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UPDATE ON ANKARA CENTRE ACTIVITIES

REGIONAL COOPERATION FOR ENHANCED AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND IMPROVED FOOD SECURITY

The Centre organised, in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the Secretariat of the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), a regional policy seminar on "Coordination and Harmonization of Policies to Enhance Agricultural Productivity and Competitiveness within the CEN-SAD Community". The Seminar was held in Tripoli, Libya, on 10-11 July 2005 and attended by 21 senior planning and policy officers from twelve CEN-SAD member countries. Mr. Jalel Chouchane, Assistant Director General, represented the Centre at the Seminar.

The Seminar aimed at contributing to the promotion of a policy dialogue and a wider consultation at the regional level to enhance cooperation for food security improvement and poverty alleviation. The participants focused particularly on the following three major themes: 1) Facilitation of exchange of information and a better understanding of the comparative and competitive advantages of the region for improved food security, 2) Identification of the economic, technical, social and environmental opportunities and policy options required for developing a conducive policy framework for regional economic cooperation and, 3) Support to stakeholders for developing practical steps for the coordination of their policies to enhance regional economic cooperation. The participants also discussed a regional policy working

paper submitted by the FAO as
well as several country

papers which explain the general characteristics of the national agricultural sector, the government strategies and plans

of action for agricultural development and the food security and poverty alleviation efforts in the respective countries.

TOURISM: A PRIORITY SECTOR OF THE OIC PLAN OF ACTION

Within the framework of the Follow-up and Implementation Mechanism of the OIC Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation among its Member Countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran hosted in Tehran on 11-14 July 2005 the Fourth Experts Group Meeting on Tourism. The Meeting was attended by representatives of 22 OIC member countries, the OIC General Secretariat and its concerned organs, namely the SESRTCIC, IDB, IRCICA, ICDT, IUT and ICCI.

The SESRTCIC was represented at the Meeting by Mr. Nabil Dabour, Chief of Social Research Section. He presented a major working paper entitled "International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges" in which he assesses the performance and economic role of the international tourism sector in the OIC countries and sheds light on some issues

and problems of tourism development in those countries. The paper also proposes certain means and modalities for strengthening cooperation among the member countries in this important area of economic and social activity.

After a general debate on the role of tourism in providing great potential for economic growth, job creation, social and cultural development and heritage conservation, the participants adopted the Report of the Meeting and the Tehran Declaration. Both documents include a set of recommendations and commitments that aim at developing the tourism sector in the OIC member countries and stress particularly the need for promoting cooperation among those countries and taking practical steps towards facilitating customs and visa regulations with a view to enhancing intra-OIC tourism.

TOWARDS A BETTER STAND OF THE OIC COUNTRIES AT THE WTO'S NEGOTIATIONS ON TRADE FACILITATION

The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organised in Jeddah on 27-28 September 2005 an experts group meeting on trade facilitation for the OIC countries. The objective of the Meeting was to deliberate on various aspects of the WTO's ongoing negotiations on trade facilitation and discuss the needs, priorities and costs of its implementation for the OIC member countries. The Meeting was attended by delegations from 40 member countries, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the United Nations

Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the World Bank, the World Customs Organisation (WCO), the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC Countries (COMCEC). The Centre was represented thereat by Mr. Murat İlkin, Researcher.

The participants discussed eight presentations made by international experts on specific issues pertaining to the state of play in the trade facilitation negotiations at the WTO, particularly those related to the technical aspects of Articles V, VIII and X of the GATT; the relevant technical assistance and capacity building for the developing countries; and the cost of the implementation of trade facilitation and its impact on the new security environment. The participants also had the opportunity to review the related experiences of Bangladesh, Malaysia, Mali, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey through presentations made by their representatives.

During the general debate, a special reference was also made to Annex D of the WTO's "July Package" which deals with trade facilitation. The participants emphasised that identifying the needs and priorities of the developing countries, including the OIC members, is an essential

element to achieve overall progress in the WTO's ongoing negotiations on trade facilitation, and that technical assistance and capacity building facilities should be provided to those countries even during the negotiations phase. They also agreed on the necessity for the said countries to adopt the international standards on trade facilitation developed by the UNCTAD, UNECE and WCO and underlined the key role played by security in trade facilitation.

The participants equally underlined the importance of risk assessment and management in increasing the efficiency of customs operations and urged the member countries to make use of the advanced technologies and adequate transport infrastructure for enhancing their trade. They also exchanged views and opinions on the workable modalities for cooperation to enhance trade facilitation among the OIC countries through the reduction of tariff rates of more products and the establishment of free trade zones.

LAUNCHING OF THE SESRTCIC E-LIBRARY

Immediately after its inception in June 1978, the Centre embarked on an ambitious project of building up a specialised library that was initially conceived to cater for the needs of its own researchers in terms of reference material that would enable them to undertake the numerous tasks assigned to the Centre by the various OIC fora on the basis of reliable and up-to-date information and data. With the support of the member countries, whose relevant institutions are the principal suppliers of the library, the latter quickly developed into a full-fledged specialised library that also functions as a depository of the World Bank publications.

Today, the SESRTCIC library boasts a multilingual (English, French and Arabic) collection of around 16,000 reference titles dealing almost exclusively with socio-economic issues. It is managed through an

electronic system, "the Library Information Service Programme", which comprises four databases: 1) the Library Database, which currently stores 14,423 records of the library's content in terms of books, reference material, statistical sources, reports and technical papers, 2) the Periodicals Database which contains 306 records of the periodicals received by the library through subscription, exchange agreements or on a complimentary basis; 3) the Articles Database which contains 3,955 records of material and articles on the OIC member countries published in the periodicals received by the Centre; and 4) the Documents Database which contains the integral texts of the reports and technical papers/documents produced by the Centre.

To share this rich collection of reference material with external users and remote

researchers, the Centre has embarked on yet another ambitious project of launching the first electronic reference library within the OIC system. The initial technical phase of the project, largely financed by the Islamic

Development Bank, has recently been completed and large segments of the above-mentioned databases' bibliographical records can now be explored online at www.library.sesrtcic.org.

OTHER NEWS

COMMUNITY OF THE SAHEL AND SAHARAN STATES

The Community of the Sahel and Saharan States (CEN-SAD) was established in Tripoli, Libya, in 1998 at the Summit attended by Mali, Chad, Niger, Sudan and Burkina Faso. The CEN-SAD is currently made up of twenty-one members, all of which are African countries. Eighteen of those countries, namely Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, The Gambia, Libya, Mali, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia, are also members of the OIC. The three non-OIC members are the Central African Republic, Eritrea and Liberia. The CEN-SAD headquarters is in Tripoli.

The CEN-SAD was recognised as a regional economic grouping at the Thirty-sixth Ordinary Session of the Conference of Leaders and Heads of State and Government of the Organisation of African Unity, held in July 2000 in Lome, Togo. It was also granted observer status in the United Nations General Assembly by virtue of the Assembly Resolution No. A/RES/56/92. The CEN-SAD has concluded partnership agreements with numerous regional and international organisations with the purpose of consolidating collective work in political, cultural, economic and social fields.

CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE LAST QUARTER OF 2005

NOVEMBER

16-18 November 2005, Expert Group Meeting on "Intra-regional Migration Statistics", Beirut, Lebanon.

17-18 November 2005, International Symposium on "Industrial Property Implementations in Turkey and the Neighbouring Countries", Ankara, Turkey.

22-25 November 2005, Twenty-first Session of the COMCEC, Istanbul, Turkey.

23-25 November 2005, Seminar on "Enhancing Agricultural Productivity Through On-Farm Water Use", Beirut, Lebanon.

28-29 November 2005, Twenty-eighth Meeting of the Board of Directors, Istanbul, Turkey.

ANKARA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

Latest Publications

InfoReport, vol. 17 no: 62, 2005 (Arabic, English and French editions).

Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries, English, vol. 26 no: 3, 2005.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE CENTRE LIBRARY

For a complete listing of the Library Acquisitions visit our e-library at:
<http://www.library.sesrtcic.org>

OIC MEMBER COUNTRY SOURCES

ALGERIA

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WORLD BANK SOURCES

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Connecting East Asia: A new framework for infrastructure. (2005).

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Guislain, P. ...[et al.] (2005). *Connecting sub-Saharan Africa: A World Bank Group strategy for information and communication technology sector development* (World Bank Working Paper; no: 51).

Maimbo, S.M., Adams, R.H., Aggarwal, R. and Passas, N. (2005). *Migrant labor remittances in South Asia* (Directions in Development).

Narayan, D. [ed.]. (2005). *Measuring empowerment: Cross-disciplinary perspectives.*

Preventing HIV/AIDS in the Middle East and North Africa: A window of opportunity to act. (2005). (Orientations in Development).

WORLD BANK POLICY RESEARCH WORKING PAPERS (PRWP)

March-August 2005

PRWP; 3549 / Jamasb, T. ... [et al.] (Mar.). *Electricity sector reform in developing countries: A survey of empirical evidence on determinants and performance.*

PRWP; 3550 / Roe, T. ...[et al.]. (Mar.). *Feedback links between economywide and*

farm-level policies: With application to irrigation water management in Morocco.

PRWP; 3565 / Limão, N. and Olarreaga, M. (Apr.). *Trade preferences to small developing countries and the welfare costs of lost multilateral liberalization.*

PRWP; 3570 / Claessens, S. (Apr.). *Taking stock of risk management techniques for sovereigns.*

PRWP; 3571 / Milanovic, B. and Squire, L. (Apr.). *Does tariff liberalization increase wage inequality? Some empirical evidence.*

PRWP; 3586 / Kellermann, T. and McNevin, V. (May). *Capital markets and e-fraud: Policy note and concept paper for future study.*

PRWP; 3590 / Maskus, K.E., Otsuki, T. and Wilson, J.S. (May). *The cost of compliance with product standards for firms in developing countries: An econometric study.*

PRWP; 3597 / Arnold, J.M. and Javorcik, B.S. (May). *Gifted kids or pushy parents? Foreign acquisitions and plant performance in Indonesia.*

PRWP; 3614 / Baracat, E. And Nogués, J.J. (May). *World Trade Organization safeguards and trade liberalization: Lessons from the Argentina footwear case.*

PRWP; 3625 / Ravallion, M. (Jun.). *Evaluating anti-poverty programs.*

PRWP; 3638 / Martínez, J. De L. (Jun.). *Workers' remittances to developing countries: A survey with central banks on selected public policy issues.*

PRWP; 3639 / Love, I. (Jun.). *Finances of Egyptian listed firms.*

PRWP; 3661 / Agénor, P.R., Nabli, M.K. and Yousef, T.M. (Jul.). *Public*

infrastructure and private investment in the Middle East and North Africa.

PRWP; 3668 / Verner, D. and Verner, M. (Jul.). *Economic impacts of professional training in the informal sector: The case of the labor force training program in Côte d'Ivoire.*

PRWP; 3671 / Go, D.S. ...[et al.]. (Aug.). *An analysis of South Africa's value added tax.*

PRWP; 3674 / Gill, I. and Pinto, B. (Aug.). *Public debt in developing countries: Has the market-based model worked?*

PRWP; 3676 / Hoekman, B. and Winters, L.A. (Aug.). *Trade and employment: Stylized facts and research findings.*

PRWP; 3679 / Warlters, M. and Auriol, E. (Aug.). *The marginal cost of public funds in Africa.*

PRWP; 3682 / Essama-Nssah, B. (Aug.). *The poverty and distributional impact of macroeconomic shocks and policies: A review of modelling approaches.*

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