



2nd Meeting of the OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom-2)

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Statement
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Distinguished Participants from OIC Institutions and NSOs

Assalaam 'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

On behalf of the Islamic Development Bank, I would like to thank and register our sincere appreciation to SESRIC for hosting the 2nd meeting of OIC-StatCom in this beautiful city of Izmir, Turkey and for the generous hospitality accorded us, and the excellent arrangement put in place for this year's meeting.

Distinguished participants

The world economy is still facing exceptional uncertainty for reasons which are well known such as debt overhang in Europe, downgrade of sovereign credit ratings of some notable advanced countries, high food and energy prices, high unemployment especially among the youth, impact of earthquake in Japan, and changes in political leadership of countries in Europe and the rest of the world; altogether are factors stalling progress of global economic recovery. It is very crucial to monitor each of these factors shaping the development landscape and evaluate the progress of various international initiatives such as Millennium Development Goals, OIC Ten Year Program of Action, and IDB 1440H Vision. Success in this direction will depend squarely on the quality of statistics available for indicators of interest and the period covered, among others.

No doubt, statistics is increasingly becoming recognized especially as it plays key role in evidence-based policy formulation, planning, strategy development, and allocation of resources. It is now an important catalyst for understanding the unknown and for managing an early warning system for preventing crisis. There is abundant evidence that the financial crisis which started in 2008 could have been averted if enough resources were made available to statistical agencies of countries from which the crisis originated. This was the case in the US when the US Congress, before the crisis, consistently refused the US Census Bureau's request for extra money to analyze services sector that made

up more than half the total US economy. However, after the collapse of the real estate markets in 2009, the Congress finally agreed to give the Census Bureau an extra \$8.1 million which at that time was too late. According to the Bloomberg Businessweek of 7 May 2012 which reported the story entitled *With Data, You Get What You Pay For*”, the moral lesson for procrastination was that the government of US saved \$8.1 million before the crisis for refusing the Census Bureau the much needed fund to analyze the service sector but many trillions dollars were lost as a result of not being able to see the crisis coming. A stitch in time saves nine, goes an adage. Therefore, our governments should provide resources to NSOs to collect data at the right time for the right purpose.

In this context, statistical communities worldwide are working to forge a common plan to raise the profile of NSOs at major international conferences. As recently as December 2011, during the 4th High Level Forum of Aid Effectiveness, the Busan Plan of Action for Statistics was agreed which reaffirmed the importance of statistics as enabler for transparency, accountability and results. The plan set out new objectives to complement the previous Marrakesh Plan of Action, including fully integrating statistics in decision making, promoting open access to data, and increasing resources for statistical systems. I am confident that all OIC stakeholders would embrace the Busan Plan of Action for Statistics.

Distinguished participants

A year ago, the first OIC-StatCom meeting took place in this great country and the aim was to catalyze statistics for development in OIC member countries. One outcome of the OIC-StatCom-I was the decision to create three working groups to (i) develop a strategic vision for OIC-StatCom, (ii) identify statistical indicators specific to OIC member countries, and (iii) develop an accreditation program for official statistical professionals. As you would notice from the reports of these working groups, reasonable progress has been made and we thank all the members of the groups for their efforts and commitments to the work assigned to them.

Given that this year's meeting will discuss issues relating to the production and dissemination of quality statistical information, it is important to develop an OIC Statistics Code of Practice for member countries to serve as best practices in the production and dissemination of quality statistics.

Distinguished participants

At IDB, we partner with a number of organizations to finance StatCap projects. The latest effort is our working together with DfiD to support statistical activities of some conflict-affected countries in the Middle East. We have recorded success in Palestine with the completion of their agricultural census which was partly financed by DfiD. We are also working closely with NSOs in Iraq and Yemen to identify suitable projects and prepare project documents for financing by DfiD. In addition, we are active in financing regional statistical activities including training and workshop. More recently, we are collaborating with the World Health Organization to finance data reconciliation and harmonization of health-related statistics in the MENA region. On this front, I call on NSOs to assist IDB in identifying areas of statistics where they have comparative advantage so as to facilitate knowledge transfer between NSOs.

Distinguished participants

I would like to assure you that IDB stands ready to do all it takes to support the OIC StatCom . This is realizable if NSOs become proactive in StatCom activities.

In conclusion, I wish you all successful and productive discussions in the next two days.

Thank you and God bless you all.

Wassalam 'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh