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UPDATE ON ANKARA CENTRE ACTIVITIES

SESRTCIC CONTRIBUTES TO PROMOTING “LADA” PROGRAMME IN WESTERN ASIA AND THE NEAR EAST

The Ankara Centre co-sponsored with the FAO Regional Office for the Near East and the Arab Centre for the Studies of Arid Zones and Dry Lands (ACSAD) a workshop on “Promoting LADA (Land Degradation Assessment in Dry Lands) Programme in Western Asia and the Near East”. The event was held in Damascus on 25-28 July 2004 and attended by 41 participants (13 from the countries of the region and 28 from regional and international organisations). Mr. Enver Hakan Konaç, Acting Director of the Technical Cooperation Department, represented the Centre at the workshop and chaired one of its working sessions.

The workshop aimed at making a regional assessment of land degradation and hazards, evaluating the role of the LADA programme in

introducing the ways and means to monitor and mitigate land degradation severity and impacts as well as the available modern tools and techniques, including remote sensing and geographic information systems, for addressing and combating land degradation. It was also intended to promote regional and international cooperation in the related field and exchange knowledge on the appropriate participatory approaches in monitoring soil degradation with particular reference to country-specific spots and promote the LADA Programme at national and regional levels.

The participants also exchanged views about the necessity of encouraging networking and coordination

among regional partners through some agreed-upon mechanisms and harmonization schemes and regular exchange of data and information. They concluded by adopting a set of

recommendations that covered the appropriate methodology for providing the modern technologies for mitigating land degradation in the countries of the region.

STATISTICAL AUTHORITIES IN OMAN SHOW HIGH INTEREST IN SESRTCIC ACTIVITIES

Mr. Sabir Said Rashid Al-Harbi, Director General of Economic Statistics at the Ministry of National Economy in the Sultanate of Oman, and Mr. Khalifa bin Abdullah Al-Barwani, Head of Population and Housing Department at the same Ministry, paid an official visit to the Centre on 25 August 2004.

They met with the Centre management and staff and were briefed on the Centre's activities and the role it plays within the OIC system. They were particularly informed of the Centre's technical contribution to the common drive toward increasing the level of socio-economic cooperation among the OIC member countries as well as on the technical

cooperation and training programmes it carried out to the benefit of a wide spectrum of recipients from the member countries.

The Omani officials expressed their appreciation of the quality and volume of the work undertaken by the Centre in all fields and highly valued the opportunity it offered to a number of Omani staff to benefit from the training workshops it organized on various subjects of interest to the OIC community as a whole. They expressed interest in further developing and expanding such cooperation between the Centre and the related Omani institutions and made some specific proposals that may be considered by both parties toward achieving that objective.

OIC NEWS

TRADE AND TRANSPORT AT THE SERVICE OF DEVELOPMENT

The Nineteenth Session of the COMCEC, held in October 2003, decided that the subject of the Exchange of Views Session during its Twentieth Session be on "Trade and Transport Facilitation Among the OIC Member States". It requested the related organs, including the Ankara Centre, to collaborate on organising a relevant workshop which the Government of Pakistan offered to host.

participants from Bangladesh, Egypt,

The workshop was held in Islamabad on 14-16 September 2004 and attended by

Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Pakistan, Togo, Turkey and the UAE. It was also attended by the OIC organs and the related international institutions.

Mr. Murat İlkin, Researcher, represented the Ankara Centre at the Workshop and made a presentation entitled "Trade and Transport those in other countries and regions. The presentation concluded by putting forward some policy recommendations aimed at facilitating trade and transport in the OIC region.

The participants discussed the current problems faced by the OIC countries regarding trade and transport, particularly in areas related to training, use of information and communications technology (ICT). The lack of adequate

Facilitation in the OIC Countries: Infrastructure and Capacity Building" in which he investigated the level of trade and transport-related infrastructure and capacity in the OIC countries and compared them among the OIC subgroups as well as with

infrastructure, legal and regulative frameworks and governments' cooperation with the private sector came forward as common areas that need to be dealt with by the OIC countries to achieve further progress in the related sectors.

The workshop issued a set of relevant recommendations to be submitted to the Exchange of Views Session of the Twentieth COMCEC to be held on 23-27 November 2004.

TOWARD BETTER UN-OIC COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

The Eleventh UN-OIC General Coordination Meeting on cooperation between the UN agencies and the OIC and its subsidiary and specialised institutions was held at the UN office in Vienna, Austria, on 13-15 July 2004. The event was preceded by an intra-OIC meeting on 12 July 2004.

Representatives of twelve UN agencies, the OIC General Secretariat and seven of its related institutions participated in the Meeting. H.E. Ambassador Erdinç Erdün, Director General, and Mr. Enver Hakan Konaç, Acting Director of the Centre's Technical Cooperation Department, represented the SESRTCIC thereat.

The SESRTCIC delegation briefed the Meeting on the activities and programmes realised by the Centre in cooperation with UN agencies since the tenth meeting held in 2002 and presented the Centre's relevant schedule for the coming period.

The SESRTCIC delegation also made use of the opportunity offered by the meeting to

hold discussions with representatives of a number of UN agencies, such as the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), on the possibilities of organising joint activities in areas of interest to the OIC community. Outlines of some interesting projects were sketched with the understanding that follow-up communications will be conducted with a view to finalising the arrangements for their effective implementation.

The representatives of the OIC and UN delegations agreed that while cooperation between the two organisations continued to be excellent, there remained room for further progress. They expressed their commitment to exploring areas where qualitative improvements could be achieved to the benefit of the two organisations and the people whom they serve.

**SECOND EXPERT GROUP MEETING
ON SETTING UP AN ISLAMIC COMMON MARKET MEETS IN
TEHRAN**

The Second Expert Group Meeting on Setting Up an Islamic Common Market was held in Tehran, Iran, on 5-6 July 2004 with the participation of delegations from

27 OIC Member States and representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, SESRTCIC, ICDT, IDB, ICCI, OISA, COMCEC Coordination Office and ECO.

The Centre was represented by Mr. Oker Gürler, Director of the Social and Economic Research Department, who presented a working paper entitled "Islamic Common Market: The Role of Transport and Telecommunications Infrastructure".

The OIC General Secretariat presented a background report on the subject and delegates from Turkey, Iran, Senegal, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and

Mauritania also made presentations in which they explained their countries' views on and approaches to the project.

After deliberations, the delegates, while stressing the fact that integration has become critically important for all economies and the establishment of an Islamic Common Market imperative if the OIC Member States are to deal on an equal footing with the existing powerful economic blocs and to avoid marginalisation, agreed on a set of recommendations to be presented, for further study and elaboration, to the higher relevant fora.

FINANCE CONTROL ORGAN AUDITS CENTRE ACCOUNTS

The Twenty-fifth Session of the Finance Control Organ of the OIC convened in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 17-27 September 2004 where auditors from Iran, Jordan, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Tunisia and Turkey, who were elected to sit on the audit panel for a two-year term by the Thirty-first Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, audited the final accounts of the OIC General Secretariat and its subsidiary organs for the financial year 2003/2004 ending on 30 June 2004. During the process, the Ankara

Centre accounts and financial operations were meticulously checked and found to be in full conformity with the OIC related rules and regulations. The audit report also commended the Centre for its judicious practices in streamlining its overall expenditures. Mr. Jalel Chouchane, Director of Publications and Coordinator of Administrative and Financial Affairs, and Mr. Coşkun Enginel, Director of the Administration and Finance Department, represented the Centre at the meetings of the Session.

CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE LAST QUARTER OF 2004

NOVEMBER

23-27 November 2004, Twentieth Session of the COMCEC and OIC Economic Conference, Istanbul, Turkey.

27-28 November 2004, Twenty-Seventh Session of the Board of Directors, Istanbul, Turkey.

29 November-1 December 2004, Experts Group Meeting on "Upgrading

Environmental Monitoring System in the ESCWA Region", Beirut, Lebanon.

6-10 December 2004, Workshop on "Population Census", Ankara, Turkey.

DECEMBER

13-15 December 2004, Fourth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Tourism, Dakar, Senegal.

6-7 December 2004, Workshop on "the Role of Indebtedness in Regional Economic Development", Beirut, Lebanon.

20-22 December 2004, Seminar on "Rural Development Policies, Strategies and Institutions", Beirut, Lebanon.

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Latest Publications

InfoReport, vol. 16 no. 58, 2004 (Arabic, English and French editions).

Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries, English, vol. 25, no. 3, 2004.

Statistical Yearbook of the OIC Countries, 2004 (Arabic and English-French versions).

Basic Facts and Figures on OIC Member Countries, 2004.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE CENTRE LIBRARY

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<http://www.sesrtcic.org/library/sesliacq.shtml>

EGYPT

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