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Pursuant to the UN General Assembly resolutions 50/17 of 28 November 1995 and 59/8 of 16 January 2003, a general meeting on cooperation between representatives of the Secretariat of the United Nations system (UN) and that of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and its specialized institutions was held in Rabat, Morocco, on 11-13 July 2006.

The Meeting proceeded in four working groups on: A) political issues, B) economic issues, C) social and cultural issues and D) education and technology issues.

The Working Group on political issues exchanged views on, among others, the situation in the Middle East and Palestine, Iraq, Sudan, Somalia and Afghanistan and the activities of the two organizations in the area of world peacekeeping.

The Working Group on economic issues reviewed the progress achieved in the implementation of the joint projects agreed upon during the last meeting and evaluated future prospects in the areas of cooperation relating to trade and development, maritime transport, food security and agriculture, investment mechanisms and joint ventures.

Within this framework, the SESRTCIC, UNIDO, UNDP, WFP and ILO agreed to consider the organisation of joint workshops/seminars on subjects of common interest for the benefit of the concerned staff in the member countries.

The Working Group on education and technology issues highly valued the fruitful cooperation that exists between the two organizations and exchanged views on possible joint projects in the fields of development of science and technology, technical cooperation, food security and agriculture, human resources development, environment and health, and education and eradication of illiteracy.

In this context, the SESRTCIC, ISESCO and ITU discussed the difficulties they encounter in collecting scientific and technological data and emphasized the need to cooperate to overcome those difficulties and share their experience in this field.

On the other hand, the SESRTCIC and FAO agreed to approach the IDB to develop a tripartite work programme towards the implementation of a series of training workshops, seminars and technical

cooperation activities on desertification and water resources management aiming at alleviating poverty and reducing hunger in the OIC countries.

The SESRTCIC and UNEP examined the possibility of carrying joint activities on human resources development and exchange of expertise in this field. The latter further agreed to share with the SESRTCIC its annual work programmes and activities related to environmental indicators.

The SESRTCIC and ITU agreed to explore the modalities of exchanging ICT-related data and cooperation on capacity building and ICT indicators and training.

At the closing ceremony, the participants noted with satisfaction the strengthening of cooperation between the two organizations in all fields and welcomed the increased political contacts between the Secretaries-General of the two organizations. They also welcomed the signing of a memorandum of understanding on technical cooperation in the field of human rights between the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the OIC.

SESRTCIC BECOMES A NEW MEMBER OF CCSA

The SESRTCIC has been selected as the newest member of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA), at its eighth session, held in Montreal, Canada, on 4-5 September, 2006. Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General, represented the Centre thereat.

The CCSA was established on 19 September 2002 to promote coordination and integration among the statistical programmes of the international organizations. It aims to facilitate the use in Member States of internationally agreed concepts, definitions, recommendations and classifications of different international organizations by

coordinating the work on methodological development and promoting harmonization of the methodologies in various fields of statistics. It also aims to achieve an integrated system in the collection, processing and dissemination of international statistics by promoting the coordination of the international official statistical system including technical cooperation in statistics. The members of the CCSA comprise international organizations such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), UNDP, UNCTAD, IMF, World Bank, FAO, OECD, EUROSTAT, World Tourism Organization and World Trade Organization.

SESRTCIC ESTABLISHES CONTACTS WITH OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General of the SESRTCIC, attended the World Leaders Summit, held in Washington, D. C. on 11 July 2006 and the Thirteenth World Conference on Tobacco OR Health, in Washington, D. C., on 12-15 July 2006.

The issue of tobacco consumption is of utmost importance to the OIC countries considering that 48 of the 57 OIC

members (85 per cent) are party to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) which was adopted in June 2003.

The Director General made use of his visit to Washington to meet with high officials at the IMF, including the heads of the Middle East and Central Asia

Department, the African Department and the Statistics Department. His discussions with the said officials focused on the possible future cooperation between the Centre and their respective departments and outlined some concrete joint activities in various fields that aim at enhancing the OIC member countries' capacity to achieve the Millennium Development Goals.

Dr. Alpay also met with the Assistant Director-General of the World Health Organisation (WHO) and discussed issues of mutual interest to both organisations.

The Director-General also met with Mr. Selim Jahan, Senior Advisor and Cluster Leader, and Mr. Bruce Jenks, Assistant

Administrator and Director, of the UNDP and discussed with them the possibilities of establishing closer ties between the two institutions.

During the talks, both sides expressed their will to explore new avenues of cooperation between the two institutions that would lead to a strategic partnership to strengthen their ability to deliver efficient and high-quality aid to the developing countries, a substantial portion of which are OIC members. The overall objective of the new partnership is to promote the shared goals of establishing solid foundations for peace and recovery from crisis in the developing countries and to work on attaining the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the fight against poverty.

OIC NEWS

TWENTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF THE COMCEC

The 22nd Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC convened in Izmir, Republic of Turkey, on 23-25 May 2006 with the participation of nine member countries of the Committee, the OIC General Secretariat and its subsidiary,

affiliated and specialised organs. The Committee reviewed and discussed the background reports of the OIC General Secretariat on the various activities undertaken by the OIC member countries and institutions within the framework of

the implementation of the COMCEC resolutions, and the OIC Plan of Action and Ten-Year Programme of Action. It also discussed the reports presented by the concerned OIC organs on the promotion of intra-OIC trade, matters related to the World Trade Organisation activities, the OIC private sector meetings, the Islamic trade and tourism fairs and cooperation among the stock exchanges of the OIC countries.

The Committee also reviewed the developments related to the Trade Preferential System among the OIC member countries (TPSOIC) and the Protocol on Preferential Tariff Scheme

(PRETAS). On the sidelines of the Session, Syria signed the said protocol and became the sixth signatory member country along with Egypt, Jordan, Malaysia, Tunisia and Turkey.

After the deliberations, the Committee finalised the draft agenda of the 22nd Session of the COMCEC, scheduled for 21-24 November 2006, and proposed a number of themes for the Exchange of Views Session to be held during the said session. In this context, the Committee requested the SESRTCIC to explore a more efficient and result-oriented mechanism for the said Exchange of Views Sessions.

FIFTH ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF TOURISM MINISTERS

The Fifth Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers convened in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 9-12 September 2006. The agenda of the Conference included in particular the review of the implementation of the various resolutions adopted by the previous conferences, a report by the Islamic Republic of Iran on tourism research and training, a report by Malaysia on tourism marketing and a report by Republic of Indonesia on tourism facilitation. The Ministers also discussed a background report presented by the OIC

General Secretariat and four working papers presented by the SESRTCIC, ICDT, ICCI and IDB.

The paper contributed by the SESRTCIC assesses the performance and economic role of the international tourism sector in the OIC countries and sheds light on some problems of tourism development in those countries. It proposes certain means and modalities for overcoming those problems and strengthening cooperation among the member countries in this vital economic field.

The Conference requested the SESRTCIC to continue its follow-up of the in developments of the tourism sector in the

member countries and report thereon to the sixth session of the Conference. It also invited the member countries to promptly respond to the relevant questionnaire circulated to them by the SESRTCIC to enable the latter to undertake this task on a sound statistical basis.

On the sidelines of the Conference, the Committee on the Regional Project “Sustainable Tourism Development in a Transfrontier System of Parks and Protected Areas in West Africa” held its second meeting on 10 September 2006 with the participation of representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, UN WTO, IDB and three of the nine countries participating in the project, namely Mali, Cameroon and Senegal. The SESRTCIC and ICDT also took part in the meeting in their capacity as

co-coordinators of the project by assignment of the COMCEC.

The Meeting discussed *inter alia* the Terms of Reference of the feasibility study of the project and the possible sources of its financing. In this respect, Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General of the SESRTCIC, expressed his full support to the project and his strong belief that, when implemented, it will certainly contribute to higher prosperity and stronger stability in the

region. However, Dr. Alpay noted that some of the tasks envisaged in the Terms of Reference document can be carried out by the member countries themselves without any consultancy

services and that the proposed budget of the project needs to be further detailed so as to make it convincing to the prospective financing institution.

CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2006

OCTOBER

Twenty-seventh Session of the Finance Control Organ (FCO), 30 September-11 October 2006, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

NOVEMBER

Second Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, 19-21 November 2006, Kuwait, State of Kuwait

Twenty-second Session of the COMCEC, 21-24 November 2006, Istanbul, Turkey

First Meeting of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations for Establishing the Trade Preferential System among the OIC Countries (TPS-OIC), 24-26 November 2006, Istanbul, Turkey.

DECEMBER

Third Islamic Conference of Ministers of Environment, 13-15 December 2006, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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