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THE ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION FOR FOOD SECURITY (IOFS)
CONDUCTS FIRST MEETING OF CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE
FOR DEVELOPMENT OF WHEAT

The Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) hosted the first meeting of sub-regional Centres of Excellence for Development of Wheat online in October 14, 2020. The session was of introductory nature, and sought to familiarize the national research institutions among the group of selected member states. The group, named as Asia Subgroup II for Wheat by the IOFS Secretariat, is comprised of Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.

The Centres of Excellence are integral to the OIC Programme of Action for Wheat and are meant to serve as knowledge-sharing platforms for various training and research institutions in their respective regions, enabling them to exchange most innovative and leading scientific practices in the field.

The virtual meeting was opened by the keynote address of the OIC ASG for Science and Technology H.E. Ambassador Askar Mussinov. He shared his confidence that the “meeting will help in developing our long-term plan on attaining food security by sharing experiences and starting joint collaborative research projects. It will in turn improve the socio-economic conditions of our Member States.”

The panel discussions involved such themes as exchange of genetic resources of cereals, grain fodder, oilseeds, and legumes; conduct of joint assessments of promising breeding material, creation of joint cereal breeding programmes, exchange of knowledge and experience between the research institutions and joint scientific events.

The participating national research institutions from Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Iran, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan shared their scientific research, achievements, challenges that surfaced and solutions they elaborated to tackle them. The scientists at the conference expressed their enthusiasm about the future prospects of Centres of Excellence, proposing to expand their areas of cooperation and the network of the research institutions.

On a final note, H.E. Ambassador Mussinov stated that the role of intra-OIC cooperation in food security is of paramount importance to the Islamic world. Such programmes as Centres of Excellence may lead to the production of credible partnership mechanisms among the OIC member states and serve as a creative solution to global hunger and malnutrition. Director-General of IOFS H.E. Yerlan Baidautet encouraged the participants

to employ opportunities the IOFS provides and concluded that the meeting was the first but not last important step towards enhanced regional scientific partnership. He assured that future meetings of Centres of Excellence would expand and engage many other international experts and organisations. This meeting also coincided with the arrival of the IOFS bulletin 'Food Security Hub', which may later publish and disseminate research findings from these institutions.

The event was convened in line with the OIC Programme on Development of Strategic Commodities and the Statute of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) on provision of "expertise and technical know-how to the member states on the various aspects of sustainable agriculture, rural development, food security, and biotechnology".

Islamic Organization for Food Security

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