

## **Fourth Session of OIC Statistical Commission**

*21-23 April 2014, Ankara – Turkey*

### **FINAL REPORT**

The Fourth Session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom) was co-organised by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) on 21-23 April 2014 at the SESRIC headquarters in Ankara, Republic of Turkey.

The delegates of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) from 38 OIC Member Countries and 9 international organizations attended the Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom. The participants list is attached in Annexes.

The agenda items of the Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom:

- Opening Session
- Implemented Activities of the OIC-StatCom
- Enhancing National Capacities in Poverty Statistics
- Post-2015 Development Agenda and its Implications for NSOs
- Towards a More Comprehensive System of Health Statistics and a Global Tobacco Surveillance System in OIC Member Countries
- Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information
- Improving Statistical Capacities in Tourism Sector
- Open Discussions and Closing Session

### **1 Opening Session**

Following the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, the Opening Session started with the welcome addresses by H.E. Mohanna al Mohanna (Chair of the OIC-StatCom and Director General of the Central Department of Statistics and Information (CDSI), Saudi Arabia), Mr. Selçuk Koç (Director, COMCEC Coordination Office), and Mr. Jakhongir Khasanov (Professional Officer, OIC) on behalf of H.E. Iyad Ameen Madani (Secretary General of OIC).

Dr. Abdullateef Bello (Director, Economic Research and Policy Department, IDB) and Prof. Savaş Alpay (Director General, SESRIC) delivered the welcome speeches as co-organizers of the OIC-StatCom. The opening session continued with the opening remarks by Ms. Khaledah Al-Kharraz (Assistant Director of Agriculture Statistics, Central Statistical Bureau (CSB), Kuwait) on

behalf of Dr. Abdullah Sahar (Director General, CSB, Kuwait), and by Mr. Enver Taştı (Vice President, Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat), Turkey) on behalf of Mr. Birol Aydemir (President, TurkStat, Turkey) representing Arab and Asian regions, respectively. Representative of the African region was unable to deliver the opening address, due to unexpected health problems.

In his inaugural address, Prof. Savaş Alpay, Director General of SESRIC, enlightened the delegates on the successful conduct of the OIC-StatCom Executive Work Plan activities, including the OIC Certification and Accreditation Programme for Official Statisticians (OIC-CPOS) and the OIC-StatCom Forum, an online knowledge and experience sharing platform. Prof. Alpay emphasized the key role of NSOs in generating reliable statistics to be used in the fight against poverty in the OIC Member Countries. Prof. Alpay also highlighted the need for better health statistics to implement sound health policies. While concluding his remarks, Prof. Alpay underlined the importance of the involvement of NSOs in the global discussions concerning the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

In their addresses, speakers thanked the organisers of the Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom, namely SESRIC and IDB, for their excellent hospitality and also for the numerous and successfully implemented capacity building activities undertaken since the Third Session, held on 10-12 April 2013, in Ankara, Turkey. A record number of participants reaching 93 delegates proving the interest that member countries grant to the OIC-StatCom has been noted. They all dwelled on the importance of best practices and experience sharing through Sessions of the OIC-StatCom. NSOs have been encouraged to meet the challenges of statistics generation induced by the strong data demand under the framework of the Post-2015 Development Agenda. In this context, they highlighted the crucial role of cooperation in capacity building among OIC Member Countries as well as with the international community. They also focused on statistics to be produced in the fields of Islamic finance, agriculture, poverty, famine, undernourishment, environment, employment, education, water and sanitation, tourism, health and tobacco control. The fact that new strategies will be needed to accomplish the “Data Revolution” has been emphasized. Some speakers also stressed upon the need to institutionalize the centres which produce statistics and provide them with the necessary autonomy to offer impartial statistics.

## **2. Implemented Activities of the OIC-StatCom**

During the session titled “Implemented Activities of the OIC-StatCom”, the presentations reporting on the activities and initiatives, which have been implemented based on the resolutions of the Third Session of OIC-StatCom, have been delivered by Mr. Atilla Karaman (Senior Researcher, Statistics and Information Department, SESRIC) and Ms. Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk (Senior Researcher, Statistics and Information Department, SESRIC). The last presentation of the morning session was made by Mr. Mansour Kh. Damas (Director of Systems Programming, CDSI, Saudi Arabia) on introducing and sharing the experience of the CDSI on a national project titled “National Statistical Databank”.

### **2.1 OIC-StatCom Executive Work Plan Activities**

During the Session of OIC-StatCom Executive Work Plan Activities, participants listened to the following presentations

- Prioritising Development Goals of the OIC Member Countries under StatCaB Activities (SESRIC)
- OIC-StatCom Forum (SESRIC)
- Certification and Accreditation Programme for Official Statisticians (OCI-CPOS) (SESRIC);

Results of the ‘OIC-StatCaB Questionnaire for the Biennium 2014-2015’, on assessing the training needs and capacities of NSOs, have been presented. This survey is conducted biennially in member countries since 2007. Countries that have not responded yet to the aforementioned Questionnaire have been reminded to complete and convey it to SESRIC, the Secretariat of OIC StatCom.

The second presentation focused on the OIC-StatCom Forum, a dynamic platform to share experiences and expertise of OIC Member Countries in the area of statistics. The simple online registration module, that allows any user, from the NSOs or other institutions, to easily join the Forum, has been explained. Member Countries were encouraged to be active in using the Forum, also giving them an opportunity to announce their own activities.

SESRIC, made a presentation on the Certification and Accreditation Programme for Official Statisticians (OCI-CPOS), which aims to enhance capacities of official statisticians in order to

provide quality statistics and to certify junior statistical professionals, working in NSOs with at least 2 years of experience, through the Basic Level Certification Exams (CertEx-Basic). The establishment of a Certification Advisory Board (CAB) and an Examination Committee (ExCom) have been announced whereas CAB will be in charge of specifying the framework and standards of the examination procedures and ExCom Member Experts will determine the certification subjects, training programmes and admission criteria.

The following feed-back and questions concerning the OIC-CPOS project have been received: Announcement of the date of entry into force, target market in the future, further grants by the IDB, profiles of professionals to certify given the heterogeneity of training on statistics and accreditation levels..

Prof. Alpay, Director General of SESRIC, provided some explanations stating that it is about both basic and high-level accreditation. He informed participants that the estimated effective starting date of the project is planned to be during 2015. He encouraged participating NSOs to actively participate in the CAB and ExCom.

The Chair of the OIC-StatCom requested IDB to increase its funding to support this programme.

Turkey presented the participants with the country experience in a similar certification project.

## **2.2 OIC-StatCom Follow-up Reports and Activities**

SESRIC made a presentation on the “Results of the Survey on the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators of the United Nations”, “Results of the Training Programme on “Statistical Database Design and Visualization Tools Development” and “Results of the Expert Group Meeting on Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics”.

In regard with the “Results of the Survey on the Minimum Set of Gender Indicators of the United Nations”, participants have been informed that a Technical Committee of Experts (TCE) Meeting took place in January 2013, in Ankara. 22 countries reported to have completed the task of gathering accurate information in conformity with the set of indicators advocated by the United Nations. OIC-StatCom requested SESRIC and IDB to organize capacity building programmes based on information collected through these surveys.

The participants have been informed that the delegates of the Expert Group Meeting on Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics, held on 25 – 26 March 2014, at the SESRIC Headquarters in Ankara, Turkey, will continue to work with the support of Central Banks of OIC Member Countries, under the framework of the Conclusions document which was endorsed by the participants at the end of the meeting

### **3. Enhancing National Capacities in Poverty Statistics**

Presentations have been made by SESRIC, Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI), Indonesia, Senegal, Turkey and Yemen.

During the session, Ms. Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk (Senior Researcher, Statistics and Information Department, SESRIC) informed the participants about the SESRIC-COMCEC joint project titled “Enhancing National Capacities of OIC Member Countries in Poverty Statistics” for which a grant has been entitled under the COMCEC Project Cycle Management (PCM) Programme for the period 2014. Questionnaires related to the project will be circulated to the countries in order to collect essential information for a better understanding of the causes of poverty and identifying the national capacities of member countries in the field of poverty statistics and poverty measurement. In this context, expert group meetings will be organized and a final report will be published.

Mr. Barış Uçar (Expert, TurkStat, Turkey), presented activities on the newly adopted poverty measurement methods, conducted since 2012. Turkey shared its plan to also utilize the multidimensional approach.

The country case presentation of Indonesia by Dr. Suryamin (Director General, BPS-Statistics Indonesia) emphasised the role of statistics as a key tool in comprehensive planning, monitoring and evaluation for the successful implementation of development initiatives towards poverty alleviation in Indonesia.

Mr. Mamadou Falou Mbengue (Deputy Director General, National Agency for Statistics and Demography (ANSD), Senegal) presented the main actions carried out by ANSD in production of poverty statistics. The main surveys conducted in Senegal are Senegalese Household Survey (ESAM I and ESAM II), Poverty Monitoring Survey in Senegal (ESPS I and ESPS II), Poverty Survey and Family Structure (EPSF I and EPSF II). He also informed about a survey named

“Listening to Senegal” carried out through the utilization of mobile phones. Limitations of these various operations have been discussed together with the need for capacity building.

In his presentation, Dr. Suman Seth (Research Officer, OPHI), focused on the multidimensional approach and how it is used to measure different dimensions of poverty based on identification of deprivations. This approach is supposed to complete the monetary approach usually used at the country level. He informed the participants about the Global Multidimensional Poverty Peer Network (MPPN), an international peer network for policymakers engaged in exploring or implementing multidimensional poverty measures.

Dr. Fares Al-Gahmi (General Coordinator for Census, Central Statistical Organisation, Yemen) reported on their cooperation with international organizations with an aim to develop databases on poverty.

During the following discussions, the lack of adequate attention at global level to the poverty phenomena has been highlighted. The importance to have a consensus on the definition of poverty has been emphasized which will enable the implementation of joint effective actions against this phenomenon within the OIC Community. Some participants think that it is necessary to take into account the Islamic criteria of poor who are entitled to receive Zakat. While considering income as one aspect of poverty, participants stressed the multidimensional nature of poverty and encouraged countries to consider this approach. Member countries were called upon to respond to the questionnaire on poverty that will be circulated by SESRIC in line with the COMCEC Poverty Project.

The delegates of Sudan, Palestine, Egypt and Djibouti shared with the delegates their experience in regard with poverty measurement surveys. During the discussions; Saudi Arabia, Benin and Arab Institute for Training & Research in Statistics (AITRS) emphasized the necessity of developing definitions of poverty for country-specific situations.

#### **4. Post-2015 Development Agenda and its Implications on National Statistical Offices (NSO)**

The last thematic session on first day was devoted to the “Post-2015 Development Agenda and Implications for NSOs”. Dr. Abdullateef Bello (Director, Economic Research and Policy Department, IDB) and Dr. Juraj Riecan (Director, Statistics Division, UNESCWA) briefed the delegates about the implications of the Post-2015 Development Agenda for the NSOs with

particular focus on the Open Data and Data Revolution initiatives. In his presentation, Mr. Abu Bakr Al Gendy (Director General, Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS), Egypt) gave information about the progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in Egypt and pointed out the strengths and weaknesses of the MDG framework. Mr. Al Gendy also focused on the role Egypt plays in the UN Open Working Group on Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) as one of the six Arab countries implementing country level SDG consultations. Following these presentations, the participants expressed their views in regard with the need to have a common vision for the identification of SDGs and allocation of more national resources to achieve them. Participants from the Sub-Saharan Africa region drew attention to the lack of human resources in official statistics mainly due to more attractive benefits offered by private sector companies, which eventually causes the NSOs to lose their human resources and, thus, jeopardizes their role in the measurement of SDGs.

## **5. Towards a More Comprehensive System of Health Statistics and a Global Tobacco Surveillance System in OIC Member Countries**

Mr. Edouard Tursan D'Espaignet (Coordinator, Comprehensive Information Systems for Tobacco Control, World Health Organization (WHO)), enlightened the audience on “Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs)” and underlined the need for global monitoring of NCDs. The Statistical Information System of WHO and some published reports were presented. In his presentation, Mr. D'Espaignet highlighted difficulties in obtaining reliable data on mortality in OIC Member Countries some of which are due to cultural reasons, which, in some countries, prevent the gathering of data on death causes, as a result of the inadequate number of autopsies.

In his presentation, Mr. Mehmet Günel (Expert, TurkStat, Turkey) informed the participants on the Turkish experience in the implementation of the European Health Interview Surveys (EHIS), recommended by EuroStat. Mr. Günel indicated that Turkey conducts EHIS biennially whereas the member states of the European Union conduct it once every six years.

The second part of the session titled “Global Tobacco Surveillance System in OIC Member Countries”, continued with the presentations by Dr. Samira Asma (Chief of Global Tobacco Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) ), Mr. Jeremy Morton (Expert, CDC), and Mr. Md. Baitul Amin Bhuiyan (Deputy Director General, Bureau of Statistics, Bangladesh) concentrating on the Global Youth Tobacco Survey (GYTS), Global Adult Tobacco

Survey (GATS) and the Tobacco Questions for Surveys (TQS). Presentations on the global tobacco surveillance system raised awareness on tobacco-use data collection tools, dangers of smoking revealed by statistics collected through surveys, as well as regulations on tobacco in different countries. The striking fact that six deaths out of ten in the world are being caused by tobacco has been highlighted.

During the discussion session, the participants gave examples from their respective countries on monitoring of tobacco control and their cooperation with the relevant stakeholders on the implementation of GYTS, GATS and TQS. The participants also highlighted the need for reliable statistics in mortality causes and exemplified the alternative approaches to pathologic autopsies which cannot be conducted in certain environments due to cultural reasons. The issue of the scarcity of financial resources to conduct tobacco surveys (every 3 years) has also been raised. However, participants agreed that providing statistical data to understand this phenomenon and to control tobacco use is more important than curing diseases caused by tobacco. This can be considered as a good investment opportunity in improving the quality of public health. Studies have shown that the cost of doing nothing against tobacco is significantly higher than the costs of action. SESRIC and IDB were requested to actively work on capacity building in health and tobacco statistics as well as the integration of the TQS into national surveys of the NSOs.

## **6. Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information**

In the following thematic session titled “Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information”, Mr. Amor Laaribi (Global Geospatial Information Management (GGIM) Coordinator, UNSD) focused on how to link socio-economic information to a location and informed the participants about the roles of the UNSD and the UN Initiative on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM) in the integration of statistical and geospatial information. An upcoming UNSD seminar on the use of geospatial data in August 2014 has been announced.

Dr. Mohamad Ahmad Al-Amer, (President, Central Informatics Organisation, Bahrain); Mr. Mohamad Saoud Al Boainain (Head of Population Statistics Section, Ministry of Development, Planning and Statistics, Qatar), Ms. Samira Ouadday (Central Director, Geographic Information Systems, Institute of Statistics, Tunisia) and Mr. Reda Mohamad Al Sabbagh (Director of Information Technology Department, National Bureau of Statistics, UAE) also made presentations that mainly highlighted the national statistical activities concerning the utilisation of



data, integration and establishment of Geospatial Information Systems by using new technologies.

Participants have been informed on the digitalized maps implemented under the General Population and Housing Census (GPHC) in Qatar in 2010 and in Tunisia in 2014. They focused on the importance of transforming statistics to knowledge, by integrating it with geospatial information. This integration allows more effective responses to the social demand while tools indicate the localization of populations and social facilities (schools, hospitals, etc.) in details. The integration provides better analysis of data before taking appropriate decisions to implement programmes.

The discussions followed by the presentations focused on the integration of geospatial data in official statistics and possible collaboration between NSOs and the UN-GGIM. SESRIC and IDB were encouraged to intensify their collaboration with UNSD and UN-GGIM for improving capacities of OIC Member Countries in this field.

## **7. Improving Statistical Capacities in Tourism Sector**

The last thematic session titled “Improving Statistical Capacities in Tourism Sector” included the presentations by Mr. Atilla Karaman (Senior Researcher, Statistics and Information Department, SESRIC), Mr. Abd Latib Talib (Director, Economic Indicators Division, Department of Statistics, Malaysia), Mr. Khalid Said Al Mudhaffar (Acting Director General of Economic Statistics, National Centre for Statistics and Information, Oman), and Ms. Emel Ural (Expert, TurkStat, Turkey).

SESRIC briefed participants on the capacity building activities planned in the field of tourism statistics under the framework of the SESRIC-COMCEC joint project titled “Improving Statistical Capacities of Tourism Sector in Mediterranean and Gulf Regions” which has been entitled to receive a grant under the COMCEC PCM Programme. The project mainly aims at strengthening statistical capacities in the field of tourism in OIC Member Countries. SESRIC also informed the audience about the training programmes to be conducted in the region and about the workshop to be held in Ankara, Turkey with the participation of international organisations under the project framework in the first week of December this year.

Mr. Abd Latib Talib reported on statistical surveys on tourism as well as the formation of an Institutional Planning Committee. Tourism satellite accounts have been implemented in Malaysia from 2000 to 2008.

Mrs. Ural informed the participants that Turkey conducts a survey in regular intervals in 26 languages in customs areas. The survey includes in particular the number of nights spent, expenses made and number of visits to other countries. It allows identifying the general pattern of inbound and outbound tourism.

In the discussion part, countries shared their experiences on practices and challenges. The lack of data in Palestine on tourist arrivals for the region of East Al-Quds City, due to the illegal occupation, was one of these discussions.

## **8. Open Discussions and Closing Session**

Following the discussions, participants adopted the draft resolution of the Fourth Session of the OIC-StatCom. The next meeting of the OIC-StatCom will be held in April 2015, in Turkey, if within one month no country proposes to hold the Fifth Session.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> of April was devoted to a social programme allowing participants to discover the Old City of Ankara.