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Upcoming Events

Ankara Centre Update

Forum on Enhancement and Promotion of Trade and Investment in Cotton Sector among OIC Member Countries

Within the framework of the implementation of the Action Plan for the OIC Cotton Producing Countries' Cooperation Development Strategy (2007-2011), the Forum on Enhancement and Promotion of Trade and Investment in Cotton Sector among OIC Member Countries was organised by the Ministry of Industry and Trade of the Republic of Turkey in collaboration with the OIC General Secretariat and held in Istanbul on 12-13 November 2007.

The Forum was attended by representatives of 21 OIC Cotton Producing Countries, the OIC General Secretariat, the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO), the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC), the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and the African Development Bank.

The Forum was also attended by representatives of 46 private companies and 17 chambers of trade and commodity exchange in Turkey, 20 private companies from other member countries and 9 international organisations, all of which are active in cotton production, trade and

industry (textiles) with the aim of encouraging, developing and supporting trade and investment in the cotton sector in the OIC member countries.

The Forum also aimed at discussing the needs and capacities of the OIC cotton producing countries and the textile sector to determine possible collaboration and cooperation areas among the cotton sector representatives, businessmen and investors and to provide a medium for mutual negotiations on these issues.

In this connection, several free discussion sessions on issues such as investment and cooperation opportunities for cotton production inputs, ginning, storage, cotton and thread fabric as well as textile were held during the Forum. Several bilateral meetings were also held during the Forum on enhancing cooperation in cotton investment and trade among the major cotton producing countries with the participation of the representatives of the private companies in these countries.

Mr. Nabil Dabour, Senior Researcher, represented the Centre at the Forum and presented a paper titled "The Cotton Sector in the OIC Countries: Problems and Possibilities of Cooperation". The paper highlighted the importance of

cotton in the OIC countries in terms of production and trade. It investigated the challenges facing the OIC cotton producing member countries, particularly those in West and Central Africa. The paper also provided a brief analysis of the world cotton markets and elaborated on

some possible ways of cooperation among the OIC member countries in this important sector. It concluded with the recommendation of establishing an OIC Cotton Alliance among OIC cotton producers, traders and industrialists to coordinate such cooperation.

The 9th Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Science

The Statistical, Economic, Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC), the Islamic Countries Society of Statistical Sciences (ISOSS) and Malaysian Institute of Statistics (IMS) organized the 9th Islamic Countries Conference on Statistical Sciences at Shah Alam, Malaysia, on 12-14 December 2007.

The objectives of this Conference were to bring together qualified and new researchers working on various statistical topics from all over the world, to provide a platform for researchers and practitioners in statistical sciences to actively share their research experiences, ideas and contributions in a stimulating environment, to forge greater cooperation between statisticians in Islamic Countries and the rest of the world, to promote the discipline of statistics as a profession in the wider community, particularly for the decision makers and finally to promote interaction and understanding amongst statisticians in the world.

The Conference took up various topics of Statistical Sciences such as: Statistical theory, distribution theory, probability models, stochastic processes, statistical inference, statistical education, prediction analysis, survival analysis, biostatistics,

bioinformatics, quality control, epidemiology, reliability theory, sampling, statistical computing, Bayesian analysis, econometrics, demography, robust methods, time series, financial mathematics, forecasting, actuarial science, environmental statistics, economic statistics, official statistics, multivariate analysis, spatial analysis, directional data analysis and others.

The SESRTCIC organised a special session during the Conference on Improving Statistical Capacity Building in the Member Countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC). The Session was attended by Chief Statisticians and high level Representatives from National Statistical Organisations of Malaysia, Turkey and Saudi Arabia and it started with a brief presentation by Dr. Savaş Alpaya on the statistical activities of the SESRTCIC. Then, Dr. Ünal Gündoğan, Vice President of the Turkish Statistical Institute, made a presentation on 'How to Build Capacity in Statistics and the Efforts of Turkish Statistical Institute' in which he highlighted the recent innovations and changes introduced by the Turkish Statistical Institute. Ms. Hajah Wan Ramlah Wan Abd. Raof, Chief Statistician of Malaysia, and Mr.

Mohanna Abdulkarim Al-Mohanna, Deputy Director General for Statistical Affairs in Saudi Arabia, each made a presentation on the theme 'Cooperation between Statistical Authorities and Research Bodies', in which they

highlighted the experience of their countries in enhancing and strengthening the relations between the national statistical organisation and the research institutions as well as other users of the national statistical data in their countries.

The New 'Data Collection and Dissemination System' of SESRTCIC

The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC) has recently developed a new Statistical Data Collection and Dissemination Software System in collaboration with the National Statistical Institute of the Republic of Turkey. This new system, which is already operating at the Centre's website, offers a more friendly usage as compared to the old one. The data dissemination side of the system allows the users of the Centre's database to download data in a more efficient and convenient way.

The SESRTCIC BASEIND (BASic Social and Economic INDicators) Database provides data on 169 socio-economic variables under 15 categories for the 57 member countries of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) dating back to 1970. The content of this database is regularly updated and enriched essentially

on the basis of information collected from the national statistical sources. In this regard, the dynamic data collection side of the new system will allow the National Statistical Organisations of the member countries to update the data related to their countries in the Centre's BASEIND Database electronically instead of providing these data through filling in the questionnaires which were regularly sent to them by the Centre.

The Centre will continue with its efforts in this regard to further improve the system to make it possible in the near future for the users to download data in different forms including a graphical style.

SESRTCIC BASEIND Statistics Database:

http://www.sesrtcic.org/stat_database.php

OIC news

The 23rd Session of COMCEC

The Twenty-third Session of the COMCEC convened in Istanbul on 14-17 November 2007 with the participation of delegates from 46 OIC member countries and a number of related international and regional organizations. The Ministerial Meeting of the Twenty-third Session of the COMCEC was held on 16-17 November and started, in the opening ceremony, with the inaugural address of H.E. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of the COMCEC. The OIC General Secretariat, subsidiary, specialized and affiliated organs also participated in the Session. The Centre was represented thereat by Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General; Mr. İlhan Uğurel, Advisor to the Director General; Mr. Nabil Dabour, Senior Researcher; Mr. Süleyman Islamoğlu, Senior Researcher; and Mr. Esat Bakımlı, Researcher.

At the opening session, statements were also made by H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC); the representatives of the three geographical groups of Member States; H.E. Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB); and H.E. Shaikh Saleh Bin Abdullah Kamel, President of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI).

The Meeting of the Senior Officials of the Twenty-Third Session of the COMCEC was also held on 14-15 November to deliberate on the various items on the agenda of the COMCEC. The Centre contributed the following background reports dealing with prominent issues on the said agenda: (1) Annual Economic Report on the OIC Countries 2007; (2) Report of the Workshop on "Micro-Credit Financing and Poverty Alleviation in OIC Member Countries"; (3) SESRTCIC Proposal on Initiating Vocational Education and Training Programme for the OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET); (4) Results of the Questionnaire Circulated by the SESRTCIC to the Member Countries on the Proposed Themes for the COMCEC Exchange of Views Sessions; and (5) Terms of Reference (TOR) on a New Mechanism for Preparation and Implementation of the Exchange of Views Sessions of the COMCEC.

In the Ministerial Working Session, which was chaired by H.E. Nazım Ekren, Minister of State and Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, the Ministers and Heads of Delegations exchanged views on the theme "Micro-Credit Financing and Poverty Alleviation in the Member States". In this connection, the Director General, Dr. Savaş Alpay, presented the outcomes (project proposals

and recommendations) of the workshop, organized on the said theme by the Centre in its capacity as the coordinating institution for the exchange of views sessions of the COMCEC in July 2007 in Istanbul. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Founder of the Grameen Bank and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate on Micro-Credit Financing also attended the Session as the keynote speaker where he made a presentation on his contribution and pioneering role in the area of micro-credit financing for alleviating poverty.

The Ministers and Heads of Delegations also reviewed and adopted the draft resolutions prepared by the senior officials. They decided, inter alia, that “Improving Investment Climate” be the theme of the Exchange of Views Session at the 24th Session of the COMCEC and requested the IDB, in collaboration with the SESRTCIC (the coordinating institution for the exchange of views sessions), the OIC General Secretariat, relevant OIC institutions and other related international organisations to organize a workshop on this topic prior to the 24th Session of the COMCEC and to submit its report to the next COMCEC Session. Furthermore, bilateral meetings were also arranged during the Ministerial Session of the COMCEC between Ministers and/or

Heads of Delegations with the aim of enhancing economic and commercial relations among the Member States.

The Closing Session of the Twenty-third Session of the COMCEC was held on 17 November 2007 under the chairmanship of H.E. Kürşad Tüzmen, Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey in charge of foreign trade. A signing ceremony was held at the Closing Session where the Heads of Delegation of the Cameroon and Malaysia signed the TPSOIC Rules of Origin, the Head of Delegation of Guinea signed the Protocol on the Preferential Tariff Scheme for TPSOIC (PRETAS) and the Head of Delegation of Senegal signed the Statute of the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC). Finally, the Head of Delegation of Sierra Leone signed the General Agreement on Economic, Technical and Commercial Cooperation, the Agreement on Promotion, Protection and Guarantee of Investments, the Framework Agreement on Trade Preferential System, (TPSOIC) the Statute of the Islamic Civil Aviation Council, the Statute of the Islamic States Telecommunications Union and the Statute of the Standards and Metrology Institute for the Islamic Countries (SMIIC).

The OIC Secretary General Calls for Reinforcement of FAO Capacities to Fight Hunger and Poverty

In a message read on Wednesday 21 November 2007 by Ambassador Babacar BA, Permanent Observer of the OIC to the United Nations in Geneva, H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic

Conference, requested the 34th Session of the FAO Conference, held in Rome (Italy), to consider the need to reinforce the capacities of FAO to fight hunger and poverty around the world.

The Secretary General of the OIC noted that, despite considerable efforts to create healthy and viable conditions for a huge number of needy people, many new phenomena had negatively affected these efforts and requested urgent and strong concerted actions to face the serious current challenges such as growing climate changes, natural disasters, energy supply crisis, scarcity of lands, water and sea resources.

The Secretary General also called for more support to enhance the agricultural capacities of developing countries and to give them better access to the global market.

He noted that the establishment of an OIC Special Fund to combat poverty and endemic diseases would constitute a contribution to the efforts of the OIC member states, FAO and the international community to face the situation and to pursue the Millennium Development Goals.

Finally, Prof. Ihsanoglu congratulated the Director General of FAO, Dr. Jacques Diouf for his dynamism and efficiency in promoting and implementing the FAO main goals of food security and agricultural development.

The 36th Session of the Permanent Finance Committee

The Permanent Finance Committee (PFC) of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) held its 36th Session in Jeddah on 2-4 December 2007. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 35 Member States and of the General Secretariat and the Subsidiary Organs of the OIC.

At the opening session, the Secretary General of the OIC, H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, delivered a statement in which he informed the participating delegations that the 36th Session of the PFC was an important and extraordinary session because it had been mandated by the 34th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), on exceptional grounds, to examine and adopt, on behalf of the Conference, the budgets of the General Secretariat and the Subsidiary Organs of the OIC for the year

2008 due to the change in the financial year to fit the Gregorian calendar.

In his statement, the Secretary General indicated that the aspirations of the OIC in terms of quality performance, distinguished presence in the international arena, and dedicated service for the Ummah's causes was not confined to what had been achieved thus far, but rather extend far beyond, to other expansive horizons, particularly those which had been opened up by the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action.

After examining and approving its Agenda and Programme of Work submitted by the General Secretariat, the Committee considered exhaustively the various agenda items of the Meeting and, following in-depth discussions, adopted the following items:

1. The 28th Report of the Finance Control Organ.

2. The proposed amendments made on the Personnel Regulations of the OIC, with some modifications.

3. The Proposed Budgets of the General Secretariat for the year 2008.

4. The Proposed Budgets of the following Subsidiary Organs for the year 2008: (1) Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), Jeddah; (2) International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), Jeddah; (3) Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC), Ankara; (4) Islamic University of Technology (IUT), Dhaka; (5) Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), Istanbul; and (6)

Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), Casablanca.

Concerning the arrears of mandatory contributions of the Member States to the budgets of the General Secretariat of the OIC and its Subsidiary Organs, the Committee agreed to apply the progressive measures against defaulting Member States upon the expiry of the Incentives Resolution No. 1/10-AF (IS) after 31st December 2007.

The Committee took note of the recommendations of the Report of the General Secretariat concerning the establishment of a Pension Scheme for the OIC Staff, and requested the General Secretariat to further its study on the pension scheme and report to the next session of the PFC.

Other Meetings

Symposium on 'The Labor Market in the GCC Countries'

The General Secretariat for Development Planning (GSDP) hosted the Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf (GCC) Labour Market Symposium in Doha on 29-31 October 2007. Various participants from regional and international institutions and organizations were present at the Symposium, such as the World Bank Institute, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Statistical, Economic, Social Research and Training

Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC), the Arab Planning Institute, Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), the GCC General Secretariat and other national actors in the labour market.

SESRTCIC was represented at the Symposium by Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General, who presented a study on Initiating a Vocational Education and Training Program for the Member

Countries of the Arab Gulf Countries. Dr. Alpay talked about the contribution of investments in human resources and improvement of the infrastructure in order to meet the development's requirements of the 21st Century. In this regard, Dr. Alpay pointed out that the GCC commanded sufficient economic resources to enable its member countries to attain a far more improved status in human development by developing and implementing appropriate modalities of cooperation. He also added that the existing vocational education and training infrastructure and technological base needed to be enhanced so that the GCC member countries could respond properly to the contemporary labor market requirements.

The Symposium addressed recent trends and developments in the labor market including the use of new analytical methods to improve the generation of employment indicators and related indices. It also discussed future goals related to improving the knowledge-based economy and developing the labor market as well as supporting decision-making by using appropriate information.

During the Symposium the following themes were taken up with a view to

addressing the challenges in the labor market and presenting a global framework to support the generation of new job opportunities for GCC nationals and for developing their capabilities:

1. Importance of the labor market in the GCC socio-economic development context.
2. GCC manpower characteristics.
3. Local labor and private sector job vacancies.
4. Skills of non-national workers within the GCC countries.
5. Labor movement within the GCC geographical areas.
6. Labor laws in the GCC.
7. Female productivity within the GCC labor market.
8. Transfer of technology and its impact on job nationalization.
9. Relationship between the provision of training provided and curricula to GCC labor market needs.
10. Decentralization of education curricula as modules to enhance the building of the work force capabilities.
11. Labor market information systems within the GCC.
12. Knowledge-based economy as an assessment tool for recruitment of non-national workers.

The 1st Arab Statistical Conference

The First Arab Statistical Conference (FASC) was organized by the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics (AITRS) in cooperation with the Department of Statistics in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and held in Amman, Jordan on 12-13 November, 2007. The

objectives of the Conference were to underline the importance of good quality and professional statistical work for the Statisticians, emphasize the role of the National Statistical Organizations (NSOs) and highlight the need for Statistical Capacity Building.

The Centre has been represented at the Conference by Dr. Savas Alpay, the Director General of the Centre, Dr. Sıdıka Başçı, Acting Director of Statistics Department, and Mr. Atilla Karaman, Researcher. In the plenary session of the Conference, Dr. Savas Alpay made a presentation entitled "Statistical Capacity Building: View on the Developing OIC Member Countries". In his presentation, Dr. Alpay informed the participants of the previous and upcoming statistical activities of the Centre. He also highlighted the improvements related to the BASEIND database project of the Centre, which involves a new software system that enables easy data collection

and dissemination by the NSOs of the member countries. He also briefly summarised the completed training programmes of the Centre in 2007 and the planned ones in 2008. Dr. Alpay concluded his presentation by introducing the Global Trade Analysis Project (GTAP) for the OIC Member Countries.

During the Conference, SESRTCIC delegation made some important contacts with the representatives of the IMF, AITRS and other international institutions, where they exchanged views on enhancing the cooperation between the Centre and these institutions in the field of statistics.

SESRTCIC's Latest Reports

Annual Economic Report on the OIC Countries 2007

The Annual Economic Report on the OIC Countries analyses the economic situation in the OIC member countries during the latest five-year. It examines the recent major economic developments in the OIC member countries and investigates the inter-linkages of these developments with those in both developing and developed countries as well as the world economy as a whole.

The analysis is carried out in the light of the global, regional and national developments, using current data on OIC member countries, specially compiled

from various international and national sources, in addition to the Centre's databases.

This year's Report analyses the trends in the major economic indicators of the OIC countries in the light of the remarkably broad-based growth performance of the world economy during the last five-year period 2002-2006, the period that followed the sudden recession in 2001.

In addition to the overall group-comparative analysis, the 57 OIC member

countries are also analysed under three sub-groups which, presumably, would better illustrate the overall performance of the OIC countries and the developments they experienced. These are the OIC least-developed countries (OIC-LDC), the OIC fuel-exporting countries (OIC-FEC) and the OIC medium-developed countries (OIC-MDC).

In an attempt to enrich the context of the Report, this year's Report introduces "Country Profile" pages, which include data and graphical analysis on the major economic indicators of each country, and, thus, it presents the overall economic performance at the individual country level.

The Report also highlights, in special windows, various issues of concern to the developing countries, including the OIC members. The themes of this year's issues are the impact of commodity prices on the economies of the developing countries, business-friendly reforms in African member countries and impact of globalisation on future growth in the developing countries.

Overall, the Report shows that, comprising a substantial part of the developing countries, the OIC countries as a group followed in general similar trends during the period under consideration. However, the economic performance of the OIC countries in terms of the group average remained below the level maintained by the group of developing countries as a whole.

Although the average growth rates of both real GDP and per capita GDP recorded by the group of the OIC countries during the last five-year period were higher than

those of the world, they were still comparatively lower than those maintained by the group of the developing countries.

This reflects greater vulnerability on the part of the OIC group to the adverse external shocks in the world economy such as the slowdown in the major developed economies and the volatility of international commodity and financial markets.

This picture indicates that, unlike the developing countries, the OIC members were, in general, unable to benefit enough from the vibrant world economic outlook during the period under consideration and, consequently, they were unable to gain enough from the enlargement of the world trade by increasing their share in global trade.

With almost 22% of the world total population, the 57 OIC member countries accounted for only 6.1% of the world total output (GDP) and 9.2% of its total merchandise exports, both in terms of current US dollars.

This situation becomes worse in the face of the high external debt burden and unsatisfactory levels of FDI inflows in a large number of OIC countries.

By the end of 2005, the total external debt of the OIC countries amounted to \$722.3 billion or almost 30% of their total GDP where 21 of them were classified as severely indebted countries. Moreover, 15 OIC countries are currently classified as Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC).

On the other hand, although net foreign direct investment (FDI) flows have picked up significantly and steadily since the year 2000 from \$10.2 billion to reach \$46.7 billion in 2005, they made up only 16.6% of all FDI flows to the developing countries.

The Report also observes that the overall economic growth and performance of the OIC countries as a whole is still highly dominated by the performance of few members in certain OIC sub-groups, mainly countries in the OIC-MDC and OIC-FEC groups.

In this context, it is observed that the bulk of the total output (GDP) of the OIC countries is produced or generated by a few of them where, together, only 10 OIC countries produced 60.2% of the total OIC output in 2006.

It is also observed that, as in the case of output, the bulk of the total OIC countries' merchandise exports is still heavily concentrated in a few countries in both the OIC-MDC and OIC-FEC sub-groups. For example, only 10 OIC countries (almost the same OIC major producing countries) accounted for 77.4% of the total OIC countries' exports in 2005.

In the same context, it is observed that the bulk of the FDI flows were attracted by a few countries where, in 2005, only 10 countries, namely Turkey, Egypt, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lebanon, Sudan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan attracted 80% of the total FDI flows to the OIC countries.

Such a set-up of the group of the OIC member countries reflects a wide income

divergence within the OIC community and a huge gap between the rich and poor member countries.

In this context, 26 OIC countries are currently classified by the World Bank as low-income countries and 25 are middle-income countries. In contrast, only 6 are classified as high-income countries

The average income per capita (in terms of current US dollar) of 14 OIC fuel-exporting countries was almost 8 times higher than that in 21 OIC least-developed countries in 2006. At the individual country level, income per capita in the richest country was 336 times higher than that in the poorest.

In fact, the wide income divergence and the considerable discrepancies in economic performance of the OIC sub-groups constitute basic factors that continue to hinder the efforts of the member countries to strengthen intra-OIC economic cooperation, particularly in the areas of enhancing intra-OIC trade and investment.

On the other hand, the structure of output and exports of the OIC countries remained almost unchanged during the period under review, where more than half of the members continued to remain as primary-product exporters (mostly fuel and agricultural products).

The persistence of the large shares of such products in the output and exports of these countries, in turn, increases the risk of exposure to price fluctuations in the world commodity markets and negatively affects sustainable economic growth and long-term policymaking.

Given this state of affairs, and noting the high pace of globalisation and liberalisation in the world economy, the OIC countries seem to be more vulnerable to the negative effects arising from the intense competition in world markets, fluctuations in international commodity prices, the instability in global financial flows and the rapid changes in technology.

The Report concludes with certain broad indicative policy actions for consideration by the member countries and governments in support of their efforts to attain higher levels of economic progress and integration. In this context, the Report highlights, among other things, the following points:

In order to decrease their vulnerability to the adverse shocks in the world economy,

the OIC countries are recommended to further their efforts towards creating an environment more conducive for sustainable development through the pursuit of more coherent and practical development strategies emphasizing enhanced sectoral diversification and structural reforms with the active participation of the private sector.

In order to increase their share in the world economy and trade, the OIC countries are recommended to devise ways and means to diversify their economies, maximise the complementarities between their economies, increase the volume of intra-trade and investments, improve the quality and increase the value-added of their products and rapidly develop the required conditions to attract larger and continued flows of foreign investment.

Food Security and Poverty Alleviation Initiative in the OIC Member States of Sub-Saharan Africa

Sub-Saharan Africa is the only region in the world where food security and poverty situation have been worsening through time. Agriculture has been recognised, in many reports on poverty in Africa, as the key sector for achieving the poverty targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) where most of the African economies, particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa, are primarily based on agriculture. Yet, food production in the region has failed to keep pace with the population growth rates over the past three decades.

The Millennium Report (2005) has, for example, shown that the region of Sub-Saharan Africa has been lagging behind in cereal yield per hectare. According to the estimates of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), 80% of the food insecure population in Africa lives in the rural areas and more than 90% of them involve in agricultural activities in marginal lands.

Therefore, addressing the problems of the rural population and agricultural productivity in Sub-Saharan Africa should be the primary concern of any initiative for poverty alleviating programme in the

region since improvements in agricultural productivity lead directly to increases in food production and improved nutrition for the poor.

In this context, the preliminary report titled “Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Situation in the OIC Member Countries” prepared by the SESRTCIC in February 2007 reached some key recommendations to reduce poverty in OIC member countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. Among other things, the report argued that increasing the productivity and the value added of the agricultural activities of the poor people in the rural areas is of an utmost importance for reducing poverty in most of these countries.

In the light of these results, the present Report “Food Security and Poverty Alleviation Initiative in the OIC Member States of Sub-Saharan Africa: A Preamble

to Cassava Integrated Project” aims at introducing an initiative for food security project proposal for alleviating poverty based on increasing the productivity of Cassava (*) and the potential of Cassava processing in some OIC member countries in Sub-Saharan Africa that could be used as a model in other member countries in the region.

The Report highlights the importance of Cassava in achieving food security and its potential in generating income for the marginal farmers. It discusses the farming systems in Sub-Saharan Africa and their relevance to agricultural productivity. This discussion facilitates the selection of project sites for the Cassava initiative in the initial phase and provides the broad outline and the key components of a pilot project proposal named “Cassava Integrated Project for Food Security and Poverty Alleviation in the OIC Member States of Sub-Saharan Africa”.

(*) Cassava is a root crop, it is estimated that over 70 million people in Africa consume more than 500 Kcal per day from Cassava.

Centre's Activities for the First Quarter of 2008

January

3rd Businesswomen Forum, 13-15 January 2008, Doha, Qatar.

February

Training Program on 'Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)', 4-6 February 2008, Sudan.

March

Senior Officials Meeting for the 11th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, 8 March 2008, Dakar, Senegal.

Preparatory Meeting of the Foreign Ministers for the 11th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, 10-11 March 2008, Dakar, Senegal.

11th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, 13-14 March 2008, Dakar, Senegal.

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Inforeport İslam Ülkeleri İstatistiksel, Ekonomik ve Sosyal Araştırma ve Eğitim Merkezi tarafından yılda dört defa yayımlanır.

ISSN: 0257-9480

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