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**REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

**the** **Sessional Steering Committee’s Meeting on the**

**Establishment of the OIC Food Security Reserve System**

Doha, State of Qatar, 1 September 2025 *(Hybrid format)*

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# **Background**

The Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), in line with the mandate issued by the 8th OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (Istanbul, 25–27 October 2021), initiated work on the establishment of the OIC Food Security Reserves System. In this context, a comprehensive preliminary feasibility study was conducted and a draft founding agreement was developed. The process also included extensive discussions and deliberations, a dedicated conference with OIC Member States, as well as a series of expert meetings and consultations.

The results of this work were presented at the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (Doha, State of Qatar, 1–2 October 2023). The Conference concluded with the adoption of a resolution to establish a Sessional Steering Committee on the OIC Food Security Reserve System. The Committee, to be chaired by the State of Qatar as host of the 9th Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (MCFSAD), will include coordinators from each of the six designated zones, relevant OIC institutions, and the OIC General Secretariat, with the mandate to provide oversight and strategic guidance for subsequent consideration at the 10th MCFSAD.

In implementation of the above-mentioned resolution of the 9th MCFSAD, the IOFS Secretariat, in partnership with the OIC General Secretariat and with the generous support of the State of Qatar represented by the Ministry of Municipality, convened the first meeting of the Sessional Steering Committee on 1 September 2025 in Doha, State of Qatar, with the participation of more than 40 delegates representing more than 20 Member States.

The present Report summarizes the key messages delivered by principal speakers, incorporates the feedback of the members of the Sessional Steering Committee, and outlines the recommendations and conclusions derived from the discussions.

# **Opening Session and Overview of Sessional Steering Committee Objectives and Expected Outcomes**

The meeting opened with the recitation of verses from the Holy Qur’an, followed by welcoming remarks from Mr. Hamada Hadi Al Hajri, Assistant Director of Food Security Department at the Ministry of Municipality of the State of Qatar; Ambassador Khusrav Noziri, Assistant Director General of the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS); and Dr Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

In their remarks, the speakers expressed appreciation to the State of Qatar for its warm hospitality and excellent organization of the event. They highlighted the strategic importance of developing the OIC Food Security Reserve System, noting that this meeting marks an important step towards establishing a practical reserve mechanism and strengthening the food security resilience of Member States.

Concluding the opening session, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri outlined the meeting’s objectives, expected outcomes, and working arrangements. He emphasized that the first session would focus on the OIC Food Security Reserve System, with the aim of producing concrete recommendations for coordinated action. These recommendations will be submitted for review and formal endorsement at the forthcoming 10th MCFSAD.

# **IOFS Vision for the OIC Food Security Reserve System**

For the conduct of this session, the floor was given to Mr. Azamat Khamiyev, Programme Manager at the IOFS Secretariat. In his presentation, he introduced the proposed architecture of the OIC Food Security Reserve (FSR), which envisions the establishment of six subregional food reserves. As an example, he demonstrated a possible model for the functioning of such a subregional reserve, outlining its overall structure, operational framework, and working mechanisms. He also proposed potential types of food crops to be stored. In addition, he presented a methodology that could be applied to determine each Member State’s participation share to FSR.

It was noted that the findings of the IOFS vision are general in nature and serve primarily as a starting point for further joint work with Member States. They are flexible and will need to be refined both conceptually and technically, taking into account regional specificities as well as the interests and expectations of Member States, during the preparation of full Feasibility Studies (FS) for each subregion, beginning with the pilot one.

The key challenges faced by the IOFS Secretariat in the course of attempting to implement this initiative were also highlighted. The main issue is the lack of financial resources for the preparation of a Feasibility Study for the pilot subregional Food Security Reserve. The absence of such a study prevents Member States from having a clear understanding of their commitments, expected benefits, and other parameters, which in turn reduces their interest in the FSR project.

The following steps were proposed for further in-depth study (Feasibility Stidy) as possible solutions: establishing a Steering Committee composed of high-level decision-makers from the pilot subregion (participating countries); and developing a joint (or individual) request to the Islamic Development Bank to secure grant funding for the preparation of the FS of the subregional FSR. Once the grant is obtained, the project is expected to be implemented through close and continuous cooperation between Member States’ technical experts, hired consultants, and IOFS, with all decisions to be endorsed at the level of the Steering Committee. This approach would ensure that the FS reflects the specifics, interests, needs, and expectations of the Member States.

The process of developing the FS would also include the organization of workshops, discussions, and country-level consultations, aimed at raising awareness of the project, promoting it among Member States, and providing additional review of the proposed solutions.

# **Member States’ Interventions and Feedback**

Representative of the State of Libya: The importance of taking into account the specificities of subregions and individual Member States was highlighted, including their socio-economic conditions, security concerns, and other national characteristics. It was proposed to conduct explanatory workshops on the FSR project, as well as to organize subregional dialogue platforms that reflect the similar characteristics of countries within each subregion. The need to maintain flexibility in the IOFS vision was emphasized, including on the matter of storage modalities, so as to allow further refinement in line with the positions of Member States and the realities of specific regions.

Representative of the People’s Republic of Bangladesh: Attention was drawn to the accuracy and correctness of certain data presented in the IOFS presentation. In response, clarifications were provided by IOFS, which helped to refine and validate the presented materials.

Representative of the Arab Republic of Egypt: The strategic importance of this initiative was highlighted, particularly in light of recent global events. The need for a complementary approach among Member States was emphasized, whereby the strengths of one country in certain areas or specific commodities could be utilized by others, and vice versa, with their advantages in other sectors providing balance. Attention was also drawn to the significant growth in Egypt’s agricultural potential in recent years, including increased production volumes, the development of IT, value chains, logistics capacities and infrastructure, as well as the active promotion of research and innovation in the agricultural sector.

Representative of the Republic of The Gambia: The importance of the issue under consideration was emphasized. At the same time, attention was drawn to the concern of possible duplication with already existing regional initiatives, such as ECOWAS projects in West Africa. It was noted that individual country-level consultations are necessary to develop the most appropriate solutions.

Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan: The importance of the project under consideration was emphasized, particularly in the context of current instability. At the same time, it was noted that a number of questions remain with regard to the IOFS vision, mainly concerning its technical details and practical modalities of implementation, which are essential for its subsequent review and approval at the high national level.

In particular, questions were raised regarding the conclusion of bilateral and multilateral memorandums, as well as the insufficient involvement to FSR project of certain Member States, as well as the need to conduct awareness-raising activities at both the political and other levels. Additionally, the need for a flexible IOFS approach that takes into account regional specificities was underlined, and the issue was raised as to whether new national bodies should be established within the framework of the project or whether existing institutional mechanisms could be utilized.

It was also expressed the readiness of the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Azerbaijan to share successful experiences in the field of agriculture and to cooperate in elaborating technical details, including analytical data and statistics. Positive experience was noted within the framework of the Organization of Turkic States (OTS), where a research institute under the Ministry conducts analytical work to identify trade opportunities among the OTS Member States.

Representative of Afghanistan: The particular importance of the FSR project was emphasized, especially in view of the existing challenges in the national food sector. It was noted that addressing these problems is not possible without the consistent strengthening of national capacity in food storage and the establishment of strategic reserves.

Representative of the Republic of Uzbekistan: It was emphasized that, in the event subregional Food Security Reserves are equipped with an IT platform for monitoring and an early warning system, careful attention must be given to the compatibility of data provided by Member States. It was also noted that a unified methodology should be developed for Member States to ensure effective data aggregation and processing, as well as a legal framework for its operation.

Representative of the OIC General Secretariat: The importance of taking into account regional and national specificities was emphasized when defining the parameters of the FSR System, including the selection of food commodities for storage and other key aspects. The need for a more proactive approach was noted, suggesting not to limit efforts to a single pilot project but to consider launching several initiatives across different OIC subregions.

It was proposed to more actively organize workshops and dialogue platforms in various regions, taking into account their specific challenges and opportunities. Particular emphasis was placed on the importance of increasing visibility and awareness of the project at all levels - from local to political - highlighting the benefits of cooperation, collaboration, and synergy effects in both economic and socio-political dimensions.

Special attention was suggested for storage issues, taking into account all potential risks and applying risk-mitigation mechanisms. It was also recommended to consider how the FSR could contribute to strengthening the capacity of Member States in ensuring food security, which requires studying and understanding national situations and the policies pursued by Member States in this area, as well as exploring opportunities to increase production and improve productivity, particularly in the context of reducing post-harvest losses.

# **Findings and Conclusions**

*Conclusions voiced directly by the Members of the Sessional Steering Committee:*

* Republic of Azerbaijan
* The IOFS proposals may be accepted as a general strategic vision; however, a number of follow-up meetings and more detailed discussions are required before a final decision can be taken at the high level;
* Statistical and analytical data are of particular importance and should play a key role in decision-making, including in determining the list of products to be stored in food reserves;
* Support was expressed for expanding the project through enhancing the capacity of Member States to establish national reserves, especially by studying, sharing, and implementing the successful experiences of other Member States.
* Arab Republic of Egypt
* The principle of complementarity should be considered one of the key approaches in the implementation of the project;
* Systematic exchange of experience and knowledge among Member States is of great importance for strengthening overall capacity.

*Conclusions drawn by the IOFS Secretariat on the basis of the interventions made by the Members of the Sessional Steering Committee during the discussions*

* For Member States, the flexibility of the proposed solutions within the FSR is of particular importance, taking into account subregional and national specificities. In light of the recommendations that the pilot should not be limited to a single subregion but rather launched in parallel based on requests from interested Member States, a logical approach would be to begin with those countries that have expressed their willingness to initiate the establishment of Subregional FSR, and to carry out in-depth targeted studies or feasibility assessments for the respective regions.
* A systematic and regular process of work is required, with a clear and regularly updated agenda that ensures dialogue, monitoring, and refinement of decisions. An important element is the thorough elaboration of technical aspects and the conduct of detailed analysis for subregion, with an emphasis on applying the principle of complementarity among countries, their specific needs, policies, and implementation approaches.
* The concept of food reserves should be actively promoted, and awareness of it should be raised at various levels - from local authorities to the national and political levels, including decision-makers. The organization of country-level consultations is essential, including for assessing the risk of duplication with existing reserve mechanisms in which countries already participate. Regional seminars and webinars involving Member States, experts, and partner organizations should also be conducted. Such programmes must take into account national and regional specificities in order to be as practice-oriented as possible.
* Consideration should be given to expanding FST concept to include the provision of technical assistance to Member States in establishing or improving national food reserve systems, taking into account their priorities and specificities, including the transfer of successful experiences accumulated by other Member States.
* Consideration should be given to incorporating into the FSR model mechanisms for enhancing the productivity of key agricultural crops, expanding the participation of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises in value chains, and reducing production and post-harvest losses.
* It is recommended to explore the possibility (including legal aspects) of creating a digital IT platform for monitoring food security (stock levels, movements, and needs). Such a platform would increase transparency, provide a basis for joint reserves, and identify additional opportunities for economic cooperation among Member States in the areas of trade, logistics, and investment.

# **Recommendations**

1. Considering that the further practical advancement of the FSR project requires comprehensive studies for each OIC subregion, with due attention to socio-economic conditions, agricultural production potential, infrastructure, institutional readiness, and national priorities, as well as rigorous analytical work based on reliable statistical data and forecasts, and carried out in close cooperation with Member States to develop solutions that genuinely address their interests and expectations, the following sequential steps are recommended to ensure tangible and practical results:
2. Start with the Member States that have expressed interest in the implementation of the FSR project. This approach will build on the political will and readiness of individual countries and allow for the commencement of practical steps in one or several pilot territories;
3. Based on the Member States that express interest in the implementation of the FSR project, it is proposed to establish a Steering Committee composed of high-level representatives from the pilot participating countries. To secure funding for further studies in these countries or within the subregion, efforts should be initiated to mobilize resources, including the option of submitting a joint (or individual, by each country) request to the Islamic Development Bank to obtain grant financing for the preparation of the FS of the subregional FSR;
4. Once the grant is obtained, the FS should be developed jointly, with the participation of technical experts and specialists from Member States appointed by the Steering Committee, external consultants financed through the grant, and experts from the IOFS Secretariat. This approach will ensure that the FS fully reflects the interests and needs of the Member States, while the depth of its analysis meets their expectations;
5. As part of the FS development in the pilot territory (or territories), it is necessary to provide for multi-level consultations with the participating Member States - from local authorities to political leadership - the organization of workshops for stakeholders aimed at raising awareness and understanding of the project’s objectives, as well as study visits and other measures to strengthen engagement and create a practical basis for developing realistic and well-aligned solutions;
6. Key interim and final reports of the joint work, the resulting solutions, as well as contentious issues on which the technical experts of the participant Member States have not reached consensus, shall be submitted for consideration and approval by the Steering Committee;
7. The outcome of this work will be the preparation of a Feasibility Study and a draft Founding Agreement, both agreed upon with the participating countries. On the basis of these two documents, it will be possible to kick off the subregional Food Security Reserve project.
8. In parallel with the work on launching the subregional project (or projects), and with a view to enhancing its visibility as well as promoting the concept among other Member States that have not yet decided to embark on its implementation, it is recommended to continue the following efforts:
9. Promoting knowledge and best experience sharing on FSR among the OIC Member States through various initiatives that use methods such as workshops, digital platforms, etc.;
10. Providing technical assistance to the needy OIC Member States (upon their request) to develop/strengthen national food security reserves;
11. Exploring the linkage between domestic food production and food security reserve, and take appropriate measures accordingly;
12. Raising the awareness about the importance of creating OIC Food Security Reserve System among the policymakers in OIC Member States through organizing more seminars and workshops in the various sub-regions of the OIC;
13. Mapping and monitoring food security risks to assess food availability, access, and vulnerability, enabling more effective interventions and early warning for food crises.

**Agreed in Doha, State of Qatar**

1 September, 2022

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