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UPDATE ON ANKARA CENTRE ACTIVITIES

EXPERTS SEEK COMPREHENSIVE AND COHERENT METHODOLOGY FOR COLLECTING INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION STATISTICS

The SESRTCIC co-sponsored with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) an Experts Group Meeting on International Migration Statistics. The Meeting took different national sources and making them available for decision and policy makers.

On the other hand, a working group was set up to revise the questions regarding international migration statistics used in the national population and housing censuses/surveys. It recommended that

place in Cairo on 14-16 November 2005 with the participation of twenty-five experts from thirteen member countries as well as experts from the related international and regional organisations. Mrs. Aslı Güveli, Deputy Director of Statistics and Information Department, represented the Centre thereat.

The immediate objectives of the Meeting were to establish a comprehensive and coherent methodology for data collection at the national level and facilitate the exchange of experiences among the concerned institutions in the member countries as regards migration statistics.

The participants made presentations regarding the current statistical system and practices in their respective countries and adopted a set of recommendations which aimed at standardizing the statistical concepts in compiling, disseminating and analysing international migration data; formalizing agreements between the statistical agencies and national offices concerned with the production of international migration data; disseminating available national data on international migration statistics; and exerting further efforts towards improving the quality of the data produced by the

standardized questions based on international concepts be used in collecting the related information. Finally, the Meeting called upon the participating international organizations to give due consideration to enhancing the capacities of the statistical offices in the region through workshops, technical assistance and partnerships schemes.

CAPACITY BUILDING IN TRADE FACILITATION AND ELECTRONIC BUSINESS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN

The SESRTCIC co-sponsored with the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) a regional seminar on "Trade and Transport Facilitation in the ESCWA East Mediterranean Countries". The event was hosted by the Egyptian Ministry of Transport and held in Cairo on 15-17 November 2005 with the participation of thirty-four experts from six member countries and the related international and regional organisations.

Mr. Murat İlkin, Researcher, represented the Centre at the Seminar and presented a paper entitled "Trade and Transport Facilitation: Infrastructure and Capacity Building" in which he highlights the importance of improving the transport infrastructure for enhancing trade between the participating countries and proposes certain means and modalities of increasing cooperation among them in the field of trade facilitation.

The Seminar was part of a United Nations project entitled “Capacity-building in Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business in the Mediterranean”, or “E-Med Business Project” for short. It discussed issues of trade and transport facilitation in the

ESCWA region and reviewed the status of national transport and trade facilitation committees in the participating countries. It also included discussions on logistics and electronic business techniques and software in order to familiarise the participants with modern trade and transport facilitation tools and their successful implementation.

The participants also deliberated on the ongoing projects and activities related to trade and transport facilitation in the region, particularly those related to road networks, railway systems and transport companies, and underlined the importance of simplified, harmonised and automated trade and transport procedures. They also highlighted some common challenges that face the countries of the region in enhancing trade and transport facilitation and made concrete proposals to successfully meet them.

ESCWA’s membership comprises thirteen countries all of which are also members of the OIC. They are: Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, the U.A.E and Yemen.

THE CHALLENGES OF WATER SCARCITY FOR AGRICULTURE

The SESRTCIC co-sponsored with the Economic and Social Commission for

Western Asia (ESCWA) a Seminar on “Enhancing Agricultural Productivity through on-farm Water Use Efficiency”. The Seminar was held in Beirut, Lebanon, on 23-25 November 2005 and attended by twenty-eight experts from ten ESCWA member countries. Resource persons from the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute and the German Institution for Technical Cooperation (GTZ) also attended the Seminar and made presentations thereto. Ms. Bahar Bayraktar, Researcher, represented the SERTCIC and contributed to the proceedings a paper entitled “Water Resources and Agricultural Development

in the ESCWA and Other OIC Member Countries” in which she sheds light on the water resources in the said countries and assesses the latter’s performance in terms of water use in agriculture.

The main objective of the Seminar was to raise the awareness of the participants as to the seriousness of water scarcity issues in the region and the urgent need for a regular assessment and monitoring of the current status of water use efficiency. More specifically, the Seminar discussed the challenges of water scarcity for agriculture, the conceptual issues in water productivity and water use efficiency; the techniques/tools for assessing and improving on-farm water use efficiency and demand management strategies.

The Seminar proceeded in four working sessions. The first was devoted to the presentations of the ESCWA and the SESRTCIC. The second to the presentations of the German Institution for Technical Cooperation, the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute and the University of Damascus. The third was devoted to the presentations of the national institutions and the fourth to the experiences of the participating member countries, namely Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, U.A.E. and Yemen.

After extensive discussions of the nineteen papers presented, the participants adopted a set of recommendations aiming at developing the appropriate management strategies that would help increase the efficiency of water use in agriculture and reduce wastage of this already scarce resource in the region.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES CENTRE’S BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Twenty-eighth Meeting of the SESRTCIC’s Board of Directors convened in Istanbul on 28-29 November 2005 to review and assess the activities carried out by the Centre during the last year and consider its work programme and budget for the Financial Year 2006/2007. In addition to the Board Members and a representative of the Secretary General of the OIC, the Meeting was also attended, as special guest, by H.E. the Ambassador of the State Palestine and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Turkey.

The Meeting marked the end of the three-year term of the present member countries of the Board, namely Morocco, Oman,

Qatar, Kuwait, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen (Turkey and Saudi Arabia are permanent members).

The Director General informed the Board Members that he would go on retirement on 30 April 2006. The Meeting, therefore, offered him the opportunity to review with the Board Members the outstanding achievements made by the Centre during his tenure.

The Board Members highly valued the remarkable work accomplished by the Centre in all fields of its mandate and praised the Director General and staff members for the unremitting efforts they made to implement the Centre’s annual work programmes with a great sense of responsibility and high spirit of innovation. They also discussed the Centre’s proposed work programme and budget for the Financial Year 2006/2007, that will start on

1 July 2006, and recommended their submission to the higher OIC fora for official endorsement.

In his message to the Meeting, the Secretary General of the OIC expressed his satisfaction to the Board Members for the

guidance they have provided the Centre during the last two terms and expressed his satisfaction to the Centre staff for the highly efficient and effective manner in which they are carrying out their assignments.

OIC NEWS

COMCEC REVIEWS THE STATE OF ECONOMIC COOPERATION AMONG MEMBER STATES

The Twenty-first Session of the Standing Committee of the OIC for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) convened in Istanbul on 22-25 November 2005. It was attended by delegates from forty-seven member countries of the OIC and representatives of a number of international and regional organisations. The OIC subsidiary, specialised and affiliated organs also participated in the Session. The Centre was represented thereat by H.E. Ambassador (Retd) Erdinç Erdün, Director General; Mr. Jalel Chouchane, Assistant Director General and Director of Publications Department; Mr. Nabil Dabour, Director of Economic and Social Research Department, and Mr. Kamuran Malatyali, Deputy Director of Economic and Social Research Department.

A meeting of Senior Officials was held on 22-23 November to discuss and deliberate on the various items on the agenda of the COMCEC Session to which the Centre contributed three major background reports. These dealt with prominent issues on the agenda, particularly with respect to the recent economic developments in the OIC countries, the promotion of cooperation among their stock exchanges,

and their interactions within the developments in the international financial architecture.

The Ministerial Session was held on 24 November where the Ministers and Heads of Delegation reviewed and adopted the draft resolutions prepared by the Senior Officials on several matters related to economic cooperation among the OIC member countries as well as to the economic assistance to some member countries.

The Ministers also decided that "Capacity Building on Facilitation of Trade and Investment" be the theme of the Exchange of Views at the next Session of the COMCEC. In anticipation, they requested the IDB, in collaboration with the related OIC institutions, to organise a workshop on this topic. The Ministers also agreed that the Twenty-second Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC convene on 23-25 May 2006, and the Twenty-second Session of the COMCEC on 13-16 November 2006.

On the sidelines of the COMCEC Session, a special meeting of the Trade Negotiating Committee, set up under the Framework Agreement on Trade Preferential System among the OIC Member Countries, was held where four member countries, namely

Egypt, Jordan, Tunisia and Turkey, signed the Protocol on Preferential Tariff Scheme

among the OIC Countries.

NEW VISION FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD: SOLIDARITY IN ACTION

In response to the kind invitation addressed from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz, the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference was held in Makkah al Mukarramah on 6-7 December 2005. It was preceded by a conference of Foreign Ministers on 5 December 2005.

The Agenda of the Summit included in particular the review of the current situation of the Muslim Ummah, review of the report prepared by the preparatory Forum of Muslim Scholars and Intellectuals, and consideration the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action.

After taking cognizance of the report and recommendations submitted to it by the Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Summit reaffirmed, *inter alia*, that Islam is a religion of moderation which rejects bigotry, extremism and fanaticism, and underlined the importance of combating deviant ideology using all available means. It also stressed that dialogue among civilizations based on mutual respect, understanding and equality between people is a prerequisite for establishing a world marked by tolerance, cooperation, peace and confidence among nations.

The Conference stressed the need to condemn terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and reject any justification for it. It also called for considering the possibility of establishing an independent permanent body to promote human rights in Member States as well as the possibility

of drafting an Islamic Charter on Human Rights.

The Conference reaffirmed the importance of the question of Palestine as the central cause of the Muslim Ummah and discussed the developments in Iraq. It underlined, in this context, the importance of the role of the UN in Iraq in cooperation with the OIC.

The Conference emphasized the need for stronger commitment to the actual implementation of the Islamic resolutions and stressed the necessity for reforming the OIC with a view to further enhancing its role and energizing its institutions.

The Conference called for support to the development in Africa and highlighted the need to make optimal use of the human, natural and economic resources of the Muslim world in order to promote intra-OIC economic and commercial cooperation. It further called for considering the possibility of establishing a Free Trade Area among the Member States and welcomed the establishment of the Islamic Corporation for Trade Finance.

At the Closing Session the leaders of the Islamic States approved the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action to Meet the Challenges Facing the Islamic Ummah in the 21st Century as well as the Makkah Declaration.

The Centre was represented at the Summit by Mr. Jalel Chouchane, Assistant Director General and Director of Publications.

OTHER NEWS

INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY IMPLEMENTATIONS IN TURKEY AND THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

The SESRTCIC represented the OIC at the International Symposium on “Industrial Property Implementations in Turkey and the Neighbouring Countries” that was held on 17-18 November 2005 at the Turkish Patent Institute headquarters in Ankara.

The Symposium was co-organised by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Intellectual and Industrial Property Rights Centre of the Ankara University (FISAUM), the Turkish Patent Institute (TPI) and the Turkish Union of Chambers of Commerce and Commodity Exchanges (TOBB). It was attended by representatives of the patent offices and/or attorneys at law in nine countries seven of which are OIC members, namely Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Jordan and Turkey, as well as representatives of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the European Patent Office (EPO) and the Eurasian Patent Office (EAPO).

The Symposium offered an opportunity for the participants to make presentations on the experiences of their offices in the process of implementing the intellectual property rights and to look into the most efficient ways of sharing information and expertise in this respect.

The SESRTCIC contributed to the Symposium a paper entitled “Intellectual Property Rights in the OIC Member Countries” in which it underlined the importance of the close links that exist between the intellectual property rights protection systems and the research and development and technology creation capacity and presented an overview of the OIC community’s capacity in this respect. The paper also briefed on the OIC countries membership position with regard to the international treaties related to the intellectual property rights and informed of the serious efforts they are making to become part of the global system by adopting the latest institutional frameworks and practices. It also elaborated on the status of the relevant national legislations and enforcing authorities in the member countries of which 55 are members of the World Intellectual Property Rights, and 45 members of at least one of the other international bodies on the IPRs such as the International Union for Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV), the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation of Architects, the African Regional Industrial Property Organisation (ARIPO) and the European Patent Office (EPO).

CENTRE’S AGENDA FOR THE FIRST SEMESTER OF 2006

FEBRUARY

20-22 February 2006, Training Workshop on “Price Statistics and Indices”, Ankara, Turkey.

MARCH

5 March 2006, OIC Coordination Session, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

7-10 March 2006, 37th Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission, New York, USA.

MAY

9-11 May 2006, 29th Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic and Cultural and Social Affairs of the OIC, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

13-15 May 2006, 34th Session of the Permanent Finance Committee of the OIC, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

JUNE

19-21 June 2006, 33rd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Baku, Azerbaijan.

ANKARA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

Latest Publications

InfoReport, vol. 17 no: 63, 2005 (Arabic, English and French editions).

Training Opportunities in the OIC Countries 2006, English-French -Arabic

Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries, English, vol. 27 no: 1, 2006.

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