

Statement of H.E. Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of the SESRIC, at the First Meeting of the Monitoring and Advisory Committee (MAC) of the Vocational Education and Training Programme for OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET)

Izmir, Republic of Turkey

13 May 2009

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour and pleasure for me to address the First Meeting of the Monitoring and Advisory Committee of the Vocational Education and Training Programme for OIC Member Countries. At the outset I would like to thank to COMCEC Coordination Office for the excellent arrangements for facilitating this significant event.

It is considerable that this meeting is bringing together, for the first time, the National Focal Points of the OIC-VET Programme. Especially in today's world, where the economies are changing into knowledge based economies, the opportunity presented by this Meeting for exchange and networking between the National Focal Points is of utmost importance. This is indeed a welcome opportunity to underscore the pre-eminent place of cooperation in vocational training as it addresses a very important priority issue within the OIC.

The main objective of this meeting is to establish closer and stronger partnerships among the National Focal Points of the OIC-VET Programme in their efforts in vocational education and training in the OIC Member States. The OIC-VET Programme emphasises the importance of coordination and cooperation among all Member States 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 of their countries.

While respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and implementation of vocational training, the Programme supports and supplements the activities of the OIC MCs. It aims at improving the competencies and skills of the people according to the needs and priorities of labour markets through intra-OIC partnerships at institutional level.

The Programme focuses on increasing accessibility and raising the quality of VET, and provides an opportunity for organizations involved in VET to build OIC partnerships, exchange best practices, increase the expertise of their staff and develop the skills and

competencies of the participants. These objectives, which are at the very core of vocational education and training efforts in Member States, call for more effective and coherent training cooperation.

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a well established fact that the rapidly changing environment, new ways and means of ensuring that working people possess the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes are critical for seizing the opportunities inherent in globalization and technological progress while reducing their adverse consequences.

Many OIC Member Countries have a huge shortage of skilled people and this talent deficit is already hampering the manufacturing and services sectors' growth prospects. Education system has been unable to support the rising demand for skill sets. There is also a big question mark regarding the compatibility of skills acquired by students who receive higher education, and the demand by the firms.

In this context, this First Meeting of the Monitoring and Advisory Committee of the OIC-VET Programme is so vital. It can help bring greater coherence to our collective efforts and can gear those efforts towards the realisation of the partnership for training, as set out by the OIC-VET Programme.

Moreover, I believe that this meeting will be an avenue towards serving as a coordination and cooperation mechanism for the VET institutions in the OIC Member States. With the establishment of this new platform, we would be able to discuss effective ways of improving the quality and capacity of vocational training systems, networking of the initiatives in the Member States in the field of vocational training, particularly for vocational guidance and promotion and use of information and communication technologies in vocational training, as well as enhancing innovative vocational training approaches.

Therefore, it is indeed heartening that representatives of National Focal Points of the OIC-VET Programme are participating in this meeting to discuss key issues regarding vocational education and training. It is my hope that open and inclusive dialogue will be the hallmark of this meeting and its concrete outcome will provide guidance for more coordinated action.

I hope this First Meeting will enhance our efforts to promote effective and coherent cooperation in the field of vocational training under the OIC umbrella, for the benefit of all our people.

In that spirit, I wish you most fruitful and successful meeting and deliberations.

Thank you for your kind attention.