

## **THE COOPERATION OF THE OTS WITH INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS**

As per to the objectives set in the Turkic World Vision – 2040, Organization of Turkic States (OTS) Strategy 2022-2026, Astana Act and Summit Declarations, the OTS Secretariat has initiated contacts to explore cooperation opportunities with the international organizations, as well as to increase the visibility of the Organization in international fora.

In this framework, Secretary General of the OTS, Amb. Kubanychbek Omuraliev visited Vienna on 31 March – 4 April 2023 and held meetings with the OSCE Secretary General, Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Director General of UNIDO, Director-General/Executive Director of the UN Office at Vienna (UNOV)/UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Director General of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

On 16-19 May 2023, the Secretary General convened with several international organizations' representatives in Geneva; namely the Director General of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG), the Executive Secretary of UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the Directors General of International Labor Organization (ILO) and International Office for Migration (IOM), the Deputy Director General of World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Secretary General of International Road Transport Union (IRU).

Moreover, the Secretary General paid a working visit to Brussels on 3-4 July 2023 in order to engage in discussions with European Union (EU) officials and explore avenues of a closer cooperation between the OTS and EU. In this framework he met with H.E. Olivér Várhelyi, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood; Mr. Simon Mordue, Chief Foreign Policy Advisor of the President of the European Council; Mr. Camilo Villarino, Chief of Cabinet of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, H.E. Josep Borrell; and Mr. Ryszard Czarnecki, Member of the European Parliament. The visit was instrumental in terms of informing the EU officials on the Organization, its priorities and provided an opportunity to exchange views on the problematic issues and explore opportunities for cooperation.

On the margins of the 78<sup>th</sup> UNGA, the Secretary General held meetings with several international organizations' representatives, including the Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC), and the Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

The Secretary General also came together at an online meeting held on 12 February 2024 with the Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia of the UN Development Coordination Office Ms. Gwi-Yeop Son, as well as heads of regional offices of UN agencies for Europe and Central Asia to discuss the development of interorganizational cooperation.

Furthermore, pursuant to paragraph 143 of Astana Summit Declaration instructing the Secretariat to accelerate joint efforts to obtain observer status at the UNGA and OIC, the Secretary General paid a working visit to New York on 15-20 February 2024 in order to discuss the pending observer status of the OTS with the UN and exchange ideas with the Permanent Representatives on the potential strides to take in the upcoming period to obtain a certain progress on the issue.

To raise awareness and generate interest in the Turkic world, the inaugural Turkic Week program was successfully held at the UNOG on 22-25 April 2024. The event, attended by the Director General of UNOG and leaders of prominent international organizations, aimed to promote visibility and understanding of Turkic cooperation and its affiliated organizations within the United Nations.

In addition to his deliberations abroad, the Secretary General maintained close contact with the diplomatic corps in Türkiye and received heads of international organizations and their representatives at the OTS Secretariat in Istanbul. In this respect, he met with the Ambassadors of numerous countries and heads of international organizations, establishing significant connections since the assumption of his tenure in 2022.

Moreover, the President of the Union of Turkic Chambers of Commerce and Industry, as well as the Secretary General of the Permanent Secretariat of the Intergovernmental Commission TRACECA, the Secretary General of the Union of Turkic World Municipalities (TDBB) and the Secretary General of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (PABSEC), the Head of OECD Istanbul Office as well as a delegation of the European Parliament (EP) paid their visits to the Secretary General.

Overall, the Organization established closer contacts with prominent international organizations and signed several documents for collaboration such as, the “Joint Action Plan for 2024-2025” between the OTS and WHO, MoU between the OTS and TİKA, MoU between the OTS and ICESCO, as well as MoU between the OTS and UN-Habitat. At the same time, a MoU is expected to be signed between the OTS and United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) soon. At the 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of the OTS of 3 November 2023 in Astana, the Council of Heads of State adopted the decision on granting the observer status to the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO).

The Secretariat worked towards establishing a closer contact with the following organizations:

### **1. United Nations (UN)**

As part of the efforts to advance the pending observer status of the OTS at the UN General Assembly (UNGA), the Secretary General has met with several high-level UN representatives between the period of March 2023 – September 2024 such as H.E. Csaba Kőrösi, President of the UNGA 77<sup>th</sup> Session, the Director General of the UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) Ms. Tatiana Valovaya, UN Resident Coordinator in Türkiye, Mr. Alvaro Rodriguez, Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna Ghada Fathi Waly, Assistant Secretary General for Europe, Central Asia, the Americas Department for Political & Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations of the UN, H.E. Miroslav Jenča, and Chair of the Sixth Committee Of UNGA - Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Thailand to the UN Amb. Suriya Chindawongse.

Although all these counterparts extended their support for OTS’s observer status bid at the UNGA, they underlined that the UN as an institution could have no role in the decision-making procedures other than encouraging consultations among the parties of contention, and that it is the countries that would decide on any single issue tabled in the UN. Accordingly, they recommended that the OTS could have diplomatic demarches on the part of the opposing countries to break the impasse and also that ensuring a weightier presence of the Organization within UN might lead to positive changes.

In this regard, at the Informal CFM Meeting held on 25 September 2024 at the premises of the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the United Nations in New York, the Secretary General encouraged the Member States to engage in negotiations with opposing countries and highlighted the need to re-submit the application with the Organization's new name.

To streamline the future action of the Organization on the pending observer status application at the UNGA, the Secretary General came together with the Permanent Representatives of the OTS on 16 February 2024. This coordination meeting gave an opportunity to exchange insights on advancing the OTS’s pending observer status bid through alternative initiatives showcasing the ability of OTS countries to act as a regional actor and their responsible approach on the issues that are high in UN agenda, promoting the Turkic cooperation and the visibility of the Organization at the UN in line with the instructions given by the Council of Heads of State.

The Secretariat will officially communicate with the Member States and Observers for the realization of the initiatives that were put forward by the Permanent Representatives of the OTS during the coordination meeting.

## **2. European Union (EU)**

The Secretary General met with H.E. Olivér Várhelyi, EU Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood; Mr. Simon Mordue, Chief Foreign Policy Advisor of the President of the European Council, H.E. Charles Michel; Mr. Camilo Villarino, Chief of Cabinet of the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, H.E. Josep Borrell and Mr. Ryszard Czarnecki, Member of the European Parliament (MEP) on 3-4 July 2023.

The Secretary General's visit to Brussels was instrumental in terms of informing the EU officials on the Organization, its priorities and provided an opportunity to exchange views on the challenging issues and explore opportunities for cooperation.

Transport connectivity and energy appear as the two areas of possible cooperation between the OTS and the EU. The Secretariat will explore the possible formats for materializing such collaboration in the mentioned fields.

Additionally, H.E. Amb. Kubanychbek Omuraliev, Secretary General of the OTS met with Ms. Terhi Hakala, the European Union Special Representative for Central Asia, within the framework of the Turkic Week in Geneva on 24 April 2024.

During the meeting, the parties engaged in constructive discussions aimed at enhancing cooperation between the OTS and EU through the areas of common interest, including economy, transport, education and culture.

In order to support the establishment of fruitful ties between the OTS and the EU, a "Joint Working Plan" was signed by the Secretary General of the OTS H.E. Amb. Kubanychbek Omuraliev and the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary H.E. Peter Szijjártó on 14 May 2024 setting specific course of actions to be implemented especially during the rotational EU presidency of Hungary.

## **3. UN Habitat**

Executive Director (former) of the United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN Habitat), Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif paid a visit to the Secretary General on 27 February 2023, at the OTS Secretariat in Istanbul following a framework cooperation agreement between the organizations.

The Secretary General convened with Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Deputy-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN-Habitat, on 18 September 2023, on the sidelines of the 78th United Nations General Assembly in New York.

During the meeting, the parties engaged in discussions concerning the draft Road Map for enhanced cooperation between the two organizations. This Road Map represents a pivotal milestone in the collaborative journey initiated between OTS and UN-Habitat following the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding in February 2023. Among the key aspects addressed during the meeting were the delineation of specific action items, milestones, and timelines within the mentioned document.

On the sidelines of the second session of the Azerbaijan National Urban Forum and the World Habitat Day 2023, a meeting of Ministers in charge of Urban Planning of the OTS was organized in cooperation with UN Habitat on 30 September 2023 in Baku, where the Parties exchanged views on future regional collaborations and partnerships, adapting the cities to climate change and risk reduction as well as on opportunities for funding and financing mechanisms for joint urban renewal projects in the OTS region.

The Secretary General met with Ms. Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Deputy-Secretary-General and Executive Director of the UN-Habitat, on 24 September 2024, on the sidelines of the 79th United Nations General Assembly in New York. The Parties discussed the current situation of cooperation

between the OTS and UN Habitat and exchanged their views on the strengthening of the cooperation, as well as carrying out joint activities between two organizations.

The two Organizations are currently working on finalizing the Road Map of cooperation.

#### **4. World Health Organization (WHO)**

The Secretary General met with the World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for Europe, H.E. Dr. Hans Henri P. Kluge on 12 July 2023 at the OTS Premises in Istanbul. He also paid a visit to the WHO Regional Office in Copenhagen on 28 October 2023. During the visit of the Secretary General, parties signed the “Joint Action Plan for 2024-2025”.

At the meeting, Secretary General Omuraliev and Director Kluge discussed the prospective cooperation opportunities between the OTS and WHO/Europe with the aim to focus on digitalization, capacity building programs, environmentally sustainable health care facilities.

Upon the invitation of the Secretariat, Executive Director at the Office of Regional Director of WHO EURO Dr. Corinne Capuano participated as panelist in the Conference on “OTS as an Emerging Actor for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals” that was held on 22 April 2024 at the premises of UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) as part of the “Turkic Week in Geneva” program.

H.E. Amb. Kubanychbek Omuraliev, Secretary General of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS) met with H.E. Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director General of the World Health Organization (WHO), within the framework of the Turkic Week in Geneva on 24 April 2024.

During the meeting, Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus highlighted the establishment of the WHO Academy based in Lyon and expressed its readiness to provide support to the activities of the OTS, including the capacity building programs.

Eventually, OTS-WHO Leadership in Health Emergencies training course organized on 6 May 2024 in Istanbul.

The training course held with the participation of almost 30 health professionals from the Member States of the OTS which includes 12 hours online courses and 5 days in-person workshop aims to develop the leadership skills of the trainees in health emergency situations.

The program is jointly organized by the OTS and WHO, based on the Action Plan signed by Ambassador Kubanychbek Omuraliev and Dr Hans Kluge in Copenhagen on 28 October 2023.

#### **5. United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE)**

The Secretariat initiated contact with UNECE in December 2022, aiming to strengthen the ongoing cooperation through the establishment of an institutional framework. Collaboratively, both Secretariats drafted the preliminary version of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

The Secretary General met with the former Executive Secretary of UNECE, Ms. Olga Algayerova on 17 May 2023 in Geneva to discuss ongoing efforts in this direction and the outcomes of the discussions among the UNECE members on the issue at the Executive Committee meeting of 15 May 2023.

Although certain countries at the UNECE raised objection to the cooperative endeavors between the two organizations, the Executive Committee (of UNECE) endorsed the continuation of negotiations. Coming to practical cooperation established with UNECE Secretariat particularly on sustainable energy, both Organizations are currently drafting an Action Plan that will map out the concrete joint projects to be undertaken in this important field.

In the framework of his working visit to Geneva on 22-24 January 2024, the Secretary General has met with the Executive Secretary of UNECE, Ms. Tatiana Molcean. During the visit, the Secretariat also took part in the launch of the UNECE and the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) Program on Energy Connectivity in Central Asia and the Caucasus and

convened with the Sustainable Energy Division to discuss collaborative initiatives for the year 2024 in this field.

Upon the invitation of the Secretariat, Chief of Cooperation and Partnerships Section of the UNECE, Mr. Tony Bonnici participated as panelist in the Conference on “OTS as an Emerging Actor for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals” that was held on 22 April 2024 at the premises of UNOG as part of the “Turkic Week in Geneva” program.

#### **6. Food and Agriculture Organization of United States (FAO)**

As per to the proposal made by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Shavkat Mirziyoyev at the Samarkand Summit to initiate institutional cooperation with FAO, the Secretary General held an online meeting with the Assistant Director General-Regional Representative for Europe and Central Asia of FAO, Mr. Vladimir Rakhmanin on 24 March 2023.

The Parties agreed to formalize their relations on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation. A draft MoU and “Joint Work Plan for 2024-2026” between OTS and FAO was prepared by both Organizations and currently, the OTS Secretariat is awaiting the FAO's final approval on the draft MoU.

#### **7. World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)**

An MoU between the two Organizations was signed on 26 June 2015 in Madrid, which aims to promote tourism products and establishment of systematic cooperation as well as organization of joint events.

In order to revitalize the relations between the OTS and UNWTO, the Secretariat prepared a joint action plan to reach concrete outcomes and shared with the UNWTO for their views and comments. Both Secretariats are in touch with each other to organize the working visit of the OTS Secretary General to the UNWTO Secretariat in the upcoming period.

#### **8. Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE)**

The Secretary General met with the Secretary General of the OSCE Ms. Helga Maria Schmid at the OSCE Secretariat in Vienna on 31 March 2023.

At the same time, the Secretary General met with the Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council and Head of Permanent Mission of North Macedonia to the OSCE Ambassador Igor Djundev on 4 April 2023 in Vienna.

During the meetings the Secretary General highlighted that the OTS remains committed to promoting regional integration, economic growth, and cultural understanding among its member states, as well as fostering stronger ties with the OSCE.

On 2 March 2024, at the venue of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Antalya Diplomacy Forum, the Secretary General of the OTS, met with the Secretary General of the OSCE Ms. Helga Maria Schmid.

#### **9. The International Road Transport Union (IRU)**

Since the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 6 October 2021, in Istanbul, the OTS and IRU have forged strengthened cooperation ties, particularly in the realm of digitalization of transport and transit issues, as well as enhancing capacity building efforts.

The two organizations have effectively collaborated on various initiatives, including the successful implementation of digital TIR pilot projects between Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, and Kyrgyzstan. They have also facilitated the establishment of green lanes and digital TIR prioritization at the Border Crossing Points (BCPs) of the Member States, as well as conducted capacity training programs for officials of the Kyrgyz Customs Administration in cooperation with the Customs Committee of Uzbekistan, among other endeavors.

The collaborative efforts of the OTS, IRU, and National Transport Associations from the Member States and Turkmenistan culminated in the establishment of the Union of Associations of

International Road Carriers in the Turkic Region (OTS-URTA). The signing ceremony for the Terms of Reference of OTS-URTA took place on 20 November 2024 in Istanbul.

In the near term, the efforts of the two Organizations will be focused on advancing the implementation of the Electronic Consignment Note (eCMR) project within the Turkic region. Preparations are also underway to organize road demonstration tours from the Irkeshtam and Khorgos border crossing points to Türkiye.

#### **10. Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO)**

The ECO, where all Member States of the OTS are also members, is the only organization that the OTS has observer status so far. Nevertheless, at the 10<sup>th</sup> Summit of the OTS held on 3 November 2023 in Astana, the Council of Heads of State adopted the decision on granting the Observer status to the ECO.

The current observer status of the OTS in the ECO and vice-versa, provides an opportunity for both sides to exchange views on issues of mutual interest and to act together with a view to contributing to regional development.

The last meeting between the Secretary General and the Secretary General of the ECO H.E. Khusrav Noziri was held on 24 January 2023, in Tashkent, where the Parties emphasized the need to update the Work Program developed in 2019, in accordance with the current realities, as well as to pursue the concrete goals and objectives and to act together to avoid duplication of each other's activities.

The two organizations plan to adopt a "2024-2026 Work Program" to implement the principles of the MoU, which was signed on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014 in New York.

#### **11. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)**

During the COP29 held in November in Baku, H.E. Ambassador Kubanychbek Omuraliev met with Mr. Francesco La Camera, Director-General of the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), to discuss prospects for collaboration between the OTS and IRENA. The meeting focused on exploring joint projects that would support the global transition toward renewable energy. Both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening partnership between the organizations.

#### **12. UN Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO)**

The Secretary General met with the Director General of the UNIDO Mr. Gerd Müller at the UNIDO Headquarters in Vienna on 3 April 2023.

Director General Müller underlined the geostrategic importance of the OTS region considering the political developments in the wider European region, and emphasized that European countries should be more aware of the huge potential of the region, especially as a source of green energy and minerals as well as the reliable route from China to Europe.

The Parties underlined their overlapping purposes and discussed the possible avenues of cooperation between the two Organizations. As the next step, they have agreed to establish a Working Group between the two organizations to prepare and identify concrete projects to attract foreign investment in the following areas: 1) sustainable and inclusive industrial development; 2) renewable energy and green transition; 3) climate protection, food security; and 4) trainings for the young professionals on IT and digitalization.

In order to strengthen their collaboration in promoting inclusive and sustainable industrial development, the two Organizations signed a Joint Declaration on 26 November 2024 at the premises of the UNIDO Headquarters in Vienna.

#### **13. UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**

The Secretary General met with the Regional Representative for South-Eastern Europe of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) H.E. Danilo Rizzi on 23 August 2023 at the OTS Secretariat's Headquarters.

During the meeting, the Secretary General briefed the Regional Representative on the activities of the Secretariat of the OTS, as well as cooperation with International Organizations. Mr. Danila Rizzi gave information about UNODC and the activities of the office of Regional Representative for South-Eastern Europe which is situated in Istanbul.

#### **14. Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)**

The Head of the OECD Istanbul Regional Office Mr. Achraf Bouali paid a courtesy visit to the OTS Secretariat on 12 September 2023.

On 13 December 2023, the Secretary General took part in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) the Eurasia Week 2023 in Paris. Within the framework of the event, the Secretary General convened with the Secretary General of the OECD, H.E. Mathias Cormann and discussed avenues of institutional cooperation between the two organizations.

The meetings held in Paris indicated a positive trajectory towards establishing a meaningful partnership between the two organizations. The shared commitment to economic development, recognition of regional challenges, and identification of specific areas for collaboration provide a solid foundation. The proposed exploration of joint initiatives, along with the potential signing of an MoU, reflects a proactive approach to realizing the partnership's potential benefits.

The Secretariat will explore with the OECD Secretariat and OECD Istanbul Center the possible formats for materializing such collaboration in the mentioned fields.

#### **15. International Labor Organization (ILO)**

The Secretary General met with the Director General of ILO Mr. Gilbert F. Houngbo on 19 May 2023, in Geneva to explore avenues of collaboration and strengthen ties between their organizations. It was noted that both organizations are committed to ensuring fair and productive employment for all individuals, regardless of their nationality or background.

The Director General of the ILO stated that migrant workers are an area of cooperation with the OTS, considering the significant work being done to address the negative impact of the Russia-Ukraine war. He expressed the readiness of the ILO to cooperate with the OTS and advised the Secretariat contacting their offices in Ankara and Moscow to have concrete discussions on the possible framework for collaborative efforts.

Upon the invitation of the Secretariat, ILO Regional Director for Europe and Central Asia Ms. Beate Andrees participated as panelist in the Conference on “OTS as an Emerging Actor for Achieving Sustainable Development Goals” that was held on 22 April 2024 at the premises of UN Office at Geneva (UNOG) as part of the “Turkic Week in Geneva” program.

#### **16. ASEAN**

The Secretary General addressed a letter to the Secretary General of ASEAN, H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn in February 2023 conveying his wish to have a meeting to discuss cooperation opportunities between the two organizations, which was not replied.

As another stride in this direction, the Secretary General of the OTS came together with the Ambassadors and Representatives of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Ankara Committee (AAC) at a meeting hosted by the Ambassador of Singapore on 11 April 2023 in Ankara upon the inquiry of the Secretary General for the Latter's assistance in facilitating establishment of institutional cooperation between the OTS and ASEAN.

The AAC informed that the Secretariat's request is on the table of the ASEAN Secretariat and reiterated the readiness of the AAC for expediting the matter. It was pointed-out that the ASEAN is stretched with many dialogue partners and the best way to get the attention of the Organization is to propose attractive cooperation projects particularly in the priority fields such as sustainable energy.

The Secretariat is currently developing a concept in potential cooperation areas to be presented to Lao PDR as the current Chair country of ASEAN.

### **17. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)**

The Secretary General of the OTS, Amb. Kubanychbek Omuraliev held a meeting with the UN Assistant Secretary-General, Assistant UNDP Administrator and Director of the Regional Bureau for Europe and the CIS H.E. Ivana Živković on 16 February 2024 to enhance cooperation between the two organizations. In short-term perspective updating the Memorandum of Understanding signed by the sides on 24 May 2016 could be considered.

The meeting facilitated a robust exchange of perspectives between the Secretary General and Assistant Secretary General on a range of pertinent issues. They explored avenues for collaboration between the OTS and the UNDP, with a keen focus on areas of mutual interest such as sustainable development, capacity-building initiatives, and socio-economic empowerment within the Turkic region.

### **18. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR)**

Taking into consideration the efforts in the framework of the OTS related to cooperation in the field of disaster and emergency management, the Secretary General of the OTS sent a letter on willingness to explore opportunities on establishment of cooperation between two organization to the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction Mami Mizutori on 25 July 2023. On 16 August 2023 a letter from the UNDRR supporting such an initiative was sent to the OTS Secretariat.

Currently, the Secretariat is discussing possible meetings between the representatives of the OTS and UNDRR.

### **19. Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC)**

Azerbaijani side has proposed in 2021 to start cooperation with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). There was an exchange of Letters between the OTS and GCC Secretary Generals in which two sides shared position on the intention to organize joint Summits at a convenient time for both sides.

The idea of exploring new formats of cooperation, and in this context holding a Summit level meeting of OTS – GCC was reiterated by Azerbaijan at the Informal Meeting of Assistants/Advisers on Foreign Policy Issues of the Heads of Member States held on 2 September 2023 in Istanbul.

Currently according to information from the GCC Secretariat, negotiation process among GCC Member States is going on. The Secretariat of the OTS works towards organizing the visit of the Secretary General of OTS to Riyadh to initiate official contacts.

### **20. African Union Commission (AUC)**

The idea of exploring new formats of cooperation, and in this context a Summit level meeting of OTS – African Union was raised by Azerbaijan at the Informal Meeting of Assistants/Advisers on Foreign Policy Issues of the Heads of Member States held on September 2, 2023 in Istanbul. Given good relations of Türkiye with African countries, Türkiye's assistance to the Organization to come up with a similar format with the African Union was requested.

The Secretariat takes necessary steps to initiate talks with the AU Commission. In this respect, the Secretary General met with H.E. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission (AUC) on 22 September 2023 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.

The Parties agreed upon working on the prospective cooperation opportunities between organizations in the upcoming period.

### **21. Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC)**

Although close relations have been established between the two organizations, observer status application of the OTS in OIC is a pending issue on the agenda of the OIC since 2013. The subject-



matter had been discussed at the relevant bodies of the OIC numerous times, yet despite the persistent efforts of the OTS member countries, no substantial progress has been achieved to obtain observer status at the OIC.

In the Article 201 of the Final Communiqué of the 13<sup>th</sup> Islamic Summit Conference held in Istanbul on 14-15 April 2016. *“The Conference welcomed the establishment of cooperation between OIC and the OTS with a view to creating a legal relation in the future”*.

Moreover, the OTS and the OIC signed a *Memorandum of Understanding* in November 2016, providing an institutional basis for their cooperation.

To expedite the observer status application and enhance cooperation between the OTS and OIC, the Secretary General convened on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly with the OIC Secretary General, H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha on 23 September 2024 in New York.

The Parties agreed to develop an Action Plan to expand collaboration and implement joint result-oriented projects of mutual interest for the Member States of the Organizations.

## **22. Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS)**

In line with the action sheet of the 10<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Summit in Astana, the OTS Secretariat established contacts with the Secretariat of the IOFS. Draft Memorandum of Understanding between the two organizations is being prepared. The document could be signed in Kazakhstan in 2025 after the appointment of the Director General of the IOFS.

## **23. Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA)**

In line with the Action Sheet of the 10<sup>th</sup> Jubilee Summit in Astana, the OTS Secretariat established contacts with the Secretariat of the CICA.

The Secretary General of the OTS held a meeting with the Secretary General of the CICA on 4 March 2024 at the OTS Premises in Istanbul. The Parties discussed possible areas of cooperation.

## **24. Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO)**

The Parties agreed to formalize their relations on the basis of a Memorandum of Understanding on cooperation. Upon the invitation of the Director-General of the ICESCO, the MoU between the OTS and ICESCO was signed on 13 June 2024 in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco. Currently, the Parties are expected to sign the Joint Action Plan during the visit of the Director-General of the ICESCO to Istanbul in 2025.