



ISSUE 174 • SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 2023

TIJARIS



THE MAGAZINE OF INTERNATIONAL AND INTRA-OIC TRADE AND INVESTMENT

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The Islamic Centre for Trade Development (C.I.D.C.), headquartered in Casablanca, Morocco, serves as a privileged instrument for promoting trade among the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

Its objectives include :

- Encouraging the development of regular trade exchanges among Member States.
- Promoting investments aimed at trade development.
- Contributing to the promotion of productions from Member States and facilitating access to foreign markets.
- Promoting commercial information.
- Assisting Member States in the field of trade promotion and international trade negotiations.
- Assisting businesses and economic operators.

C.I.D.C's actions revolve around six main areas :

TRADE PROMOTION

- Encouraging contacts between businessmen from Member States.
- Promoting the products of Member States, including through regular Islamic Fairs and specialized exhibitions.
- Assisting Member States in establishing and organizing Export Promotion Centers.
- Providing advisory and expertise services to Member States in trade promotion matters.

TRADE INFORMATION

- Collecting and disseminating trade data.
- Developing remotely accessible trade databases.
- Assisting Member States in establishing Documentation Centers and Commercial Information networks.

INVESTMENT PROMOTION

- Encouraging intra-OIC investments.
- Promoting foreign investments in OIC Member States.
- Encouraging partnerships among economic operators from Member States.
- Providing advisory and expertise services to Member States, particularly in export-oriented investment promotion.

STUDIES AND RESEARCH

- Publishing an Annual Report on intra-Islamic trade.
- Conducting sectoral studies on products and markets.
- Studying ways and means to alleviate trade barriers among Member States.

TRAINING

- Organizing seminars and training programs.
- Assisting Member States in creating a pool of experts in various fields of trade development.

INTERNATIONAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

- Assisting Member States in trade negotiations.
- Preparing and organizing intra-OIC trade negotiations.

Latifa Elbouabdellaoui,
Managing Director ICDT.



The Primary Sector: A Driver of Economic Growth and Sustainable Development

As a key sector of the economy in member countries of the OIC (Organization of Islamic Cooperation), agriculture represents approximately 10.4% of the GDP's value added and employs nearly 40% of the active population. Agricultural development can thus contribute to economic growth and job creation.

The agricultural sector can also be a driver of sustainable development. It helps protect the environment, preserve natural resources, and combat climate change. Furthermore, it serves as a source of social stability and security, as food security is a fundamental human right. Agricultural development can contribute to ensuring the food security of populations, which is an essential condition for social stability and security.

By organizing the 9th Ministerial Conference of the OIC on Food Security and Agricultural Development, OIC member countries have expressed their intentions to invest more in agricultural development. These investments involve the implementation of effective public policies, the improvement of agricultural infrastructure and services, and the promotion of innovation. We delve into these topics in this issue. Additionally, important subjects for OIC member countries, such as culinary tourism, have not been overlooked. Culinary tourism represents a significant opportunity for OIC countries with a wide range of cultures, economies, societies, and cuisines—assets that make them a natural destination for travelers. To recall, the global culinary tourism market, valued at \$1.2 trillion in 2019, is projected to reach \$2.1 trillion by

2027, with an annual growth rate of 9.5%. We provide a roundup of this in this issue and share some success stories.

In this issue, we also examine the Agreement on the Trade Preference System among OIC States of CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa). This is good news for both the CEMAC sub-region and OIC member countries, as it aims to promote intra-regional trade.

Regarding its role in promoting exchanges between OIC member states and encouraging investments to improve the well-being of populations, CIDC (Islamic Centre for Development of Trade) revisits key events of the OIC, including OBIC Istanbul, the World Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi, the Ministerial Conference in Doha on food sovereignty and agricultural development, and the Workshop on market access and value chain management for women-led businesses and cooperatives in Arab countries that are OIC members. This drive towards women's empowerment is illustrated by the perspective of a banker in «Let Girls Shine.»

Staying true to its mission of continually enhancing cooperation among OIC member states, CIDC highlights ICDT Invest Days N'Djamena, and a busy agenda for the coming weeks and months.

Happy reading ! ■

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Food Security and Agricultural Development in the Spotlight

THE 9TH MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE OF THE OIC ON FOOD SECURITY AND AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, HELD IN DOHA, QATAR, ON OCTOBER 1ST AND 2ND, 2023, UNDER THE THEME «TOWARDS ACHIEVING SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS BY 2030 IN OIC MEMBER STATES,» DID NOT OVERLOOK THE GOALS OF FOOD SOVEREIGNTY, BASED ON THE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SECTORS.



THE INTERVENTION OF MRS. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, MANAGING DIRECTOR ICDT



« The intervention of Mrs. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Managing Director ICDT, on the occasion of this Forum focused on the role of trade in strengthening food security in the OIC area. She also focused on the possibilities of promoting the agro-industrial sector in order to ensure stable and resilient regional production and supply chains. »

OIC member states are now working on developing and implementing common strategies and programs to promote food security and agricultural development in the region. As the physiocrats used to say, only the land provides sustenance. The member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) understand this and are focusing on the primary sector and agro-industry that valorizes it. The city of Doha, Qatar, has just hosted the OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development. This biennial conference brought together ministers and other high-level officials from the 57 OIC member states. Held under the theme «Towards Achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 in OIC Member States,»

this meeting allowed participants to discuss and address the challenges and opportunities facing OIC members. Resolutions and declarations adopted aim to promote food security and agricultural development, following a review of the activities of the Islamic Organization for Food Security (OISA) and other OIC institutions working in the fields of agriculture, rural development, and food security.



Examining the areas of food security and agricultural development, various participants focused on the role of agriculture in promoting sustainable development and poverty reduction, the challenges and opportunities of climate change for agriculture, and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the global food crisis on OIC member states.

The role of technology and innovation in improving agricultural productivity and food security in OIC member states was not overlooked, just as the importance of trade and investment in promoting agricultural deve-



PHOTO: A VIEW OF THE CONFERENCE

lopment. Indeed, there will be a focus on enhancing scientific research, the use of modern technologies to strengthen the food

security system, and concerted efforts to support countries facing challenges such as natural disasters. ■

They Said...



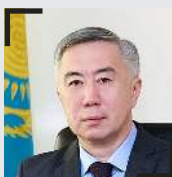
H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the OIC :

«Work is underway to develop a strategic plan to ensure food security in OIC member states, with the aim of creating synergies with existing national strategies and mobilizing resources and capacities at the OIC level for sustainable agriculture, rural development, and improved food security.»



Dr. Reem Al-Fulaij, Chairman of the Board and CEO of the General Authority for Food and Nutrition of Kuwait:

«This conference is 'important,' especially in light of the challenges the world faces in terms of food security and the impact of food supply chains during times of disaster and crisis... We are moving towards strengthening environmental cooperation within the framework of the food and agricultural sector organization, to build more resilient food systems and work towards achieving the SDGs, through the exchange of knowledge and best practices to enhance food security, safety, productivity, and resilience.»



Serik Zhumangarin, Deputy Prime Minister of Kazakhstan :

«Kazakhstan, one of the largest producers and exporters of environmentally friendly agricultural products, has made several proposals related to the development of transport and logistics infrastructure and the formation of new food supply routes... We emphasize the need for all OISA members to join efforts to focus on increasing investment cooperation, the efficient use of water resources in agriculture, and providing humanitarian aid to those in need.»

Food Sovereignty at the Heart of the Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development

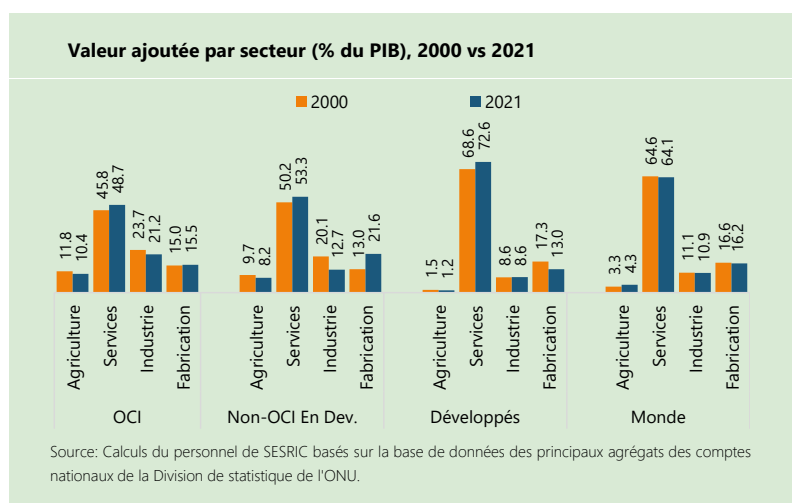
IN DOHA, MINISTERS AND HEADS OF GOVERNMENT FROM OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE AGREED TO TRANSFORM AGRICULTURAL SECTOR CHALLENGES INTO OPPORTUNITIES. THE KEY WORDS HAVE BEEN VITAL IMPROVEMENT TO ENHANCE THE RESILIENCE OF FOOD AGRICULTURAL SYSTEMS, UTILIZING EXISTING POTENTIAL, RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT WITH AN ECO-RESPONSIBLE FOCUS, AND SHARING SUCCESS STORIES.

The agricultural sector plays a crucial role in many OIC economies. After a sector roundup reveals that over the past decade, global production of primary crops (cereals, fruits, vegetables, roots, and tubers, with cereals, roots, and tubers being the largest group of crops produced in OIC countries in 2021) has increased, we observed that these two (cereals and roots & tubers) represent 39.9% and 25.1%, respectively, of the total production of the four primary crops in OIC countries. During this period, OIC countries contributed 405.2 million tons to global cereal production, accounting for 13.2%, a slight decrease from 14.6% in 2011.

Another observation is that among the various fruit crops grown worldwide, dates stand out as the only fruit crop for which OIC countries have a significant production advantage compared to any other region in the world. Dates have been cultivated for thousands of years, with evidence of their cultivation dating back to 7000 BC in the Middle East.

Breaking Free from Food Insecurity

In 2021, agriculture represented over 2.5% of the gross domestic product (GDP) of 11 OIC countries, namely Sierra Leone, Somalia, Chad, Comoros, Niger, Mali, Afghanistan, Guinea-Bissau, Benin, Mozambique, and Guinea. Most of them are low-income countries in sub-Saharan



Africa, where a significant portion of the population works in agriculture. It is one of the main economic activities. However, its contribution to the GDP is declining in OIC member countries, dropping from 11.8% in 2000 to 10.4% in 2021. Paradoxically, despite having significant agricultural resources, most developing countries heavily rely on imports to feed their local populations. In 2020, OIC countries had approximately 203 million undernourished people, accounting for 28% of the total number of undernourished people globally and 11.2% of the total population of OIC countries.

To address this, the Doha ministerial conference emphasized the need for creating a favorable environment and prioritizing sustainable rural develop-

ment. Such a roadmap will include measures in member countries such as targeting vulnerable farmers and smallholders, ensuring land ownership and property rights, developing new business models, implementing effective price policies, improving market access and financing, supporting the adoption of modern technologies and practices, including digitization, promoting climate-smart agricultural practices through the successes of the Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (MARDI), the Agricultural Research Center (ARC) of Egypt, the King Abdulaziz City for Science and Technology (KACST), the Indonesian Agency for Agricultural Research and Development (IAARD), advanced technologies, and precision farming methods in Turkey...■

8th World Investment Forum in Abu Dhabi

THE OCI PARTICIPATED IN THE 8TH WORLD INVESTMENT FORUM BY UNCTAD FROM OCTOBER 16TH TO 20TH. THE ORGANIZATION WAS PART OF THIS BIENNIAL MULTIPARTITE GATHERING. HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT, MINISTERS, BUSINESS LEADERS, AND HEADS OF INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS CAME TOGETHER TO FACILITATE DIALOGUE AND ACTION ON CURRENT AND EMERGING GLOBAL CHALLENGES IN INVESTMENT AND DEVELOPMENT.

Considered by governments and business leaders as the premier global event for investment partnerships and policy development, the World Investment Forum is a must-attend event for OCI member countries. As a platform for interaction among key stakeholders, including policymakers and parliamentarians, CEOs of global companies, family businesses, investment promotion agency heads, investors, stock exchange leaders, pension fund and sovereign wealth fund managers, as well as academics and civil society representatives, they exchanged ideas under the theme «Investing in Sustainable Development.»

This year, the event had 8,000 participants, including 69 ministers, 700 CEOs, 65 speakers, with 35% being women, in 157 panels.

The 8th edition featured flagship events, promising initiatives, and innovative solutions in response to global investment challenges for development. Indeed, the forum aims to address the main investment challenges posed by the multiple current global crises, particularly the need to invest in food security, energy, health, supply chain resilience, and production capacity growth in the poorest countries.



Promotion of Climate Finance and Investments

Furthermore, the 2023 edition, which took place just before the global climate change negotiations at COP28 in the same location, included a focus on the promotion of climate finance and investments. For decision-makers, including those from OIC member countries, this was an opportunity to find solutions and reach a consensus on priorities for climate financing and investments. Undoubtedly, the outcomes will inform COP negotiations.

Participants from OIC member countries used this platform to connect with the global invest-

ment community and network with high-level participants, deepening their understanding of the global investment landscape and investment policies. In conjunction with WIF2023, CIDC, IsDB, and ICIEC, in collaboration with UNCTAD, organized a Panel on Investment Promotion Guidelines in OIC Countries on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at ADNEC Abu Dhabi, UAE.

During the panel, discussions revolved around ways to harmonize public investment policies and share successful experiences of OIC Member States and regional cooperation. ■



OIC BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE CENTER ISTANBUL 2nd Capacity Building Program for Users of the OIC Business Intelligence Center

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT) PARTICIPATED IN THE 2ND CAPACITY BUILDING PROGRAM FOR USERS OF THE OIC BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE CENTER FROM SEPTEMBER 26TH TO 28TH, 2023, IN ISTANBUL, TURKEY. THE DISCUSSIONS FOCUSED ON THE ROLE OF INFORMATION SHARING AND ECONOMIC INTELLIGENCE IN SUPPORTING BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT DECISIONS.

The OIC Business Intelligence Center plays a central role as a decision support tool for member countries. That is precisely why its capacity-building programs for users are closely followed. During the 2nd program of its kind, which brought together participants from 20 OIC member countries, the emphasis was on the role of information sharing and economic intelligence in supporting business and investment decisions. The ICDT representative delivered a presentation on September 28th, 2023, about the effective use of statistical information resources in trade and investments. It's worth noting that through a workshop, a range of different services offered by OBIC

was presented to its users, raising awareness of information sources and their impact on trade and investment decision-making.

It should be noted that Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Indonesia will be the pilot hubs for OBIC.

Sharing the Center's Expertise

ICDT conducted a session on the use of data and analytics for business decision-making. This session covered various sources of data available, analysis methods, and decision support tools. In essence, ICDT's participation in this program provided an opportunity to share the Center's knowledge and expertise in economic intelli-

gence with participants from the region.

In summary, ICDT's presence at this meeting involved presenting a session on the use of data and analytics for business decision-making and participating in a panel discussion on cooperation between economic intelligence institutions.

It is also noteworthy that ICDT participated in a panel on cooperation between economic intelligence institutions. The panel discussed the advantages of collaboration between public and private institutions to enhance the quality of economic intelligence. ■



M. NASSOUR MAHAMAT DELIO, GENERAL MANAGER OF THE NATIONAL AGENCY FOR INVESTMENT AND EXPORTS (ANIE)

Vision 2030, a crucible of investments in Chad

WITH CHAD, A COUNTRY WITH MULTIPLE OPPORTUNITIES, BENEFITING FROM AN IDEAL GEOSTRATEGIC POSITION IN THE HEART OF THE CONTINENT, IMPROVING ITS RANKING IN DOING BUSINESS, FOSTERING A BETTER BUSINESS CLIMATE, INCLUDING FOR FEMALE ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND HOSTING ICDT-INVEST DAYS NDJAMENA DECEMBER 13 AND 14, 2023, INVESTORS FROM OCI MEMBER COUNTRIES HAVE A DREAM OPPORTUNITY. MR. NASSOUR MAHAMAT DELIO, GENERAL MANAGER OF THE NATIONAL AGENCY FOR INVESTMENT AND EXPORTS (ANIE), TELLS US MORE.

TIJARIS: The Republic of Chad will host ICDT-Invest Days Ndjamena, a sign of the importance placed by the country on OCI member states. What measures are being taken to make Chad even more attrac-

tive to OCI country investors, and what major assets does it possess?

Mr. Nassour Mahamat Delio: Since the creation of ANIE, several reforms have been undertaken

to improve the business climate in Chad, including the establishment of the Single Business Creation Window (GUCE), the only place where commercial authorizations are issued. GUCE has significantly reduced the cost and time required

to create a business, all in one place. Among the major reforms and innovations initiated by the government, the legal framework for investments has been improved to meet the highest standards with the National Investment Charter. This law provides many facilities and exemptions for investors.

Without being exhaustive, recently, the Presidential Council for the Business Climate, an entity under the direct supervision of the Head of State, has been established. Although not yet operational, this observatory will periodically assess various indicators to streamline and improve the Doing Business environment in our country.

In the context of the Strategic and Operational Plan 2021-2025, there is a desire to make Chad an emerging power, a regional hub for trade between sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and the Middle East. Can you tell us more?

We wanted to implement an ambitious strategy to position our country quickly in a business-friendly environment and attract more foreign direct investments (FDI). Chad's strategic location in the heart of Africa, at the crossroads of the Eastern and sub-Saharan world, close to African giants such as Egypt and Nigeria, with a population of over 50% under 25 years old, and enormous potential in various sectors such as agriculture, livestock, mining, etc., make us believe that massive investment is needed to aspire to become one of the emerging powers on the continent. This ambitious yet realistic strategic plan is aligned with the various development plans that our government is pursuing and

*Recently,
the Presidential Council for the Business Climate,
a body placed under the direct supervision
of the Head of State, has been created.*

with a comprehensive vision for our country, «Vision 2030, the Chad we want.»

What technical support can CIDC provide you with?

CIDC, a subsidiary body of the OCI, has extensive experience in promoting good business practices and foreign direct investment attraction policies. We want to highlight the frank and fruitful collaboration we maintain with CIDC and its executive body. The partnership agreement we have signed with this institution for the organization of the Investment Forum delights us immensely. We extend our sincere gratitude to the leaders of CIDC, and we rely on them to develop capacity-building activities for our team, organize an event highlighting a Chadian product, and support the production of an investor's guide, among other things.

What series of events does ANIE plan to organize to promote investment opportunities in the country, whether among local investors, the Chadian diaspora, or foreign investment funds?

Of course, the ICDT-Invest Days Ndjamen Investment Forum will be the highlight event for ANIE at the end of this year. In

late November, we will also actively participate in a roundtable discussion on resource mobilization for the 2023-2027 National Development Plan, organized by the Ministry of Economic Prospective and International Partnerships, of which our Agency is a part. In 2024, we plan to implement a New Action Plan that will incorporate various strategies for mobilizing partnerships to finance local investments.

Can you share the strategies, legislations, and social policies that have been or will be implemented for better integration of women into the Chadian economy?

Chad has adopted a National Strategy for Women's Entrepreneurship led by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. In addition, several initiatives and decrees related to empowering women and their economic integration are in place.

The law 012/PR/2020 establishing the National Chamber of Women's Entrepreneurship (CNEF) aims to empower women and provide them with the necessary support for their entrepreneurial activities.

Various technical and financial partners supporting the private sector also do so to assist the government in its efforts. UNDP ■



GASTRONOMIC TOURISM A Catalyst for Tourism in OIC Countries

IN THE OCI (ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION) REGION, A GROUP OF 57 COUNTRIES WITH A POPULATION OF OVER 1.8 BILLION PEOPLE, UNLOCKING THE TOURISM POTENTIAL THROUGH GASTRONOMIC AND HEALTH TOURISM MAKES A LOT OF SENSE. THE TOURISM SECTOR IN THE REGION ALREADY CREATES MILLIONS OF JOBS AND CONTRIBUTES TO ENVIRONMENTAL PRESERVATION. FURTHERMORE, IT PROMOTES HARMONY AND PEACE WHILE GENERATING BILLIONS IN REVENUE. IN 2019, 292 MILLION INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS GENERATED \$238 BILLION IN REVENUE.

Tourism is a promising sector. Under their respective tourism programs, Tourdev and Tourisme-CaB, and in line with the relevant resolutions of the 38th Session of COMCEC and the 11th Session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), SESRIC and the Islamic Center for Trade Development (ICDT) co-organized a training webinar on «Gastronomic Tourism in OIC Countries» on October 4th and 5th, 2023, via an online video conferencing platform.

This training webinar was conducted by knowledgeable experts from Egypt, Indonesia, Morocco, Mozambique, Oman, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, and Uzbekistan, aimed at enhancing the skills of participants from OCI member countries in gastronomic tourism. It presented the latest trends and shared successful experiences in the sector. It aligns with a recent CIDC study in 6 OIC countries, focusing on gastronomic tourism (Morocco, Qatar, Indonesia, Uzbekistan, Uganda, and Nigeria) which

helped to highlight opportunities for strengthening intra-OIC cooperation.

Generally, gastronomic tourism is a booming industry that showcases the culinary diversity, traditions, and flavors of these nations. Recent trends have shown an increase in immersive experiences such as cooking classes, food festivals, and culinary heritage trails. Gastronomic tourism is a segment of the travel industry expected to grow by 25% annually, as travelers seek

authentic products and sustainable culinary experiences rooted in a destination's culture and traditions.

The advent of social media has amplified gastronomic tourism, encouraging travelers to explore the culinary treasures of OCI countries. The rise of gastronomic tourism apps and websites has made it easier for people to discover new culinary specialties.

A Vast Untapped Potential

The growth potential in this sector is enormous, and by investing in infrastructure, fostering cooperation, and promoting sustainable practices, several countries can become preferred destinations for gourmet travelers, offering a taste of authentic culture and unforgettable culinary delights. In OCI countries, except for members like Turkey, Morocco, Malaysia, and Indonesia, which have made significant strides in promoting their gastronomic tourism offerings, this sector is not yet fully exploited compared to various other regions.

A quick assessment reveals that OIC countries possess a rich and diverse culinary heritage that can attract tourists. Through the development of gastronomic tourism infrastructure and programs such as culinary tours, cooking classes, food festivals, increased awareness, and promotion of gastronomic tourism offerings, the growth of gastronomic tourism in OCI countries can become a reality.

Success Stories

Fortunately, several OIC countries have successfully tapped into the gastronomic tourism market. Malaysia, for example, has become a popular destination for halal tourism, with its diverse and delicious halal cuisines. Turkey has capitalized on its rich

culinary heritage, offering culinary tours and cooking classes to tourists. Morocco has also developed a comprehensive strategy to promote its gastronomic tourism, including investment in catering services, the development of culinary tourism experiences, and partnerships with travel agencies to promote its cuisine.

Through marketing and promotional strategies, OIC countries can promote this sector. Additionally, partnerships with travel agencies, digital marketing, campaigns, culinary festivals, and tours, as well as tastings, culinary tourism packages, or cooking classes and workshops related to



farming and fishing, can attract more visitors.

Furthermore, OIC countries can collaborate with other countries and international organizations to promote their culinary heritage by participating in international exhibitions. To cater to the growing halal tourism market, halal gastronomic tours and culinary courses or immersive experiences can be organized. Examples from Malaysia, Indonesia, or Morocco can be cited. Malaysia has emerged as

a popular destination for gastronomic tourism, particularly halal tourism. As a niche market, it reached approximately \$4.3 billion in 2020. In Indonesia, it benefits the entire sector. In 2019, total tourism revenue reached \$20.1 billion, according to the Indonesian Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy. Similarly, in Morocco, tourism contributed \$7.5 billion to GDP in 2019, according to the World Bank, with a significant portion coming from the gastronomic sector. ■



Strategic Role of Culinary Tourism in Tourist Arrivals

OCI MEMBER COUNTRIES HOST DIVERSE CULINARY CULTURES AND TRADITIONS, MAKING THEM ATTRACTIVE DESTINATIONS FOR TOURISTS. ALIGNED WITH THE GROWING TREND OF TOURISTS SEEKING UNIQUE AND AUTHENTIC EXPERIENCES, CULINARY TOURISM IS SOMETHING TO ENCOURAGE IN OUR COUNTRIES.

OCI member countries boast some of the world's most diverse and flavorful cuisines, making them ideal destinations for culinary tourism. Each country has unique culinary traditions influenced by geography, history, and religion. For example, Turkish cuisine is heavily influenced by Ottoman cuisine, which incorporates elements from Central Asian, Middle Eastern, and Mediterranean cuisines. Moroccan cuisine, on the other hand, draws strong influences from Berber, Arab, and Mediterranean cuisines.

In addition to cultural and culinary experiences, culinary tourism can contribute to local economies by creating jobs and generating income for local communities. Many businesses can benefit from increased demand for products and services, including farmers,

artisans, local food producers, restaurants, cafes, and food markets.

Among the challenges facing the development of culinary tourism in OCI countries are inadequate infrastructure and limited support for tourism sector development. Many OCI countries have underdeveloped transportation networks, limited accommodations, and quality issues with tourism services, making it challenging to access culinary experiences. Other difficulties include limited awareness and understanding of the potential of culinary tourism among local communities.

Recent Culinary Tourism Trends

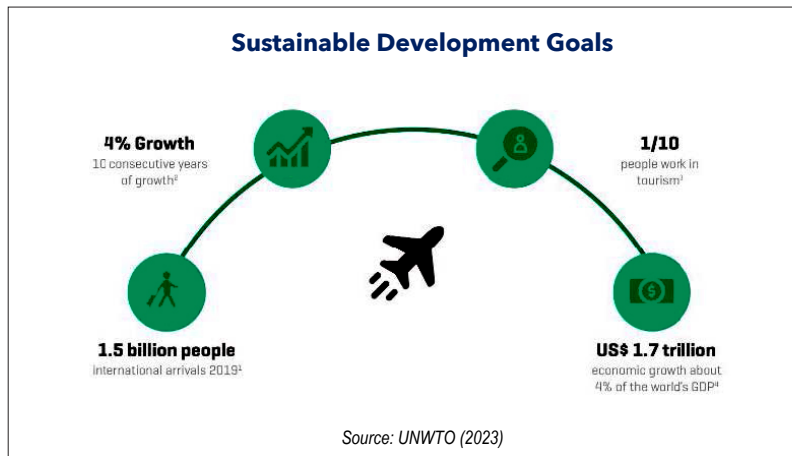
The culinary tourism industry has evolved and been influenced by new trends. One recent trend emphasizes sustainable and local food.

Moreover, many tourists seek healthy and organic foods, which can be found in the traditional cuisines of OCI countries. Another culinary tourism trend is the fusion of different cuisines. Blending culinary traditions from different cultures can create exciting and unique culinary tourism experiences. OCI countries can leverage their diverse culinary cultures to produce fusion cuisine that appeals to different tastes and preferences.

Farm-to-fork tourism is another growing trend in culinary tourism. For tourists who want to learn more about the food production process and experience it, OCI countries can offer a unique experience. Additionally, there are various culinary offerings, ranging from food festivals to workshops and courses, as well as street food experiences in Egypt. ■

The Investment Ecosystem in Culinary Tourism

SEVERAL FACTORS COULD DRIVE INVESTMENT IN CULINARY TOURISM WITHIN OIC COUNTRIES. IN ADDITION TO THE SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF MUSLIM TOURISTS, EXPECTED TO REACH 1.8 BILLION BY 2030 ACCORDING TO THE PEW RESEARCH CENTER, NEW PARADIGMS, INCLUDING TRAVELERS SEEKING AUTHENTIC GASTRONOMIC EXPERIENCES TO IMMERSE THEMSELVES IN THE CULTURE AND CUISINE OF OIC COUNTRIES, ARE EMERGING. THE FAVORABLE BUSINESS CLIMATE IN OUR COUNTRIES BODES WELL FOR FURTHER GROWTH..



Currently, culinary tourism has gained popularity worldwide, and OIC countries are well-positioned to capitalize on this trend due to their wide range of food options, from traditional dishes to innovative fusion cuisines. The favorable investment climate offered by many OIC member countries in terms of attractiveness, including tax incentives, business support, and other benefits, is of interest to caterers or businesses related to culinary tourism. As a result, the investment ecosystem in culinary tourism within OIC countries is rapidly developing, offering promising prospects for investors. The efforts of member countries to strengthen institutional and human capacities by sharing knowledge, experiences, and best practices among relevant ministries and national tourism institutions include programs. Un-

der these programs (Tourdev and Tourism-CaB), CIDC has recently organized capacity-building activities using various modalities, such as training courses, workshops, and study visits.

A Growing Sector

Investment avenues include establishing or investing in restaurants and hotels or supporting culinary festivals and events. Investors can either start their culinary establishment or contribute to existing ones. Furthermore, investing in food production and processing is a longer-term option, but it yields significant benefits. This approach involves investing in companies specializing in traditional food production or innovative fusion cuisine. Observers find that this is a sector that continues to grow, generating new opportuni-



ties for investors intrigued by the market's prospects. Nevertheless, there is not enough capacity to support growth. This is mainly due to the lack of restaurants, hotels, and other infrastructure. Additionally, the lack of skilled labor in the sector negatively impacts the development of the tourism sector.

Insufficiently encouraged, the culinary tourism sector is somewhat hindered by legal barriers in some countries. Finally, the issue of sustainability should not be overlooked, as some destinations do not adhere to the principle of sustainability, which is a factor inhibiting sector growth. However, new investment projects could help address some of these challenges by bringing a fresh understanding of technical management and technologies for operations. ■

Successes in Investment and Attractiveness of FDI in Culinary Tourism

TO ATTRACT FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT (FDI) IN CULINARY TOURISM, THE OIC COUNTRIES HAVE TAKEN VARIOUS MEASURES AND INITIATIVES. SOME HAVE DEVELOPED MARKETING CAMPAIGNS TO SHOWCASE THEIR CULINARY ASSETS, AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INVESTMENTS HAVE SEEN MANY SUCCESSES.



OIC countries, with their rich cultural heritage and diverse culinary traditions, actively pursue strategies to attract FDI in culinary tourism. These countries recognize the potential of unique cuisines and culinary experiences to draw tourists and international investors. By leveraging their culinary strengths, they aim to strengthen their tourism sector, promote culture, foster exchange, and stimulate economic growth.

There have been notable successes in terms of investment in culinary tourism. One of Turkey's most famous chefs, CZN Burak, gained worldwide

fame with over 35 million Instagram followers. He recently invested in Qatar from Turkey by opening a new restaurant in Doha, Qatar's capital. This new restaurant quickly became the center of attention for Qataris and foreign tourists.

Wagamama, a British restaurant chain known for its healthy and delicious Japanese cuisine, opened its first branch in Istanbul.

The Qatar Investment Authority, Qatar's sovereign wealth fund, invested \$45 billion in McDonald's, the largest fast-food chain in the United States. This investment is aimed at developing Qatar's tourism sector. The Qatar Ministry of Tourism launched a new culinary tourism campaign to promote the country's tourism potential through its rich culinary culture and gastronomy.

The Saudi Ministry of Culture has opened a new culinary center to preserve and promote the rich culinary culture and gastronomic heritage of the country. The Saudi Ministry of Tourism has launched a campaign to promote culinary tourism.

Dubai has selected the Hilton Group to develop a new \$1 billion hotel in 2022. This new hotel will contribute to Hilton's growth in the Middle East market and will be located in the heart of Dubai, offering 500 rooms and suites.

Facilitating the Investment Process

Restaurant chain X has opened a new Chinese restaurant in Rabat, Morocco. This restaurant will be a significant contribution to Morocco's culinary tourism and aims to attract more tourists to the capital.

By hosting the FIFA World Cup 2022, Qatar has successfully turned a major economic opportunity into reality. This event has attracted significant FDI to the country, boosting the tourism sector and attracting more tourists.

Saudi Arabia is making massive investments in infrastructure as part of its Vision 2030 program, with a commitment of \$100 billion to achieve an annual target of 100 million tourists.

In a similar vein, Egypt plans to invest \$10 billion to attract 50 million tourists annually.

Some member countries have introduced favorable investment policies and incentives. They encourage foreign investors to establish restaurants, culinary schools, and food-related infrastructure and businesses. Governments have streamlined the investment process, simplified regulations, and provide support to culinary entrepreneurs to ensure a conducive business environment. ■

Size of the Culinary Tourism Market

TOURISM IS A DRIVER OF ECONOMIC GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT, GENERATING \$1.7 TRILLION ANNUALLY, ROUGHLY 4% OF THE GLOBAL GDP, AND ABOUT 29% OF SERVICE EXPORTS. TOURISM DIRECTLY ACCOUNTS FOR ONE IN TEN JOBS WORLDWIDE, APPROXIMATELY 300 MILLION JOBS IN 2019. THE TOURISM POTENTIAL IN THE MIDDLE EAST IS RAPIDLY GROWING. SOME OCI MEMBER COUNTRIES (UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, MOROCCO, QATAR, AND SAUDI ARABIA) ARE MAKING SIGNIFICANT EFFORTS TO BOLSTER THE TOURISM SECTOR. THE CULINARY BRANCH IS EXPERIENCING RAPID GROWTH. FROM \$1.2 TRILLION IN 2019, IT IS EXPECTED TO REACH \$2.1 TRILLION BY 2027, AT A COMPOUND ANNUAL GROWTH RATE (CAGR) OF 9.5% FROM 2020 TO 2027.

Europe remains the largest culinary tourism market, representing over 50% of the global market in 2021. This is primarily due to Europe's rich culinary heritage, diverse food cultures across European countries and regions, as well as high-quality artisanal food and beverages.

Asia Pacific comes second in culinary tourism, driven by the increasing popularity of Asian cuisines, particularly in countries like China, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, India, and Indonesia. Due to the growing consumer interest in authentic local cuisine, food production site visits, cooking schools, and farm-to-table experiences, this Asia Pacific market is expected to further grow.

North America is another significant market for culinary tourism, with the United States being the largest market in the region. The American culinary scene is diverse, with influences from various immigrant communities. There is a growing interest in urban food halls, food trucks, craft breweries, distilleries, farm-to-table restaurants, and other culinary festivals.

Among other factors driving market growth are the rise of food and travel media that influence consumers, food culture, and food-related engagement on social media.



Furthermore, increased health awareness leads to interest in local and organic foods.

Culinary Tourism on the Starting Blocks

While there are many opportunities in the OCI region, challenges remain. These include seasonality in demand, perishable products, skill and training shortages, and the need for partnership strategies among tourism boards, farmers, food producers, and restaurateurs to develop food, tourism infrastructure, and promote destina-

tions. The global market is poised for strong ongoing growth.

The 57 OCI member states encompass diverse cultures, landscapes, and cuisines ripe for culinary tourism. The culinary tourism market in this area is estimated at over \$260 billion. It is expected to reach \$500 billion by 2030, with an estimated CAGR of 10.5%. With various natural and cultural assets, OCI countries are well-positioned to become leaders in culinary destinations, sharing traditional cuisines and rich culinary traditions. ■



«Let Girls Shine»

MRS. HADIATOU DIALLO BARRY IS A BANKER WHO FOCUSES ON PROVIDING ACCESS TO BANKING PRODUCTS AND SERVICES TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF THE MOST VULNERABLE SEGMENTS OF THE POPULATION, NAMELY WOMEN AND YOUTH. BEFORE BEING A FINANCE PROFESSIONAL, SHE IS A MUSLIM, WIFE, AND MOTHER OF THREE CHILDREN, DEDICATED TO GIRLS' EDUCATION THROUGH THE ASSOCIATION «LET GIRLS SHINE,» FOUNDED IN 2016. WITH A BACKGROUND WHERE THIS SEGMENT WAS OFTEN EXCLUDED, SHE DECIDED TO ESTABLISH THE AKIBA FINANCE GROUP, SPECIALIZING IN MICROFINANCE. THIS DETERMINED WOMAN, WHO HELD POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY IN A MALE-DOMINATED FIELD, BELIEVES THAT BY FACILITATING ACCESS TO SAVINGS AND APPROPRIATE FINANCING, THE FUTURE OF AFRICAN WOMEN WILL BE BRIGHT. SHE SHARES HER THOUGHTS ON THE EMPOWERMENT OF MUSLIM WOMEN.

Tijaris: Within the populations of OIC member states, women represent more than half. How can they be empowered more broadly to boost the development of member countries?

Mrs. Hadiatou Diallo Barry: Women can significantly and sustainably contribute to the socio-economic development of our populations if they are supported with access to financial resources and education.

It has been proven that when a woman has access to savings, that is, to a bank account, her entire environment is impacted, including educa-

tion, health, and well-being. In our societies, there is a form of African savings called «tontine,» which helps them mobilize resources to meet their needs and those of their families.

By helping women become financially independent, the entire community benefits. Entrepreneurship is another avenue for the development of these women, enabling them to be self-reliant and fulfilled.

Financial inclusion of African populations living below the poverty line is essential for economic, social, and societal development in our countries. Akiba, with its mis-

sion, actively contributes to social impact.

You are the head of the Akiba Finance Group. How can your journey inspire other Muslim women?

As a Muslim woman, wife, and mother of three children, I had the opportunity to develop a rich and dynamic banking experience that led me to entrepreneurship through the creation of the Akiba Finance Group. I have held important positions in a male-dominated environment, especially in the banking sector, thanks to resilience but, above all, thanks to the support and encouragement of my husband and family.

BIO-EXPRESS

With over 16 years of banking experience, Hadiatou Diallo Barry resigned from her position as CEO at NSIA Bank to establish the Akiba Finance Group, the first digital microfinance institution in Guinea, through her company and investment vehicle Southern Rivers Capital. She holds multiple roles, including Administrator and CEO of the Akiba Finance Group, CEO of Southern Rivers Capital, serving as a Director on the board of Telenum Guinea, a subsidiary of the Canal Plus Group, and as an independent Director within the State Guarantee Fund of Guinea. A graduate of ICN Business School in France and a certificate holder in leadership and management from HEC Paris and Saint-Cyr, she began her career with Maersk and entered the banking world through Eco-bank as the Head of Treasury Sale.



Family values and the education I received were crucial in my professional journey. In my opinion, it is very important to be supported by one's partner and family.

In your journey as a female entrepreneur, what have been your greatest achievements?

One of my greatest achievements as a female entrepreneur is the opportunity to positively impact the lives of the people we support within our Akiba community.

To recall, the Akiba Finance Group aims to be a high-impact financial institution. Our goal is to have a

Microfinance has an impact on women's empowerment, as it can provide them with funds to boost their activities, knowing that women, especially entrepreneurs, often face financial barriers when dealing with banks.

lasting impact on women's lives. To achieve this, we have integrated gender equality and women's empowerment into our mission.

We have developed products and services in our catalog specifically targeting women and tailored to their habits. One such product is

«Akiba Tontine,» which allows for progressive savings and, ultimately, access to loans and/or working capital advances to finance their activities.

This is my way of contributing to the socio-economic development of my country.



We strongly believe in digitalization, which allows everyone to benefit from the advantages of banking, regardless of their geographical location.

Can microfinance be a good platform for empowering women in OIC member countries?

Yes, microfinance has an impact on women's empowerment in the sense that it can provide them with funds to boost their activities. Moreover, women, especially entrepreneurs, often face financial barriers when dealing with banks. They may have limited access to capital and face higher interest rates than men.

Furthermore, it is important to note that microfinance also has a social and societal mission, through financial education sessions, awareness of women's rights, and training in income-generating activities.

Our goal is to promote greater financial inclusion of the most vulnerable populations, taking into account the specific characteristics of each target group.

These actions encourage a change in the way women view their lives and their role within the community, through awareness and knowledge of their respective rights.

Can we say that the era of digitalization, with AI greatly facilitating transactions, comes at the right time for women?

We strongly believe in digitalization, which allows everyone to

benefit from the advantages of banking, regardless of their geographical location.

Digitalization makes financial services accessible to populations excluded from traditional systems and economically vulnerable by offering them adapted and digital financial services (accounts and access to credit) for financial inclusion.

Do you believe that by leveraging commercial reference systems, female entrepreneurs forming business consortia have the potential to boost trade among OIC member countries?

Female entrepreneurs forming business consortia have the potential to boost trade among OIC member countries if they are supported, and if governments implement an effective gender equality policy to facilitate their exchanges. Specific financing initiatives in their favor, such as dedicated funds, can also be beneficial. ■

WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES AND COOPERATIVES IN ARAB OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES

Workshop on Market Access and Value Chain Management



A SOUVENIR PHOTO FROM THE WORKSHOP ON MARKET ACCESS AND VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES AND COOPERATIVES IN ARAB OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES.

A TRAINING WORKSHOP ON MARKET ACCESS AND VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES AND COOPERATIVES IN ARAB MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC WAS RECENTLY ORGANIZED IN CASABLANCA, MOROCCO, BY CIDC IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MOROCCAN MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY AND TRADE, THE DEPARTMENT OF COOPERATION AND CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDB, THE MOROCCAN ASSOCIATION OF EXPORTERS (ASMEX), AND THE TRADE FACILITATION OFFICE OF CANADA (TFOC CANADA).

The training workshop on market access and value chain management for women-led businesses and cooperatives in Arab OIC member countries concluded in

Casablanca with the same enthusiasm it began. Approximately 40 beneficiaries received their diplomas, marking their participation in this training session with great joy.

Such a workshop remains a valuable initiative to promote the economic empowerment of female entrepreneurs and cooperatives in the region. With the support of



DIPLOMA PRESENTATION TO THE RECIPIENTS.



partners, its aim was to facilitate the access of women-led businesses to local, regional, and international markets, strengthen leadership and communication skills, as well as value chain management from production to distribution, and encourage collaboration and networking among women-led businesses and cooperatives in OIC member countries. Clearly, the objective has been achieved.

Reinvigorated for a Better Future

Better equipped with market access

and value chain management skills, they are now capable of analyzing markets, identifying opportunities and specific challenges for their businesses in the OIC member country region. This will enable them to establish strategic planning for developing strong business plans, using marketing techniques suitable for both local and international markets.

Recipients will be able to easily manage the supply chain, optimizing production, logistics, and distribution.

During the training session, the module on accessing financing allowed participants to identify funding sources for women-led businesses.

With all these essential skills acquired for developing and managing their enterprises, these brave women entrepreneurs and cooperative leaders can face the future with greater confidence. ■

Work meeting for the OIC Coffee Meet Cameroon

ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 2023, MS. LATIFA ELBOUABDELLAOUI, DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF THE CIDC, HELD A WORKING MEETING WITH HIS EXCELLENCY MR. LUC MAGLOIRE MBARGA ATANGANA, CAMEROONIAN MINISTER OF COMMERCE, IN PREPARATION FOR THE OIC COFFEE MEET SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 28 AND 29, 2023, IN YAOUNDÉ.

The OIC Coffee Meet Cameroon, initiated by the CIDC in partnership with the Cameroonian Ministry of Commerce, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), and the Inter-professional Council of Cocoa and Coffee (CICC), will take place on November 28 and 29, 2023, in Yaoundé, Cameroon. To ensure the success of this event, held under the High Patronage of His Excellency Paul Biya, President of Cameroon, a working meeting was held on Thursday, August 24, 2023, between Ms. Latifa ElBouabdellaoui, Director-General of the CIDC, and His Excellency Mr. Luc Magloire Mbarga Atangana, Cameroonian Minister of Commerce.

Reassuring her counterpart of the availability and commitment of the Center and its technical partners, the Director-General of the CIDC emphasized the conditions necessary for the successful positioning of Cameroonian coffee



in the markets of OIC member countries. If the promotion of trade flows and investments in the coffee industry sector among OIC member states becomes a reality, the goal of the OIC Coffee Meet Cameroon will be achieved. Therefore, discussions revolved around the prerequisites for a successful meeting on all fronts.

A Host of Benefits

It appears evident that to fully capitalize on the advantages of

the vast OIC market, Cameroon must ensure the quality of its coffee, compliance with international standards, efficient export logistics, and the promotion of its products in OIC markets. Additionally, it will be essential to negotiate favorable trade agreements with OIC member countries and maintain strong trade relations to sustain these advantages.

Marketing Cameroonian coffee in these countries will provide access to a larger market, greatly facilitating intra-OIC trade. For the host country, exporting coffee to OIC countries can help diversify its markets, reducing dependence on traditional markets, which can enhance economic stability.

Furthermore, given the needs of OIC members for coffee, export opportunities for Cameroon are greatly multiplied. ■

Food sovereignty is achieved through support for small-scale farmers



A VIEW OF THE 6TH SESSION OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION FOR FOOD SECURITY (IOFS).

Taking advantage of the 6th General Assembly Session of the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), held on October 3, 2023,

in Doha under the presidency of the State of Qatar, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the OIC, conveyed a message delivered by Dr. Ahmed Kawesa Sengendo, Deputy Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, regarding support for small-scale farmers in OIC member countries by the IOFS, a specialized agency of the OIC. Such assistance contributes to increasing local food production, meeting local and regional food demand, creating markets, and reducing food waste. This support should translate into OIC

projects and programs related to agriculture, rural development, and food security on their behalf. He noted that this is particularly wise as they constitute 76% of the total number of farmers in OIC member countries and often use labor-intensive rudimentary methods, leading to low productivity.

He added that the challenges posed by food insecurity in OIC member countries require concrete actions and effective programs and projects at the national, regional, and international levels. ■

ICDT Team at the Marathon for Social Inclusion

THE SECOND EDITION OF THE MARATHON FOR SOCIAL INCLUSION, ORGANIZED ON OCTOBER 28, 2023, BY ISESCO AND THE MOROCCAN NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR EDUCATION, SCIENCE, AND CULTURE, SAW THE PARTICIPATION OF A CIDC TEAM.



PRESENTATION OF MEDALS TO PARTICIPANTS

By taking concrete measures to promote sports and social cohesion, Islamic countries can contribute to improving the physical and mental health of their citizens while strengthening the sense of belonging and community. As part of its social initiatives for the member states of the OCI, CIDC participated in the 2nd Edition of the Marathon for So-

cial Inclusion, organized by ISESCO and the Moroccan National Commission for Education, Science, and Culture on October 28, 2023.

The aim of this event is to promote sports and social cohesion and contribute to the enhancement of physical and mental health in Islamic countries, especially among indi-



REMEMBERING PHOTO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE MARATHON

viduals with specific needs. CIDC shares the idea that it is important to create sporting opportunities for everyone, regardless of age, gender.

Practiced in a group, sports create a sense of belonging and camaraderie. Members of a sports team support each other and share a common passion. ■

Investments: Establishment of a Permanent Dispute Resolution Mechanism

As part of efforts to strengthen investments among OIC member states, the Intergovernmental Expert Group tasked with creating a permanent dispute resolution body and mechanism for investment matters held its second meeting from September 14 to 16, 2023, in Casablanca, the Kingdom of Morocco.

This meeting focused on discussing the provisions of a draft protocol aimed at facilitating the resolution of disputes arising from investment operations in the OCI region, in accordance with the Agreement on the Promotion, Protection, and Guarantee of Investments of the OIC, signed in 1981. Through this new protocol, member states aim to enhance



E-PHYTO TOGO, A VIEW OF THE AUDIENCE

the legal investment environment, contributing to the strengthening of regional economic integration within the OIC.. ■

Digitalization Project for Agricultural Product Certification «e-Phyto» in Togo

In collaboration with various partners, including the Togolese Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Rural Development, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation, the CIDC has designed «e-Phyto», a digitalization and certification project for agricultural products in Togo. It was recently launched in Lomé.

On Wednesday, September 27, 2023, Ms. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director-General of the Islamic Centre for the Development of Trade (CIDC), participated in the launch of the e-Phyto project for digitalization of agricultural product certification in the Togolese Republic. In the long term, this project will contribute to facilitating intra-OIC trade in the agri-food sector. It involves establishing an effective and efficient digital platform for phytosanitary certi-



UNE VUE DES TRAVAUX

fication, aiming to facilitate trade and improve international market access for Togolese exporters.

Implemented by the CIDC, in collaboration with the Togolese Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, and Rural Development, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Global Alliance for Trade Faci-

ilitation, and the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ), this project will offer several benefits to Togo in terms of efficiency, transparency, traceability, disease prevention, facilitation of agricultural trade among OIC member countries, access to agricultural information, and administrative efficiency improvement. ■

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE TPS-OIC AGREEMENT FOR CEMAC MEMBER STATES WITHIN THE OIC

WIN-WIN OIC-CEMAC

THE AGREEMENT ON THE PREFERENTIAL TRADE SYSTEM BETWEEN OIC STATES IN THE CEMAC IS A SIGNIFICANT INITIATIVE FOR PROMOTING TRADE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE SUB-REGION. ITS SUCCESS WILL DEPEND ON THE WILLINGNESS OF MEMBER STATES TO COLLABORATE AND EFFECTIVELY IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENT.

Member States of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), members of the OIC, are signatories of the Agreement on the Trade Preference System (TPS) of the OIC. This Agreement aims to promote intra-regional trade by reducing customs duties on traded goods among member states.

The benefits are numerous. The adoption of such an agreement represents a significant step towards regional integration within CEMAC. By simplifying trade, it should enable businesses in the region to have easier access to

markets and reduce their production costs.

It's also a lever for economic development because regional integration allows countries to leverage their complementarities and economies of scale. However, regional cooperation and collaboration with OIC member countries will be essential to maximize the benefits of this trade agreement.

A Foundation for Economic Development

An Agreement on the preferential trade system is an ambitious endeavor. To recall, this system

between OIC member states (TPS-OIC) originates from the General Agreement for Economic, Technical, and Commercial Cooperation, the Mecca Declaration, and the Action Plan for Economic Cooperation adopted at the 3rd session of the OIC Summit Conference in 1981 in Saudi Arabia. It is one of COMCEC's most significant projects aimed at encouraging intra-OIC trade. This system is based on three Agreements: the Framework Agreement, the Protocol on the Preferential Tariff Scheme (PRE-TAS), and the Rules of Origin. The Framework Agreement, which defines the general rules



H.E. MR. HOUSSEIN BRAHIM TAHAR, SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OIC.



H.E. MR. EVARISTE NGAMANGA, PRESIDENT OF CEMAC.

and principles for negotiations towards establishing the TPS-OIC, entered into force in 2002. PRETAS, which complements the Framework Agreement by specifying the concrete tariff reduction rates according to an implementation schedule, came into effect in February 2010. The Rules of Origin, which will be applied to determine the origin of products eligible for preferential tax reductions under the

TPS-OIC, entered into force in August 2011. The legal basis for the system has thus been completed.

Challenges to Address

In addition to the list of concessions from certain OIC member countries, updated according to the format, several challenges need to be addressed for the effective implementation of the Agreement. These challenges

include coordinating the trade policies of member states, simplifying customs procedures, enhancing the capacity of businesses to export, and promoting intra-regional trade.

Adhering to the agreement may require harmonizing regulations and standards, which could be a challenge for some countries. Additionally, CEMAC countries may need to invest in infrastruc-



ture and logistics to facilitate trade with OIC countries and raise awareness among local economic actors while improving their export skills to maximize the benefits of the agreement.

Attracting More Foreign Direct Investment to the Sub-Region

Considering CEMAC countries individually, the agreement could be received differently depending on their interests,

economies, and priorities. Some sectors might be more vulnerable to competition, necessitating adjustments.

As for opening up new markets and expanding export opportunities to stimulate the sub-region's economic growth and diversifying markets, thus reducing their dependence on a few traditional trading partners, these objectives are widely shared.

On the other hand, certain specific economic sectors could benefit more from this agreement. For example, preferential access to OIC markets could boost the export of agricultural, petroleum, mining, manufacturing, or service products. In the same vein, increased trade with OIC countries could attract foreign investments to the region, thereby stimulating economic development. ■



In parallel with WIF2023, CIDC, IsDB, and ICIEC, in collaboration with UNCTAD, organized a Panel on Investment Promotion Guidelines in OIC Countries on Wednesday, October 18, 2023, at ADNEC Abu Dhabi, UAE. During the panel, discussions revolved around ways to harmonize public investment policies and share successful experiences of OIC Member States and regional cooperation.





EDUCATION AND YOUTH SKILL DEVELOPMENT IN OCI COUNTRIES

Bridging the Gaps

OCI MEMBER STATES ARE HOME TO 350.8 MILLION YOUTHS AGED 15 TO 24, REPRESENTING 18.5% OF THEIR TOTAL POPULATION AND 29% OF THE GLOBAL YOUTH POPULATION. THE OCI-2025 ACTION PROGRAM DOES PRIORITIZE THE YOUTH OF OCI MEMBER COUNTRIES IN MULTIPLE OVERLAPPING POLICY AREAS TO GUIDE COMMON ISLAMIC ACTION, BUT MUCH EFFORT REMAINS.

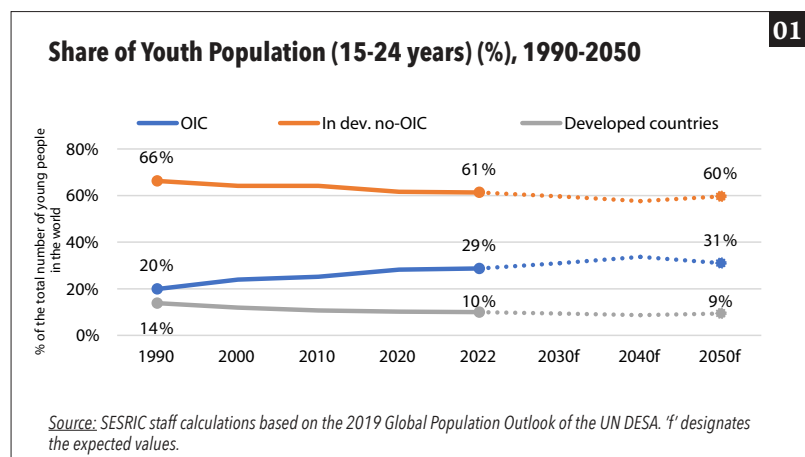
OCI member countries host over a quarter of the world's youth, offering unparalleled advantages in industry, innovation, growth, and workforce. However, young people face a range of challenges and constraints in contributing productively to their societies.

To facilitate multilateral cooperation in addressing youth challenges, OCI member countries have held four sessions of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM) and adopted the OCI Youth Strategy, particularly focusing on education and training aligned

with market jobs, unemployment, health services, radicalism, conflicts, migration, and political

engagement. (Voir graphique 1)

In the education sector, the lite-



racy rate for OCI youth (84.8%) remained well below the global average of 91.3% in 2020, with relatively low investments in education infrastructure and personnel. The same applies to the youth activity rate in OCI countries, which stands at 37.4% compared to the global average of 40.1%, resulting in a youth unemployment rate of 15.7% compared to the global average of 14.9% in 2022.



According to a recent report from SESRIC, recent data from UNESCO's ISU database indicates that the literacy rates among youth in OCI member states are, on average, relatively more favorable than adult literacy rates. However, since the publication of the last report (SESRIC & ICYF, 2020), the youth literacy rate in the OCI group has increased by 2.5%. Furthermore, the gender literacy gap has reduced, with male literacy at 87.8% and female literacy at 81.6%, a decrease from the previous 6.8% gap. (Voir graphe 2)

At the country level, youth literacy rates exceed 90% in the majority of OCI member states. Only 12 OCI member states have youth literacy rates below 70%. There were 25 OCI member states with youth literacy rates of at least 95%. Uzbekistan was the top-performing OCI country with a youth literacy rate of 100%, followed by Azerbaijan, Turkey, Tajikistan, and Kazakhstan, all with youth literacy rates of 99.9%.

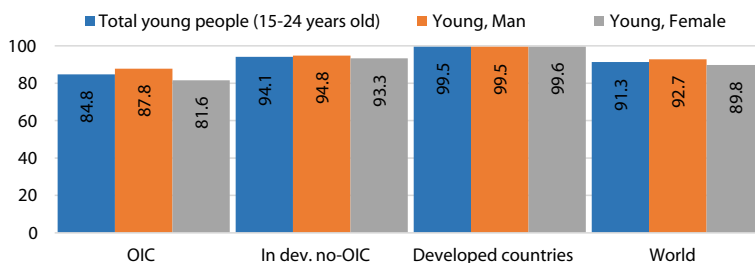
Conversely, Chad, with a rate of 30.8%, has the lowest youth literacy rate among OCI countries. Following are Niger (43.5%), Mali (46.2%), Guinea (53.9%), and Afghanistan (55.9%). (Voir graphe 3)

In several OCI member states, the disparity between the literacy rates of young men and young women persists. Progress has been made since the last report, with more countries closing the gender gap in youth literacy. According to the latest

available data, 22 OCI member states have a gender disparity in favor of young women, with no or negative difference in literacy rates between young male and female populations. However, in 30 OCI member states, this disparity is positive, meaning that

Adult Literacy Rates (%), 2020

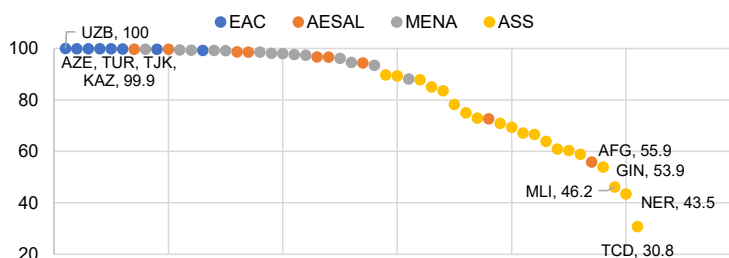
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Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UNESCO, UIS database. The weighted averages are calculated based on the latest data available between 2012 and 2020.

Literacy Rates in OCI Member States (%), 2020

03



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UNESCO, UIS database. Latest data available for each country between 2012 and 2020.

the average youth literacy rate for young men exceeds that of young women. The largest disparity is observed in Guinea, where the youth male literacy rate was 69.6% compared to 43.5% for young women in 2020.

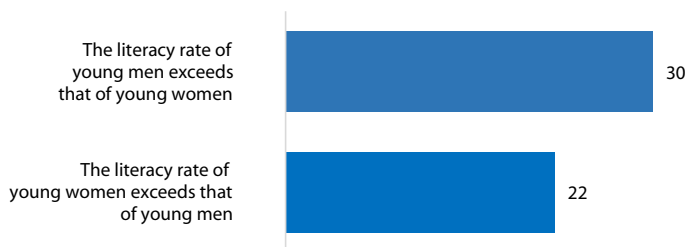
In the field of education, gender inequality manifests in a lack of access to educational infrastructure, materials, and training programs tailored to women's needs. Equitable education systems for both genders enhance the autonomy of young people and promote the development of crucial life skills, such as self-management, communication, negotiation, and critical thinking, necessary for youth success. Therefore, it is crucial for OCI member states not only to reduce the number of illiterate youth but also to ensure equal access to education for all. (Voir graphe 4)

Higher education enables students to acquire advanced knowledge and skills directly after secondary school or later in life. An increase in enrollments in higher education leads to a better-educated and highly skilled workforce that actively contributes to a country's economic development and competitive advantage. According to the most recent available data, the gross enrollment rate of higher education students in OCI member states was 30.9%, which is lower than the global average (41.7%), the average for non-OCI developing countries (39.0%), and developed countries (80.7%). (Voir graphe 5) ■



Number of OCI Member States with Gender Literacy Gap, 2020

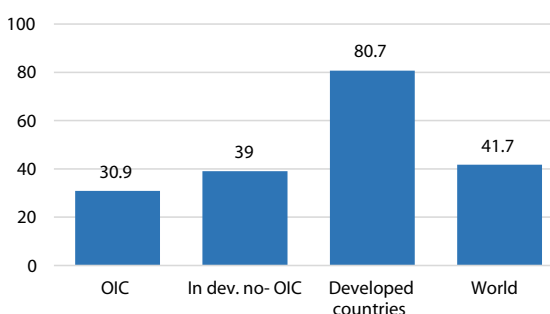
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Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UNESCO, UIS database. Latest data available for each country between 2012 and 2020. OCI n = 52.

Gross Enrollment Rate in Higher Education, 2020

05



Source: SESRIC staff calculations based on UNESCO, UIS database. The weighted averages are calculated based on the latest data available between 2012 and 2020.



Following the earthquake that shook the Haouz region in Morocco, the joint humanitarian aid caravan from CIDC and ICESCO arrived in Taroudant to distribute essential supplies (tents, mattresses, blankets, various provisions, medical equipment, solar panels, etc.) to the affected areas.

**ARRÊT
SUR IMAGE**

INDONESIA

OCI Youth Cultural Activity

THE VERY FIRST MEETING OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION (OIC) ON YOUTH ACTIVITY IN INDONESIA HAS JUST CONCLUDED UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE OIC AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA.

By **Mohammad Amar Ma'ruf**
Career Diplomat of Indonesia

The Indonesian government, through the Ministry of Youth and Sports, in coordination with all relevant ministries, regional governments, higher education and professional institutions, hosted the OIC Youth Conference on Cultural Activity, an initiative aimed at promoting cooperation in multicultural programs among its members. The event took place from July 7 to July 14, 2023, simultaneously in the provinces of Jakarta and East Kalimantan.

Strengthening cooperation in education and youth entrepreneurship

The conference attracted the participation of most of the 57 OIC member countries. The conference program, established by the Committee, provided a better understanding of Indonesia's diversity, including its ethnic groups, culture, religions, scenic landscapes, and more. The program

offered an opportunity for the OIC Secretariat and participants to enhance their cooperation in the fields of education, social empowerment, and youth entrepreneurship to proactively address the challenges faced by OIC member countries, in a spirit of collaboration. It is a fact that OIC member countries are at different levels of economic development, ranging from «high income» to «middle income» and «low income.»

The Committee also organized a simulation of an OIC meeting for students in Indonesia, allowing them to familiarize themselves with the procedures and how issues should be discussed to reach a consensus or resolution for the benefit of member countries. This activity also encourages Indonesian students to become diplomats by engaging in collaborative actions to address multilateral or global issues.

When youth sets an example through unity in diversity

The OIC, the second-largest gathering after the United Nations, was initially created to respond to the brutality of Israeli forces during the burning of Al-Aqsa Mosque and the oppression of the legitimate rights of Palestinians to their land. Today, the organization is revitalizing its role by promoting technical cooperation among its members. While issues related to Palestine and Al-Quds persist, economic and technical cooperation, as well as assistance, are very dynamic to preserve the spirit of humanity, the well-being of the Ummah, and commitment to global peace. To achieve this goal, most OIC member countries have experienced a similar journey toward national sovereignty. The majority of OIC members were colonized by other nations. This period of colonization was abolished through the resistance of local leaders and their

societies, which are actually diverse in culture. In the case of Indonesia, despite the coexistence of many religions and cultures, with a spirit of «unity in diversity,» the founding fathers and Indonesian society fought for independence from colonial masters. This independence was a remarkable and historic moment, inseparable from the Indonesian youth movement. The youth managed to link their independence movement against colonial oppression to their massive action in the form of the Youth Pledge (Sumpah Pemuda) in 1928. From this perspective, Indonesian youth demonstrated remarkable tolerance, despite the coexistence of different cultures and ethnic groups. They committed to becoming one nation and speaking one language.

This has become a valuable lesson, something to share with their counterparts in OIC member countries. It is clear that multiculturalism in Indonesia has been positively managed by the youth, in the effort to support their movement and play an active role in working hand in hand with other generations to free themselves from colonial domination.

Necessary international collaboration

It appears that the role of youth will always be necessary. The global situation has become very complex due to rapid information technology transformation. It has worsened when the world faced natural and non-natural disasters, including an unprecedented pandemic. Many disasters are cross-border. Global issues require global collaboration. To anticipate future destructive threats from natural and human-made disasters, global collaboration is needed to raise awareness of humanity's obligation to protect life and the environment sustainably.

To more precisely understand the fundamental issues of their way of life and their impact on the environment, humans must understand their surroundings. They must respect their interactions, namely the interaction between human and human, human and the environment, and human and the Creator. As the Holy Quran says, Surah Ar-Rum, verse 22, «And among His signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth and the diversity of your languages and your colors. Indeed in that are signs for those of knowledge.»

For this reason, the OIC Youth Cultural Conference has the noble aim of preventing the deterioration of global conditions. Despite the numerous ethnicities and races present in the world, the Almighty commands humans to act wisely in their environment. In this regard, youth, as a productive age group, must be assigned a role to become «agents of change,» a change aimed at improving the conditions and the three fundamental interactions mentioned above.

Coordinating the Youth Development Program

The perspective mentioned above seems to be a priority at the OIC Secretariat level to move forward with OIC members. As highlighted by the OIC Deputy Secretary-General, H.E. Tariq Bakheet, during the press conference held on July 7, 2023, at the Indonesian Ministry of Youth and Sports, the OIC Secretariat has just established a new Youth Department. This department has been set up to channel and coordinate the Youth Development Program among OIC members and other entities.

This newly created Youth Department within the OIC Secretariat becomes an appropriate



platform for the Indonesian government and youth stakeholders, under the supervision and coordination of the technical ministry in Indonesia, to review cases and play a more active role while working in concert with the Secretariat, other OIC members, and organs to support OIC youth worldwide, particularly by promoting and expanding multicultural literacy, aligning it with youth empowerment through proper education and training.

The combined approaches mentioned above appear to be in line with the multicultural reality of OIC member countries and will be a strategic asset for collaborating on a forum for communication and interaction. For these noble objectives, let us congratulate and support this Committee for its fruitful and successful results, and let us unite to begin the literacy of our cultural heritage through youth participation to help people worldwide regain their noble existence, namely working together to achieve good deeds and prevent or even prohibit destruction. It is hoped that this meeting will lead to joint projects that will expand open literacy in many technical areas, not only for the benefit of societies in OIC member countries but also beyond the OIC member states. ■

Consultative Meeting of Member States of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council for the Implementation of the OIC-TPS Agreement

THE ISLAMIC CENTER FOR TRADE DEVELOPMENT WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING OF MEMBER STATES OF THE ARAB GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENT ON THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION TRADE PREFERENTIAL SYSTEM (OIC-TPS), SCHEDULED FOR NOVEMBER 1, 2023, IN RIYADH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA.



OIC member countries are actively working towards the implementation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Trade Preferential System (OIC-TPS) Agreement. During a consultative meeting scheduled for November 1, 2023, discussions will focus on practical modalities for the application of this system, which has been operational since July 1, 2022. The Islamic Center for Trade Development (ICTD) will participate in this consultative meeting of member states of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council,

with an emphasis on the importance of making this system a driver for promoting intra-OIC trade and partnership. With the removal of tariff and non-tariff barriers, trade between member states will be strengthened. The Agreement will enable exporters from these countries to access larger markets and more competitive prices. An important trade agreement for OIC member countries, the OIC-TPS offers opportunities for economic growth and regional integration. ■



ICDT Invest Days in N'Djamena

THE ISLAMIC CENTRE FOR TRADE DEVELOPMENT (ICDT) IS ORGANIZING, IN COLLABORATION WITH THE NATIONAL AGENCY FOR INVESTMENT AND EXPORTS OF CHAD (ANIE), THE ICDT INVEST DAYS N'DJAMENA ON DECEMBER 13 AND 14, 2023.

N'Djamena, the capital of Chad, will host the ICDT Invest Days N'Djamena on November 13 and 14, 2023. This major event, organized by the Islamic Centre for Trade Development (ICDT) in partnership with the National Agency for Investment and Exports of Chad (ANIE), is under the High Patronage of His Excellency General Mr. Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno, Head of State, President of the Transition, President of the Republic of Chad.

As a high-level forum, this gathering aims to present the new investment opportunities in Chad

and contribute to strengthening its economic relations with the 56 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. In addition to an inaugural session where notable figures can be encountered, the days are scheduled with simultaneous sessions in different spaces, covering the primary sector (agriculture, livestock, and fishing - Room 1), infrastructure (Room 2), mining and industry (Room 3) on the first day. The second day features sessions on energy & oil (Room 4), tourism (Room 5), and ICT (Room 6). On this final day, the event will include site visits and conclude with a gala dinner. ■



CALENDER

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- ▶ **3RD EDITION OF THE TOURISM FAIR OF OIC MEMBER STATES**
November 20-22, 2023 - Doha, State of Qatar
 - ▶ **OIC COFFEE MEET CAMEROON**
November 28-29, 2023 - Yaoundé, Republic of Cameroon
 - ▶ **WORKSHOP ON MARKET ACCESS AND REGIONAL VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES AND COOPERATIVES OF FRANCOPHONE OIC COUNTRIES**
December 11-15, 2023 - N'Djamena, Republic of Chad
 - ▶ **ICDT INVEST DAYS N'DJAMENA**
December 13-14, 2023 - N'Djamena, Republic of Chad
 - ▶ **AWARENESS WORKSHOP ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SPS-OCI AT THE CEMAC LEVEL**
December 14, 2023 - N'Djamena, Republic of Chad
 - ▶ **OIC ISLAMIC SUMMIT**
December 16-17, 2023 - Banjul, Republic of The Gambia
 - ▶ **WORKSHOP ON MARKET ACCESS AND REGIONAL VALUE CHAIN MANAGEMENT FOR WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES AND COOPERATIVES OF ANGLOPHONE OIC COUNTRIES**
December 18-20, 2023 - Banjul, Republic of The Gambia
 - ▶ **CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP PREPARATORY TO THE 13TH WTO MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE FOR OIC MEMBER STATES**
January 11-12, 2024 - Tunis, Tunisian Republic
 - ▶ **WORKSHOP ON TRADE DEFENSE MEASURES FOR ARAB COUNTRIES**
February 22-23, 2024 - Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco
 - ▶ **MEETING OF REGIONAL ECONOMIC COMMUNITIES OF THE OIC ZONE**
January 25-26, 2024 - Marrakech, Kingdom of Morocco
 - ▶ **5TH OIC HEALTH FAIR**
July 4-7, 2024 - Dakar, Republic of Senegal



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي
OIC-OCI

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations, comprising 57 member states spread across 4 continents. The Organization serves as the voice of the Muslim world, safeguarding and protecting its interests in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among the world's diverse peoples.

The Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the General Secretariat are the main organs of the OIC. The Organization also includes three permanent thematic committees: the Committee on Science and Technology, the Committee on Economy and Trade, the Committee on Communication and Culture, as well as the Al-Quds Committee. Furthermore, the Organization has specialized institutions operating under its umbrella, such as the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (ISESCO). These thematic committees, subsidiary bodies, and affiliated institutions of the Organization play a vital and complementary role by working in various domains.



www.oic-oci.org



ICDT INVEST DAYS N' DJAMÉNA

SAVE



THE DATE



13 - 14 décembre 2023



**Hôtel Radisson Blu N'Djaména
République du Tchad**