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COMMUNICATION UNIVERSITY OF CHINA



Institute for a Community
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人类命运共同体研究院



The Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS): **A Great Model of Interregional Cooperation**



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Published on 21st December 2022

In developing countries, economic growth has been halted due to many reasons and major uncertainties jeopardize the availability of food that typically account for half of household net expenditures. It has become a regional issue that requires multilateral cooperation and an integrated framework to counter. Food security is defined as when all people, at all times, have physical and economic access to sufficient safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life. There are four main dimensions of food security, i.e., availability, access, utilization, and stability. On June 8, 2011, the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan H.E. Nursultan Nazarbayev, announced the need for a specialized food security entity within the OIC at the 7th session of the World Islamic Economic Forum in Astana. At the 38th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC, he mentioned it again and suggested locating the headquarters in Kazakhstan, a food-producing and exporting state.



Islamic Organization for Food Security

The grand vision was the dire need for time with relevance to food insecurity and hunger in many Islamic countries. It was affirmed that agricultural development and global efforts are required to eradicate hunger. In this aspect, significant role of the Islamic Organization for Food Security

is pertinent to mention. The organization has been providing comprehensive support for the development of food reserves and the implementation of a large-scale international humanitarian campaign. IOFS has been actively working with 45 countries of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Over the years, the highly competitive management of IOFS has successfully achieved set targets for food security and hunger prevention.



Recently, the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) celebrated December 12 as IOFS Day, during which it presented the results of all the work accomplished in 2022, and reported on the "Year of Africa" program. Throughout the year, the Organization worked with African governments and other partners to develop the African agricultural sector and implement its strategic programs. The diplomatic corps and experts from more than 20 countries, as well as representatives of the international media, arrived in Astana to participate in the forum. The forum also outlined the implementation of new projects and programs of the organization of the

IOFS Strategic Plan for 2023. The major goals and objectives of IOFS also complement UN Global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs 2030) for end hunger and food security.

It was an honor for me to personally visit Astana and attend the forum organized by IOFS on 12 December 2022. The Chairman IOFS Executive highlighted that the objective of the organization is to provide adequate, healthy and balanced nutrition, and increasing the capacity related to obtaining it at the appropriate cost and the required quality in order to achieve sustainable development, social stability and a decent life for the Islamic peoples. This comes in light of the current



situation and the recurring crises that threaten food security in the countries of the world in general and Islamic countries in particular, which requires more concerted efforts and capacity building to strengthen the food security system to enable it to withstand these challenges. Thus, robust developments under the agriculture sector vis-à-vis end hunger policies can benefit all parties involved in the sustainable availability of the food supply chain. Here, I would like to acknowledge the sheer efforts of Dr. Masoud J. Al-Marri, Chairman of the Executive Board of IOFS and Prof. Yerlan A. Baidaulet, Director General, IOFS. Due to their credible work and

planning, the organization has been witnessing success towards achieving the goal. Under their supervision, many programs have been effectively implemented.



It is noteworthy that Kazakhstan is the major pioneer of this very idea and also contributes in an effective way to integrate countries. The visionary leader, President Tokayev, noted that a promising direction for CICA is to establish cooperation with the Islamic Organization for Food Security. On the other hand, Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA) has continued to serve as an effective forum, advocating the idea that peace and security can be attained by constructive dialogue and mutual cooperation. Undoubtedly, the ongoing time is crucial as it is termed as the Asian century. It is a widely accepted notion that stability, prosperity, and joint development in Asia are imperative for global peace. Thus, extending the work scope of CICA members with IOFS will bring a win-win situation.



The world has witnessed significant policies and success stories of Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS). Thereby, Pakistan, as a partner country, welcomes new projects and initiatives by IOFS and aims to provide support in the areas of mutual interest to foster regional cooperation to end hunger and achieve common aspirations for sustainable food security. Under these assertions, it can easily be anticipated that IOFS will continue to work to achieve set goals in the future as well as to achieve its vision 2031. In this voyage, many prospects for joint collaboration among OIC member states can uncover new ways to resolve joint issues with a shared forward-looking spirit.