



# TIJARIS



INTRA-OIC AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INVESTMENT MAGAZINE

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**e-commerce :  
threat or  
opportunity  
for OIC  
countries ?**



**Interview with ICIEC CEO :  
Strengthening Intra-OIC relations  
with ICIEC's Insurance Solutions**



**Doing Business : Cote  
d'Ivoire : strong assets  
for investment**

### 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.



## EDITORIAL



### OIC : e-commerce to build the trade of tomorrow

Will e-commerce soon become the standard and store visits the exception? It seems so, at least for mass purchases. While global trade in goods is growing by an average of 5 % per year, e-commerce, which has recorded for several years an increase of around 15%, jumped in 2020, in light of the pandemic restrictions, by 24 %. By 2024, it will have grown by 50% !

The e-commerce wave will not spare any country or any commodity. E-commerce, driven by proximity, ease and customer experience, will soon be the must do and many countries have taken a considerable lead in this area.

That's reason enough for the OIC countries to make it a priority in the field of economic and social development. There is also an emergency. On the one hand, statistics show (see our article p.18) that out of the ten countries that weigh the most in global e-commerce, none is an OIC member state and, on the other hand and more worrying, according to a report by Nielsen, the global trade data compeller, 57 % of the consumers made a purchase from a foreign retailer in 2019. In 2020, that number has risen to 68 %. China, the United States and United Kingdom being the three international marketplaces from where they buy the most.

In other words, the ease of purchase and the plethora of one-click supply may squeeze producers access to their consumers in the own local market. And this is where the urgency lies.

Building an e-commerce offer supposes several prerequisites: a solid telecoms and internet infrastructure, appropriate regulations and a visible and structured offer. Does this exist within the OIC région ? Yes, undoubtedly, and the success stories of several countries testify to it. However, there is a global dynamic and synergies to be triggered and the OIC countries could make e-commerce a huge vector of commercial growth.

Three mechanisms can be put in place by OIC to strenghten countries individual efforts.

The first is to set up technical assistance in the country to develop their regulation in order to provide the necessary conditions for the rise of e-commerce. Commercial regulations, intellectual property, fair competition, authentication and security of transactions, etc. are all projects to be supported.

The second mechanism is capacity building. Human capital in OIC countries must understand the business of e-commerce with its market responsiveness, its supply agility, its distribution constraints and its computerized management.

The third mechanism is the technical and financial support for the private sector to acquire new marketing and sales techniques for virtual commerce. Multiple and distant suppliers, management of orders, customer experience, logistical flexibility, etc. It is not enough to produce, it is also necessary to make people know, to make people want, to sell and to deliver: Certainly not reinventing the wheel of doing business, but the path is quite different.

In conclusion, the OIC countries have a threat to turn into an opportunity: a global market where the cost of the effort to reach a consumer has never been so low, but also where competition has never been so fierce. A market where a craftsman in a village can compete with a giant whose turnover exceeds the GDP of several countries. Globalize or die...

Latifa Elbouabdellaoui  
CEO of ICDT



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Légende photo sommaire : intra-OIC trade is hampered by the membership of its member countries to regional economic groups

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**PRESIDENT OF EGYPT AND OIC’S SG CHAIRED THE 8<sup>TH</sup> MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON WOMEN**



The 8<sup>th</sup> OIC Ministerial Conference on Women was organized from July 6 to 8, 2021 in Cairo, under the theme “Preserving the achievements of gender equality and the empowerment of women in the light of the pandemic of Covid-19 and beyond. The Conference witnessed the participation of delegations from 48 OIC Member States and representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, OIC institutions as well as other important personalities and institutions. The first two days were devoted to preparations for the Ministerial Conference. On this occasion, the delegates presented the efforts of the OIC institutions in the field of women’s rights and economic empowerment and discussed the resolutions and the Cairo Declaration to be presented for adoption to the Ministerial Conference. The Ministerial Conference was held on July 8, 2021, and it was marked by the presence at the opening ceremony of HE Abdel Fattah El-Sissi - President of the Republic of Egypt, HE Dr. Yousef A. Al Othaimeen - Secretary General of the OCI, HE Madame Hélène Marie Laurence - Minister of National Solidarity of Women, Family and Hu-

manitarian Action of Burkina Faso and HE Dr. Maya Morsi - President of the National Council of Women of the Arab Republic of Egypt and newly elected President of the 8th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women. During this important meeting, participants reviewed the efforts made by OIC Member States and institutions to achieve the objectives of OPAAW (OIC Plan of Action for Advancement of Women). While stressing the importance of strengthening cooperation to combat the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on women and girls, they also presented other measures taken to preserve the socio-economic development of women in the OIC countries. The Conference concluded with the following:

- The adoption of the resolutions of the Conference and of the Cairo Declaration;
- A Call to speed up the ratifications of the statutes of the OIC Women’s Development Organization headquartered in Cairo;
- The offer of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to host the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women in 2023.

**The Trade and Investment Sub-Committee is working on its three-year program**

As part of the strengthening of the implementation of the activities of the Sub-Committee on Trade and Investments (TISC), the Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT) which chairs the TISC took the initiative to prepare an evaluation report covering the period 2016-2019. The report was submitted to the members in order to ensure continuity and take the necessary measures for the review, restructuring and coordination of the joint programs for 2021-2023, taking into particular consideration the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. For this purpose, the organized a virtual consultative meeting of the TISC leaders on January 28, 2021. The following institutions took part in this meeting: Department of Economic Affairs of the OIC, COMCEC, SESRIC , SMIIC, ICICIA, ITFC, ICIEC, ICD, ICYF, IOFS and BMAQ. These institutions presented the inventory of their past activities. In addition, ICDT has proposed a three-year program of activities on the promotion, facilitation, financing and development of the Halal industry, that of tourism as well as the development of strategic products. The representatives of the OIC and ICDT highlighted the importance of implementing joint integrated programs according to the Sustainable Development Goals and the OIC Ten-Year Plan of Action 2016-2025. After a debate on the evaluation report and the restructuring of the programs, the participants appointed the institutions as leaders of the following Technical Committees: Trade Finance and Insurance by ICIEC; Development of strategic products including COVID-19 products and services and SMEs by ITFC; Trade Facilitation and Investment Promotion by ICDT; and the Development of Halal Industry and Tourism by SMIIC. Each thematic leader is responsible for coordinating their program with other stakeholders and submitting a semi-annual report to the ICDT secretariat. It is up to the latter to present it to the TISC Managers for the implementation of joint projects (2021-2023). Moreover, each institution is requested to submit the TISC program for approval to its Governing Council and to involve at least two OIC institutions in its execution.



### 3<sup>RD</sup> MEETING OF TRADE PROMOTION BODIES IN FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICA



As part of the implementation of the recommendations of the 3rd Forum of Trade Promotion Bodies (TPB) of the OIC Member States, held in Casablanca in October 2017, the Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Senegalese Export Promotion Agency (ASEPEX) which chairs the Francophone Network of OIC Trade Promotion Bodies, organized on April 6, 2021, the 3rd Meeting of the Network.

The meeting was crowned with the adoption of the Action Plan of the network of Francophone TPBs of the OIC and comprising, among other things, the support of the TPBs in their promotional activities and the internationalization of their fairs and shows; technical assistance for the

establishment of autonomous TPBs; and the development of promotional strategies aimed at OIC Member States. In addition, particular emphasis will be placed on the development of information systems and capacity building.

It should be noted that ICDT has planned in its 2021/2022 program of activities to organize the Meeting of the Networks of Arab-speaking and English-speaking TPBs, with a view to organizing the 4th Forum of Trade Promotion Bodies (TPBs) of the Member States on the sidelines of the Dubai Expo Universal Exhibition, which will be held from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022, for more synergies, complementarity and coordination between the different networks.

### OIC: COMMITTEE ON TRADE PREFERENCES CONTINUES ITS WORK

The Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT) participated, on June 1 and 2, in the virtual meeting of the Trade Negotiations Committee organized by the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC). The objective of the meeting was to discuss the operationalization and impact of the intra-OIC trade agreement on the Participating States. The following countries took part in this meeting: Bahrain, Bangladesh, Iran, Jordan, Malaysia, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Oman, Pakistan, Turkey, United Arab Emirates and the Secretariat of the GCC (Council of Gulf Cooperation).

The representatives of the Turkish Ministry of Commerce, COMCEC and ICDT spoke in their interventions about the importance of the Agreement and its implementation by participating countries in 2022, as well as its extension to other Member States. The ICDT presented its study on the impact of the SPC / OIC Agreement on the economies of participating countries. This study concluded that the Agreement has a more or less positive impact - depending on the country - on trade, investment, production, consumption, GDP and social welfare.

The participants recommended to reflect on the modernization of the agreement (new generation agreement) and its implementation by July 2022. The participating countries must finalize their internal procedures in order to facilitate its implementation with products and services with high potential for intra-OIC trade and investment and contribute to the achievement of the objective of 25% of intra-OIC trade by 2025. Participants also insisted on the definition of the "Least Developed Country" (LDC) concept in the operationalization of the Agreement.

### THE ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK HELD ITS 46<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

ICDT participated in the 46th Annual Meeting of the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB) organized in Tashkent, Uzbekistan from September 1st to 4th, 2021. More than 2000 delegates from 100 countries as well as regional and international organizations took part to this event.

The inaugural session was co-chaired by the Head of State of the Republic of Uzbekistan, His Excellency Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev and the Chairman of the IsDB Group, His Excellency Dr. Muhammad Al Jasser. H.E Mirziyoyev congratulated IsDB for its role in the development of Member States, particularly in Uzbekistan where the bank has financed 101 projects for 2.3 billion USD. He insisted on the creation of a green route between West African and East Asian countries in order to develop agribusiness and ensure food security. He also called for the introduction of new technologies, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. President of Uzbekistan also highlighted the importance of expanding Islamic finance in member states and establishing a fund for science and technological innovation as well as investment in infrastructure.

H.E Dr Al Jasser commended the efforts of the Government of Uzbekistan in its inclusive development plan. He praised the excellent cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Uzbekistan on economic empowerment to support the Uzbek microenterprises through an initial envelope of USD 100 million to fight poverty.



## NEGOTIATIONS AT THE WTO : STATE OF PLAY DISCUSSED WITHIN THE OIC COUNTRIES



The Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) organized, in partnership with the WTO Secretariat and the Department of Cooperation and Regional Integration of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) a regional workshop on state of play of negotiations at the WTO for the benefit of OIC countries, from June 21 to 23, 2021, by videoconference.

This meeting aimed to support the OIC countries in the ongoing discussions at the WTO level, ahead of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12) scheduled for November 30 to December 3, 2021, in Geneva.

Work focused on updating information on ongoing negotiations, with an exchange of experiences between OIC member countries called to participate in MC12. In this regard, reference was made to the initiative on the facilitation of investment for development, which aims to initiate structured discussions in order to develop a legal framework engaging countries multilaterally on this subject.

Discussions also focused on other development-related topics such as the

Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Work Program and e-commerce. These two issues were highlighted as being of great importance in the post-COVID context.

In addition to the state of play of preparations for MC12, the update on the ongoing negotiations also focused on issues of domestic regulation in the field of services and the links between trade and the environment.

The exchange of experiences and views on the different themes under negotiation focused in this instance on agriculture, fisheries subsidies, services and special and differential treatment. Following the work of this workshop, the participants recommended:

- The pursuit of actions to build the capacities of OIC countries, by organizing thematic workshops on WTO issues, regional integration and the implementation of regional trade agreements.

- The strengthening of consultations between OIC member countries with

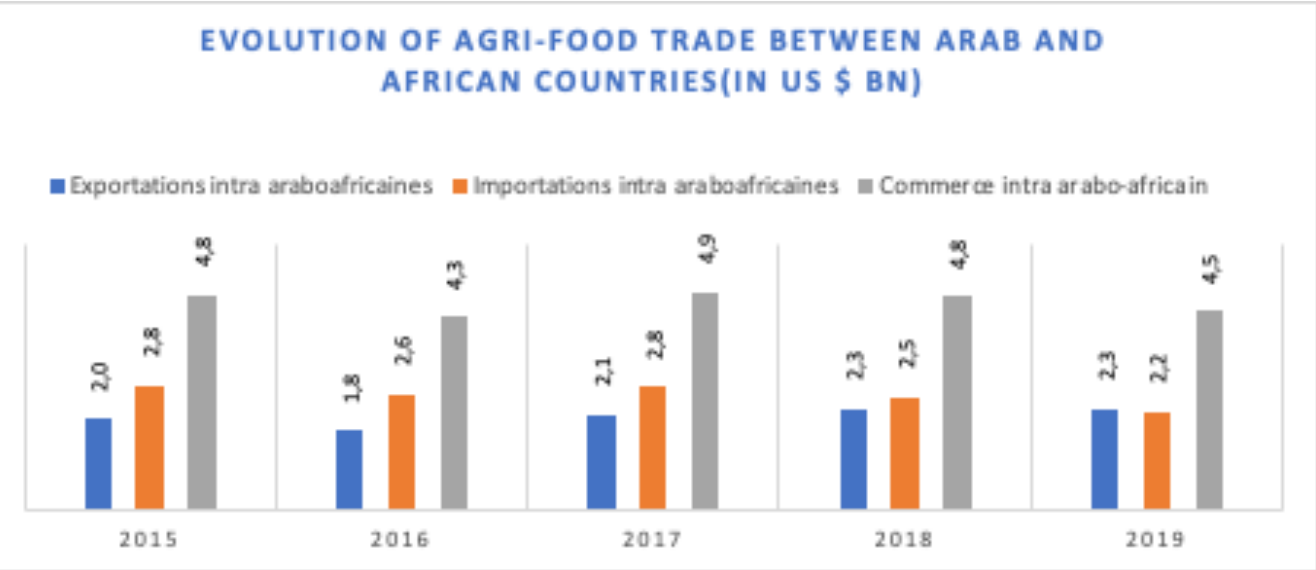
a view to contributing to a reconciliation of positions helping to make WTO issues a vector for the achievement of economic and social development in their area.

- The mutual sharing of experiences in the fields of new negotiating subjects such as electronic commerce, facilitation of investment for development, Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises / MSMEs, domestic regulation in the field of services and trade and environment, etc.

It should be noted that in preparation for the 12th Ministerial Conference of the WTO, the ICDT will soon organize, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank, the consultative meeting of the Ministers of Trade of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It will be preceded by the preparatory meeting of senior trade officials from OIC countries, and this will provide an opportunity to better coordinate the different positions with a view to concerted participation in MC12.



INTRA-ARAB-AFRICAN TRADE  
IN AGRI-FOOD PRODUCTS: STILL TOO WEAK !



Since its appearance, the pandemic linked to COVID-19 has highlighted in a crude way the issue of food security in the world, with sometimes dramatic consequences. In this food safety issue, the food industry plays and will play in the future a decisive role because it brings both added value and employment, and also because it makes it possible to extend the lifespan of foods and therefore their storage and integration into a chain of food solidarity. It is in this sense that **the Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT) and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), co-organized the Arab-African Virtual Business Forum of Agri-Food Products July 6-8, 2021.** The objective of this event was to promote trade and the development of partnerships as well as the sharing of experiences between operators in the Arab-African region, by targeting the opportunities, obstacles and ways of developing the agro-food sector. Or-

ganized in virtual format, the forum was a real success with the presence of 600 participants from 68 countries and the participation of 160 companies exhibiting their products and services in this area. It must be said that the stakes are considerable and the agrifood sector can provide concrete answers. In her opening remarks, Mrs. Latifa Bouabdellaoui, CEO of ICDT, rightly indicated that “according to the United Nations Development Program, more than 20 million people are at risk of famine in the world today, and among the most affected countries, 4 are African, of which 3 are members of the OIC: Nigeria, Somalia, Yemen and South Sudan ”. In addition to the DG of the ICDT, a number of personalities marked the inaugural session of this forum, like the Deputy Secretary General in charge of Economic Affairs of the OIC, the Minister of Finance and Planning of Sudan, the Minister of Industry and Commerce of Côte d'Ivoire and the Chairman of the Board of

Directors of BADEA. All of them highlighted the need to strengthen synergies between countries and international and regional institutions, in order to take advantage of the potential in agriculture and agro-industry, which abounds in these two regions. It must be said that the share of trade in agri-food products between Arab and African countries is only around 5% of their foreign trade and this weakness is due to several factors :

- Limited and unsuitable production and storage infrastructures;
- Weakness of regional value chains in agro-food matters;
- Transport difficulties and red tape at cross-borderposts;
- Problem of sourcing local products;
- Lack of information on markets and distribution channels;
- Application of non-tariff barriers;
- Complexity of standards and their unexpected amendment;
- Funding problems;
- Lack of international distributor;

- Poor transport and logistics infrastructure;
- Lack of knowledge of the services of regional financial institutions (BADEA, BID, Afreximbank, BAD? Etc.);
- Linguistic and cultural barriers.

These obstacles and the means to face them were also at the center of the 3 panels held during the forum where it was also question about the opportunities remaining to be exploited and the necessary support, particularly in the digitization, logistics aspects and transport. The testimonies of business leaders throughout the 3 days of the program were eloquent on this subject. This forum also had B to B business meetings and a virtual exhibition of products and services in the agri-food sector covering fruits and vegetables, cereals and preparations, flour products, fishery products, honey, meats, milk and dairy products, vegetable oils, sugar and sweets, coffee, juices and mineral water. Following technical discussions and testimonials from the private sector, the recommendations emerging are summarized as follows:

- Initiate programs comprising bankable projects for the production,

industrialization and marketing of agri-food products between Arab and African countries via complementary regional value chains, with a view to developing the agri-food sector.

- Support the research and development sector in the various fields of agro-industry, with a view to modernizing production and marketing mechanisms.
- Promote the introduction of modern technology in agricultural and agro-industrial production processes.
- Facilitate trade flows between the countries of the Arab-African region, by developing transport via trade corridors and promoting logistics distribution chains.
- Support the system of quality standards for food products in the countries of the two regions in collaboration with SMIIC, OADIM, AOAD, FAO and the African Standards Institutes.
- Work for the progressive lifting of tariff and non-tariff barriers, by taking advantage of the legal frameworks relating to existing trade in the region, in particular the AfCFTA and the Great Arab Free Trade Zone.
- Strengthen synergies between the various regional institutions to develop partnerships in the agri-food

sector.

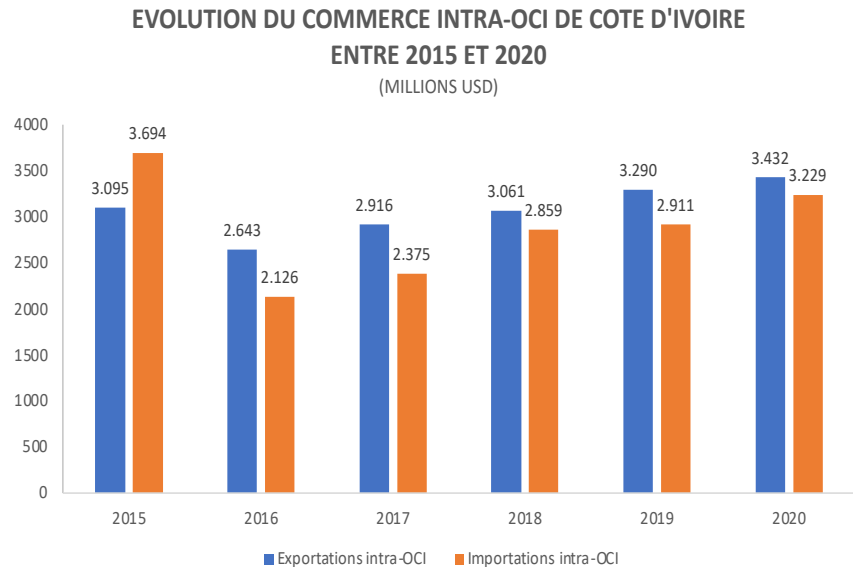
- Organize this Forum-Expo on an annual face-to-face basis in an African or Arab country or remotely, while strengthening B2B meetings between the two regions with a presentation of bankable projects to investors and financing, insurance and reinsurance.
- Further initiate institutional and entrepreneurial capacity building programs in feasibility studies, production technology and international marketing of their products and services between the two regions.
- Popularize and promote the services provided by regional institutions (AfDB, IsDB, BAD, Afreximbank, etc.) to the private sector of the two regions.
- Support economic operators, in particular SMEs held by women and young people in African and Arab countries.
- Encourage large Arab companies to invest in joint ventures in African countries in order to contribute to the transfer of agri-food technology and the fight against local unemployment of women and young people.





# COTE D'IVOIRE : THE ECONOMIC BRIDGEHEAD TO WEST AFRICA

As part of the technical assistance program in the field of trade and investment promotion for the benefit of OIC Member States, the Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT) organized with several Ivorian institutions a webinar on “Doing Business in Cote d'Ivoire”, on Thursday, June 24, 2021. The objective of this webinar was to present trade regulations and the investment climate as well as the specificities of the market and promising sectors in Cote d'Ivoire. It also aimed at identifying business opportunities, while providing information aiding decision-making to set up and invest in potential economic sectors in Cote d'Ivoire and West Africa. 80 economic and institutional operators have taken part in this meeting from the ten countries: Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger, Algeria, Senegal, Morocco, Togo, Iraq and Turkey. The work of the webinar focused on two aspects. The first institutional component included presentations on the development of foreign trade, the regulatory framework for trade and investment as well as the economic and commercial potential in Cote d'Ivoire. The second session was devoted to testimonials from companies established in this country as well as those exporting. These testimonies shed light on the obstacles hindering the development of Ivorian foreign trade and on the investment and partnership opportunities in this country with other OIC Member States. During the opening session, the intervention of Ms. Latifa Bouabdellaoui, DG of ICDT, who highlighted the assistance offered by the Center to OIC member countries, was followed by a speech of Mr. Souleymane Diarrasouba, Minister of Trade and Industry of Cote d'Ivoire in which he presented the main orientations of the economic policy of his country, while underlining its role as an economic engine within



ECOWAS. Webinar participants benefited from several presentations during the morning, including one dedicated to the state of play and partnership opportunities between Cote d'Ivoire and OIC member countries. To this end, the representative of ICDT noted that the volume of trade between the Cote d'Ivoire and the OIC countries amounts to 6.66 billion dollars, or 29% of the overall trade of this country. The speaker clarified that the untapped trade potential in about 15 OIC countries is around 23 billion USD and relates to the following products and services: agrifood products, ICT, Tourism, Higher education, Islamic finance, road and airport infrastructure, mining and energy. For the presentation of the regulatory framework for foreign trade in Cote d'Ivoire, the representative of the Ministry of Trade and Industry highlighted the different legal regimes governing import and export. It was specified that commercial activity in this country is free, subject to compliance with regulatory provisions relating to the preservation of morality,

order and public safety, as well as the protection of plants and health, and the lives of people and animals. Regarding the export potential of Cote d'Ivoire to OIC countries, the representative of the Export Promotion Agency of Cote d'Ivoire (APEXCI) pointed out that Cote d'Ivoire is full of significant potential for industrial transformation in the food industry. The Cote d'Ivoire is in fact the 1st world producer of cocoa beans, the 1st African producer of rubber, the 1st world exporter of cola nuts and cashew nuts, and the 5th world producer of palm oil, as well as the 6th largest producer of shea in the world. He recalled the objectives of the National Development Plan of Cote d'Ivoire (2021-2025) which will be likely to ensure the structural transformation of the economy and initiate major economic reforms by implementing incentive measures for national and foreign investments. He insisted on the importance of carrying out actions that will allow a better knowledge of the markets of the OIC zone. Regarding the import potential in Cote d'Ivoire, the representative of the

Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Cote d'Ivoire (CCI-CI) specified that fuels, food products and machinery occupy an important place in the country's imports. He highlighted certain recommendations concerning possible avenues for the development of trade and investment with Cote d'Ivoire's partners, including the reduction of tariff barriers and the strengthening of economic promotion actions. Regarding the Investment Climate in Cote d'Ivoire, the representative of the Center for the Promotion of

establish ties with CEPICI, which provides the support for investors in the achievement of their projects in Cote d'Ivoire. In the 2nd part of the session, webinar participants had the opportunity to listen to testimonials from foreign companies based in Cote d'Ivoire as well as local SMEs that have internationalized their business. It was particularly a question of a favorable reception climate, but also of certain export constraints, particularly related to the logistics aspect. Finally, the webinar ended with a set

member countries of the OIC;

- Organize common fairs and exhibitions to increase opportunities between Ivorian businessmen and those from OIC member countries;
- Set up an electronic information exchange platform;
- Hold another restricted Webinar involving only companies interested in partnering with Ivorian companies;
- Continue consultations between the ICDT and the Ivorian authorities, for the organization of similar promotional activities.



Investments of Cote d'Ivoire (CEPICI) highlighted the incentives for investment in Cote d'Ivoire due to the adoption of institutional and structural reforms initiated by the State. He stressed that Cote d'Ivoire is embarking on a trajectory of strong and sustained growth through a dynamic and competitive private sector. It was specified that the economic prospects of Cote d'Ivoire are promising and supported by the implementation of major structuring projects. He encouraged the participants to

of recommendations on actions to be taken in order to intensify trade and investment between Cote d'Ivoire and the OIC countries, and which we reproduce below this summary:

- Work for the mitigation of constraints preventing the development of business between the Cote d'Ivoire and the OIC, in particular:
- Absence of a direct maritime line between Cote d'Ivoire and the other countries of the OIC zone;
- Organize «country days» in Cote d'Ivoire for each of the flagship

\* These include the Ministry of Commerce and Industry; the Cote d'Ivoire Export Promotion Agency (APEXCI); the Cote d'Ivoire Investment Promotion Center (CEPICI); Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCI); and the National Export Center (CNE) of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire.

\*\* websites : [www.industrie.gouv.ci](http://www.industrie.gouv.ci); [www.apexci.net](http://www.apexci.net) ; [www.cepici.gouv.ci](http://www.cepici.gouv.ci) ; [www.cci.ci](http://www.cci.ci),[www.cne-ci.org](http://www.cne-ci.org).



# STRENGTHENING INTRA-OIC RELATIONS WITH ICIEC’S INSURANCE SOLUTIONS



Oussama Abdul Rahman KAISSE, Chief Executive Officer of the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC)

## Can you begin with a brief rationale for increasing intra-trade between OIC countries?

Of course. Increasing the share of trade between OIC countries is not just a strategic policy initiative designed by governments; it is a sound business approach for OIC members to build resilience in the face of trade shocks. In times of crisis, it's much easier to collaborate with partners and governments in countries committed to the same ideals, customs, economic models, and cultural nuances. By increasing intra-OIC trade, governments of OIC countries will be better positioned to fortify their country's economy, reduce their exposure to volatility, and better protect the lives and livelihoods of their citizens.

The last year of battling the COVID-19 pandemic has exemplified just how vital this aim is by highlighting that OIC supply chains, and trade partnerships with non-OIC actors across the globe, are more fragile than once believed. As such, intra-OIC trade must be increased to bolster the resilience and prosperity of OIC economies.

## What is the current state of intra-OIC trade?

Before the pandemic, we had already begun to witness strengthened relations between OIC member states via partnerships, shared capacity building, and knowledge exchange. We have also seen steady growth in intra-OIC trade shares over the past decade, rising from a 17.3% share in 2011 to 19.6% in 2020. Though this growth demonstrates significant progress, the current level of trade integration among OIC countries is still lower than desired.

At the 13th Islamic Summit held in April 2016 in Istanbul, a new Ten-Year Plan of Action was adopted by the Committee for Economic and Commercial Co-operation of the OIC (COMCEC), which aims to achieve a 25% intra-OIC trade share by 2025. Currently, only 28 of the OIC's 57 Member States have attained the target OIC trade share, and given that the current collective figure is still 5% below the target, there is still much room for improvement.

## What are some of the current opportunities and challenges for intra-OIC trade?

Given some of the longstanding implications of the COVID-19 pandemic, there are still lingering challenges for trade globally, such as protectionism, decreased

risk appetite, and supply and demand shocks. Perceived political risks and a lack of financial data and records in many OIC countries also result in barriers to accessing credit more generally for businesses in these countries seeking to expand their operations. This situation hampers the growth prospects of exporting businesses and the supply of capital goods and consumables for firms in these markets perceived too risky for trade.

**CUMULATIVELY, ICIEC HAS INSURED MORE THAN USD 70 BILLION IN IMPORTS, EXPORTS AND INVESTMENTS SINCE 1994. IN 2020 ALONE, THE CORPORATION WAS ABLE TO GUARANTEE USD 4.47 BILLION OF INTRA-OIC TRADE.**

Despite the challenges, we are currently presented with immense opportunities to support economic recovery and growth within the OIC market, especially given its growing demographics. The combined population of OIC Member Countries sits at 1.8 billion, with recent reports suggesting that OIC countries will, in general, witness population growth across all age groups over the next 30 years. Alongside this growing population will come a demand for enhanced infrastructure development, more goods and services, and increased food security, presenting ample oppor-

## BIOGRAPHY

**Mr. Oussama A KAISSE is the Chief Executive Officer of The Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit, ICIEC, the Export Credit, Political Risk Insurance and Credit Enhancement arm of the Islamic Development Bank Group.**

**Mr. KAISSE a graduate in Finance & Economics from Indiana University in the USA; has thirty-three years of diverse experience in the Insurance and Risk management industries. Having worked in the USA, Middle East and Africa, he has vast and diversified exposure to different markets, cultures and business models.**

**He is the founding President and Chief Executive Officer of two publicly listed Insurance Companies and served as the Regional General Manager for a Pan Arab Reinsurance Company.**

**Mr. KAISSE is The Chairman of the Executive Council of Aman Union a professional forum assembling Commercial & Non-commercial Insurers & Reinsurers in 56 Member Countries of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation and the League of Arab States.**

**He has served as Board member of CIBAFI - The General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions; The Chairman of the OIC Investment Trade and Promotion Agency, as well as Regional Takaful and Financial institutions.**

tunity for businesses in OIC countries to expand alongside the market demand. As I mentioned earlier, it's also easier for businesses to expand to new markets in countries with similar values, cultures, and customs; thus, there is plenty of space for intra-OIC business growth.

Intra-OIC export flows have already witnessed a steady increase, from USD 260 billion in 2016 to USD 327 billion in 2019 due to the increased market demand.

## What is ICIEC's role in facilitating intra-OIC trade?

ICIEC plays a crucial role in promoting intra-OIC trade and investment through its trade credit and political risk insurance strategic provision. ICIEC's insurance solutions, namely the Documentary Credit Insurance Policy, Bank Master Policy, and Sovereign Sukuk Insurance Policy, are designed to bridge the market failures that often inhibit intra-OIC trade and investments. More broadly, for ICIEC covered transactions, its presence in the financial market as a multilateral insurer, backed by an Aa3 credit rating from Moody's and preferred creditor status, helps increase its partners' financial capacity in OIC countries.

The Corporation also works to strengthen Islamic Finance capital markets and mobilize capital for strategic projects in OIC countries, contributing to their national development agendas and sustainable development. As such, we have instituted several initiatives in least-developed OIC countries that are perceived as higher risk and therefore not as attractive to traditional market players, supporting them to participate in trade transactions with more favourable terms.

Cumulatively, ICIEC has insured more than USD 70 billion in imports, exports and investments since 1994. In 2020 alone, the Corporation was able to guarantee USD 4.47 billion of intra-OIC trade. ICIEC's insurance enables Member Countries to import strategic goods such as food, export products that generate foreign currency revenue for the country and strengthen strategic sectors through infrastructure de-

velopment. Enhancing the volume of intra-OIC trade is central to ICIEC's operations. ICIEC's insurance can be catalytic for assisting Member Countries in reaching the 25% intra-OIC trade target set by COMCEC for 2025, thereby enhancing regional economic integration and resilience. ICIEC's dedication to being a powerful risk mitigant ensures that potential OIC trade partners can engage in impactful trade and investment transactions. As OIC countries increase their intra trade activities in goods and services, they will reach economic security, resiliency to outside shocks and harmony with their partners.

GIVEN SOME OF THE LONGSTANDING IMPLICATIONS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THERE ARE STILL LINGERING CHALLENGES FOR TRADE GLOBALLY, SUCH AS PROTECTIONISM, DECREASED RISK APPETITE, AND SUPPLY AND DEMAND SHOCKS

5. Where does ICIEC see opportunities to enhance intra-OIC trade for the future? Looking ahead, ICIEC is continuing to expand its operations in OIC coun-

tries to support and enable intra-OIC trade. Supporting intra-OIC exports from least developed Member Coun-

MORE ABOUT ICIEC

The Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC) is a member of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group. ICIEC was established on 1st August 1994 as an international institution with full juridical personality.

The idea for the establishment of an entity to provide investment and export credit insurance for Islamic Countries originated from the Agreement for the promotion, protection and guarantee of Investment among Member Countries of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

This Agreement provided that the OIC, through the Islamic Development Bank, establishes an Islamic Insurance Company operating under Shari'ah principles, to provide insurance products for investments and export credits.

Following the Agreement, the Board of Governors of IsDB Group, at its 16th Annual Meeting held in Tripoli, Libya, in February 1992, approved the Articles of Agreement of the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC), declaring its establishment.

The driving ambition behind the Agreement as a whole and the creation of ICIEC was to strengthen the economic relations between member countries of the OIC on the basis of Islamic Shari'ah.

tries allows these countries to export to trade areas where their commodities are competitive, leading to more preferential trade agreements, which significantly lower the trade barriers. The Corporation has identified immense opportunities for facilitating export transactions between African and Arab countries. Most OIC member countries in these two regions are developing countries with rapidly growing demographics. As such, ICIEC is a crucial participant in the Arab-Africa Trade Bridges (AATB) Program. AATB is a multi-donor, multi-country, and multi-organizational program designed to leverage new trade partnerships, strengthen existing partnerships, and increase trade and investment flows between the Arab and African regions. ICIEC supports the AATB Program by providing investment and export credit insurance for Islamic Countries to strengthen their economic relations. To date, ICIEC has demonstrated the great potential of the AATB program by closing USD 5.6 billion worth of transactions under this program. Through initiatives such as AATB, ICIEC will continue playing a critical role in facilitating intra-OIC trade towards meeting the goal of 25% by 2025. Oussama Abdul Rahman KAISI, Chief Executive Officer of the Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC) Cumulatively, ICIEC has insured more than USD 70 billion in imports, exports and investments since 1994. In 2020 alone, the Corporation was able to guarantee USD 4.47 billion of intra-OIC trade.

MOROCCO TAKES THE LEAD TO BECOME A CONTINENTAL CHAMPION IN VACCINE PRODUCTION



On July 5, Morocco announced its intention to become a producer of anti-COVID vaccines, thus becoming the first country on an African scale to take the step of health independence. In fact, the 3 agreements signed between the Moroccan State, private operators and banks relate to a 3-phase strategy aimed at making the Kingdom not only a local producer of anti-COVID vaccines but also a reference in the branches of injectable drugs. The clearly stated ambition is to become, in the next 5 years, a continental champion of vaccines and biotherapies, capable of meeting the health needs of the continent in the short and long terms. The project also integrates the dimension of pharmaceutical research, clinical development, manufacturing and marketing of essential biopharmaceuticals on the continent. The project requires a global investment of 500 million dollars, or more than 4.4 billion DH, part of which is financed by the Mohammed VI Fund for investment and another by the consortium of three Moroccan banks (Attijariwafa Bank, BOA capital and Banque Populaire Group). Concretely, the project is divided into 3

phases:

- **phase 1: Ensuring the vial filling capacity in the clean room for the anti-covid 19 vaccine meeting the immediate health imperative.** This is where the agreement signed between the State and Sinopharm, as well as that signed between the Ministry of Health and the Moroccan pharmaceutical company Sothema, come into play. Sothema will make its aseptic filling facilities available to the State for the manufacture of the anti-Covid19 vaccine owned by Sinopharm. The expected production capacity is 5 million doses per month. This phase starts now until 2022/2023. In other words, the expected end of the pandemic by achieving national and continental collective immunity.
- **phase 2: Creating a new production center for vaccines and biotherapies** This new center was the subject of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Moroccan State and the Recipharm Company. The agreement was also signed by Othmane Benjelloun as representative of the consortium of Moroccan banks contributing to the financing of the project. The new aseptic filling production unit

requires an investment of \$ 100 million (excluding infrastructure). This unit represents the first step towards vaccine health independence. The contribution of the Swedish Recipharm Company to the project is as follows:

- Assistance in piloting the construction of the plant;
- Training of work teams in Morocco and Europe in Recipharm factories;
- The transfer of manufacturing technologies in a clean room and adequate know-how;
- The management of the factory in Morocco and guarantee of the quality of the batches manufactured;
- Ensuring the viability of the plant and its commercial development on a private management basis;
- Planning its expansion and growth based on the decisions taken by the Board of Directors;
- Provision of available capacities in Recipharm factories around the world during the current pandemic.

For this stage, Morocco sets itself the deadline of 2024. This being said, the work on this phase also starts this year with the establishment of governance and project management, the start of the servicing of infrastructure (field), the creation of a business plan and the creation and execution of a master plan.

- **phase 3: Developing production of biotherapies, mRNA active ingredients and biosimilars.** This phase starts in 2024 with the objective of creating an African biopharmaceutical and vaccine innovation hub in Morocco. To do this, it is planned to set up an incubator hub for the biotechnologies of tomorrow; to create strategic biotechnology partnerships with scientific institutions; to foster a network of venture capital to help new biotechnology-based startups; and finally to promote the establishment of pharmaceutical multinationals in R&D in Morocco.





### ABEDA MOBILIZES FUNDS TO FIGHT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Sub-Saharan Africa continues to suffer the blow from the spread of the pandemic with 140,000 deaths officially recorded at the end of June 2021, and a very heavy economic corollary: a loss of production estimated at around 50 billion dollars for the year 2020 alone, and the first economic recession in 25 years. Already in March 2020, the Board of Directors of the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) approved the allocation of \$ 100 million to help countries in the region cope with COVID. Three months later, the same Board approved the financing of actions in the field of health for 88 million dollars, and in the process to help the economic recovery, it released 35 million dollars in favor of SMEs in Guinea and Cameroon.

At the same time, to these individual initiatives, BADEA has committed to a contribution of one billion dollars within the framework of the «Arab Coordination Group» and to a risk coverage of 200 million dollars with the Bank of Eastern and Southern Africa. Finally, and under the COPREFA fund, created with Afreximbank, IFTC and IsDB, BADEA has pledged \$ 500 million. COPREFA is a fund accessible to the banking sector and businesses to finance the import of medical supplies and agricultural equipment.

### WTO: ONGOING DISCUSSIONS FOR A NEW DRAFT AGREEMENT ON FISHERIES SUBSIDIES

Fisheries subsidies are among the subjects on the agenda of the 12th WTO Ministerial Conference (MC12), scheduled for early December 2021. The related negotiations began 20 years ago. They aim to eliminate overfishing, subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and to prohibit certain forms of subsidies. In the context of these negotiations, it is a question of allowing developing and least developed countries to benefit from appropriate advantages under the principle of special and differential treatment, despite the differing points of view of the member countries of the European Union. It should be noted that the negotiations on fisheries subsidies, which are based in particular on the Doha Mandate and the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda (SDA), have accelerated in recent months. However, member countries did not find common ground on the text of this Agreement until the end of 2020 deadline, as previously set. The new Director General of the WTO, the Nigerian, Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala, who took office in early March 2021, has made this issue a priority and is pushing the international community towards a consensus as soon as possible, especially in perspective of MC12.

### OISA HELDS A CONFERENCE ON AGRIFOOD INVESTMENT AND TRADE IN THE OIC AREA

ICDT participated, on August 19th 2021, in International Conference «Ways to Enhance Cross Border Agri-Food Investments and Trade in OIC Countries» organized by the Islamic organization for food security (IOFS). The aim of the Conference was to promote the intra-OIC investments and trade to build up value chains of domestic food processing, sales networks and develop food clusters, including basic agriculture and logistics. In her opening remarks, besides those of H.E. Oussama Abdel Rahman Kaisi, CEO of the ICIEC (see also interview on p.12), H.E. Yousef Hasan Khalawi, Secretary General of the ICCIA and H.E. Yerlan Baidaulet, Director General of the IOFS, Mrs Latifa El Bouabdel-

### CAMEROON RATIFIES BILATERAL ECONOMIC AGREEMENT WITH UK



A stakeholder in the EPA concluded between the Republic of Cameroon and the EU, the United Kingdom decided in 2017, in a referendum, to leave this grouping. The Kingdom then embarked on the negotiation of new trade agreements and treaties with all of its major trading partners. The bilateral Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) between the Republic of Cameroon and the United Kingdom, signed on March 9, 2021 in London, has just been ratified. Indeed, the President of the Republic of Cameroon signed on June 28 a decree ratifying this EPA. Modeled on the EPA with the European Union (EU), this agreement allows the Cameroonian side to continue to benefit from preferential access (without customs duties and without quotas) to the British market, for all of its products; and in the United Kingdom, to bring in, free of customs duties, 80% of its exports to the Cameroonian market.

(source : Ecofin)

### MOROCCO-TURKEY: A MORE BALANCED TRADE AGREEMENT



Much awaited by the business community, the amendment to the Morocco-Turkey Free Trade Agreement (FTA), signed in August 2020 between the two countries, entered into force on May 13, 2021. The amendment of this FTA was published in the official bulletin. Thus, Rabat obtained from Ankara a negative list of products on which customs duties will be reinstated at 90% of common law. This negative list concerns more than 1,200 products, corresponding to 630 tariff headings, related to the textile-clothing, leather, metallurgy, electricity, wood and automotive sectors. It should be noted that these new customs duties remain valid for a period of 5 years, renewable once for the same period.

### ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP: EU ACCOUNTS FOR HALF OF KAZAKHSTAN'S TRADE



The European Union and the Republic of Kazakhstan underlined, in respective press releases published at the end of June 2021, the progress made in their bilateral relations since the entry into force of the Enhanced Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (EPCA) on March 1, 2020. The EPCA enables cooperation in areas such as trade and customs, the environment and the fight against climate change, energy, the rule of law and the justice system. Moreover, it should be noted that the EU represents «almost half of Kazakhstan's foreign trade and investments». This Central Asian nation hopes that the EPCA, which opens up possibilities in 29 potential areas of cooperation, will significantly increase its bilateral trade and especially its exports.

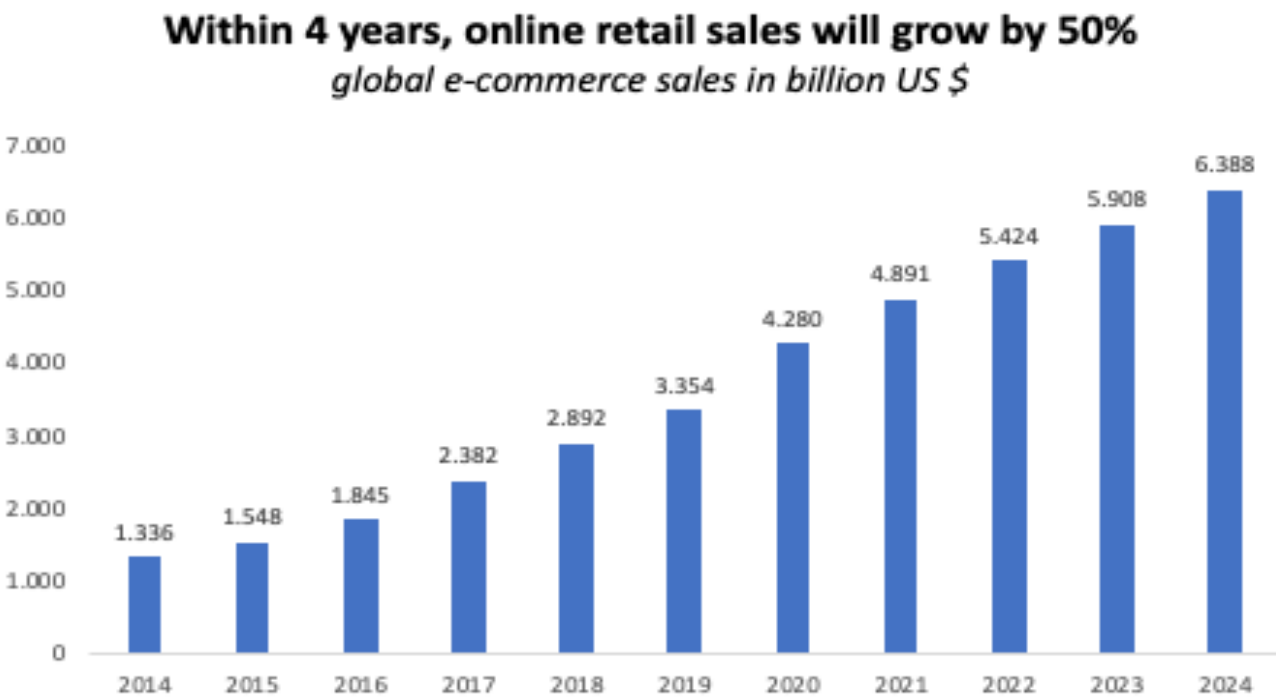
### USA INTENDS TO PROFIT FROM AFCFTA



The US intends to take advantage of the African Free Trade Area to further develop its activities on the continent. According to a senior American official, Scott Eistner, of the US-Africa Business Council, the US intends to support the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), with the aim of attracting investment to the Continent, in particular that of trade in some countries like Nigeria. The latter was speaking at a recent meeting on the new relations between the United States and Africa, organized last June, by the American Business Council in partnership with the American Chamber of Commerce, with the support of the American Tower Company. It is also a question of considering to sign a comprehensive USA-AfCTFA free trade zone.

(source : Ecofin)

# E-COMMERCE: OPPORTUNITY OR THREAT FOR OIC COUNTRIES?



Source : statista

The COVID pandemic had a deep effect on commerce habits. In 2020, global e-commerce sales grew up to 24% to reach \$ 4,280 billion, which is 20% of all retail sales! And it's not over. According to aggregator Statista, this figure is expected to jump to 49% by 2024 to reach \$ 6.4 trillion. Forecasters predict that, by 2040, 95% of purchases will be made online. Suffice to say that we are facing a major trend that is inevitable, favored by 2 major marketing arguments. On the one hand, the saving of time, materialized by the possibility of shopping without leaving home or office, therefore without wasting time in transport and tedious journeys between different store shelves. On the other hand, the wide choice afforded by ever crowded, increasingly alluring store-

fronts that allow the customer experience to be seen in front of their screen. The gentleman wants to buy a car ? He can try out all the colors, options and even drive it virtually before even incurring any expense. The lady is tempted by a bag? She'll be able to know all the details and see it paired with a whole bunch of other clothes and accessories, without even having to untie a purse. In short, considered from the consumer side, e-commerce is this global boon that offers the possibility with a single click of seeing, trying, choosing, paying and being delivered, all through a rapid process. So what about businesses and, by extension, national economic systems? Are all countries equal when it comes to e-commerce? According to business.com site, the top 10 are trusted by the great world powers, headed by China which sits on the

podium with nearly 700 billion dollars and which achieves practically double what the United States does, 2nd in the ranking. Unsurprisingly, the list includes the UK, France, Japan, Germany, and also Brazil and Canada. A question of market size? There is certainly some of it, but it is far from being the only explanation: Indonesia and Egypt with populations of over 200 million are far behind in the ranking. The United Arab Emirates, champion of new technologies, are no better off. In fact, within the OIC, few countries can claim to have made e-commerce an important link in their trade channels. Does that mean it is too late? Certainly not, but the fact is that the acceleration of e-commerce is accompanied by an internationalization of competition. In other words, what the consumer will not find in

this country, he will buy elsewhere from Ali Baba, the Chinese giant or from Amazon, the American grand bazaar. Therefore, e-commerce may ultimately constitute a threat to local production in the OIC area. For that reason, it is time for the OIC countries to adapt, precisely to transform this latent hegemony into an opportunity to build, individually, its own e-commerce ecosystem. In this regard, several steps must be taken. The legislative arsenal is the first link to be forged, notably with the inclusion of e-commerce in regulatory texts, the existence of authenticator and regulatory bodies and of course the internet infrastructure that enables millions of transactions to be resolved. Then comes the public boost with the digitization of administrative services

## The 10 largest e-commerce markets in the world in 2020

- China: \$ 672 billion
- United States: \$ 340 billion
- United Kingdom: \$ 99 billion
- Japan: \$ 79 billion
- Germany: \$ 73 billion
- France: \$ 43 billion
- South Korea: \$ 37 billion
- Canada: \$ 30 billion
- Russia: \$ 20 billion
- Brazil: \$ 19 billion

and online payment for community services (water, electricity, gas, etc.). Finally, for the development of e-commerce, private initiative is

of course vital, but it is also based on an intensification of distribution infrastructures, online commerce being only the trigger for a strongly physical supply chain. Are the OIC countries armed to turn e-commerce into an opportunity to market their products and services? In fact, everyone moves at their own pace, depending on their economic priorities, the quality of their texts and infrastructures and the appetite of their population for this type of purchase which still arouses suspicion due to the numerous no man's land laws that still punctuate their economic systems. But one thing is certain: if e-commerce is today a choice, tomorrow it will be an obligation and as it is said: life belongs to those who get up (and who click) early.

## ELECTRONIC COMMERCE IN THE WTO NEGOTIATIONS

In the context of the World Trade Organization (WTO), electronic commerce was recognized for the first time at the Second Ministerial Conference held in May 1998 in Geneva. It was the subject of a ministerial Declaration which aimed to establish a comprehensive work program to examine, inter alia, the relationship between electronic commerce and WTO agreements, especially legal provisions, to maximize the positive impact of e-commerce on development. It is true that the WTO Agreements are based on the fundamental principles of non-discrimination and transparency. However, the treatment stipulated by the said Agreements does not differentiate between goods and services purchased online and those obtained through traditional channels. The question also arises for the extent of intellectual property protection for products and for online business activities. The same is true for the recent WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA), which entered into force in February 2017, requiring the introduction of technological means to facilitate import and export processes. The TFA deserves to be revisited for a better use of e-procedures. In addition to these concerns, it is a question of discussing

the "Moratorium on electronic commerce" introduced in May 1998, and which consists of not imposing customs duties on electronic transmissions until the Twelfth Ministerial Conference (MC12), scheduled for November 30 to December 3, 2021, with a renewal every two years. As a reminder, and in order to breathe new life into future negotiations within the framework of the WTO on aspects of electronic commerce linked to international trade, a group representing 86 countries out of the 164 members of the WTO presented in 2019 a comprehensive long-term digital policy agenda. The negotiations focus on textual proposals presented by Member States, drawing inspiration from the provisions of certain regional trade agreements. The six major themes concerned are:

- Promotion of electronic commerce;
- Openness and e-commerce;
- Trust and e-commerce;
- Telecommunications;
- Market access;
- Cross-cutting issues.



# THE ECONOMIC INTEGRATION RATE OF OIC COUNTRIES REACHES 19%

- A RATE THAT REMAINED STABLE FOR 10 YEARS
- INTRA-OIC INTEGRATION HAMPERED BY THE MEMBERSHIP OF ITS COUNTRIES TO REGIONAL ECONOMIC GROUPS
- THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, THE BIGGEST INTRA-OIC EXPORTER AND BANGLADESH THE BIGGEST IMPORTER



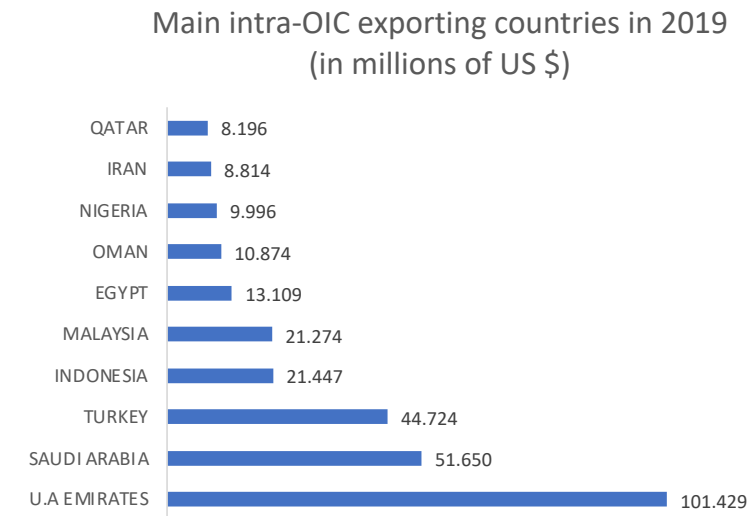
Can do better! This is how intra-zone trade can be qualified in the economic space made up of the 57 members of the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC). At the end of 2019, and according to data from different sources (UNCTAD, WTO), the share of trade carried out by these countries within their cooperation area stood at nearly 19% and even fell in comparison to its record set in 2018 with 21%. Better than the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) with its 5%, but less than the African Union (37%), the Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN) with its 43% and especially the European Union with a

rate close to 60% Yet, in the case of the OIC in particular, the comparison is not correct. First, because this economic unit is not based on geographical considerations endowed with an inter-country proximity conducive to trade, as is the case for the other zones. Secondly, because the different countries constituting the OIC are each an integral part of a regional economic unit, offering an attractive free trade framework. We could therefore rather see the glass as half full and estimate that a rate of 19% is already in itself a major achievement.

In fact, when speaking of the overall economic integration rate of the countries of the OIC zone, it would be more interesting to go beyond the global figure to focus on national and/or regional achievements.

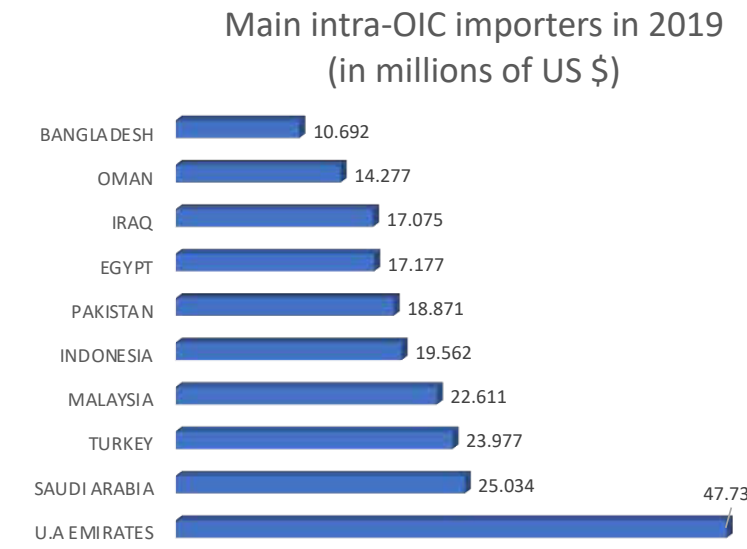
### Sudan: champion of intra OIC integration with 76%

Surprise! In this ranking of countries whose share of trade is dedicated to other OIC countries, the champion is... Sudan with more than ¾ of its intra-OIC trade. No wonder, however, when you consider that the country has strong regional trade relations, in particular with Egypt, Yemen and, to a lesser extent, Libya. It is through the same regional prism that we should read the score of Yemen, second on the list of champions of intra-OIC trade with a share of 73%. There again, relations with Sudan and Egypt of course, but also especially with the countries of the Arabian Peninsula, including Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), from which it imports manufactured products. Conversely, these same UAE only carry out 24% of their trade within the OIC, due in particular to greater trade openness and their proximity to the markets of the Indian subcontinent.



This factor of regional proximity also explains the low rate achieved by Malaysia (only 10%) since it is located first and foremost within the Asian space. However, we must put it into perspective, since in terms of value of goods traded, Malaysia ranks 4th. On the side of African countries, in

the register of the share of trade dedicated to the OIC, we find The Gambia (54%), Niger (53%), Benin (43%) and Sierra Leone (41%). Here again, we will invoke the regional effect, these countries belonging more or less to the same sub-region in West and Central Africa, which makes them first and foremost economic partners.



### United Arab Emirates: champion of intra-OIC exchanges in value

If we consider this time the ranking according to the value of goods traded within the OIC space, it is the countries with high population or high rate of industrialization that dominate the ranking of intra-OIC trade. Leading the way is the United Arab Emirates, a true regional manufacturing hub but also an oil producer with trade worth \$ 149 billion, followed for just over half of that amount by Saudi Arabia. Next come Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia and Egypt. As for Morocco, and despite a dynamic manufacturing sector, it achieves in intra-OIC trade only 11 billion dollars. Here again, it is the region effect that is felt and in particular the fact that 60% of the Kingdom's foreign trade is carried out with the European Union. Added to this is the fact that Morocco is a signatory of free trade agreements with 55 countries, and that favors a greater diversity of its partners. Ultimately, is a 19% rate of economic integration among OIC countries a good or a bad score? It all depends on the outlook, but one thing is certain: in ten years the progression, upward or downward, has been very low. And this is probably where to act.

AN OIC EXHIBIT SPACE  
WITHIN THE DUBAI WORLD EXPO

The United Arab Emirates are preparing to open their doors to the world on October 1. ‘Expo 2020 Dubai’, the long-awaited World Expo had to take a year-long hiatus due to the pandemic, but Dubai is now more prepared and determined than ever to host one of the world’s most significant mega-events. important and popular events will bring together the international community in a spirit of collaboration and innovation.

For 170 years, the Universal Exhibitions have provided a platform to showcase the technological and architectural innovations and revolutions that have shaped and will shape the world in which we live. Expo 2020 will continue this tradition with the latest technology from around the world.

Expo 2020 Dubai will be the first-ever World Expo to be held in the Middle East, Africa and South Asia (MEASA) region. It is a collaboration between more than 190 countries, international organizations, the private sector and educational institutions brought together for six months, from October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022.

The exhibition will take place under the theme “Connecting Minds, crating the Future” through the celebration of diverse cultures and innovations never seen before. This general theme is divided into key sub-themes namely: Sustainability, Opportunity and Mobility.

Expo 2020, which invites international cooperation to stimulate progress in the world, offers a diverse programming, the aim of which is to encourage decision-making to address challenges related to key issues such as climate change. , health and well-being, inequalities and environmental degradation.

Through thematic weeks and international days organized during the event, Expo 2020 Dubai partners, participants and visitors will address major global challenges and together seek collective solutions to



meet them in order to create a better future for all. .

Expo 2020 Dubai will above all be an opportunity to present the achievements of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) as the collective voice of the Muslim world, whose interests is to ensure the protection of the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony between the different peoples of the world. The OIC Day celebrations will take place on November 2, 2021 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at Al Wasl Plaza. The construction of this focal point for visitors to Expo 2020 is the result of a global collaboration involving 14 countries. The OIC pavilion will be a privileged opportunity to highlight its main achievements and those of its institutions in promoting the true image of Islam and encouraging intercultural dialogue. Emphasis will also be placed on the efforts undertaken to improve the standard of living in OIC countries, in particular infrastructure, trade, finance, empowerment of vulnerable people and initiatives in favor of women and youth, as well as the promotion of regions. The OIC pavilion will be located in the

Multilateral Building - Mobility. The concept of the OIC pavilion is a journey from darkness to light. The main idea is IQRA! IQRA is the very first commandment of Allah to Muslims and it is the OIC message to the world.

This simple prescription goes beyond its literal meaning. Thus, visitors will start their visit from a black and white entry space (representing the stereotypes that people often have against Islam), then gradually, along the way, their understanding will increase, and will discover a panoply of frescoes, images, and animations representing the extreme diversity, the melting pot of cultures, the mixing of people and ideas that is the Muslim world. The OIC day’s program includes lectures, workshops and exhibitions as well as performances. The Islamic Center for the Development of Trade (ICDT), as the focal point for the participation of OIC institutions in the Expo, is working hard and closely with the Expo team to ensure them good representability and under the best conditions for participation.

CALENDAR

Activity	Date	Place
Dubai Expo	1 <sup>st</sup> october 2021-march 31 <sup>th</sup> 2022	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
10 <sup>th</sup> Session of OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom) (organized by SESRIC)	05-07 october 2021	Ankara, Turkey (virtual)
Virtual Training Workshop on Compilation and Analysis of National Food Balance Sheets in OIC Countries (organized par SESRIC)	18-22 october 2021	Ankara, Turkey (virtual)
Symposium on FDI Statistics (organized by UNCTAD)	19 october 2021	Geneva, Switzerland (virtual)
Doing Business in Indonesia (organized by ICDT)	21 october 2021	Casablanca, Morocco (virtual)
Doing Business in Irak (organized par ICDT)	21 october 2021	Casablanca, Morocco (virtual)
2 <sup>d</sup> edition of the Conference on bio and local produce of OIC member states	26-31 october 2021	Tunis, Tunisia
Global Islamic Economy Summit	1-2 november 2021	Dubai, United Arab Emirates
8 <sup>th</sup> conference on Halal products of OIC member states	25-28 november 2021	Istanbul, Turkey
17 <sup>th</sup> Trade fair of OIC member states	6-9 décembre 2021	Dakar, Senegal





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OIC region and  
beyond**



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