

TRANSPORT COOPERATION FRAMEWORK
WITHIN THE ORGANISATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC)
“İZMİR DOCUMENT 2011”

I. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The current 57 OIC member countries from various regions of the World, covers one sixth of the World’s land area. Moreover, one fifth of the total World population inhabits within this wide geography. While the OIC member countries are holding vital and strategically important junctions for the intercontinental trade thanks to their divergent locations on the World, they also offer very wide range of economically significant values to the international trade.

Within this scope, economic activity should undoubtedly be perceived as one of the key pillars of the welfare and development of the OIC member countries. In order to take the deserved share from the ever-growing world trade, secure, safe, reliable, well-functioning and interconnected transport infrastructures and systems are indispensable for the OIC family.

In this regard, The Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (COMCEC) has always attributed utmost importance to transport cooperation since its establishment. Therefore, transport has been identified as one of the ten priority areas/sectors of cooperation in “the Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation” among the member countries of the OIC, adopted at the 10th Session of the COMCEC in İstanbul in October 1994.

Apart from some very important steps taken in the past, today it is a fact that there is a need to revitalise the cooperation among the member countries in the transport area through a permanent and regularly functioning framework.

Within this perspective, recently, the COMCEC Economic Summit, which was held in Istanbul in November 2009 on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the COMCEC, emphasized the importance of cooperation in the area of transportation to increase intra-OIC trade and requested COMCEC to work on the revitalization of cooperation in

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this sector. Accordingly, the Republic of Turkey offered to organize an Experts Group Meeting (EGM) on the subject in 2011 with this purpose. Based on this background, the Experts Group on Transport Cooperation met on 9 June 2011 in İzmir/Republic of Turkey.

Furthermore, the 26th Session of the COMCEC, which was held in Istanbul in October 2010, adopted “The Impact of Transportation Networks on Trade and Tourism” as the theme for the Exchange of Views at its 27th Session, which will be held in October 2011, and requested the SESRIC, in collaboration with IDB, the OIC General Secretariat, relevant OIC institutions and other related international organizations to organize a workshop on this topic prior its 27th Session meeting and to submit a report to the said meeting.

Accordingly, two days before the Experts Group Meeting, the Workshop on “The Impact of Transportation Networks on Trade and Tourism” was held on 7-8 June 2011 in İzmir/Republic of Turkey.

During the Experts Group Meeting on Transport Cooperation, representatives of the member country, taking into consideration the recommendations developed during the above-mentioned Workshop, formulated the following recommendations so as to lay the foundations of future cooperation in the field of transport within the OIC; and hereby submit this set of recommendations so called “İzmir Document 2011” to the COMCEC for adoption during its 18th Session:

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Establishment of a Working Group on Transport

Establishment of a COMCEC “Working Group on Transport” which would be the main platform where the OIC member countries would discuss general transport issues as well as specific issues of road, rail, maritime transport and civil aviation, is recommended.

2. Scope of Transport Cooperation among the OIC Member Countries

a. The main objectives to which the transport cooperation efforts among the OIC member countries should be oriented are as follows:

- Establishment of safe, secure, high-quality and interconnected transport networks among the OIC member countries.
- Conducting reliable, fast, gradually liberated and well-functioning transport activities compatible with the international standards/norms/rules among the OIC member countries.
- Connection of the sub-regions of the OIC geography both with each other and also with the rest of the world.

b. The main challenges and problems in the field of transport within the scope of OIC, which also would determine the areas of transport cooperation among the OIC member countries can be identified as follows:

- Inadequate transport infrastructures in/between the OIC member countries,
- Serious security and safety concerns on some transport routes in certain OIC regions,
- Implementation of excessive taxes, fees and other kind of charges for transit/international transport and unofficial charges in some points within the OIC member countries,
- Some missing links and bottlenecks on certain important transport routes within the OIC region,
- Lack of adequate financial resources and funding opportunities,
- Technical and infrastructural incompatibilities among the OIC member countries in different modes of transport,

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- Non-physical barriers hindering the transit and international transport of goods and passengers among the OIC member countries,
- Cumbersome procedures and facilities in some border-crossing points,
- Insufficient cooperation in the field of transport which may include sharing the experiences, best practices and training opportunities in different areas of transport such as infrastructure, legislation, vehicles, staff, commercial etc.,
- Inadequate human and institutional capacity of relevant authorities,
- Lack of progress in signing and especially implementation of relevant international agreements and conventions.

3. Areas of Cooperation

a. Harmonisation of National Legislations on Transport

- Identification of challenges affecting the transport activities adversely among the OIC countries resulting from incompatibility of the national legislations.
- Increasing the awareness in OIC about major international agreements and conventions on transport; and increasing the number of OIC member countries which are parties to these agreements and conventions.
- Development of other possible ways and means to meet short term needs in the harmonization of legislations related to the transit transport.

b. Trade and transport facilitation activities in the OIC member countries.

- Structural harmonisation of physical transport infrastructures and improvement of border crossing facilities among the OIC member countries.
- Removal of non-physical barriers in front of transit/international transport among the OIC member countries.
- Removal of restrictions on transit/international transport among the OIC member countries and gradual liberalisation of the transit/international transportation within the OIC.

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- Increasing institutional and human capacity in transport related institutions and organizations.

- c. Establishment of safe, secure, high-quality and interconnected transport networks in/among the OIC member countries and connection of the sub-regions of the OIC geography both with each other and also with the rest of the world.**

- Studying on transit/international transport routes connecting the OIC member countries and transport infrastructure needs and projects on these routes.

4. Means of Implementation

- Assessment reports on needs and policies of member countries or impact of emerging issues in the sector/subsector,
- Institutional support and capacity building programs,
- Programs for sharing best practices,
- Seminars,
- Study visits,
- Training courses and related materials (guidebooks, brochures etc.),
- Consultations with stakeholders (private sector, NGOs, public representatives),
- Joint commercial and technical initiatives.
- Public-Private-Partnership Projects

III. ADOPTION

The above mentioned recommendations on transport cooperation among the OIC member countries were formulated during the COMCEC Experts Group Meeting on Transport which was held in İzmir/TURKEY on 9 June 2011.