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for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

**Proceedings of the 21st Meeting of the
COMCEC Trade Working Group**

“Improving E-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries ”



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PROCEEDINGS OF THE 21ST MEETING OF THE
COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

ON

“Improving E-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries”

(October 16th-17th, 2023, Ankara)

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1. Introduction

The 21st Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group was held on October 16th -17th 2023, in Ankara at CPAnkara Hotel with the theme of “Improving E-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries”. The representatives of 23 Member States, which have notified their focal points for the Trade Working Group, attended the Meeting.

(The Agenda and Program of the Meeting are attached as Annex-I and Annex-II)

The meeting was further attended by the representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, SESRIC, ICDT, ITFC, SMIIC, UNCTAD, and COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO).

(The List of Participants of the Meeting is attached as Annex-III)

2. Opening Session

The Meeting started with a recitation from the Holy Quran. At the outset, H.E. Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Deputy Director General of the COMCEC Coordination Office, welcomed all participants to 21st Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG).

Mr. KOÇ expressed that the transformation of the Internet requires a re-evaluation of marketplaces that now exist not only in physical spaces but also in virtual spaces. He also indicated that in the context of the global pandemic, the increased reliance on the internet, social media, and mobile devices has further emphasized the significance of e-commerce for nations, businesses, and consumers.

Mr. KOÇ pointed out that the rise of e-commerce, where transactions are facilitated through the internet, has drastically changed the worldwide business environment. Stating that e-commerce has emerged as an important force in terms of stimulating economic growth and creating employment in developing countries, Mr. KOÇ highlighted that many actors are collaboratively striving to harness the potential of the internet for economic development and although some developing nations have made substantial progress in the field of e-commerce, the majority still find themselves falling behind.

Mr. KOÇ stated that many developing countries, even if it differs from one county to another, including those in the OIC region suffer from difficulties and challenges such as limited technological infrastructure and trust environment, high costs of internet and electricity access, low GDP per capita, and a lack of suitable financial, legal and regulatory frameworks, lack of human capacities and trained human resources related to e-commerce, and weakness in data pool and research on e-commerce etc.

Additionally, Mr. KOÇ expressed that since there is a complex, dynamic and rapidly evolving e-commerce field and there is a paradigm shift in trade, particularly developing countries need to observe e-commerce dynamics, identify the most effective entry points into the e-commerce system and poses a national strategy on e-commerce by benefiting from the good practices.

After then, Mr. KOÇ mentioned that the theme of TWG this year will be the Exchange of Views of the Thirty-Ninth (39th) COMCEC Ministerial Meeting and emphasized that our Ministers will discuss this issue in detail by sharing their experiences in the field of trade in that session. He ended his opening remarks by wishing all participants fruitful discussions and deliberations during the Meeting.

Later, in her opening remarks, Ms. Nudrat KHAN, Joint Secretary Commerce Division, Ministry of Commerce and Textile of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan highlighted that shared commitment to foster economic and commercial cooperation among the Member Countries. Ms. KHAN stated that challenges of the OIC Member Countries range from economic uncertainties to healthcare in post-COVID regime.

Ms. KHAN stated that all these challenges were factors that strengthened collaboration of the Member Countries. Ms. KHAN highlighted that by harnessing the power of collaboration the Member States overcome obstacles, promote sustainable economic growth and enhance the well-being of people. Ms. KHAN also encouraged the participants to share their experiences on behalf of their Countries with aim of mutual understanding and to build strengthened bonds for more prosperous future.

3. COMCEC Trade Outlook 2023

Mr. Ercan SAKA, consultant from COMCEC Coordination Office, has presented some of the key findings of the COMCEC Trade Outlook 2023 which is expected to be published soon. In his presentation, Mr. SAKA gave an overview over global and OIC and intra-OIC countries merchandise and service trade during 2021 and 2022 and concluded with remarks on trade openness and mostly traded merchandise and services.

Mr. SAKA firstly informed the participants that the global merchandise exports values were 22.3 trillion USD in 2021 and 24.9 trillion USD in 2022, representing annual increase of 11%. China with 3,5 trillion USD was the leading exporters of the year 2022 and followed by the USA with 2.06 trillion USD. Concerning the global imports of merchandise during the past two years, it was led by the USA with 3.3 billion USD and the total import value reached to 25.6 trillion USD in 2022. This was marked the highest of the past five years global import values. Comparing to previous year (2021), the global merchandise imports increased 13.5% in 2022.

Mr. SAKA stated that total OIC Member Countries' merchandise and service trade sharply recovered in 2021 and 2022 from the significant drop in 2020 (-17%). The value of the OIC merchandise export increased from 1.4 trillion USD in 2020 to 2.1 trillion USD in 2021 and then 2.7 trillion USD in 2022. The yearly basis increases were 41% and 30% during the past two years. Similar trends were seen in OIC countries' merchandise import during the same period. The merchandise imports by the OIC countries increased from 1.5 trillion USD in 2020 to 2.0 trillion USD in 2021 and 2.4 trillion USD in 2022. He added that the major exporters and importers of the OIC Member Countries were Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Indonesia, Türkiye, Qatar, Iraq, Kuwait, Kazakhstan, Egypt, Morocco, Pakistan, Nigeria, and Algeria. However, Mr. SAKA emphasized that the share of the OIC merchandise exports and imports in the sum of the world merchandise exports and imports has never been more than 10% during 2018-2022.

Furthermore, Mr. SAKA elaborated the merchandise exports and imports between OIC Member Countries (intra-OIC) in 2021 and 2022. He shared the export and imports figures of intra-OIC trade and underlined that the share of the total intra-OIC countries' merchandise exports and imports in the OIC Member Countries' overall exports and imports has never been more than 20% during 2022 and past five years.

According to the available trade data, he highlighted that chemicals, communication equipment, various machinery, basic metal, oil, gas and coal were the mostly traded commodities at global level while transport, R&D, professional consulting, telecom and IT, technical and trade related services kept the top five types of service categories.

Mr. SAKA concluded his presentation by listing the principal influencers of international trade ranging from geopolitical tension to exchange rate fluctuations. He ended his overview by explaining the importance and meaning of trade openness as one of the international trade indicators, referring to certain countries trade openness ratio of 2022. The highest openness ratio was owned by China, Hong Kong SAR and Singapore' with 182% and 115% respectively. He pointed out that these ratios were less than 100% for the OIC member States such as UAE (73%), Türkiye (29%), Kazakhstan (26%), Egypt (12%) and Iran (5%).

4. Overview Presentation of the Final Draft of Research Report and Survey Findings

4.1. General Overview of the Report

Assoc. Prof. Dr. AYCI firstly indicated that this study has been prepared as a guide book for the development of an effective e-commerce environment in OIC Member Countries. Within this context this study aims to (i) provide a basic guidance in terms of principles and recommended practices; (ii) share information on good practices & assessments of the current similar programs and practices; (iii) provide a reference practical instrument towards improving e-commerce capacities of OIC Member Countries.

Afterwards, Dr. AYCI gave information about the parts of the study. Dr. AYCI inform that the Guidebook basically consists of 4 chapters titled introduction section, basic determinants and trends of e-commerce environment, experiences of countries, and key policies, standards and recommended practices.

Firstly, he expressed that the e-commerce environment in Ireland, Tunisia, Jordan, Pakistan and Somalia analysed by desk research method and underlined that Ireland, which was one of the economically weakest countries in Europe until recently, entered the world rankings with the keywords SME, IT and E-commerce, with its share from the world E-commerce and advanced E-commerce infrastructure (Technological, legal, commercial) selected as a best practice example. He added that other desktop research countries were selected by evaluating the intensity of commercial activities, the status of e-commerce infrastructure, and the perspectives of country governments on e-commerce.

Dr. AYCI stated that in the second part of the research, field visits made to relevant public institutions/organizations, NGOs and businesses in Jordan and Azerbaijan. In these visits, exploratory analyses were made on understanding the best practices in the country, identifying the barriers to e-commerce within and between countries, suggestions for removing these barriers, and policies for the development of e-commerce.

He informed the participants that in the third part of the research, two different target groups in the OIC countries were surveyed. First of all, e-commerce businesses was asked about their motivation, obstacles and expectations. The second target audience of the research was the institutions and organizations that support/regulate the e-commerce infrastructure in the

relevant countries. This group was asked about the problems, motivations and expectations of e-commerce businesses in the country. In addition, they were asked to make due diligence and make recommendations regarding the development of the e-commerce environment within the OIC Member Countries.

Dr. AYCI expressed that in this way, comparative analyses was made between different actors. A data pool was created from online platforms such as search engines and social media in finding e-commerce businesses and authorities. At the same time, the support of the COMCEC country representatives is very important in delivering the surveys to the relevant companies and authorities. Lastly, in the fourth part of the study, he touched upon that the data obtained by desk research, field visits and survey method were analysed and standards and application recommendations were made. In the fourth section, these standards and recommendations were listed.

After giving brief information about study framework, Dr. AYCI presented final draft of the study, which included the Introduction and Basic Determinants and Trends of E-Commerce Environment section and Survey's findings. In his presentation, Dr. AYCI indicated that with the development of the internet, the shift of marketplaces to virtual environments in addition to physical ones has necessitated a different perspective on commerce. Mentioning that economic and socio-cultural changes, particularly those affecting all national markets in our globalized world, have significant impact on trade along with technological advancements, Mr. AYCI underlined that the growth of cities, the increase in educated populations, demographic changes in lifestyle and workforce, and economic variables such as inflation and purchasing power affecting consumer behaviour have led to the rapid development of e-commerce as an alternative form of trade.

Dr. AYCI added that consumers want to shop in environments where they are offered the most effective and valuable propositions with their limited and precious time. He highlighted that this situation concerns not only individuals but also industrial market actors who have demands such as raw materials and semi-finished goods, etc., with the right timing, place, and decent quality. The development of technology accelerated the internet and the development of the internet accelerated the e-commerce processes.

Dr. AYCI provided information about the e-commerce trends in the second part of the draft study. He emphasized that e-commerce is following a growing and developing process day by day and in 2021, retail e-commerce sales are approximately 5.2 trillion US dollars worldwide. On the one hand, countries develop their e-commerce infrastructures and capacities, this developing process is reflected in e-commerce figures, on the other hand, e-commerce applications reach very advanced dimensions with the developing technology.

He added that e-commerce is changing due to reasons such as economic parameters (inflation rates, exchange rate and GDP) age criteria (an increase in the young population and mature people's adaptation to e-commerce), and technological adaptation (social media, mobilization and internet usages). Various statistics and indicators are compiled to guide customers, businesses, and also governments. In this section, e-commerce trends in the world and OIC Member Countries were examined on the basis of indicators, and then some important trends in e-commerce for businesses was discussed.

Emphasizing that the ever-increasing expectations and demands of consumers, businesses and administrations, together with constantly developing technologies, have turned into innovative applications in e-commerce, Dr. AYCI listed the current trends in e-commerce such as Mobile Commerce and Social Commerce in E-commerce, Personalisation and Local Language, Technological Trends in E-Commerce.

Furthermore, Dr. AYCI gave information about the method and analysis results of the survey study. He explained that this study was carried out in order to produce policies for the development of e-commerce capacities of COMCEC member countries. It was aimed to participate in the research of 57 OIC Member Countries and in this direction, a questionnaire is created in three different languages (Arabic, English, French). A database of 5.000 e-commerce companies based in OIC Member Countries was created and e-mails were sent to all of this database twice at different times to answer the survey questions. At the same time, through social media, surveys were tried to be delivered to the relevant segments. The organizations/institutions in the e-commerce system in the countries were reached through the COMCEC contact points in the countries. COMCEC focal points were asked both to fill out the questionnaires themselves and to share the questionnaires with the relevant institutions.

He stated that in line with the purpose of the research, two separate questionnaires were created on the basis of the institutions and organizations of the relevant countries and the companies. With the questionnaires prepared, it was aimed to understand the factors that motivate the enterprises, to identify the problems they encounter in e-commerce, to compare the problems perceived by the enterprises and the regulatory/supporting institutions. In addition, it is aimed to identify their recommendations for the development of e-commerce in their countries and within the OIC.

Dr. AYCI stated that the surveys were completed by 27 companies and 25 institutions/organization officials and evaluated the 25 responses from institutions/organizations in the presentation. The evaluation of E-commerce infrastructure in the country (Org/Inst), highest average attitude score is 3,53 for the Trade Logistic and Facilitation. The second highest attitude score is ICT Infrastructure with 3,29. Lowest average score is Legal Frameworks. In the other part of the survey, public institutions and organizations were asked about their suggestions on the development of e-commerce for both their own countries and the OIC in open-ended form. There have been six responses from public institutions and organizations for the development of OIC Member Countries in e-commerce. One of these responses is the provision of physical and legal infrastructure, two of which are the provision of support to vulnerable countries within the OIC, two of which are of sharing information directly or through a digital platform from countries experienced in e-commerce, and one of which is the organization of a campaign to raise public awareness.

Dr. AYCI explained that the second survey group was e-commerce businesses in OIC Member Countries. The main motivations of e-commerce businesses are Expanding sales to a wider geographic area (4.29), followed by improving customer service via E-commerce (4.17). Evaluation of Electronic Commerce Infrastructure (Company Surveys) where companies evaluate the electronic commerce infrastructure of their countries, seven factors are again prepared as Five Points Likert Scale. Here, the highest average score is the "Skills developments" factor with 3,04 and the lowest average score is the "Financing SME's" factor with 2,63.

Lastly, Dr. AYCI stated that 10 responses came from firms for the development of countries in E-commerce. One of these responses suggested the establishment of a legal framework, the development of the internet and payment network, three of them aimed to inform and raise public awareness by developing a national strategy, two of them proposed to support companies operating in the field of ecommerce, and one of them proposed to ease the permitting processes. two of the responses do not contain any suggestions. There have been 9 responses from firms for the development of OIC Member Countries in e-commerce. Two of these responses suggest to the establishment of a common payment platform, two of support for start-ups, one of increasing digital literacy, two of ensuring effective coordination at the OIC level, one of increasing the level of training of human resources, and two of the acquisition of new markets.

4.2. Selected Case Studies

Dr. AYCI shared the desk research and field research findings with valuable participants in the second session of the meeting (Lessons Learned from the Selected Case Studies). Dr. AYCI explained that Ireland was researched as an example of good practice in E-commerce, and then a desk research was conducted for OIC member countries Azerbaijan, Pakistan, Somalia, Tunisia, and Jordan, and then field visits were carried out to Jordan and Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan

Dr. AYCI firstly shared information about historical developments and the economic performance of Azerbaijan. He expressed that Azerbaijan's economy is driven by the oil and gas sector, which accounts for around 90% of the country's exports and 30-50% of its GDP, depending on oil prices The ICT sector in Azerbaijan is the second sector to get state support after the oil and gas.

Dr. AYCI explained that according to the UNCTAD B2C E-commerce index, Azerbaijan ranks 65th among 152 countries. In 2022, almost 300.000 E-commerce transactions were made and the total expenditure was 11 Million USD and ecommerce market is projected to reach 1,8 billion US Dollars in 2023. 8.93 million internet users in Azerbaijan as of January 2023 and it means that over 80% of the population of Azerbaijan has access to the internet.

He added that the informality of e-commerce companies is a very important problem and this issue creates a problem both in competition and taxation. Electronic payments are quite rare in Azerbaijan. The Government supports electronic payments for consumers, and consumers who make electronic payments receive back 17.5% of the VAT they paid.

Dr. AYCI pointed out that Azerbaijan is aware of the importance of qualified workforce and carries out different projects, for example scholarships are given by 2 Ministries to train 6000 ICT experts, trainings are given to entrepreneur candidates and companies for e-commerce and free training and seminars on displaying products on platforms such as Amazon are of particular interest.

Dr. AYCI stressed that Azexport, established in 2016, is an online listing platform of registered Azerbaijani products and not only Azexport, but also on the Alibaba platform, nearly 10,000 Azerbaijan products are listed free of charge. In Azerbaijan Metaverse trade is seen as the future of this business and preparations are being made for virtual reality with VR offices thus, it will be possible to see the products as 3D. Azerbaijan is the world's second country, after Estonia, to offer e-Residency. In addition he explained that the Law of the Republic of Azerbaijan "On

Electronic Commerce" (issued in 2005) plays a vital role in regulating e-commerce. Efforts are continuing to update the e-commerce law as one of the targets of the 2022-2026 National Development Strategy.

Jordan

In the second part of his presentation, Dr. AYCI shared with the participants the findings obtained as a result of desk studies and field visits regarding Jordan. Dr. AYCI stated that Jordan is one of the most advanced countries in the region in e-commerce and it ranks 76th out of 152 countries (UNCTAD B2C E-commerce index, 2020). Estimated revenue of US\$ 2,759.4 million in 2023 and expected to reach a volume of US\$ 4,494.5 million by 2027. ICT sector in Jordan is one of the fastest growing, contributing approximately 4% of gross domestic product (GDP). National Digital Transformation Strategy and Implementation Plan 2021-2025 aims to advance the digitization of government services, improve connectivity and create at least 50,000 direct jobs in the digital sector by 2025.

Dr. AYCI pointed out that since there is no regulation for e-commerce in Jordan, there is no registered e-commerce business. Although the first national e-commerce strategy was adopted at a relatively early stage in 2008, it was not fully implemented. Jordan eCommerce Readiness Assessment was prepared in 2022 by UNCTAD and this report provides a detailed analysis of the national e-commerce ecosystem and provides the government with concrete policy measures that can accelerate the country's digital transformation.

Furthermore, Dr. AYCI explained that after UNCTAD Jordan E-commerce report publish on 22/02/2023, National E-commerce Strategy approved on 6 April 2023 and the national task force consisting of different institutions/organizations related to e-commerce prepared the 2023-2025 action plan by taking the opinions of the relevant stakeholders. Preparations for planning and coordination for the development of e-commerce in Jordan have been completed, and implementation activities continue at full speed. He also added that with the enactment of e-commerce legislation, a new era will begin for Jordan. However, one of the important issue is that the definition of e-commerce has not been made yet and one of the weaknesses is the lack of data collected specifically for e-commerce, and each institution collects data in its own way.

Pakistan

In the third part of his presentation, Dr. AYCI informed the participants about some social and economic indicators of Pakistan. Pakistan is the world's fifth-most populous country, with a population of over 249.5 million people, and has the world's largest Muslim population as of year 2023. Dr. AYCI has highlighted Pakistan's notable improvement regarding the ease of doing business and he stated that Pakistan's E-commerce market showed as a promising which likely to cross \$7 billion in 2022 and \$9 billion by 2025 and e-commerce has an untapped potential in Pakistan. The number of registered e-commerce business in Pakistan increased from 1,707 (in 2019-20), to 3,003 (in 2020-21), 76% increase. Lack of trust, slow adaptation of payment methods, payment frauds, lack of experience of internet shopping among people in line with limited feedback from users, problems in maintaining online business and imposition of taxes are main barriers for the development of e-commerce in Pakistan.

Dr. AYCI explained that Pakistan Government is declared a policy framework for E-commerce. (2019) and A National E-Commerce Council has been constituted “as a single window for policy oversight to facilitate e-Commerce players”. According to his findings Pakistan seems to have everything for well-developed E-commerce ecosystem with its legal and financial infrastructure, policy strategies and related institutions but main challenges are safe and sustainable internet and informal economy.

Somalia

In the fourth part of the country experiences presentation, Dr. AYCI shared the findings of the Somalia desk research. He informed the participants that Somalia has a population of more than 15 million people, also it has a diaspora of more than 2 million people worldwide. Despite significant challenges Somalia maintaining its strong reform momentum. He gave an example that the Central Bank of Somalia has recently integrated the International Bank Account Numbers (IBAN) into the National Payment System (NPS). According to the findings businesses in Somalia have started testing various e-commerce models since 2013 and problems can often be encountered in logistics. Businesses in Somalia operate with little or no formal government enforcement

Dr. AYCI stated that today there are about 20 e-commerce platforms and there is no institution directly related to e-commerce in Somalia, data on e-commerce, strategy document on e-commerce, etc. information and documents are not available

Tunisia

In the last part of the presentation, Dr. AYCI informed the participants about the economic indicators regarding E-commerce in Tunisia. With a strong economy, Tunisia ranks 90th globally and 5th in Africa (GDP). In the report of UNCTAD "E-Commerce Index for 2020", Tunisia ranked 77th globally, third place at the African level. Tunisia is the country with the highest internet spending in North Africa. The ratio of internet spending in to all spending is also the highest in Tunisia.

Dr. AYCI stated that as of the beginning of 2023, Tunisia's internet penetration rate stood at 79.0 percent of the total population, a standard VAT rate of 19% is applied to most e-commerce transactions. Tunisia has a total of 8 ports that facilitate international trade and the Tunisian customs website offers access to online tariff data. According to the findings of the study the utilization of e-commerce in Tunisia has historically been limited due to underdeveloped e-payment and m-payment systems. Additionally, Tunisia has the National Federation of E-Commerce and Distance Selling (SEVAD), a government agency responsible for the development and promotion of e-commerce. Dr. AYCI emphasized that having such an administrative structure is important for the development of e-commerce.

Dr. AYCI explained that Tunisia National E-Commerce Strategy 2021-2025 was developed by the Tunisian Ministry of Commerce and the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology. He underlined that the document sets out a number of initiatives to achieve these goals, including to develop a national e-commerce platform to promote e-commerce education and training, to facilitate access to finance for e-commerce businesses and improving the legal and regulatory framework for e-commerce. Lastly he added that Electronic commerce in Tunisia is under the control of The Ministry of Trade and Export Development and is subject

to the same laws governing the commercial sector in addition to special laws. The results of the desk research show that the e-government entrepreneur in Tunisia is still in its infancy.

5. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member States, International Institutions, and Private Sector

5.1. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member States

a) Malaysia

Mr. Zulhilmi Akmal SAIPOLBAHRI, Malaysian representative, Assistant Director, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry Malaysia (MITI) addressed a presentation titled “Enhancing The Economic Competitiveness Of Malaysia Through Digitalisation–Approaches via Entrepreneurship, Investment, and Internationalisation”. In his presentation, Mr. SAIPOLBAHRI informed the participants that current digitalisation developments have shown much promises for our future. According to the latest available Report of Information and Communication Technology Satellite Account (ICTSA) 2022 published by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM), the ICT sector recorded a value of RM412.3 billion in 2022, a rise of 14.8 per cent as compared to 2021. It contributed 23 per cent to Malaysia’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which comprises the gross value added of the ICT industry (GVAICT: 13.6 per cent) and e-commerce of other industries (9.4 per cent).

Additionally, Mr. SAIPOLBAHRI he expressed that the contribution of e-commerce to GDP has grown over the years especially since the implementation of the first National E-commerce Strategic Roadmap (NESR) in 2016. In 2022, the e-commerce contribution to GDP was at 13.3% (RM239.1 billion) from 13% (RM201.1 billion) in 2021.

In his presentation, Mr. SAIPOLBAHRI pointed out that the MyDIGITAL Agenda was launched on 19 February 2021, representing the Government of Malaysia’s aspiration in continuously transforming Malaysia into a digitally-driven and a high-income nation by 2030 and added that MyDIGITAL agenda signifies the long-standing commitment of the Malaysian Government in promoting digitalisation for economic prosperity and societal well-being.

Furthermore, Mr. SAIPOLBAHRI stressed that the implementation of the MyDIGITAL is steered by the National Council of Digital Economy and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (MED4IRN), under the stewardship of the Honourable Prime Minister of Malaysia. He also explained that under the governance structure of MED4IRN, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) is leading the “whole-of-nation effort” to boost economic competitiveness through digitalisation, focusing on: entrepreneurship, investment and internationalisation.

Mr. SAIPOLBAHRI expressed that buoyed by the momentum of insistent growth of digital trade notwithstanding the challenges of the pandemic, Malaysia leveraged on the aspiration of the MyDIGITAL agenda as the latest basis for Malaysia in the course of digital trade establishment at the multilateral, regional and bilateral levels, as well as the e-commerce trade rules and Free Trade Agreements being negotiated at the World Trade Organisation.

In addition, he mentioned that in the ASEAN forum, Malaysia continues its active participation among others, in fostering the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Electronic Commerce, the Bandar Seri Begawan Roadmap (the ASEAN digitalisation agenda), and the preparation of the ASEAN Digital Economy Framework Agreement to be ready by 2025.

Lastly, Mr. Mr. SAIPOLBAHRI pointed out that in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) arena, Malaysia has continued its commitment in implementing the APEC Internet and Digital Economy Roadmap (AIDER) that was endorsed in 2017, via the guidance of the APEC Digital Economy Steering Group (DESG). Besides, he informed the participants that APEC Economies have pledged to work together in eleven key focus areas within the Roadmap, to facilitate technological and policy exchanges, promote innovative, inclusive, and sustainable growth, as well as to bridge digital divide in the APEC region.

b) Algeria

Mr. Tarek ALLOUNE, Sub-Director, Ministry du Commerce and Promotion of Exportations , Algerian representative, made a presentation on Algerian perspective on E-Commerce. He stated the Algerian government gave an importance to electronic commerce, especially during the pandemic Covid 19.

Mr. ALLOUNE, mentioned that in order to enhance the digital economy transformation, a Law No. 18-05, dated May 10, 2018, was published relating to electronic commerce, through which the Algerian legislator established the legal framework that governs the activity of electronic commerce. He added that this law concerns the policy of developing the digital economy by establishing an atmosphere of trust, it would lead to the generalization and development of electronic exchanges and digitization in our country, in the medium and long term.

Mr. ALLOUNE pointed out that in fact, the aforementioned law 18-05 related to electronic commerce is considered as continuation of the legal map drawn up in the past few years, to advance the digital economy in Algeria, and it is also considered an inevitable result of the available legal frameworks that had to be guaranteed to provide the necessary climate for the digital economy transition.

Furthermore, Mr. ALLOUNE expressed that it is relating to numerous legislative texts that represent the basic pillars for building a national digital economy, without which an electronic commercial activity cannot be imagined, which can be summarized in: Electronic contract, Protection of personal data, Electronic certification, Electronic payment, Protection of media systems, Electronic advertising.

Lastly, Mr. ALLOUNE underlined that aforementioned law constituted a favorable opportunity for the Algerian legislator to frame electronic payment by including provisions related to the dissemination and establishment of electronic payment platforms. The law stipulated the persons who can establish these platforms (banks and Algeria Post), the conditions for connecting them to the supplier's website, and the subjection of these platforms, So the Bank of Algeria can ensure its response to interoperability requirements, data confidentiality, integrity, and exchange security .

5.2. Experiences/Perspectives of the International Institutions

c) United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

Dr. Rashmi BANGA, Senior Economic Affairs Officer, Unit on Economic Cooperation and Integration among Developing Countries, UNCTAD, made a presentation on E-Commerce Policies: Learning from Developing Countries. Firstly, Ms. BANGA informed the participants about UNCTAD's Platform for Policy Sharing which enable to share policy experiences of developing countries in their structural transformation. Stating that digital transformation is one of the focus areas where many developing, least developed countries and SIDS initiate their national policies, strategies and plans, in this context, Ms. BANGA explained that peer learning can also help the Global South within the framework of digital transformation.

Dr. BANGA touched upon China's experiences within the scope of digital transformation because China is one of the developing countries which has been able to successfully transform itself from an agrarian economy to an assembly hub and then a global manufacturing hub and now a digital leader. Dr. BANGA also underlined the China's digital transformation strategy, China's e-commerce policy and digital platforms and she gave the information regarding Sri Lanka's digital transformation efforts, Indonesia's digital start-up policies, and UNCTAD's regional digital cooperation agenda.

Dr. BANGA explained that digital infrastructure is multi-layered. In this context China's effort in building digital infrastructure consist of building cloud computing infrastructure, strengthening broadband infrastructure, building smart cities, promoting e-governance, investing digital innovations and technologies, investing digital start-ups and building e-commerce platforms. She also shared statistics on rapid growth of broadband penetration and speed of fixed broadband in China.

Additionally, she expressed that China's data governance policies and regulations. China has put in place a legal system for its data protection, including the criminal law, general principles of civil law etc. She underlined that the cyber security law stipulated that the personal information and important data collected and generated in domestic operations of critical information infrastructure operators shall be stored within China's territory, and where such data are transferred across borders for business needs, security assessments shall be conducted. Stating that China attaches importance to national data sovereignty, Dr. BANGA emphasized studies on data storage and security such as the credit investigation administration regulation and the map management regulation. She also gave examples through Alibaba, started as an online B2B marketplace to assist small and medium-size Chinese enterprises to find oversea trading partners, and then gradually expanded to C2C and B2C online retailing markets.

Furthermore, Dr. BANGA touched upon China's cross-border e-commerce policies AND China's exports. Expressing that the government has maintained its encouraging attitude, increased its support to the industry, created a favorable tax policy environment and encouraged social capital to invest in platform exports Dr BANGA explained that in terms of import and

export ratio, China's CBEC accounted for 83% of exports and 17% of imports. She added that the government created a favorable tax policy environment, and encouraged social capital to invest in the platform exports.

Moreover, Dr. BANGA also highlighted the best practices and important lessons from China and stated that Data is the main source of the digital economy and Data Centres are the next generation factories.

Additionally, she informed the participants on Sri Lanka's digital transformation. Stating that Sri Lanka defined 'Building a technology-based society' as an important national initiative in the National Policy Framework (NPF) adopted in December 2019, Dr. BANGA, touched upon the topics such as measuring the digital economy, establishing the ministry responsible for digital transformation, open and short-term comprehensive national digital policy; medium term; and long-term goals, assessing existing digital transformation capabilities, identifying key enablers, digital government and enabling the legal environment. She also briefed the participants regarding national policy framework and Sri Lanka's digital economy size.

Afterwards, Dr. BANGA emphasized the Indonesia's Start-Up investments which has grown 68 times in past five years. Explaining that the Jakarta government (DKI) has introduced a series of incentives to "digitalise" SMEs, Dr. BANGA also shared the Priority Policies for Indonesia, covering ICT skills, ICT infrastructure, personal data protection, and the framework and cooperation between government agencies.

At the end of her presentation Dr. BANGA gave information about the WTO Moratorium on E-Commerce based on customs duties on electronic transmissions and the E-Commerce Work Program. In this context, she stated that the Moratorium includes digitized products, anything transmitted electronically, and electronic transmissions without content. She also highlighted mentioned the effects of 3D Printing and Digital Industrialization. Lastly, stating that developing countries need regional support to advance digitally, Dr. BANGA shared UNCTAD's 10-item regional digital cooperation agenda with the participants.

5.3. Experiences/Perspectives of the Private Sector

d) GETİR

Mr. Tuncay TÜTEK, Co-Founder of the Getir which is a Turkish e-commerce company presented Getir and shared their experiences regarding the topic with a presentation and relevant videos. Tuncay TÜTEK informed that they founded Getir with three partners in 2015 and the founders had key roles and prior experience in e-commerce before Getir.

Mr. TÜTEK expressed that they identified people were wasting at least 30 minutes preparing time for even urgent shopping needs before they founding Getir. In this regard, Mr. TÜTEK emphasized that Getir was formed with the purpose of allowing people to meet their needs

through the application while they relax at home within an approximate time frame of about 10 minutes.

Mr. TÜTEK informed about working mechanism of the Getir. In his presentation, Mr. TÜTEK stated that customers place orders from the application of Getir at first step, orders are conveyed to the nearest Getir Store (these stores are open for only couriers to get orders) and Getir Store receives order. Couriers carry orders and consumers receive items within minutes.

Mr. TÜTEK presented ‘delivery in minutes’ model enabled with the full-stack system for unprecedented speed. Mr. TÜTEK pointed out that Getir purchase items from FMCG (Fast-Moving Consumer Goods) companies and that situation enables right assortment and availability. Mr. TÜTEK expressed that Getir transports from its central warehouses to the Getir Stores. He added that Getir Stores supplied on a daily basis. In addition, Getir Stores are designed and sheaved for quick picking with technology.

Mr. TÜTEK briefed the success story of the Getir in the presentation. Mr. TÜTEK expressed that after Getir was launched in İstanbul, in 2015 became dominated on-demand delivery market in Türkiye within time. With the effect of Covid-19 pandemic, Getir expanded to the United Kingdom (UK), European countries and United States of America (USA) respectively. Mr. TÜTEK underlined that Getir acquired it’s the biggest rival, Gorillas in 2022 and is rationalized footprint in Europe to focus on Core Markets 1. Mr. TÜTEK declared that Getir preserve its dominant leadership and maintain its sustainable growth with the contributions of the selected investors.

Mr. TÜTEK highlighted that Getir is operational in 3 continents and 5 countries (UK, USA, Germany, Netherlands and Türkiye). Mr. TÜTEK also underlined that the application of Getir has been downloaded to 61 million devices so far and has covered 90 million people. Mr. TÜTEK emphasized that Getir has 25 million users. There are 812 Getir Stores, and the total number of deliveries made up to this point is 250 million.

6. COMCEC Financial Support Programs

Mr. Mehmet Celalettin AKTAŞ, Director of Programs and Projects Department at the COMCEC Coordination Office, made a presentation on COMCEC Project Support Programs.

Mr. AKTAŞ started his presentation by providing general information on the COMCEC Project Support Programs, namely COMCEC Project Funding, COMCEC COVID Response and COMCEC Al-Quds Program.

After that, he explained objectives and main characteristics of CPF. Accordingly, he informed the participants that more than 130 projects have been implemented by 29 countries and 6 OIC Institutions. He emphasized that more than fifty countries benefited from the output of the project activities.

Mr. AKTAŞ also provided details about the supported themes under the trade area. He stated that the CCO supports the projects, which are formulated in line with the sectoral themes that are formulated in accordance with the COMCEC policy recommendations.

Reminding that the project submission period is still open, Mr. AKTAŞ recommended the participants to review the application documents particularly the Project Preparation and Submission Guidelines as well as supported sectoral themes before designing and submitting their project proposals. Moreover, he informed the participants about online project submission and highlighted the critical steps for this process.

Mr. AKTAŞ concluded his presentation with providing brief information about the trade projects under CPF conducted in 2023.

7. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. Can AYGÜL, Head of Department at the COMCEC Coordination Office. In his closing remarks, Mr. AYGÜL expressed his sincere gratitude to the Member Country participants for their active participation and contributions to the discussions and negotiations. Afterwards, Mr. AYGÜL conveyed his thanks to representatives of international organizations, OIC and other institutions for their valuable contributions. Lastly Mr. AYGÜL underlined that the theme of 20th and 21st Meeting of Trade Working Group will be discussed in the Exchange of View Session of 39th COMCEC Ministerial Session to be held in December 2023. The Meeting ended with a vote of thanks.



AGENDA
OF THE 21st MEETING OF THE COMCEC
TRADE WORKING GROUP
(October 16-17, 2023; Ankara)

“IMPROVING E-COMMERCE CAPACITIES OF THE OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES”

1st DAY: OCTOBER 16TH, 2023

Opening Remarks

1. “Improving E-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries” (Scope, Conceptual Framework and Methodology)
2. Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Studies
3. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member States, International Institutions, Private Sector, and NGOs on the Subject
4. COMCEC Project Support Programs

2nd DAY: OCTOBER 17TH, 2023

1. Main Challenges and Success Factors in Improving E-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries
2. Policy Debate Session: Formulation of Policy Recommendations for the 39th COMCEC Ministerial Session

Closing Remarks

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PROGRAMME

- 21st MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP (October 16-17, 2023, Ankara)

“Improving E-Commerce Capacities of the OIC Member Countries”

October 16th, 2023

- 09.00-09.30** **Registration**
- 09.30-09.35** **Recitation from Holy Qur’an**
- 09.35-09.45** **Opening Remarks**
- 09.45-10.05** **COMCEC Trade Outlook 2023**
- *Presentation by Mr. Ercan SAKA
Consultant
COMCEC Coordination Office*
- 10.05-10.15** **Discussion**
- 10.15-10.55** **Presentation of the Draft Research Report**
- *Presentation by Associate Prof. Dr. ALİ AYCI
Consultant
COMCEC Coordination Office*
- 10.55-11.15** **Discussion**
- 11.15-11.30** **Coffee Break**
- 11.30-12.00** **Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Studies**
- *Presentation by Associate Prof. Dr. ALİ AYCI
Consultant
COMCEC Coordination Office*
- 12.00-12.30** **Discussion**

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-15.00 Experiences/Perspectives of the Member States

Sharing Experiences and Good Practices on Improvement of E-Commerce Capacities

- *Presentation by Malaysia*
- *Discussion*

15.00-15.15 Coffee Break

15.15-15.45 Experiences/Perspectives of International Institutions

- *Presentation by UNCTAD*
Dr. Rashmi Banga
Senior Economic Affairs Officer
- *Discussion*

15.45-16.15 Perspectives of the Private Sector

- *Presentation by Tuncay TÜTEK*
Chairman of the Board
Getir Turkish Company
- *Discussion*

16.15-16.45 Utilizing the COMCEC Project Support Programs

- *Presentation by Mustafa Adil SAYAR*
COMCEC Coordination Office
- *Discussion*

October 17th, 2023

09.30-12.00 Policy Debate Session: Formulation of Policy Recommendations for the 39th COMCEC Ministerial Session on Improving E-Commerce Capacities of OIC Member Countries

There will be a policy debate session to come up with a set of policy recommendations to address improvement of e-commerce capacities of the Member Countries.

Discussion

12.15-12.30 Closing Remarks and Family Photo

12.30-14.00 Lunch

14.00-19.00 Social Program

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10. Annex III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

21st Meeting of the Trade Working Group

(16-17 October 2023, Ankara-TÜRKİYE)

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Mr. TAREK ALLOUNE

Sub-Director, Ministry du Commerce and Promotion of Exportations

- Ms. ZAKNOUNE WAHIBA

Sub Director, Ministry of Trade

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Mr. KANAN IBRAHİMOV

Specialist, Center for Analysis and Coordination of the Fourth Industrial Revolution

- Ms. NANAKHANİM MASİMLİ

Senior Advisor, the Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

- Ms. AMANİNA SHAMSULBAHRİN

Finance Officer, Ministry of Finance and Economy

- Ms. NORHAZIMAH HANISAH MDDANY

Special Duties Officer Grade II, Ministry of Finance and Economy

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- Mr. EHAB FATHY

Director General, Ministry of Trade and industry

- Mr. TAMER HEGAZY
Expert, Ministry of Trade and Industry

REPUBLIC OF GABON

- Mr. BARTHELEMY NGOUKULIA
Secretary General, Ministry of Trade

REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

- Mr. YUDHI ARDIAN
Counsellor, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

- Ms. FARANAK ABOLMASOUM
Head of e-commerce Monitoring Group, Iran Center for e-commerce Development

REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

- Mr. RIYAD FAKHER
Director General, Ministry Of Trade
- Dr. OMAR ALDULAIMI
Executive in Iraq Commercial Attaché, Embassy of Iraq

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

- Ms. FATIMA ALSHNEIKET
Principal Researcher- Project Management Department, Ministry of Industry, Trade and
Supply

THE STATE OF KUWAIT

- Ms. ASMA ALHADBAH
Senior Researcher in External Relations, Ministry of Finance
- Ms. MANAL ALHAIDARI
Controller International Organizations, Ministry of Finance

LIBYA

- Mr. ESAM S ALMALHOUF

Head of Organization Department, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. JAMAL MAHDUN

Expert, Ministry of Trade

MALAYSIA

- Mr. ZULHILMI AKMAL SAIPOLBAHRI

Assistant Director, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry Malaysia (MITI)

- Mr. WAN AHMAD FARHAN WAN AHMAD SHABRI ZAINUDDIN

Assistant Director, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry Malaysia (MITI)

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- Ms. NUDRAT HUSSAIN

Joint Secretary (FT-IV), Ministry of Commerce

STATE OF QATAR

- Ms. NOOR ALMALKI

Section Head of Digital Economy Development, Ministry of Communications & Information

Technology

- Ms. SALMA ALDOSARI

Researcher of International Cooperation, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- Mr. AHMED BIN HAMAD ALTHANI

International Cooperation Researcher, MCIT

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Mr. ALI FATEEL

Director of Services, Investment and Electronic Commerce Department, General Authority of

Foreign Trade

- Ms. NADA ALHATHLOL

Director of Regional Organizations Department, General Authority of Foreign Trade

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

- Mr. ORZUJON NAIMOV

Head of WTO Affairs Department, Ministry of Economic Development and Trade

REPUBLIC OF TOGO

- H.E. KAMALA BIDILOU

Head of Mission, Embassy of the Republic Of Togo

- Mr. KWADJOVI DEOGRATIAS EFAVI

First Counsellor, Embassy of Togo in Ankara

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ

- Ms. ÇİĞDEM KOŞAN

Head of Department, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. NURULLAH ASIM AKBULUT

Trade Expert, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. AYSEGUL DEMİR

Trade Expert, Ministry of Trade of Türkiye

- Mr. KAYA KARENOĞULLARI

Trade Expert, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. SARENAZ YÜKSEL

Trade Assistant Specialist, Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade

STATE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

- Mr. HASAN ALKILANY

Senior Legal Advisor, Ministry of Economy, United Arab Emirates

- Ms. MAHABBA ALTENEİJİ

Legal Researcher, ministry of economy

REPUBLIC OF UZBEKISTAN

- Mr. FARKHOD SHONAZAROV

Head of Department, the Ministry of Investments, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan

- Mr. SARVARKHUJA GANIKHUJAEV

Chief Specialist, Ministry of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan

B. THE OIC GENERAL SECRETARIAT

OIC

- Ms. FARHA RAMDZHAN SAID

Professional Officer, OIC Department of Economic Affairs

INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC TRADE FINANCE CORPORATION (ITFC)

- Mr. HOJAMUROD HOJAEV

Relationship Manager, International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC)

C. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

ISLAMIC CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT)

- Mr. ABDELAZIZ ALAMI

Head of Department, ICDT

STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

- Mr. KENAN BAGCI

Senior Researcher, SESRIC

- Mr. SYED TAHIR MAHMUD

Researcher, SESRIC

D. AFFILIATED ORGANS OF THE OIC

STANDARDS AND METROLOGY INSTITUTE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SMIIC)

- Mr. MURAT TAŞARŞU

Specialist, Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries

E. INVITED INSTITUTIONS

UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD)

- Ms. RASHMI BANGA

Senior Economist, UNCTAD

GETİR

- Mr. TUNCAY TÜTEK

Founder, GETİR

- Mr. YUNUS AKBABA

Public Relations Director, GETİR

F. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ

Acting Director General, COMCEC Coordination Office

- Mr. CAN AYGÜL

Head of Department, COMCEC Coordination Office

- Mr. MEHMET ASLAN

Head of Department, COMCEC Coordination Office

- Mr. MEHMET CELALETTİN AKTAŞ

Head of Department, COMCEC Coordination Office

- Ms. ÖZGÜL YÜKSEL

Coordinator

- Mr. YUNUS KAYIŞ

Assistant Expert

- Ms. MİNE DEMİR

Assistant Expert

- Ms. TİLBE GOCUKLU

Assistant Expert

- Mr. OZAN LİF

Coordinator

- Mr. HAKAN USLU

Coordinator

- Mr. Selim UYAR

Registration and Accommodation Coordinator

