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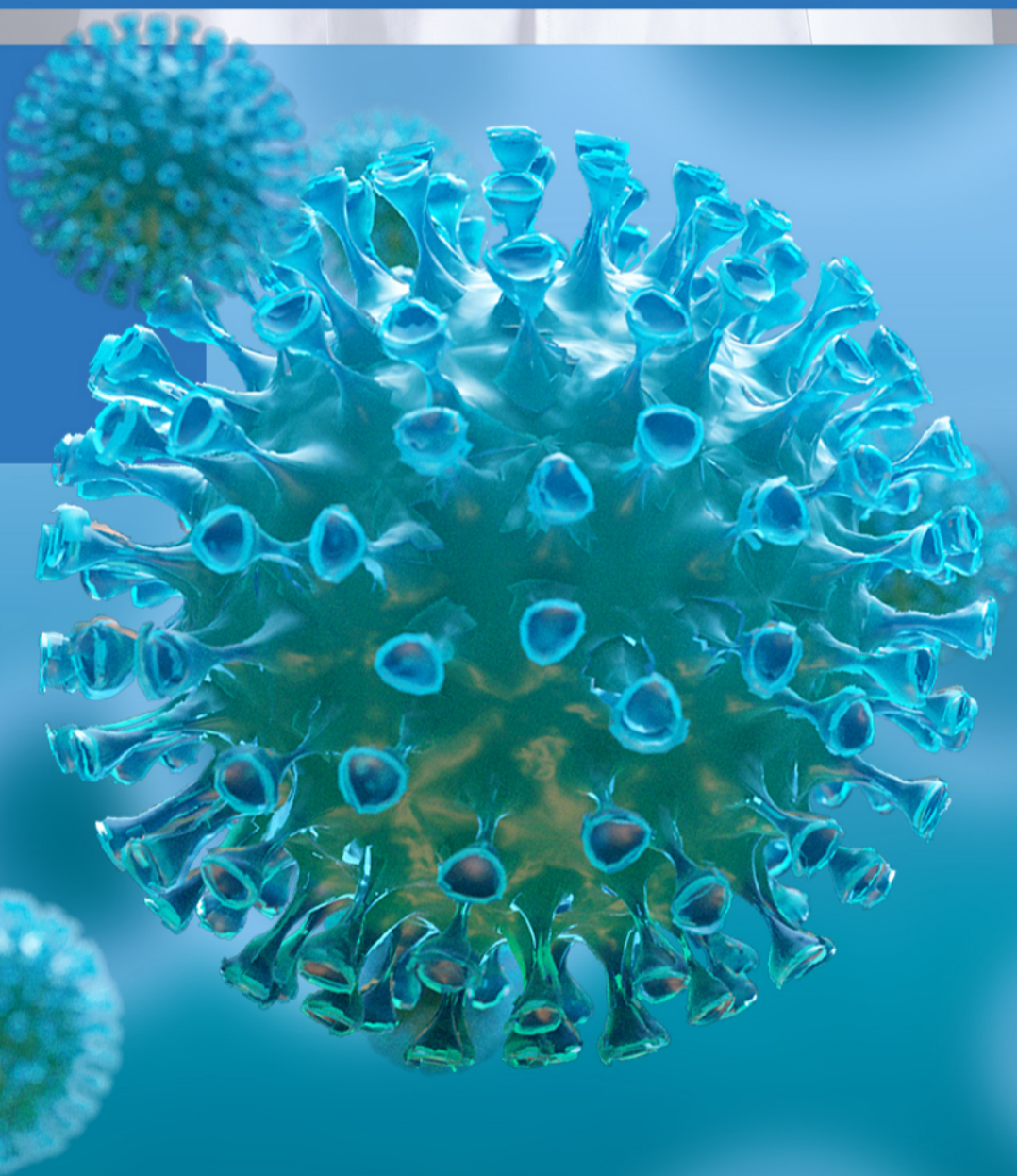
ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION

IN ADDRESSING
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



COVID-19

In this report we shall review a number of forms of response by the OIC and its institutions in the context of addressing coronavirus pandemic and supporting member states' efforts to counter this pandemic and its adverse impacts



POLITICAL FIELD

HUMANITARIAN FIELD

HEALTH AREA

ECONOMIC FIELD

INFORMATION DOMAIN



OIC General Secretariat
Islamic Development Bank Group
Islamic Solidarity Fund
Islamic Organization for Food Security
ISESCO
International Islamic Fiqh Academy
SESRIC

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EFFORTS OF THE
ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
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Efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation in Addressing Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19)

The present report reviews the salient efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and its relevant institutions over the period starting from the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19) to date. The websites of the OIC and its institutions include a lot of detailed information in this regard.

To play its role in promoting cooperation and coordination in times of humanitarian emergencies, and in view of the multi-dimensional repercussions and effects of COVID-19 pandemic on all its Member States, the OIC and its various institutions launched a set of joint initiatives in the framework of their joint response to the requirements of the current stage and to help Member States counter this pandemic.

In this report we shall review a number of forms of response by the OIC and its institutions in the context of addressing coronavirus pandemic and supporting member states' efforts to counter this pandemic and its adverse impacts, including by implementing the provisions of the Final Communiqué of the virtual meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22 April 2020.

➤ POLITICAL FIELD:

In response to the grave situation and serious challenges posed by COVID-19 pandemic to the OIC Member States and the world at large, the OIC has expeditiously assumed its responsibility to support the national efforts of Member States and coordinate among them. In this context, the OIC has contributed to regional and international initiatives to overcome those challenges.

Under these circumstances the OIC's attention was focused on Palestine and to conflict-torn countries and regions in Africa and Asia, as well as the least developed countries and refugees wherever they were to assist them and to demand the passage of humanitarian and medical assistance to them.

And since some countries are not able to grapple with this pandemic unless wars and conflicts come to a halt, the Secretary-General appealed to parties to conflicts in the OIC region to initiate an immediate ceasefire, end violence, protect their peoples, preserve lives, and focus their attention on combating and preventing the pandemic, while striving to reach peaceful solutions to disputes.

In this context, the Secretary-General welcomed the announcement of the Joint Forces Command to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, led and supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, of a two-week comprehensive ceasefire in Yemen effective Thursday, 19 April 2020, which was later extended for one month. The Secretary-General stated that this announcement was a commendable humanitarian initiative at this critical juncture that Yemen is going through to counter the challenges posed by COVID-19 outbreak.

• Executive Committee Meeting:

The General Secretariat took a set of measures in the context of its urgent moves to consult and coordinate with the Member States on holding an extraordinary virtual meeting of the OIC

Executive Committee at the level of foreign ministers on Wednesday, 22nd April 2020, in coordination with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the Islamic Summit and the Executive Committee.

Following the Executive Committee meeting, the General Secretariat held a series of meetings chaired by the Secretary-General to follow up the implementation of content of the Final Communiqué of the meeting, particularly as regards internal measures and consultation and coordination with OIC Member States and institutions and communication with the United Nations and regional organizations.

- **Palestine and Al-Quds:**

The General Secretariat has been following up the repercussions of COVID-19 on the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds, attaching special attention to supporting the Palestinian people to counter the pandemic. Among the efforts exerted by the OIC and its different organs in this regard are:

1. The Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) announced a financial contribution in support for the Ministry of Health of the State of Palestine to help in fighting the worldwide novel coronavirus pandemic. On the other hand, the Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC) launched a humanitarian appeal to support the efforts of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society's program to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. The Secretary-General sent letters to Their Excellences the Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States and relevant international organizations including the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union, urging them to provide financial assistance to the Government of the State of Palestine and United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).
3. Coordination is underway with various OIC organs, especially the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) following the latter's subsequent announcement of a \$35.7 million assistance package to the State of Palestine in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, at the request of the Palestinian government.
4. Continued consultations are conducted continuously with the UNRWA regarding its current financial situation and the challenges faced by Palestinian refugees and the ways to address them jointly, during this unprecedented health challenge.
5. The OIC Representative Office to the State of Palestine exerted many efforts, including formal consultation with government officials, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on the field developments and conveying to the General Secretariat, requests for OIC interventions to mitigate the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

➤ **HUMANITARIAN FIELD:**

As part of its efforts in the humanitarian front, the General Secretariat has been following carefully the repercussions of the COVID-19 worldwide and at the level of OIC Member States in particular. In this perspective, the General Secretariat is in permanent coordination with different relevant OIC institutions and international partners to help as many Member States as

possible, particularly LDCs and those most affected by the pandemic, grapple with COVID-19 pandemic's impacts in the health and relief areas.

Humanitarian measures to implement directives of the General Secretariat to fight the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid19):

The Secretary General endorsed the initiative launched by the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), a subsidiary organ of the OIC, to allocate an account to assist Member States to enhance their capabilities in facing Coronavirus pandemic, mainly in the health sector. In this context, financial aids were allocated for a group of affected States, particularly LDCs ,from the three regional groups. These states are:

- 1) Islamic Republic of Afghanistan,
- 2) State of Palestine,
- 3) People's Republic of Bangladesh,
- 4) Republic of Burkina-Faso,
- 5) Republic of Niger,
- 6) Republic of Djibouti,
- 7) Republic of Uganda,
- 8) Republic of Senegal,
- 9) Republic of Sudan,
- 10) Republic of Somalia,
- 11) Republic of Guinea-Bissau,
- 12) Republic of the Comoros
- 13) Republic of Mali,
- 14) Islamic Republic of Mauritania,
- 15) Republic of Yemen,
- 16) Republic of Maldives,
- 17) Republic of Chad.

This assistance is intended to provide medical items and equipment to support and enhance the capacities of health ministries in those countries to face COVID-19 pandemic. Coordination with the ISF is ongoing to finalize the allocation and delivery of the remaining assistance to other LDCs and those states most in need.

- The General Secretariat continues its efforts to deal with the various requests of Member States seeking assistance to fight COVID-19. In this regard, the requests received from the Member States are immediately transmitted to the ISF to consider meeting their needs, while undertaking daily follow-up of request processing and urging other Member States to provide financial support for the account reserved for supporting most affected countries.

- Similarly, all requests received from the Member States were transmitted to the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) to provide assistance to those Member States concerned. The IsDB has responded positively to the requests of some affected Member States.
- Intensifying consultations with international partners in the humanitarian field, including the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the European Union, China, The United States of America and international agencies.

➤ **HEALTH AREA:**

1. On 11th March 2020, the OIC General Secretariat participated in a teleconference of the Executive Committee of the Islamic Advisory Group for Polio (IAG). IAG is a consortium of three leading institutions, namely the OIC General Secretariat, Islamic Development Bank, International Islamic Fiqh Academy, and Al-Azhar Alsharif. It also includes in its membership eminent Islamic Scholars, religious leaders, and medical experts. The purpose of the Teleconference was to discuss potential collaboration between WHO and IAG regarding COVID-19 outbreak, and specifically the areas where IAG can contribute by using its network of religious and community leaders in raising awareness about the Pandemic and sensitizing communities to abide by the measures and guidelines put in place by authorities to prevent further spread of the disease.
2. The OIC, in coordination with the Government of UAE, Chair of the 7th Islamic Conference of Health Ministers, convened an Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Steering Committee on Health via video conference at the level of Ministers on 09 April 2020. The Committee adopted a Joint Statement that *inter-alia* called on the Member States to scale up timely and transparent sharing of information on the issues of global public health concern on the prevention, detection, and treatment of the cases of COVID-19, epidemiological and clinical research data exchange, and materials necessary for research and development of medical treatment for this virus.
3. As a follow-up to the above Statement, the General Secretariat requested the Member States to share their respective experiences in the fight against the Pandemic, regularly. The OIC General Secretariat will disseminate the information among the Member States to **create an effective network for sharing of knowledge, experiences, and materials in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic.**
4. In follow-up of the provisions of the Final Communiqué of the Virtual extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee held on 22 April 2020 to discuss the Novel Coronavirus, the General Secretariat requested the Member States to share the details of the institutions involved in the production of medical products, equipment, and other related medical supplies. It also requested the OIC relevant institutions to map the institutions engaged in the production of medical equipment and supplies as well as those undertaking research activities for diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics for Novel Coronavirus and share the information with the General Secretariat to enable it to share them with all the Member States. The aim is to improve coordination among manufacturers, scientists and health professionals to accelerate the research and development process, and expand manufacturing capacity among the Member States, to meet the increasing demand for medical supplies and ensure that these are made widely available at an affordable price as quickly as possible.

➤ **ECONOMIC FIELD:**

Like in other parts of the world, almost all OIC countries are affected by COVID-19, which seems poised to worsen dramatically. The disruption of the world economy through global value chains, the abrupt fall in commodity prices and fiscal revenues, and the enforcement of travel and social restrictions will have a negative impact on production and employment in OIC countries. Some key sectors of the OIC countries' economies are already experiencing a slowdown as a result of the pandemic. Tourism, air transport, and the oil sector are visibly impacted, leading to both lower demand for and supply of goods and services. In order to limit the social and economic impact of the COVID-19, governments in OIC countries have announced fiscal measures to support households and businesses during emergencies.

Against this background, the General Secretariat will use all the instruments at its disposal to help OIC Member States to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic, in particular, through ensuring the effective implementation of the Final Communiqué of the Virtual Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee held on 22 April 2020.

In this context:

1. The Secretary-General has addressed a letter to the President of the World Bank Group and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), respectively, on the outcome of the above-mentioned Executive Committee Meeting and the need to consider easing debt burden of LDCs, including providing concessional loans and basic support to combat the consequences of the pandemic.
2. The General Secretariat requested the SESRIC to prepare a research study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economies of OIC Member States. This study would enable OIC Member States to understand the possible socio-economic repercussions as well as develop policy recommendations to respond collectively to the COVID-19 crisis. On their part, the relevant OIC institutions, such as SESRIC, IsDB Group, and IOFS, have also launched several initiatives in this direction.

➤ **INFORMATION DOMAIN:**

Since the outbreak of the novel Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), the General Secretariat in its Media efforts focused on sensitization campaigns in order to highlight the efforts of the OIC Member States and its institutions. The General Secretariat took the following steps with regards to its media/sensitization campaigns:

1. Several press releases were issued and many media interviews were conducted to shed light on the need to reinforce global cooperation to combat the pandemic and support the various measures taken by the Member States to constrain its spread. Raise awareness of its dangers and ways to prevent it.
2. A large-scale media awareness campaign was launched under the hashtag #OICCountriesCombatCOVID19 in English and (#دول_التعاون_الإسلامي_تواجه_كورونا) in Arabic, particularly on the OIC website and social media platforms. Hundreds of video clips, graphics, pictures, and other content were posted therein to highlight the efforts of the different OIC

Member States, the General Secretariat, and OIC institutions in combating COVID-19 and raise awareness of prevention means.

The awareness-raising media campaign launched by the General Secretariat on social media to combat the disease was well-received widely in the different OIC Member States and non-member states; the messages of the campaign reached millions of people in the three working languages of the OIC (Arabic, English and French). Followers continue to interact with the content published on the issue.

3. The OIC General Secretariat established a special window on the OIC website, which features news and basic statistics on the spread of COVID-19 in the OIC Member States, including numbers of cases, recovered cases, and deaths. The statistics are updated every 30 minutes.

Sawt Al Hikma Center (OIC Voice of Wisdom Center):

Starting March 16, 2020, the activities of the Voice of Wisdom Center focused on following the crisis of the spread of the coronavirus, methods of confronting it, and adopting the OIC's approach to dealing with that issue that has occupied the whole world. In this context, the Center published a wide range of different forms of content that mostly focused on the pandemic.

1. The most prominent activities carried out by the Center during that period included the Voice of Wisdom Contest for Short Films, in which we encouraged the participants to produce attractive distinctive content through simple resources available under home quarantine and lockdown. The Center received some posts that focused on the issue of Coronavirus. This triggered the followers' great interaction with the films that qualified for the finals of the contest.
2. Since March 16 until the end of April 2020, the Voice of Wisdom Center published many forms of content that focused mostly on the issue of Coronavirus outbreak, while showing Islam's great keenness on hygiene and personal care.

Efforts of the OIC Institutions in Addressing COVID-19 pandemic

Many relevant OIC institutions launched urgent initiatives to respond to the challenges ahead of OIC Member States, particularly LDCs, due to the Novel Coronavirus outbreak.

The following is a set of initiatives by some OIC organs. The websites of OIC Organs include more details:

➤ Islamic Development Bank (OIC specialized institution)

IsDB Group's Strategic Preparedness and Response Programme for COVID-19 Pandemic

On 4th April 2020, the IsDB Group has launched a US\$2.3 billion Strategic Preparedness and Response Programme. The programme aims to support Member States' efforts to protect against this pandemic, curb its impact and promote recovery. It follows a holistic approach at the short, medium and long terms and highlights priorities that go beyond health sector immediate and urgent response.

In the meantime, the programme endeavors to put Member States on the track of economic recovery again by restoring livelihoods, building resilience and resume economic growth.

- IsDB-TWAS Joint Programme for the Sustainability Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity Building
- Call for Innovation through Transform 2020 Fund

➤ **Islamic Organization for Food Security (OIC specialized institution)**

On 06 April 2020, the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), which is a specialized institution of OIC, has unveiled its strategy to address the food security crisis in its member states in the wake of the COVID pandemic. The strategy features actions in the immediate and medium terms at national and OIC levels.

➤ **Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (OIC specialized institution):**

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) launched on 30th April 2020 the “Societies We Want” initiative to spread knowledge and implement innovative programs to build healthy, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and resilient societies, a need that surfaced at the time of COVID-19. It also launched ‘ICESCO Digital Home’, a knowledge platform for digital content. It includes several programmes including distance access to culture, ICESCO suitcase for educational content and other efficient programmes and initiatives.

➤ **International Islamic Fiqh Academy (OIC subsidiary organ):**

The International Islamic *Fiqh* Academy (IIFA), a subsidiary organ of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, held an Islamic jurisprudence- medical symposium on the spread of Covid-19 on 16th April 2020 via video conference. The Symposium brought together eminent Islamic scholars and medical experts to discuss the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its implications from the religious and medical points of view. The Symposium also considered a range of issues including the *Shariah* provisions on isolating the confirmed and suspected patients, social distancing, acts of worship, including congregational prayer, Friday prayer, and Ramadan fasting during the lockdown, personal hygiene, and the necessary precautions, especially adherence to health directives issued by the competent authorities.

Earlier on 1st March 2020, the IIFA had issued a statement supporting the precautionary measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in order to protect citizens, residents, and all Muslims. The statement appreciated the measures taken by the Kingdom to protect *Umrah* performers wishing to visit holy sites and the Prophet's Mosque, calling for abiding with instructions issued by the Kingdom.

➤ **Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Center for Islamic Countries (OIC subsidiary organ)**

In the framework of its response to COVID-19 pandemic in OIC Member States, the Statistical, economic and Social Research and Training Center (SESRIC), a subsidiary organ of the OIC, has recently launched the following programmes:

1. *SESRIC COVID-19 Pandemic Database for the OIC Member States*
2. *A research study titled “Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 in OIC Member States: Prospects and Challenges”*