

**Workshop on
"Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in OIC Member
Countries: Needs and Capacity Assessment"
09-11 May 2016, Ankara, Turkey**

Welcoming remarks by H.E. Musa Kulaklıkaya

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim

Excellencies,
Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu

It is a great pleasure for me to address this august gathering and distinguished audience on the occasion of the Workshop on “Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in OIC Member Countries: Needs and Capacity Assessment”, which we are jointly organising with the Association of Education for Future and the UNDP Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development. At the outset I would like to express my deep thanks and gratitude to all of you for allocating your precious time to attend this important workshop.

As we all know, unemployment still constitutes one of the major challenges for many OIC member countries in their development efforts. According to the estimation in our latest report on “OIC Labour Market Report”, as of 2014, total unemployment rate in OIC countries is estimated at 7.6%. Moreover, average youth unemployment rate in OIC countries is even less promising. It remained constantly above 16%, a rate which is well above of non-OIC developing countries during the period 2000-2014. On the other hand, it is found that labour force participation rate, employment to population ratio, share of employment in services sector, share of labour force with tertiary education are lower in OIC countries compared to other developing countries.

In order to overcome the challenges related with unemployment, OIC member countries should develop compatible technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems in order to enhance employability and employment opportunities. TVET is an investment in human capital with a high return and significant benefits for a broad range of actors in the labour market including individuals, enterprises and the state. TVET programs help unskilled workers or people who are less endowed intellectually to develop their skills and competence to continue in their jobs and/or find new better job opportunities. In this connection, a set of measures to be considered in developing and implementing a TVET system is propose, which includes designing a compatible TVET system, boosting the effectiveness, and ensuring the sustainability.

Technical and vocational education and training equips people with the knowledge, know-how, skills and values necessary for professional integration and boosts productivity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. We believe that, as a means of investment in human capital, TVET should be the primary concern of our policies for a sustainable development and growth of economies, and for fighting against poverty and social exclusion. TVET is an effective and efficient tool for empowerment, for enabling youth as well as adults to escape the trap of poverty and contribute to their community's economic and social wellbeing.

Moreover, for lifelong employability, new opportunities should be constantly provided to working people in order to periodically update their skills and learn new ones. As a result of technological, economic and policy changes, some skills may become redundant and this may lead to prolonged unemployment or underemployment. In order to minimize the potential impacts under such circumstances, upgrading skills and retraining of workers through active labour market policies are required to protect them against jobs losses and risk of unemployment. This is also important to avoid skills mismatch.

It is against this background that SESRIC has initiated the OIC Vocational Education and Training Programme (OIC-VET) at the COMCEC Economic Summit in 2009 to improve the quality of vocational education and training in the public and private sectors with the aim of supporting and enhancing the opportunities for individuals to develop their knowledge and skills and thus to contribute to the development and competitiveness of the economies. Since its inception the OIC-VET Programme has played a crucial role in facilitating sharing of knowledge and skills through cooperation among training institutions, enterprises, social partners and other relevant bodies all over the OIC region. Through different modalities and customised programmes the OIC-VET supported and supplemented the efforts of the OIC countries, improving the competencies and skills of the people according to the needs and priorities of labour markets through intra-OIC partnerships at institutional level.

During the initial phase, the Programme focused on exchange of best practices, human and institutional capacity building to develop the skills and competencies of the professionals by introducing a transnational perspective in conformity with national priorities of the member countries. Working closely with governments, local administrations, municipalities, research centres, institutes, universities and NGOs, the Centre has initiated several capacity-building programmes, skill development projects and networks of institutions, which served to the exchange of thousands of people throughout OIC countries, and enhanced the quality and innovation capacity of training systems, facilitating the transfer of best practices from one country to another.

Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 and the OIC Programme of Action 2025, both targets to increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and

entrepreneurship, innovation as well as sustainable development. It is therefore the right time for us all to rethink innovative ways and means for enhancing the TVET systems of our countries. The current workshop will allow participants to assess the current needs of the technical and vocational education systems in OIC Member Countries and to develop proposals for further development, with a view to developing a comprehensive strategy document for vocational training that will include the strategic priorities, goals, targets and activities with key performance indicators.

I hope this workshop will play an important role to contribute in building a better life and future for our societies and economies, and to open up new prospects for young citizens.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all the participants for their commitment in this important issue and for sparing time to attend this workshop and I wish all the success to this workshop.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Wassalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuh