



26-27 Mart March 2013,  
Kahire Cairo )

# 4. İİT ÜLKELERİ DÜŞÜNCE KURULUŞLARI FORUMU

“İİT Ülkelerinde Ekonomik Entegrasyon: İmkânlar ve Güçlükler”

# 4<sup>th</sup> THINK TANKS FORUM OF THE OIC COUNTRIES

“Economic Integration within the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges”



The Egyptian Cabinet  
Information and Decision Support Center



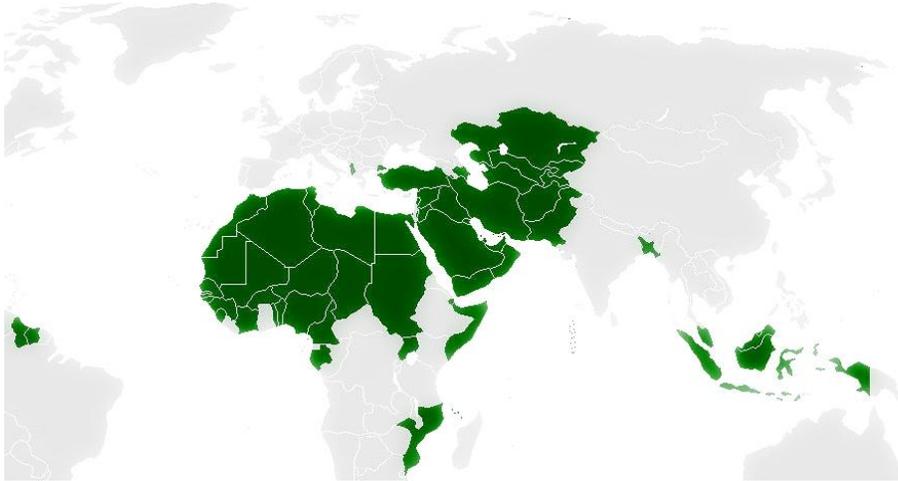
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



## Fourth Think Tanks Forum of the OIC Countries

“Economic Integration within the OIC Countries:  
Prospects and Challenges”

### Concept Note



26 - 26 March, 2013

Cairo - Egypt

## 1. About the Forum of Think Tanks of the Member Countries in the Organization of Islamic Countries ( OIC )

The Forum of Think Tanks of the Member Countries in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) is an initiative by the Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies (TASAM) with the contribution of the (OIC). The aim of this initiative is to gather think tanks from Islamic countries to share the political, socio-cultural and economic developments and assess collective knowledge, and to develop creative dialogues for present and future.

**The First forum** was held in Istanbul on 28 - 30 January 2010. Think tank organizations of the member countries of the OIC decided to co-work for the common interests of their own countries as well as for the whole Islamic world. In that context, it was decided that a *“Platform of Think Tanks of the Member Countries of the OIC”*, with the aim of coordination and cooperation, would be established in Istanbul and that hosting the subsequent annual meetings of the Forum would be open to all participating institutions and countries. Think tanks from 40 member countries of the OIC, delegates from the OIC observer countries such as Russia, Thailand and Turkish State of Northern Cyprus, General Secretariat of the OIC, representatives of the diplomatic missions of the OIC countries, experts, eight think tank organizations from Turkey and members of the media were among the participants of the Forum.

**The Second Forum** was held in Istanbul on 30 - 31 of March 2011 under the theme of ‘public diplomacy’. Around 50 member countries were present in the conference. In this framework, the following subjects were taken into consideration: “Theoretical-Conceptual Framework and Actors in Public Diplomacy”, “Education, Cultural Activities and Public Diplomacy”, “Foreign Policy and Public Diplomacy”, “Economic Activities and Public Diplomacy”, “Civil Society Movements, Democracy and Crisis Management in the OIC Countries” and “Cooperation and Institutionalization among the Think Tanks from the OIC countries in the Perspective of “Public Diplomacy”. In addition, the views regarding the cooperation among the Islamic countries think tanks have been exchanged



The Egyptian Cabinet  
Information and Decision Support Center



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



During this forum, it has been decided to hold the 3rd annual meeting which will be hosted by SAM (Center for Strategic Studies under the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan) between 1 - 2 March 2012 in Azerbaijan Baku, the 4th meeting which will be hosted by IDSC (Information and Decision Support Center) in 26 - 27 March 2013 in Egypt.

The **third forum** organized by Center for Strategic Studies (SAM) and TASAM Institute of Islamic Studies in Baku with the main theme “Change and Transformation in the OIC Countries”, between 2 - 3 March, 2012. The forum lasted for two days and ended with the announcement of “Baku Declaration”. Think Tanks from 40 member countries, Delegations from observer states like Russia, Thailand and The Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, diplomats from OIC countries, experts and media representatives attended to the forum.

## 2. The Fourth Forum Think Tanks Forum of the OIC Countries in Egypt

Egypt considers the development of the Islamic region is one of the essential pillars in its foreign policy and national security system. The Egyptian foreign policy has been working on promoting tolerance and moderation, modernization, extensive reforms in all spheres of activities including science and technology, education, trade enhancement, and emphasizes good governance and promotion of human rights in the Muslim world, especially with regard to rights of children, women and elderly and the family values enshrined by Islam since the foundation of the OIC in 1969. Egypt supports the global objective of the organization to be the collective voice of the Muslim world that protects the interests of the Muslim World in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

In its endeavor of achieving and sustaining development of the Islamic region, Egyptian foreign policy contributes through financial support, peacekeeping missions, mediating role in resolving conflicts, technical and logistical assistance.



The Egyptian Cabinet  
Information and Decision Support Center



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



Realizing the strategic importance of the Islamic region, the Information and Decision Support Center (IDSC), mobilizing its mandate as the Egyptian cabinet think tank, took the initiative of organizing the Fourth Forum of Think Tanks of the Member Countries in the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC) in Egypt in 2013 to promote the sustainable chain of forums organized to gather the think tanks in the OIC that discuss the common developmental challenges facing the region.

## 2.1 Rationale

The Muslim World is facing political, socio-economic, cultural and scientific challenges with implications for its unity, peace, security and development. OIC Member States would need to cooperate decisively in order to face these challenges and to take necessary initiatives to overcome them. It has therefore become imperative for the OIC countries to take joint actions to achieve higher levels of development and prosperity, given its abundant economic resources and capacities. Priority must be given to enhancing economic cooperation, intra-OIC trade, alleviating poverty, enhancing tourism, and promoting human development in OIC Member States.

According to the Ten-Year Programme of Action developed during the third extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit which was held in Makkah in December 2005, the target of a level of 20 percent for intra-OIC trade needs to be achieved during the period covered by the Programme (by 2015). Special attention has been given to trade and considerable efforts have been exerted at various OIC forums to develop ways and means of joint cooperative action to increase trade among the OIC countries. However, the intra-OIC trade has grown at a significantly lower rate than the OIC world trade. In fact, the analysis of intra-OIC trade indicates that it is still far from the target level of 20 percent set to be reached. Even though the share of intra-OIC trade in total trade of the OIC countries has increased, moving up from 11.8 percent in 2000 to 16.8 percent in 2009. However, the OIC countries should stay committed to reach the target by exerting more efforts in the coming years.

Today, international relations is progressing upon the basis of multidimensional competition. Such an international system, in which more than two competitive powers have such a high degree of human and technologic capacity and, therefore, has the



The Egyptian Cabinet  
Information and Decision Support Center



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



power to influence each other, has first existed in this period of history. The possibility of making inferences about what kind of consequences that policies based on the multidimensional competition might breed is very low. Yet, it can safely be put forward that the OIC countries are at the heart of this competition. If the OIC countries fail to improve their distinctive initiatives, it is most probable that they can lose an additional half a century. Herein, it is vital that the OIC countries must condense their economic relations among themselves.

In order economic integration activities to be successful, leadership of one country, as USA in the case of NAFTA, or of a group of countries, as Germany, France and Italy in the case of EU, is an inescapable necessity. As of today, it is impossible to talk about any single OIC country that can lead an economic integration, or can contribute in the acceleration of economic interactivities, among the OIC countries. Therefore, it can be a good recommendation that D-8 countries plus Saudi Arabia, all of which are member countries of the OIC, for example, can constitute a group and lead 57 member countries of the OIC to develop an economic integration and improve economic relations. In time, expansion of this group can be taken into account. The role of the 4<sup>th</sup> Think Tanks Forum of the OIC Countries and the activities of the Wise Persons Group, which are to be held in this process, are very important.

Inter-state relations are important but it is required to develop some channels which give depth to these relations. At this point, the role of OIC as a mediator and accelerator gains importance. NGO's, businessmen, universities, expertise institutions, too, are to take part in this process. Therefore, the Think Tanks Forum of the OIC Countries must be favored as a non-governmental initiative.

The basic condition for deepening economic integration activities and economic interaction depend on the atmosphere of trust, safety and security in every dimension. For example, if enrichment some countries as a result of improved economic activities is perceived by others as a threat, it will be difficult to talk about moving economic activities to a progressed level in such an environment. Therefore, the success of economic integration initiatives is closely related to developing mutual confidence between the countries and generalizing it in every dimension.



The Egyptian Cabinet  
Information and Decision Support Center



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



Sustainability of economic interaction and integration activities is closely related to the existence of sustainable environment of trust and confidence. It is essential to take measures to secure mutual confidence and trust in such areas as food security, terrorism, human security etc. For example, going ahead of infectious diseases through imported goods and of social crises undermining tourism are of great importance in this context.

In order to create a meaningful economic integration, or at least to increase economic interaction between the OIC countries, it is essential to create safe transportation and communication networks extending from Balkans, Black Sea, Caucasus, Central and South Asia, to the Upper Nile and mid-Africa; to operate these roads efficiently, to provide road safety, to increase emphasis on confidence-building measures and to provide security measures in such areas as terrorism and human and drug trafficking. Preparation of a safe and legal infrastructure for investors, ensuring human security environment is a must condition for economic integration.

Accordingly, there is a pressing need for the OIC countries to make a firm commitment to strengthen economic integration through the removal of trade barriers, harmonization and improvement of trade rules, policies and procedures. This would contribute in expanding the size of the regional market and ensuring a rapid growth rate and a more equitable distribution of the gains from trade and investment in the region. In other words, the OIC countries should seek to do together what they cannot do alone. Building on the success of the previous forums, the 4<sup>th</sup> Think Tanks Forum of the OIC Countries aims to make an academic contribution in the following areas: Intra-Trade, a common market and economic cooperation in the OIC countries.

## 2.2 Theme

“Economic Integration within the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges”

## 2.3 Objectives

The conference's main objective is to discuss the role of think tanks in Islamic countries in presenting sound policy options that promotes economic integration in the region. In addition, the conference will aim to discuss:



The Egyptian Cabinet  
Information and Decision Support Center



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



- Intra-Trade Promotion in the OIC countries
- Policy Options for Establishing a Common Market in the OIC countries
- Facilitating Interaction among the Private Sector in the OIC countries
- The Economic Role of Tourism in the OIC Countries
- Transport Facilitation among OIC Countries
- Islamic Economies in the OIC Countries
- **Multidimensional Security and Economic Integrity**

### 3. Why the Information and Decision Support Center ( IDSC )?

Mobilizing its mandate as the Egyptian cabinet think tank, IDSC has managed to develop cooperation channels with distinguished research institutions, international organizations and think tanks not only in the Islamic region but also around the world which share common fields of interests. IDSC hosted several think tanks gathering in the past five years. Amongst, the first International Conference on the Role of Think Tanks in Developing Countries in January 2009 with the aim of promoting a south-south cooperation where different counterparts were present. In addition, IDSC hosted the first regional conference on the Role of African Think Tanks.

### 4. Why The Turkish Asian Center for Strategic Studies ( TASAM )?

TASAM is a scientific research center operating since 2003 as an independent and dynamic think tank and an NGO that address the foreign policy of Turkey. It managed to host several think tanks gathering in the world with the aim of promoting networking and awareness about the role of think tanks.



The Egyptian Cabinet  
Information and Decision Support Center



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation



## 5. Suggested Date and Venue

Venue: Zamalek Marriott Hotel

Date: 26 - 27 March, 2013 Cairo - Egypt

## 6. Participants

The organizers welcomes the participation of policy makers, international organizations, private sector, civil society, media and academia and most importantly representatives of think tanks, NGOs and public policy research organizations from Islamic countries. For interested participants, kindly register on the conference website.