

SIXTH SESSION of OIC STATISTICAL COMMISSION

5-6 November 2016, Konya - Turkey

WELCOME SPEECH of H.E. Amb. Musa KULAKLIKAYA, Director General, SESRIC

Bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates of the National Statistical Offices of OIC Member Countries,

Esteemed Representatives of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Supranational and International Institutions,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,

It is a great pleasure for me to welcome you all to the Sixth Session of the Statistical Commission of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation. Thank you for having accepted our invitation and allocating your time to attend to this Session organised in collaboration with IDB. I also would like to convey my special thanks to the esteemed officials of the Governorship and Municipality of Konya in providing their generous support and warm hospitality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is not a coincidence why the current Session of OIC-StatCom is taking place in this beautiful city of Konya. Konya is awarded as the Tourism City of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for 2016. More importantly, Konya is also the city of Mawlānā Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, the great Islamic scholar of the 13th century. Rumi's literary works and thoughts on **peace, mutual understanding, and solidarity** still guide us in our contemporary times.

Through OIC-StatCom, we aim together at bringing about this solidarity among all the stakeholders of the National Statistical Systems (NSSs) of OIC countries based on the philosophy of South-South and Triangular Cooperation (SSTC). As my colleagues will be briefing you about the implemented activities of OIC-StatCom in the first session, I would like to focus more on the vital role of statistics in development of countries.

Based on the well-known **Wisdom Hierarchy** (Data-Information-Knowledge-Wisdom), it is not possible to reach the light of wisdom without gathering parts as data, connecting them as information and forming a whole as knowledge. In a similar vein, these steps are also inevitable for a sound decision making mechanism.

In this connection, as the primary producers of official data in a country, National Statistical Offices (NSOs) are **indispensable building blocks of decision making processes**. Additionally, being the main coordinators of National Statistical Systems (NSSs), NSOs are also crucial for monitoring and evaluating national development policies. When used timely and on a proper basis, statistics produced by the relevant stakeholders of NSSs have the potential to identify the *“development inputs”* and accordingly affect the *“development outcomes”*.

It is obvious that **without national ownership and investment into the NSSs, there will be difficulties in coming up with systems to monitor and evaluate progress and thus design sound policies based on the evidence available.**

Distinguished Participants,

Despite the progress recorded at the global level for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the development among the countries has been uneven. The global reporting at that time has drawn an optimistic picture although the improvements observed at the country level per each MDG have differed widely. We can explicitly state that the structure, content, enforcement and implementation methods of MDGs have limited the scope of their expected outcomes and results.

With the hopes to overcome the aforementioned shortcomings, the Member States of UN endorsed the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** in September 2015. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are different than MDGs in terms of global coverage as SDG process also involves developed countries as well as developing countries.

We need to admit 17 goals, 169 targets and 230 indicators are enormous in number and more ambitious when compared to the MDGs. Except for Tier 1 indicators, majority of SDG indicators is either classified as with “irregular/no data collection practices” or “without a developed methodology” which creates a lot of challenges including **data gaps**.

To uncover facilitating and inhibiting factors that may affect the achievement of the 2030 development agenda, SESRIC has been requested by the **COMCEC** to follow up the tracks of OIC countries pertaining to the SDGs and report on a periodic basis to the annual sessions of the COMCEC Summit. In this regard, SESRIC has prepared a **Tendency Survey on the SDG Priorities** and circulated it among OIC member countries. I must state that we have received a low number of completed surveys till the original deadline provided. Bringing this issue to your attention again, **I kindly ask for the completion of this important survey by our esteemed NSOs by the end of November.**

Esteemed Colleagues,

Even at the fundamental statistics level, the OIC countries still have on-going challenges to overcome. The **2016 Statistical Capacity Indicator (SCI)** scores calculated by the World Bank show that our 50 member countries with available data lag behind the averages of non-OIC Developing Countries group and the World.

Despite all these matters, the statistical community at the OIC level is vibrant and progressive to develop solutions. In this sense, the **OIC-StatCom** is an important platform through which we discuss and exchange experiences both on mainstream statistical themes and on themes specific to OIC countries in a sincere environment.

I also would like to underline that **in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the OIC fora and mandate assigned to our Centre, SESRIC is the responsible subsidiary organ and main focal point of the OIC for the issues related to statistics.** Actually, there is a dire need for paving the way towards synergies among the national, regional, and international stakeholders for the achievement of the 2030 development agenda. Through our direct engagement with the all these stakeholders and through our own initiatives for contributing to the efforts of our member countries in improving their statistical capacities, we are exerting our maximum efforts on this path.

To exemplify a few, our projects on **OIC Accreditation and Certification Programme for Official Statisticians (OIC-CPOS)** with the IDB, **Tobacco Questions for Surveys (TQS)** with the WHO,

cooperation on **tourism statistics** with the UNWTO, **education statistics** with ISESCO, development of a **peer-review mechanism** in the NSOs of OIC Countries with Eurostat are smoothly on track. And we look forward to opening new avenues of tangible cooperation with the ILO and GCC-Stat soon through the MOUs we sign.

Besides the aforementioned activities, I would like to explicitly mention the project for the development of the **Islamic Financial Industry Database** as it is a very niche area that we need to focus belonging to the Islamic world. Last October, we organized a Stakeholders Meeting in Washington, DC, in collaboration with the World Bank Global Islamic Finance Development Centre in the margins of the 2016 IMF-World Bank Annual Meetings. The Stakeholders Meeting was fruitful and the participants declared their willingness to support the project.

Additionally, we would like to initiate a project related to Measurement and Monitoring of Official Development Assistance statistics after taking your views tomorrow. Since the variety and complexity of development finance need to be assessed appropriately to allocate resources efficiently in a time of **tighter budgets with greater expectations**.

These activities are all reflections of our willingness and determinism to leverage the current synergy of South-South and Triangular Cooperation towards improving the statistical systems of OIC countries so that they could make more effective and efficient development decisions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you know the **draft agenda for this year's Session** has been **mainly structured** through taking the feedback of the participants that attended to our side-event held in New York in March 2016 in the margins of the 47th Session of UN Statistical Commission. Our themes are significantly relevant to the discussions around post 2015 development agenda. We are also glad to host the Meeting on **Regional Action Plan for Arab Countries** with the initiatives of Palestine and UNESCWA.

As is the tradition with our annual sessions, our colleagues from the international agencies will inform us about the main pillars of the SDGs, alternative approaches in measuring and monitoring broader development finance, statistical architectural models and new approaches to human resources management within the NSOs. The presentations will certainly facilitate the sharing of know-how. And your active participation and interventions will definitely give us the clues for the better planning of our future activities.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to express once again my thanks to the IDB for their support and to the Governorship and Municipality of Konya for their warm hospitality for the organisation of the Sixth Session OIC-StatCom. May Allah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) bestow his mercy on the undertakings of this Sixth Session of the OIC Statistical Commission.

Wassalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu