Letter from the Chairman - Eng. Hani Salem Sonbol

It is my great pleasure to introduce to you all the first issue of GTRC Newsletter, a quarterly newsletter created to better communicate GTRC news and highlight all activities related to intra-OIC trade.

The Group Trade Related Issues Committee (GTRC) was formed, under the guidance of the Chairman of the IDB Group, as a means to actively engage the IDB Group on issues related to intra-OIC trade. Towards creating synergy and combining all efforts, the Committee has been developed into a platform where representatives from entities and experts share their experiences and strengthen the alliances on trade related issues under one umbrella.

The GTRC will aim to translate the strategic thrusts of the IDB Group Vision 1440H into actionable programs. It will utilize the available tools of the IDB Group, such as the MCPS, Policy Dialogues, and Awareness Seminars to achieve its endeavor. The GTRC will study the overall role to be played by the IDB Group in enhancing Intra-OIC-trade, monitor the implementation of the road map agreed upon in the Expert Group Meeting, prepare reports on developmental topics which have trade related components and study ways of increasing cooperation with international organizations in trade matters.

Since the establishment, the GTRC has evolved and members has steadily grown in size, it started with single representatives of the IDB Group and a handful of experts, to representatives that exceed 20 active members from the entire IDB Group.

In addition, sub-teams were organized to cross-fertilize the GTRC with their wide-range of experience and knowledge besides bringing back ideas and initiatives to their respective departments or entities. The five sub-teams are: Aid for Trade, Transport and Trade, Trade and Agriculture, Trade Competitiveness and Integrated Projects.

On behalf of GTRC, I wish you all the best for this year, prosperity and success in the years to come.

Synergizing Trade

The Group Trade Related Issues Committee (GTRC) was formed under the guidance of the Chairman of the IDB Group as a means to actively engage the IDB Group on issues related to intra-OIC trade.

The Committee has developed into a platform where the various IDB Group entities share experiences and strengthen alliances on trade related issues.

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Objectives

- To study the overall role to be played by the IDB Group in enhancing Intra-OIC-trade.
- To monitor the implementation of the road map agreed upon in the Expert Group Meeting.
- To prepare reports on developmental topics which have trade related components.
- To study ways of increasing cooperation with international organizations in trade matters.
- To coordinate “Aid for Trade” initiatives within the IDB Group.
- To coordinate COMCEC initiatives within the IDB Group.
GTRC Vision:
The GTRC was formed as a means to actively engage the IDB Group on issues related to intra-OIC trade. The Committee has developed into a platform where the various IDB Group entities share experiences and strengthen alliances on trade related issues.

The GTRC’s mandate is to carry out the following tasks:
- To study the overall role to be played by the IDB Group in enhancing Intra-OIC trade.
- To monitor the implementation of the road map agreed upon in the Expert Group Meeting.
- To prepare reports on developmental topics which have trade related components.
- To study ways of increasing cooperation with international organizations in trade matters.
- To coordinate “Aid for Trade” initiatives within the IDB Group.
- To coordinate COMCEC initiatives within the IDB Group.

The GTRC strives to translate the strategic thrusts of the IDB Group Vision 1440H into actionable programs based on the IDB’s new way of doing business. It utilizes and participates in all the available tools of the IDB Group, including but not limited to the MCPS, Policy Dialogues, and Awareness Seminars.

The GTRC plays a catalyst role in embodying trade as an integral part of IDB’s mandate to alleviate poverty in its member countries.

Membership to the GTRC has evolved over time. Starting with single representatives of the IDB Group and a handful of experts, the Group membership has steadily grown in size with representatives and participation of the IDB Group. All members are part of one or more of the sub-teams, cross-fertilizing the GTRC with their wide-range of experience and knowledge and also bringing back ideas and initiatives to their respective Departments/entities. Current membership levels exceed 20 active members from the entire IDB Group.

Forging Partnerships

World Trade Organization

On July 6th, 2010, the GTRC organized a Seminar on Aid for Trade to create awareness and ownership among IDB Group staff on Aid for Trade and to help prepare for the upcoming Third Global Review on Aid for Trade. The Seminar invited senior representatives from the WTO and the World Bank to provide an overview of the Aid for Trade agenda. OECD also participated in the event through Video Conference. The seminar was well attended and the participants from the IDB Group came out with a better understanding of the global agenda on AFT.

In addition to the above, meetings with senior WTO officials were also held in Geneva to further discuss IDB’s Aid for Trade Program of Action and to seek their technical assistance and any suggestions in this regard. The WTO Secretariat has assured the IDB Group of its full support in implementing the IDB’s Plan of Action and provided concrete suggestions.

The WTO Secretariat has proposed that the three regional reviews which IDB intends to organize on Aid for Trade can feed into the Report which IDB Group would be submitting to the Global Review tentatively by end May 2011. The theme for the regional reviews suggested is “Impact of Aid for Trade - Is it Working”.

TOBB (Union of Turkish Chamber of Commerce)

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between IDB and TOBB (Union of Turkish Chamber of Commerce) was signed during the visit of H.E. Abdullah Gul, President of Turkey to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on February 5, 2009. Subsequently, a number of high-level visits have taken place to discuss among others, the joint activities/projects between IDB and TOBB entities.

To date there have been seven (7) joint activities successfully completed. These activities range from Experts Group Meetings, Capacity Building programs, Familiarization and Knowledge Sharing Programs and Training Programs.
Currently the GTRC has established five sub-teams to further consolidate and enhance IDB’s interventions in Trade related issues. The sub-teams are:
- Transport and Trade
- Trade Competitiveness
- Integrated Projects
- Aid for Trade
- Trade and Agriculture

**Transport and Trade Sub-team:**

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<th>Team Leader: Br. Bahadir Yadikar</th>
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<td>Mohammad Noordali</td>
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<td>Ayhan Karaca</td>
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<td>Bassem Soua</td>
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<td>Mourad Bouaouina</td>
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<td>Faisal Siddik</td>
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The Transport and Trade Sub-team is working in the coordination of the Transport & Trade related activities of the IDB Group entities. One of their aims is to develop synergy within the IDB Group to enhance economic cooperation between IDB member countries through Transport & Trade facilitation and prepare a comprehensive IDB Group and the COMCEC Transport & Trade related activities program.

This team’s achievements and activities are:
- An IDB Group Transport Corridors Report is currently being prepared setting up the stage for developing a comprehensive IDB Group transport sector strategy.
- Transport and Trade Ministerial Meeting in coordination with COMCEC to present the policy recommendations of the Transport Corridors Report and Expert Group Meeting to the Trade and Transport Ministers of IDB MCs.
- Customs Border Gate Modernization project – a joint initiative with TOBB (Turkey) to identify potential member countries where border crossing gates can be modernized through PPP structures.
- OIC Conference on Transport and Trade Facilitation – trade facilitation, customs harmonization, single window, data harmonization, non-tariff barriers
- Implementation of the IDB Group Transport and Trade Framework – seminars, workshops, conferences, reports.

**Trade Competitiveness Sub-team**

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<th>Team Leader: Dr. Mamoud Kamara</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. El Walid Hamour</td>
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<td>Dr. Bakary Kolley</td>
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<td>Dr. Muhammed Zubair</td>
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<td>Br. Mamadou Diop</td>
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Integration into global markets has been a strong driver for growth for many IDB member countries over the past 30 years, but not all have effectively participated. This calls for more attention to policies that facilitate trade and improve competitiveness – supported where necessary by Aid for Trade. This team’s main focus will be on Export Competitiveness.

In this context, the objective are:
- Coordinate, enhance and mainstream trade in Country agenda among the IDB Group entities
- Promote cross-fertilization within different areas of expertise, learning from country experiences, and knowledge from sector-specific experiences in order to mainstream export competitiveness into IDB Group country operations
- Regular reporting on Trade and Competitiveness related activities in the IDB Group entities

Formulate a Trade Competitiveness Strategy in the IDB Group and related programs and activities

This team’s achievements and responsibilities are highlighted in the following:
- 1432H program includes organizing Awareness Sessions, preparing an IDB Trade Competitiveness Report and organizing a Competitiveness & Trade Ministerial Meeting.
- Furthermore the Competitiveness Sub-team will work closely with other sub-teams to address the competitiveness challenges relating to reducing trade related costs (backbone services and inputs, e.g. transport, energy and telecom, customs and business environment) and overcoming government and market failures (e.g. economic zones and clusters, export & investment promotion, and standards and certification).
Integrated Projects Sub-team

**Team Leader:** Mohammad Noordali
**Team Members**
- Faisal Siddik
- Mohammed Hebshi
- Ahmet Gundogdu
- Aminuddin Ariff
- Ahmed Ompo Sarwo

The objective of Integrated Projects Sub-team is to introduce cross departmental intervention to integrated sector projects. The cotton sector integrated project in the Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) region is identified as their primary focus.

Twenty OIC cotton-producing countries have a share of 28 percent of the world total cotton production, 24 percent of world total cotton consumption, 36 percent of the world total cotton export and 27 percent of world cotton import.

The cotton sector in Sub-Saharan and West Africa plays a highly strategic role in the economy of many countries. It has a considerable cross-sectional impact on the economic growth, export revenues and the socio-economic development of the rural population. Moreover, the cotton cultivation is the only sustainable way for farmers to access valuable fertilizer which is used for both cotton and staple food cultivation.

On this basis, the sub-team intends to propose cross departmental integrated projects for the development of cotton sector in SSA in pursuit of poverty alleviation and food security in the region as per OIC Ten Year Programme of Action and Five Year OIC Cotton Plan of Action.

Aid for Trade Sub-team

**Team Leader:** Br. Syed Habib
**Team Members**
- Dr. Abdulkader Chachi
- Br. Zaki Mansour
- Dr. Hussam Murad
- Br. Hosam Sadeedien
- Dr. Nael Al-Hajaj

The Aid for Trade initiative, primarily aims at addressing the “supply side” constraints of the developing and the least developed countries through increasing their productive capacity and infrastructure with a view to enhance their exports and make a good use of market access opportunities offered by the WTO regime.

The sub-team, as a part of its work plan also intends to organize three (3) Regional Seminars on Aid for Trade to engage IDB MCs in the Aid for Trade agenda and study the impact of the IDB Group’s AFT activities/operations on their respective economies and development.

The deliberations of the seminars would also feed into the comprehensive report of the IDB Group to be circulated in the Third Global Review hosted by the WTO, July 2011. This event monitors and evaluates the progress of AFT initiative made at the global level, where MDBs and International Organizations participate.

Trade & Agriculture Sub-team

**Team Leader:** Dr. Hussam Morad
**Team Members**
- Abdrafeea Mutaleb
- Dr. Safiullah
- Lassad Bin Hassine
- Dr. Ismaeel Naiya

The Trade & Agriculture Sub-team’s main objective is to formulate a strategy in conjunction with the Operations Complex on promoting trade in Agricultural Products within IDB Member Countries. They also coordinate and provide reports on Trade and Agriculture related activities of the IDB Group.

The program identifies sectors/products with export and employment/income creation potential particularly in disadvantaged communities in member countries and with the assistance of a local partner, these communities are assisted in improving the production, processing and marketing the product so as to match local producers with domestic or international market outlets. Assistance will be in form of technical assistance for human resource development, for microcredit and for various technical/production inputs.

Workshops will be held to gather experiences from experts in the field as well as cross-fertilization.