself as a key facilitator of transport-driven trade integration. Its action goes beyond advocacy, focusing on structuring policy dialogue and aligning national strategies with regional priorities. Through high-level forums, technical workshops and

coordinated exchanges between ministries of transport, trade and investment, ICDT contributes to shaping a more coherent vision of connectivity across Member States. This coordination role is particularly critical in a fragmented environment, where the effectiveness of transport systems depends not only on infrastructure, but on the harmonization of policies, procedures and corridor-based approaches.

At the operational level, ICDT has placed strong emphasis on trade and transport facilitation through digitalization. By promoting instruments such as eTIR and eCMR, the Centre supports the transition from paper-based systems to electronic data exchange, improving transparency, predictability and efficiency of

DP WORLD – A GLOBAL LOGISTICS COMPANY DRIVING DIGITAL TRADE FACILITATION

DP World is a global logistics and supply chain company headquartered in Dubai, playing a major role in international trade facilitation through the digitalization and integration of logistics services. DP World handles approximately 70 million containers annually, moved by around 70,000 vessels, representing nearly 10% of global container traffic. Its network comprises 82 marine and inland terminals across more than 40 countries, positioning the company as a key global logistics operator.

While DP World was historically focused on port operations, since 2016 it has pursued a strategic transformation toward an end-to-end logistics model. Through acquisitions and investments across the value chain—including inland terminals, freight forwarding, logistics platforms and digital trade solutions—the company has expanded its role beyond ports to provide integrated supply chain services. This evolution reflects a shift from asset-based operations to logistics ecosystems capable of supporting multimodal and cross-border trade flows.

Digitalization is central to DP World's strategy. The company has developed and deployed digital platforms enabling paperless trade, real-time cargo tracking, data sharing among logistics actors and streamlined interactions with customs and border authorities. These digital solutions improve transparency, reduce administrative delays and enhance the predictability of logistics operations. DP World's experience illustrates how global logistics operators can leverage digital technologies to support trade facilitation, optimize corridor performance and strengthen integration into regional and global value chains—offering relevant lessons for OIC Member States.



A container ship in a port terminal operated by DP World

cross-border transport. These efforts are complemented by initiatives such as the implementation of e-Phyto systems, notably in Nigeria, aimed at streamlining sanitary and phytosanitary certification processes. Through capacity-building programs, technical assistance and institutional support, ICDT helps Member States modernize customs procedures, reduce administrative burdens and strengthen interoperability between national systems, thereby directly addressing one of the main bottlenecks in trade flows across the OIC region.

In parallel, ICDT plays a catalytic role in mobilizing investment and strengthening connectivity, particularly for landlocked Member States.

Through initiatives such as ICDT Invest Days and targeted support to investment promotion agencies, the Centre contributes to enhancing the visibility and bankability of transport and logistics projects, facilitating their connection with international investors and development partners. Its analytical and advisory work on strategic corridors, such as the Sudan–Chad axis, further illustrates its capacity to translate structural challenges into actionable solutions.

Combined with its partnerships with international institutions and its growing body of analytical work, ICDT's approach reflects a comprehensive strategy that integrates policy, investment, capacity building and knowledge production to advance transport and trade facilitation across the OIC region.■



E-Phyto launch in Nigeria -Abuja on June 25, 2024



A Strategic Imperative for the OIC

Transport stands at the core of the OIC's ambition to deepen econo-

mic integration and strengthen its position in the global economy. The progress achieved in recent years demonstrates the potential of coordinated action but also hi-

ghlights the scale of the challenges that remain.

By treating transport as a strategic enabler of trade, rather than a purely logistical function, OIC Member States can unlock significant economic opportunities. Improved connectivity, reduced costs and enhanced reliability can facilitate greater participation in global value chains, support the development of SMEs and promote more inclusive growth.

Ultimately, the future of intra-OIC trade will depend on the ability of Member States to transform transport systems into integrated, efficient and resilient networks, capable of supporting the movement not only of goods, but of opportunity itself. ■

THE FUTURE OF INTRA-OIC TRADE WILL
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UTALII AFRICA TOURISM EXPO 2026

As part of its activities aimed at strengthening tourism flows, promoting trade and investment in the tourism sector, and developing franchising in the OIC Member States, the CIDC, in collaboration with “Utalii Events Co Africa Ltd,” under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Heritage (MTWH) of the Republic of Uganda, and in partnership with the “Uganda Tourism Board,” the “African Tourism Board (ATB),” and the “Private Sector Foundation of Uganda (PSFU),” is organizing the “Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo and Africa Franchise Expo.” The event will take place from 25 to 27 June 2026 at the Kololo Ceremonial Grounds in Kampala, Republic of Uganda.

This mega-exhibition aims to strengthen cooperation between Africa and OIC Member States in the tourism sector, promote historical monuments and tourist sites, and encourage investment in this field. It will also provide a platform for stakeholders to exchange views and share national experiences among public and private investors in the tourism sector. Furthermore, it will offer economic operators opportunities to explore business prospects and establish partnerships. Among its additional objectives are:

- Promoting the development of economic and commercial partnerships among Member States in the tourism sector;

- Disseminating and exchanging information on the economic and tourism potential of Member States;

- Contributing concretely to the development of trade and investment in the tourism sector;

- Facilitating direct contact among economic operators in the tourism industry;

- Enhancing economic integration among Member States through strategic tourism-related products and services;

- Organizing exhibitions and B2B meetings as marketing tools among business communities of participating countries;



- Promoting economic and commercial partnerships among participating countries by strengthening collaboration between franchisors, franchisees, and investors;

- Showcasing the economic and commercial potential of participating countries, highlighting opportunities in franchising, trade, and investment;



- Facilitating direct interaction and business networking through exhibitions and B2B meetings, enabling partnerships and investment opportunities among participating business communities.



On the sidelines of the Expo, several events will also be organized, serving as a privileged platform for high-level B2B and B2G meetings, panel discussions, investment forums, specialized exhibitions, and strategic networking opportunities aimed at stimulating economic growth across the African continent. In this regard, the CIDC, in collaboration with its partners, has scheduled a panel on Family Tourism and another on the principles and requirements of Halal Tourism standards, to be organized in cooperation with the Islamic Countries Standards and Metrology Institute (SMIIC).

All these events will provide an opportunity for governments, investors, tourism boards, franchise brands, and business leaders to promote trade, tourism, and cross-border investment. ■

Further details about this exhibition are available at the following link: : <https://africatourismexpo.com/>

For further information or reservations, please contact the organizers:

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Interview

H.E. MR. FRANCIS MUGOGA

CEO de « Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo »

1. As the Chief Executive Officer of Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo, can you tell us more about your Organization and at what extent have you contributed to the development of the tourism sector in your country and within the OIC region?

As the Founder & Chief Executive Officer of the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo, I lead an initiative that is designed to become Africa's largest platform for tourism and investment collaboration. The Expo brings together all 54 African countries, Africa Diaspora, Global Tourism stakeholders and member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to showcase their tourism products, investment opportunities, and cultural diversity.

Our vision is to create a unified platform where governments, tourism boards, investors, tour operators, airlines, hospitality brands, and development partners can meet, build partnerships, and unlock the enormous potential of tourism across Africa. The Expo is built around a simple but powerful idea: Africans Meet Africa and the World Visits Africa, creating a space where global stakeholders connect with African destinations and close real business deals in tourism and investment.

My personal contribution to the development of the tourism sector in Africa has been driven through institutions that strengthen both tourism promotion and human capital development. I am the Founder and CEO of Explore Africa Safaris, a tourism company that promotes travel experiences across

14 African countries. Through this company, we have played a role in marketing African destinations to international travelers while also encouraging intra-African tourism by connecting visitors with the continent's wildlife, culture, heritage, and natural attractions.

Equally important is the development of skilled professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry. To address this need, I founded the Tourism Institute of East Africa, which focuses on training and capacity building for the tourism, travel, and hospitality sectors. The institute has trained students and professionals from different parts of Africa, equipping them with practical skills needed in the industry. Graduates from the institute have gone on to work in hotels, airlines, travel agencies, tour companies, cafés, airports, and



government institutions, including ministries of tourism and national tourism boards. In this way, the institute has helped strengthen the human resource base that drives the tourism ecosystem across the continent.

The Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo represents another major step in this journey. It is a mega continental project designed to become an annual international event where African countries and OIC member

states come together with global investors, tourism professionals, and policymakers. Through this platform, Africa presents its opportunities to the world while fostering collaboration within the continent. Ultimately, the Expo is positioned as a marketplace where Africa meets itself and the world connects with Africa, accelerating tourism growth, investment, and sustainable economic development across the region. I have been promoting tourism in Africa for now 26 years.

2. Could you outline the key priorities of your action plan for the coming years?

As the Chief Executive Officer of the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo, our action plan for the coming years is focused on expanding the Expo into Africa's leading global tourism and investment marketplace, while strengthening partnerships that drive sustainable development across the continent and within the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) region.



First, our strategy is to establish the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo as a major annual international event for Africa. The Expo will continue to bring together all 54 African countries, OIC member states, global investors, tourism boards, and private sector stakeholders to showcase tourism destinations, hospitality projects, and investment opportunities. Each year, the event will grow in scale and impact, positioning Africa as one of the most promising tourism and investment destinations in the world.

A key highlight of our action plan is the development of strategic partnerships with international organizations, business networks, and tourism stakeholders. One important collaboration already in place is with the Africa Franchise Expo, where we will host a two-in-one exhibition platform. This partnership allows us to combine tourism promotion with franchise and investment opportunities in sectors such as hospitality, restaurants, travel services, and tourism-related enterprises. By bringing both expos together, we are creating a powerful marketplace where investors can explore opportunities not only in tourism destinations but also in tourism-related businesses and brands that can expand across Africa.

Another important pillar of our action plan is to strengthen collaboration with institutions within the OIC ecosystem, particularly the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Development (ICCD), Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). Through this partnership, we aim to attract investors, tourism developers, and financial institutions from OIC member states to explore opportunities across Africa. These colla-



THIS PARTNERSHIP ALLOWS FOR THE COMBINATION OF TOURISM PROMOTION WITH FRANCHISE AND INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN SECTORS SUCH AS HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, TRAVEL SERVICES AND TOURISM-RELATED BUSINESSES.

bations will help mobilize investment for tourism infrastructure, including hotels, resorts, eco-tourism projects, conference facilities, and transport connectivity.

We also plan to actively encourage greater cooperation among African OIC member states. Through the Expo platform, these countries will have opportunities to collaborate on joint tourism promotion campaigns, regional travel packages, cultural exchange programs, and investment partnerships that strengthen intra-OIC tourism flows within Africa.

In addition, our long-term strategy includes building the Expo into a year-round platform for tourism development, not only an annual event. This will involve organizing investment forums, tourism roadshows, digital networking platforms,

and sector-specific workshops that continue to connect stakeholders even beyond the exhibition period.

Another major component of our action plan is promoting sustainable and inclusive tourism development. We want to ensure that tourism benefits local communities, supports environmental conservation, and creates employment opportunities for young people across Africa. By working with governments, private sector investors, and development institutions, we aim to help develop projects that are economically viable while also protecting Africa's natural and cultural heritage.

Ultimately, our vision for the coming years is to make the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo the gateway for tourism and investment in Africa—a platform



where Africans meet Africa, and the world meets Africa, leading to real partnerships, business deals, and long-term development for the continent.

3. As a co-organizer, alongside ICDT, of the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo (UATE) scheduled to take place in June in Kampala, could you explain the main objectives of this event and its expected benefits for OIC Member States?

As the co-organizer, together with the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), of the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo (UATE) -UTALII EXPO and Africa Franchise Expo scheduled to take place on 25-27 June in Kampala, Uganda, our primary objective is to create a powerful international platform that connects Africa with the member states of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) through tourism, trade, and investment.

The Expo is designed as a high-level meeting point where governments, tourism boards, investors, hospitality brands, airlines, tour operators, financial institutions, and development agencies come together to explore the immense tourism potential of Africa and build partnerships that translate into real economic opportunities. Africa is home to extraordinary natural attractions, wildlife reserves, cultural heritage, and emerging tourism destinations, yet many of these opportunities remain under-explored by global investors and tourism stakeholders. The Utalii Expo aims to bridge that gap by providing a dedicated marketplace where Africa presents its tourism and investment opportunities to Africans and the world.



AFRICA IS HOME TO EXCEPTIONAL NATURAL ATTRACTIONS, WILDLIFE RESERVES, A RICH CULTURAL HERITAGE, AND MANY EMERGING TOURIST DESTINATIONS.

One of the key objectives of the event is to promote tourism investment across the African continent. Through investment forums, project showcases, and business-to-business meetings, African governments and private developers will present bankable tourism projects to investors from OIC countries and beyond. These projects include hotel developments, eco-tourism lodges, resorts, cultural tourism centers, conference and exhibition facilities, and tourism infrastructure such as transport and aviation connectivity. For investors from OIC member states, this provides a unique opportunity to access a growing tourism market with strong long-term potential.

Another important objective is to strengthen economic cooperation between African countries and OIC member states through tou-

risms. Tourism is one of the most effective sectors for fostering cultural exchange, trade relationships, and economic integration. Bringing together stakeholders from both regions, the Expo encourages the development of joint ventures, partnerships, and cross-border tourism packages that can significantly increase travel flows between Africa and OIC countries.

The Expo also serves as a knowledge-sharing platform where policymakers, tourism experts, and industry leaders will discuss emerging trends, best practices, and innovative solutions in the tourism and hospitality sector. Topics such as sustainable tourism development, digital tourism marketing, tourism financing, aviation connectivity, and skills development will be addressed through conferences, panel discussions, and specialized works-



hops. This exchange of knowledge is particularly beneficial for developing tourism destinations within the OIC region.

For OIC countries, the benefits of participating in the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo are extensive.

a. First, it provides direct access to the African tourism market, which is one of the fastest-growing regions for tourism development. Investors and tourism companies from OIC member states will have the opportunity to identify profitable projects and establish long-term business partnerships with African counterparts.

b. Second, the Expo will help promote intra-OIC tourism, encouraging travelers from OIC member countries to explore African destinations. Many African nations that are part of the OIC possess rich Islamic cultural heritage, historical sites, and vibrant cultural traditions that can attract visitors from across the OIC world. Strengthening tourism promotion and cooperation, the Expo will help increase tourist flows between these regions.

c. Third, the event opens the door for strategic investment opportunities for OIC businesses, particularly in sectors such as hospitality, aviation, travel technology, tourism infrastructure, and destination marketing. These investments can contribute to economic diversification and job creation both in Africa and across the wider OIC community.

d. Another key benefit is the opportunity for institutional collaboration and policy alignment. Bringing together tourism ministries, investment authorities, and development institutions, the



FOR INVESTORS FROM OIC COUNTRIES, THIS REPRESENTS A UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY TO ACCESS A RAPIDLY EXPANDING TOURISM MARKET WITH STRONG LONG-TERM GROWTH POTENTIAL.

Expo creates an environment where governments can discuss policy frameworks that facilitate tourism investment, improve travel connectivity, and enhance visa and mobility arrangements between countries.

e. Additionally, the Expo promotes capacity building and human resource development in tourism and hospitality. Through partnerships with training institutions and industry leaders, participants will explore ways to strengthen education, skills development, and professional training within the tourism sector, ensuring that the industry has the skilled workforce needed for sustainable growth.

Ultimately, the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo is not just an exhibition—it is a strategic

platform for building long-term partnerships between Africa and the OIC region. By connecting investors, governments, tourism professionals, and development partners, the event will help unlock the full potential of tourism as a driver of economic growth, cultural exchange, and sustainable development.

In essence, the Expo represents a vision where Africa and the OIC world come together to build a stronger tourism ecosystem, creating opportunities for investment, travel, and collaboration that benefit both regions for many years to come.

4. In your view, what priority areas of cooperation should be developed between your organization and OIC institutions, particularly ICDT, to further



strengthen the tourism sector across the OIC region?

In my view, the future of tourism growth within the OIC region lies in strong strategic partnerships that combine investment, knowledge, market access, and human capital development. Through our collaboration between the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo and the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), there are several priority areas that can transform tourism into one of the most powerful engines of economic growth across the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).



a. The first priority area is tourism investment promotion and project development. Africa is one of the world's most promising tourism frontiers, rich in wildlife, culture, landscapes, and heritage sites. However, unlocking this potential requires strategic investment in infrastructure such as hotels, eco-resorts, conference centers, transport networks, and tourism technology. The Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo is designed precisely to serve as the gateway platform where OIC investors connect with high-value tourism projects across Africa. Through our partnership with ICDT, we can mobilize investors, sovereign funds, hospitality brands, and tourism developers from OIC member states to participate in Africa's tourism growth story.

b. The second priority area is intra-OIC tourism promotion and destination marketing. With over a billion people across OIC member states, there is enormous potential to increase travel between these countries.

By working together with ICDT and other OIC institutions, we can promote joint tourism campaigns,

THE UTALII AFRICA TOURISM & INVESTMENT EXPO IS NOT SIMPLY AN EXHIBITION; IT IS A STRATEGIC PLATFORM AIMED AT ESTABLISHING SUSTAINABLE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN AFRICA AND THE OIC REGION.

develop multi-country travel packages, and improve visibility of African destinations within OIC markets. Platforms like the Utalii Expo will enable African tourism boards to showcase their destinations to the world while creating new tourism corridors between Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and other OIC regions.

c. The third critical area is human capital development and professional training for the tourism and hospitality sector. Tourism is ultimately a people-driven industry, and its success depends on the quality of service and professional expertise. Through institutions such as the Tourism Institute of East Africa, we have already taken major steps to train the current and next generation of tourism professionals across the continent. Students and trainees from different parts

of Africa continue to receive practical training that prepares them to serve in hotels, airlines, travel agencies, tour companies, airports, restaurants, and tourism ministries. By strengthening cooperation with OIC institutions, we can expand this training model to create regional centers of excellence that build a highly skilled tourism workforce across the OIC world.

d. Another key area of cooperation is innovation and digital transformation in tourism. Today's travelers are influenced by digital platforms, smart tourism technologies, and data-driven marketing strategies. Working with OIC institutions, we can support the development of digital tourism platforms, smart destination management systems, and global marketing campaigns that position OIC destinations—especially those in



Africa—more competitively on the global tourism map.

e. Additionally, public–private sector collaboration must be strengthened. Governments alone cannot develop tourism; it requires strong engagement with private investors, entrepreneurs, airlines, tour operators, and hospitality brands. The Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo is uniquely designed to bring all these stakeholders together in one place, making it easier to build partnerships, sign investment deals, and launch collaborative tourism initiatives across OIC countries.

f. Ultimately, our vision is clear: to build the most powerful tourism collaboration platform between

THE UTALII AFRICA TOURISM & INVESTMENT EXPO IS
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TIATIVES ACROSS OIC COUNTRIES.

Africa and the OIC world. Through the Utalii Africa Tourism & Investment Expo, supported by institutions like ICDT and strengthened by professional training through the Tourism Institute of East Africa, we are creating a comprehensive ecosystem that connects investment, talent, destinations, and global markets.

This is more than an event or an ins-

titution—it is a movement to position Africa and the OIC region as one of the most dynamic tourism blocs in the world. And through strong cooperation, strategic investment, and skilled human capital, we can unlock a new era where tourism becomes a major driver of prosperity, cultural exchange, and sustainable development across our regions. ■

UTALII AFRICA
TOURISM EXPO®



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EXPO



AFRICA
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EXPO**
KAMPALA - UGANDA
25TH - 27TH JUNE 2026

ONE AFRICA ONE MARKET

25-27 JUNE 2026 KOLOLO CEREMONIAL GROUNDS

**TOURISM. INVESTMENT. FRANCHISING.
ONE BOLD CONVERSATION.**



**UGANDA
TOURISM BOARD**



**African
Tourism
Board**



Rabat to Host the Launch of the ICDT's 2025 Report on Halal Trade and Investment

ON 13 APRIL 2026, THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT) WILL OFFICIALLY LAUNCH ITS 2025 REPORT ON HALAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT IN RABAT, BRINGING TOGETHER LEADING INSTITUTIONAL STAKEHOLDERS, INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, AND PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS FROM ACROSS THE OIC ECOSYSTEM.

This event reflects the growing strategic importance of the halal economy in global trade dynamics and its increasing role in strengthening economic cooperation among OIC Member States.

The opening ceremony will feature high-level addresses delivered by the Director General of ICDT, alongside representatives from Morocco's Ministry of Industry and Trade and the General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, underscoring the institutional significance of this ini-

tiative. The program will continue with the official presentation of the report by sector experts, followed by discussions on its key orientations and future prospects. Designed as a platform for dialogue, the event will also include interactive discussions and bilateral meetings between public institutions, development partners, and private sector actors, thereby fostering new opportunities for collaboration in the halal economy.

Beyond its event dimension, this launch represents a significant mi-

lestone in ICDT's ongoing efforts to position the OIC as a key player in the global halal market. The 2025 edition introduces an updated Halal Trade and Investment Index, providing a structured framework for assessing the performance of Member States and highlighting opportunities for strategic alignment and cooperation. By bringing together a wide range of stakeholders in Rabat, ICDT aims to stimulate partnerships, encourage investment flows, and strengthen the integration of halal value chains within the OIC region. ■



Report On

Halal Trade & Investment in OIC Member States 2025

**STRENGTHENING OIC ECONOMIES:
LOCAL SOLUTIONS IN A GLOBAL MARKET**



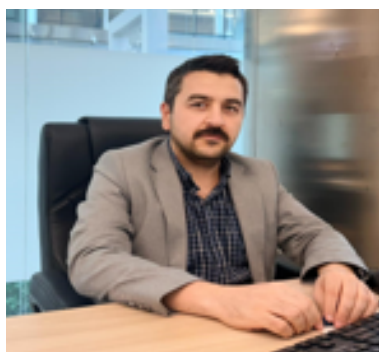
DinarStandard

FOOD SECURITY AND ECONOMIC STABILITY : Challenges of Global Shocks and Policy Coordination in OIC Member States

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ABSTRACT:

Despite significant progress in global agricultural productivity, food systems continue to be characterized by a persistent gap between availability and accessibility. This study examines the structural determinants of food insecurity and argues that food security should be reconsidered as a central pillar of systemic economic security, rather than merely an agricultural issue.

Through the analysis of the Food Price Index (FFPI) and the three major price shocks of 2007–2008, 2010–2011, and 2020–2022, the study demonstrates how global volatility is transmitted through trade, energy, and financial markets. For OIC Member States, heavy dependence on cereal imports and limited fiscal space generate specific macroeconomic vulnerabilities that amplify the domestic impact of external shocks.

The study assesses the limitations of strategies focused on domestic production and emphasizes the need for policy coordination oriented toward resilience. It also highlights the strategic role of regional cooperation and the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) in strengthening technical coordination, data transparency, and logistical integration.

The study concludes that, for OIC Member States, integrating food security into broader economic governance is essential to maintaining domestic stability and ensuring sustainable development in an increasingly unstable global context.

1. Introduction

Despite notable progress in global agricultural productivity, food systems continue to exhibit a persistent imbalance between availability and accessibility. Current estimates indicate that approximately 8% of the world's population remains undernourished, highlighting enduring constraints that go beyond the issue of overall food supply (FAO, 2023; World Bank, 2023). A growing body of literature suggests that this gap is largely attributable to structural factors—particularly income distribution, market access, and the resilience of food systems to external shocks—rather than to an absolute shortage of food (Barrett, 2010; Babu et al., 2014).

In many OIC Member States, these structural constraints are compounded by macroeconomic vulnerabilities. High levels of dependence on food imports, exposure to exchange rate fluctuations, and limited fiscal space have gradually shifted food security concerns beyond the agricultural domain, embedding them more firmly within the sphere of economic policy and risk management (SESIC, 2023; IsDB, 2022). This shift is also reflected in policy debates, where food affordability and supply stability are increasingly addressed in connection with inflation, trade balances, and social protection mechanisms.

The FAO Food Price Index (FFPI) provides a relevant empirical entry point for analyzing these dynamics. Since the mid-2000s, the index has experienced several significant surges, notably in 2007–2008, 2010–2011, and 2020–2022, each associated with a distinct combination of supply

THIS EVOLUTION IS REFLECTED IN POLITICAL DEBATES, WHERE FOOD ACCESSIBILITY AND SUPPLY STABILITY ARE INCREASINGLY DISCUSSED IN RELATION TO INFLATION, TRADE BALANCES AND SOCIAL PROTECTION SCHEMES.

disruptions, policy responses, and global market conditions (Headey & Fan, 2008; FAO, 2023; WFP, 2023). Rather than isolated episodes, these fluctuations increasingly reflect a pattern of recurring tensions within the global food system.

In this context, this study adopts a risk-based approach and argues that food price volatility should not be viewed solely as a market outcome, but as a systemic risk factor with broader economic and social implications. For OIC Member States in particular, integrating food security into broader economic security frameworks is becoming less a policy option than a necessity.

2. Global Food Price Shocks: Lessons from Three Crises

The surge in global food prices in 2007–2008 is widely regarded as a major turning point for contemporary food policies. During this period, the Food Price Index (FFPI) rose sharply, reflecting a convergence of factors rather than a single identifiable shock. Rising energy prices increased production and transportation costs, while the rapid expansion of biofuel policies diverted essential commodities, such as maize and vegetable oils, away from food markets. At the same time, historically low global stock levels and a wave of export restrictions amplified price pressures (Headey & Fan, 2008; Mitchell, 2008; Timmer, 2010).

The consequences were both immediate and unevenly distributed. Several low- and middle-income countries experienced a sharp deterioration in food security, and episodes of social unrest were reported in parts of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East (Berazneva & Lee, 2013; Lagi et al., 2011). For many import-dependent economies, this crisis exposed structural vulnerabilities that had previously been insufficiently addressed in public policy, thereby placing food security at the center of the development agenda (FAO, 2011; World Bank, 2008).

A second episode of significant price increases occurred in 2010–2011. Although shorter in duration, this surge was closely linked to climate-related supply shocks, notably droughts and wildfires affecting major cereal exporters such as Russia and Ukraine. These disruptions, combined with policy responses including new export restrictions, contributed to tightening global markets (FAO, 2011; Tangemann, 2011). The price peak coincided with a period of political upheaval in several countries in North Africa and the Middle East. While the causal relationship remains debated, a growing body of empirical studies suggests that rising food prices acted as an aggravating factor in contexts already marked by economic tensions and gover-

nance challenges (Bellemare, 2015; Lagi et al., 2011; Arezki & Brückner, 2014). At the very least, this episode highlighted the sensitivity of domestic stability to external price fluctuations. The most recent cycle, spanning approximately from 2020 to 2022, stands out both for its magnitude and its structure. Rather than being triggered by a single dominant factor, it resulted from the accumulation of multiple, simultaneous shocks. The pandemic disrupted labor availability, logistics chains, and global supply systems, while rising energy and fertilizer prices increased agricultural production costs. In addition, climate events continued to affect yields in several regions, and the conflict between Russia and Ukraine introduced new constraints on the supply of cereals and fertilizers in international markets (FAO, 2023; WFP, 2023; World Bank, 2023).

In this context, the FFPI reached historically high levels in 2022, surpassing its previous peaks in real terms (FAO, 2023). The effects were particularly pronounced in developing economies dependent on food imports, where rising import bills translated into domestic food inflation and increased pressure on public finances due to subsidy mechanisms and expanded social protection needs (IsDB, 2022; IMF, 2022).

Taken together, these three episodes reveal a broader trend: global food price shocks are becoming less episodic and increasingly systemic. Their cross-border transmission highlights the growing interconnectedness of food systems, while underscoring the importance of resilience-oriented policy frameworks.

FOOD SECURITY POLICY HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY INTERTWINED WITH OTHER AREAS OF ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE.

3. From Price Volatility to Systemic Risk

The recurrence of sharp food price fluctuations over the past two decades suggests that volatility is an intrinsic feature of global food systems, rather than a sequence of isolated disruptions. A review of the literature indicates that this dynamic results from the interaction of several structural factors. Climate variability, for instance, has become a more persistent source of uncertainty for agricultural production, affecting yields in major farming regions and amplifying supply-side risks (IPCC, 2022; Wheeler & von Braun, 2013). Moreover, the geographical concentration of global food exports in a limited number of countries has increased the system's exposure to localized shocks, allowing disruptions in major exporting regions to rapidly propagate to international markets (Puma et al., 2015; UN Comtrade, 2023).

Policy responses have also played a significant role. Episodes of export restrictions and other trade-related interventions have, in practice, tended to reinforce global price volatility by tightening supply and increasing uncertainty (Martin & Anderson, 2012; Gouel, 2016). At the same time, the growing interdependence between food, energy, and financial markets has added an additional layer of complexity.

Fluctuations in energy prices affect both input costs and biofuel demand, while financialization has, in some cases, contributed to the transmission and amplification of price signals across markets (Headey, 2011; Tangermann, 2011).

All in all, these elements point to a system that is structurally sensitive to external disturbances. In this context, food price volatility appears less as a temporary deviation and more as a transmission channel through which global shocks translate into domestic economic pressures and, in some cases, broader social consequences (Barrett, 2013; Lagi et al., 2011).

4. Structural Vulnerabilities in OIC Member States

Across OIC countries, exposure to global food price volatility is shaped less by short-term fluctuations than by a set of underlying structural conditions. One of the most well-documented features is the relatively high level of dependence on cereal imports observed in several countries, particularly in the Middle East, North Africa, and parts of Sub-Saharan Africa. Data compiled by SESRIC indicate that, in many cases, import dependency ratios exceed 50%, implying a direct and often immediate transmission of international price changes to domestic markets (SESRIC, 2023a; FAO, 2023).

**RECENT EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT EXPOSURE
TO EXTERNAL PRICE VOLATILITY CANNOT BE FULLY
MITIGATED THROUGH DOMESTIC SUPPLY-SIDE
MEASURES ALONE, PARTICULARLY FOR COUNTRIES
THAT ARE STRUCTURALLY DEPENDENT ON FOOD
IMPORTS.**

This external exposure is compounded by macroeconomic constraints that limit policy flexibility. For many OIC economies reliant on food imports, exchange rate volatility and tighter global financial conditions directly affect import bills, often translating into increased fiscal costs through subsidy mechanisms or social protection measures (IsDB, 2022; IMF, 2022). In such contexts, governments' ability to mitigate price shocks depends not only on policy choices but also on available fiscal space.

Demographic and structural changes further shape these dynamics. Rapid urbanization in many OIC countries has altered consumption patterns, increasing reliance on market-based food access while reducing the buffering role of subsistence production (SESRI, 2023b; World Bank, 2023). As a result, a growing share of households becomes more sensitive to price fluctuations, particularly among low-income groups where food expenditures account for a significant proportion of total consumption (Ivanic & Martin, 2008; Headey, 2013).

To conclude, these factors suggest that, in many OIC Member States, global food price shocks cannot be easily contained at national borders. Instead, they

tend to transmit into domestic economies with limited absorption capacity, interacting with existing economic constraints and, in some cases, amplifying broader risks related to social and economic stability (Barrett, 2013; Arezki & Brückner, 2014).

5. Policy Coordination and System Resilience

Traditional approaches to food security have long emphasized the expansion of domestic agricultural production. While improving productivity remains an important objective, it is increasingly evident that production-centered strategies alone are insufficient in the context of integrated global markets and recurrent systemic shocks (Pingali, 2012; FAO, 2023). Recent experience shows that exposure to external price volatility cannot be fully mitigated through domestic supply-side measures alone, particularly for countries that are structurally dependent on food imports.

In this context, policy debates have gradually shifted toward the concept of resilience. In practical terms, this has translated into a broader set of interventions aimed at reducing vulnerability to external disruptions. Diversifying sources of imports, for instance, helps mitigate risks associated with supply concen-

tration, while investments in storage, transport, and logistics infrastructure enhance short-term shock absorption capacity (World Bank, 2020; Gilbert & Morgan, 2010). At the same time, more effective early warning and information systems have proven essential for supporting timely policy responses, particularly when combined with transparent market data and robust monitoring mechanisms (FAO et al., 2011; Barrett, 2013).

More fundamentally, food security policy has become increasingly intertwined with other domains of economic governance. Trade policy decisions, exchange rate management, and the design of social protection systems all influence how food price shocks are transmitted and managed at the national level (Anderson, Ivanic & Martin, 2014; HLPE, 2020). From this perspective, institutional coordination is not merely a complementary objective but a central requirement. The effectiveness of food security interventions largely depends on the degree of alignment and complementarity among policies implemented across these different domains.

6. The Role of Regional Cooperation and the IOFS

Regional cooperation has long been considered a potentially important—yet unevenly utilized—dimension of food security strategies. Within the OIC, the coexistence of major food-exporting countries alongside economies that are structurally dependent on imports suggests a form of complementarity that could, in principle, support more balanced and resilient supply arrangements. In practice, however, intra-OIC agricultural trade

remains relatively limited compared to its potential, with trade flows still largely oriented toward global markets rather than regional partners (UN Comtrade, 2023; COMCEC, 2023).

A number of structural and institutional constraints help explain this gap. Infrastructure deficiencies continue to hinder the efficient movement of agricultural goods across borders. These challenges are often compounded by regulatory fragmentation, particularly differences in standards, customs procedures, and trade policies—which increase transaction costs and reduce predictability for market actors (World Bank, 2020; OECD, 2020). In addition, there is a relative lack of well-established coordination mechanisms capable of facilitating information exchange and aligning policy responses during periods of market stress.

In this context, the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) plays a potentially important, albeit clearly delimited, role. Rather than acting as a centralized authority, its comparative advantage lies in its ability to convene Member States, support technical cooperation, and promote more systematic data-sharing practices. Experience from other regional platforms suggests that even modest improvements in transparency, policy dialogue, and coordination can contribute to more timely and coherent responses to external shocks (FAO et al., 2011; Barrett, 2013). For OIC Member States, strengthening such mechanisms could represent a pragmatic approach to reducing exposure to global volatility while preserving national policy autonomy.

7. Conclusion

The analysis presented in this



IN THIS CONTEXT, THE ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION FOR FOOD SECURITY (IOFS) PLAYS A POTENTIALLY IMPORTANT, ALBEIT CLEARLY DELIMITED, ROLE.

article highlights a fundamental transformation in the global food landscape: food security can no longer be viewed as a purely local agricultural issue, but must instead be recognized as a central pillar of systemic economic security. The recurring price shocks of the past two decades demonstrate that, for many OIC Member States, exposure to global food markets constitutes a significant source of sovereign risk.

The structural vulnerabilities identified—particularly high import dependence and limited fiscal space—indicate that traditional production-centered strategies, while necessary, are insufficient on their own. Resilience to 21st-century shocks requires a multidimensional approach that integrates trade policy, social protection, and strategic infrastructure within a coherent food security framework. Moreover, the potential for intra-OIC cooperation remains one of

the most important yet underutilized levers for strengthening regional stability. By addressing logistical constraints and harmonizing regulatory standards, Member States can transform existing complementarities into an effective and functional safety net. In this process, institutions such as the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) play a critical role—not by replacing national authorities, but by acting as catalysts for technical coordination, data transparency, and collective crisis management. Ultimately, the transition from ad hoc crisis management to the construction of systemic resilience requires a long-term commitment to policy alignment. For OIC Member States, treating food security as an integrated component of economic planning is not merely a strategic choice, but a prerequisite for domestic stability and sustainable development in an increasingly volatile and uncertain global environment. ■

SUCCESS STORIES IN WOMEN'S AND YOUTH ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Dr. Fatoumata Sacko

Founder and Promoter of Kaira-Ma



Dr. Fatoumata Sacko at the Macfrut in Italy and in her laboratory in Bamako

IN THIS ISSUE, WE HIGHLIGHT DR. FATOUMATA SACKO DIALLO, A MALIAN WOMAN ENTREPRENEUR AND HEAD OF THE KAIRA-MA LABORATORY. HOLDING A PHD IN PHARMACY AND AN EXPERT IN NATURAL COSMETICS, DR. DIALLO FOUNDED THE KAIRA-MA LABORATORY IN 2017 WITH THE AIM OF PRODUCING NATURAL COSMETIC PRODUCTS BASED ON SHEA BUTTER, AFRICAN VEGETABLE OILS, AND TRADITIONAL PLANT-BASED INGREDIENTS.

Throughout her career, Dr. Diallo has distinguished herself through the publication of a Guide to Good Pharmaceutical Practices in Mali in 2007, as well as her participation in several international events, including the International Pharmaceutical Forum – Marrakech (2013), Tunis (2016), the Shea & Gum Arabic Business Forum – Maison de l'Afrique (2018), the Intra-African Trade Fair – Durban (2021), Cosmetic Inside Korea (2022), Cosmoprof – Singapore (2022), the Macfrut – Rimini, Italy (2023), and Pharmagora.

Dr. Diallo is also highly active in the associative sector and currently holds the following positions:

- Secretary General – Siguikadiya Association (Torokorobougou)
- Executive Board Member – AFE-PHAR
- Member – NALA Network
- Executive Board Member of the Interprofessional Shea Sector of Mali
- Ambassador of the Akwaba Community of Canada in Mali

Presentation of Kaira-Ma

Led by Dr. Fatoumata Sacko Diallo, the Kaira-Ma Laboratory specializes in the formulation and manufacturing of natural cosmetic products, both for its own brand Nye Kaira and for other African brands. Kaira-Ma's objective is to offer healthy, sustainable formulations that comply with international cosmetic standards.

The company is also active in training and supporting cosmetic businesses, particularly in their restructuring and development processes. Formerly known as Kocos Cosmétique, this ISO 22716-certified enterprise is committed to producing high-quality skincare products that respect both human health and the environment, using locally sourced and valorized resources.



Sector of Activity and Product Range

The Kaira-Ma Laboratory offers a wide range of cosmetic products based on shea butter and cold-pressed vegetable oils (including moringa, hibiscus, baobab, desert date, neem, and others). Its product portfolio includes body lotions and creams, solid and liquid soaps, balms and deodorants, as well as hair serums and facial care products.

Sourcing and Fair Trade

The Kaira-Ma Laboratory prioritizes fair trade practices. Its main suppliers are women's cooperatives producing shea butter and other raw materials. Through its procurement and sourcing policies, the company favors local sourcing and actively contributes to socio-economic development in Mali.

Distribution Channels and Partnerships



Kaira-Ma products, marketed under the Nye Kaira brand, are distributed through pharmacies, the Shopreate supermarket, and the Duty Free shop at Sénou International Airport in Bamako. The company also has regional representatives, notably in Senegal, and serves an international clientele.

In addition, the laboratory manufactures products for various companies, including Kari Kari (Togo),



Les Douceurs de la Peau (Mali), and the haircare brand Bolonow

Track Record and Quality Compliance

Kaira-Ma has participated in numerous international and regional trade fairs and exhibitions, including the Paris International Agricultural Show (2020 and 2021), the Intra-African Trade Fair (IATF 2021) in Durban, CI Korea (2022), and Cosmoprof Asia (2022), among others.

Committed to ensuring product compliance, the company has established a laboratory that meets international standards and has benefited from technical support from PUM Mali (a Dutch organization) as part of its ISO 22716 certification process. A final audit was conducted by the accredited body Tagnon / MQA International in June 2025.

To meet growing demand, the company has also invested in additional production equipment.

Development Prospects

Following the acquisition of ISO 22716 certification, Kaira-Ma aims to expand its distribution network globally. In particular, it is targeting



the rapidly growing halal market and is seeking support to obtain the relevant certification.

In addition, the company plans to acquire further equipment dedicated to soap production in order to increase its production capacity and diversify its product range. ■

For orders, please contact the laboratory by email or phone:

KAIRA-MA Laboratory SARI
Email : kairama.lab@gmail.com
Tél. : +223 66 06 24 94
+223 76 43 08 82



Davos Forum 2026

THE 56TH EDITION OF THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM ANNUAL MEETING 2026 WAS HELD THIS YEAR UNDER THE THEME "THE SPIRIT OF DIALOGUE."

This gathering, which brings together some of the world's most prominent leaders, took place in an international context marked by heightened geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainty, and rapid technological transformations. On this occasion, discussions focused on several key issues of common interest, including artificial intelligence, energy security, and current economic tensions.

Among the key highlights of the meeting was the shared commitment of global leaders to priori-

tize dialogue in order to restore trust among governments, businesses, and civil society. There was also growing interest in geopolitical issues and artificial intelligence, alongside concerns about the global economic outlook. In addition, water emerged as a central theme, particularly in relation to the energy transition and sustainable agriculture.

Another important feature of the Forum was the series of informal meetings and partnerships established between countries in areas such as climate action, agri-

culture, and sustainable investment.

At the conclusion of the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2026, global leaders reaffirmed the need to work collectively to address shared challenges and put forward the following recommendations:

- Revitalize cooperation in the face of growing geopolitical tensions by fostering flexible alliances and maintaining international platforms for dialogue;
- Identify new drivers of growth

by investing in emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, while supporting innovation and digital infrastructure;

- Invest in skills and employment, through continuous training, adaptation to new AI-related professions, promoting gender equality in access to jobs, and supporting labor market participation;

- Regulate innovation, particularly artificial intelligence, by establishing clear rules on data, privacy, and standards, promoting global technology governance, and combating disinformation and cyberattacks;

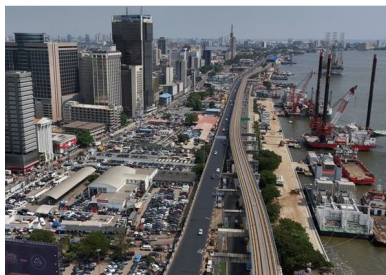
- Reconcile growth with planetary limits by integrating climate and biodiversity considerations into economic decision-making, investing in sustainable infrastructure, and redirecting environmentally harmful subsidies;

- Strengthen resilience to global risks by anticipating crises and enhancing the resilience of key systems (energy, supply chains, cybersecurity);

- Promote public-private collaboration among governments, businesses, and civil society

Although the most prominent discussions during the meeting focused on global geopolitical tensions, the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2026 nonetheless helped define global priorities in the areas of artificial intelligence, climate, and inclusive growth. It also confirmed that the world is entering a phase of profound economic and technological transformation, presenting both significant opportunities and major risks for countries. ■





► NIGERIA'S ECONOMIC REBOUND TAKES SHAPE AS REFORMS BEGIN TO DELIVER STABILITY

NIGERIA IS GRADUALLY ENTERING A PHASE OF ECONOMIC CONSOLIDATION, AS RECENT STRUCTURAL REFORMS START TO RESTORE MACROECONOMIC STABILITY, IMPROVE MARKET CONFIDENCE, AND LAY THE GROUNDWORK FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH.

After several years of mounting imbalances, Nigeria's economy is showing early but meaningful signs of recovery. According to assessments highlighted by The Economist, the reform agenda launched since 2023 has begun to address deep-rooted structural weaknesses inherited by the current administration. While the adjustment process has been challenging for households and businesses, initial outcomes point to improved economic fundamentals.

One of the most significant shifts has been the move toward a more transparent and market-oriented policy framework. The removal of fuel subsidies and the unification of exchange-rate mechanisms have helped correct long-standing distortions, enhance policy credibility, and reduce uncertainty for investors.

Complemented by tighter monetary policy, these measures have contributed to greater macroeco-

nom ic discipline and a more predictable operating environment.

Improving stability is gradually translating into stronger sentiment across financial markets. Equity markets have opened the year on a positive note, reflecting renewed confidence driven by reform momentum and improving corporate performance. At the same time, foreign exchange conditions have become more orderly, supported by rising external reserves and a clearer policy direction. Together, these trends signal a gradual return of investor trust after a prolonged period of volatility.

The rebound is also visible in Nigeria's growth outlook. International and domestic institutions now project a recovery trajectory, underpinned by stabilising inflation, recovering oil and gas production, and improved security conditions in key producing regions. Enhanced confidence in the energy sector has encouraged renewed investment interest, reinforcing Nigeria's role as a major producer and export-oriented economy.

Beyond hydrocarbons, reforms are beginning to improve competitiveness in non-oil sectors. A more flexible exchange rate is enhancing the attractiveness of agricultural

and light manufacturing exports, supporting diversification objectives and regional trade integration. These developments align with Nigeria's longer-term ambition to build a more balanced and resilient economic model.

Fiscal conditions remain a key area of focus, particularly in managing public debt and improving revenue mobilisation. Recent reforms to taxation and tax administration aim to strengthen government finances and create greater fiscal space for development priorities. While challenges persist, the emphasis on consolidation reflects a shift from crisis management toward medium-term economic planning.

Overall, Nigeria's economy appears to be turning a corner. The combination of structural reform, improving macroeconomic stability, and renewed investor engagement suggests that the country is laying the foundations for a more sustainable recovery—one that could translate into stronger trade, investment, and growth prospects in the period ahead.

Source: This Day (quotidien nigérian), Business Insider Africa



▶ MOZAMBIQUE'S GAS REVIVAL SIGNALS A TURNING POINT FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND INVESTMENT

THE RESTART OF MOZAMBIQUE'S FLAGSHIP LNG PROJECT MARKS A DECISIVE MOMENT FOR THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY, RESTORING MOMENTUM TO A CORNERSTONE INVESTMENT EXPECTED TO DRIVE GROWTH, EMPLOYMENT AND LONG-TERM FISCAL REVENUES.

After more than four years of suspension, Mozambique has formally resumed work on its largest energy project, the Mozambique LNG development in Cabo Delgado. Led by TotalEnergies, the \$20 billion project represents Africa's largest foreign direct investment and a central pillar of Mozambique's ambition to become a globally significant liquefied natural gas exporter.

The lifting of force majeure and the restart of construction at the Afungi site signal renewed confidence in the country's economic and security trajectory. Improved security conditions, supported by cooperation with regional partners, have been critical in enabling contractors and workers to return. More than 4,000 workers are already mobilised, the majority of them Mozambican nationals, highlighting the project's immediate impact on employment and income generation.

From an economic perspective, the

resumption of Mozambique LNG is expected to have far-reaching multiplier effects. During peak construction, the project is projected to create several thousand direct jobs and support a wide network of local suppliers through multi-billion-dollar contracts awarded to domestic companies. This scale of local participation is expected to stimulate activity across construction, logistics, services and manufacturing, reinforcing the domestic private sector.

Beyond the construction phase, LNG exports are poised to transform Mozambique's external position. With planned production capacity of 13 million tonnes per year and first exports targeted for 2029, the project is expected to generate substantial foreign exchange inflows over several decades. Government estimates point to significant lifetime revenues, which could strengthen public finances, improve balance-of-payments resilience and provide resources for infrastructure, social services and human capital development.

The restart also carries broader implications for investor sentiment. Mozambique LNG is widely viewed as a test case for whether mega-scale energy projects can progress in frontier markets facing

security, financing and ESG scrutiny. Its revival sends a positive signal to international investors assessing risk and long-term opportunity in Africa's energy sector, particularly when supported by clear government commitment and sustained security improvements.

At the same time, authorities and project partners have emphasised community development and social investment. Through the Mozambique LNG Foundation, dedicated funding has been allocated to support livelihoods, agriculture, fisheries and small businesses in Cabo Delgado, aiming to ensure that economic benefits extend beyond state revenues and contribute to regional stability.

Overall, the restart of Mozambique LNG represents more than the resumption of a single project. It marks a potential inflection point for Mozambique's economy, anchoring its role in global gas markets while offering a pathway toward growth, employment and increased investor confidence—provided that security gains are sustained and resource revenues are managed in support of inclusive and long-term development.

Source: APA News, Energy Capital & Power

▶ EGYPT AND TÜRKİYE ACCELERATE ECONOMIC RAPPROCHEMENT AS INVESTMENT AND INDUSTRIAL TIES DEEPEN



A HIGH-LEVEL BUSINESS FORUM IN NEW ALAMEIN HAS MARKED A DECISIVE STEP IN STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC RELATIONS BETWEEN EGYPT AND TÜRKİYE, SIGNALLING GROWING CONFIDENCE, RISING INVESTMENT FLOWS, AND A SHARED AMBITION TO BUILD DEEPER INDUSTRIAL AND FINANCIAL INTEGRATION.

Economic relations between Egypt and Türkiye are entering a new phase of momentum, following what officials described as the largest commercial gathering in the history of bilateral ties. Held in New Alamein, the Egypt-Türkiye business forum sent a clear signal of renewed cooperation, with both sides highlighting expanding opportunities for trade, investment, and long-term industrial partnership.

The forum was jointly led by representatives of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey and the Federation of Egyptian Chambers of Commerce, and focused on priority areas for cooperation over the coming decade. Discussions highlighted infrastructure contracting, energy partnerships, and closer integration of industrial and technological supply chains as core pillars of the evolving economic relationship.

Concrete investment prospects are already emerging. Egyptian business leaders anticipate Turkish investments exceeding USD 500 million in 2026, particularly in textiles, including spinning, weaving, dyeing, and finishing, alongside broader industrial and commercial activities.

The renewed business dialogue is also viewed as a precursor to an upcoming visit by President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, expected to be accompanied by a major Turkish trade delegation. Together, these developments underscore a shared commitment by Cairo and Ankara to transform political normalization into tangible economic outcomes, positioning the bilateral partnership as a growing pillar of regional trade, industrial development, and investment cooperation.

Source: Egypt Independent



▶ INDONESIA'S AUTOMOTIVE EXPORTS ACCELERATE AS OVERSEAS MARKETS DRIVE INDUSTRY RESILIENCE

INDONESIA'S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY IS INCREASINGLY ANCHORED BY STRONG EXPORT PERFORMANCE, WITH RECORD VEHICLE SHIPMENTS CONFIRMING THE COUNTRY'S GROWING ROLE AS A REGIONAL PRODUCTION AND EXPORT BASE DESPITE SOFTER CONDITIONS IN THE DOMESTIC MARKET.

Indonesia's automotive sector is undergoing a clear rebalancing, with exports emerging as a central growth engine. According to data from the Association of Indonesian Automotive Industries (GAIKINDO), exports of completely built-up (CBU) vehicles reached 518,000 units in 2025, marking an all-time high. This achievement highlights Indonesia's expanding integration into global automotive supply chains and its strengthening competitiveness as a manufacturing hub.

Export momentum has been sustained throughout the year. During the first eight months of 2025, CBU exports totalled 335,063 units, representing a 12.2 percent increase compared with the same period in 2024. The upward trend continued through January–September 2025, when total CBU exports reached 382,374 units, up 10.9 percent year on year from 344,780 units in the corresponding period of 2024. For context, total

CBU exports for the full year 2024 amounted to 472,194 units, indicating that 2025 is on track to set a new benchmark.

Exports of semi-finished or completely knocked down (CKD) vehicles have also expanded rapidly. From January to September 2025, CKD exports climbed by 29.8 percent to 45,673 units, compared with 35,179 units a year earlier. This growth underscores Indonesia's dual role as both a finished-vehicle exporter and a regional assembly base serving multiple international markets.

Leading manufacturers continue to underpin export performance. Toyota remains Indonesia's largest exporter, shipping 114,280 vehicles, an increase of 6.8 percent year on year. Over the January–September period, Toyota exported 130,045 units, capturing a 34 percent market share. Daihatsu followed with 89,418 units (23.4 percent share), while Mitsubishi Motors recorded particularly strong growth, exporting 75,361 units (19.7 percent share). Hyundai-HMMI contributed 43,334 units (11.3 percent), alongside Suzuki with 22,359 units (5.8 percent) and Honda with 12,628 units (3.3 percent).

Export growth has played a stabilizing role for the industry amid weaker domestic demand. From January

to September 2025, total vehicle production reached 854,952 units, declining by only 3.4 percent year on year, despite a sharper contraction in domestic sales. Wholesale sales fell 11.3 percent to 561,819 units, while retail sales declined 10.9 percent to 585,917 units, reflecting pressure on consumer purchasing power.

Destination markets across ASEAN, Latin America, Japan, and the Middle East have been key contributors to export growth, helping manufacturers maintain production volumes and operational efficiency. Industry leaders note that exports are now an integral component of overall production planning, directly supporting factory utilization and supply chain continuity.

Looking ahead, industry representatives expect Indonesia's automotive exports to approach 500,000 units by the end of 2025, reinforcing production stability and supporting a broad ecosystem of manufacturers, component suppliers, logistics providers, and financing companies. The sustained rise in exports confirms Indonesia's ambition to position itself as a regional automotive production and export hub, demonstrating resilience and adaptability in an evolving global market.

Source: Gaikindo, Kompas.id, Business Indonesia



OIC AND ICDT AGENDA

▶ **Virtual Workshop on ICDT Trade and Investment Tools for Start-ups, Micro-enterprises, and Trade Support Institutions of OIC Member States,**
April 22, 2026

▶ **42nd Meeting of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee,**
May 12–13, 2026 – Ankara, Türkiye

▶ **OIC African SMEs Forum,**
June 11–13, 2026 – Dakar, Senegal

▶ **16th OIC Summit,**
June 19–20, 2026 – Baku, Azerbaijan

▶ **OIC Tourism Fair / UATE Tourism Expo,**
June 25–27, 2026 – Kampala, Uganda

▶ **9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women,**
July 12–13, 2026 – Islamabad, Pakistan

▶ **17th OIC–UN General Meeting on Cooperation,**
July 27–29, 2026 – Geneva, Switzerland

▶ **15th AIM Congress,**
September 7–9, 2026 – Dubai, UAE

▶ **2nd OIC Ministerial Conference on Energy,**
October 2026 – Riyadh, Saudi Arabia

▶ **42nd COMCEC Ministerial Meeting,**
October 31–November 3, 2026 – Istanbul, Türkiye

▶ **11th OIC Halal Expo,**
November 25–28, 2026 – Istanbul, Türkiye

▶ **10th Meeting of the ACMOI,**
December 9–10, 2026 – Jeddah, Saudi Arabia



ICDTEvents est la plateforme officielle du Centre islamique pour le développement du commerce (ICDT) dédiée à la gestion, à la promotion et à la participation aux événements économiques et commerciaux organisés sous les auspices de l'Organisation de la coopération islamique (OCI).



Notre mission est de faciliter l'accès, la participation et la visibilité aux événements stratégiques du monde islamique, en vue de renforcer le commerce intra-OCI et la coopération Sud-Sud.

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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.

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