

The Lives and Livelihoods Fund Board approves US\$ 243 million to combat poverty in eight countries

Riyadh, April 5, 2017 - The Life and livelihoods Fund Executive Board approved recently US\$ 242.6 million to finance several development projects in the areas of health, agriculture and rural infrastructure in eight Islamic Development Bank member countries: Tajikistan, Sudan, Djibouti, Niger, Mauritania Cameroon, Uganda and Guinea.

The meeting approved the list of projects being prepared for 2017, to be financed through the Fund, the largest multilateral development initiative of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa with a capital of US\$ 2.5 billion. The meeting was to identify more priority projects that will have the greatest impact in the fight against poverty and disease in Muslim countries and thus contribute to a better life for the beneficiary communities.

The meeting, held for the second time since establishment recently in Riyadh, was opened by the Advisor to the Royal Court, General Supervisor of King Salman Center for Humanitarian Relief and Works, Dr. Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Rabiah, and attended by representatives from Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development and the Islamic Development Bank. Among the attendees were representatives of the IDB and all of the Fund's major donors: King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Works, Qatar Development Fund, Abu Dhabi Development Fund, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development.

Commenting on the meeting, Dr. Bandar Hajjar, President of the IDB Group said that the LLF continues to advance its mission to help the poorest communities in the Muslim world to lead healthier and productive lives by investing in health, agriculture and rural infrastructure. He added that "By combining grants from donor institutions and IDB loans, we are seeking to provide more financial assistance to fight disease and poverty across the Muslim world compared to what grants can achieve alone."

"The second meeting of LLF Executive Board represents an important milestone in the progress of this noble initiative," said Maher Al-Hadrawi, Assistant General Supervisor of Operations and Programs at the King Salman Center for Humanitarian Relief. In March 2017, we succeeded in launching the first project by the Fund to support the efforts of the Senegalese government to fight and eradicate malaria", he added.

Mr. Khalifa Bin Jassem Al-Kuwari, Director General of the Qatar Development Fund, said that the partnership in this fund reflects the importance of concerted efforts and cooperation between donor institutions and regional governments. He added that consolidating resources and combining grants and IDB financing will enhance the impact of development programs and will ultimately save more lives.

Mr. Mohammed Saif Al Suwaidi, Director General of the Abu Dhabi Fund for Development, said that the Fund's contributions are in line with the UAE Government's development policies, which aim to enhance overall economic and social development efforts by working with partners from other development agencies to ensure the effectiveness of development grants and programs.

Dr. Waleed Al-Wuhaib, Director General of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, said that through grants from LLF they aim to protect communities from preventable diseases, improve reproductive health, ensure mental and physical well-being of children, promote access to primary and preventive health care services and support rural development. He added that all this will contribute to the empowerment of the world's poorest communities and offer them the opportunity to lead a healthy and productive life.

Mr. Hassan al-Damluji, head of Middle East Relations at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, said 400 million people out of more than 1 billion people in extreme poverty live in IDB member countries. These countries urgently need funding to support development projects aimed at eradicating disease, providing primary health care services, improving farming practices and developing basic infrastructure.

It is worth mentioning that the representatives of the donor institutions rotate in heading the Fund each year. The Fund's Executive Board is headed, in its first session, by Mr. Maher Al-Hadrawi, Assistant General Supervisor of Operations and Programs at King Salman Center for Relief and Humanitarian Works.

The LLF Executive Board approved in September 2016 financing projects worth US\$ 363 million for the first five years of its operations.