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**REPORT
OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE STANDING
COMMITTEE FOR ECONOMIC AND
COMMERCIAL COOPERATION OF THE OIC
AND THE OIC ECONOMIC CONFERENCE**

(Istanbul, 23-27 November 2004)

1. The Twentieth Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (COMCEC) and the OIC Economic Conference were held from 23 to 27 November 2004.
2. The Meeting of Senior Officials of COMCEC preceded the Session on 23-24 November, which was held under the Chairmanship of H.E. Dr. Ahmet TIKTIK, Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization of the Republic of Turkey, to consider items of the Draft Agenda and prepare Draft Resolutions for consideration by the Ministerial Session.
3. The Session was attended by the representatives of the following Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC):
 1. Transitional Islamic State of Afghanistan
 2. Peoples Democratic Republic of Algeria
 3. Republic of Azerbaijan
 4. Kingdom of Bahrain
 5. People's Republic of Bangladesh
 6. Republic of Benin
 7. Brunei Darussalam
 8. Burkina Faso
 9. Republic of Cameroon
 10. Union of Comoros
 11. Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
 12. Arab Republic of Egypt

13. Republic of Gambia
14. Republic of Guinea
15. Republic of Indonesia
16. Islamic Republic of Iran
17. Republic of Iraq
18. Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
19. Republic of Kazakhstan
20. State of Kuwait
21. Kyrgyz Republic
22. Republic of Lebanon
23. Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
24. Malaysia
25. Republic of Mali
26. Islamic Republic of Mauritania
27. Kingdom of Morocco
28. Republic of Mozambique
29. Federal Republic of Nigeria
30. Sultanate of Oman
31. Islamic Republic of Pakistan
32. State of Palestine
33. State of Qatar
34. Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
35. Republic of Sierra Leone
36. Republic of Sudan
37. Syrian Arab Republic
38. Republic of Tajikistan
39. Republic of Tunisia
40. Republic of Turkey
41. Republic of Turkmenistan
42. Republic of Uganda
43. State of the United Arab Emirates
44. Republic of Uzbekistan
45. Republic of Yemen

4. Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus participated in the Session as observers and the Republic of Macedonia as guest.

5. OIC General Secretariat and the following subsidiary, affiliated and specialized OIC institutions attended the Session:

1. Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC)
2. Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT)
3. Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
4. Islamic Research Center for History, Culture and Art (IRCICA)
5. Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI)

6. Furthermore, representatives of the following international organizations attended the Session as well:

1. Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)
2. United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)
3. Developing Eight (D-8)
4. Federation of Consultants from Islamic Countries (FCIC)
5. Federation of Islamic Countries' Contractors (FICC)
6. Association of National Development Financing Institutions (ADFIMI)

(A copy of the List of Participants of the Twentieth Session of the COMCEC is attached as Annex 1.)

OIC Economic Conference

7. In commemoration of the 20th Anniversary of the COMCEC, the OIC Economic Conference was held in parallel to the 20th Session of the COMCEC on November 23-27th 2004 in Istanbul, with the participation of the ministers, businessmen, and eminent persons. The Conference consisted of Business Forum, Panel Discussions, and Brainstorming Sessions.

8. **The Business Forum** of OIC Economic Conference was held on 23-24th November 2004. The Forum ended up with a declaration consisting of a set of proposals concerning promotion trade and investment among the OIC Countries.

The said proposals were submitted to the ministers with a view to make those practical targets achieved by devising proper studies and action plans.

9. In the framework of the OIC Economic Conference two **Panel Discussions** were held on November 24th 2004, on the subjects of “Evaluation of the Economic and Commercial Cooperation within the OIC” and “Enhancing the Institutional Set-up and Mechanisms for the OIC Economic and Commercial Cooperation”.

10. The OIC Economic Conference continued with two **Brainstorming Sessions** on November 25-26th 2004. The first session was participated by ministers and businessmen discussing the outcomes of the Business Forum. The second session, which took place with the participation of the ministers, evaluated the outcome of the Business Forum, Panel Discussions, and the first Session of the Business Forum. The evaluation resulted in the Final Communiqué of the OIC Economic Conference.

11. The Report of the OIC Economic Conference and its Annexes are prepared separately and will be published accordingly for circulation.

Opening Session

12. The Joint Opening Ceremony of the Twentieth Session of the COMCEC and the OIC Economic Conference was held on 25 November 2004 under the chairmanship of H.E. Ahmet Necdet SEZER, President of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of the COMCEC.

13. In his inaugural Statement, H.E. Ahmet Necdet SEZER, extending his warm greetings, heartily welcomed all the delegates. Referring to the participation for the first time of the private sector in a COMCEC session, he emphasized the importance of its participation in COMCEC sessions, because of its crucial role in economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC countries. Taking into consideration the growing competition in world markets, H.E. SEZER, stressed the significance of the need to develop intra-OIC trade through establishing stronger regional economic alliances, which in return would enable the OIC Countries to play a more prominent role in the world economy. In this connection, H.E. SEZER, drew attention to the trade negotiations, which began this year under the Framework Agreement for a Trade Preferential System Among OIC Countries, reiterating his call on the

OIC Member States to participate in the trade negotiations with a view to reaching a successful completion of it. H.E. President SEZER, paid tribute to the memory of H.E. Mr. ARAFAT, whose death particularly saddened the Islamic world. He concluded his statement by wishing success for all the parties attending the COMCEC.

(A copy of the text of the Inaugural Statement of H.E. Ahmet Necdet SEZER is attached as Annex 2.)

14. H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed BELKEZIZ, Secretary General of OIC made a statement at the Opening Ceremony. He expressed his deep sense of gratitude to H.E. Mr. Ahmet Necdet SEZER, President of the Republic of Turkey and the Chairman of the COMCEC, for his gracious presence at the 20th Session of the COMCEC. H.E. BELKEZIZ laid particular stress on the promotion of intra-OIC investment and emphasized that the issue deserved a fresh look. He hoped that this Session would significantly contribute to the economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC countries. Underlining the need of incorporating the private sector in the work, he appreciated the participation of businessmen in the First Business Forum, which was held in parallel to this Session of COMCEC. He wished the COMCEC Session and the OIC Economic Conference all success.

(A copy of the address of H.E. Abdelouahed BELKEZIZ, Secretary General of the OIC is attached as Annex 3.)

15. The Heads of Delegation of the State of Qatar, Republic of Cameroon, and Islamic Republic of Iran made statements on behalf of the Arab, African, and Asian groups of Member States respectively. In their statements, they expressed their thanks and appreciation to H.E. Ahmet Necdet SEZER for his great efforts as the Chairman of the COMCEC. The Heads of Delegation, referred to the need for further strengthening economic cooperation among the Member States. In this regard, they expressed their hope that the launch of the first round of trade negotiations under TPS-OIC might serve this goal through substantially increasing the intra-OIC trade which had been one of the main objectives of the COMCEC since its commencement. They also thanked the

President, the Government and People of the Republic of Turkey for the warm welcome and excellent arrangements made for the Meeting.

(The texts of the Statements made on behalf of the Arab, Asian and African Member States are attached as Annexes 4, 5 and 6 respectively.)

16. H.E. Ahmed Mohammed ALI, the President of the Islamic Development Bank, also addressed the Opening Session conveying a comprehensive speech. Praising the fruitful cooperation between the IDB and the COMCEC, he mentioned the OIC Economic Conference, which was jointly organized by them, enumerating the various activities carried out in the Conference. H.E. ALI asserted that the Conference would attain tangible results promoting cooperation between OIC Countries. He informed the Session about the numerous achievements of the IDB over the last thirty years through its diverse programs and outlets and about its current long term credit rating of AAA and short term “A -1 +” which was the highest rating among multilateral development banks free of risk.

(The text of the Message of the President of IDB is attached as Annex 7.)

17. Mr. M. Rıfat HİSARCIKLIOĞLU, the President of the Union of Chambers and Commodity Exchanges of Turkey (TOBB), also made a statement. He pointed out the significant role that might be played by private sector in enhancing the unsatisfactory level of economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC countries. He offered to share their vast experience of increasing the role of private sector in the decision making process with the OIC countries.

(The text of the speech of the President of TOBB is attached as Annex 8.)

18. Following the Opening Ceremony, H.E. Ahmet Necdet SEZER received the Heads of Delegation.

Ministerial Working Session

19. The Ministerial Working Session of the Twentieth Session of the COMCEC was held on 26 November 2004 under the Chairmanship of H.E. Erkan MUMCU, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey.

20. A signing ceremony was held. The Heads of Delegations of Syrian Arab Republic, State of Qatar, State of Kuwait, and State of the United Arab Emirates signed the Framework Agreement on the Trade Preferential System Among the OIC Member States.

21. The Session expressed deep condolences at the sad demise of H.H. Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, Amir of Abu Dhabi and President of United Arab Emirates and H.E. Mr. Yasser Arafat, President of the State of Palestine.

22. The Session adopted the Draft Agenda of the Twentieth Session of the COMCEC.

(The Agenda of the Twentieth Session of the COMCEC is attached as Annex 9.)

23. An Exchange of Views on “Trade and Transport Facilitation Among the OIC Member States” was held under agenda item 10. This was initiated with a presentation by H.E. Dr. Ahmet TIKTIK, Undersecretary of the State Planning Organization of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of the Senior Officials Meeting, who gave a brief account on the outcome of the deliberations of the Senior Officials on “Trade and Transport Facilitation Among the OIC Member States”.

(The text of presentation of the Chairman of the Senior Officials is attached as Annex 10.)

24. The Heads of Delegation of the Republic of Turkey, Republic of Iraq, Kingdom of Morocco, Sultanate of Oman, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Indonesia, and Republic of Tajikistan took part in the exchange of views, which also included a number of country reports on “Trade and Transport Facilitation Among the OIC Member States”

(Country reports, submitted in writing, are available separately).

25. The Session thanked the Republic of Turkey and the IDB for successfully having organized the OIC Economic Conference in conjunction with the 20th Session of COMCEC.

26. The Session took note of Final Communiqué of the OIC Economic Conference and called for its implementation.

27. The Session then adopted Resolution OIC/COMCEC/20-04/RES(1) and Resolution OIC/COMCEC/20-04/RES(2).

(Resolution OIC/COMCEC/20-04/RES(1) and Resolution OIC/COMCEC/20-04/RES(2) are attached as Annexes 11 and 12, within the context of the Resolution (1);

- Recommendations of the Workshop on “Trade and Transport Facilitation Among the OIC Member States” is attached as Annex 13.

28. The Session also reviewed the Report OIC/COMCEC/20-04/Sc.Rep. of the Fifth Sessional Committee, which was held on November 22nd 2004.

(The Report OIC/COMCEC/20-04/Sc.Rep. of the Sessional Committee is attached as Annex 14.)

Closing Session

29. The Joint Closing Ceremony of the Twentieth Session of the COMCEC and the OIC Economic Conference was held on 27 November 2004 under the chairmanship of H.E. Kürşad TÜZMEN, Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey.

30. H.E. Sher Afgan KHAN, Ambassador of Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Turkey and Rapporteur of the Meeting, presented the Resolutions adopted at the Ministerial Session. In his presentation H.E. KHAN summarized the proceedings of the Drafting Committee highlighting some of the points of agreement.

31. The Session adopted the Final Communiqué of the OIC Economic Conference OIC/COMCEC/20-04/FCEC.

(The Final Communiqué of the OIC Economic Conference OIC/COMCEC/20-04/FCEC is attached as Annex 15.)

32. H.E. Ambassador, Thierno Nabika DIALLO, the Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs, read out the message of H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed BELKEZIZ, the Secretary General of OIC. In His message, H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed BELKEZIZ, welcoming the signature of the Framework Agreement on Trade Preferential System Among the OIC Member States by four Member States, namely Syrian Arab Republic, State of Qatar, State of Kuwait, and State of the United Arab Emirates, during this Session of the COMCEC, expressed his hope that further signatures and ratifications would follow in the near future, and that the first round of trade negotiations would successfully end in March 2005. Reiterating that the General Secretariat of the OIC would not spare any effort in implementing all COMCEC resolutions, H.E. BELKEZIZ concluded his remarks.

(The text of the Message of the Secretary General of the OIC, is attached as Annex 16.)

33. In his statement on behalf of all participating Member States, H.E. Dr. Amer Hosni LUTFI, Minister of Economy and Trade and Head of Delegation of Syrian Arab Republic, thanked H.E. Ahmet Necdet SEZER, the President of the Republic of Turkey, H.E. Kürşad TÜZMEN, Minister of State of Republic of Turkey, the OIC General Secretariat, and all the concerned parties contributing to the work of the Session.

34. H.E. Kürşad TÜZMEN, Minister of State of the Republic of TURKEY, also made a statement at the Closing Session. H.E. TÜZMEN evaluated the outcomes of the OIC Economic Conference and expressed his belief that the active involvement of the participants had led to important decisions concerning development of the economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member States. He concluded his statement by expressing his feelings of deep gratitude to all delegations which had contributed to the success of the 20th Session of the COMCEC and the OIC Economic Conference.

(The text of the Closing Statement of H.E. TÜZMEN is attached as Annex 17.)

