



TIJARIS



INTRA-OIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT MAGAZINE

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COP 26 :
200 countries
commit to decarbonize,
a new hope for earth



Interview with CEO of EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH : the exhibition industry, an engine for economic growth



Brunei Darussalam paves the way for its economic take-off.

Halal holds trade fair in Ankara

Randa El Haddad : she exports senegalese agri-food.

Trade in medical products in OIC Member states

The Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT)

is the subsidiary organ of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, which has been entrusted with trade promotion among the OIC Member States.

Its main objectives are as follows :

- To encourage regular trade exchanges among Member States ;
- To promote investments likely to develop trade flows ;
- To contribute to the promotion of Member states' products and encourage access to foreign markets ;
- To promote trade information ;
- To assist Member States in the fields of Trade Promotion and international negotiations ;
- To extend assistance to enterprises and economic operators.
- To participate in the trade fairs organised by ICDT.

Trade Promotion :

- To promote contacts between Member States' Businessmen ;
- To ensure the promotion of Member States' production by regularly holding the Islamic Trade Fair and specialised showrooms ;
- To assist Member States with creating and organising Export Promotion Centres ;
- To extend consultancy and expert services to Member States in the field of trade promotion.

Trade Information :

- To collect and disseminate trade information ;
- To Develop Trade data bases and facilitate their remote access ;
- To Assist Member states with setting up and organising documentation and information centres and Trade Information Networks.

Investment Promotion :

- To encourage intra-O.I.C investments ;
- To promote foreign investments in the O.I.C Member States ;
- To encourage partnership between Member States' economic operators ;
- To provide consultancy and expert services to Member States in the area of investments promotion and in particular export oriented investments.

Studies and research :

- To publish an annual report on Intra-OIC Trade ;
- To undertake sectorial product and market studies ;
- To examine the ways and means likely to alleviate obstacles to trade among Member States.

Training :

- To organise seminars and training sessions ;
- To help Member States establish expert groups in the various fields of trade development.

International Negotiations :

- Assist Member States in trade negotiations ;
- Prepare and organize the Intra-OIC Trade negotiations.



ÉDITORIAL



TURNING CRISIS INTO OPPORTUNITY

Some economic forecasts indicate that it is unlikely to return to the levels of economic growth and trade recorded in the pre-COVID era. Despite some promising signs, there is some fear that this situation will not be improved due to market uncertainty and soaring inflation levels.

The World Bank has predicted a loss of more than 10 trillion dollars compared to the situation that would have prevailed without the pandemic. In fact, the total economic cost could be even higher because of the long-term effects on investment.

Furthermore, World trade has been severely affected and is, fortunately, beginning to recover with an increase of 4.7 % in 2022, compared to 11 % in 2021.

The OIC countries are no exception. Trade flows and capital flows within the OIC space are in a slump bearing the brunt of the health crisis, not to mention the disruption of supply chains and the increase in transport costs. However, as Winston Churchill once said, « If you put two economists in a room, you get two opinions, unless one of them is Lord Keynes, in which case you get three opinions. »

In our opinion, this pandemic has made the opportunity in the hand of the beholder.

Apart from the solidarity demonstrated by the countries (Islamic Solidarity Fund, urgent financial subsidies, IsDB program of 2.3 billion dollars), the OIC area possesses tremendous economic assets, and its potentials are abundant.

Besides, it is worth mentioning the 2 billion consumers, half of whom are under 25 years old and fond of consumption, the world's first energy reserves, as well as the untapped growth potential in many sectors such as agribusiness, mining, renewable energies, or sustainable tourism.

Although some economic imperatives prevail, the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade has always been striving to meet them.

Without a fortified trade and investment facilitation, economic recovery and prosperous trade are hard to accomplish. This trade streamlining would focus on three key outcomes: the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), the contribution to the furtherance of implementing regional trade agreements, and the creation of opportunities for business meetings via the organization of trade fairs, exhibitions, business forums, buyer-seller meetings, and trade missions. Interestingly, all these goals should be in line with modern and efficient approaches that consider the genuine interests of operators.

The same applies to trade and investment corridors which should be centered on fostering trade and investment along with land and maritime infrastructures set up to improve connectivity between OIC Member countries, at the 3 regions of the OIC space (Sub-Saharan Africa, Arab, and Asia).

Finally, there remains the development of regional value chains aiming at developing raw materials (cotton, cassava, fruits and vegetables, mines...) as well as strengthening regional complementarities and the implementation of economic intelligence program which can provide the right information at the right time.

These imperatives are necessary, especially since economic recovery must also meet the challenge of climate change by adopting the criteria of environmental sustainability. Considered in the past as a marginal problem, it has now become a global priority. Indeed, from now on any project will have to be carbon-free by adopting a certain energy sobriety in its choices, and focusing on renewable energies and secured carbon sinks.

In conclusion, the adage claiming that during every crisis, lies a great opportunity has never been so relevant. Particularly in an era where the digitization of foreign trade processes and the strengthening of value chains at reduced regional scales, encouraged by the institutions, are available. For this reason, "if a window of opportunity appears, don't pull down the shade", we either use it or lose it.

Latifa Elbouabdellaoui
Director General of ICDT



35 000 visitors attend to OIC Halal Expo at Ankara, Republic of Turkey,
25-28 november 2021

CONTENT

H.E Hissein Ibrahim Taha takes office as OIC secretary general	5
Cooperation between ICDT and Bait Mal Al Quds Agency	6
Roundtable on foreign direct investment in OIC countries.....	7
Halal holds trade fair in Ankara and attracts 35,000 visitors...8	
Brunei Darussalam paves the way for its economic take-off.....	10
Entretien with his excellency Saif Mohammed Al Midfa, CEO of EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH.	12
OIC countries preparations for the 12th WTO ministerial conference.....	15
Pakistan adjusts its tariffs on honey and fresh fruits.....	16
Randa El Haddad : her senegalese agri-food exports reach all corners of the world.	17
COP 26 : 200 countries commit to decarbonize, a new hope for earth.....	18
Trade in medical products in OIC Member states : An increase of 27% in one year.....	20
Trade Integration, a key factor for the development of OIC Countries..	22
OIC Calendar.....	23



H.E. HISSEIN IBRAHIM TAHA TAKES OFFICE AS OIC SECRETARY GENERAL

Hissein Ibrahim Taha was elected in November 2020, during the 47th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States, held in Niamey, Capital of the Republic of Niger, as the representative of the African Group, in accordance with the rotating geographical distribution at the head of the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. Thus, he assumed the position of

Secretary General of the Organization for a five-year term, starting from November 2021.

His Excellency Ambassador Hissein Ibrahim Taha had held several positions in his country, such as Minister of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation; Minister (Assistant to the Deputy Secretary General of the Presidency of the Republic); Diplomatic Advisor to the Presidency of the Republic; Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chad and Minister Delegate and Ambassador Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Chad to France, Spain, Portugal, Greece and the Vatican. He also served as First Counselor at the Embassy of the Republic of Chad to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The new Secretary General of the OIC was decorated with the insignia of a knight of the National Order of Chad, which is the preeminent Order of Merit of the Republic of Chad. He is also an Officer of the French National Order of the Legion of Honor, the highest order of French merit.



OIC HONORED AT EXPO 2020 DUBAI

The OIC Honor Day, marking the Commemoration of the Anniversary of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, took place on November 2, 2021 at Expo2020 Dubai at Al Wasl Plaza.

The OIC Day was punctuated by a series of activities including an opening ceremony marked by the expected addresses of the representative of the United Arab Emirates, host country of the event and of the Secretary General of the OIC.

During his statement, Dr. Youssef Al-Othaimeen pointed out that the Muslim world today faces several challenges, the most important of which is knowledge, explaining that the OIC Member States are strongly engaged in the global technological race and have embraced the pace of its progress.

After the opening ceremony, the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and his guests went to the OIC Pavilion for its official inauguration. Then, they continued their tour to stop over at the Pavilions of the United Arab Emirates and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The tour was concluded with an official lunch at the Leadership Pavilion and a Press Conference. The OIC Pavilion is an opportunity to display the main achievements of the organization and its institutions in improving the standard of living of its member states, to promote Islamic values and foster intercultural dialogue. Besides the OIC Pavilion, it should be noted that the participation of OIC institutions comes in several forms (conferences, seminars, exhibitions, talks, discussion panels, etc.) depending on the nature, scope and the subject of each event to be held on the sidelines of Expo2020 Dubai, under the coordination of ICDT as the focal point in charge of managing the participation of OIC Institutions in this Universal Exhibition.



COOPERATION BETWEEN ICDT AND BAIT MAL AL QUDS AGENCY

As part of the Ceremony of the official launch of the «DLALA» platform for electronic commerce for the benefit of products from Al-Quds, Mrs. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui, Director General of the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT), and Mr. Mohamed Salem Cherkaoui, Director in charge of the management of the Bait Mal Al-Quds Asharif Agency, signed a cooperation protocol between the two institutions. This protocol aims to strengthen coordination and cooperation between the

Center and the Agency regarding activities in favor of economic operators in the holy city. These include technical assistance in international trade and facilities for participation in Fairs and Exhibitions organized by the Center as well as the promotion of the «DLALA» platform as a tool for social and solidarity trade. During her inaugural address, Mrs. El-bouabdellaoui expressed the Centre's availability to continue supporting actions for economic operators of Al-Quds Asharif, in the area of trade and investment.

COMCEC HOLDS ITS 37TH MEETING

The Islamic Center for Development of Trade participated in the 37th Ministerial Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC) held in Istanbul, Republic of Turkey, on November 24-25, 2021. The Center was represented by Ms. Latifa El Bouabdellaoui and Mr. Mamoudou Bocar Sall, respectively Director General and Assistant Director General. The meeting was attended by 42 OIC Member States, 5 Observer countries and 20 OIC regional and international organizations. The objective of this meeting was to present the activities organized by the Institutions within the framework of the COMCEC Strategy and the implementation of the OIC Ten Year Plan of Action (OIC 2016-2025). The Committee recommended to ICDT the organization of trade promotion activities (trade fairs, exhibitions and business and investment forums) and trade and investment facilitation (awareness and operationalization of the TPS / OIC Agreement and organization of workshops on WTO issues). Bilateral meetings were held between ICDT and its partners such as ICIEC, ICCIA and other countries to strengthen the organization of joint activities.

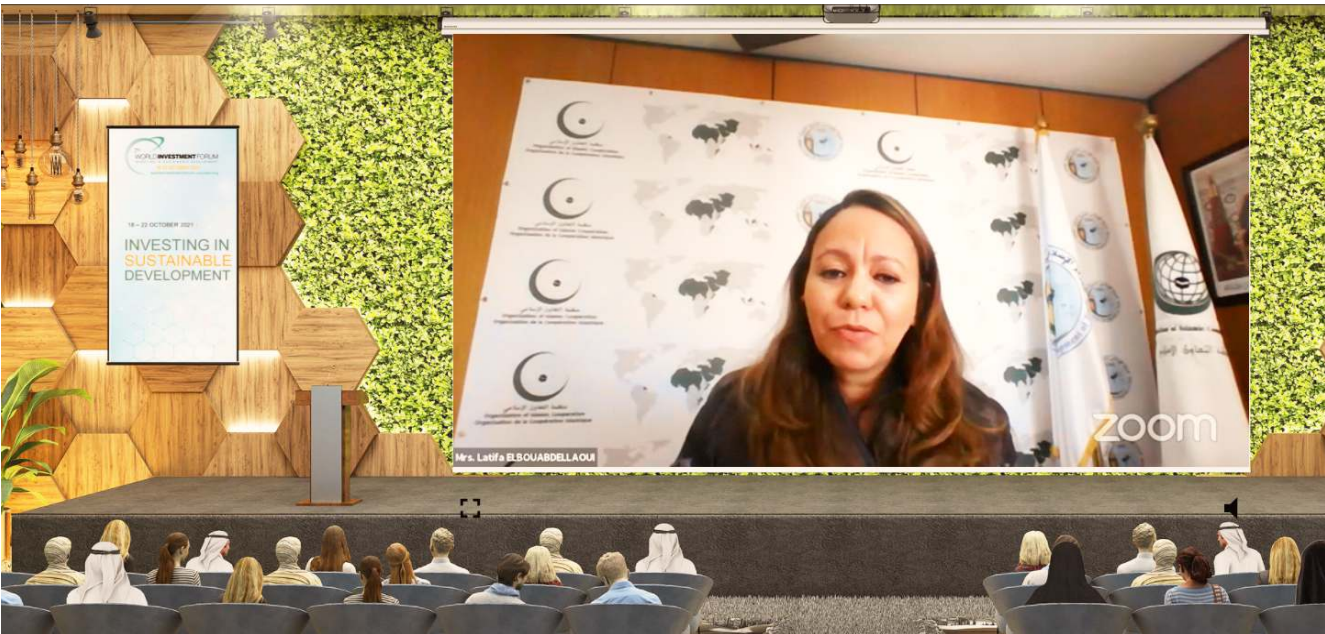


CAIRO HOSTS THE 2ND EDITION OF THE ARAB-AFRICAN TRADE FORUM

Within the framework of the implementation of the Trade Bridges Program between Arab and African Countries and the Recommendations of the First Arab-African Forum held in Addis Ababa in November 2018, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) organized the second edition of the Forum on November 3-4, 2021 in Cairo, Egypt, under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Several discussion panels were organized. They focused on the role of institutions promoting and financing trade between Arab and African countries. The panelists recommended the implementation of a platform to strengthen institutional cooperation and the private sector to support all stakeholders in the development of the two regions. The Director General of ICDT moderated the session on the current situation and perspectives of Arab-African. During this session, ICDT presented the role of Trade Promotion Institutions in strengthening trade and investment between Arab and African countries. The next edition will be organized in an African country in 2023.



ROUNDTABLE ON FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT IN OIC COUNTRIES



The policies for the promotion of foreign direct investments (FDI) in the OIC countries were the subject of the virtual round table organized on October 21, 2021 by ICDT in collaboration with UNCTAD, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (SESRIC). This round table is part of the activities of ICDT, aimed at strengthening technical assistance and exchange of experiences between the OIC Member countries. It allowed to explore possible avenues for reflections with a view to foster the development of investments for a better regional integration at the level of the OIC. It was also an opportunity to share national experiences in terms of strategies to encourage FDI, especially in a context marked by the economic and social implications of COVID-19. During this meeting, the focus was made on global FDI, which experienced a considerable drop in 2020, by nearly 53%, from 1.530 billion USD to only 999 billion USD. This situation is the result of restrictive measures linked to the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, lockdown which reduced the

movement of investors and ultimately the financing of structuring projects as well as the closure of several vital industries in national economic sectors have negatively impacted FDI flows at the global level. OIC Member States have not been spared by this downward trend in project financing flows from international donors. Thus, the inflows of inward FDI to OIC countries have experienced a decrease of 14% from 114 billion USD in 2019 to 100 billion USD in 2020, despite the measures taken to counter the effects of the pandemic in several countries. More than 33 OIC countries have seen their FDI decline such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Egypt, Turkey and Azerbaijan. In this context, it is worth noting that the share of intra-OIC investments in 2020 stood at around 14%. The main investors in the OIC Zone in 2020 were the Gulf countries, Turkey, Malaysia, Morocco and Libya. In order to ensure a revival of intra-OIC investments, the panelists called for the implementation of measures based on inclusiveness and South-South and North-South partnerships, and even triangular. MSMEs, which represent over 90% of the economic fabric of OIC member

countries, should be at the center of any growth strategy. The participants' recommendations concerning governmental investment development policies covered the following aspects:

- Encouraging investment promoting the development of local added value, by choosing industrial and service projects that enhance the country's resources and intangible capital;
- Creating more jobs for women and young people in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals;
- The establishing of the appropriate legal arsenal allowing compliance with international standards and improvement of product quality;
- The adoption of measures promoting the internationalization of the company through its support in foreign markets, with a view to increasing their competitiveness;
- The building of a healthy and serene climate of investment favoring the creation of structuring partnership projects;
- The involvement of the private sector in the development of industrial units;
- The organization of national and regional investment forums.

HALAL HOLDS TRADE FAIR IN ANKARA AND ATTRACTS 35,000 VISITORS



Halal Expo is the world’s largest halal exhibition that takes place regularly in Istanbul, Turkey. It is an international platform for representatives of governments, institutions, manufacturers, traders and entrepreneurs in the Halal

industry. Halal Expo is designed as an exhibition accompanied by conferences & workshops for exchanges and debates between industry professionals and experts in Halal industry and services.

Organized by the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Institute of Standardization and Metrology for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) and the company Discover, the 8th edition of the OIC Halal Expo 2021 took place from 25 to 28 November 2021 with the support of the Ministry of Commerce of the Republic of Turkey and other relevant ministries and public institutions of the Republic of Turkey. Held under the theme «New Era & New Normals: Necessity of Halal Production and Consumption» over an area of more than 14,000 m2 at «Istanbul Congress Center (ICC)», Halal Expo 2021 gathered this year more than 390 participants. Companies, representatives of administrations, organizations, institutions, NGOs ... concerned by the Halal sector, the exhibitors come from



34 Member countries of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and non-Member countries. Very popular, this Fair welcomed 35,000 visitors despite the COVID-19 context. The previous edition in 2019 welcomed 378 national and international exhibitors from 36 countries and more than 34,800 visitors including nearly 4,750 foreign visitors from 94 countries. The exhibition covered several products and services including Halal tourism products, Islamic finance, Islamic textiles, fashion, cosmetics & beauty products, culinary arts, food processing, machinery & equipment, packaging as well as other services such as concession and franchising.

Taking place simultaneously with the Halal World Summit organized under the auspices of the Presidency of the Republic of Turkey, this edition witnessed the holding of a wide range of workshops, meetings and side events related to different aspects, evolution and prospects of Halal, in particular on:

- the assessment of conformity and Halal quality infrastructure;
- the future of Halal tourism in light of new standards;
- Food production technologies from a Halal perspective;
- The different perspectives of the Halal lifestyle;
- Halal in a rapidly changing world.

Other workshops have taken place, some dedicated to presentations of

Start-Ups. Indeed, the exhibition program also included B2B meetings with the participation of buyers, investors and trade delegates. The Islamic Center for Development of Trade participated in this edition with a stand where it presented the various communication media on its role and attributions. In addition to being co-organizer of the event, ICDT participated with a view of informing visitors about its activities and promoting the actions it carries out within the framework of the development of partnership relations among OIC countries and also between them and those which are not members.

DOING BUSINESS : BRUNEI DARUSSALAM PAVES THE WAY FOR ITS ECONOMIC TAKE-OFF

ICDT organized in collaboration with the Minister of Finance and Economy of Brunei Darussalam a Webinar on Doing Business in Brunei Darussalam, on Tuesday 16th November 2021.

The strategic location of Brunei Darussalam within the ASEAN market with its economic, political stability and peace along with strong leadership and vision 2035 makes it very attractive for OIC Countries and more particularly Medium-Sized Export Oriented Companies interested in expanding their activities within the OIC region. Today, Brunei is in the process of creating a positive and favorable eco-system for companies in knowledge-based and value-added downstream manufacturing sector as well as supporting ambitions in a manner such that companies can focus on marketing, sales and geographical expansion of network and product development activities and ICDT believes that shedding the light on this Country would enhance trade exchanges between Brunei and other OIC .

The Webinar on Doing Business in Brunei Darussalam aimed at enabling participants to learn more about the investment climate in Brunei, to discover business opportunities and promising sectors and to share the experiences of national and international companies operating in the local market. Were present Madam Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, ICDT Director General as well as HE Hon Dato Dr. Amin



Liew bin Abdullah, Minister at the Prime Minister’s Office and Minister of Finance and Economy II of Brunei Darussalam. Mrs Elbouabdellaoui indicated that Brunei is one of the leading Countries and a driver of integration in Southeast Asia and a land of opportunities for foreign investors.

On his turn, HE Hon Dato Dr. Amin Liew emphasized the opportunity for any company established in Brunei to market its products to consumers in the Borneo Island which comprises Brunei as well as states of Malaysia and Indonesia and to ASEAN consumers which comprises a population of more than 650 million. His Excellency also announced that Brunei has ratified the

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which enters into force from January 2022 and constitutes the biggest FTA in the World comprising 30% of World’s GDP and population.

On this occasion, the delegate from the Ministry of Finance and Economy presented the foreign trade regulatory framework in Brunei and the representative of Brunei Economic Development Board emphasized on the numerous reasons to invest in Brunei which can be summarized as follows: Clean& Green; Strategically located; Favourable Tax Regime; Ease of Doing Business Reforms; Credible Partnership; Intellectual Property Protection; Up to 100% Foreign Ownership; Complete Faci-

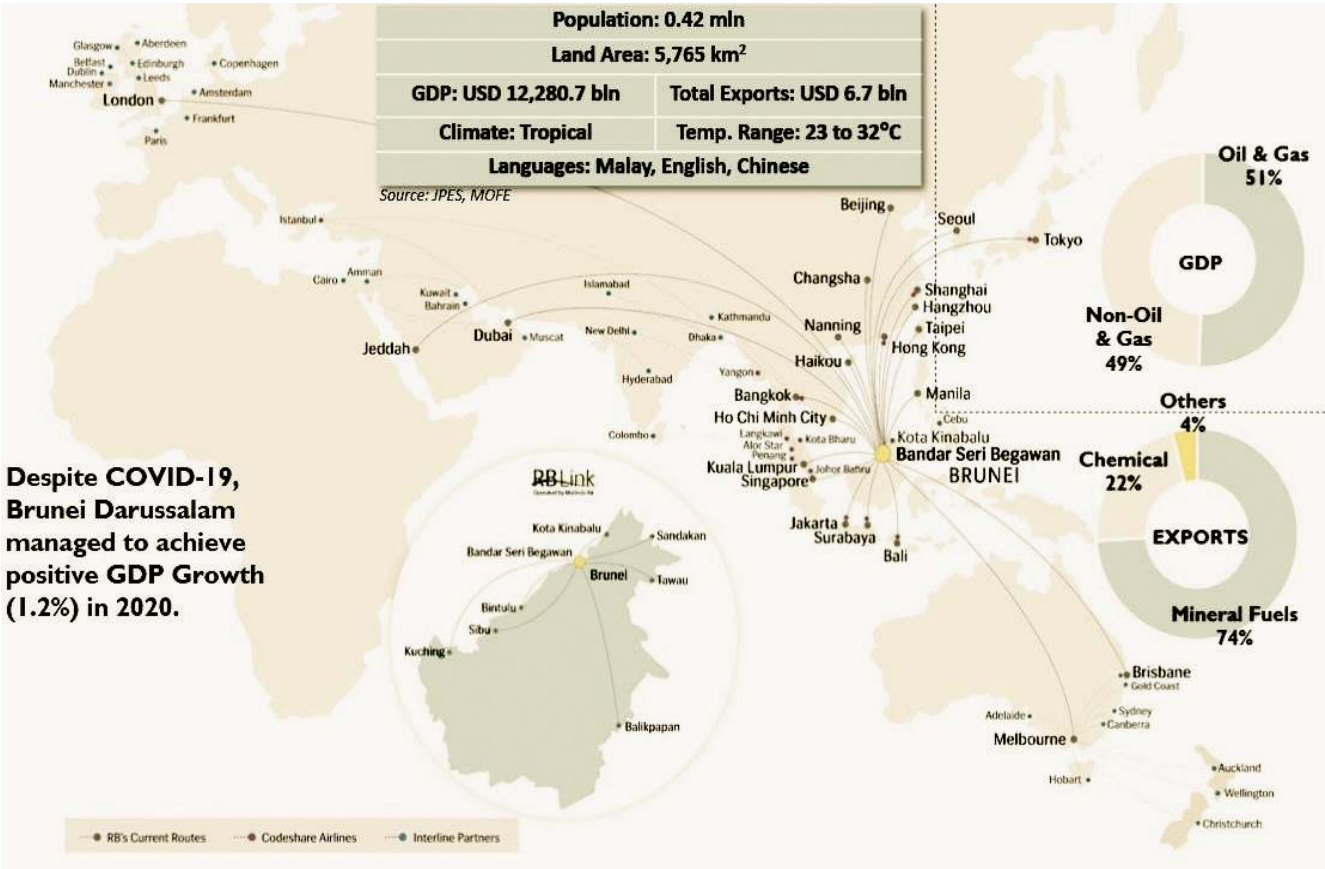
litation and Support; Financing opportunities with local banks and the Strategic Development Capital Fund . In addition, Sectors with high potential for investments and partnerships such as OIL and Gas, Food, Tourism, Services (finance, transport and logistics) and Information and Communication Technologies (Artificial Intelligence, Internet of things, Blockchain) were also highlighted.

International and CIC Environment, two local companies in Brunei, presented their activities as well as their experiences while exporting to foreign markets including those of the OIC Countries.

According to trade and investment opportunities that have been raised, ICDT will organize a second Edition of “Doing Business in Brunei Darus-

salam” for companies interested in developing their businesses locally and investors in need of establishing business partnerships.

The Webinar was attended by OIC public and private sectors and trade institutions from the following Member Countries: Brunei Darussalam, Republic of Azerbaijan, State of



The CEO of Barramundi Group, an international company, shared too the experience of his company while establishing in Brunei and emphasized on all incentives provided on this occasion by Brunei Authorities. On their turn, the CEOs of Ghanim

salam” for companies interested in developing their businesses locally and investors in need of establishing business partnerships. Mrs Pengiran Hajah Zety Sufina, Permanent Secretary (Industry) at the Ministry of Finance and Economy

the United Arab Emirates, Republic of Uganda, Republic of Turkey, Republic of Tunisia, Republic of Guinea, State of Qatar, Kingdom of Morocco, Federal Republic of Nigeria. Non OIC Countries such as France, the UK and USA also attended the event.

INTERVIEW WITH HIS EXCELLENCY SAIF MOHAMMED AL MIDFA, CEO OF EXPO CENTRE SHARJAH



Légende photo :
Saif Mohammed Al Midfa, PDG d'Expo Centre Sharjah

1. In your capacity as the CEO of Expo Centre Sharjah, we would like you to inform our readers of the activities implemented by the Centre and the objectives expected.

The Expo Centre Sharjah is one of the most important exhibitions and conference centers in the region. It is dedicated to organizing and hosting local and international exhibitions, conferences, and events, which vary between industrial, commercial, cultural, and real estate. The Centre's annual calendar witnesses many exhibitions, the most prominent of which are: the «Sharjah International Book Fair», the « Watch & Jewelry Middle East Show», the «National Job Fair», the «International Education Fair» and the "ACRES Real Estate Exhibition".

Every year, we are keen to enrich the annual agenda of the Centre with innovative and quality events and exhibitions that keep pace with economic, commercial, and cultural developments and global trends in the exhibition industry, to contribute to the consolidation of the position and presence of the Emirate of Sharjah on the regional and world economic and tourist map, by developing the exhibition industry in the Emirate and improving its competitiveness, and its continuous advancement to maintain its position as one of the most important cities leading this industry in the region, taking into account supporting all important sectors and areas, attracting investors and businesspersons working in various sectors, stimulating the tourism movement, diversifying sources of income and present the achievements of the Emirate in various fields of development and life in general.

2. How did the Expo Centre Sharjah deal with the repercussions of the "Covid-19" pandemic?

The Expo Centre Sharjah has adopted innovative and flexible strategies to deal with the impact of the pandemic on the trade fair and conference makers' sector. These strategies included working mechanisms that took place at the local, Arab, and international levels. At the level of the Emirate of Sharjah, which was a global leader in reviving the fair and conference industry and announced its recovery to its pioneers and institutions, Expo Centre Sharjah was fully prepared to embrace the visions and instructions of His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Muhammad Al Qasimi, the Supreme Council Member and Ruler of Sharjah, whose objective was to preserve the safety of the crowds who attend the exhibitions, by taking and applying strict measures of precautions, and by setting clear protocols in cooperation with various stakeholders. This contributed to enhancing

confidence in the center's abilities and possibilities to host major events.

On the Arab and international level, the Centre has signed numerous cooperation agreements with several Arab countries, including Egypt and Libya, to exchange expertise and experiences and intensify common efforts to find solutions to all the challenges facing the exhibition and conference sector.

On the international level, Expo Centre Sharjah participated in the activities of the «World Exhibition Industry Summit», organized

IN THE FUTURE, FAIRS SHOULD SPECIALIZE EVEN MORE AND INVEST IN FIFTH-GENERATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES, SUCH AS ROBOTICS AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE.

by the Union of International Fairs (UFI), during this event the Centre reviewed the reality of the exhibition and conference sector and the challenges it faces under the repercussions of Covid-19 pandemic, and the steps to be taken to promote the recovery of this sector. The event presented many recommendations that contribute to promoting the recovery of the exhibition sector at the global level, including working to provide government support programs and packages for the conferences and exhibitions sector, and the need to link economic recovery plans to the sector and consider it an essential part of those plans. In addition to activating and strengthening mergers and partnerships between exhibition organizers at the global level.

BIOGRAPHY

Saif Mohammed Jasim Al Midfa has been promoted to the position of Director-General, Expo Centre sharjah. Saif Al Midfa joined the organisation in February 2005 as the manager of Expo Marketing Services (EMS) — the creative arm of Expo Centre Sharjah, bringing with him vast experience in management and finance.

Curriculum vitae :

- Chief Executive OfficerChief Executive Officer Expo Centre Sharjah ; from oct. 2004 - Today
- Regional Area Manager ENOC Emirates National Oil Company ; from feb. 2001 to feb. 2004
- Head of International Relations Department Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sharjah; from1999 to 2000

3. How did the United Arab Emirates in general and the Emirate of Sharjah, in particular, achieve the success of its strategy related to developing trade and attracting investment?

The State of the United Arab Emirates has succeeded in developing and consolidating its position as a vital center for trade in the region and the world and enhancing its role as an influential player on the global trade map. This was done in light of the effectiveness of the forward-looking vision and proactive plans implemented by the Emirates under the guidance and support of its wise lea-

dership through the development of flexible, open, and long-term policies to maintain the attractiveness of the country's commercial activity and the consolidation of its position as a main commercial gateway linking East and West and the main axis for the continuity and growth of global supply chains. What we can see now as a result through official data confirming the distinguished position of the State, as the non-oil foreign trade of the United Arab Emirates recorded an estimated amount of 900 billion dirhams. The country's non-oil exports increased over the same period to 170 billion dirhams, thus achieving a growth of 44% compared to the first half of 2020.

As for the Emirate of Sharjah, which represents a major focal point in the United Arab Emirates for establishing successful investment projects and regional and international economic relations, it is also considered a central player in international trade, due to its geographical location at the level of the Gulf countries, and the availability of transport infrastructure, a wide network of free zones and industrial areas, and the multiplicity of components and benefits of attracting investment in viable economic, social and service opportunities, which enabled the Emirate to attract more than USD 220 million of foreign direct investment in 2020, through 24 projects, with the increase in the number of projects by 60% between the 2nd half and the 1st half of the same year.

4. What is the future vision of the Centre regarding the development of trade and partnership between the OIC countries, particularly about the use of information and communication technologies, which flourished with the Covid-19 pandemic?

The future vision of Expo Centre Sharjah is to make an effective contribution in terms of accelerating practical measures aimed at unifying the efforts of Islamic countries to find a joint action system in the exhibition and conference sector, to encourage and

support cooperation between actors in this field in all its forms, and to exchange views on how to benefit from the capacities, expertise, and facilities available in each country. The objective is to intensify efforts to upgrade the exhibition and conference sector in the Arab and Islamic world, to strengthen its role and contribution to the service of Arab and Islamic companies, to focus on investment, trade, and economic opportunities in these countries, and to access new markets for the products and industries of the OIC Member States. As for the role of information and communication technologies in the development of trade and partnership among the OIC Member States, there is no doubt that the media play a fundamental role in sustainable development, through their close connection to the economy. This interde-

INDIRECTLY, AND BEYOND THE EVENTS SECTOR, THE CENTER PARTICIPATES IN ATTRACTING INVESTMENT, STIMULATING THE TOURISM MOVEMENT, AND PRESENT THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE EMIRATE IN VARIOUS FIELDS OF DEVELOPMENT AND LIFE IN GENERAL.

pendence is imposed by the data of the enormous development witnessed by the world today in the field of economic media, especially in the light of the growing role of the media in communication at the local

and external levels, as it conveys the image, and greatly influences public opinion and attitudes. In this regard, the Centre seeks, according to its future vision, to unify the efforts to find specialized media platforms in the trade fair industry sector at the level of the OIC countries, especially since the

MORE ABOUT EXPO SHARJAH

Expo Centre Sharjah was established by the Sharjah Chamber of Commerce & Industry in 1977 – a visionary first-of-its-kind for the United Arab Emirates. the steady growth of the trade fairs, exhibitions and conventions industry in the region for more than 40 years have led the expo centre Sharjah to become home to the Gulf’s best-attended trade shows.

On 16 September 2002, His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah and Member of the Supreme Council of the UAE, inaugurated the current state-of-the-art Expo Centre Sharjah facility, featuring six expansive halls and world-class technical and visitor facilities to cater for events from a vast array of industries.

Today, this striking Centre at the heart of Sharjah’s vibrant Al Khan area is a renowned landmark in the city. It is spread over an area of 126,000 square meters, housing over 28,000 square meters of highly functional, column-free exhibition space and overlooking a beautiful lagoon.

specialized professional media is an essential pillar of the success of this sector. This is an important soft power to strengthen its position and enable it to achieve its objectives in terms of development of the economic sectors, by highlighting the exhibitions and their positive spin-offs at the level of promoting the growth of companies, increasing the prospects of their strategic relationships and opening up new markets for them, which constitutes a catalyst to attract international and local companies to participate.

5. In your opinion, what is the future of exhibitions in the form and methodology in which they are organized today? How to improve their performance?

First, it should be mentioned that the fairs and conferences industry has become, in recent years, one of the main industries that play an important role in the economic lifecycle of countries, it contributes to increasing national income, achieving sustainable economic development, and increasing tourism rates. In the future, it is expected that fairs and exhibitions are going to be more specialized, with the tendency to invest in fifth-generation communication technologies, robotics, and artificial intelligence, and rely on smart digital platforms to organize virtual exhibitions and promote the use of advanced marketing methods. As for the ways to improve the performance of the exhibitions sector, it should be given more opportunities to communicate with customers and learn about their future needs, create a common platform for organizing exhibitions & conference companies, offer training to actors in accordance with technologies that meet future needs and encourage companies specialized in organizing exhibitions to join international organizations and bodies to benefit from their expertise and experience.

OIC COUNTRIES PREPARATIONS FOR THE 12TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE



12th WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE
GENEVA 2022
CO-HOSTED BY KAZAKHSTAN

The participation of the OIC Member States in the 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) was the subject of a preparatory virtual workshop of experts organized by the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) in partnership with the Secretariat of the World Trade Organization and the Islamic Development Bank, on November 9-10, 2021.

This workshop aimed to exchange views on the issues raised on the MC12 Agenda, as well as to update information on the state of play of negotiations and on potential outcomes. The negotiation themes discussed relate to contemporary development issues linked to trade and development.

Thus, the focus was on «trade and health» topics, including ways to overcome the challenges related to COVID 19 for a global economic recovery. Countries are negotiating opportunities to reach consensus on appropriate policies to undertake at the international level for strengthening supply chains and developing vaccine-manufacturing capacities. With regard to subsidies to preserve fi-

sheries resources, the negotiations aim to reach an Agreement on the basis on the adoption of disciplines prohibiting subsidies harmful to the resource, in accordance with the objectives of Sustainable Development. It is worth noting that the ban on these subsidies would lead to a 12.5% increase in global fish biomass by 2050, bearing in mind that a third of the world’s marine fish stocks are currently in a situation of overexploitation.

Compared to agriculture, which has been the subject of negotiations since 2000, within the framework of the Integrated Agenda of the WTO (Built-in Agenda), the highlight was on the state of progress of the discussions relating to supportive policies to agricultural activities for the purposes of food security, in particular export subsidies or the establishment of public food stocks. In addition to these major negotiation issues, the workshop took stock of the state of play of discussions on new joint initiatives launched at the 11th WTO Ministerial Conference, held in Buenos Aires in December 2017. The aim was to

initiate negotiations on issues of increasing relevance to the world trading system. These are initiatives on electronic commerce, facilitation of investment for development and domestic regulation in services.

Ongoing negotiations at the WTO could lead to a ministerial declaration that should indicate the way forward and the deadlines for reaching consensus on these issues. The adoption of Agreement texts would follow. In addition, this workshop was an opportunity to exchange views on the trends of the ongoing negotiations. The representatives of Morocco and Saudi Arabia presented the regional and national preparatory processes for the participation in the work of the MC12.

They underlined the importance of these discussions for the economic development of the OIC Member countries. They insisted on the need to further enhance cooperation and exchange of experiences among OIC Member countries in this area.



PAKISTAN ADJUSTS ITS TARIFFS ON HONEY AND FRESH FRUITS

On 29 November 2021, Pakistan's Directorate General of Customs Valuation through Valuation Ruling No. 1569/2021 increased the reference values for the calculation of customs duties on imports of honey of different brands classified under subheading 0409.

The customs value ranged from USD 2.77 to USD 17 per kg earlier and range from USD 2.85 to USD 17.05 after the amendment. Imports of these goods will be assessed to the above minimum customs values for

assessment of duty or taxes. One week earlier, the Ministry of Finance and Revenue of Pakistan through SRO 1501(I)/2021 exempted the imports of all edible fruits, except apples, from Afghanistan from the whole of sales tax applicable on such imports.

The amendment is effective retrospectively from 15 September 2021. The general rate of Sales Tax applicable in Pakistan is 17%, while the specific rates for individual goods may be different.



TURKEY LIFTS IMPORT DUTY ON SARDINES DEDICATED TO PROCESSED FOOD

On 28 October 2021, the government of Turkey lifted the import duties on sardines (*Sardina pilchardus*, *Sardinops* spp.) provided that the imported product is used in the production of prepared or preserved fish. In the case of the importation of the sardines for other purposes, 30% import duties will

be applied. Sardines are classified under the HS code 0303.53; The decision is taken through a revision in the list of the products subject to discounted customs duties within the scope of the end-use legislation. The Turkish government also removed the Mass Housing Fund (MHF) surcharge on sardines (Sar-

dina pilchardus, *Sardinops* spp.) provided that the imported product is used in the production of prepared or preserved fish. In the case of the importation of the sardines for other purposes, a 23% MHF surcharge will be applied.

RANDA EL HADDAD : HER SENEGALESE AGRI-FOOD EXPORTS REACH ALL CORNERS OF THE WORLD



Randa El Haddad is the managing director and founder of Zena Exotic Fruits for 12 years. She has been repeatedly awarded for her entrepreneurial skills and the company's performance. Randa Hadad shares the management of the company with her husband, and she is considered an icon of women entrepreneurship in Senegal. Interview

Randa El Haddad is a well-known personality in Africa. She represents zealous women who dared to be industrial entrepreneurs. Who was Randa before she became an entrepreneur?

I was born in Lebanon, and I studied at the French private schools. Afterward, I pursued a career in law studies at the Lebanese university. I belong to a family consisting of seven girls and my father. Despite his modest means, he was keen to help us receive the best education because he firmly believes that girls have a crucial role in their homes and communities.

What was your key driving force to become an entrepreneur?

My father was a great businessman. Since we were young, we were asked to

help him and assist him in his work alternately. But I admit that I enjoyed helping him as he gave me more responsibility progressively. Honestly, I never thought of being an entrepreneur; I was pleased to help him.

What was the trigger back then? Thanks to what, thanks to whom?

As fate would have it, I got married in Senegal. Just as all women, I followed my husband. It turned out that he and his father were at the head of a very modest family fruit and vegetable processing business. History repeats itself, I wanted to help them, and I liked to embark on this adventure and go further and develop even more.

What were you doing before becoming an entrepreneur?

Regarding my education, I have two bachelor's degrees. The first in Law from Lebanon and the second in communication and marketing from Senegal. Paradoxically, I first started my professional career as a teacher for long enough. I spent 11 years teaching at the French middle schools in Lebanon. Later, I spent seven years as an administrative assistant at the Kuwaiti Embassy in Dakar. Then, I occupied the position of administrative and financial director of Unisali, the forerunner of Zena.

Accordingly, you took the responsibility of managing the company... how have you faced this challenge?

Nothing was planned; I made the most of what life offered me. I instinctively like challenges and decent work. Succeeding in something boosts my energy much like consuming vitamin C. Consequently, I aspire to go even further and achieve more. Who supported you in your journey? My husband encouraged me and supported me in all decisions, even the unwise ones. Instead of blaming me or holding me back, he backed me up to accept the defeat and start over. This is vitally important, and I believe that it has fueled my at-

tachment to the cause of women as well as my desire to encourage and help them to enjoy the status they deserve in the working environment

How did you raise funding for your venture?

In the beginning, I financed my ambitions and my project with my salary. In addition to that, I benefited from some trading opportunities, funds from tontines, and support classes. In short, I was able to do it thanks to resourcefulness, in other words, my self-reliance, as well as some modest means. My family also lent me some money.

How and where did you find the human resources necessary to start processing?

The food industry is primarily kind of a know-how imparted from father to son, and my husband was in charge of production. Moreover, I did extensive training afterward.

What products does Zena Exotic fruits produce today, what volumes are processed, what markets are being explored? Zena Exotic Fruits is the pride of Senegal and a leader in the national market. We process and manufacture more than 55 products (juices, jams, syrups, sauces, chili, spices, cereals, seeds...), and we export to the European, Canadian, and American markets.

What would your advice be to the start-up entrepreneurs?

They should think about their projects and believe in what they want to do. They need to do it with passion, love, and mastery. Besides, I invite them to arm themselves with courage and an iron will. Overthinking will not lead to success, working too hard will not lead to success, being too afraid will not lead to progress, and having too much audacity and courage is risky. Therefore, courage, education, mastery, and learning from others and their own experiences are essential. Most importantly, they should be a voice, not an echo.

COP 26 : 200 COUNTRIES COMMIT TO DECARBONIZE, A NEW HOPE FOR EARTH

- CHINA AND INDIA REFUSE TO DECIDE ON A DEFINITIVE ABANDONMENT OF COAL
- \$ 500 BILLION PLEDGED TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES TO HELP WITH ADAPTATION
- EMPHASIS ON REFORESTATION TO EXPAND CARBON SINKS



Could do better... However, until when? By announcing the results of the climate compromise on November 13, Alok Sharma, the President of COP26, looked grim. Altered by the last-minute turnaround of China and India, which preferred to commit to a «gradual reduction» rather than a «gradual exit» from fossil fuels, the Glasgow Pact is nonetheless the first roadmap involving as many nations in the race against global warming. It should be said that the urgency is there and the procrastination of the States observed since the Paris Agreement (COP21) has ended up giving way to a bitter reality: the world is at a loss. Thirty years ago, climate change was considered a relatively marginal problem issue. It has become now a global priority. The planet has warmed by 1.1

° C compared to the pre-industrial era. The disastrous effects of global warming are already being felt around the world: storms, floods, droughts and forest fires are intensifying, giving way to a sense of urgency. However, we are not acting fast enough. At the opening of the Glasgow Summit, world leaders - including British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and US President Joe Biden - presented COP26 as the last best chance, the last great opportunity, to save the planet from disaster. The leaders of the poorest and most exposed nations to warming have startled that their populations' survival is at stake. Time is running out. Wasn't this already the case in 2015 at COP21? Six years ago, 196 States signed a commitment, the Paris Agree-

ment, to work together to limit global warming to below 2 ° C, while pursuing their efforts to keep it below 1.5 ° C. (mitigation), to adapt to the consequences of global warming (adaptation) and to raise funds to achieve these objectives (finance). Since then, Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) scientists have raised the alarm: 1.5 ° C is a level beyond which every tenth of an additional degree will lead to deadly heat waves, water shortages, the collapse of ecosystems and more extreme weather events. We must limit the rise in average temperatures to 1.5 ° C. In the Paris Agreement, countries committed to putting in place national plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) with a commitment to review them every 5 years. Unfortunately, the NDCs established in Paris proved to be insufficient to follow a 1.5 ° C trajectory. With a one-year delay due to the pandemic, countries were expected at COP26 with ambitious reduction targets to "keep 1.5 ° C alive" according to the expression of Alok Sharma, President of COP26. On November 13, following 2 weeks of bitter discussions between the negotiators of the 200 countries involved in the process, and marked by many twists and turns, the president of the COP26 described this Agreement as a «fragile win» for the climate. Progress has been made, but we are clearly falling short of expectations. The Agreement shows a clear consensus that all countries must act more and immediately to prevent ca-

tastrophic temperature warming. It calls for specific measures, such as halving CO2 emissions by 2030 and curbing methane emissions. It establishes new rules to make States accountable for their progress as well as their failures. He calls on States to come back next year with more demanding emission reduction commitments. He urges rich nations to «at least double» funding by 2025 to protect the countries most exposed to climatic hazards. Nonetheless, it leaves open the crucial question of the speed and level of emission reductions that each country will need to achieve over the next decade. Here are the main advances obtained by the negotiators:

1) The 1.5 ° C ambition: Some countries were opposed to stronger action upon arrival in Glasgow and argued that setting the global ambition at 1.5 ° C would mean to reopen the Paris Agreement. The British presidency, supported in particular by US special envoy John Kerry, has insisted that «well below 2 ° C» does not equate to 1.9 ° C or 1.8 ° C. The text repeatedly refers to the «best available science» that has evolved since the Paris Agreement. The battle for Glasgow was clearly won by supporters of 1.5 ° C. A victory for the British presidency, and above all, for the planet.

2) Reduction of emissions: a majority of countries had raised their NDCs targets ahead of COP26, including large emitters such as Europe, the United States and China, but their commitments remain insufficient to contain global warming to 1.5 ° C. Two big emitters have joined the club of "net zero emissions" nations by producing new NDCs during

DEFINITION

Behind the word decarbonization, we find all the measures allowing an economic sector, an entity - State, company, - to reduce its carbon footprint, which means its greenhouse gas emissions, mainly carbon dioxide (CO2) and methane (CH4), in order to limit the impact on the climate. One of the essential levers for successfully decarbonizing can be summed up in one formula: consume less and better. How?

- By targeting **energy efficiency** : notably the energy used to heat buildings, run industries, drive our cars ...
- By emphasizing **the approach centered on the development of energy sobriety** which consists in reducing energy consumption;
- By focusing on **renewable energies**, which are more virtuous.
- By securing carbon sinks, namely natural ecosystems (soils, forests, etc.) enabling carbon to be captured, while developing technologies for capturing and storing CO2.

the talks: India, which has pledged to reduce its greenhouse gases by 1 billion tons (of CO2 equivalent) by 2030 and to achieve the objective of neutrality by the end of 2070, and Brazil, which has strengthened its objective of reducing carbon emissions to 50% - against 43% before COP26 and which aims for neutrality in 2050.

3) Gradual and progressive reduction of coal and fossil fuel subsidies: coal is by far the most emitting fossil fuel. To achieve this goal, the construction of new coal-fired power plants must be stopped now and at least 40% of the 8,500 existing power stations must be dismantled by 2030. For the very first

time, the COP26 declaration commits States, without specific deadlines, to intensify their efforts to «gradually reduce» the combustion of coal.

4) Adaptation finance: rich countries have pledged \$ 500 billion in private and public funds over 5 years to help developing countries. More funds will need to be allocated for adaptation. This is a significant step forward, because most of the funds are currently intended for emission reduction projects, mainly renewable energy projects in intermediate countries. These profitable projects could be implemented without this financial support. The poorest countries are struggling to receive aid to adapt to extreme weather conditions. The proportion of funding allocated to adaptation should double by 2025 compared to 2019.

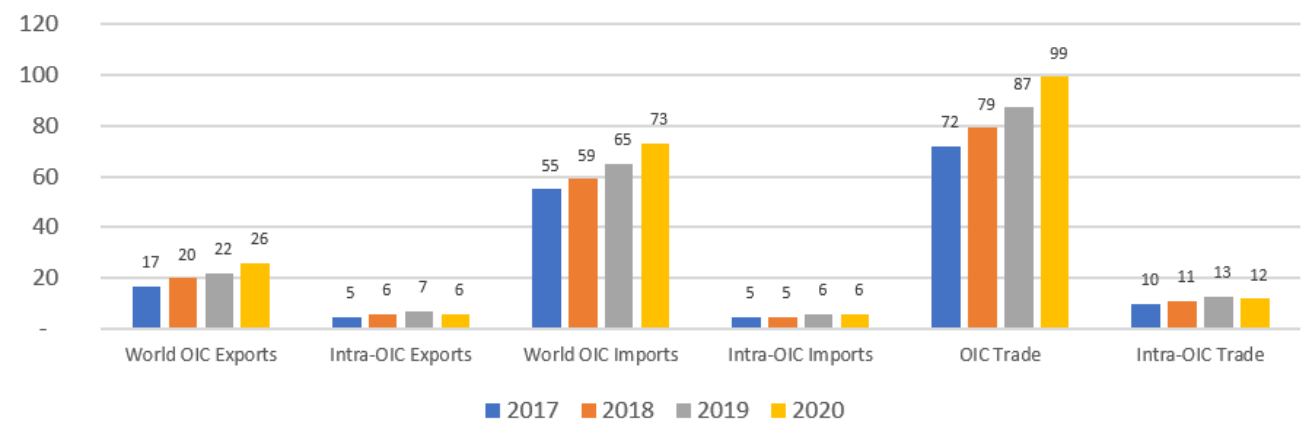
5) Loss and damage: The concept of loss and damage refers to climatic devastation that is too destructive to allow countries facing it to avoid it or adapt to it. The subject has been on the table for a decade without significant progress, with developing countries demanding compensation from the developed countries responsible for it. However, loss and damage is mentioned for the very first time in the cover section of the deal, and the issue will return to negotiations next year.

6) Global Carbon Market Agreement: Negotiators also reached an agreement setting carbon market rules, potentially unlocking trillions of dollars for forest protection, development of renewable energy projects and other projects to fight against climate change.

TRADE IN MEDICAL PRODUCTS IN OIC MEMBER STATES: AN INCREASE OF 27% IN ONE YEAR

- A MARKET OF 99 BILLION DOLLARS IN 2020
- MEDICAL EQUIPMENT REPRESENTS 80% OF THE MARKET
- TURKEY, JORDAN, SAUDI ARABIA IN THE TOP 3 OF EXPORTERS

Evolution of trade in medical products in OIC Member States between 2017 and 2020
(in billions of US dollars)
Source: ITC TradeMap, 2021, ICDT calculations

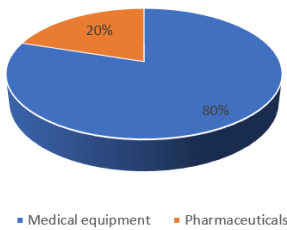


OIC Member States are suffering the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic and struggling to overcome the adverse effects of the current crisis. Due to issues related to intellectual property rights, complexity of production, or hoping to lower overall costs, companies have a tendency to rely more on a single company or supplier. The rampant pandemic has led to an increase in household health spending and medical consumption, thereby increasing countries' GDP. When the estimated increase in health expenditure and pharmaceutical consumption was incorporated as data in the model, the GDP of Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Iran was positively impacted at rates of 0.57%, 0.28%, 0.14%, 0.33%, and 0.14% respectively in the medium scenario. The notable increase in healthcare consumption is attributed to the severity of the infection in the above countries, which recorded over 10.8 million cases, as of

December 27, 2021. The WTO Report reveals that the average tariff for medical products related to COVID-19 was 4.8%, and 134 WTO Members have imposed a tariff of 5% or less on medical products, although tariffs on masks reached 55% in some countries during the pandemic. In fact, the average customs tariff imposed on COVID-19 related medical supplies by OIC Members States is 9.7%, which is relatively higher than the global average of 4.8%. The global average customs duty imposed on soap is 17% and on protective supplies around 11.5%. Among OIC Member States, the average tariff imposed on hand soap is 17.6%, on disinfectants / sterilization products is of 16.5% and amounts to 13.4% for protective clothing, which is relatively higher than the world average. The OIC market for medical products totaled around US \$ 72 billion in 2017 to US \$ 99 billion in 2020, an increase of 27% due to increased imports from

OIC Member States during this period and intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic and the scarcity of industrial medical production units. Besides, the OIC foreign trade is made up by 80% of medical equipment and 20% by pharmaceutical products in 2020. 76% of the most marketed medical equipment is made up of the following products: face masks (20%), vulcanized rubber gloves, mittens and mitts (17%), instruments and devices used in medical and surgical sciences (10%), carrier diagnostic or laboratory reagents, prepared diagnostic or laboratory reagents and certified reference materials (8%), hand sanitizer (6%), other cleaning products (6%), needles, catheters, cannulas used in medical, surgical and dental sciences (4%), ozone therapy, oxygen therapy, aerosol therapy, artificial respirators or other therapeutic breathing apparatus (3%) and hand soap (3%). In 2020, 93% of the OIC pharmaceu-

OIC Trade Structure of Medical Products in 2020
Source: ITC TradeMap, ICDT calculations, 2021



tical trade was mainly composed of drugs made of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic use (69%) and human blood (24%). Intra-OIC trade improved by 6%, from US \$ 10 billion in 2017 to US \$ 12 billion in 2020. These data show that OIC Member countries are net importing countries of medical products. The share of intra-OIC trade in medical products decreased by 37% from 20.3% in 2017 to 14.9% in 2020 due to the use of domestic products for local demand and in order to avoid the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic between 2019 and 2020.

Before 2019, intra-OIC trade of medical products was around 20% and intra-OIC exports around 30% thanks to the existence of medical industries in some OIC countries especially in Asia, GCC countries and North Africa, which supplied other Member States.

In addition, the intra-OIC trade of medical products in 2020 was made up of 56% of medical equipment and 44% of drugs.

83% of the most marketed medical equipment is made up of the following products: cleaning products (27%), hand soap (17%), face mask (12%), gloves, mittens and mitts in vulcanized rubber (9%), hand disinfectant (6%), surgical gloves, vulcanized rubber (5%), medical and surgical instruments and devices (5%) and disinfectants in packaging for retail sale (3%).

Intra-OIC drug trade in 2020 was made up of 93% of drugs consisting of mixed or unmixed products for therapeutic or prophylactic use (81%) and drugs consisting of two or more constituents mixed together for therapeutic or prophylactic purposes (12%).

Major medical equipment manufacturers, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, have been the most affected between 2019 and 2020. Malaysia's exports fell by 19.32% and imports by 27.66%. Indonesia's exports fell by 31.84% and imports by 8.32%. The value of Turkey's exports fell by 25.5% and imports by 13.91%. UAE exports fell by 16.54% and imports by 12.58%.

Malaysia, Jordan, Egypt, Morocco, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia are among the OIC countries whose contribution of the medical products sector to the GDP is significant. The top 15 exporters of pharmaceuticals in OIC countries are: Turkey, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Pakistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Lebanon, Oman, Kuwait, Mo-

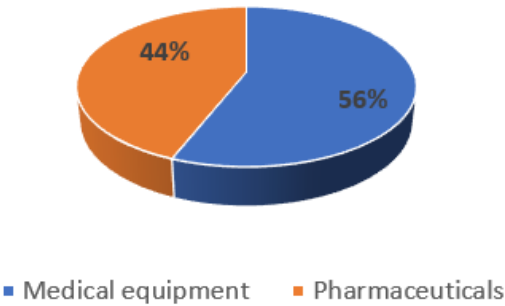
rocco, Tunisia, Uzbekistan and Iran in 2020.

They ensured 98% of the total OIC pharmaceutical exports in 2020. These countries have made efforts to develop their local pharmaceuticals and can share their experience for the benefit of other OIC Member States and invest in this sector to avoid the disruption of these products in the event of possible pandemics.

The largest pharmaceutical importing countries in 2020 were Saudi Arabia, Iraq, United Arab Emirates, Algeria, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Brunei, Yemen, Nigeria and Egypt. Indeed, this top ten totaled 61% of OIC pharmaceutical imports.

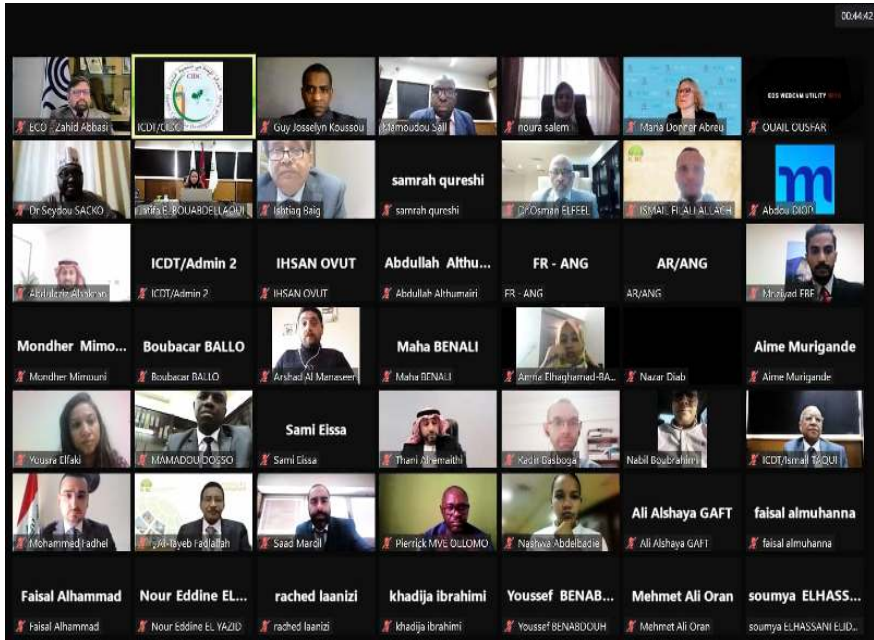
To improve the trade of OIC medical products, ICDT will continue to organize B2B meetings, an OIC Health Fair, analytical studies on medical products markets and also the insertion of business opportunities on its website in order to promote the development of this sector among Member States in collaboration with OIC institutions and international partners.

Structure of Intra-OIC Trade in Medical Products in 2020
Source: ITC TradeMap, ICDT calculations, 2021



TRADE INTEGRATION A KEY FACTOR FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF OIC COUNTRIES

The leading approaches to the development of regional trade integration among the OIC Member States was the theme of the Virtual Conference held on December 20th by ICDT in partnership with the Department of Cooperation and Regional Integration of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). With the attendance of several international and regional organizations, the meeting focused on the experiences of economic integration in the OIC space and the possibilities of further developing intra-OIC trade in line with the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action. The latter aims at increasing the target share of intra-OIC trade to 25% by 2025. The OIC actions depict the joint efforts of all the institutions of the organization functioning in trade and partnership. It is worth noting that the OIC, which is composed of 57 Member countries located in 4 continents, has an OIC Trade Preferential System designed to lay the foundations for a true regional economic integration. The OIC space has about 13 regional free trade areas and 4 customs unions in force, namely: the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Economic Development Community of West Africa (ECOWAS), the Economic Development Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the East African Community (EAC), the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU). Other customs unions are under creation, notably in the Arab world and in Central Asia. The interest in yielding the positive results of all these legal instruments has become a necessity for the Organization, knowing that intra-OIC trade reached only 19% in 2020. Whereas, at the level of the European Union and North America, this share has attained 60% and 42% respectively. The suc-



cess of sub-regional groupings in the OIC space will boost the implementation of more joint investment projects in line with the development of complementarity among OIC countries. The richness and diversity of natural and economic potentials offer real opportunities to establish the basis of economic integration, which leads to growth stimulation and job creation in the 57 OIC countries. Furthermore, ICDT will aspire to increase opportunities for meetings between the business communities of the OIC countries. These meetings aim at exploring the possibilities of enhancing trade and partnership opportunities along with value chain development. The present situation is a result of the persistence of obstacles in the path of growth of intra-regional trade and investment. These obstacles encompass non-tariff barriers such as complicated technical regulations, import control procedures, the problem of

Certificate of Origin, and limited financing lines. Similarly, experiences prove that the capacity of exporting SMEs cannot take advantage of market opportunities in OIC countries, given the problems related to financing and transport connectivity. The efforts of ICDT and its partners will focus on mitigating these obstacles by reducing the time and cost of cross-border movement of goods, services, capital, and information flows. Indeed, the implementation of the Trade Facilitation Agreement of the WTO by the forty-four OIC Countries Members of the WTO is an asset to the actions undertaken to increase the fluidity of intra-OIC trade. It essentially revolves around the reinforcement of the coordination between the customs authorities at the borders, the simplification of procedures, the creation of single windows, and the use of new technologies of commination, which will allow to better serve the operator of foreign trade.

CALENDAR

Activity	Date	Place
Dubai Expo	October 1, 2021-March 31, 2022	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
Online training for the benefit of companies and associations of member countries of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), on the theme: "Export Strategies and Internationalization of SMEs"	February to March 2022	Virtual or in Yaoundé, Republic of Cameroon (TBD)
2nd edition of the OIC Member States Plastics Fair	1-4 June 2022	Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco
17th edition of the Trade Fair of OIC Member States	June 2022	Dakar, Republic of Senegal
2nd edition of the OIC Cotton and Textile Expo	26 June – 1 st July 2022	Abidjan, Republic of Ivory Coast
13th edition of the OIC Halal Expo	14-18 September 2022	Tunis, Republic of Tunisia
13th edition of the Food Industries Exhibition of OIC Member States	To be defined	Jeddah 2022 - Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
Bahrain Halal Forum «Bahrain Halal Expo»	October 6-8, 2022	Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain
Turkey Halal Expo	24-28 November 2022	Istanbul, Republic of Turkey
18 th edition of the Trade Fair of OIC Member States	5-11 December 2022 (To be confirmed)	Lahore, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

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