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Building Futures:
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Ratification



المنظمة الإسلامية للأمن الغذائي
Islamic Organisation for Food Security
l'Organisation Islamique pour la Sécurité Alimentaire



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Dear Readers,

As we mark 11 December — OIC Food Security Day and the anniversary of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), it is with great pride that we present the final 2025 edition of the Food Security Hub. This publication closes a year defined by rising global uncertainties but also renewed determination across our Member States to advance resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems. Throughout 2025, IOFS has continued to champion evidence-based solutions, strategic partnerships, and capacity-building efforts that place people—especially rural women, youth, and smallholder communities—at the centre of food security transformation.

This year's articles reflect the depth and breadth of challenges shaping food systems across the OIC region and beyond. They explore how empowering women and youth is essential for unlocking demographic potential; how resilient food systems in Central Asia depend on the reliability of services and governance; how targeted assessment and partnership with UN Women can strengthen value chains in Nigeria and Sierra Leone; how smarter water allocation can dramatically improve irrigation performance; and how

IOFS's accession to the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development reinforces our commitment to global cooperation. Together, these insights illuminate a clear message: sustainable food security cannot be achieved through isolated interventions, but through integrated, collaborative, and forward-looking action.

As we conclude 2025, IOFS reaffirms its unwavering commitment to serving as a catalyst for collective action, a platform for knowledge exchange, and a partner to all Member States in their pursuit of resilience and self-reliance. This edition of the Food Security Hub stands not only as a reflection of the year's achievements but also as an invitation to deepen collaboration as we move into 2026 with renewed purpose and unity. On this IOFS Day, we celebrate our shared progress and reaffirm the guiding principle that food security is both a right and a responsibility—one that unites and empowers the entire OIC community.

Ambassador Berik Aryn

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Islamic Organisation
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BRIDGING GAPS, BUILDING FUTURES: IOFS STRATEGIES FOR INCLUSIVE AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

AMBASSADOR BERIK ARYN,

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The Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) marks its establishment anniversary and the OIC Food Security Day on 11 December, a symbolic occasion to reaffirm our shared commitment to the right to adequate food and nutrition for all. This year's theme, *"Strengthening OIC Food Systems through the Leadership of Rural Women and Youth"*, is both timely and crucial. It highlights the untapped potential of rural women and young people as the driving force behind resilient, inclusive, and sustainable food systems across the OIC Member States.

THE ROLE OF RURAL WOMEN AND YOUTH IN FOOD SYSTEMS

Across the OIC region, rural women and youth remain the cornerstone of agricultural production and community resilience. According to the FAO Statistical Yearbook 2025, women represent about 39–40% of the agricultural workforce, rising to 44% in Africa and 39% in Asia, yet their participation in decision-making, land ownership, and access to finance remains limited. Meanwhile, the rural population is ageing, and younger generations are increasingly moving away from agriculture. Unless youth are re-engaged, the region risks losing its productive base, technological adaptation capacity, and long-term food security.

CURRENT SITUATION IN OIC

In South, Southeast, and Central Asia, agriculture remains a vital source of livelihoods. The sector employs roughly 27% of the workforce, with millions of smallholders driving food production. Women play critical roles in cultivation and post-harvest processing but face persistent barriers in land tenure and financial inclusion. Climate variability and limited irrigation infrastructure further constrain productivity. Priority actions may focus on strengthening land rights for women, expanding digital agriculture and agri-startups to empower youth, promoting water-saving technologies through enhancing rural finance alongside cooperative-based marketing mechanisms.

In Arab OIC Member States, agriculture operates under water-scarce and semi-arid conditions, with high import dependency and vulnerability to geopolitical disruptions. Women contribute significantly to food processing and local markets but remain underrepresented in leadership. Migration, displacement, and resource constraints have disrupted rural continuity. Priority actions could rely on scale up solutions tailored to women and youth farmers; reintegration and livelihood programmes for displaced communities; and foster mobile-based agricultural extension and e-learning tools for rural women.

Agriculture continues to dominate employment in African OIC countries, engaging nearly 45% of the workforce and with women representing 44% of all agricultural workers. However, limited access to credit, weak infrastructure, and post-harvest losses undermine rural incomes. Undernourishment and obesity co-exist, highlighting nutritional inequality. Priority actions may be expanding Islamic microfinance and insurance schemes targeting women and youth; investing in cold chain and storage facilities; promoting women's cooperatives and market access programmes; and integrating nutrition-sensitive agricultural production.

WHY EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH MATTERS

Empowering women and youth is not only a matter of social equity but also a strategic necessity for sustainable food systems. Studies show that closing the gender gap in access to productive resources could raise agricultural output by up to 4% and lift over 100 million people out of hunger. Youth engagement accelerates digital transformation, innovation, and rural employment creation. Empowering women and youth inclusion improve resilience to economic and climatic shocks, contributing to inclusive growth and food security.

Key Development Priorities for the OIC Region:

- Strengthening women's land and inheritance rights.
- Expanding microfinance, Islamic social finance, and rural credit tailored to women and youth.
- Investing in education, talent development, and agribusiness skills.
- Improving market integration through cooperatives and digital trade platforms.
- Promoting technology transfer and youth-led agri-tech innovation hubs.
- Linking agricultural production with nutrition outcomes to combat undernourishment and obesity.
- Integrating social protection with food and employment programmes to reduce vulnerability.

Across the OIC region, rural women and youth are both the custodians of tradition and the agents of innovation. From the water-stressed Arab world to Asia's smallholder mosaics and Africa's vast agricultural base, targeted investment in land rights, finance, skills, and nutrition can turn potential into measurable progress in food security and resilience.

IOFS as a Platform for Addressing Food Security Challenges

IOFS stands as a unique and necessary platform within the OIC framework to confront the multifaceted challenges of food

security that persist across the Muslim world. From climate change and land degradation to supply chain disruptions and population growth, the IOFS provides Member States with co-ordinated mechanisms to build resilience and self-sufficiency. Its approach is rooted in solidarity, knowledge-sharing, and evidence-based policymaking — enabling countries with varying agricultural capacities to collaborate toward common objectives. By fostering regional partnerships and aligning with global development agendas such as the SDGs, IOFS plays a pivotal role in transforming vulnerabilities into opportunities for sustainable growth.

REDUCING FOOD INSECURITY AND UNLOCKING DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL

Many OIC Member States possess rich natural resources, youthful populations, and vast arable lands, yet still struggle to fully harness these assets due to fragmented food systems and limited institutional coordination. IOFS bridges this gap by promoting integrated strategies that combine agricultural innovation, value chain development, and rural empowerment. Through initiatives that support local food production, enhance storage and distribution systems, and expand access to Islamic financing tools, IOFS contributes to reducing dependency on imports while strengthening intra-OIC trade. These actions not only address immediate food security concerns but also lay the foundation for long-term socio-economic transformation and rural prosperity.

PROMOTING WOMEN- AND YOUTH-CENTERED SOLUTIONS

One of IOFS's most distinctive strengths lies in its emphasis on inclusive solutions that empower women and youth as agents of change. Recognizing that sustainable food systems depend on their active participation, IOFS integrates gender and youth dimensions into all its strategic programs. From improving women's access to land, finance, and markets to supporting youth-led agritech startups and digital agriculture platforms, IOFS ensures that policy and practice evolve in tandem with demographic realities. These efforts contribute to the creation of inclusive rural economies where innovation, entrepreneurship, and social responsibility reinforce one another.

A CONVERGING PLATFORM FOR COLLABORATION AND RESILIENCE

Ultimately, IOFS's role transcends the technical aspects of agricultural policy — it serves as a moral and developmental platform uniting the Muslim world around the shared vision of ending hunger, strengthening resilience, and fostering self-reliance. By integrating women's leadership, youth innovation, and collective action, IOFS embodies the principle that food security is not merely a development goal, but a foundation for dignity, stability, and sustainable progress across OIC Member States.

IOFS AS A CATALYST FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

Since its establishment, IOFS has evolved into the OIC's specialized body driving regional cooperation in food security. Through its Strategic Programmes on Food Security Governance, Agri-Food Investment, and Food Systems Resilience, IOFS is actively strengthening Member States' capacities to address vulnerabilities and harness demographic potential.

IOFS PROGRAMS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF EMPOWERING WOMEN AND YOUTH

The acknowledgment of women's pivotal role in combating undernourishment and poverty is crucial for strategic policy prioritization. Observing that women typically prioritize household nutrition and food security, IOFS can leverage this insight to enhance policy impact. The Food Security Governance Program is the primary mechanism for integrating this gender-aware approach. This program is designed to facilitate effective Member State Food Security policies and regulatory frameworks. By developing new Food Security policy frameworks and implementation guidelines for Member Countries, IOFS ensures that policies, such as those related to resource allocation, agricultural extension services, or small-scale farming support, are intentionally prioritized to maximize the involvement and effectiveness of women in the food system. This strategic policy design increases the probability of achieving the ultimate goal of addressing mega-trends like Hunger & Malnutrition across the OIC region.

The role of IOFS as a catalyst for collective action, particularly in the context of empowering women and youth, can be concretized through its strategic programs with the following explanations:

- **Talent Development:** The IOFS OIC Food System Talent Development Program aims to strengthen the talent pool in the food and agriculture sectors of member countries. This program facilitates the networking of Food Science university programs and scales up higher education and vocational training through events like the OIC Education Forum to accelerate the integration of youth into the agri-food sector. This is a fundamental way to empower the potential of the young population by equipping them with the skills necessary for modern food systems.
- **Agri-Technology and Capacity Building:** The Bio and Agri-Technology Development Program, under the main heading of Capacity Building, aims to make IOFS the OIC's Center of Excellence for food technology and agritech. This program empowers a new generation of the workforce, including youth and women, by providing technical expertise and training programs related to innovative solutions. Technological transformation in agriculture can increase the participation of women.
- **SMEs and Industry Development:** IOFS strives to achieve its goal of enhancing the competitiveness of the OIC Agri-Food Industry. This objective involves increasing exports and managing post-harvest losses for everyone, from large corporations to SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises). Support and training for SMEs are vital for the economic empowerment of women, who often play critical roles in these stages of the agri-food supply chain. This allows them to realize their entrepreneurial potential and actively participate in intra-OIC trade.

CONCLUSION

As IOFS commemorates its anniversary and the OIC Food Security Day, it reaffirms the collective vision of an Islamic world free from hunger, malnutrition, and food insecurity. The discussions and initiatives outlined above clearly demonstrate that sustainable food systems cannot be achieved without the meaningful inclusion of rural women and youth — the very actors who sustain production, innovation, and community resilience across the OIC Member States. Their empowerment is not only a social

imperative but an economic necessity that determines the long-term stability and prosperity of our societies.

IOFS has proven itself as a vital and dynamic platform for addressing the structural challenges of food insecurity within the Muslim world. Through its comprehensive programs on food security governance, agri-food investment, and capacity building, the Organisation has strengthened the institutional foundations that enable Member States to transition toward self-sufficiency and resilience. By promoting evidence-based policymaking, facilitating the exchange of knowledge, and encouraging intra-OIC cooperation, IOFS has positioned itself as both a policy driver and a catalyst for sustainable transformation.

Looking ahead, the Organisation's emphasis on women- and youth-centered approaches will remain essential. Empowering women through access to land, finance, and leadership, and equipping youth with skills in agri-tech, entrepreneurship, and innovation, will create a new generation capable of driving food systems transformation. These efforts align with the broader objectives of the OIC and the Sustainable Development Goals, reinforcing the notion that food security is inseparable from human development, gender equality, and social justice.

Ultimately, the mission of IOFS extends beyond providing technical solutions — it embodies a shared moral responsibility to ensure that every individual in the OIC region enjoys the right to adequate food and nutrition. By uniting Member States around collaborative, inclusive, and forward-looking strategies, IOFS continues to serve as a beacon of hope and progress. In doing so, it strengthens not only food security but also the solidarity, dignity, and sustainable future of the entire Islamic world.

PHOTOS:



(IOFS Afghanistan Food Security Program)



(IOFS - UN Women National Consultation Workshop in Abuja to Empower Women in Nigeria's Cassava Value Chains)



(IOFS – TAGEM – TIKA – GFCM Workshop on Sharing Experiences of GFCM Countries in Post-Harvest Fish Loss Reduction in Türkiye)



(IOFS-ICESCO-KazNARU Workshop in Almaty)

EN SUMMARY

This article highlights the significance of the IOFS anniversary and OIC Food Security Day as a moment to reaffirm the shared commitment to ensuring adequate food and nutrition across the Muslim world, with a special focus on this year's theme: empowering rural women and youth as key drivers of resilient and sustainable food systems. It examines regional realities across Asia, Africa, and the Arab world, showing how women's limited access to land and finance, youth disengagement, climate pressures, and fragmented food systems hinder progress, while also outlining priority actions to close these gaps. The article underscores that empowering women and youth is both an equity imperative and a strategic necessity that can boost productivity,

innovation, and climate resilience. It further presents IOFS as a central platform for coordinated action, supporting Member States through programs on food security governance, agri-food investment, capacity building, and inclusive development. By promoting gender-responsive policies, youth talent development, agritech innovation, and SME strengthening, IOFS helps unlock the region's demographic and agricultural potential. Ultimately, the article argues that sustainable food security in the OIC cannot be achieved without fully harnessing the leadership of women and youth, and positions IOFS as a catalyst for collective action toward a more resilient, self-reliant, and equitable food future.

FR RÉSUMÉ

Cet article met en lumière l'importance de l'anniversaire de l'IOFS et de la Journée de la sécurité alimentaire de l'OIC comme moment clé pour réaffirmer l'engagement collectif en faveur du droit à une alimentation adéquate dans le monde musulman, en mettant particulièrement l'accent sur le thème de cette année : l'autonomisation des femmes rurales et des jeunes, moteurs essentiels de systèmes alimentaires résilients et durables. Il examine les réalités régionales en Asie, en Afrique et dans le monde arabe, montrant comment l'accès limité des femmes à la terre et au financement, le désengagement des jeunes, les pressions climatiques et la fragmentation des systèmes alimentaires freinent les progrès, tout en identifiant des priorités pour combler ces écarts. L'article souligne que l'autonomisation des femmes et des jeunes constitue à la fois une exigence d'équité et une né-

cessité stratégique pour renforcer la productivité, l'innovation et la résilience climatique. Il présente également l'IOFS comme une plateforme centrale d'action coordonnée, soutenant les États membres grâce à des programmes portant sur la gouvernance de la sécurité alimentaire, l'investissement agroalimentaire, le renforcement des capacités et le développement inclusif. En promouvant des politiques sensibles au genre, le développement des talents des jeunes, l'innovation agri-tech et le soutien aux PME, l'IOFS contribue à libérer le potentiel démographique et agricole de la région. En définitive, l'article affirme que la sécurité alimentaire durable dans l'OIC ne peut être atteinte sans mobiliser pleinement le leadership des femmes et des jeunes, et positionne l'IOFS comme un catalyseur d'action collective vers un avenir alimentaire plus résilient, autonome et équitable.

ملخص

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والقدرة على مواجهة تغير المناخ. كما يعرض المقال دور المنظمة بوصفها منصة مركزية للعمل المنسق، تدعم الدول الأعضاء من خلال برامجها في حوكمة الأمن الغذائي، والاستثمار في الأنظمة الزراعية والغذائية، وبناء القدرات، والتنمية الشاملة. ومن خلال تعزيز السياسات الحساسة للنوع الاجتماعي، وتنمية مهارات الشباب، ودعم الابتكار الزراعي الرقمي، وتقوية المؤسسات الصغيرة والمتوسطة، تسهم المنظمة في إطلاق الإمكانيات الديموغرافية والزراعية في المنطقة. ويخلص المقال إلى أن تحقيق الأمن الغذائي المستدام في دول منظمة التعاون الإسلامي لا يمكن أن يتم دون الاستفادة الكاملة من قيادة النساء والشباب، ويبرز المنظمة كعامل محفز للعمل الجماعي نحو مستقبل غذائي أكثر صموداً واعتماداً على الذات.

يسلط هذا المقال الضوء على أهمية الذكرى السنوية للمنظمة الإسلامية للأمن الغذائي و«يوم الأمن الغذائي لمنظمة التعاون الإسلامي» بوصفهما لحظة لإعادة تأكيد الالتزام المشترك بضمان الغذاء والتغذية الكافيين في العالم الإسلامي، مع التركيز بشكل خاص على موضوع هذا العام: تمكين النساء الريفيات والشباب باعتبارهم محركات أساسية لبناء نظم غذائية أكثر صموداً واستدامة. ويستعرض المقال الواقع الإقليمي في آسيا وأفريقيا والعالم العربي، مبيّناً كيف أن محدودية وصول النساء إلى الأراضي والتمويل، وتراجع مشاركة الشباب، والضغط المناخي، وتشتت النظم الغذائية تعيق التقدم، مع تحديد أولويات عملية لمعالجة هذه الفجوات. ويؤكد المقال أن تمكين النساء والشباب ليس مجرد التزام بالعدالة الاجتماعية، بل هو ضرورة استراتيجية يمكن أن تعزز الإنتاجية والابتكار

STRENGTHENING FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE IN CENTRAL ASIA

HOW RELIABILITY AT KEY CHOKEPOINTS SHAPES RESILIENCE



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INTRODUCTION

Climate change, market volatility, and changing global trade routes are putting extra pressure on food systems in many parts of the world. Central Asia is no exception. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have invested a lot of resources into digital agriculture, storage, laboratories, transport corridors, and irrigation. But when shocks occur, supply chains are still fragile.

The primary cause is not always the lack of infrastructure, but the fact that key systems like irrigation service provision, transport and distribution, and food safety certification fail to function as expected. This article contends that operational reliability at these chokepoints constitutes a vital yet often neglected cornerstone of food system resilience. The examples are from Central Asia, but the mechanisms could be applicable to many OIC Member States that have similar climate and logistical issues. Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan are studied because they are among the largest agricultural producers in the region, with complementary profiles in rain-fed grain (Kazakhstan) and irrigated horticulture (Uzbekistan) production. The analysis draws on the author's MSc research on food system resilience in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan at Cranfield University, UK.

RETHINKING FOOD SYSTEM RESILIENCE

Food system resilience is now widely understood as the ability to maintain food security while absorbing, adapting, and changing in response to shocks (FAO, 2021; Tendall et al., 2015). It depends on elements like land, water, infrastructure, and storage, as well as how well institutions collaborate, how information flows, and how efficient core services are. Recent reviews also show that, in low- and middle-income countries, resilience studies still focus largely on primary production and robustness, with less attention to downstream value-chain stages and to adaptiveness and transformability of food systems (Meyer, 2020).

Infrastructure on its own does not guarantee resilience. A canal that delivers water at unpredictable intervals, a modern storage facility that is not available when needed, or an upgraded laboratory with certification times that change frequently all make it harder for farmers, traders, and processors to plan and deal with stress. In reality, predictability and coordination are what make the difference between having enough capacity and having stable food flows.

CENTRAL ASIA: HIGH EXPOSURE, HIGH STAKES

Central Asia faces several inherent risk factors, linked to its climate, water resources and long distances between production areas and markets. Research on climate shows that temperatures are rising, heat waves are happening more often, and the amount of water flowing through the Syr Darya and Amu Darya basins is changing. Kazakhstan's grain-growing areas that get their water from rain are at risk from changes in rainfall and soil moisture, while Uzbekistan's irrigated agriculture relies heavily on reliable water delivery (Kummu et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2022).

Both countries are landlocked and they depend on only a few rail and road corridors to trade with their partners. Changes in trade routes, transit conditions, and transportation costs have all had an effect on the movement of food and agricultural inputs (UN-ESCAP, 2021). Responsibilities for water management, agriculture, trade, transport and food safety are divided among several institutions, sometimes with weak coordination (OECD, 2021).

Because of these things, when core systems act in unexpected ways, the effects spread quickly along the value chain. To make systems more resilient, we need to look at more than just "how much capacity" they have. We also need to look at how steadily systems function.

THREE CHOKEPOINTS THAT SHAPE FOOD SYSTEM PERFORMANCE

In this context, three operational chokepoints stand out: irrigation and water delivery, food transport and market distribution, and the certification of food safety and laboratory services. Each plays a decisive role in determining timing and reliability.

1. IRRIGATION AND WATER DELIVERY

In semi-arid regions, water is often the main factor that determines whether a harvest succeeds or fails. It is not only about how much water is available in total, but also about *when* it reaches the fields. If farmers do not know when irrigation water will come, they struggle to choose the right sowing dates, crop varieties, or fertiliser plans.

In parts of Central Asia, farmers report that water sometimes comes earlier or later than promised, or in smaller amounts than

expected. Schedules may change due to technical problems, competing demands upstream, or unclear allocation rules. When this happens, farmers adjust as best they can: they delay planting, change crops, or accept lower yields. These choices might be sensible at the farm level, but they make the whole system more vulnerable to heat waves and dry spells (FAO, 2020; FAO, 2021).

Improving resilience here does not always mean building new canals or reservoirs. It can also mean clearer seasonal water plans, regular maintenance of key sections of the network, simple measurement of flows, and better communication tools. Even basic SMS alerts or notice boards can help farmers prepare. When people know what to expect, they have better adaptive abilities.



2. FOOD TRANSPORT AND MARKET DISTRIBUTION

The second bottleneck is the movement of food and agricultural inputs within the countries. In both Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan, the crops are often grown far from the major consumption or processing areas. Grain harvested in the north of Kazakhstan may need to move hundreds of kilometres to reach flour mills or ports; fruit and vegetables produced in Uzbekistan's irrigated valleys must be delivered quickly to urban markets or packing houses.

Delays and uncertainty in transport and distribution can appear for many reasons: limited availability of trucks or rail wagons during peak seasons, seasonal road conditions, uneven access to cold-chain facilities. Other factors include weak logistical coordination between farmers, intermediaries, storage facilities and wholesale markets. When vehicles or storage space are not available at the right moment, farmers may be forced to sell at lower prices, lose quality, or leave produce unsold. These problems can become more serious during years of bad weather, high prices, or strong demand swings (UNESCAP, 2021; UNCTAD, 2022).

From a resilience point of view, logistics systems that are not necessarily “perfect”, but are reliable and transparent, can make a big difference. Better planning of seasonal transport needs, improved links between producers and logistics companies, modest investments in intermediate storage, and more efficient use of existing infrastructure can all help to reduce timing problems. When food can move steadily from surplus areas to deficit areas, countries are better positioned to manage local crop failures, price spikes, and other shocks.



3. FOOD SAFETY CERTIFICATION AND LABORATORY SERVICES

Another area where timing can significantly impact performance is food safety certification. Over the past decade, many laboratories in Central Asia have benefited from national programmes and cooperation with international partners. Staff are better trained, equipment is more modern, and regulations are closer to international standards. However, exporters and domestic producers often still face uncertainty about how long it will take to get test results and official certificates.

Sometimes they come back within a day and other times it takes several days. Reasons can include workload peaks, staff absences, manual paperwork, or the need for multiple signatures in different offices. While each delay may seem small, together they can seriously affect planning. For perishables, unpredictable certification timelines can result in quality loss or missed delivery windows; for grain and processed foods, they create extra storage and finance costs (UNCTAD, 2022).

Here again, digital tools can help, but only if they are used to simplify and connect processes. Electronic submission of samples, digital tracking of where a test or certificate currently is in the workflow, and e-certification that links laboratories with competent authorities and customs can reduce delays and increase transparency. Setting simple service-level targets, such as typical turnaround times for standard tests, also makes it easier for businesses to plan.



DIGITALISATION AND RELIABILITY

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have made good progress in using digital tools in agriculture and trade. Examples include satellite-based monitoring of crops, automated meters in parts of irrigation networks, online customs portals, and electronic phytosanitary certificates (FAO, 2021; World Bank, 2023). There is also growing interest in using artificial intelligence to improve yield forecasts, climate risk assessments, and logistics planning.

However, digitalisation does not automatically make systems resilient. In many countries, digital solutions have sometimes been developed separately in different sectors, which can make it harder to share information and use it in a coordinated way. For digital tools to support resilience, they need to help different actors see the same picture, at roughly the same time, and act on it.

In practice, this means focusing on interoperability and usability. Systems that allow water authorities, logistics and distribution actors, food safety agencies, and even private companies to see key indicators, such as current waiting times at borders, lab workloads, or planned irrigation releases can help everyone adjust sooner. The goal is not just to make things faster but to make them **more predictable**.

CONCLUSION

The experience of Central Asia shows that strengthening food systems is not only about building more canals, laboratories, or storage facilities, it is just as much about whether these systems work in a steady and predictable way. When irrigation schedules change at short notice, transport is delayed or unavailable, or food safety certificates come back on different timelines every week, the whole value chain becomes harder to manage.

For farmers, traders, and processors, this unpredictability turns ordinary business decisions into a kind of guessing game. It limits their ability to cope with droughts, price spikes, or disruptions in supply and demand, even when formal capacity on paper looks sufficient. By contrast, when key services operate with clear rules and stable timing, it becomes much easier to plan, adjust, and recover after shocks.

For many OIC Member States, especially those that are landlocked or highly exposed to climate risks, this is an important lesson. Looking only at “how much” capacity exists is not enough. Paying attention to how reliably core systems perform, and to small, practical improvements in timing and coordination, can be one of several ways to make food systems in Central Asia and beyond stronger and more resilient.



EN SUMMARY

This article examines how food system resilience in Central Asia depends not only on infrastructure, but on how reliably key services operate over time. Using Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as examples, it highlights three domestic chokepoints: irrigation and water delivery, food transport and market distribution, and food safety certification and laboratory services. It argues that timing,

predictability and coordination at these nodes strongly influence how well farmers, traders and processors can cope with climate and market shocks. The article also notes that digital tools can support resilience when they improve information sharing and interoperability, rather than creating isolated platforms.

FR RÉSUMÉ

Cet article analyse comment la résilience des systèmes alimentaires en Asie centrale dépend non seulement des infrastructures, mais aussi de la fiabilité du fonctionnement des services essentiels dans le temps. En prenant le Kazakhstan et l'Ouzbékistan comme exemples, il met en évidence trois points d'étranglement internes : l'irrigation et la distribution de l'eau, le transport des denrées et la distribution sur les marchés, ainsi que la certification sanitaire et les services de laboratoire. Il

soutient que le calendrier, la prévisibilité et la coordination à ces nœuds influencent fortement la capacité des agriculteurs, des commerçants et des transformateurs à faire face aux chocs climatiques et économiques. L'article souligne également que les outils numériques peuvent renforcer la résilience lorsqu'ils améliorent le partage d'informations et l'interopérabilité, plutôt que de créer des plateformes isolées.

ملخص

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المخبرية. ويؤكد المقال أن عامل التوقيت وقابلية التنبؤ والتنسيق في هذه النقاط يؤثر بشكل كبير على قدرة المزارعين والتجار والمصنعين على التعامل مع الصدمات المناخية والسوقية. كما يشير إلى أن الأدوات الرقمية يمكن أن تدعم المرونة عندما تعزز تبادل المعلومات وقابلية التشغيل البيئي، بدلاً من إنشاء منصات معزولة

يبحث هذا المقال في كيفية اعتماد مرونة النظم الغذائية في آسيا الوسطى ليس فقط على البنية التحتية، بل أيضاً على مدى موثوقية عمل الخدمات الأساسية بمرور الوقت. ومن خلال استخدام كازاخستان وأوزبكستان كأمثلة، يسلط الضوء على ثلاثة نقاط محلية: الري وتوصيل المياه، نقل الأغذية وتوزيعها في الأسواق، وشهادات السلامة الغذائية والخدمات

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BUILDING THE FOUNDATION FOR WADI 2026: IOFS–UN WOMEN PARTNERSHIP ON WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT IN AGRICULTURE



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1. INTRODUCTION

Women are essential to agriculture and food security given that they are involved in production, processing, marketing, and household nutrition. They support with the domestication of plants and animals, the selection of seeds, and the use of sustainable farming methods. Women's involvement in agriculture differs by region and is influenced by socio-economic conditions, cultural practices, and access to resources. 66% of the workforce in sub-Saharan Africa is made up of women, and 71% of women in South Asia depend on agrifood systems for work. Women play a critical role, yet they are faced with issues like lower pay, less access to land and resources, and social barriers that make it challenging for them to take part in high-value agricultural activities. Female-owned farms generate 24% less than male-owned farms on average since women lack the same access to inputs and opportunities (UN FAO, 2023).

Women in rural areas carry significant household and caregiving responsibilities, which overlap with their productive roles and contribute to time poverty. Tasks such as cooking, cleaning, collecting water and fuel, and caring for family members reduce the time available for income-generating agricultural activities. Many women also work on family farms or run small agribusinesses, balancing both domestic and productive workloads.

Women are less likely to be entrepreneurs or independent farmers, often working as unpaid or casual laborers in less profitable crops, with social norms limiting their participation in male-dominated activities. Closing this gender gap is essential for improving food security and economic growth. According to various studies, providing women with equal access to resources could increase agricultural yields by 20–30%, boost national food production by up to 4%, and reduce malnutrition by 12–17%. (UN FAO, 2011). Women must be at the forefront of agrifood transformation, leveraging science, technology, and innovation to drive sustainable agricultural development and resilience. Women are key to transforming agrifood systems, and prioritizing their inclusion is crucial for productivity and sustainability. Science, technology, and innovation must be leveraged to address current challenges, with women leading the agrifood revolution.

The Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) is addressing food security challenges in OIC member states through targeted initiatives that enhance agricultural resilience and support vulnerable communities. Therefore IOFS has initiated the flagship programs, such as *the African Food Security Initiative (AFSI)*, launched in 2022, focuses on strengthening sustainable food production, promoting climate-smart agriculture, and improving smallholder farmers' access to finance and markets, and *the Afghanistan Food Security Program (AFSP)* was launched as part of the mandate by

the 17th Extraordinary Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (19 December 2021, Islamabad, Pakistan) which aims to tackle Afghanistan's food crisis by delivering immediate assistance while strengthening the agricultural.

Building on the success of these initiatives and the ongoing need to empower women in the agricultural sector, IOFS is now proposing the **Women in Agriculture Development Initiative (WADI)**. This initiative is intended as a continuation of IOFS's strategic efforts to develop the agricultural sector in the OIC geography by empowering women in agriculture and ensuring their access to financial resources, training, and modern farming technologies. WADI aims to scale up the impact of previous IOFS activities by placing women at the center of food security strategies, recognizing their essential role in agricultural development and resilience, working coherently with national, regional, and international organizations with relevant interests for creating better livelihoods in the OIC geography.

2. STRATEGIC IOFS-UN WOMEN PARTNERSHIP

In driving forward such an important and multidimensional initiative, IOFS engaged with **UN Women** to collectively work on the empowerment of rural women and highlight their essential role in agriculture and agribusiness. Such a partnership, which was made manifest with a Memorandum of Understanding between IOFS and UN Women on 19 May 2025, ensures a strong institutional framework to facilitate coordinated actions, sharing of knowledge, and the design of gender-responsive interventions.

The IOFS and UN Women therefore initiated the **"Women's Empowerment through Climate-Resilient Agriculture Value Chains in West and Central Africa Initiative"** to implement a range of tailored activities, projects, and technical support to improve livelihoods in West and Central Africa, with particular focus on vulnerable regions and countries where its interventions are most critical, leveraging expertise, innovative technologies, and knowledge-sharing platforms to foster meaningful partnerships and for a long term drive impactful changes.

In its initial phase, the project is implemented in two countries: **Nigeria** and **Sierra Leone** on the **cassava value chain**. In both project countries, cassava is one of the main staple crops and has been identified as a priority strategic crop in their national agriculture, food security and food sovereignty, and economic development strategies.

3. COUNTRY STUDIES ON WOMEN IN THE CASSAVA VALUE CHAIN

In West and Central Africa, women play a leading role in agriculture, particularly in post-harvest processing, but also in the production and commercialization stages of the value chains. Post-harvest activities present an opportunity for income diversification and the development of high-value chains, particularly for women, who are traditionally engaged in this phase. However, the post-harvest processing of various crops, including cassava, entails a considerable workload and associated effort.

Consequently, it is important to invest in infrastructure, capacity-building initiatives, and the creation of specialized financial services to enable rural women to alleviate time-consuming labor linked to agricultural production and post-harvest processing.

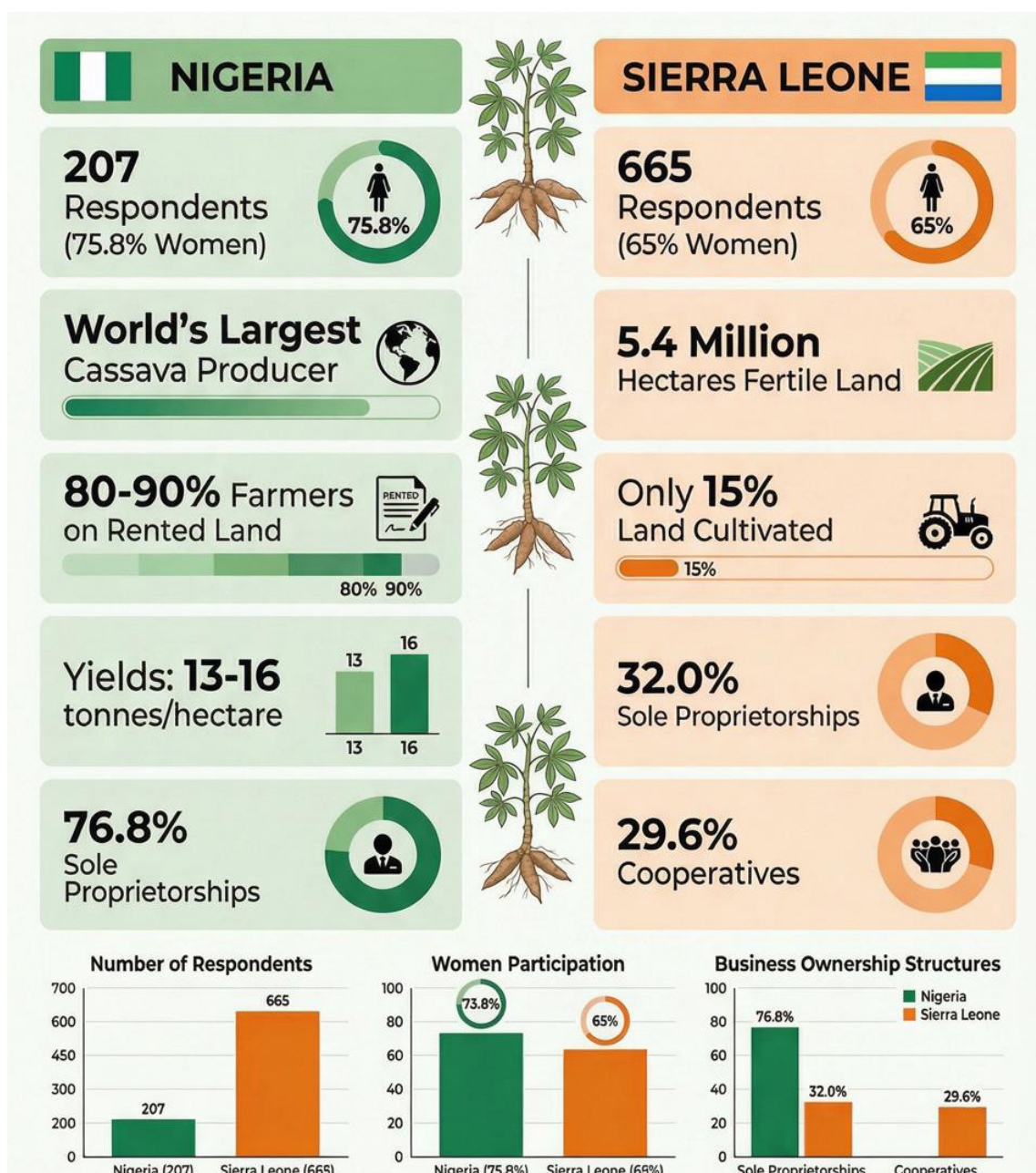
One of the most strategic crops in West Africa, cassava, presents several complex gender-related dynamics, as well as opportu-

nities and constraints for women's participation and economic empowerment. To evaluate these factors, IOFS and UN Women carried out a thorough Rapid Response Appraisal (RRA) between August and October 2025 through a gender-responsive lens. RRA Study is to design a clear and actionable programmatic framework to implement a scalable project in the cassava value chain with a focus on women-led enterprises and organizations.

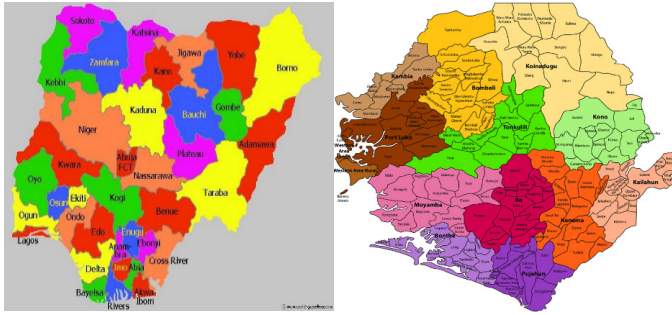
The study aimed to analyse the cassava value chain in both countries by identifying key actors and market opportunities, assessing major challenges—especially those affecting women and youth—examining gaps in past and ongoing interventions, and determining the capacity needs of stakeholders across the value chain.

The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative data collection via semi-structured questionnaires administered through KoboToolbox with qualitative data collection methods to generate in-depth insights into value chain dynamics.

3.1. OVERVIEW OF THE CASSAVA VALUE CHAIN ASSESSMENT IN NIGERIA AND SIERRA LEONE



3.1.1. REGIONAL CONTEXT AND PRODUCTION LANDSCAPE



Cassava represents a critical food security crop in tropical regions, with global production reaching 324.7 million tonnes annually. Africa dominates global cassava output, accounting for 64.7% of total production, followed by Asia (26.7%), the Americas (8.5%), and Oceania (0.1%) (Krungrsri Research, 2021). Within the African context, West Africa emerges as a particularly significant production zone, contributing over 35% of global cassava production.

Nigeria and Sierra Leone, both significant West African cassava producers, present contrasting production scales and development trajectories. Nigeria maintains its position as the world's leading cassava producer, generating approximately 67 million tonnes annually representing roughly 30% of global output (FAOSTAT, 2021). In contrast, Sierra Leone's production demonstrates considerable volatility, fluctuating between 881,222 tonnes (2019) and 3,047,589 tonnes (2021), positioning it among West Africa's emerging cassava producers with substantial untapped potential.

3.1.2. AGRICULTURAL POTENTIAL AND CONTEXT

The study covered four key locations in Nigeria—Abuja (Federal Capital Territory), as well as the states of Abia, Oyo, and Nasarawa—and assessed six districts across three regions in Sierra Leone, namely the Northern Region (Bombali, Karene), Southern Region (Bo, Moyamba, Pujehun), and Eastern Region (Kenema).

The two countries present starkly different agricultural development stages. Nigeria, as the global cassava leader, operates within a mature but constrained production system. The sector faces intensification challenges with yields remaining at 13–16 t/ha despite widespread availability of improved varieties such as TMS 419 and yellow cassava. Land access remains severely constrained: in Abuja and Abia, over 80–90% of farmers cultivate less than 10 hectares, predominantly on rented land.

Sierra Leone, conversely, possesses substantial untapped agricultural potential. With a population of 8.8 million (United Nations Population Fund), only 15% of 5.4 million hectares of fertile arable land is currently under cultivation, highlighting enormous expansion possibilities. The country benefits from favorable climatic conditions, receiving approximately 3,000mm of rainfall over half the year, with seven major rivers providing additional water resources. District-level yields range from 10–21 t/ha, with Kenema District achieving 21 t/ha—substantially higher than Nigeria's average. Cassava serves as the country's second major staple crop after rice and is central to the national Feed Salone Strategy (NAT 2023), which recognizes cassava's resilience to climate shocks and versatility for food and industrial uses.

3.1.3. DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIOECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Both studies showed that a majority of women participated part, but the numbers were very different. With 75.8% of women in Nigeria and 65% of women in Sierra Leone, both countries show that women play a major role in cassava value chains. Age distribution patterns were similar in both countries, with the majority of respondents being between the ages of 36 and 45 (Nigeria: 39.6%; Sierra Leone: 41.4%). This suggests that cassava businesses are mostly run by people in their mid-career.

Educational disparities were pronounced. Nigeria showed 61% with secondary education or above versus Sierra Leone's 44% uneducated population. This suggests Nigeria requires advanced technical training while Sierra Leone needs foundational literacy programs integrated with agricultural extension before specialized interventions can succeed.

Business ownership structures diverged significantly. Nigeria exhibited limited collective action with 76.8% sole proprietorships, 10.6% family businesses, 5.8% cooperatives, and 4.8% partnerships. Sierra Leone showed greater organizational diversity: 32.0% sole proprietorships, 29.6% cooperatives, 18.2% partnerships, and 12.9% family-owned businesses, suggesting stronger though still insufficient collective action frameworks.

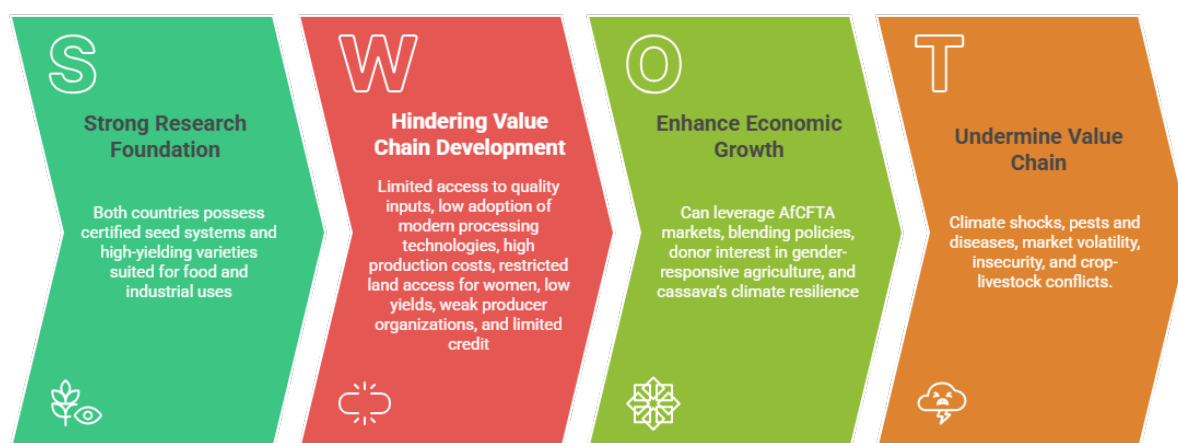


3.1.4. SWOT ANALYSIS

To better understand the structural performance of the cassava value chains in Nigeria and Sierra Leone, the assessment has included a comprehensive SWOT analysis for both countries. The analysis captures the most critical internal and external factors influencing sector productivity, gender inclusion, market development, and long-term resilience. Despite operating at different

stages of agricultural development, the two countries share several systemic challenges and opportunities. Nigeria's cassava sector is large and mature but constrained by low yields and limited expansion capacity, whereas Sierra Leone holds vast unused fertile land and strong political commitment but faces foundational gaps in education, infrastructure, and financing.

Cassava Value Chain Development



3.1.5. CRITICAL GENDER-RELATED BOTTLENECKS

The assessment revealed several gender-specific limitations that restrict value chain participation and women's economic empowerment in both Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

In Nigeria, gender-related challenges are intensified by the high cost of inputs and processing equipment, weak rural infrastructure—such as inadequate roads, processing facilities, and water supply—limited awareness of export certification requirements, and high electricity costs that reduce profitability. Across both Nigeria and Sierra Leone, women face structural barriers, including limited access to finance, restricted land rights due to traditional tenure systems, heavy unpaid care responsibilities, and limited participation in decision-making across the value chain. In Sierra Leone, these challenges are further compounded by lower baseline education levels and gaps in access to information and extension services, which make the adoption of new technologies more difficult.

These constraints underscore the need for tailored, gender-responsive interventions capable of addressing both the shared and context-specific barriers faced by women in each country.

3.2. NATIONAL CONSULTATION WORKSHOPS

As an essential component of the joint IOFS–UN Women initiative, national multi-stakeholder consultation workshops were convened in close partnership with the governments of **Nigeria (8–9 October 2025)** and **Sierra Leone (14–15 October 2025)** to validate the Rapid Response Appraisal findings and engage key stakeholders in shaping the design of the programme implementation. Both consultations were attended by high-level representatives from the Ministries of Gender and Agriculture, alongside other government bodies, development partners, financial bodies, research organizations, and above all, women farmers and entrepreneurs to reflect on the study results and jointly identify practical pathways for empowering women within climate-resilient cassava value chains.

In **Nigeria**, the workshop was held in the UN House in Abuja and brought together more than 200 participants, who examined the

study findings, including women's participation in the cassava sector, persistent land and finance constraints, and the need for improved processing technologies. Over two days, discussions centered on market access, climate resilience, and gender-responsive policy environments. Stakeholders put forward several concrete recommendations, including:

- strengthening women's access to modern technologies and inputs;
- creating gender-responsive financing mechanisms;
- developing shared processing facilities;
- establishing agricultural insurance schemes for women;
- enhancing extension services through digital data systems; and
- creating regional knowledge hubs to improve skills and innovation.





4. KEY OUTCOMES AND INSIGHTS

The joint IOFS–UN Women assessment in Nigeria and Sierra Leone produced a strong evidence base for shaping gender-responsive, climate-resilient interventions under WADI. The study confirmed that women constitute the backbone of the cassava value chains yet continue to face deeply rooted, gender-related barriers, including in land access, financing, technology use, and extension services. These constraints, while common across both countries, manifest differently and therefore require tailored, country-specific solutions.

The national consultation workshops held in Abuja and Makeni validated the study findings and produced clear, actionable priorities. Stakeholders emphasized the urgency of improving women's access to improved planting materials, modern processing technologies, gender-responsive financial products, common-user processing facilities, strengthened cooperatives, and digital data systems linking women farmers to markets and other resources.

These recommendations now serve as the foundation for IOFS and UN Women to further work in partnership with the governments of Nigeria and Sierra Leone to design a joint, gender-responsive project for both countries and mobilize funding for implementation. Overall, the assessment highlighted three key lessons for WADI: (1) women's economic contribution remains significantly undervalued despite their dominance in the sector; (2) structural and gender-related constraints are deeply interconnected and require integrated solutions; and (3) strong national ownership, aligned policies, and multi-stakeholder engagement. IOFS remains committed to supporting Member States, serving as an implementing partner, and expanding this successful approach to other regions under the WADI framework.

In **Sierra Leone**, the consultation—held in the town of Makeni alongside the International Day of Rural Women—engaged over 180 stakeholders who validated the findings of the RRA study. The workshop highlighted major challenges faced by women, such as land access barriers, limited financing, weak infrastructure, and low technology adoption. Participants recommended a focused set of actions, including:

- Adopting gender-responsive policies and local by-laws that protect women's land rights;
- establishing rural processing centers and common-user facilities;
- introducing insurance schemes for women farmers and processors;
- improving access to gender-friendly equipment;
- strengthening women's cooperatives;
- expanding training on best agronomic practices; and
- building a national data system linking women farmers to markets and extension services.



EN SUMMARY

This article presents the findings and lessons learned from the joint assessment conducted by the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) and UN Women on women's participation and economic empowerment opportunities in the cassava value chains of Nigeria and Sierra Leone. The study, carried out between July and October 2025, used a gender-responsive, mixed-methods approach to analyse key actors, market opportunities, structural constraints, gender-specific barriers, and capacity needs across both countries. The results confirm women's dominant role in the cassava sector—representing 65–76% of respondents—while revealing persistent inequalities in land access, financing, technology adoption, and extension services.

The two countries exhibit contrasting agricultural contexts and both present gender-related disparities: Nigeria, while the world's largest cassava producer, faces constraints in farm expansion at the smallholder level and continues to operate below its yield potential despite

widespread availability of improved varieties., whereas Sierra Leone holds substantial untapped agricultural potential, supported by fertile land, favorable climatic conditions, and higher-yielding districts. National consultation workshops in Abuja and Makeni validated these findings and generated concrete recommendations, including improving women's access to inputs and technologies, establishing common-user processing facilities, strengthening cooperatives, and creating gender-responsive financial mechanisms.

The assessment provides a strong evidence base for the Women in Agriculture Development Initiative (WADI), guiding IOFS and UN Women in designing tailored programmes for Nigeria and Sierra Leone and mobilizing resources for implementation. Building on these insights, both organizations will continue working closely with Member States as an implementing partner, strengthening climate-resilient value chains and expanding the WADI model across the OIC region.

FR RÉSUMÉ

Cet article présente les résultats et les enseignements tirés de l'évaluation conjointe menée par l'Organisation islamique pour la sécurité alimentaire (IOFS) et ONU Femmes sur la participation des femmes dans les filières de manioc au Nigeria et en Sierra Leone. L'étude, réalisée entre juillet et octobre 2025, a utilisé une approche mixte et sensible au genre pour analyser les acteurs clés, les opportunités de marché, les contraintes structurelles, les obstacles spécifiques au genre et les besoins en renforcement de capacités dans les deux pays. Les résultats confirment le rôle dominant des femmes dans le secteur du manioc — représentant 65 à 76 % des répondantes — tout en révélant des inégalités persistantes en matière d'accès à la terre, de financement, d'adoption des technologies et de services de vulgarisation.

Les deux pays présentent des contextes agricoles contrastés : le Nigeria fonctionne avec un système de production vaste mais limité en terres et à faible rendement, tandis que la Sierra Leone dispose d'un potentiel agricole important non exploité, soutenu

par des terres fertiles, des conditions climatiques favorables et des districts à rendements plus élevés. Des ateliers de consultation nationale à Abuja et Makeni ont validé ces conclusions et formulé des recommandations concrètes, notamment l'amélioration de l'accès des femmes aux intrants et aux technologies, la mise en place d'unités de transformation communes, le renforcement des coopératives et la création de mécanismes financiers sensibles au genre.

L'évaluation fournit une base probante solide pour l'Initiative pour le développement des femmes en agriculture (WADI), guidant l'IOFS dans la conception de programmes adaptés au Nigeria et à la Sierra Leone et la mobilisation de ressources pour leur mise en œuvre. S'appuyant sur ces enseignements, l'IOFS continuera de travailler étroitement avec les États membres en tant que partenaire de mise en œuvre, en renforçant les chaînes de valeur résilientes au climat et en étendant le modèle WADI à l'ensemble de la région de l'OIC.

ملخص

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تتمتع سيراليون بإمكانات زراعية كبيرة غير مستغلة، مدعومة بأراض خصبة، وظروف مناخية مناسبة، ومناطق إنتاج ذات غلة أعلى. وقد صادقت ورش العمل الوطنية في أبوجا وماكيني على هذه النتائج وقدمت توصيات عملية، بما في ذلك تحسين وصول النساء إلى المدخلات والتقنيات، وإنشاء مرافق تحويل مشتركة، وتعزيز التعاونيات، وإطلاق آليات تمويل حساسة للنوع الاجتماعي. يوفر هذا التقييم قاعدة قوية للأدلة لدعم مبادرة تطوير النساء في الزراعة (IDAW)، موجّهة المنظمة في تصميم برامج مخصصة لنيجيريا وسيراليون وتحفيز الموارد لتنفيذها. وبالاستناد إلى هذه الرؤى، ستواصل المنظمة العمل عن كثب مع الدول الأعضاء كشريك تنفيذي، لتعزيز سلاسل القيمة المقاومة للتغير المناخي وتوسيع نموذج IDAW في جميع أنحاء منطقة منظمة التعاون الإسلامي.

يقدم هذا المقال نتائج ودروس التقييم المشترك الذي أجرته المنظمة الإسلامية للأمن الغذائي (SFOI) ومنظمة الأمم المتحدة للمرأة حول مشاركة النساء في سلاسل قيمة الكاسافا في نيجيريا وسيراليون. وقد تم تنفيذ الدراسة بين يوليو وأكتوبر ٢٠٢٥ باستخدام منهجية مختلطة ومستجيبة للنوع الاجتماعي لتحليل الفاعلين الرئيسيين، وفرص السوق، والقيود الهيكلية، والعوائق الخاصة بالنساء، واحتياجات بناء القدرات في كلا البلدين. وتؤكد النتائج الدور المهيمن للنساء في قطاع الكاسافا، حيث يمثلن ما بين ٦٧ و ٥٦٪ من المشاركين في الاستطلاع، مع الكشف عن استمرار الفوارق في الوصول إلى الأراضي، والتمويل، واعتماد التكنولوجيا، وخدمات الإرشاد الزراعي.

وتظهر البلدان سياقات زراعية متباينة: حيث يعمل نظام الإنتاج في نيجيريا على نطاق واسع ولكنه محدود الأراضي ومنخفض الغلة، بينما

CROP-BASED WATER ALLOCATION: PRACTICAL OPTIONS FOR SMARTER IRRIGATION IN OIC COUNTRIES



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WHY EQUAL ALLOCATION FALLS SHORT

Anyone working with irrigation in the OIC region will know that water scarcity is not a future scenario—it's already shaping how people farm today. The Middle East and North Africa, for instance, have some of the world's highest ratios of agricultural water use to total withdrawals, often reaching 85–90% (SESRI, 2021).

Many governments still allocate water in the same way they did decades ago, usually on a uniform per-hectare basis. This may seem simple, but it does not match how crops actually grow. For example, the water needs of tomatoes or orchards are not remotely comparable to wheat or fodder crops.

The technical losses in irrigation networks make the situation even worse. Studies by the IWMI (2019) and World Bank (2020) point out that 30–50% of water in such systems can be lost before it reaches the farm. Combined with a uniform distribution system, the result is predictable: too much water in some places, too little in others, and farmers struggling to stabilise yields.

HOW CROP-BASED ALLOCATION WORKS IN PRACTICE

The main idea behind crop-based allocation is straightforward: determine how much water each crop will require during its growth cycle, and then plan distribution accordingly.

To estimate these needs, water managers use crop coefficients and local climatic indicators. FAO's approach — calculating evapotranspiration through ET_0 and K_c values — is widely applied because it allows planners to build realistic seasonal irrigation schedules. Software like CROPWAT or AquaCrop helps combine this information with rainfall, soil texture, and temperature.

When shortages emerge (and they often do), planners can prioritise crops that offer higher economic returns or that are essential for food security. Some regions of Spain already use a similar principle, giving more water to horticultural crops than to cereals, which has helped improve water productivity and rural incomes.

This method brings clearer reasoning into decision-making: water is assigned based on agronomic logic rather than tradition.

WHAT COUNTRIES ARE SEEING SO FAR

In the last few years, several OIC countries have tested elements of this approach. In Uzbekistan, satellite data on evapotranspiration helped identify where water deliveries were completely out of sync with crop needs. After adjustments, local reports indicated better yields — in some pilot areas, improvements of around 10–15 percent (Esri, 2023).

Crop-based allocation also influences how farmers choose what to plant. When water becomes a calculated input rather than a guaranteed amount, farmers gradually shift toward crops that use water more efficiently or generate better returns. Over time, this helps increase overall water productivity.

Kazakhstan is taking a different path by modernising parts of its irrigation network. The new Water Code aims to reduce losses from around 50 percent to 25 percent by improving canal lining and measurement systems (The Astana Times, 2024). These upgrades create the basic conditions needed for more flexible and crop-responsive allocation.

Other countries, like Morocco and Türkiye, approach the issue through zoning and digital tools. Morocco has long concentrated water-intensive horticulture in specific irrigated areas. Türkiye's DSI uses monitoring systems and automated gates in some schemes, helping managers regulate irrigation more accurately.

DIGITAL TOOLS MAKING THE SHIFT POSSIBLE

The availability of digital monitoring tools has made a big difference. FAO's WaPOR platform allows countries to track water use through satellite observations (FAO, 2021). Uzbekistan's GIS platform now integrates similar data for managing irrigation districts. Türkiye's SUTEM system — presented during the Astana training — automatically regulates canal flows based on real-time data.

Kazakhstan and several neighbouring countries have started deploying sensors, telemetry units, and dashboards that help water managers monitor distribution more closely. These technologies support a gradual shift away from purely supply-based irrigation to a model where actual crop water consumption plays a central role.

Importantly, these tools don't require countries to rebuild their entire infrastructure. Many can be introduced step by step.

MOMENTUM WITHIN THE OIC REGION

Interest in modern water-allocation methods is increasing. The IOFS–IsDB regional water management training in 2025 gathered more than 80 specialists — policymakers, researchers, and regional partners — who examined examples from Türkiye, Uzbekistan and other Member States. Much of the discussion focused on how countries can strengthen governance arrangements, adopt digital monitoring tools, and plan water distribution based on crop needs and real-time field conditions.



Group photo of IOFS–IsDB Regional Training participants, Astana 2025

The growing use of models such as Uzbekistan's TaqSim system, Morocco's crop-zoning strategies, and SESRIC's regional assessments shows that many Member States are moving in the same direction.

CONCLUSION: MOVING TOWARD PRACTICAL WATER-SMART AGRICULTURE

For many OIC countries, water scarcity is no longer a theoretical issue — it is already constraining agricultural growth. Crop-based allocation offers a realistic and affordable approach to using water more responsibly. By aligning supply with the actual needs of crops, countries can cut losses, raise yields, and build more resilient food systems.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MEMBER STATES

- Build national datasets on crop water needs using FAO methodologies and local field observations.
- Modernise selected irrigation schemes by improving flow measurement and adding telemetry or partial automation.
- Strengthen the skills of water professionals and farmers through IOFS–IsDB training programmes and regional exchanges.
- Review water-governance rules to ensure they allow flexible and transparent allocation in line with crop demand.
- Promote cropping choices that use water more efficiently or have stronger financial returns.

Together, these steps — in line with IOFS Vision 2031 — can help Member States make the best use of their limited water resources and improve agricultural resilience.



EN SUMMARY

In many OIC countries, irrigation is not just an agricultural activity—it is the backbone of rural economies. In some regions, agriculture draws close to 90% of all freshwater, according to recent FAO AQUASTAT and SESRIC reports. Yet a lot of that water never reaches the crops the way it should. Some of it is lost in canals, some disappears because the infrastructure is old, and some is simply misallocated. In many districts water is still divided equally by land area or according to a long-standing schedule — regardless of whether a farmer grows vegetables, wheat, orchards, or something else entirely.

FR RÉSUMÉ

Dans de nombreux pays de l'OCI, l'irrigation n'est pas seulement une activité agricole : elle constitue l'épine dorsale des économies rurales. Dans certaines régions, l'agriculture prélève près de 90 % de toute l'eau douce, selon les rapports récents de la FAO AQUASTAT et du SESRIC. Pourtant, une grande partie de cette eau n'atteint pas les cultures comme elle le devrait. Une partie se perd dans les canaux, une autre disparaît en raison de l'ancienneté des infrastructures, et une autre encore est simplement mal répartie. Dans de nombreux districts, l'eau est encore distribuée en fonction de la superficie des terres ou selon un calendrier établi de longue date — sans tenir compte du fait qu'un agriculteur cultive des légumes, du blé, des vergers ou tout autre type de culture.

A more practical approach is to base water allocation on the actual needs of different crops and on the conditions in which they grow. FAO's crop-water estimation methods are useful tools for this, especially when combined with satellite observations and modern irrigation monitoring. This was one of the central themes discussed during the IOFS–IsDB regional training in Astana (October 2025), where participants looked at how new data and better governance can help countries distribute their limited water more wisely.

Une approche plus pratique consiste à baser la répartition de l'eau sur les besoins réels des différentes cultures et sur les conditions dans lesquelles elles poussent. Les méthodes d'estimation des besoins en eau des cultures de la FAO constituent des outils utiles à cet égard, surtout lorsqu'elles sont combinées avec les observations satellitaires et le suivi moderne de l'irrigation. C'était l'un des thèmes centraux abordés lors de la formation régionale IOFS–IsDB à Astana (octobre 2025), où les participants ont examiné comment de nouvelles données et une meilleure gouvernance peuvent aider les pays à répartir plus judicieusement leurs ressources hydriques limitées.

ملخص

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إن نهجاً أكثر واقعية يتمثل في تخصيص المياه بناءً على الاحتياجات الفعلية لمختلف المحاصيل وعلى الظروف التي تُزرع فيها. وتُعد طرق تقدير احتياجات المحاصيل من المياه التي طوّرتها منظمة الفاو أدوات مفيدة في هذا السياق، خصوصاً عند دمجها مع الملاحظات الفضائية وأنظمة المراقبة الحديثة للري. وكان هذا أحد المحاور الرئيسية التي نوقشت خلال التدريب الإقليمي المشترك بين المنظمة والبنك الإسلامي للتنمية في أستانا (أكتوبر ٢٠٢٥)، حيث بحث المشاركون كيف يمكن للبيانات الحديثة وتحسين الحوكمة أن يساعدوا الدول على توزيع مواردها المائية المحدودة بشكل أكثر حكمة.

في العديد من دول منظمة التعاون الإسلامي، لا يعدّ الري مجرد نشاط زراعي، بل هو العمود الفقري لاقتصادات المناطق الريفية. وفي بعض المناطق، يستهلك القطاع الزراعي ما يقارب ٩٠٪ من إجمالي المياه العذبة، وفقاً لتقارير TATSUAQA OAF و CIRSES الحديثة. ومع ذلك، فإن جزءاً كبيراً من هذه المياه لا يصل إلى المحاصيل كما ينبغي. فبعضها يضيع في القنوات، وبعضها يتسرب بسبب قِدم البنية التحتية، وبعضها الآخر يُخصّص بطريقة غير صحيحة. وفي كثير من المناطق، ما تزال المياه تُوزّع بالتساوي حسب المساحة الزراعية أو وفق جداول تقليدية قديمة — دون مراعاة ما إذا كان المزارع يزرع الخضروات أو القمح أو البساتين أو غيرها من المحاصيل.

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THE PATH OF PARTNERSHIP BEYOND OIC GEOGRAPHY OR WHY THE IOFS JOINED THE GLOBAL DONOR PLATFORM FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT



MR. ABDULA - MANAFI MUTUALO,

*Chief Multilateral Affairs Officer,
Islamic Organisation for Food Security*

I have always been told that money does not bring happiness, being adult, however, I now understand, for instance, that financial resources are critical for the healthy survival of international organizations that rely on mandatory contributions from their esteemed Member States. As such premise also applies to the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), I, in my capacity as Chief Multilateral Relations Officer, always search for funding opportunities from non-traditional pool of partners or, in other words, beyond the geography of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC).

It was in that specific context that a decision was taken for the IOFS, in its quest for continuing strengthening its role as a key actor in global agrifood systems, to join the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD).

WHY WE JOINED THE PLATFORM

At IOFS, we recognize the urgency of transforming agrifood systems in an era marked by climate change, conflict, water scarcity, rising food insecurity, and economic uncertainty. These challenges are transboundary and require coordinated, multisectoral responses, and we are sure that no institution can address them alone.

Under the wise leadership of our Director General, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, we saw a clear opportunity to join a platform that brings together donors, development actors, experts, and innovators around one shared objective: **to advance rural development and build resilient food systems worldwide.**

Joining the GDPRD allows IOFS to:

- Engage in structured, high-level dialogue on global priorities affecting rural communities.
- Align our initiatives with complementary efforts led by donors and development partners.
- Increase the visibility and voice of OIC Member States in global conversations on food systems transformation.
- Strengthen cooperation on financing, partnerships, and innovation—areas essential for scaling impact.
- Connect humanitarian needs to long-term development, a central mission of IOFS programming.

In short, becoming part of the Platform enhances our ability to serve our Member States more effectively.

WHAT IOFS BRINGS TO THE PLATFORM

As the OIC specialized food security agency, the IOFS brings a unique perspective rooted in the priorities and realities of developing countries across Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and beyond.

Within the family of the Platform, the IOFS is ready to bring such voice to the conversation on how to advance the agendas of food security and agricultural development together. Other contributions may include:

- South-South and Triangular Cooperation, leveraging shared knowledge and solutions among developing countries.
- Policy expertise, by sharing the lessons learned in the process leading to finalization of forthcoming Strategic Plan for Ensuring Food Security in OIC Member States (SPEFS-OIC).
- On-the-ground experience, especially in fragile and conflict-affected areas such as Afghanistan, particularly after having effectively implemented the Afghanistan Food Security Program (AFSP), albeit with modest financial resources.
- Private sector engagement through the International Islamic Food Processing Association (IFPA).
- Insights from youth, women, and smallholder-focused initiatives, including within the framework of celebration of 2026 as IOFS Year for Women Agrileaders and Youth Agripreneurs (WAYA).

Our membership ensures that the needs, aspirations, and experiences of OIC Member States are meaningfully reflected in global donor discussions.

We are particularly eager to collaborate with other Platform members in mobilizing capital and partnerships for agrifood transformation, advancing climate-smart agriculture and resilience, reducing post-harvest losses and strengthening value chains, empowering women and youth, and linking humanitarian food relief with long-term development pathways. These areas are directly aligned with IOFS priorities and offer strong opportunities for meaningful synergy.

A SHARED COMMITMENT TO COLLECTIVE ACTION

The greatest value of the GDPRD lies in its ability to bring diverse actors together to work toward shared solutions. As IOFS,

we see our membership not only as a strategic opportunity, but also as a responsibility to contribute actively and meaningfully to global efforts aimed at ending hunger and fostering resilient rural livelihoods.

We look forward to advancing this important collaboration and ensuring that the voices of our Member States continue to be heard at the global table.

In conclusion, our decision to join the Global Donor Platform also reflects the broader direction IOFS is taking to diversify and expand its partnerships beyond the OIC region. In recent years, we have strengthened our engagement with global frameworks such as the Zero Hunger Coalition and the Global Flagship Initiative for Food Security. Joining the GDPRD is another important step in positioning IOFS within the wider ecosystem of international cooperation, allowing us to mobilize expertise, forge stra-

tegic alliances, and connect the priorities of our Member States with global action.

Looking ahead to 2026, IOFS intends to deepen its collaboration with these platforms through concrete, results-oriented initiatives. This includes contributing to global dialogues on food systems transformation; jointly developing capacity-building and investment-oriented programmes; participating in coordinated advocacy efforts on climate resilience, youth and women empowerment, and humanitarian–development linkages; and aligning selected IOFS projects with multi-partner initiatives to leverage broader resources and visibility.

By advancing these partnerships, we aim to ensure that IOFS continues to serve as a bridge between the OIC region and the global community, enhancing the collective impact on food security and rural development.



EN SUMMARY

The Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) has joined the Global Donor Platform for Rural Development (GDPRD) as part of its broader effort to diversify partnerships and strengthen its role in global agrifood systems. Recognizing that today's challenges—climate change, conflict, water scarcity, and rising food insecurity—require coordinated, multisectoral responses, IOFS seeks to engage with a wider community of donors and development actors beyond the OIC region. Through this membership, IOFS

aims to enhance high-level dialogue, mobilize financing, and amplify the voice of its Member States in global food-systems discussions, while contributing its expertise in South-South co-operation, policy development, private-sector engagement, and field operations in fragile contexts. Ultimately, joining the GDPRD supports IOFS's mission to build resilient rural livelihoods and strengthen food security by forging strategic alliances that connect Member State priorities with global action.

FR RÉSUMÉ

L'Organisation islamique pour la sécurité alimentaire (IOFS) a rejoint la Plateforme mondiale des donateurs pour le développement rural (GDPRD) dans le cadre de ses efforts visant à diversifier ses partenariats et à renforcer son rôle au sein des systèmes agroalimentaires mondiaux. Consciente que les défis actuels — tels que le changement climatique, les conflits, la rareté de l'eau et l'augmentation de l'insécurité alimentaire — exigent des réponses coordonnées et multisectorielles, l'IOFS cherche à collaborer avec une communauté plus large de donateurs et d'acteurs du développement au-delà de la région de l'OCI. Grâce à cette adhésion, l'IOFS entend renforcer le dialogue de haut niveau,

mobiliser des financements et amplifier la voix de ses États membres dans les discussions mondiales sur la transformation des systèmes alimentaires, tout en apportant son expertise en matière de coopération Sud-Sud, d'élaboration de politiques, d'engagement du secteur privé et d'opérations sur le terrain dans des contextes fragiles. En définitive, rejoindre la GDPRD soutient la mission de l'IOFS visant à renforcer la résilience des moyens de subsistance ruraux et à améliorer la sécurité alimentaire en établissant des alliances stratégiques qui relient les priorités des États membres à l'action mondiale.

ملخص

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هذه العضوية، تهدف المنظمة إلى تعزيز الحوار رفيع المستوى، وتعبئة التمويل، وإيصال صوت دولها الأعضاء في النقاشات العالمية حول تحول النظم الغذائية، فضلاً عن تقديم خبرتها في مجالات التعاون جنوب-جنوب، وصياغة السياسات، وإشراك القطاع الخاص، والعمل الميداني في البيئات الهشة. وبشكل عام، يدعم الانضمام إلى المنصة مهمة المنظمة في تعزيز صمود سبل العيش الريفية وتحسين الأمن الغذائي من خلال بناء تحالفات استراتيجية تربط بين أولويات الدول الأعضاء والعمل العالمي.

انضمت المنظمة الإسلامية للأمن الغذائي إلى المنصة العالمية للمانحين من أجل التنمية الريفية (DRPDG) في إطار جهودها الرامية إلى تنويع شراكاتها وتعزيز دورها ضمن نظم الأغذية الزراعية العالمية. وإدراكاً منها أن التحديات الراهنة — مثل تغير المناخ، والصراعات، وشح المياه، وتزايد انعدام الأمن الغذائي — تتطلب استجابات منسقة ومتعددة القطاعات، تسعى المنظمة إلى التعاون مع مجتمع أوسع من المانحين والجهات الإنمائية خارج نطاق دول منظمة التعاون الإسلامي. ومن خلال



IOFS: A CALL FOR SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION

STRENGTHENING FOOD SECURITY THROUGH UNITY



SOFIAN BEN MOUADEB

*Chief Bilateral Relations Officer,
Islamic Organisation for Food Security*

A SHARED VISION FOR FOOD SECURITY

In our interconnected world, where climate change, economic volatility, and evolving agricultural challenges respect no borders, the need for coordinated action has never been more urgent.

The Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), headquartered in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, represents the institutional embodiment of this shared commitment. As the OIC's specialised organisation dedicated to food security, IOFS serves as a vital platform for cooperation, knowledge exchange, and collective action. However, the full realisation of this vision depends on the participation of all OIC Member States.

Currently: **20 Member States have ratified** the IOFS Statute, **21 have signed but await ratification**, and **15 have yet to join** this important platform. While significant progress has been made, the journey toward complete membership continues; and with it, the opportunity to strengthen our collective capacity to ensure food security for over 1.8 billion people across the Islamic world.

THE IOFS APPROACH: STRATEGIC VISION 2031

Following its establishment, IOFS has evolved into an operational institution with a clear strategic framework. The organisation's work is guided by the **Strategic Vision 2031**, which provides a comprehensive roadmap for addressing food security challenges through five interconnected pillars:

GOVERNANCE ENABLEMENT

Focuses on facilitating effective national food security policies and regulatory frameworks while providing Member States with robust data and analysis for evidence-based decision making through platforms such as the IOFS Food Balance Database.

FOOD CRISIS RESPONSE

Establishes mechanisms to rapidly address food emergencies and supply chain disruptions, ensuring that Member States can collectively respond to crises with speed and efficiency.

CAPACITY BUILDING

Enhances technical expertise and institutional capabilities across Member States, fostering knowledge transfer and strengthening

national food security systems through training, research collaboration, and best practice sharing.

INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT

Strengthens the competitiveness of the OIC agri-food sector, promotes intra-OIC trade, and supports value chain development; from smallholder farmers to small and medium enterprises, creating economic opportunities while enhancing food security.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

Coordinates financial resources, partnerships, and investments to scale up food security interventions, ensuring that Member States can leverage collective resources more effectively than through individual efforts.

These five pillars are operationalized through sixteen strategic thematic programs. **In implementing these programs, IOFS adopts a demand-driven approach, prioritising platforms that directly respond to Member States' expressed needs and expectations while carefully aligning interventions with available resources.** This ensures that every program delivers tangible value and meaningful impact where it matters most; addressing the specific food security challenges that Member States identify as their highest priorities.

51ST SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS (CFM-51/2025)

«Also calls on Member States, which have not done so, to sign and ratify the Statute of IOFS, the OIC specialized institution based in Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan.»

15TH ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE (OIC/SUM-15/2024)

“The Conference called on OIC Member States, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify the Statute of IOFS, at their earliest convenience.”

THE VALUE OF FULL MEMBERSHIP

Becoming a full member of IOFS through ratification offers Member States significant strategic advantages that extend beyond technical cooperation. Full membership provides **complete voting rights and decision-making authority** within IOFS governance structures,

ensuring that national priorities and regional perspectives shape the organisation's strategic direction.

Member States gain **eligibility for Executive Board membership**, offering direct influence over resource allocation, program priorities, and institutional development. This governance role provides a meaningful platform for **regional leadership**, enabling countries to serve as bridges between their regions and the broader OIC geography while facilitating South-South cooperation.

From a diplomatic perspective, full membership enhances a nation's **standing as an active participant** in a strategic OIC institution, strengthening its voice in regional and international food security discourse. Practically, members receive **priority consideration** for IOFS technical support, capacity building platforms, and access to program funding across all five strategic pillars.

Perhaps most importantly, full membership enables countries to contribute to and benefit from **collective food security architecture**; a network of cooperation that is stronger than the sum of its parts.

SUPPORTING THE SIGNATURE AND RATIFICATION JOURNEY

IOFS recognizes that the path to signature and ratification involves navigating institutional processes, legal considerations, and national priorities. The Organisation stands ready to provide comprehensive support throughout this journey, offering technical clarification on the Statute's provisions, coordination assistance with relevant ministries and parliamentary bodies, and documentation from successful ratification experiences.

Our team is committed to facilitating this process in a manner that respects each Member State's unique circumstances and institutional frameworks. We view signature and ratification not as bureaucratic hurdles but as opportunities to strengthen partnerships and deepen our collective commitment to food security.

HOW TO SIGN THE IOFS STATUTE

Member States wishing to sign the IOFS Statute may do so through the following channels:

- **Through your country's Permanent Representative to Saudi Arabia at OIC Headquarters** in Jeddah, where the Statute is deposited and available for signature.
- **During the upcoming IOFS General Assembly in Astana**, where special arrangements can be made for signature ceremonies in coordination with the IOFS Secretariat.
- **At the next Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development (MCFSAD)**, which provides a dedicated forum for high-level engagement on food security matters.

For more information on any of these signature opportunities, please contact the IOFS Secretariat.

RECENT PROGRESS AND CONTINUING MOMENTUM

The past few years have witnessed encouraging developments. In 2023 alone, four Member States; the Gabonese Republic, Republic of Iraq, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Republic of Yemen, signed the IOFS Statute, demonstrating renewed recognition of the organisation's strategic value. The recent ratification by Côte d'Ivoire

further illustrates that it is never too late to join this important platform.

These developments reflect a broader understanding: as global food security challenges intensify, the value of collective action through institutions like IOFS becomes increasingly evident.

AN INVITATION TO PARTNERSHIP

For Member States that have signed the IOFS Statute and are progressing toward ratification, we extend our appreciation for your commitment and our continued support in completing this important step. Your impending full membership will enhance both your national food security capacity and our collective institutional strength.

For Member States that have not yet joined IOFS, we extend a warm invitation to explore membership. Whether your nation is a major agricultural producer, a food-importing country facing supply challenges, or somewhere in between, IOFS offers relevant programs and partnerships tailored to diverse national contexts. The organisation's strength lies in its diversity, and each new member enriches our collective capacity.

THE PATH FORWARD: UNITY IN DIVERSITY

The recent resolutions from both the 51st Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers and the 15th Islamic Summit Conference underscore the OIC's commitment to food security through IOFS. These high-level endorsements reflect a collective understanding that food security challenges require institutional solutions and sustained cooperation.

As we work toward the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 2 on Zero Hunger, the urgency of collective action becomes clearer. Food security is not achieved through isolated national efforts alone but through networks of cooperation, shared knowledge, coordinated policies, and mutual support.

CONCLUSION

Food security is a journey we must undertake together. The Islamic Organisation for Food Security stands ready to support this journey, not as a distant institution but as a partner committed to the wellbeing of communities across OIC Member States.

For those considering membership, we invite dialogue. For those in the signature or ratification process, we offer support. For current members, we express gratitude and commitment to delivering meaningful impact through our programs and partnerships.

The time for complete IOFS membership has arrived; not as an obligation, but as an opportunity to strengthen our collective capacity to address one of humanity's most fundamental challenges.

Together, we can build food secure and resilient communities across the Islamic world.

FOR INFORMATION AND DIALOGUE ON IOFS MEMBERSHIP:

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EN SUMMARY

The Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), a specialised institution of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation headquartered in Astana, Kazakhstan, respectfully invites all Member States to join this collaborative platform through signature and ratification of its Statute. Currently, 20 Member States have ratified, 21 have signed and are advancing toward ratification, and 15 are warmly encouraged to explore membership. In our interconnected world facing shared challenges of climate change, economic volatility, and agricultural vulnerabilities, collective action has never been more vital. Guided by Strategic Vision 2031, IOFS serves Member States through five complementary pillars: governance enablement, crisis response, capacity building, in-

dustrial development, and resource mobilisation. These pillars are brought to life through demand-driven programs carefully designed to respond to each Member State's unique priorities and circumstances. Full membership offers meaningful benefits including participation in decision-making, access to technical support, and enhanced diplomatic engagement within a community serving 1.8 billion people. IOFS stands ready to support Member States throughout their signature and ratification journey, celebrating recent progress while recognising that achieving food security for all requires continued partnership, mutual support, and shared commitment toward SDG 2 on Zero Hunger by 2030.

FR RÉSUMÉ

L'Organisation Islamique pour la Sécurité Alimentaire (OISA), institution spécialisée de l'Organisation de la Coopération Islamique basée à Astana, Kazakhstan, invite respectueusement tous les États membres à rejoindre cette plateforme collaborative par la signature et la ratification de son Statut. Actuellement, 20 États membres ont ratifié, 21 ont signé et progressent vers la ratification, et 15 sont chaleureusement encouragés à explorer l'adhésion. Dans notre monde interconnecté confronté à des défis communs tels que le changement climatique, la volatilité économique et les vulnérabilités agricoles, l'action collective n'a jamais été aussi essentielle. Guidée par la Vision Stratégique 2031, l'OISA sert les États membres à travers cinq piliers complémentaires : renforcement de la gouvernance, réponse aux crises,

renforcement des capacités, développement industriel et mobilisation des ressources. Ces piliers prennent vie à travers des programmes axés sur la demande, soigneusement conçus pour répondre aux priorités et circonstances uniques de chaque État membre. L'adhésion complète offre des avantages significatifs, notamment la participation aux décisions, l'accès au soutien technique et un engagement diplomatique renforcé au sein d'une communauté servant 1,8 milliard de personnes. L'OISA est prête à accompagner les États membres tout au long de leur parcours de signature et de ratification, célébrant les progrès récents tout en reconnaissant que la sécurité alimentaire pour tous nécessite un partenariat continu, un soutien mutuel et un engagement partagé vers l'ODD 2 sur la Faim Zéro d'ici 2030.

ملخص

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الصناعية، وتعبئة الموارد. تُنفذ هذه الركائز عبر برامج موجهة بحسب احتياجات الدول الأعضاء، مصممة للاستجابة لأولويات وسياسات كل دولة عضو. توفر العضوية الكاملة مزايا هامة تشمل المشاركة في اتخاذ القرارات، والوصول إلى الدعم الفني، وتعزيز المكانة الدبلوماسية ضمن منظومة تخدم 1.8 مليار نسمة. تلتزم المنظمة بمساندة الدول الأعضاء في مسيرة التوقيع والتصديق، مشيدة بالتقدم المحرز مؤخراً، مع التأكيد على أن تحقيق الأمن الغذائي للجميع يتطلب الشراكة المستمرة والدعم المتبادل والالتزام المشترك لبلوغ الهدف الثاني من أهداف التنمية المستدامة بشأن القضاء على الجوع بحلول عام 2030.

تدعو المنظمة الإسلامية للأمن الغذائي، المؤسسة المتخصصة لمنظمة التعاون الإسلامي ومقرها أستانا، كازاخستان، جميع الدول الأعضاء للانضمام إلى هذا الإطار المؤسسي من خلال التوقيع والتصديق على نظامها الأساسي. حتى الآن، صادقت 20 دولة عضو على النظام الأساسي، بينما وقعت 21 دولة في انتظار استكمال إجراءات التصديق، فيما لم تنضم 15 دولة بعد. في ظل التحديات المشتركة التي يواجهها العالم من تغير المناخ والتقلبات الاقتصادية والضغط على النظم الزراعية، أصبح العمل الجماعي ضرورة ملحة. تسترشد المنظمة بالرؤية الاستراتيجية 2031، وتعمل على خدمة الدول الأعضاء من خلال خمس ركائز متكاملة: تمكين الحوكمة، والاستجابة للأزمات الغذائية، وبناء القدرات، والتنمية



IOFS NEWS OVER OCTOBER–NOVEMBER–DECEMBER

IOFS Strengthens Partnerships at 5th Consultative Forum of Regional Cooperation Organisations in the OIC Region



IOFS strengthened its multilateral partnerships during the 5th Consultative Forum of Regional Cooperation Organisations (RCOs) in the OIC region, held on 2–3 October 2025 in Istanbul and hosted by the Islamic Development Bank Group and ICDT. Representing IOFS on behalf of Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, Chief Multilateral Affairs Officer Mr. Abdula Manafi Mutualo actively contributed to discussions on tariff and non-tariff barriers, connectivity, investment promotion, and regional cooperation for food security and agrifood systems transformation. On the sidelines, IOFS held bilateral meetings with key institutions, including IsDB, WTO, UNC-TAD, SAARC, ICDT, and the OIC General Secretariat, to explore joint initiatives and program alignment in support of food security, trade facilitation, and agricultural development. IOFS's engagement reaffirmed its commitment to advancing sustainable food systems and deepening collaborative action across the OIC region.

IOFS and Mauritania Forge Strategic Partnership to Launch Wheat Farming Development in Mauritania



The Director General of IOFS, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, held a virtual meeting on 8 October 2025 with Mauritania's Minister of Agriculture and Food Sovereignty, H.E. Sid'Ahmed Ould Bouh, to advance cooperation on wheat development and broader food security initiatives. Minister Ould Bouh highlighted Mauritania's heavy dependence on wheat imports and expressed strong interest in partnering with IOFS to boost domestic wheat production through technology transfer, improved seed systems, and strengthening the entire wheat value chain under the "Wheat Farming Development in Mauritania" project. Ambassador Aryn reaffirmed IOFS's commitment to supporting Mauritania's strategic priorities and announced plans for an upcoming tripartite meeting to finalize implementation modalities and mobilize technical and financial support. Both sides underscored the importance of a coordinated, innovative approach to build sustainable wheat production capacity and enhance national food security in line with IOFS's mandate.

IOFS facilitates participation of Kazakhstani Delegation in Livestock Summit in France



IOFS facilitated the participation of a high-level Kazakhstani delegation at the Livestock Summit 2025, held on 7–10 October in Clermont-Ferrand, France. Led by IOFS Program Manager Mr. Bakdaulet Yerkhanov, the delegation, including representatives from Asyl Tulik, Qazyna Center, the Union of Sheep Producers of Kazakhstan, and NASEC, engaged in technical meetings and field visits organized by FASEP in cooperation with INRAE, the French Livestock Institute, and leading breeder associations. The program provided in-depth exposure to France's advanced breeding systems, genetics, and cooperative livestock models, complemented by a dedicated workshop and Q&A session with Summit President Mr. Jacques Chazalet. Mr. Yerkhanov also presented IOFS's Livestock Development Program to interna-

tional participants, highlighting efforts to promote sustainable, climate-smart livestock systems and strengthen OIC-wide collaboration. Field visits to exemplary farms and breeding stations across Auvergne further enriched the delegation's understanding of best practices in animal production and genetic improvement.

IOFS and UN Women Convene National Consultation Workshop in Abuja to Empower Women in Nigeria's Cassava Value Chains



The Islamic Organisation for Food Security, in partnership with UN Women, held a two-day national consultation workshop in Abuja, Nigeria (8–9 October 2025) to advance the joint initiative on “Women’s Empowerment through Climate-Resilient Agriculture Value Chains,” with a focus on the cassava sector. The event gathered women producers and processors alongside government agencies, research institutions, financial actors, and development partners to review findings from a Rapid Response Appraisal conducted across four states and the FCT, engaging 207 respondents - 76% of them women. The assessment confirmed women’s pivotal role in cassava production and processing but highlighted barriers to land access, finance, and modern technologies, while identifying market opportunities and policy avenues to boost competitiveness and inclusion. IOFS and UN Women emphasized that the consultations aim to transform evidence into action by co-designing practical, gender-responsive interventions on skills, technology, finance, and market access to support women’s transition from subsistence to enterprise. The workshop concluded with validated findings and agreed next steps, with the next national consultation to take place in Sierra Leone.

IOFS Football Team Wins Second Place at the CICA Tournament



On 12 October, the Secretariat of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) won second place at the CICA Secretariat

Football Tournament, held in honor of CICA Day under the framework of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia (CICA). The friendly tournament brought together teams from key national and international institutions, including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, the Presidential Administration, and the embassies of Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Kuwait, China, Russia, and Tajikistan. The IOFS team demonstrated exceptional teamwork, discipline, and sportsmanship throughout the competition, securing a runner-up result among strong contenders.

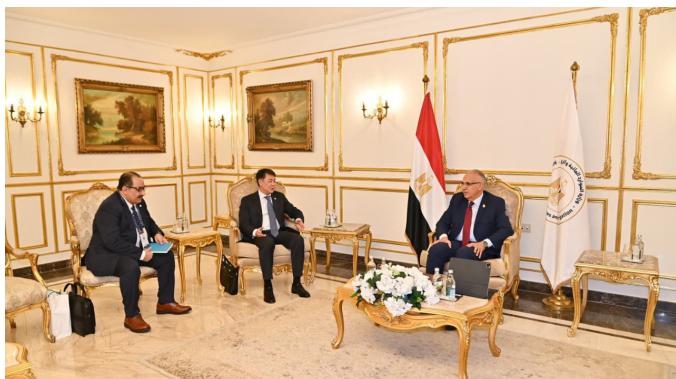
IOFS Champions Water-Food-Climate Resilience at Cairo Water Week 2025 and INWRDAM General Assembly



The Islamic Organisation for Food Security, represented by Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn and Director of Pro-

jects Department Dr. Ismail Abdelhamid, participated in Cairo Water Week (CWW) 2025 from 11–15 October under the theme “Innovative Solutions for Climate Resilience and Water Sustainability,” an event opened by a video address from H.E. President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi calling for stronger regional cooperation to address water scarcity and climate challenges. The mission marked a major step in strengthening IOFS’s engagement on the water–food–climate nexus, with Ambassador Aryn delivering a keynote at Plenary Session 4 on 15 October, stressing the urgent need to scale water-smart agriculture, nature-based solutions, smart irrigation, resilient seed systems, and drought-tolerant crop varieties across OIC Member States, while calling for increased investment, integrated governance, and cross-sector partnerships. On 13 October, he also addressed the 38th INWRDAM General Assembly, reaffirming the strategic importance of the Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystems (WEFE) Nexus, the IOFS–INWRDAM MoU of 2023, and joint efforts to advance WEFE projects, capacity building, and cross-border models such as the Red Sea “Golden Triangle.” IOFS further co-organized, with IWMI and INWRDAM, a high-level side event titled “Agricultural Development in the OIC Needs Water: Policy & Institutional Successes to Scale,” moderated by Dr. Abdelhamid, which convened regional experts and government representatives to present successful policy models from MENA and Central Asia, including case studies from Saudi Arabia and Morocco on desalination policy, irrigation modernisation, and drought-resilient cropping systems, concluding with pathways for regional scaling through pilots and coordinated financing. On 12 October, Ambassador Aryn held a bilateral meeting with INWRDAM Executive Director H.E. Dr. Marwan Alraggad, resulting in an agreement to establish an IOFS–INWRDAM Working Group to design joint projects for 2026 on water-smart agriculture, WEFE capacity building, and mobilisation of climate finance, including via the Green Climate Fund. The mission also included a strategic consultation on 13 October with ICARDA Director General H.E. Dr. Aly Abousabaa, where both sides reviewed progress on genetic resource repatriation to Kazakhstan, joint research activities, and scientist training, and agreed to deepen cooperation, particularly on wheat, barley, plant genetic resources, and dryland agriculture, under a forthcoming joint Action Plan to advance food security across OIC Member States.

IOFS Deepens Cooperation with Egypt on Water and Agricultural Resilience



H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, Director General of IOFS, visited Cairo on 14 October, for high-level meetings with Egypt’s Ministers of Water Resources and Irrigation, H.E. Prof. Dr. Hani Sewilam, and Agriculture and Land Reclamation, H.E. Mr. Alaa El-Din Farouk Zaky El-Sayyed. The discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in sustainable water management, agricultural modernisation, and climate-resilient food systems. Ambassador Aryn praised Egypt’s leadership in Cairo Water Week and its expertise in water-efficient irrigation, wastewater reuse, and agricultural innovation, noting them as models for OIC Member States. Both sides explored Egypt’s national water strategy and solutions to water scarcity, including digital irrigation, wastewater reuse, and drought-resilient governance, while IOFS committed to supporting regional capacity-building and pilot projects to enhance sustainable water and food security practices across the OIC region.

IOFS Participates in the 6th Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers in Doha



From 15-16 October, The Islamic Organisation for Food Security participated in the 6th Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers (ICLM) under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, bringing together representatives from over 50 Islamic countries and international organisations. The conference, hosted by Qatar’s Ministry of Labour under the OIC, focused on labour cooperation, social protection, and workforce development. The Conference concluded with the adoption of the Resolution of the 6th ICLM and the signing of the Statute of the OIC Labour Centre, which explicitly acknowledged IOFS’s mandate and encouraged its continued engagement, recommending that IOFS work with relevant OIC institutions to promote rural employment, agricultural entrepreneurship, and initiatives that support workers’ transition from wage labour to enterprise ownership, reflecting a broader commitment to decent work, skills development, and inclusive economic growth across the Islamic world.

IOFS and UN Women Strengthen Partnership to Empower Women in Agriculture in Sierra Leone



From 14-15 October, in Makeni, Sierra Leone, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, in partnership with UN Women, hosted a National Stakeholder Consultation Workshop to strengthen women's participation in Sierra Leone's cassava value chain. The two-day event brought together government, development, research, and civil society representatives to discuss gender-responsive strategies for agricultural development. Dr. William Agyei-Manu, representing IOFS, highlighted the importance of women's empowerment for food security, climate resilience, and inclusive economic growth across OIC Member States. The workshop, part of the Women in Agriculture Development Initiative (WADI), focused on enhancing access to resources, technologies, finance, and markets for women, while addressing production, processing, value addition, and market challenges in the cassava sector. Recommendations from the consultation will guide the next phase of IOFS–UN Women collaboration, promoting locally grounded, sustainable, and gender-responsive interventions to advance women's economic empowerment and food security.

IOFS Director General Meets TURKPA Secretary General to Strengthen Cooperation on Food Security and Sustainable Development



On 17 October, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, Director General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, welcomed H.E. Ambassador Ramil Hasan, Secretary General of the Par-

liamentary Assembly of Turkic States (TURKPA), to the IOFS Headquarters to discuss enhanced cooperation in food security and sustainable agriculture, with a focus on inter-parliamentary collaboration. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to deepening collaboration, exploring joint initiatives in agricultural legislation, sustainable rural development, and knowledge exchange, with special attention to empowering women, youth, and parliamentarians. The meeting reinforced the 2021 IOFS–TURKPA Memorandum of Understanding and underscored shared efforts to advance regional food security, agricultural sustainability, and socio-economic resilience.

IOFS Director General participates in Global Food Week 2025 in Abu Dhabi





aligned on the concept and roles for the Global Food Security Summit 2026. Ambassador Aryn also joined Dr. Tareq Ahmed Mohamed Alameri of ADAFSA, Mr. Sene, and Mr. Lootah to discuss the joint organisation of Global Food Week 2026 and its key segment—the Global Food Security Summit—expected to gather high-level officials, ministers, and investors from OIC and African countries to advance Africa–Central Asia agri-food investment and cooperation. Demonstrating IOFS–IFPA efforts to strengthen intra-OIC food trade, leading Kazakhstani producers supported by QazTrade, including Riks, Mareven, 7 Kolibri, Qazaq Apple, and Goji, participated in the exhibition with tailored proposals for the UAE market, where Ambassador Aryn and H.E. Rauan Zhumabek, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to the UAE, visited the national pavilion, reaffirming IOFS's commitment to promoting agri-food trade and investment across the OIC.

Water Governance and Digitalization in focus of IOFS-IsDB co-organized Regional Training in Astana



On 22 October, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, launched the Regional Training on Governance and Digital Solutions for Sustainable Irrigation and Water Management in Astana, Kazakhstan. The three-day programme brought together experts and officials from Central Asia and Türkiye, alongside representatives from ICARDA, IWMI, and leading water-sector consultancies, to strengthen regional cooperation, water governance, and digital irrigation systems. Opening speakers emphasized cross-border collaboration, integrated policies, and knowledge exchange to improve water efficiency. Assistant Director General of IOFS, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri highlighted the transformative role of digital solutions in ensuring water security and food system resilience, while technical sessions showcased successful models like Türkiye's SUTEM system. The training provided a platform for sharing best practices, building institutional capacity, and advancing climate-smart, data-driven approaches to sustainable water management and regional food security.



At Global Food Week 2025, held on 21 October at the Abu Dhabi National Exhibition Centre under the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan, IOFS Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn participated in the high-level Opening Ceremony and Global Food Talks Forum inaugurated by the UAE Minister of Climate Change and Environment, H.E. Dr. Amna bint Abdullah Al Dahak Al Shamsi, alongside nearly 30,000 visitors and hundreds of exhibitors gathered under the theme "Driving Sustainable Solutions for Global Food." On the sidelines, Ambassador Aryn held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Eng. Mansour bin Hilal Al Mushaiti, Vice Minister of Environment, Water, and Agriculture of Saudi Arabia, to explore enhanced IOFS–KSA cooperation, and convened a strategic consultation with Mr. Saleh Lootah (International IFPA), Mr. Amath Pathe Sene (AGRF), and Mr. Daniel Annerose (Manobi Africa), during which the parties

IOFS Strengthens Strategic Engagement at the 5th Islamic Conference of Ministers Responsible for Water in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



From 20-22 October, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, led by Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, participated in the 5th Session of the Islamic Conference of Ministers Responsible for Water (ICMW-2025), hosted by Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture under the OIC in Jeddah. The conference convened ministers and senior officials to discuss sustainable water management as a foundation for food security and climate resilience. During the Senior Officials Meeting, Dr. Abdelaziz Hajjaji presented IOFS's flagship Water Use Management for Agriculture initiative and the Water–Energy–Food–Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus framework, emphasizing digital irrigation, water-use efficiency, and climate-smart agricultural practices. IOFS reaffirmed its commitment to integrated water governance, capacity-building, and cross-sectoral collaboration to strengthen sustainable development and food security across OIC Member States.

IOFS-IsDB co-organized Regional Training on Water Management concludes in Astana



Astana, Kazakhstan | 22–24 October 2025 — The Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), in partnership with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) and Kazakhstan's Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, successfully concluded

the Regional Training on Governance and Digital Solutions for Sustainable Irrigation and Water Management. The three-day programme brought together over 80 specialists and policy-makers from Central Asia, Türkiye, and international experts from ICARDA and IWMI to discuss institutional water governance, digital irrigation platforms, and climate-smart policies. Case studies highlighted Türkiye's SUTEM platform and Uzbekistan's SRBISA system, while participating countries shared national innovations and best practices. The training concluded with recommendations to strengthen institutional capacities, promote regional knowledge exchange, encourage digital and weather-smart irrigation tools, and support inclusive water policy frameworks. Dr. Ismail Abdelhamid, IOFS Projects Director, reaffirmed the Organisation's commitment to building water-secure, climate-resilient agrifood systems in line with IOFS Strategic Vision 2031 and Kazakhstan's national priorities, marking a key milestone in advancing sustainable water management and regional cooperation.

IOFS Advances Regional Cooperation to Reduce Post-Harvest Fish Losses in Fisheries and Aquaculture



From 21-22 October, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, in collaboration with Türkiye's Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry (TAGEM), TİKA, and supported by the General Fisheries Commission for the Mediterranean (GFCM), organized a workshop on post-harvest fish loss reduction under the OIC Healthy, Halal, and Safe Food Ecosystem initiative in Trabzon, Türkiye. Policy-makers and experts from Türkiye, Egypt, Morocco, Lebanon, and Syria, along with GFCM and FAO representatives, exchanged experiences on managing fish losses across capture fisheries and aquaculture in the Mediterranean and Black Sea regions. Discussions highlighted innovative solutions such as circular economy models, smart cold-chain logistics, and value-added processing of aquatic by-products to enhance sustainability and profitability. The workshop reinforces IOFS's role in advancing sustainable food systems, capacity development, and regional cooperation among OIC Member States, contributing to the UN Sustainable Development Goals 1, 2, 12, 14, and 17.

IOFS Highlights Food Security and Climate Resilience at Global Green Growth Week 2025 in Seoul



From 27-28 October, The Islamic Organisation for Food Security, led by H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, participated in Global Green Growth Week 2025, organized by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) under the theme "Innovation in a World in Transition" in Seoul, Korea. On 27 October, Ambassador Aryn delivered a keynote at "Shifting Paradigms: Addressing Organic Waste and Food Loss for a Greener Future," highlighting IOFS's initiatives on food waste reduction, circular economy, and climate-smart food systems across OIC Member States. On 28 October, he joined a high-level panel on "Green Growth as a Response to Desertification" alongside global leaders, emphasizing integrated approaches for soil rehabilitation, climate-smart agriculture, and innovative financing. Dr. Ismail AbdelHamid presented IOFS–GGGI joint projects, including livestock baseline assessments in Guinea and Togo. The delegation's participation reaffirmed IOFS's commitment to green growth, cross-regional knowledge exchange, and sustainable, resilient food systems across the Islamic world.

IOFS Calls for Ethical Action to End Hunger at FAO Panel on the Right to Food



On 28 October, The Islamic Organisation for Food Security participated in a high-level FAO panel on "The Role of Faith-Based Organisations in Realizing the Right to Food for All" in Rome, Italy. Assistant Director General, Ambassador Khusrav Noziri highlighted IOFS's initiatives across 57 OIC Member States, including the Africa Food Security Initiative, Afghanistan Food Security Program, and the planned OIC Food Security Reserves System, emphasizing investment, technology transfer, agricultural resilience, emergency aid, and support for women farmers. He stressed the integration of human rights principles with Islamic ethical values – justice, trust, and moderation – through inclusive programs engaging local communities and national institutions. The panel, featuring global faith-based organisations, reaffirmed the role of ethical and community-based approaches in advancing food security. Ambassador Noziri reiterated IOFS's commitment to strengthen cooperation with FAO and partners to ensure the right to food for all.

IOFS and WFP Sign Memorandum of Understanding to Strengthen Cooperation on Food Security



On 29 October, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security and the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) formalized their partnership by signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at the WFP Headquarters in Rome. The agreement, signed by Amb. Khusrav Noziri (IOFS) and Ms. Natasha Nadazdin (WFP), establishes cooperation to enhance food systems, improve agricultural production and value chains, support humanitarian responses, promote climate-resilient practices, and foster knowledge exchange and policy dialogue. The MoU strengthens collaboration between the OIC institution and the

UN agency in advancing food security and resilience, contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Zero Hunger (SDG 2) and Climate Action (SDG 13).

IOFS and GGGI Strengthen Strategic Partnership with Bilateral Meeting and MoU Signing



30 October, during Global Green Growth Week 2025, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, Director General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, held high-level discussions with the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to advance climate-resilient agriculture and sustainable food security across OIC Member States. Ambassador Aryn met with H.E. Ban Ki-moon, GGGI President, and Dr. Sang-Hyup Kim, GGGI Director General, alongside Kazakhstan's Ambassador to Korea, H.E. Nurgali Arystanov. The meetings highlighted shared commitments to nature-based solutions, climate-smart agriculture, and capacity-building programmes. Following the formal signing of a Memorandum of Understanding, IOFS and GGGI outlined joint initiatives on sustainable agricultural development, water management, and smart agriculture, establishing a framework for technical cooperation, policy support, and financial mobilisation to strengthen resilient food systems, promote green growth, and foster long-term environmental sustainability across OIC countries.

IOFS Expands Global Ties at Global Green Growth Week 2025 in Seoul



On 31 October, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, IOFS Director General, held a series of high-level meetings in Seoul, with leading international institutions to advance sustainable agriculture, food security, and climate resilience. At the KOICA Headquarters, he met with H.E. Mr. Chang Won Sam, President of KOICA, to discuss expanding support for agricultural innovation, rural development, and climate-resilient food systems through knowledge-sharing, technical assistance, and capacity-building programmes. At the Green Climate Fund, Ambassador Aryn engaged with H.E. Dr. Thomas Eriksson, Director of the Department of Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East, on scaling climate finance and developing joint mechanisms to support IOFS initiatives on sustainable agriculture and water efficiency. On the sidelines of Global Green Growth Week 2025, he met with H.E. Mr. Aly Abousaabaa, Director General of the International Center for Agricultural Research in the Dry Areas (ICARDA), to promote research on drought-resilient crops and climate-smart technologies, and with H.E. Dr. Thuraya Said Al-Sareeria, Presidential Advisor for Nature Conservation at the Ministry of Environment Authority of the Sultanate of Oman, to explore joint initiatives for sustainable agriculture. Additionally, he conferred with Dr. Mahamadou Tounkara, Regional Director for MENA at GGGI to strengthen regional cooperation in climate-smart agriculture, sustainable landscapes, and resilience-oriented programs. Ambassador Aryn reaffirmed IOFS's commitment to deepening partnerships with KOICA, GCF, ICARDA, Oman, and GGGI to advance sustainable food systems and tackle climate-related challenges across OIC Member States.

Kazakh Water Experts Complete Technical Study Visit to Türkiye with IOFS Support



In November, Kazakh water experts completed a high-level technical study visit to Adana, Türkiye, organized by the

IOFS as a follow-up to two earlier water management trainings in Astana, to deepen practical knowledge on digital and efficient irrigation systems. Hosted by Türkiye's State Hydraulic Works (DSİ), the delegation examined canal automation, remote monitoring, tariff and cost-recovery models, irrigation union performance, and field applications of digital control systems. Through site visits to the Seyhan Regulator, Yedigöze Dam, and the İmamoğlu Irrigation Automation System, participants gained hands-on exposure to Türkiye's scalable, data-driven approaches to water distribution. The visit reinforces IOFS's commitment to sustained capacity building and institutional cooperation among its Member States.

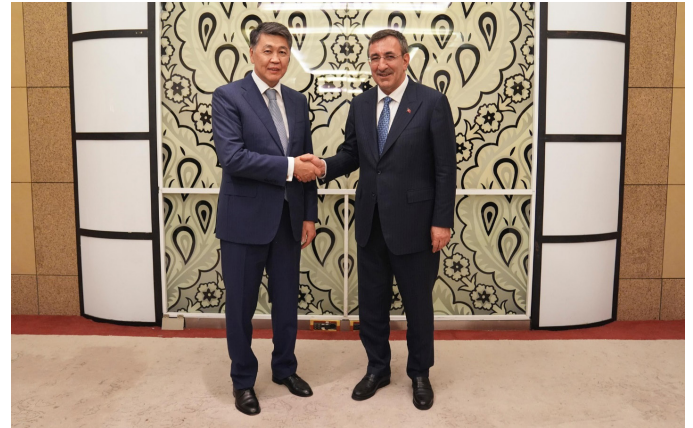
IOFS Highlights Food Security Achievements at Senior Officials Meeting Preparatory to the 41st COMCEC Ministerial Session in Türkiye



From 1-2 November, under the instructions of H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, Director General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, Mr. Abdula Manafi Mutualo, Chief Multilateral Relations Officer, represented IOFS at the Senior Officials Meeting preparatory to the 41st Ministerial Session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the OIC (COMCEC) in Istanbul. During discussions on Agenda Item 10: "Increasing Productivity of Agriculture Sector and Sustaining Food Security," Mr. Mutualo emphasized the centrality of food security to the OIC development agenda and reaffirmed IOFS's strong partnership with COMCEC in advancing resilient and integrated food systems across Member States. He highlighted IOFS initiatives since the last COMCEC session, including the Strategic Vision 2031, the Africa Food Security Initiative, the Afghanistan Food Security Programme, humanitarian assistance in Gaza, and the Strategic Plan for Ensuring Food Security in OIC Countries (SPEFS-OIC), developed jointly with the OIC General Secretariat, SESRIC, and IsDB, which will be considered at the upcoming Ministerial Conference on Food Security.

IOFS Director General Participates in Opening of Business Leaders' Summit on the Sidelines of 41st COMCEC Ministerial Session





On 2 November, at the Business Leaders' Summit held in Istanbul alongside the 41st COMCEC Session, IOFS Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn joined ministers, senior officials, and private-sector leaders to advance cooperation on sustainable economic development across the OIC region. The event featured high-level statements from TOBB, ICCD, ICYF, and the IsDB Group, with Türkiye's Minister of Trade, H.E. Prof. Dr. Ömer Bolat, delivering the opening address. Ambassador Aryn also attended an official dinner hosted by Türkiye's Vice President H.E. Mr. Cevdet Yılmaz, where he presented IOFS's mission and key food-security initiatives. On the sidelines, he met with Mozambique's Secretary of Commerce to explore deeper collaboration in agricultural development and value-chain enhancement. His participation underscored IOFS's commitment to innovative, investment-driven approaches that strengthen food security and economic resilience across member states.

IOFS Director General Participates in 41st COMCEC Ministerial Meeting and Holds High-Level Bilateral Engagements





During the 41st COMCEC Ministerial Session on 3–4 November 2025 in Istanbul, IOFS Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn took part in proceedings inaugurated by H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, President of the Republic of Türkiye, who emphasized enhanced cooperation among OIC Member States in food security, trade, and resilience. H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary General of the OIC, also delivered an opening statement on coordinated action to address shared challenges. On the sidelines, Ambassador Aryn held bilateral consultations with H.E. Serigne Guèye Diop, Minister of Trade & Industry of Senegal; H.E. Latifa Elbouabdellaoui, Director General of ICDT; and H.E. Isiaka Abdulqadir Imam, Secretary General of the D-8 Organization, discussing joint work on food security, agricultural trade, private-sector engagement, and agri-food technology transfer. On 4 November, he joined the Ministerial Working Breakfast on Syria chaired by H.E. Cevdet Yılmaz, Vice President of Türkiye, where he presented the components of the upcoming “IOFS–Syria Strategic Cooperation Proposal” to support agricultural recovery and food-system resilience.

IOFS Strengthens Cooperation in Agricultural Innovation: Beninese Delegation Explores Morocco's Agri-Export and Irrigation Excellence in Agadir



The IOFS, together with Morocco's Ministry of Agriculture, Maritime Fisheries, Rural Development, and Water and Forests, organized a high-level study visit from 4-5 November to the Souss-Massa region for a Beninese delegation to enhance agricultural cooperation and share Morocco's successful practic-

es in modern irrigation, crop production, and export systems. Over two days, the delegation examined innovative irrigation techniques at the Regional Directorate of Agriculture, toured advanced greenhouse farms using localized irrigation and fertigation, and visited the DUROC agricultural exploitation and conditioning station known for its excellence in packaging and quality control. The program also included technical visits to ONSSA laboratories (LRAR Agadir) for phytosanitary systems, INRA facilities for irrigation and horticultural research, and ONCA for agricultural extension programs, concluding with a detailed briefing at ORMVA-SM on hydro-agricultural networks and irrigation infrastructure. Conducted under the IOFS Africa Food Security Initiative (AFSI), the visit reinforced efforts to promote South–South cooperation, technology transfer, and institutional partnerships to strengthen agricultural resilience, productivity, and value-chain development across Africa.

IOFS Director General Strengthens Partnership with the United Nations System in Kazakhstan



On 12 November, IOFS Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn welcomed H.E. Sarango Radnaragcha, UN Resident Coordinator in Kazakhstan to the IOFS headquarters, for discussions on strengthening cooperation between IOFS and the UN system in support of shared food security and sustainable development goals. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to expanding the productive IOFS–UN dialogue, with Ambassador Aryn emphasizing IOFS's active engagement with UN entities such as FAO, WFP, IOM, UNDP, UN Women, UNODC, and UNAMA. He highlighted joint outcomes, including humanitarian support for Afghanistan and a multi-country cassava value-chain study with UNDP, set for expansion in 2026. The meeting also focused on enhancing collaboration within Kazakhstan, particularly in water management, climate resilient agriculture, and capacity development, while aligning programmes with national food security and rural development priorities. Recalling the strong foundation laid by the 16th UN–OIC General Meeting hosted by IOFS in 2024, both parties expressed a shared commitment to deepen cooperation, strengthen multilateral coordination, and transform their common vision of sustainable, climate-resilient food security into impactful results for Kazakhstan, the OIC region, and beyond.

IOFS Director General Participates in 20th SMIIC General Assembly and Holds High-Level Bilateral Engagements





On 13 November, IOFS Director General H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn participated in the 20th General Assembly of the Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC) in Tashkent, gathering OIC representatives to advance standardization, metrology, and conformity assessment. During the Opening Ceremony, addressed by H.E. Dr. Saad Alkasabi (SMIIC Chairman), H.E. Eng. Nawaf Ibrahim Al-Mana (President, GCC Standardization Organization), and H.E. Dr. Adel Al-Keaid (President, IFHAB), Ambassador Aryn highlighted the importance of stronger institutional collaboration for food security, trade, and quality assurance. He underscored Uzbekistan's strategic role as the “food basket of Central Asia,” encouraging deeper engagement with IOFS and stressing the value of enhanced IOFS–SMIIC cooperation to jointly advance Halal and food safety industries across the OIC. On the sidelines, he held a bilateral meeting with H.E. Dr. Adel Al-Keaid to explore collaboration on strengthening Halal accreditation systems as a driver of food security and agri-food transformation. He also paid a courtesy call on H.E. Muzaffar Madrahimov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, discussing bilateral cooperation and reiterating IOFS's invitation for Uzbekistan to join as a full Member State, which would support initiatives such as the Afghanistan Food Security Program.

IOFS Participates in the Technical Workshop on Locusts in Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA)



From 10-14 November, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security participated in the Technical Workshop on Locusts in Caucasus and Central Asia (CCA) in Tashkent, joining experts from regional countries and partner organizations to strengthen coordination and preparedness against locust threats. Represented by Dr. Abdelaziz Hajjaji, IOFS contributed to discussions on campaign reviews, forecasting and monitoring systems, environmental safeguards, and biopesticide innovations. Emphasizing capacity building, transboundary governance, knowledge exchange with other OIC regions, and the use of digital early-warning and climate-smart tools, IOFS reaffirmed its commitment to supporting member states in enhancing surveillance, cooperation, and sustainable control approaches. The workshop underscored the importance of regional solidarity and technical collaboration to reduce the food security impacts of locust outbreaks.

IOFS Participates in the Joint PPR & FMD Roadmap Meeting for the ECO and West Eurasia Regions



From 11 to 13 November 2025 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS) participated in the Joint PPR and FMD Roadmap Meeting for the ECO and West Eurasia regions, co-organized by WOA, FAO, and the Europe-

an Commission. Represented by Mr. Bakdaulet Yerzhanov, IOFS reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening animal health systems across OIC Member States, emphasizing regional cooperation, capacity building, and One Health approaches to combat transboundary animal diseases. The mission included bilateral discussions with stakeholders: Pakistan expressed interest in aligning national priorities with the IOFS Animal Development Programme, KazBiopharm explored vaccine export opportunities, and Syrian delegates discussed cooperation on vaccines and veterinary training. FAO proposed joint PPR sero-monitoring in Central Asia in 2026. IOFS reiterated its support for the regional roadmap, highlighting its readiness to mobilize expertise and partnerships to enhance veterinary health, disease surveillance, and sustainable livestock systems across the OIC region.

IOFS Director General Meets Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan



On 18 November 2025 in Astana, Kazakhstan, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, Director General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, held a high-level meeting with H.E. Mr. Yermek Kosherbayev, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Kazakhstan, to strengthen cooperation between Kazakhstan and IOFS. Ambassador Aryn expressed gratitude for Kazakhstan's support as host of the IOFS Secretariat and highlighted the country's leadership in promoting food security, sustainable agriculture, and humanitarian solidarity across the OIC region. He also outlined IOFS initiatives and strategic priorities in Central Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Minister Kosherbayev reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to multilateral efforts for resilient food systems and regional stability, welcoming IOFS engagement with international partners. Both sides agreed to continue close collaboration to enhance IOFS programme impact globally and further elevate Kazakhstan's role in shaping the international food security agenda.

IOFS and Lebanon Explore Enhanced Cooperation in Agriculture and Food Security



On 19 November 2025 in Astana, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, Director General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security (IOFS), received H.E. Mr. Georges Abou Zeid, Ambassador of Lebanon to Kazakhstan, at the IOFS Headquarters. Ambassador Aryn congratulated Ambassador Abou Zeid on his appointment and reaffirmed IOFS's readiness to support Lebanon's agricultural development priorities, emphasizing the country's agricultural potential and the value of leveraging IOFS expertise and instruments to address food security challenges. The discussion included the planned IOFS mission to Lebanon early next year and potential joint initiatives on climate adaptation, strategic crops, and natural resource management. The Director General also invited Lebanon to join IOFS as a full Member State, highlighting opportunities for partnership, capacity building, and engagement in regional and international food security platforms. Both sides agreed to maintain momentum through continued dialogue, technical cooperation, and participation in IOFS programmes and events.

IOFS Director General receives Leadership of Murdoch University Dubai



On 20 November 2025 in Astana, Ambassador Berik Aryn, Director General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, received Dr. Mohamed Bamatraf, Executive Director of Murdoch University Dubai and Director of Strategic Partnerships for the MENA region, at IOFS Headquarters. The discussion focused on strengthening cooperation in food security in Central Asia through joint academic initiatives, applied research, and institutional partnerships, as well as enhancing youth talent development in the region. Both IOFS and Murdoch University reaffirmed their commitment to developing concrete joint actions to support education, research excellence, and long-term capacity building across OIC Member States.

IOFS Delegation Participates in FAO Technical Workshop on Strengthening National Food Security and Nutrition



On 21 November 2025 in Astana, an IOFS delegation participated in the FAO Technical Workshop on Strengthening National Food Security and Nutrition. The workshop brought together senior officials from the Government of Kazakhstan, FAO, UN agencies, academia, private sector, and development partners to review progress, gaps, and opportunities in food security, agrifood systems transformation, and nutrition. Participants examined FAO Technical Support Programme projects on sustainable food systems and healthy nutrition, covering topics such as agrifood markets, school feeding, supply chains, and the National Food Atlas. The IOFS delegation emphasized the relevance of these discussions to its mandate of enhancing food security governance, climate-resilient agrifood systems, and nutrition-focused policies across OIC Member States, expressing appreciation to FAO Kazakhstan and reaffirming IOFS's readiness to deepen cooperation in evidence-based, multi-sectoral food security initiatives.

Director General of IOFS Receives the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco



On 26 November, the Director General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, H.E. Ambassador Berik Aryn, met with H.E. Mohamed Rachid Maaninou, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Kazakhstan, to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation in food security and agricultural development. Both sides highlighted Morocco's strong support for IOFS programmes, noting its leadership in agricultural innovation, water management, sustainable farming, and its active role in hosting IOFS initiatives such as the Water Use Management Workshop in Rabat and the upcoming Food Loss and Waste Management Roundtable in Meknes. The meeting underscored Morocco's commitment to South-South cooperation and knowledge transfer, as well as both parties' readiness to deepen collaboration in capacity building, technology transfer, and regional resilience. The discussions reaffirmed the strong and growing partnership between IOFS and Morocco.

Meeting between IOFS Director-General and the Ambassador of Uzbekistan



On 28 November, the Director-General of the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, Ambassador Berik Aryn, met with H.E. Ambassador Bakhtiyor Ibragimov of Uzbekistan to discuss the expanding partnership between IOFS and Uzbekistan. Ambassador Aryn highlighted active collaboration with Uzbek agricultural institutions and the participation of Uzbek experts in key IOFS programmes, as well as Uzbekistan's constructive contributions to recent IOFS meetings in Doha. He emphasized the importance of Uzbekistan's upcoming accession to the IOFS and identified new areas for cooperation, including logistics hub development, water resource management, research partnerships, and joint work under the IOFS-mandated Afghanistan Food Security Programme. Ambassador Ibragimov confirmed that accession procedures are nearing completion and reaffirmed Uzbekistan's strong commitment to deepening cooperation and advancing shared food security goals across the region.

IOFS Concludes International Workshop on Sustainable Food Security in Somalia

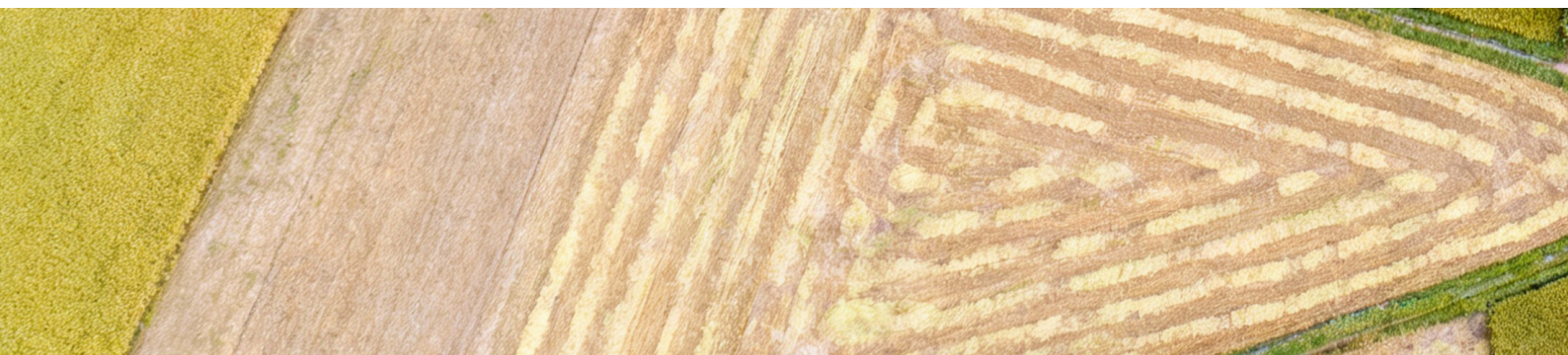


From 24–26 November 2025, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security, in collaboration with COMSTech and Benadir University, held a three-day International Workshop on "Advancing Knowledge and Innovation for Sustainable Food Security Systems" in Mogadishu, Somalia. The event brought together over 300 participants, including researchers, government officials, university professors, and private-sector stakeholders, to share knowledge, discuss practical solutions, and strengthen Somalia's national food security framework. Dr. Muhammad Yousuf Khan, representing IOFS, highlighted the organization's commitment to supporting climate-smart, research-driven, and self-reliant food systems, while sessions addressed agricultural sustainability, value chain development, digital agriculture, governance, and equitable food access. The workshop also showcased IOFS initiatives in wheat production, strategic food reserves, youth capacity-building, and partnerships across OIC universities, emphasizing the growing research capacity and readiness of Somali institutions to adopt innovative approaches for resilient and sustainable food security.


IOFS Presents Vision for Future Halal Food Systems at the 11th World Halal Summit in Istanbul





From 26–27 November, the Islamic Organisation for Food Security presented its forward-looking vision for halal food systems at the 11th World Halal Summit (WHS 2025), held under the theme "Halal and Hi-Tech" and attended by over 50,000 participants from more than 100 countries. Delivering opening remarks on behalf of IOFS Director-General Ambassador Berik Aryn, Dr. Memduh Ünal highlighted the limited presence of OIC Member States in global halal trade and emphasized the opportunity for regional leadership through harmonized standards, digital traceability, and capacity-building. The IOFS sub-session, moderated by Ms. Shakhlo Atabaeva, showcased initiatives supporting farmers, SMEs, and intra-OIC trade, while the joint IOFS–SMIIC "Halal & Hi-Tech" session demonstrated cutting-edge technologies—including AI, gamma radiation, and genomic innovations—that are shaping transparent, resilient, and future-ready halal food systems, reinforcing food security across the OIC.






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