



**SPEECH OF**

**H.E. MR. IYAD AMEEN MADANI  
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OIC**

**AT**

**THE FIRST INVESTMENT FORUM ON THE OIC PLAN OF  
ACTION FOR COOPERATION WITH CENTRAL ASIA**

Dushanbe, Republic of Tajikistan  
27-28 October 2014



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**H.E. Mr. Emomalii Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan,**

**Honorable Ministers and Head of Delegations,**

**H.E. Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali, President of the Islamic Development  
Bank Group,**

**Distinguished participants,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen**

*Assalamu Alaykum wa-Rahmatullahi wa –Barakatuhu*

It is indeed a great privilege for me to attend the First Investment Forum on the Organization of Islamic Cooperation's Plan of Action for Cooperation with Central Asia, which opens today in this impressive but historical city of Dushanbe, the Republic of Tajikistan.

Permit me to express my utmost appreciation to His Excellency, Emomali Rahmon, President of the Republic of Tajikistan, the Government and the hospitable people of Tajikistan for the warm reception extended to all participants, and the OIC delegation.

I must also express our appreciation to all OIC Member States from Central Asia for their respective support and cooperation, which facilitated in no small measure the extensive

arrangements and preparations made in order to ensure the success of this maiden event.

I must also commend the traditional collaborative spirit extended by H.E. Dr. Ahmad Mohammad Ali, President of the Islamic Development Bank Group, who mobilized the entire membership of the Bank and provided the needed technical support for the smooth conduct of the proceedings of this Forum.

**Mr. President,**

**Your Excellences,**

**Distinguished participants**

This Investment Forum represents another practical implementation of the OIC Plan of Action for Cooperation with Central Asia, which was adopted by the 38<sup>th</sup> Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Astana, Kazakhstan in June 2011. Earlier on, the Resolution on Central Asia and the Muslim World adopted during the 37<sup>th</sup> Council of Foreign Ministers, held here in Dushanbe in May 2010 had approved the convening of a High Level regional Conference to prepare a detailed Plan of Action that would underpin OIC strategic vision for solidarity with Central Asian countries.

It is rewarding to note that this vision of enhanced solidarity and cooperation between OIC Member States and Central Asia is being translated into concrete action, through this Investment Forum. There is no doubt that the various actions and activities envisaged under the OIC Plan of Action for Cooperation with Central Asia bear very promising potentials for increased socio-economic cooperation among OIC Member States and it also a credible model for the south-south cooperation, which the OIC exemplifies. Certainly, the steady growth of trade exchanges between Central-Asia and other OIC

countries, which now stands at 32.75% of Tajikistan's total international trade is impressive. It clearly demonstrates the abundant opportunities inherent in intra-OIC cooperation in other sectors, such as energy, agriculture and social and physical infrastructure development.

It is apparent that, with a combined GDP of US\$ 9.4 trillion, OIC Member States and their corporate establishments can scale up intra-OIC investments in Central Asia. This will assist considerably in increasing the combined Gross Domestic Product of the Central Asian countries, which currently stands at 3.18% of total OIC GDP. In this regard, the envisaged joint activities, such as the rehabilitation of rail and road transportation links among Central Asian countries can address the problem posed by the land-locked topography of Central Asia. Furthermore, the joint investment in both the renewable energy and agricultural sectors can render the economies of Central Asia more competitive, while making intra-OIC socio-economic cooperation more mutually rewarding.

It is for the foregoing reasons that I call on all participants at this Forum to take advantage of the enormous opportunities and potentials for enhanced business relations with Central Asian countries. There is no doubt that investing in Central Asia amounts to profitable investment in the growth, development and prosperity of the entire Muslim Ummah. This is borne out of the fact that Central Asia is located in an important geo-strategic part of our region, the home of the traditional silk-road, the center of Islamic culture and scholarship, a region that enjoys bio-diversity and is richly endowed with natural resources.

**Mr. President,**

**Your Excellencies,**

**Distinguished Participants**

Let me avail myself of this opportunity to state that the OIC will continue to encourage the Government and corporate institutions in Central Asia to actively participate in the trade facilitation and trade financing mechanisms of the OIC. This is because most of investors from OIC Member States and beyond are always attracted by the various business incentives that the states can guarantee. Most recently, the OIC Trade Preferential System, known as TPS-OIC has entered into force with the completion of the required ratification formalities. This mechanism is aimed at establishing greater tariff and non-tariff concessions across the board in OIC Member States. It also aims at reducing cost of exports and imports by 50% within the first phase, including customs processing time and documentation. In the same vein, appreciable progress has been made with regard to encouraging visa liberalization to facilitate movement of businessmen within OIC Member States.

Similarly, cooperation in the domain of transport sector development, agro-industry, financial and tourism services, as well as private-public partnership has been stepped up. The Executive Programme of the OIC Plan of Action for Central Asia provides for such regional projects that can promote regional integration in Central Asia as well as enriching the contributions of both the public and private sectors in OIC Member States. These projects feature prominently: Kazakhstan-Turkmenistan- Iran Railway; the Dushanbe-Mazari Sherif- Herat Rail Corridor; and the establishment of a Special Economic Zone in Central Asia for Export Promotion. In this regard, the essence of such collaboration is to ensure that all stakeholders in the OIC Member States are pro-actively involved in promoting intra-OIC economic development projects.

In the same context, the creation of a new specialized institution for food security in Kazakhstan remains one of the positive outcome of such intra-OIC collaboration. This food

security institution will join other operational organs of the OIC to promote foreign direct investments for agricultural commodities, increase agricultural productivity and reducing post-harvest losses. It will also deal with broad issues of food security, rural development, youth employment and women empowerment, among others.

In the same vein, the agenda of the OIC on cooperation in the financial services sector are geared towards promoting Islamic financial products, which are steadily gaining popularity at the global level. In this context, the OIC seeks to increase its micro-finance support for Small and Medium Enterprises through the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, including the revival of the Islamic social windows, such as wakf and zakat.

Finally, let me avail myself of this opportunity to thank the entire OIC institutions, which participated in the arrangements for this Forum. It is my sincere hope that this Forum will pave the way for a robust regional cooperation framework, which will fit perfectly into the OIC current strategy to promote regional economic integration through cross border programmes at the sub-regional level.

I thank you all and I wish this Forum a very successful outcome.

*Wassalamu Alaikum wa-Rahmatu Allahi wa –Barakatu*