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SESRTCIC JOINTLY ORGANISES A CONFERENCE ON “STRENGTHENING SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES FACING GLOBALISATION AND LIBERALISATION” IN ABU DHABI, UAE

The Conference on “Strengthening Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises Facing Globalisation and Liberalisation” was held on 21-22 May 2000 in Abu Dhabi, U.A.E. It was jointly organised by the Ministry of Economy and Commerce (MEC) of the United Arab Emirates, the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ADCCI), the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRTCIC).

The Conference was held under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Khalifa Al Nahyan, Executive Council Member, Chairman of the Office of H.H. the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and

Honorary President of Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Director General Ambassador Erdinç Erdün, Assistant Director General Dr. Abdelrahman Zeinelabdin and Director of Technical Cooperation Department Mr. Selim Ilkin represented the Centre at the Conference.

The main objectives of the Conference were to discuss and provide answers to the following questions:

1. What are the impacts of liberalisation and globalisation on the Small and Medium Scale

Manufacturing Enterprises (SMEs) and what types of domestic, regional or OIC-level measures are needed to overcome the adverse impacts?

2. What is the role of the domestic environment (financial, legal, economic, etc.) in the promotion and effectiveness of SMEs?
3. Are there OIC countries in which liberalisation and globalisation had a positive impact? What are the main factors which contributed to this positive result?
4. What intra-OIC Cooperation is needed to promote SMEs?

Twelve participants from eight countries (Bangladesh, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Qatar, Turkey, United Arab Emirates) and four institutions (Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), Islamic Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB)) attended the Conference. The participants were well selected and all of them were keenly interested in the subject matter.

During the opening session, speeches were delivered on behalf of H.H. Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Khalifa Al Nahyan, Executive Council Member, Chairman of the Office of H.H. the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Honorary President of the Abu Dhabi Chamber of Commerce and Industry and H.H. Sheikh Fahim Bin Sultan Al-Qasimi, Minister of Economy and Commerce of the U.A.E. Ambassador Erdiñ Erdün, Director General of SESRTCIC, also delivered a speech expressing his satisfaction with the arrangements for the Conference and touching upon the role of SESRTCIC within this context.

International and regional experts presented papers aimed at analysing the following issues:

- What kind of policy instruments can effectively be utilised in support of the development of SMEs in view of the international constraints imposed by various agreements leading to the WTO charter? Specifically what are the implications of globalisation and liberalisation?
- Importance of transfer of technology, opening export markets and financing of production of the SMEs in the developing economies.
- Profiles of change in manufacturing industries in the developing countries with specific reference to the SMEs: Factors leading to best practice policies.
- Assessment of policies supporting and stimulating the development of SMEs: Recent Experience.
- Role of regional and international organisations in the promotion of SMEs.
- Cooperation between public and private sectors and Islamic regional cooperation for the promotion of SMEs.

The Conference has been highly rated by the participants in terms of its organisation and topical coverage. SESRTCIC will edit the papers that were presented at the Conference as well as the final report. They are to be submitted to the Sixteenth Meeting of the COMCEC which will be held in Istanbul on 23-26 October 2000.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SESRTCIC WEB SITE

Strong with the support of its users, more than 11.500 visitors since 19 January 2000, SESRTCIC Website continues to improve the quantity and quality of its information. In terms of statistical information, the Website provides data on 194 indicators for 56 OIC member countries, from 1975 to the latest available data year. This is the biggest and most comprehensive on-line statistics database on the OIC countries. It is also the most visited part of our web site. More statistical information will be accessible to our visitors once the on-going process of establishing links to the National Statistical Institutions of all 56 member countries is complete.

The Website is being enriched with other material. First, the latest issue of the Journal of Economic Cooperation in English (Volume 21, Number 2). It is now accessible and it includes four downloadable articles. Second, the

conversion of the web pages into Arabic is proceeding smoothly with daily additions. Thirdly, we shall be shortly including a list of Research and Training Institutions of the OIC member countries and giving links to those that have their own web sites. This will enable our visitors to obtain information on research and training activities in a more structured and timesaving manner.

Regarding technical developments, our web site has changed its outfit in order to be even more user-friendly. There is now a new menu bar at the top of the screen, which is accessible from any pages visited, and our new search facility enables keyword searches on our entire site and gives result lists that match the inquired keywords. Finally, we shall soon be moving on to a server that will enable faster access to our web pages and minimise the risk of technical problems for our visitors.

OIC NEWS

THE 16TH MEETING OF THE FOLLOW-UP COMMITTEE OF COMCEC AGREES TO GIVE MORE EMPHASIS TO THE AREA OF TECHNICAL COOPERATION

The 16th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (COMCEC) took place in Istanbul, Turkey on 9-11 May 2000. The Meeting was attended by nine (out of ten) member countries of the Follow-up Committee, by the OIC General Secretariat, and by Subsidiary, Specialised

and Affiliated OIC institutions. Director

General Ambassador Erdinç Erdün and Assistant Director General Dr. Abdelrahman Zeinelabdin represented the Centre at this Meeting.

The Committee took up the following Agenda items:

- A background report by the OIC General Secretariat on the progress achieved in the implementation of the COMCEC projects.
- Review of the implementation of the Plan of Action to Strengthen Economic and Commercial Cooperation among OIC Member States.
- Report by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) on the Expansion of Intra-OIC Trade in the 21st Century.
- Matters relating to the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- Preparation for the Exchange of Views on “Strengthening Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Facing Globalisation and Liberalisation”, to be organised during the 16th Session of the COMCEC.
- Draft Agenda of the 16th Session of the COMCEC.
- Recommend to the 16th COMCEC a number of measures to accelerate the implementation of the OIC Plan of Action.
- Urge Member States to expedite the action for convening Expert Group Meetings and the formation of project committees with a view to expediting the implementation of the Plan of Action.
- Urge the OIC General Secretariat and the IDB to maintain their assistance to the Member States in matters related to the WTO.
- Request the OIC General Secretariat, COMCEC Co-ordination Office and other related OIC institutions to make arrangements for an effective and in-depth exchange of views on the subject of “Strengthening Small and Medium Sized Enterprises Facing Globalisation and Liberalisation”.
- Propose the convening of the 16th Session of the COMCEC from 23 to 26 October 2000 in Istanbul.

After extensive deliberations the Committee agreed to:

- Emphasise the importance of implementing the existing Agreements and Statutes in the area of economic cooperation.

27TH ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS REVIEWS OIC ACTIVITIES

The 27th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM), Session of Islam and Globalisation, was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 27 to 30 June 2000. Director General Ambassador Erdinç Erdün, Assistant Director General Dr. Abdel Rahman Zeinelabdin and Acting Director of Administration and Finance Mr. Jalel Chouchane

represented SESRTCIC at the Conference.

The Conference was attended by the Member States of the OIC and by some

other states with observer status. It was also attended by the subsidiary, specialised and affiliated institutions of the OIC as well as some International

and Regional Organisations and some Islamic Foundations and Societies.

The Conference was opened by H.E. Dato Seri Dr. Mahathir bin Mohamed, Prime Minister of Malaysia. H.E. Dr. Azeddine Laraki, the Secretary General of the OIC, then delivered an extensive address on the activities of the OIC. After the adoption of the Agenda, the Conference continued to discuss its respective agenda items in the following committees on a) Muslims and Minorities, Political, Legal and Information Affairs, b) Economic and Social Affairs, c) Cultural and Islamic Affairs, d) Administrative and Financial Affairs.

After reviewing the activities of the OIC in the economic field, the Economic and Social Affairs Committee decided to take up the various resolutions one by one. The Committee deliberated on various important developments in the global economic scene, the international financial crisis, matters relating to WTO, debt and other issues of interest to Member States. At the end of its deliberations, the Committee adopted the relevant resolutions. Besides its regular assignments such as the annual reports on the World Economy, the Least-Developed countries, WTO activities, Regionalisation, Poverty and Debt, the Centre was entrusted a new topic entitled "Supporting the Reforms of the International Financial Structure".

The Administrative and Financial Affairs Committee took up the Report of the 28th

Session of the Permanent Finance Committee, the Report of the 20th Meeting of the Finance Control Organ and the Report of the Second Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Administrative and Structural Reforms of the OIC. After an extensive deliberation, the Committee adopted the above mentioned Reports and the recommendations contained therein, among which were the budget proposal of SESRTCIC for the Financial Year 2000/2001 and its Final Accounts for the Financial Year 1998/1999. The Committee also elected the new members of the Finance Control Organ and adopted certain amendments to the OIC Personnel Regulations.

The Conference elected H.E. Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz of Morocco as Secretary General of OIC for a four-year term as of 1st January, 2001. The Conference also elected Assistant Secretary Generals for Arab and African Groups and one from Saudi Arabia. The election of the Assistant Secretary General for Asia has been postponed to a forthcoming meeting.

CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE THIRD QUARTER OF 2000

JULY

- 11-13 July 2000: OIC-UN Meeting in Vienna, Austria.

SEPTEMBER

- 27-28 September 2000: Conference on "Ways and Means to Establish Islamic Common Market" in Tehran, Iran.

- September 2000: Training Seminar on "Uruguay Round and Future Multilateral Trade Negotiations in Agriculture for the G.C.C. Countries" in Muscat, Oman.

OCTOBER

- 3-5 October 2000: 23rd Board of Directors Meeting of SESRTCIC in Ankara, Turkey.

- 15-17 October 2000: 7th Private Sector Meeting for the Promotion of Trade and Joint Venture Investment in Doha, Qatar.
- 30 October-2 November 2000: Training Seminar on "Water Quality Management and Pollution Control" in Cairo, Egypt.

ANKARA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

Latest Publications

Inforeport, April 2000 (English, French and Arabic editions).

Statistical Pocketbook 2000 (French and Arabic editions).

Journal of Economic Cooperation (English), issue no.2, vol.21.

Industrial Estates in the OIC Countries.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE CENTRE LIBRARY

Latest Acquisitions

The following is a selection among the publications acquired by the Centre during the second quarter of 2000:

Asian Development Outlook 2000, Special Chapter: The Social challenge in Asia. Oxford University Press, Asian Development Bank, 2000.

Braga, Carlos A. Primo, Carsten Fink and Claudia Paz Sepulveda, Intellectual Property Rights and Economic Development. World Bank Discussion Paper, 412. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

Cernea, Michael M. and Christopher McDowell (Edited by), Risks and Reconstruction: Experiences of Resettlers and Refugees. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

Chang, Roberto and Giovanni Majnoni, International Contagion: Implications for Policy. Policy Research Working Paper,

2306. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

Eichengreen, Barry, Toward a New International Financial Architecture: A Practical Post-Asia Agenda. Wash., D.C., Institute for International Economics, February 1999.

Foster, Stephen and et al, Groundwater in Rural Development: Facing the Challenges of Supply and Resource Sustainability. World Bank Technical Paper, 463. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

Gray, John, Kazakhstan: A Review of Farm Restructuring. World Bank Technical Paper, 458. Europe and Central Asia Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Series. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

Hallberg, Kristin, A Market-Oriented Strategy for Small and Medium Scale Enterprises. IFC Discussion Paper, 40. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, April 2000.

Hayami, Yujiro, An Ecological and Historical Perspective on Agricultural Development in Southeast Asia. Policy Research Working Paper, 2296. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

Herman, Barry (Supervising Editor), Global Financial Turmoil and Reform: A United Nations Perspective. Tokyo, United Nations University Press, 1999.

Herman, Barry and Krishnan Sharma (Edited by), International Finance and Developing Countries in a Year of Crisis: 1997 Discussions at the United Nations. Tokyo, United Nations University, 1998.

Honohan, Patrick, How Interest Rates Changed under Financial Liberalization: A Cross-Country Review. Policy Research Working Paper, 2313. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, April 2000.

The Impact of the Euro on OIC Member States. Casablanca, Islamic Centre for Development of Trade, 1999.

Kudat, Ayse, Stan Peabody and Caglar Keyder, Social Assessment and Agricultural Reform in Central Asia and

Turkey. World Bank Technical Paper, 461, Europe and Central Asia Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Development Series. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, February 2000.

Narayan, Deepa and et al, Voices of the Poor: Can Anyone Hear Us? Oxford University Press, The World Bank, 2000.

Recanatini, Francesca, Scott J. Wallsten and Lixin Colin Xu, Surveying Surveys and Questioning Questions: Learning from World Bank Experience. Policy Research Working Paper, 2307. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

Smarzynska, Beata K., Technological Leadership and Foreign Investors' Choice of Entry Mode. Policy Research Working Paper, 2314. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, April 2000.

World Economic Outlook May 2000: Asset Prices and the Business Cycle. World Economic and Financial Surveys. Wash., D.C., International Monetary Fund, 2000.

The Road to Stability and Prosperity in South Eastern Europe: A Regional Strategy Paper. Europe and Central Asia Region. Wash., D.C., The World Bank, March 2000.

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