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## UPDATE ON THE ANKARA CENTRE ACTIVITIES

### New Director General at SESRTCIC

His Excellency Ambassador Erdinç Erdün, assumed his duties as Director General of SESRTCIC of May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998.

Ambassador Erdün was born in 1941 in Istanbul. He graduated from Galatasaray Lisesi in 1961 and from the Faculty of Political Sciences of the University of Ankara in 1965. The same year, he joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. From 1965 to 1981, he was successively Third, Second, First Secretary and Counsellor at the Turkish Embassies in Athens, Addis Ababa and the Turkish Delegation to NATO. From 1981 to 1986, he was Consul General in Karachi. From 1986 to 1988, he was Head of Department in Policy Planning. From 1988 to 1989, he was Minister

Plenipotentiary, Deputy Director General of Bilateral Economic Affairs. From 1989 to 1991, he was Director General of Bilateral Economic Affairs.

He served as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary in Khartoum from 1991 to 1995 and in Manila from 1995 to 1998.

Ambassador Erdün is married and has a son.

He was awarded the Decoration of the Order of the Two Niles of the Sudan and that of the Order of Sikatune of the Philippines.

### **News from the Centre's Web Site**

The number of visitors to our site continues to increase. It is now more than doubling every quarter. If this pace keeps up, we'll be receiving almost 5 thousand hits a day by the end of 1998. Granted, the Internet is itself growing, but is it growing at the rate we are talking about? Is it doubling every quarter? Well, some reports say it does. Then again, that means we are not falling back in a very fast growing sector.

Statistics on InfoBase usage for the second quarter of 1998 are as follows:

Total pages accessed	76148
of which,	
through the direct request of our Internet address of "www.sesrtcic.org"	400
to our home page, following our hint at the bottom of a page that was hit	3759
through an outside link (see list below)	892
from our own links (i.e. page to page)	43648
as a result of some search which hit one of our pages, among other sites' pages	21952

As a result, during this period our home page was opened on 4570 instances. As the size of the data is growing very fast we have not been able to design a method that will analyse the distribution yet, but we are working on it.

A brief review of the distribution of accessed pages according to kind shows that "statistical data for countries" are the most popular with 14543 occurrences. This is followed by "bibliographic pages citing our Library's collections", with 6870.

We've discovered that in the period covered, 892 users have found their way to our site's various pages thanks to the links established to the involved pages by other sites. 35 of these were from various pages in the web site of the BBC, 57 from the pages in the web site of the Indonesian Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS), again 10 were from the web site of Palestine Central Bureau of Statistics.

Only about 5 % of the hits to our pages originated from our member countries and the top 3 are Malaysia (1588, four times its level in the previous quarter), Turkey (358), and Indonesia (302). Regarding hits from non-member countries, the USA lead the list with 20377; they are followed by the United Kingdom (3808). 4088 of the hits from the USA were from educational institutions and this is almost the double of the previous quarter. We think that this last indicator is most significant because educational users being one of the first in the Internet are expected to approach the saturation point and an increase in the number of hits originating from such users is more likely to be a better indicator of increased use.

We activated the feedback facility of our site only in late October, 1997 and the total number of evaluations/comments received at the end of last quarter was 29; since then 54 more have been sent. The general assessment of these are positive and the most frequent request concerns information; although it is worth noting that some employment applications are not missing.

This quarter's major new element in the InfoBase is the "Training Opportunities" pages. The most popular page of this new facility is the page which we called "Training Opportunity Scheduler" where the users can make their selections of training area and month and review the various specific options they have in the member countries of the OIC.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Session of the WTO Ministerial Conference and Commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of Multilateral Trading System held in Geneva**

The Second Session of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Ministerial Conference was convened in Geneva between from 18 to 20 May 1998. Concurrently, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organised a Consultative Meeting of OIC Member Countries in connection with the WTO Conference. Mr. Oker Gürler, Senior Economist from SESRTCIC, attended both meetings as part of the OIC Delegation.

The WTO Ministerial Conference aimed to review the implementation of the WTO Agreement and the decisions taken at the First Ministerial Meeting of the WTO held in Singapore on 9-13 December 1996 and to discuss the future agenda of the WTO.

Mr. Renato Ruggiero, the Director-General of the WTO, in his address, gave an account of the successes achieved since the First Ministerial Meeting in Singapore. He pointed to the increasing interest of the developing countries, particularly the least-developed countries, in the WTO which brought together 132 countries under common international rules, regulations and procedures. He said that whenever trade was talked about, issues such as development, financial stability, marginalisation, environment, social conditions, employment, public health, cultural diversity, etc., came up immediately. Mr. Ruggiero concluded that these issues must be taken up by the international community and that the disciplined and rule-based Multilateral Trading System (MTS) was essential for a better management of the world economy.

The Ministers, during the Meeting, reviewed the activities of the WTO and expressed their ideas on the implementation of the WTO Agreement and other ministerial decisions. The Ministers also exchanged views on the topics that they deemed necessary for the future agenda of the WTO.

At the end of the Conference, the Ministers adopted a Ministerial Declaration and a Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce. The first had been prepared by the General Council through discussions amongst the WTO member countries. In this Declaration, the Ministers underlined the crucial importance of the multilateral rule-based trading system. After recalling the financial turmoil in the Asian countries, they rejected the use of any protectionist measures while stressing the importance of keeping all markets open. The Ministers also decided to consider how to improve the transparency of the WTO

operations in order to enhance the public understanding of the MTS. They have repeated their concern over the marginalisation of the Least Developed Countries, and urged members to implement the market-access commitments in favour of these countries. They also decided to establish a process under the General Council to ensure full implementation of the existing agreements.

The second document, Declaration on Global Electronic Commerce, was proposed by the United States. In this Declaration, the Ministers, “recognising that global electronic commerce is growing and creating new opportunities for trade”, gave an assignment to the General Council “to establish a comprehensive work programme to examine all trade-related issues relating to global electronic commerce”. Furthermore, They requested that “the General Council should produce a report on the progress of the work programme and any recommendations for action to be submitted at (their) third session. The Ministers further stated that “Members will continue their current practice of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions”. Ministers also accepted the US’ proposal to hold the Third Session in the United States in 1999. And they elected the USA, Pakistan, Burkina Faso and Colombia as the Office Members of the next session.

### **SESRTCIC hosts The Third Meeting of the Heads of the National Statistical Organisations of the Member States of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference in Ankara**

The Third Meeting of the Heads of the National Statistical Organisations of the Member States of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference was held in Ankara, Republic of Turkey, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> June, 1998. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following Member States of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference: Bangladesh, Benin, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Turkey, Turkmenistan and Yemen. Representatives of the General Secretariat of the OIC, COMCEC Co-ordination Office, IDB, UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) also attended the Meeting.

The Meeting was inaugurated by HE Ambassador Erdiñ Erdün, Director General of the Centre, who welcomed the participating delegates and stated that the Centre has developed considerably since the two meetings that were held in the early years of its establishment. HE Erdün, pointed out that, as a result of the experience gained during the past 20 years, the Centre has developed the capacity to contribute substantially to the promotion of co-operation among the member states in the field of statistics, particularly in the areas of flow and exchange of information, compilation and dissemination of comparable data on member country economies and provision of support to the statistical activities in the member countries through technical co-operation arrangements.

Dr. Padi Cindoruk, the founder and former Director General of the Centre who has retired recently after twenty years of service, also addressed the Meeting. Dr. Cindoruk, following a brief summary of the statistics- and information-related work and activities of the Centre during the early years, expressed his confidence that the Meeting would provide an opportunity for the delegates to examine the state of affairs in the Islamic world in the area of statistics, renew their commitments to support the Centre in its

multifarious activities, and consider ways and means to use the Centre resources and facilities to establish and promote closer co-operation amongst their institutions to help face the new global challenges.

HE Ambassador Prof. Dr. Orhan Güvenen, Under-secretary of the State Planning Organisation and former President of the State Institute of Statistics of Turkey addressed the Meeting and commended the high quality work and significant contributions of the Centre in the areas of statistics, economic research and training. HE Güvenen stressed the importance of information and knowledge in the current era of rapid globalisation which, besides certain obvious advantages in selected areas of economic life, could if unchecked turn out to be harmful and lead to the loss of the human dimension in growth and development.

Mr. Candan Baysan, Senior Statistician at SESRTCIC, presented to the Meeting a Working Paper entitled “Collection and Dissemination of Statistics in the Member States of the OIC and the Role Played by the SESRTCIC” that was prepared for the Meeting by the Centre. He pointed out that the national statistical organisations were the main publishers of processed statistical data in the member countries and went on to suggest for consideration by the delegates a number of ways through which the flow of statistics and information from the National Statistical Organisations to the Centre could be improved. He expressed the hope that with the improvements in world-wide telecommunications, it would soon be possible to use electronic means as a more efficient and faster way of supplying data to the Centre. Mr. Baysan concluded his presentation by stating that the Centre was always ready to play the catalytic role given to it in its mandate to help support the establishment and promotion of improved channels of information exchange among the national statistical organisations themselves by keeping its facilities and resources, especially its web site, at their disposal.

Brief presentations were made by Mr. Mostafa Muhammed Ahmed of Egypt on the “Geographical Information System (GIS) and its Statistical Applications in Egypt”, Ms. Nazan Teksoy of Turkey on the “Impact of Remote Sensing on Official Statistics”, Mr. Kotb Abdel Latif Salem, regional advisor of National Accounts and Economic Statistics, ESCWA on “Changes Between the System of National Accounts (SNA) 1993 and SNA 1968” and Mr. Loade Syafiuddin of Indonesia on “Environmental Accounting for Sustainable Growth and Development with Special Reference to SEEA; the Indonesian Experience”.

Then SESRTCIC presented to the Meeting another Working Paper, this one entitled “The Role of National Statistical Organisations in Technical Co-operation in the Area of Statistics”. The paper started with a brief introduction on the importance of technical co-operation in the multilateral framework and the potentials that existed in the OIC member countries to build up facilities and highly-qualified human capital in various sectors of the national economies. The paper went on to describe the work undertaken by the Centre in this respect and concluded by expressing the hope that the Meeting would assume its role as the appropriate forum wherein this crucial aspect of overall co-operation would be studied in detail and ideas for drawing up a medium-term technical co-operation scheme in the area of statistics would be offered.

At the conclusion of the Meeting some recommendations were made on (a) the future work and activities of the Centre in the area of Statistics and Information and (b) the action to be taken by the national statistical organisations of the member states in support of the Centre's activities as well as to help expand and promote institutional co-operation amongst themselves.

The Meeting agreed to express its appreciation to Dr. Padi Cindoruk, the founder and former Director of the Centre and its executive head during the first 20 years of its operation and wished him good health and continued success during his retirement.

**SPECIAL ITEM: Recommendations of the Third Meeting  
of the Heads of National Statistical Organisations of  
the Member States of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference**

1. The National Statistical Organisations (NSOs) should provide the Centre with all requested statistical data and information in order to help it fulfil its mandate in the area of statistics. In this context, published sources of such data and information should routinely be mailed to the Centre to keep its library well-equipped and up-to-date. One copy each of the questionnaire responses that the NSOs supply regularly to the other international agencies should be sent to the Centre.

2. To facilitate a smoother and more complete flow of such information from the NSOs, the Centre should determine its requirements in a systematic manner, make complete and clear listings of such requirements and address them directly to the offices of the Heads of National Statistical Organisations in the member countries, at regular intervals to be determined in line with the calendar of commitments of the NSOs.

3. To ensure the efficiency of the information flow, it would be advisable for the Centre to draw up a list of socio-economic indicators most commonly used by the Centre to be circulated to the NSOs in the form of specially designed questionnaires which would be complemented by explanatory notes for best results.

4. For an efficient and effective follow-up of the communications related to the flow of information, data and publications from the NSOs to the Centre, the latter should design a clear method of prompt acknowledgement of all material received.

5. The Centre should take special care to obtain, process and disseminate officially authorised statistics on the member countries, while making sure to include proper annotations in cases where it would be obliged to use information and data from other sources in some of its work.

6. Regular bi-annual meetings of the Heads of the NSOs, to be held in different member countries, should be considered as a useful and constructive means not only to ensure support to the Centre in its activities in the area of statistics, but to help promote and expand direct contacts and exchanges among the NSOs at the highest level to help promote OIC co-operation in this vital area. In this connection, the Centre is requested to try to organise the future meetings in all three official languages of the OIC.

7. Although it was observed with great interest that some of the NSOs have embarked upon the implementation of and/or experimentation with the use of such techniques, the high costs of the basic minimum investments needed for their use as regular tools in standard operations would make them prohibitive for most of the member countries.

8. The cost element notwithstanding, it would still be essential for years to come to complement these techniques with the more conventional and well-established statistical tools in order to benefit from the advantages and offset the disadvantages of each and achieve the best overall results.

9. Training, as the most crucial facet of technical co-operation in the area of statistics, is an important area where the needs of the NSOs are by far the greatest and the most urgent.

10. The information already accumulated at the Centre and that conveyed through the questionnaire responses show that the existing manpower resources, physical facilities and technical capacities, on the one hand, and the expressed needs, on the other, point to the possibility of realising a large volume of technical co-operation activities at different levels and in various subject areas of statistics.

11. To render the information collected by the latest questionnaire more complete, the Centre would be well-advised to follow-up the completion of the questionnaire survey with those NSOs from which no responses had been received.

12. Given the inadequate financial resources of the Centre on account of both the small size of its overall budget and the fact that only 40 to 50 per cent of its annual budgets could actually be realised due to the large number of OIC member countries that default on their mandatory contributions to the Centre, the latter could best play an enabling and catalytic role.

13. The above notwithstanding, the Centre would be expected, in co-operation and collaboration with the NSOs, to invest a substantial amount of effort, apply systematic action and undertake detailed planning not only to match the existing capacities and needs for the formulation of specific technical co-operation projects, but to help secure funding for these projects from various national, regional and international sources on a continuous basis.

14. In this connection, the Centre can compile and widely disseminate the basic information on the existing needs and capacities in the NSOs, design, in collaboration with the participating organisations, the "capacity-need" match-ups in the form of specific technical co-operation projects and undertake the necessary contacts with the possible funding agencies to help secure financial support for the said projects.

15. In implementing its various activities, it would be advisable for the Centre to work with 'homogeneous' groups of member countries to be formed according to factors like language, geographical proximity, etc., in order to save time, money and other resources.

16. In order to make available a source of information that would be vital to implement technical co-operation projects, the Centre can prepare a dynamic roster of experts in different statistical subjects that are available in the NSOs, as well as in the universities and other training establishments in the member countries and elsewhere, and make this list readily accessible to the NSOs and other interested parties in the Islamic world.

17. Given the diverse nature of the statistical activities that are being carried out by the NSOs, the Centre should prepare a minimal programme for itself that would be made up of a number of priority areas of statistical activity relating particularly to information exchange and technical co-operation, where it would be best equipped, given its means, to meet at least some of the basic needs of the NSOs. In this connection, the organisation of training programmes and workshops on subjects of common interest to the NSOs, like sampling survey techniques, in co-operation with the relevant regional and international organisations would be useful.

18. The Centre should consider the NSO in each member country as its focal point regarding all of its activities in the area of statistics, including technical co-operation and training. In order to increase the efficiency of its relations with the NSOs and to benefit the most from its collaboration with them, the Centre would be well-advised to acquaint itself, to the extent possible, with the administrative procedures, organisational structures and detailed mandates of the individual NSOs. Meanwhile, the NSOs could support the Centre in its relations with their respective governments provided that the Centre keeps them regularly informed about all of its activities in their countries.

**The Ankara Centre Hosted the 21<sup>st</sup> Meeting of the Board of Directors of SESRTCIC in Ankara, on 4-6 June 1998**

The Twenty-first Meeting of the Board of Directors of SESRTCIC was held in Ankara, Republic of Turkey, on June 4-6, 1998. The Meeting was attended by delegates from Bangladesh, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey. The Director General of the Centre and the representative of the OIC General Secretariat were present as ex officio members of the Board, and the representative of the COMCEC Co-ordination Office attended the Meeting as an observer.

The Director General Ambassador Erdiñ Erdün, opened the Meeting and welcomed the members of the Board of Directors to Turkey, the Meeting and the Centre on the Twentieth Anniversary of the establishment of SESRTCIC. Ambassador Erdün extended a special welcome to Dr. Padi Cindoruk, the founder and former Director General of the Centre, and paid a special tribute to him for the exceptional services he had rendered at the head of SESRTCIC since 1 June 1978. He announced to the Meeting that they had decided to name the library of the Centre as “Dr. Padi Cindoruk Library” in recognition of his services to the Centre during the past twenty years.

The Board of Directors started the working sessions and adopted the agenda of the Meeting. Under Agenda Item 3, HE Ambassador Erdiñ Erdün, the Director General, introduced the report on the activities of the Centre since the last Meeting, and Mr. Ýlhan Uđurel, the Executive Co-ordinator, presented the details of the report . During the

deliberations held on the Report, the members of the Board discussed in detail the financial and manpower difficulties faced by the Centre.

Under Agenda Item 4, HE Ambassador Erdün introduced the proposed Budget of the Centre for the Financial Year 1998/1999, which included as an integral part the Work Programme of the Centre for the same year starting on July 1, 1998. He explained that the proposed Budget was composed of two main parts, the Administrative Budget and the Programme Budget. Dr. Abdelrahman Zeinelabdin, Director of Administration and Finance, then, presented the details of the proposed Budget.

During the deliberations that ensued, the Meeting appreciated the fact that, although no increase was being proposed in the budget total for 1998/1999 over that of the past year, a certain amount of funds, albeit small, could still be transferred from the Administrative Budget to the Programme Budget. The Board of Directors went on to approve the proposed Budget (including the Work Programme) of the Centre for 1998/1999 and recommended its adoption by the competent OIC authorities. The Meeting also made a number of recommendations:

1. The Meeting requested that the Twenty-sixth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, to be held in the Spring of 1999 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, may consider to adopt, in addition to the Centre's Budget for 1998/1999, that for 1999/2000 in the same overall amounts, so that the problems emanating from late approval of the annual budgets during the last several years could be ended.

2. The Meeting requested the Centre to make the necessary arrangements to encourage the Member countries who were in arrears to the Centre's budgets to make use of the renewed special formula for back payments in order to meet their commitments at an early date. The Meeting also welcomed the initiative taken by the Centre to undertake country visits in order to secure payment of contributions to the Centre's budget through direct contacts with the concerned authorities in the individual countries. The Meeting urged the Centre to further expand its efforts to develop modalities to secure additional funds by selling its publications and services.

3. The Meeting requested the Centre to intensify its efforts to cooperate and collaborate with the relevant regional and international organisations in formulating joint activities, projects and programmes on a cost-sharing basis.

## **OIC NEWS**

### **IDB's Consultative Meeting of OIC Member Countries to Prepare for the 2<sup>nd</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference in Jeddah**

Mr. Selim Ýlkin, Senior Economist at the Centre, attended the Islamic Development Bank's Consultative Meeting of OIC Member Countries to Prepare for the 2<sup>nd</sup> WTO Ministerial Conference. The Meeting, organised in Jeddah on 28-29 April 1998, was an

effort on the part of the IDB to prepare OIC Member Countries to the Ministerial Conference that was scheduled to take place on 18-20 May 1998 in Geneva.

The participants of the Meeting expressed their appreciation to the President of the IDB and other officials for their efforts in assisting the OIC Member Countries to participate more actively in the WTO and enabling them to cope with the challenges faced in integrating into the Multilateral Trading System. It was emphasised that special attention should be given to implementation issues in general, and those in Agriculture, Textiles and clothing, in particular. The participants also emphasised the importance for OIC Ministers to get together prior to the WTO Ministerial Meeting in Geneva.

Furthermore, the Meeting expressed its satisfaction that efforts being undertaken by the IDB in assisting countries in the process of accession to the WTO are bearing fruit.

### **Sectoral Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of the OIC Plan of Action in the Area of Technology and Technical Co-operation**

The Sectoral Expert Group Meeting on the Implementation of the OIC Plan of Action in the Area of “Technology and Technical Co-operation” was held in Istanbul from 6 to 8 May 1998. Eighteen member countries and one observer country of the OIC attended the Meeting. The representatives of the General Secretariat and seven subsidiary, specialised and affiliated institutions of the OIC also attended the Meeting.

Mr. Timuçin Sanalan, Deputy Under-secretary of the State Planning Organisation of the Republic of Turkey, opened the Meeting. Mr. Sanalan, emphasised the importance of such meetings in starting the implementation of the new OIC Plan of Action in line with the new principles and operational modalities contained in the OIC Strategy and the Plan of Action.

HE Ambassador Motahar Hossain, Director of Economic Affairs of the OIC General Secretariat, delivered a message from HE Dr. Azeddine Laraki, Secretary General of the OIC, emphasising the importance of the OIC Plan of Action in furthering economic and commercial co-operation among the member countries.

After the election of the Bureau of the Meeting and adoption of the Agenda, the Background Report of the General Secretariat was presented. The Meeting, then, heard a presentation by the Islamic Development Bank concerning the activities and facilities of the Bank relating to technical assistance and technical co-operation.

Under Agenda Item 6, SESRTCIC presented a working paper entitled “Proposals on Means/Modalities of Implementation and Information Requirements in the Area of Technology and Technical Co-operation.”, where detailed proposals were advanced to prepare the ground for specific project proposals under each of the programmes contained in the Chapter of the Plan of Action under consideration.

Under Agenda Item 7, SESRTCIC presented a document entitled “Project Proposals and Project Committees in the Area of Technology and Technical Co-operation”, in order to facilitate the deliberations of the Meeting.

The delegates went on to consider and deliberate upon various project proposals and joint schemes presented by a number of member countries. The Meeting also noted the thirty-six projects submitted to COMSTECH by eighteen Member States and agreed that they may also be considered. It was also decided that it would be possible for new project proposals to be sent to the General Secretariat even after the conclusion of the Meeting, especially by the member countries that have not attended the Meeting. It was agreed to make a strong appeal to the Member States to forward to the General Secretariat their responses to the project proposals already made as soon as possible, preferably by 1 October 1998 at the latest, in order to facilitate the establishment and early activation of the project committees in the case of the projects that have mustered sufficient interest.

#### **14<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Co-operation of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (COMCEC)**

The Fourteenth Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Co-operation of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (COMCEC) was held in İstanbul, from 9 to 11 May 1998. The representatives of nine Member States of the Committee, the General Secretariat and five subsidiary, specialised and affiliated institutions of the OIC attended the Meeting. The Meeting was inaugurated by Mr. Timuçin Sanalan, Deputy Under-secretary of the State Planning Organisation of Turkey, on behalf of HE İþýn Çelebi, Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey.

HE Süleyman Demirel, President of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of the COMCEC, in his message to the Meeting, underlined the substantial developments that have taken place world-wide, since the COMCEC became operational in 1984, and the fact that globalisation has started to make its effects felt more and more everyday to shape the future of the World. While wishing success to the Meeting, HE Demirel expressed his confidence that the agenda of the next COMCEC Session to be finalised by the Committee and the ensuing work by the Ministers themselves will provide an opportunity for the member countries of the OIC to deliberate and agree upon joint action to face the global challenges being raised.

The Meeting also heard the message of HE Dr. Azeddine Laraki, the OIC Secretary General, which was delivered by HE Ambassador Nabika Diallo, Assistant Secretary General of OIC. HE Laraki, stressing the weight of economic and commercial co-operation issues on the overall agenda of the OIC and the important role that was being played in this vital area by the COMCEC, thanked HE President Süleyman Demirel for his efforts, as Chairman of COMCEC, and the Turkish Government for their contributions towards making this Summit committee as the most important OIC forum where the crucial economic issues of the day were being taken up in detail by the OIC countries in order to develop effective responses to the global challenges being faced collectively.

The Meeting, then, heard the Background Report of the General Secretariat, which was followed by a report on the implementation of the Plan of Action. Additional reports were presented by the representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, the Islamic

Development Bank, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade and the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry regarding WTO Meetings and related issues.

Under Agenda Item 6, the Committee considered the Draft Statute of the Standards and Metrology Institute and recommended, for consideration by the Fourteenth Session of the COMCEC, a clarifying amendment in the relevant article of the Statute concerning financial contributions to be made towards the budgets of the Institute. The Committee noted with appreciation the willingness of the State of Palestine to host the headquarters of the Standard and Metrology Institute (SMIIC) in Palestine, after the initial period of three years during which the headquarters will be hosted by Turkey.

Under Agenda Item 7, the representatives of the COMCEC Co-ordination Office made a presentation on the preparations for the exchange of views on “Intra-OIC Trade and Investments, Economic Stabilisation and Structural Reforms in Member Countries” to be conducted during the 14<sup>th</sup> Session of the COMCEC.

Under Agenda Item 8, the Committee considered the Draft Agenda of the Fourteenth Session of the COMCEC to be held from 1 to 4 November 1998, in Ýstanbul. The Committee reviewed the Draft Agenda and decided to submit it to the Fourteenth Session of the COMCEC.

At its closing session, chaired by HE Ambassador Yařar Yakýp, Head of the Delegation of the Republic of Turkey, the Committee adopted its Report together with its annexes.

### **Consultative Meeting of OIC Member Countries in Conjunction with the WTO Ministerial Conference held in Geneva**

The Consultative Meeting of OIC Countries in Conjunction with the Second WTO Ministerial Conference was held in two sessions in Geneva on 17 and 20 May 1998. Mr. Oker Grlr, Senior Economist, represented the SESRTCIC in the Meeting. During the first session, the delegations from the OIC member countries expressed their opinions on the Ministerial Declaration, and made comments on the WTO activities and the implementation of WTO Agreements. They also stated the need to improve co-operation and co-ordination among the member countries of the OIC in relation to the WTO activities and trade talks. They proposed to continue with similar consultation meetings in the future within the OIC.

During the second session, the delegations evaluated the outcome of the Ministerial Conference, and tried to find answers to the question as to what needed to be done to face the challenges that may arise during the talks related to the future agenda of the WTO. They also tried to develop ways and means to improve co-ordination and co-operation amongst the OIC countries. The participants proposed, inter alia:

1. To prepare studies to evaluate the impact of implementation of the WTO agreement on the economies of the OIC Member States,
2. To establish an Ad-Hoc Working Group to prepare a consolidated OIC position with respect to the WTO agenda,

3. To convene a series of Expert Group Meetings to discuss various facets of the WTO agenda,
4. To start a series of Consultation Meetings in Geneva amongst the permanent representations of the Member States,
5. To include the evaluation of WTO activities and the discussion of its future agenda into the COMCEC as an agenda item.
6. To request the IDB to prepare a study analysing the results of the Ministerial Conference.

### **Second Meeting on Preparing the Islamic Ummah for the 21st Century**

The Second Meeting on Preparing the Ummah for the Twenty-first Century was held in Tehran, the Islamic Republic of Iran on 13-14 June 1998. The General Secretariat of the OIC, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade (ICDT), the Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry ICCI), the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC) and The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) participated in the Meeting.

The meeting was inaugurated by HE Sabah Zangane, Ambassador to the Permanent Mission of the Islamic Republic of Iran to OIC, Jeddah. The Meeting listened to HE Ambassador Ali A. Mojtahed Shabestari who delivered the statement of the host country, and emphasised the vital importance of the OIC Standing Committees and institutions in exploring the challenges posed by the advent of the 21st century, and the need to design the adequate responses. The Meeting then listened to HE Ambassador Motahar Hossain, Director of the Economic Affairs Department of the OIC, who briefed the Meeting on the chronology of the progress of the IDB document on the 21st century through COMCEC, the Eighth OIC Summit and the 25th ICFM, including the related consultative meetings held on the initiative of IDB to examine and improve the document. Finally, the Meeting listened to HE Dr. Ahmed Mohamed Ali, the IDB president, who called for delineation of specific areas of action and specification of definite targets for the Ummah to be achieved within the next three years. The Meeting subsequently listened to the presentation of papers submitted by the participating OIC Institutions.

HE Ambassador Erdinç Erdün, the Director General of SESRTCIC, emphasised the importance of viewing the IDB initiative as an effort to contribute to the implementation of the 1994 OIC Plan of Action through concrete modalities to be developed in the specific areas delineated in the IDB document. The Director General of ICDT, indicated that major changes are affecting the world economy following the signing of the Marrakesh Agreements, the emergence of economic blocs of industrialised countries and acceleration of the globalization trend. ICCI's paper presented an active programme of projects to be implemented in the next three years. The IDB paper outlined a broad approach in devising an appropriate agenda that can be pursued immediately as a first

step to translate the recommendations contained in the OIC resolution into practical programs.

Following the presentations of the different institutions, there was a general discussion centring on the Summit Resolution and on how to translate its recommendations into practical programmes with qualitative and quantitative targets in the priority areas specified by the Resolution. The implementation modalities for the selected areas of focus were determined as Training under Human Resources Development, Expansion of Intra-OIC Trade under Trade and Investment, and Health and Literacy under Basic Needs. Special task forces, comprising the related OIC institutions, were established in each of these areas in order to effectively follow up the implementation of the Resolution.

In the closing session, the Meeting approved its Report, together with its annexes, and suggested to hold future meetings of the group as needs would arise.

### **Centre Experts on Temporary Assignment at the General Secretariat of ECO**

The Director of Technical Co-operation and Training Department, Selim Ilkin, and Senior Statistician Candan Baysan undertook a special visit to the General Secretariat of the Economic Co-operation Organisation in Tehran from 13 to 21 June 1998. They were on temporary assignment to hold consultations with the staff of ECO and to prepare a report on the measures needed to be implemented in connection with the work programme of two newly-established directorates of ECO.

The directorates in question are the Directorate of Economic Research and Statistics and the Directorate of Project Research. The first one is envisioned to develop and maintain some databases, a library and a computer centre, while the second one would organise training programmes and technical co-operation activities. The ECO General Secretariat, in full recognition of the experience and proficiency of the SESRTCIC in these two areas, had sought the assistance of some experts from our Centre last January. Since all of the 10 ECO members are also members of the OIC, it was felt that it would be highly appropriate to make use of the Centre's experience and know-how in the implementation of this particular project. The visit was financed by a grant made by the IDB.

The Centre experts, who took several documents and publications of the Centre along with them, also had the chance, during this visit, of making a brief demonstration of the Centre's web site on a CD. The copies of the report of the visit prepared by the Centre staff were already sent to both the Secretary General of ECO and the President of IDB.

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### **Centre's Computer Expert Systems Analyst Attends TINIC Meeting in Casablanca, 23-24 June 1998**

Mr. Talat Öncü attended "2nd Meeting of TINIC's National Focal Points" in Casablanca organised by ICDDT which was about "Information Technologies at the Service of Trade Promotion". The meeting was attended by the representatives from 8 member countries and 6 international organisations.

The Centre prepared and presented a paper titled "Information Technologies at the Service of SESRTCIC: The Influence of Technological Innovations on the Centre's Activities" in the first session of the meeting after the basic background document of ICDT. The paper explained the influence of technological innovations involving the tasks of collecting, processing and distribution of huge volumes of data. It emphasised that, SESRTCIC, from the very beginning of its establishment, tried to organise the data in the form of databases to help the users in accessing and processing the data easily. It described the recent developments triggered by the importance of the Internet in the area of data distribution and handling and the launching of the Centre's WEB Site, InfoBase, in June 1997. The presentation also stated that, because of lack of access to Internet in certain member states, it was also distributed in CD-ROM form to several addresses. The report concluded by stating that the new innovations are continuously monitored so that, this WEB Site could be redesigned in order to supply the users with the following additional features:

- On-line database search and formatting,
- On-line data entry and editing,
- User-forums, and
- Channels for Internet Explorer 4.0.

Copies of the above-mentioned CDs were also distributed to the participants by Mr. Öncü.

In the meeting, each of the attending National Focal Points of the member states explained the Internet supported trade activities in their countries as well as databases which help international users to get information about country trade data. International Trade Centre of UNCTAD/WTO (ITC) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) also made presentations in the meeting describing their views about the current topic. IDB's presentation included a brief description of the current status of OICIS-NET.

## **CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 1998**

**SESRTCIC will participate in the following activities during the third quarter of 1998:**

### **JULY**

- UN-OIC Co-ordination Meeting, organised by UN, 13-15 July, 1998, Geneva.
- Tenth Annual Conference on Socio-economics (SASE), 13-16 July, 1998, Vienna.
- 1998 Annual Conference of World Future Society (WFS), 18-22 July, 1998, Chicago.

## **AUGUST**

- Country visit to Sudan

## **SEPTEMBER**

- European Economic Association Meeting (EEA) 2-5 September, 1998, Berlin
- International Conference on Developing Countries and Uruguay Round Agreements (AC&UNDP) 8-10 September, 1998, Cairo.
- Workshop on Agriculture (AC&FAO) 12-23 September, 1998, Babolsar, Iran
- Seminar on Human Resource Development and Poverty Alleviation (IIT) 13-15 September 1998, Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Regional Training Seminar on Applications of Soil and Terrain Database (FAO&AC) 20-27 September 1998, Damascus
- Training Seminar on Sustainability Issues and Environmental Considerations in agricultural Policy Analysis and Planning (AC&FAO) 20 September-1 October 1998, Cairo.
- Meeting of OIC Finance Control Organ (OIC)GS) September 1998, Jeddah.
- Country Visit to Tunisia and Morocco, 28-29 September 1998.
- Workshop on Stabilisation Restructuring and Expansion of Trade (AC&ICDT) 30 September-2 October 1998, Casablanca.

## **ANKARA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS**

### **Latest Publications**

## **WHAT'S NEW IN THE CENTRE'S LIBRARY**

*The Centre's library receives publications from international organisations such as the United Nations and its agencies, and serves as the depository library for all the publications of the World Bank.*

*It also receives a widening range of statistical publications, reference works as well as periodicals, reviews and newsletters, on a variety of topics of interest to the OIC Community as a whole, from the national institutions of the OIC member countries.*

### **Latest Acquisitions**

*The following is a selection among the publications acquired by the Centre during the second quarter of 1998:*

BENNEH, George, William B. Morgan and Juha I. Uitto (Editors), *Sustaining the Future: Economic, Social, and Environmental Change in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Tokyo, The United Nations University, 1996.

GILBAR, Gag G., *Population Dilemmas in the Middle East*. London, Frank Cass, 1997.

GILLESPIE, Richard (Ed. By), *The Euro-Mediterranean Partnership: Political and Economic Perspectives*. London, Frank Cass, 1997.

*Gulf Energy and the World: Challenges and Threats*. Abu Dhabi, The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1997.

HARPER, Malcolm (Ed. By), *Partnership Financing for Small Enterprise: Some Lessons from Islamic Credit Systems*. London, Intermediate Technology Publications, 1997.

KONI, Hasan (Ed. By), *The Contribution of Turkey for Reconstruction and Development of Palestine*. Ankara, Ankara University and Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation in Turkey, 1995.

MADDY-WEITZMAN, Bruce, *Middle East Contemporary Survey: Volume XIX, 1995*. Jerusalem, Tel Aviv University, 1997