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UPDATE ON ANKARA CENTRE ACTIVITIES

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS APPROVES THE CENTRE'S BUDGET AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2005/2006

The Twenty-seventh Meeting of the Board of Directors of the Centre convened in Istanbul on 27-28 November 2004. Delegates from Kuwait, Tunisia, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Yemen and a representative of the OIC Secretary General attended the Meeting. His Excellency Ambassador Fouad Yaseen, Ambassador of the State of Palestine and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps accredited to Turkey, and Mr. Allal Rachdi, the Director General of the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, also attended the meeting as guests.

The Director General briefed the Board members on the developments related to the conclusions of the last Meeting and the resolutions adopted in their respect by the related OIC fora. He, then, informed of the activities carried out by the Centre during the elapsed year in the field of statistical data collection and dissemination, socio-economic research and study, and technical cooperation and training. He also explained the care taken by the Centre to ensure that its activities are relevant to the most important areas of interest to the Islamic community and their benefits reach the largest number of potential users in the member countries.

The Board Members were then briefed on the financial situation of the Centre and informed of the details of its proposed budget and work programme for the Financial Year 2005/2006 that will start on 1 July 2005. After

deliberation, they approved both proposals and recommended their adoption by the relevant OIC fora.

The Board Members also made some recommendations as to, inter alia, the

expansion of the coverage of the Centre's main statistical database, the resumption of the country visits programme for collecting the unpaid contributions and enhancing the cooperation with related international and regional organisations.

UPGRADING THE ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING SYSTEMS IN THE ESCWA REGION

The Ankara Centre co-sponsored with the Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) an Expert Group Meeting on upgrading the environmental monitoring systems in the ESCWA region. The Meeting was held in Beirut, Lebanon, on 29 November - 1 December 2004 and attended by 12 experts and resource persons from the ESCWA countries. Representatives from the West Asia Regional Office of the United Nations Environment Programme, the Centre for Environment and Development for the Arab Region and Europe and the UN Economic Commission for Europe also attended the Meeting. Mr. Nabil Dabour, Chief of Social Research Section, represented the Centre at the Meeting.

The Meeting aimed at assessing the current status of the existing environmental monitoring systems in the ESCWA region and identifying the required measures and appropriate strategies that ensure their sustainability and maintain their effectiveness.

Eighteen relevant papers, one of which was presented by the SESRTCIC on the "Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development in the OIC and ESCWA Countries", were discussed during the meeting and served as a basis for the formulation of a set of related recommendations that would help improve the existing facilities and enhance their effectiveness.

EXPERTS MEET IN ANKARA TO DISCUSS POPULATION CENSUS METHODOLOGIES

The Centre organised in Ankara on 6-10 December 2004 a Training Workshop on "Traditional Methods of Population Census and New Approaches" in collaboration with the State Institute of Statistics (SIS) of the Republic of Turkey. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) provided technical assistance to the workshop by designating an international consultant to make a presentation.

Twenty-one participants from Bangladesh, Cameroon, Indonesia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen participated in the

Workshop which aimed at helping the statistical authorities in the OIC member countries improve their population census methodologies and produce comparable results by sharing their practical experiences in this field and exchanging views on the new methods and perspectives of the population censuses.

The main topics covered by the workshop included issues of practical relevance to the census process such as the selection and training of enumerators, the tabulation of the results, the data analysis at the micro and macro levels, the construction of

census databases and the online dissemination of results.

The participants also made presentations on the systems of population census currently used by their countries and

explained the problems they face in this field and their future plans to remedy them. They also agreed on a set of recommendations that would improve the population-based statistical activities in their countries.

ASSESSING THE IMPACT OF INDEBTEDNESS ON DEVELOPMENT

The SESRTCIC co-sponsored with the UN Economic and Social Commission for West Asia (ESCWA) a Workshop on “The Role of Indebtedness in Development” which convened in Beirut, Lebanon, on 6-7 December 2004.

Twenty-three experts from the ESCWA countries and a representative from the International Monetary Fund attended the Workshop. The SESRTCIC was represented thereat by Ms. Bahar Bayraktar, Research Assistant, who presented a paper titled “External Debt Situation of ESCWA and Other OIC Member Countries”.

The main objective of the Workshop was to facilitate the exchange of views, ideas and experiences on the efforts to identify the ESCWA region’s debt problems with respect to its socio-economic development agenda. More specifically, the Workshop aimed at enhancing the stakeholders’ ability to identify economic and social issues relating to indebtedness and seek understanding on the debt problems

pertaining to the ESCWA region and elaborating ideas for regional cooperation in economic development and external debt management such as the coordination of exchange rate management and debt management; and exploring new ideas and methodologies to evaluate indebtedness.

Seven papers were discussed at the Workshop covering, among others, two case studies from Lebanon and Iraq. The first, entitled “Indebtedness and Socio-economic Development in the ESCWA Region” focused on the region’s governments’ efforts to manage the debt problem and the views on the role of indebtedness in financing investment and/or consumption in the region. The second paper, entitled “Indebtedness and Post-conflict Reconstructions”, studied the region’s experiences on the role of debt burden impact with a view to investigating the ways and means of transforming debt from a burden into a development asset for the ESCWA region.

OIC NEWS

COMCEC CELEBRATES ITS TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The Twentieth Session of the COMCEC convened in Istanbul on 23-27 November 2004 with the participation of delegates from 47 member countries and a number of

related 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 Erdiñ Erdün, the Director General, Mr. Jalel Chouchane, General Coordinator and Director of Publications Department, Mr. Oker Gürler, Director of the Research Department, and Mr. Kamuran Malatyali, Senior Economist.

A meeting of senior officials was held on 23-24 November to discuss and deliberate on the various items on the agenda of the COMCEC to which the Centre contributed four reports and background documents on the economic developments and situation in the member countries in 2004, the developments in the international financial architecture, the role of transport and telecommunications in the establishment of an Islamic common market, and the stock exchange alliances and cooperation among the member states.

The Ministerial Session was held on 26 November where the Ministers and Heads of Delegation reviewed and adopted the draft resolutions prepared by the senior officials. A signing ceremony was also held during the Ministerial Session where the Syrian Arab Republic, the State of Qatar and the State of the United Arab Emirates signed the Framework Agreement on the Trade Preferential System Among the OIC member States.

The Ministers decided, *inter alia*, that the "Role of Tourism in the Promotion of Economic Cooperation Among the OIC Countries" be the theme of the exchange of views at the next session of the COMCEC.

In anticipation, they requested the related OIC subsidiary organs, including the SESRTCIC, to organise a workshop on this topic. The ministers also agreed that the Twenty-first Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC convene on 10-12 May 2005, and the Twenty-first Session of the COMCEC on 22-25 September 2005.

Concurrently with the annual session of the COMCEC, an OIC economic conference was held to mark the twentieth anniversary of this standing committee of the OIC. H.E Ahmet Necdet Sezer, President of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of the COMCEC, chaired the joint opening ceremony of both events on 25 November. In His inaugural speech, President Sezer highlighted the role being played by the COMCEC in promoting cooperation between the OIC countries and stressed the need to further enhance that cooperation to help providing the Islamic World with the necessary capacity to successfully meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. He expressed the hope that the launching of the first round of trade negotiations under the Trade Preferential System of the OIC would serve this goal.

The said Economic Conference consisted of a business forum, two brainstorming sessions and two panel discussions to which the SESRTCIC presented two working papers entitled "Economic and Social Development in the OIC Countries" and "Integration into the World Economy: Experience of the OIC Countries".

CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE FIRST QUARTER OF 2005

JANUARY

5-8 January 2005, Third Session of the Trade Negotiating Committee Towards the Establishment of a Trade Preferential System Among the OIC Member States, Antalya, Turkey.

12-13 January 2005, Twenty-first Session of the Board of Directors of the ICDT, Casablanca, Morocco.

FEBRUARY

5-7 February 2005, Eleventh Private Sector Meeting for the Promotion of Trade and

Joint Venture Investment Among Islamic Countries, Manama, Bahrain.

Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

5-9 February 2005, Tenth Trade Fair of the Islamic Countries, Manama, Bahrain.

MARCH

1-4 March 2005, Thirty-sixth Session of the UN Statistical Commission, New York, USA.

13-15 February 2005, Fourth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Tourism, Dakar, Senegal.

26-30 March 2005, Thirty-third Session of the OIC Permanent Finance Committee, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

26 February-2 March 2005, Twenty-eighth Session of the Islamic Commission for

ANKARA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

Latest Publications

InfoReport, vol. 17 no. 60, 2005 (Arabic, English and French editions).

Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries, English, vol. 25 no. 4, 2004.

Money, Banking and Finance Sector, 2004 (Information series on OIC countries; 11).

Transportation Sector, 2004 (Information series on OIC countries; 12).

Tourism Sector, 2004 (Information series on OIC countries; 13).

Technical Documents

- Annual Economic Report on the OIC Countries, 2004.

- Basic Indicators of International Tourism in the OIC Countries and Modalities for Strengthening Cooperation.

- Development of a Joint Transportation Scheme for the Land-locked OIC Member States.

- Developments in the International Financial Architecture, 2004.

- Economic and Social Development in the OIC Countries.

- Integration into the World Economy: Experience of the OIC Countries.

- Role of Transport and Telecommunications in the Establishment of an Islamic Common Market.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE CENTRE LIBRARY

For a complete listing of the Library Acquisitions visit:
<http://www.sesrtcic.org/library/sesliacq.shtml>

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WORLD BANK POLICY RESEARCH WORKING PAPERS (PRWP)

September-November 2004

PRWP; 3396 / Anderson, K. (2004, Sep.). *Agricultural trade reform and poverty reduction in developing countries*.

PRWP; 3398 / Zaman, H. (2004, Sep.). *The scaling-up of microfinance in Bangladesh: Determinants, impact, and lessons*.

PRWP; 3399 / Baker, J. and Schuler, N. (Sep. 2004). *Analyzing urban poverty: A summary of methods and approaches*.

PRWP; 3411 / Anderson, K. and Jackson, L. A. (Sep. 2004). *Implications of genetically modified food technology policies for Sub-Saharan Africa*.

PRWP; 3412 / Feenstra, R. C. and Kee, H. L. (Sep. 2004). *Export variety and country productivity*.

PRWP; 3416 / Bayraktar, N. and Wang, Y. (Sep. 2004). *Foreign bank entry, performance of domestic banks, and sequence of financial liberalization*.

PRWP; 3417 / Dasgupta, S., Meisner, C. and Wheeler, D. (Sep. 2004). *Is environmentally-friendly agriculture less profitable for farmers? Evidence on integrated pest management in Bangladesh.*

PRWP; 3421 / Estache, A., Laffont, J. J. and Zhang, X. (Sep. 2004). *Universal service obligations in developing countries.*

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