

Report and Study of the **Workshop on OIC Future Coordination mechanism to WTO issues**

OIC Mission in Geneva, 19-20 October 2018

I/ CONTEXT:

Referring to the Resolution N° 52 of the Thirty-Third Session of the COMCEC held during the period 20-23 November 2017 in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey which has requested ICDT and IsDB Group to submit a working paper for the consideration of the next COMCEC meeting about Practical options to increase OIC Ministers of Trade Coordination vis-à-vis recent developments in the negotiations at the WTO and to formulate positions on priority issues for OIC Countries currently being proposed in the WTO, ICDT and IDB in collaboration with OIC Permanent Representative in Geneva, organised a Workshop on this theme in Geneva, Switzerland on 19-20 October 2018 .

II/ OBJECTIVES:

The objectives of this workshop are to review the draft study and gather the observations and comments made by Member States (MS) in one hand and on the other hand to elaborate practical recommendations to better enhance common coordination mechanisms between Member States in WTO matters.

III/ PARTICIPANTS:

The Workshop was attended by the following representatives of the OIC Permanent Missions in Geneva: Niger, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Sudan, Palestine, Pakistan, Oman, Albania, Bangladesh, Mali, Djibouti, Senegal, Gabon, Turkey, Maldives, Brunei, Pakistan, Jordan, Comoros, Yemen and Kazakhstan.

ICDT, the OIC Mission in Geneva and IsDB Group attended this meeting.

IV/ PROCEEDINGS:

The Workshop started by the opening statements of H.E Amb. Nassima BAGHLI, Representative of the OIC Mission in Geneva, Mr. Syed Hussain QUADRI, Representative of IDB Group and Dr. El Hassane HZAINI, Director General of ICDT. The three speakers underlined the importance of OIC Member States to enhance the coordination on the WTO issues by a setting a standing mechanism of coordination defending the common interests of OIC MS during the WTO meetings and negotiations.

Dr. Nabyl EDDAHAR, Consultant at ICDT, made a presentation on the draft joint study on the OIC WTO mechanisms of coordination. He presented the assessment of the current coordination of the OIC MS in the matters of the WTO, Groups coordination practices within WTO, and proposed practical options to enhance the mechanisms of coordination, taking into consideration the OIC MS capabilities and specificities.

According to these findings, it is possible to imagine three possible options to enhance coordination among OIC MS at the WTO, ranging from the most radical to the most conservative.

Option 1: Creation of an OIC Group within the WTO

The first option and the most radical one would be to create an OIC Group within the WTO that will resemble the African Group in its structure and mechanisms and adapt to the specificities of the OIC MS. Within OIC, African and Asian MS are active in other Groups.

Option 2: Fundamental and deep reform of the current practice

This second option implies the following steps: Establishing an independent agenda item dedicated to WTO issues at the COMCEC meetings. Holding consultative meetings at the level of senior officials based in Geneva and/or Casablanca and/or Jeddah alternatively, to discuss priority issues. Organizing a Consultative Ministerial Meeting on WTO issues (at the sidelines of COMCEC Ministerial Meetings) before the WTO Ministerial Conference (MC). Empowering ICDT and OIC Geneva Office: a WTO Unit could be created at the Geneva Office in cooperation with ICDT and IsDB. Here again, in order to reform the current practice, developing capacity building programs that address both trade negotiation capacity and implementation aspects. OIC MS capacity building programs should be reexamined and enhanced. Mainstreaming trade at the institutional level is equally important. Benefits from the current mechanisms adapted from the experiences of different Groups at the WTO is useful.

Option 3: Keeping the present practice “as it is”: quasi-status-quo/shallow reforms

This implies carrying on the current practice along with a dedicated program to Geneva-based missions, and more coordination among the main stakeholders: OIC GS, Geneva OIC Permanent Mission, COMCEC, IsDB Group and ICDT. It implies also increasing capacity building activities in WTO issues, empowering OIC Geneva Office and enhancing its role in WTO matters.

V/RECOMMENDATIONS:

After a fruitful debate, participants proposed the following recommendations:

- to support of the application made by to State of Palestine since 2009 to beneficent from the Observer State on the WTO.
- to include all the observations made by OIC MS Representatives in the final version of the study; in this regard, the MS are invited to give their views about the different options mentioned in the Chapter III of this study;
- to extend the period of receiving the observations from OIC MS representative till 31st October 2018; the observations received after this date will be added as an annex to the study and distributed during the COMCEC Meeting in Istanbul (26-29 November 2018);
- to add a new Option (4th Option) relating to the creation of an informal Group at the Geneva Level, like the WAEMU Group;
- In the case the “Option 1” is adopted, the OIC Group shall focus on the systemic issues like the reform of WTO;
- to initiate a “Reverse Linkage Program” on WTO matters for the benefit of acceding countries;
- to initiate a special training program for Geneva OIC based Missions starting from 2019.

VI/ MOTION OF THANKS:

At the end of the workshop, participants extended their deepest thanks and gratitude to His Excellency Dr. Yousef bin Ahmad AL-OTHAI MEEN, the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and to His Excellency Dr. Bandar M. H. HAJJAR, President of the IsDB for their continuous support to promote trade and investment cooperation among OIC MS and achieving goals of the Ten-Year Programme of Action (OIC-2025).

They also expressed their gratitude to H.E. Amb. Nassima BAGHLI, Representative of the OIC Mission in Geneva, Dr. El Hassane HZ AINE, Director General of ICDT and Mr. Syed Hussain QUADRI Acting Director Country Strategy and Cooperation of IsDB and their staff for the preparatory work, facilities and assistance which were provided to ensure the success of this workshop.

REPORT ON
REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP ON ICDT/IDB JOINT
STUDY TO INCREASE OIC MEMBER STATES
COORDINATION VIS-À-VIS WTO ISSUES

PRESENTED BY

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT
OF TRADE

TO THE

34th SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
FOR ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL
CO-OPERATION OF THE OIC
(COMCEC)

Istanbul – Republic of Turkey
26th – 29th November 2018