

**IN THIS ISSUE****ANKARA CENTRE UPDATE****Preparatory Meeting for  
Workshop on E-commerce 1****OIC NEWS****Twenty-sixth Session of  
the Islamic Commission for  
Economic, Cultural and  
Social Affairs 2****Fifth Consultative Meeting  
Among OIC Organs 3****Thirty-first Permanent  
Finance Committee 3****OTHER MEETINGS****Thirty-fourth UN Statistical  
Commission 4****Working Group Meeting on  
COMCEC Projects 4****UPCOMING EVENTS 4****CENTRE PUBLICATIONS 5****LIBRARY ACQUISITIONS 5****UPDATE ON ANKARA CENTRE  
ACTIVITIES****E-COMMERCE ON THE AGENDA**

The Eighteenth Session of the COMCEC, held on 25 October 2002, decided that the subject of the Exchange of Views to be conducted during its Nineteenth Session, scheduled for 22-25 October 2003, would be "The Impact of E-commerce and Use of Information Technology on Strengthening and Developing Intra-OIC Trade". In this connection, it requested the related OIC organs, including the Ankara Centre, to collaborate on the organisation of a relevant workshop that the Government of Tunisia offered to host.

In line with the said assignment, the Ankara Centre participated in a preparatory meeting held in Tunis on 20-21 February 2003 and attended by representatives from the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Handicrafts, the Ministry of Communication Technologies and Transportation of Tunisia, and the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade. Mr. Kamuran Malatyali, Economist, represented the Centre at the Meeting.

The Meeting dealt particularly with issues related to the programme of the workshop and its financial and organisational arrangements. In this context, it has been agreed that the workshop would be held in Tunis during the second week of June and open for participants from the fifty-seven member countries of the OIC. Experts from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the International Trade

Centre (ITC) will also be invited to make presentations on the subject. The programme of the workshop will evolve around three main axes: 1) The present situation and the general environment of e-commerce and its legislative framework in the Islamic countries, 2) The infrastructure and capacities in the member countries, especially in terms of human resources and electronic equipment, and 3) Investigating the modalities of using e-commerce and information technology for the purpose of

developing intra-OIC trade.

Within this framework, the Ankara Centre will present to the workshop, in addition to its financial contribution, a paper in which it assesses the present situation in the OIC member countries and their capacities in terms of e-commerce and information technology on the basis of information collected through a questionnaire it recently circulated to all member countries.

## **OIC NEWS**

### **GENERAL ASSEMBLY ELECTS NEW BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF ANKARA CENTRE**

The Twenty-sixth Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs held its meetings in Jeddah on 11-15 January 2003. The Session was attended by representatives from thirty-four member States, the OIC General Secretariat and its subsidiary, specialised and affiliated organs. H.E. Ambassador Erdiñç Erdün, Director General, Mr. Oker Gürlür, Director of Economic and Social Research Department and Coordinator of Technical Activities, and Mr. Jalel Chouchane, Director of Publications Department and Coordinator of Administrative and Financial Affairs, represented the Centre at the meetings of the Session.

After the adoption of the Agenda and the Work Programme, the Commission convened in its capacity as the Joint General Assembly of the five subsidiary organs of the OIC. As such, it reviewed the activities of the said organs during the elapsed year and their work programmes for the year to come. It also took note of their audited final accounts for the financial year 2001/2002 and their proposed budgets for the financial year 2003/2004 and recommended their approval by the higher relevant fora.

On the other hand, the Joint General Assembly elected the following new members of the Board of Directors of the Ankara Centre for a three-year term (2003-2005): the State of Kuwait, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Sultanate of Oman, the State of Qatar, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Tunisia, the Republic of Turkey, the United Arab Emirates and the Republic of Yemen.

On the technical front, the Commission expressed its appreciation for the Centre's success in implementing its work programme and commended the valuable studies and reports it presents to the various OIC meetings and conferences. It also commended the Centre's activities in the areas of statistics and information, training and technical cooperation and, in particular, the active and useful role it plays in its capacity as the focal point for technical cooperation between the OIC organs and related UN agencies.

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## **OIC ORGANS IN PURSUIT OF BETTER COORDINATION**

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On the sidelines of the Twenty-sixth Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs, the Fifth Consultative Meeting Among the OIC Organs was held at the Islamic Development Bank Headquarters in Jeddah on 13 January 2003 under the co-chairmanship of H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, Secretary General of the OIC, and Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali, President of the IDB.

The Meeting was attended by the OIC General Secretariat, the Islamic Development Bank, the Ankara Centre, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, the Islamic University of Technology and the COMCEC Coordination Office.

The Chief Executives of the said organs discussed several matters pertaining to the enhancement of cooperation and coordination between their institutions with

a view to achieving optimum efficiency and avoiding duplication of work. From this perspective, they reviewed in particular 1) the Supplementary Mechanism for Implementation of the OIC Plan of Action, 2) the preparation for the Expert Group Meeting on Tourism, 3) the holding of the first round of negotiations following the entry into force of the Framework Agreement on Trade Preferential System Among the OIC Member Countries, and 4) the implementation of the Resolution of the Eighteenth Session of the COMCEC regarding private sector investments in the OIC member countries and the role of the IDB in this respect.

The Meeting requested the General Secretariat of the OIC to follow up all these subjects and report thereon to the forthcoming Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

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## **OIC PERMANENT FINANCE COMMITTEE APPROVES CENTRE'S BUDGET AND PROPOSES ITS ADOPTION BY THE FOREIGN MINISTERS**

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The Thirty-first Session of the Permanent Finance Committee (PFC) of the OIC held its meetings in Jeddah on 23–26 March 2003 with the participation of twenty-nine member countries in addition to the General Secretariat of the OIC and its five subsidiary organs: SESRTCIC, ICDT, IUT, IFA and IRCICA. The Ankara Centre was represented by H. E. Ambassador Erdiñç Erdün, Director General, and Mr. Jalel Chouchane, Director of Publications and Co-ordinator of Administrative and Financial Affairs.

The Committee reviewed the audited final accounts of the OIC General Secretariat and

the subsidiary organs for the financial year 2001/2002, approved their budget proposals for the financial year 2003/2004 at the same ceiling of the previous year and recommended their adoption by the forthcoming session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers to be held in Teheran in May 2003.

The Committee also exhorted the member countries to clear their outstanding arrears and pay their contributions on time in order to provide the adequate financial support to the OIC that enables it to carry out its mandate without any impediments.

## **OTHER MEETINGS**

### **THIRTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE UNITED NATIONS STATISTICAL COMMISSION**

The Thirty-fourth Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 4-7 March 2003. It was attended by Member States of the Commission, observers from other Member States of the United Nations and regional and sub-regional organisations. Director General, Ambassador Erdiñç Erdün, represented both the Ankara Centre and the OIC at the meetings of the Session.

The Commission reviewed and discussed, inter alia, the activities carried out by the national, intergovernmental and international bodies in the field of demographic and social statistics, economic statistics and natural resources and environmental statistics.

Among the main topics deliberated upon were the publication target of 2008 of the revised System of National Accounts, the report prepared by the World Bank on the recent developments in the implementation of the International Comparison Programme at the global level and the recommendations put forward by the Expert Group on International Economic and Social Classifications concerning the 2007 revisions of the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) and the Central Product Classification (CPC).

The Commission recommended that its thirty-fifth session be held on 2-5 March 2004.

### **WORKING GROUP MEETING ON COMCEC PROJECTS**

A Meeting of a Working Group on COMCEC Projects was held on 25-27 March 2003 in Ankara with the participation of representatives from the OIC General Secretariat and the related OIC institutions working in the field of economic and commercial cooperation. The Meeting reviewed the preparation and progress of

some COMCEC projects and set up a time table for their consideration by the concerned OIC institutions prior to their circulation to the member countries of the COMCEC Follow-up Committee. Mr. Oker Gurler, Director of Research Department, and Mr. Kamuran Malatyali, Economist, represented the Ankara Centre at the Meeting.

## **CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2003**

### **APRIL**

17-18 April 2003, Casablanca, Morocco: Forum on Trade Expansion Between North and West African OIC Member Countries

### **MAY**

12-14 May 2003, Istanbul, Turkey: Nineteenth Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC

## *JUNE*

27-30 May 2003, New York, USA: Thirtieth Session of the High Level Committee on the Review of Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries

Workshop on the Impact of E-commerce and Use of Information Technology on Strengthening and Developing Intra-OIC Trade, Tunisia

28-31 May 2003, Teheran, Iran: Thirtieth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers

Eighth Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Sciences, Bahrain

## **ANKARA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS**

### **Latest Publications**

*InfoReport*, vol. 15, issue no. 52, Arabic, English and French editions

*Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries*, English, vol. 24, issue no. 1, 2003.

*Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries*, Arabic, vol. 24, 2003

*Statistical Handbook of the OIC Countries 2002*, English

*Training Opportunities in OIC Countries 2003*, English-French and Arabic

EU-Mediterranean Relations and Implications of EU Enlargement on the OIC Member Countries

Economic Problems of the Least Developed and Land-Locked OIC Countries (2002): External Finance for LDCs

Combatting Poverty and Food Insecurity in the Least Developed and Low-Income OIC Member Countries

The External Debt Situation of African and Other OIC Member Countries

### **Technical Documents**

Annual Economic Report on the OIC Countries 2002

International Financial Architecture and Financing for Development

Implications of Establishing an Islamic Common Market: Gradual Integration and Possible Consequences

Stock Exchange Alliances and Possible Methods for Establishing an Islamic Stock Exchange and Clearing Union

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### **MEMBER COUNTRIES SOURCES**

#### **ALBANIA**

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