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

COMCEC

Proceedings of the 25th Meeting of the

COMCEC Trade Working Group

"Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries''

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

September 2025

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 25th MEETING OF THE

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ON

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COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

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1. Introduction

The 25th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group was held on 22-23 September 2025, in Ankara with the theme of "Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries". The representatives of 22 Member Countries, 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)

Representatives of the SESRIC, ICDT, COMSTECH, WTO and the COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO) attended the meeting.

(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, Director-General of COMCEC Coordination Office, welcomed all participants to 25th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group (TWG).

H.E. KOÇ started his speech by expressing his pleasure in addressing the distinguished TWG Focal Points at the 25th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group and warmly welcomed all participants. He underlined that COMCEC, as a Ministerial-Level Standing Committee of the OIC, plays a vital role in enhancing economic and commercial cooperation among its Member Countries, guided by the COMCEC Strategy and addressing shared development challenges.

At the beginning of his remarks, H.E. KOÇ expressed deep sorrow over the ongoing tragedy in Palestine and emphasized that the humanitarian crisis in Gaza, resulting in the loss of countless innocent lives, constitutes a grave violation of human dignity. He reiterated Türkiye's unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people and their legitimate aspirations to live in peace, dignity, and independence, while calling upon the international community to take urgent and concrete actions to end the suffering and ensure accountability.

Turning to global economic issues, H.E. KOÇ stressed that international trade remains one of the key engines of global economic growth, yet the trade landscape is undergoing profound transformation due to rising protectionism, geopolitical tensions, and supply chain disruptions.

He informed that although global merchandise trade showed modest recovery in 2024 after contracting in 2023, risks remain elevated, particularly for least developed and developing countries that face reduced market access, higher trade costs, and external vulnerabilities.

H.E. KOÇ noted that increasing tariffs and trade policy uncertainty have reshaped traditional trade routes, creating both challenges and new opportunities for agile and competitive economies. In this context, he underlined that developing sound export strategies has become an economic imperative rather than a policy choice.

He emphasized that OIC Member Countries possess significant potential in global trade owing to their strategic locations, natural resources, and growing industrial capacities. Harnessing this potential requires well-structured export strategies to enhance integration into global value chains, diversify markets, and build resilience against shocks.

H.E. KOÇ highlighted that the development of robust export strategies is not only a pathway to economic growth but also a foundation for long-term stability and shared prosperity across the Islamic world. He informed that the meeting would continue the discussion on the theme "Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries," which is also the topic of the forthcoming Ministerial Exchange of Views Session during the 41st COMCEC Ministerial Meeting which will be held in November 2025.

H.E. KOÇ appreciated that the contributions of Member Countries, international organizations, and the private sector would enrich the discussions and support the development of effective export strategies among the Member Countries.

Later, Ms. Nudrat KHAN, Joint Secretary Commerce Division, Ministry of Commerce and Textile of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, moderated the Sessions during the Meeting.

In her opening remarks, she welcomed all participants to the 25th Meeting of TWG and gave a brief overview of export strategies. Ms. KHAN underlined the importance of developing comprehensive and forward-looking export strategies to strengthen resilience against global challenges and promote sustainable economic growth. She also informed about Pakistan's ongoing efforts to enhance export performance through diversification, policy reforms, and capacity-building initiatives.

She noted that the outcomes and progress achieved within this TWG Meeting will be reflected in the deliberations of the COMCEC Ministerial Session. Accordingly, Ms. KHAN called upon all Member Countries to actively engage in the discussions to ensure concrete and actionable results.

Then, Ms. KHAN briefly informed the attendees of the agenda and program of the Meeting.

3. Trade Outlook of the OIC Member Countries

Mr. Ercan SAKA, a 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 Member Countries.

He highlighted that world merchandise exports reached around 24.1 trillion USD in 2023, marking a moderate recovery following the slowdown in 2022. Meanwhile, global merchandise imports stood at approximately 24.0 trillion USD, indicating a relatively balanced trade flow. Service exports worldwide amounted to 7.8 trillion USD, showing an upward trend led by travel, transport, and ICT-related services.

Mr. SAKA underlined that total OIC merchandise exports were valued at around 2.6 trillion USD, corresponding to roughly 10.8 percent of global merchandise exports, while OIC merchandise imports totaled 2.5 trillion USD, accounting for 10.3 percent of the global figure. However, intra-OIC trade remained below expectations, representing only 19.26 percent of total OIC trade in 2022, compared to the target of 25 percent set under the OIC-2025 Programme of Action.

He also drew attention to key challenges impacting OIC and intra-OIC trade performance, such as dependency on limited commodity exports, protectionist trade policies, high transport and logistics costs, complex customs procedures, and underdeveloped financial systems. Mr. SAKA emphasized that tackling these obstacles and enhancing institutional and infrastructural capacity are crucial steps for improving the trade competitiveness of OIC Member Countries.

He concluded by stating that the OIC Trade Outlook 2024 serves as an evidence-based reference for policymakers, supporting informed decision-making and fostering cooperation among OIC Member Countries to promote sustainable trade growth and regional economic integration.

4. Presentation of the Draft Research Report

Mrs. Zeynep ÖKTEM has provided a comprehensive presentation titled "Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries" at the 25th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group. She has outlined the structure, objectives, and analytical framework of the draft research report, emphasizing its importance for guiding OIC Member Countries in formulating effective National Export Strategies (NES).

Mrs. ÖKTEM has introduced the report as a detailed guideline intended to serve as a practical and analytical reference for OIC Member Countries. She has mentioned that the study aims to outline a step-by-step process for assessing, planning, and executing export strategies, supported by appropriate legal frameworks and institutional mechanisms. She has explained that the research integrates literature reviews, surveys, interviews, and field visits to develop evidence-based recommendations.

She has underlined the significance of the study in addressing regulatory and supervisory issues emerging from trade digitalization, the expansion of e-commerce, and the growing importance of sustainability and green trade. Furthermore, she has explained that the research adopts a multi-layered methodology combining qualitative and quantitative techniques to ensure analytical robustness.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has also presented the selection criteria for case countries, ensuring geographical and structural diversity across OIC and non-OIC members. She has mentioned that Nigeria, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, and Egypt are chosen as case studies from the OIC group, while China and the Netherlands serve as international benchmarks due to their advanced trade frameworks and digital trade leadership.

She has provided a conceptual overview of the evolving global trade environment, noting the disruptive effects of the 2007–2008 financial crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and rising protectionism. She has emphasized that global trade is increasingly shaped by government-imposed constraints such as tariffs, export controls, and non-tariff barriers.

She has highlighted the WTO's 2025 forecast, indicating a 0.2% contraction in world merchandise trade volumes followed by a moderate recovery in 2026. She has mentioned that OIC Member Countries represent around 25% of the global population and hold a significant share of the world's natural resources but still face challenges of diversification and competitiveness.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has stressed that intra-OIC trade has grown modestly—from 19.16% in 2023 to 20.36% in 2024—yet remains below global averages. She has identified structural challenges such as limited diversification, weak logistics infrastructure, and non-tariff barriers. However, she has also noted the positive role of mechanisms like the Trade Preferential System among OIC Countries (TPS-OIC), COMCEC, and SESRIC in promoting evidence-based policymaking.

She has explained that export-led growth remains a key driver of economic development, creating employment, reducing poverty, and fostering industrialization. She has emphasized that successful export-oriented economies have established coherent policy frameworks, institutional mechanisms, and regulatory environments conducive to competitiveness.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has described the National Export Strategy (NES) as a "strategy of strategies," serving as a holistic tool to align national objectives with market opportunities. She has outlined that an effective NES promotes diversification, SME competitiveness, investment attraction, and public–private collaboration while ensuring continuous monitoring through measurable key performance indicators (KPIs).

She has underlined that digitalization has become central to modern trade systems, enabling paperless processes such as e-customs, e-certification, and e-payments. She has noted that leading economies—including the Netherlands, New Zealand, and Singapore—have achieved digitalization rates above 90%, serving as benchmarks for others.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has also highlighted the role of Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) in strengthening global competitiveness, reducing trade barriers, and fostering diversification through stable policy environments.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has shared comparative insights from advanced economies to illustrate successful practices in export promotion. She has mentioned Germany's focus on institutional coordination, Denmark's VITUS Programme for SME export support, and Japan's JETRO File system that facilitates access to international market data. She has also highlighted Spain's ICEX Master's Programme as a best practice in human resource development for export promotion, and Denmark's KPI-based performance monitoring as an example of institutional accountability. Additionally, she has referred to the Great Britain & Northern Ireland Campaign as an exemplary communication strategy that strengthens national branding and export reputation.

Finally, she has mentioned the Norwegian Trade Council's monitoring framework as a model for evaluating the performance of trade promotion organizations through independent surveys and impact assessments.

5. Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Study

Mrs. Zeynep ÖKTEM has delivered a second presentation titled "Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries – Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Studies" at the 25th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group.

She has provided an in-depth analysis of good practices derived from both OIC and non-OIC Member Countries, illustrating how strategic export frameworks, digital transformation, and institutional reforms contribute to sustainable and inclusive trade growth.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has begun by explaining that the study categorizes international trade strategies (ITS) through the identification and mapping of good practices. She has mentioned that the analytical model follows the Identify–Implement–Monitor cycle to ensure a systematic and replicable approach for evaluating policies and institutional mechanisms.

She has highlighted that good practices are assessed not only in terms of their success but also their transferability, lessons learned, and potential for capacity building across OIC countries. She has further emphasized the integration of cross-cutting global themes—digitalization, artificial intelligence, sustainability, and ethical trade—to reflect the modern dynamics of global commerce. She has also reiterated that the research employs a multi-layered methodology, combining literature reviews, online surveys, field visits, and stakeholder interviews, ensuring that conclusions and recommendations are grounded in robust, evidence-based analysis.

Nigeria

Mrs. ÖKTEM has provided an overview of Nigeria's economy, emphasizing its heavy reliance on oil and gas exports (over 80% of total exports) while recognizing recent diversification efforts targeting agriculture, solid minerals, manufacturing, ICT, and creative industries. She has mentioned that the National Export Strategy (NES II, 2021–2026) aligns with AfCFTA priorities, promoting e-commerce, a Single Window system, and performance-based institutional accountability through the FMITI and National Trade Facilitation Committee.

She has also highlighted Nigeria's progress in digital trade through the National Single Window and digital payment platforms such as Interswitch and Flutterwave, along with government investments in 5G infrastructure and AI-driven job creation, which led to the country being named a Digital Trade Champion by the African Union in 2025.

Azerbaijan

She has described Azerbaijan's strategic geographic position as a trade and energy transit hub linking Europe and Central Asia. She has mentioned that large infrastructure projects such as the Baku–Tbilisi–Kars Railway and Baku International Sea Trade Port have enhanced connectivity and regional integration under the New Silk Road Initiative.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has explained that while oil and gas account for nearly 90% of exports, Azerbaijan's Strategic Road Map for the National Economy and Key Sectors (2016) and the Social and Economic Development Strategy (2022–2026) aim to strengthen non-oil sectors such as agriculture, ICT, and tourism.

She has underlined that digitalization initiatives, including the Customs Single Window, Azexport Portal, and Digital Trade Hub, have significantly improved trade facilitation and global visibility. She has also mentioned that Azexport was recognized by UNESCAP as a best practice in cross-border paperless trade.

Indonesia

Mrs. ÖKTEM has detailed Indonesia's strategic maritime position between the Indian and Pacific Oceans and highlighted its strong manufacturing base and diversification into high-value sectors such as electronics, nickel processing, and automotive components. She has emphasized Indonesia's Vision 2045 and the Ministry of Trade's Strategic Plan (RENSTRA) 2025–2029, which focus on industrial transformation, halal certification, MSME empowerment, and regional export diversification.

She has explained that the National Strategy for Digital Economy (2030) is built upon six pillars including digital infrastructure, innovation, cybersecurity, and financial inclusion. The Indonesia National Single Window (INSW) integrates seamlessly with the ASEAN Single Window, enhancing regional interoperability.

She has also mentioned that e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Bukalapak, and Gojek dominate Indonesia's digital economy, contributing to 70% of its digital GDP. These developments have positioned Indonesia as a regional leader in digital trade and innovation.

Egypt

Mrs. ÖKTEM has described Egypt's strategic geographic and economic position, noting the Suez Canal's critical role in facilitating 12% of global trade and generating significant revenues. She has explained that Egypt's export strategy is embedded in Vision 2030 – Sustainable Development Strategy, emphasizing diversification, human-centered growth, and sustainability.

She has mentioned that since 2016, the Economic Reform Program has strengthened fiscal balance and competitiveness, while digital trade facilitation platforms like NAFEZA and ACI have modernized customs operations. She has added that Egypt's e-commerce ecosystem, supported by local platforms such as MaxAB and ShipBlu, is expanding rapidly, improving SME participation in digital trade.

China

Mrs. ÖKTEM has presented China as a global trade powerhouse that transformed through reforms since 1978 and major initiatives such as Made in China 2025 and the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). She has noted that China's Dual Circulation Strategy (2020) aims to balance domestic consumption with global integration.

She has explained that China's 14th Five-Year Plan (2021–2025) prioritizes modernization, technology, and sustainability, while digitalization through Internet Plus, Digital Silk Road, and Golden Projects has built a robust trade infrastructure integrating AI, Big Data, and blockchain.

She has concluded that China's e-commerce ecosystem—led by Alibaba, JD.com, and Douyin—has become a global benchmark, supported by 4.19 million 5G base stations and one of the world's largest broadband networks.

The Netherlands

She has highlighted the Netherlands as a highly competitive, export-driven economy with advanced logistics through the Port of Rotterdam and Schiphol Airport, positioning it as the Gateway to Europe. She has mentioned that the Netherlands' exports are dominated by services, chemicals, and high-tech goods, achieving a trade surplus of US$86.9 billion in 2024.

She has explained that the Netherlands' export strategy—outlined in A Strategy for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation (2022)—is built around three pillars: protecting entrepreneurs, promoting open strategic autonomy, and reducing dependency on critical raw materials.

She has further added that digitalization efforts, including the Single Window for Trade and Lean and Green Programme, have strengthened both trade facilitation and environmental sustainability, making the country a Digital Gateway to Europe.

Mrs. ÖKTEM has synthesized lessons from both non-OIC and OIC member countries, organized according to the Identify–Implement–Monitor framework.

Identification Phase: She has noted that China's Dual Circulation Strategy and the Netherlands' identification of 25 priority markets represent effective models of market targeting. She has emphasized the success of China's Belt and Road Initiative and the Netherlands' focus on public–private partnerships (PPPs) as best practices for cross-sectoral cooperation.

Implementation Phase: She has cited China's Guangzhou e-commerce pilot and the Netherlands' Entrepreneurial Development Bank (FMO) as examples of strong financial and technical support. In OIC countries, she has mentioned Egypt's Center of Excellence, Indonesia's Digital Talent Scholarship Program, Azerbaijan's "Made in Azerbaijan" initiative, and Nigeria's Export4Survival Campaign as notable implementation successes.

Monitoring Phase: Mrs. ÖKTEM has explained that Nigeria's NES II offers a clear monitoring and evaluation framework with defined performance indicators and institutional responsibilities, ensuring effective policy tracking and accountability.

She has concluded that the transferability of these practices depends on each country's institutional capacity, digital readiness, and stakeholder engagement. She has emphasized that coordinated governance and continuous monitoring are critical for sustaining export competitiveness.

Mrs. Zeynep ÖKTEM has also concluded by underlining that mapping and analyzing good practices from both OIC and non-OIC countries reveal the essential ingredients for successful export strategies: institutional coordination, digital transformation, policy coherence, and inclusive capacity building. She has noted that by leveraging these lessons, OIC Member

Countries can design resilient, future-oriented, and digitally integrated export strategies aligned with sustainable development principles.

6. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member Countries and International Institutions

Experiences/Perspectives of the Member Countries

a) Bangladesh

Mr. Akram ALİ, Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Ankara made a presentation on Bangladesh's perspective on export strategies.

Mr. ALİ underlined that export-led growth remains central to Bangladesh's economic development and that cooperation under COMCEC programs has provided valuable opportunities for knowledge sharing, training, and investment flows among OIC Member Countries.

He highlighted that the Ready-Made Garments (RMG) sector constitutes around 82% of Bangladesh's exports and contributes more than 87% of total foreign exchange earnings. However, he indicated that diversification is a key priority, with growing focus on pharmaceuticals, leather, ceramics, agro-processing, shipbuilding, and jute products.

Mr. ALİ informed the meeting that Bangladesh has adopted a multi-year Export Policy (2024–27) with explicit targets and measures designed to foster an export-friendly environment, taking into account the challenges arising from LDC graduation and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). He emphasized that national strategies include sustaining and upgrading the RMG sector through better compliance and a shift toward higher-value and man-made fiber garments, while also supporting MSMEs and backward linkages.

Mr. ALİ pointed out the country's major policy initiatives such as trade policy reforms, establishment of EPZs (Export Processing Zones) and SEZs (Special Economic Zones), and introduction of the National Single Window (NSW) and One-Stop Service (OSS) systems to enhance trade facilitation and attract export-oriented FDI (Foreign Direct Investment). He also underlined ongoing investments in logistics and port modernization — particularly Chattogram, Payra, and Matarbari ports — under various PPP (Public–Private Partnership) models to improve efficiency and lower transport costs.Moreover, he stressed Bangladesh's commitment to green and sustainable exports, encouraging energy-efficient manufacturing and low-carbon logistics.

In conclusion, Mr. ALİ highlighted that Bangladesh's export success results from long-term strategy, strong policy support, and active private sector engagement. He suggested that enhanced cooperation among OIC Member Countries would further help address common export development challenges and ensure sustainable growth.

b) Malaysia

Mr. Sadat ANAKFOSTERMAAD, Director, Matrade İstanbul made a presentation on Malaysia's perspective on export strategies.

Mr. ANAKFOSTERMAAD underlined that Malaysia remains one of the world's leading trading nations, conducting trade with more than 200 countries and maintaining robust growth across both goods and services sectors.

He highlighted that Malaysia's total trade exceeded USD 300 billion for the third consecutive year in 2024, driven primarily by exports of electrical and electronic (E&E) products, petroleum products, chemicals, and palm oil. He noted that the United States, China, the EU, and ASEAN countries remain Malaysia's major trading partners.

Mr. ANAKFOSTERMAAD informed the participants that Malaysia's services trade has also expanded significantly, with travel, transport, and other business services being key contributors. He pointed out that the trade deficit in services has narrowed as exports grew faster than imports in early 2025.He emphasized that Malaysia has signed and implemented 16 Free Trade Agreements, with FTA partners accounting for around 65 percent of Malaysia's total trade. In this regard, he stressed the importance of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP).

Mr. ANAKFOSTERMAAD highlighted that under the *Thirteenth Malaysia Plan* and the *New Industrial Master Plan 2030 (NIMP 2030)*, Malaysia aims to strengthen economic resilience, governance, and value creation, focusing on key sectors such as E&E, automotive, aerospace, pharmaceuticals, and chemicals.

He further underlined the objectives of the *National Trade Blueprint (NTBp)*, which seeks to position Malaysia as a dynamic and pre-eminent trading nation through sustainable export development, diversification of products and markets, and the strengthening of the export ecosystem.

Mr. ANAKFOSTERMAAD also drew attention to MATRADE's role as the national trade promotion organization under the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI), responsible for promoting Malaysian products and services abroad through 48 offices worldwide. He informed the participants about MATRADE's key initiatives, including the *Madani Digital Trade (MDT)* platform, designed to enable MSMEs to access global markets through virtual engagement, e-marketplaces, and one-stop trade solutions.

Finally, he stressed Malaysia's commitment to championing the global Halal industry through the annual *Malaysia International Halal Showcase (MIHAS)*, which serves as a leading platform for promoting innovation, sustainability, and international collaboration within the Halal ecosystem.

c) Türkiye

Ms. Seda MEYVECİ DOĞANAY began the presentation with an overview of the Global and Turkish Economy. She noted that, despite global uncertainties and weak external demand, the Turkish economy grew by 4.8% in the second quarter of 2025, reaching an annualized GDP of 1.47 trillion USD. She underlined that Türkiye's exports of goods and services have increased sevenfold over the past 22 years, reflecting its strong export-oriented performance. Between January and August 2025, exports amounted to 178.1 billion USD, marking a 4.34% increase compared to the previous year. She added that under the Medium-Term Program (MTP) 2026–2028, Türkiye aims to reinforce macroeconomic stability and further reduce external financing needs.

Ms. Ümran ÖZDEMİR then elaborated on Action Tools and Policies Regarding Merchandise Exports. She emphasized the institutional structure supporting exporters, particularly the Türkiye Exporters Assembly and Exporters' Associations, which operate under 14 General Secretariats and 61 associations. She introduced key initiatives such as the Easy Export Platform (E-KIP) and the Export Academy, designed to provide AI-based guidance and training to exporters. She also highlighted diversification strategies, including the Faraway Countries Strategy, which targets 18 markets with a 50 billion USD export goal by 2028, and the OIC Member States Export Strategy, aiming to increase the OIC countries' share in Türkiye's exports from 26% to 30% by 2028.

Mr. Ayhan BÜYÜKTÜRK presented the section on Action Tools and Policies Regarding Services Exports. He informed that services account for two-thirds of Türkiye's GDP and employment, aligning with global trends. Türkiye's services exports reached 117 billion USD in 2024, compared to 14 billion USD in 2002, marking an eightfold increase. He noted that Türkiye recorded a 61.4 billion USD surplus in its services trade balance, ranking 5th globally. Tourism and logistics/transportation were identified as the leading sectors, generating 61 billion USD and 41 billion USD respectively. Mr. BÜYÜKTÜRE also mentioned activities such as trade delegations, buying missions, and services trade fairs, which support Turkish service providers in expanding their international presence.

Mr. Nurullah Asım AKBULUT presented the section on Trade Diplomacy. He underlined that trade diplomacy builds trust, strengthens bilateral and multilateral cooperation, and enhances market access through trade agreements. Türkiye currently maintains 24 Free Trade Agreements in force and a strong diplomatic presence with 230 commercial counselors and attachés in 115 countries. He stressed that Türkiye's active engagement in regional and international organizations, as well as Joint Economic Commissions and business forums, contributes to creating an enabling environment for exporters and to resolving trade-related challenges through dialogue.

Mr. Ayhan ŞENTÜRK concluded the presentation with the section on Free Zones in Türkiye. He informed that the country currently has 19 Free Zones covering 26,000 acres, hosting more than 2,000 firms—including 545 foreign companies—and employing over 96,000 people. He stated that total exports from free zones reached 12 billion USD, with 74% of total sales consisting of exports and 10.4% comprising high-tech products. He emphasized that free zones play a vital role in promoting export-oriented investment and production, attracting foreign direct investment, and facilitating technology transfer, thereby contributing to Türkiye's integration into global value chains.

Experiences/Perspectives of the International Institutions

d) World Trade Organization (WTO)

Ms. Kenza LE-MENTEC, Head of Regional Desk for Amec-Ceecac at WTO made a presentation regarding WTO experience towards export strategies.

Ms. LE-MENTEC underlined that the World Trade Organization (WTO) is a rules-based intergovernmental body established in 1995 to administer multilateral trade agreements, facilitate negotiations, and ensure predictability, transparency, and non-discrimination in the global trading system.

She highlighted that the WTO currently has 166 Members with 22 countries in the process of accession, and operates on a consensus-based decision-making model with its Secretariat based in Geneva.

Ms. LE-MENTEC informed the participants that the WTO performs key functions including administering trade agreements, acting as a forum for negotiations, settling disputes, monitoring national trade policies, and cooperating with other international institutions such as the IMF and World Bank to ensure coherence in global economic policy-making.She emphasized that transparency is a core principle of the WTO, achieved primarily through the Trade Policy Review Mechanism (TPRM), the Trade Monitoring Exercise, and regular notifications by Members.

Ms. LE-MENTEC pointed out that under the TPRM, all WTO Members undergo periodic reviews depending on their share of world trade — every three years for the top four traders (EU, USA, China, Japan), every five years for the next sixteen, and every seven years for others. She explained that this mechanism enables members to evaluate national trade policies, identify constraints, and ensure coherence between policy and law.

She also highlighted the Trade Monitoring Exercise, established after the 2008–2009 global financial crisis, as the only cross-cutting transparency tool within the multilateral trading system. It provides regular updates on trade measures implemented worldwide and fosters an inclusive peer review platform for all members.

Ms. LE-MENTEC underlined that information collected through these mechanisms contributes to strengthening transparency, monitoring protectionist tendencies, and promoting global trade resilience.She further informed that OIC Member Countries can benefit from WTO support through various technical assistance and capacity-building programmes such as the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF), the Enhanced Integrated Framework (EIF), and the Trade Facilitation Agreement Facility (TFAF).

In conclusion, Ms. LE-MENTEC stressed that strengthening engagement with WTO mechanisms and enhancing transparency will help OIC countries achieve sustainable export growth, effective trade policy reform, and better integration into the multilateral trading system.

7. COMCEC Financial Support Programs

Ms. Eda AKÇA, Expert from Programs and Projects Department at the COMCEC Coordination Office, made a presentation on COMCEC Project Support Programs.

Ms. AKÇA started her presentation by providing general information on the COMCEC Project Support Programs, namely COMCEC Project Funding and COMCEC Al-Quds Program.

After that, she explained objectives and main characteristics of CPF. Accordingly, she informed the participants that 156 projects have been implemented by 29 countries and 6 OIC Institutions. She emphasized that almost all the member countries benefited from the output of the project activities.

In her presentation, Ms. AKÇA also outlined the supported themes under the trade cooperation area, underlining that the CCO supports projects formulated in line with sectoral themes derived from the COMCEC policy recommendations.

Explaining the project timeline and the annual CPF cycle, Ms. AKÇA 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, she informed the participants about online project submission and highlighted the critical steps for this process.

As an important development, Ms. AKÇA underlined that the issue of "Entering Data into the COMCEC Policy Follow-Up System" is now taken into consideration during the evaluation of project proposals, along with other critical aspects outlined in the Preparation and Submission Guidelines.

The presentation concluded with a brief showcase of selected 2025 Trade Projects funded under CPF. Examples included Indonesia's project on enhancing halal and food safety compliance in slaughterhouses, and SMIIC's initiative to boost the capacity of metrology laboratories in Sudan and Uganda.

Furthermore, Ms. AKÇA informed the participants that the new project call will be announced on 1 October 2025.

8. Main Challenges and Success Factors in Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries

Mrs. Zeynep ÖKTEM has delivered the third presentation titled "Main Challenges and Success Factors in Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries" at the 25th Meeting of the COMCEC Trade Working Group. She has provided a comprehensive analysis of the key structural, institutional, and technological challenges facing OIC Member Countries in designing and implementing National Export Strategies (NES), while also outlining guiding principles, recommended practices, and policy recommendations to strengthen intra-OIC trade and global competitiveness.

Challenges

Mrs. ÖKTEM has elaborated on the main challenges confronting OIC Member Countries in formulating and implementing effective export strategies. She has mentioned that heavy reliance on imports of strategic goods exposes economies to supply and price volatility, while fluctuations in export revenues directly affect macroeconomic stability. She has emphasized that increasing protectionism, geopolitical tensions, and global disruptions—environmental or technological—intensify these vulnerabilities and reveal structural weaknesses in export-led growth models.

She has also underlined several interrelated problem areas:

Institutional and Coordination Gaps: She has noted the need for stronger stakeholder coordination and public–private partnerships to ensure long-term competitiveness and coherence in trade governance.

Quality Infrastructure and Standards: She has mentioned that unharmonized quality infrastructure policies limit SMEs and MSMEs in complying with ISO or Halal standards. Variations in international halal certification systems create barriers to trade and consumer trust, calling for closer alignment through OIC-level mechanisms such as SMIIC and IFHAB.

Trade Literacy Deficiencies: Mrs. ÖKTEM has highlighted that limited trade literacy in developing and emerging countries restricts their ability to access global markets. Budgetary constraints prevent SMEs and MSMEs from investing in training and capacity development.

Innovation and High-Tech Limitations: She has explained that low R&D investment, weak academia–industry collaboration, and insufficient funding hinder innovation and technology adoption. Rapid digital transformation has created a skills gap in fields like AI, data science, cybersecurity, and blockchain.

SME and MSME Constraints: She has stated that limited financial resources, low digital literacy, and inadequate infrastructure hinder SMEs' integration into global value chains. She has further noted that high licensing fees and fragmented digital systems make it difficult for small enterprises to adopt e-commerce and digital trade tools.

Green Trade and Sustainability Pressures: Mrs. ÖKTEM has indicated that new climate-related regulations, such as the EU Green Deal, impose significant compliance costs, demanding greater sustainability integration throughout supply chains.

Digital Transition and Security Issues: She has pointed out that paper-based systems, lack of interoperability, and data security concerns discourage firms from digital adoption. She has added that the high infrastructure cost of digitalization, disproportionately burdens SMEs and widens competitiveness gaps.

Road Map for Effective NES

Mrs. ÖKTEM has proposed a five-pillar roadmap for designing and implementing effective National Export Strategies across OIC Member Countries. She has emphasized that successful NES models should include:

Data-based, sector-specific identification processes for targeted interventions.

Strong institutional capacity with well-defined coordination mechanisms.

Accessible financial and technical support for SMEs and MSMEs.

Integration of digitalization and advanced technologies into trade operations.

Transparent monitoring and independent evaluation systems ensuring accountability and continuous improvement.

Guiding Principles and Recommended Practices

Mrs. ÖKTEM has outlined a phased framework for guiding OIC Member Countries in NES formulation and execution, structured under Identification, Implementation, and Monitoring phases.

Identification Phase: She has emphasized evidence-based assessment, supported by competitiveness reports and trade data from ITC and UNCTAD. She has recommended sectoral roadmaps, regional integration strategies, and inclusive stakeholder engagement through exporter advisory councils and consultations.

Implementation Phase: She has suggested establishing export academies to strengthen institutional and human capacity, and forming National Export Committees to ensure clear leadership structures. She has also advocated for export credit and insurance mechanisms, SME funds, and AI-driven market analytics to enhance decision-making.

Monitoring Phase: Mrs. ÖKTEM has proposed annual NES progress reports, real-time digital dashboards, and independent external evaluations conducted by international organizations like ITC or UNCTAD.

She has stressed cross-cutting principles, such as promoting sustainability, ethical trade, green production, and awareness campaigns through digital and physical platforms.

9. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mr. Gürkan POLAT, Director at COMCEC Coordination Office. In his closing remarks, Mr. POLAT expressed his sincere gratitude to the Member Country participants for their active participation and contributions to the discussions and negotiations. Afterwards, Mr. POLAT conveyed his thanks to representatives of the relevant OIC institutions and WTO for their valuable contributions. Lastly Mr. POLAT underlined that the contributions of the participants would be reflected in the Policy Guide. The Meeting ended with a vote of thanks.

10. Annex I

DRAFT AGENDA
OF THE 25th MEETING OF THE COMCEC
TRADE WORKING GROUP

(22-23 September 2025; Ankara)

"Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries"

1st DAY: SEPTEMBER 22ND, 2025

Opening Remarks

1. "Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries": Scope, Conceptual Framework and Methodology

2. Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Studies

3. Experiences/Perspectives of the Member Countries, International Institutions, Private Sector, and NGOs on the Subject

4. COMCEC Project Support Programs

2nd DAY: SEPTEMBER 23RD, 2025

1. Main Challenges and Success Factors in Developing/Improving Export Strategies of the OIC Member Countries

2. Policy Debate Session: Formulation of Policy Recommendations for the 41st COMCEC Ministerial Session

Closing Remarks

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11. Annex II

DRAFT PROGRAMME
THE 25TH MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

(22-23 September 2025, Ankara)

"Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries"

22 September 2025

09.00 - 09.30	**Registration**
09.30 - 09.35	**Recitation from the Holy Qur'an**
09.35 - 09.45	**Opening Remarks**
09.45 - 10.05	**Trade Outlook of the OIC Member Countries** *-Presentation* Mr. Ercan SAKA (Consultant), COMCEC Coordination Office
10.05 - 10.15	*Discussion*
10.15 - 10.55	**Presentation of the Draft Research Report** *-Presentation* Ms. Zeynep ÖKTEM (Consultant), UTRLab
10.55 - 11.25	*Discussion*
11.25 - 11.40	*Coffee Break*
11.40 - 12.20	**Lessons Learnt from the Selected Case Studies** *-Presentation* Ms. Zeynep ÖKTEM (Consultant), UTRLab
12.20 - 12.50	*Discussion*
12.50 - 14.30	*Lunch*
14.30 - 15.30	**Experiences of the Member Countries** *-Presentation by Bangladesh* *-Presentation by Malaysia* *-Presentation by Türkiye*

	Discussion
15.30 - 15.45	*Coffee Break*
15.45 - 16.15	**Experiences of International Institutions** *-Presentation by Dr. Kenza Le Mentec, World Trade Organization (WTO)*
	Discussion
16.15 - 17.00	**Utilizing the COMCEC Project Support Programs** *-Presentation* Ms. Eda AKÇA (Expert), COMCEC Coordination Office
	Discussion

<u>23 September 2025</u>

09.30 - 10.15	**Main Challenges and Success Factors in Developing/Improving Export Strategies in the OIC Member Countries** *-Presentation* Ms. Zeynep ÖKTEM (Consultant), UTRLab
10.15 - 11.45	**Policy Debate Session: Formulation of Policy Recommendations for the 41st COMCEC Ministerial Session** *A policy debate session will be held on policy recommendations to develop or improve export strategies in the Member Countries.* *Discussion*
11.45 - 12.00	**Closing Remarks and Family Photo**

12. Annex III

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

25th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TRADE WORKING GROUP

(22-23 September 2025 - Ankara)

A. MEMBER COUNTRIES OF THE OIC

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA

- Ms. HAMIDI SABRINA

Head of Department, Ministry of Foreign Trade and Export Promotion

REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Mr. ALİ BABAYEV

Head of Department, Azerbaijan

- Mr. MIRALAKBAR ALAKBARLI

Chief Advisor, Ministry of Economy of the Republic of Azerbaijan

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- Mr. MD AKRAM ALI

Counsellor, Ministry of Commerce, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

BRUNEI DARUSSALAM

- Ms. SOBRINA ROSLI

First Secretary, Embassy of Bruneı Darussalam in Ankara

ARAB REPUBLIC OF EGYPT

- Mr. GOMAA MADNY

Undersecretary, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade

- Ms. FATMA MAHMOUD

Director General, Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade

REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

- Mr. BANNY RATNO RAMADHANI

Trade Attaché, Indonesian Embassy İn Ankara

- Mr. TEUKU MUAMMAR RIZKI TAQWA MUAMMAR

Officer, Indonesian Embassy İn Ankara

REPUBLIC OF IRAQ

- Mr. RIYADH FAKHER

Deputy Director General, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. DHEYNA NASER

Director, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. MUTHANA ALWAN

Consultant, Iraq Commercial Attaché

- Mr. OMAR ALDULAIMI

Head of Department, Iraq Commercial Attaché

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

- Mr. SUHAIB ALROUD

Head of Department, the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply

- Ms. SHAIMA MASARWEH

Head of Regional Organization Section, Ministry of Industry Trade and Supply

REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN

- Mr. SERIK ASHITOV

Deputy Director, Ministry of Trade and Integration of the Republic of Kazakhstan

- Mr. DARKHAN BEISENBAY

Counsellor, Embassy of Kazakhstan İn Ankara

THE STATE OF KUWAIT

- Ms. ASMA ALHADBAH

External Relations Researcher, Ministry of Finance

LIBYA

- Mr. ESAM ALMALHOUF

Director, Ministry of Economy

- Mr. MOSTFA GDARA

Director, Ministry of Economy

MALAYSIA

- Ms. ZAIREEN OMAR

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

- Mr. SADAT ANAKFOSTERMAAD

Director, Matrade Istanbul

KINGDOM OF MOROCCO

- Mr. BENABDOUH YOUSSEF

Head of Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade

REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

- Ms. EMA SORAYA MUSTAFA MULIMA MBUMBA

Head of Department, Ministry of Economy

- Mr. OCTAVIO FRANCISCO ZEFANIAS

Analyst, Apıex- Mozambıque Investee and Export Promotıon Agency

SULTANATE OF OMAN

- Ms. NOOF ALSHAAILI

Specialist of İnternational Organizations, Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Investment Promotion

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN

- H.E. Dr. NUDRAT KHAN

Joint Secretary, Ministry of Commerce

- Mr. ALTAF HUSSAIN

Expert, Ministry of Commerce

STATE OF QATAR

- Mr. SALEEM ALKATHIRY

International Cooperation Researcher, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

- Ms. SALMA ALDOSARI

Researcher of International Cooperation and Agreements, Ministry of Commerce and Industry

KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

- Mr. JIHAD ALHUTHAIL

Director General, General Authority for Foreign Trade

- Mr. SALEH ALSAHIBANI"

Tax Journey Director, Saudi Arabia, Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority

- Mr. QASIM ALALAWI

Expert, General Authority for Foreign Trade

- Ms. SHADEN ALGHADEER

Assistant Expert, Saudi Arabia, Zakat, Tax, and Customs Authority

- Mr. OMAR ALRAJEH

Counsellor, Saudi Export Development Authority

REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

- Dr. ILHAM OBIED

Head of Department, Sudanese Standard & Metrology Organization

- Ms. MANAL ABDELWHAB

Head of Department, Ministry of Industry and Trade

REPUBLIC OF TAJIKISTAN

- Mr. YOQUBI MEHROBJONI

Attaché, Embassy of Tajikistan İn Ankara

REPUBLIC OF TUNISIA

- Ms. BLAGUI RAJA

Director, Ministry of Trade and Development Export Tunisia

REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE

- Mr. AYDIN SENTURK

Head of Department, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. ICLAL SINCERSIT

Head of Department, the Mınıstry of Trade

- Ms. NACIYE ASLIHAN GUNEY

Head of Department, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. SEDA MEYVECIDOGANAY

Head of Department, Mınıstry of Trade

- Ms. AYSEGUL DEMIR

Senior Expert, Mınıstry of Trade

- Mr. AYHAN BÜYÜKTÜRK

Expert, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. NURULLAH ASIM AKBULUT

Expert, Mınıstry of Trade

- Ms. ELIF AYDIN

Expert, Mınıstry of Trade

- Ms. GULAY BABADOGAN

Expert, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. UMRAN OZDEMIR

Expert, Mınıstry of Trade

- Ms. YASEMİN SİPAHİOĞLU

Expert, Ministry of Trade

- Mr. SEDAT OZAN KURT

Assistant Expert, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. MELEKGUL KARGI

Assistant Expert, Ministry of Trade Republic of Türkiye

- Ms. HABIBE HILAL CAKAR

Assistant Expert, Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Trade

- Ms. FATMA KURT

Assistant Expert, Ministry of Trade

- Ms. NERIMAN GULCEMAL

Assistant Expert, Ministry of Trade

STATE OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

- Ms. HANAN ALQADI

Expert, Ministry of Foreign Trade

B. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

ISLAMIC CENTER FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT)

- Ms. SOUMYA ELHASSANI

Executive İn Trade Facilitation Department

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

- Mr. BARIS GENCAL

Technical Cooperation Officer,

- Mr. MUZAMIL EDEMA

Expert, Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries

- Mr. SYED TAHIR MAHMUD

Senior Expert, SESRIC

F. AFFILIATED ORGANS OF THE OIC

ISLAMIC CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND DEVELOPMENT (ICCD)

- Mr. SYED NASIR UD DIN SHAH

International Relations Associate, ICCD

C. OIC STANDING COMMITTEES

STANDING COMMITTEE FOR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL COOPERATION (COMSTECH)

- Mr. TAYYAB MAHMOUD

Expert,

D. INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

WTO

- Ms. ARFI LE MENTEC KENZA

Head of Regional Desk for Amec-Ceecac, World Trade Organization

O. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

CONSULTANTS

- Prof. Dr. HUSEYIN AVNI OKTEM

Consultant

- Ms. ZEYNEP OKTEM

Consultant

- Ms. HULYA KURT

Consultant

- Ms. IPEK OKTEM

Consultant

- Prof. Dr. DILEK TEMIZ

Consultant

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ

Director General

- Mr. GÜRKAN POLAT

Director

- Mehmet C. AKTAŞ

Director

- Mr. MEHMET ASLAN

Director

- Ms. EDA AKÇA

Expert

- Mr. YUNUS KAYIŞ

Expert-Working Group Coordinator

- Ms. TİLBE GOCUKLU ÇETİNKAYA

- Working Group Coordinator

- Mr. AŞKIN ÇETİNKAYA

Expert

- Mr. MERT CAN SELVER

Expert

- Mr. MAHMUT ERDEM SEPETÇİ

Assistant Expert

- Mr. SELİM UYAR

Translator

- Ms. HANDE ÖZDEMİR

Officer

Mr. MUHARREM TEMLİSU

Secretary

- Ms. YELİZ DURAN

Secretary

- Ms. HAVVA YILMAZ

Officer