

Statement of H.E. Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of SESRIC

**International Conference on eGovernment: Sharing Experiences (eGOVsharE2009)
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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am pleased to welcome you to the International Conference on E-Government: Sharing Experiences. I would like to present my sincere appreciation for the efforts of the eGovernment Centre (eDEM) of Public Administration Institute for Turkey and Middle East (TODAIE), the Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency (TİKA), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) to co-organize this significant event together with the SESRIC.

As you are all aware, the immense and extensive influence of technology has been felt very deeply on all of the processes around us. Since the time of al-Jazarī – the prominent Islamic polymath who set the foundations of cybernetics and invented machines with knowledge processing abilities – information technology (IT) took enormous steps which enable 16 million pages to be stored on a small USB flash drive. From stone tablets to electronic paper, the technological transformation has resulted in savings and speed in processing, storing and exchanging information. Nanotech is now playing supportive backbone role for the IT in the processing and transformation of high revolutionary products faster, the entire new generation of products which are meant to be smaller in size but cleaner and stronger in structure and functions, In other words; lighter and more precisely effective.

Two major developments in the last two decades, the increase in computer penetration rates and the opening of the Internet to commercial use, paved the way for access to information on an unimaginable scale, and productivity both in the private and public sector. Governments also could not ignore the service quality, service delivery time, and administrative innovation brought by these developments.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen;

The objective of eGovShare2009 is to provide a platform for all of the participants here to share their practices, ideas and research results regarding e-government initiatives, implementations and projects. “E-government”, as a term, has not a unique definition. However, these different definitions show that e-government is one aspect of digital government which includes the broad use of all information and communication technology (ICT) tools in delivering public sector services.

To reflect the extent of governments’ willingness and ability to use ICT to transform conventional government applications to deliver better service to citizens, businesses and even the public sector, the E-Government Readiness Index (ERI) is being used in the UN e-Government Survey series published by the United Nations Public Administration Network (UNPAN). The ERI can be seen as measure of the quality of a country’s ICT infrastructure and the ability of its consumers, businesses and governments to use ICT to their benefit.

From this perspective, based on the “E-Government Readiness: The Performance of the OIC Member Countries” report prepared by the SESRIC, there are 4 OIC Member Countries in the Global Top 50 ERI Performers List: United Arab Emirates, Malaysia, Bahrain and Jordan. I can also gladly say that the 4 OIC Member Countries in the Top 50 ERI List of 2007 increased their ranks stated in the 2005 list. Also, the Web Measurement Index (WMI) scores of the United Arab Emirates and Malaysia made them to take place in the Global Top 20 WMI Performers List in 2007 due to the strength of three of their ministries’ websites, namely: Social Welfare, Labour and Finance. This is a clear confirmation of the intensive efforts of these OIC Member Countries to enhance their e-government services and processes.

However, shortcomings faced in the fulfilment of robust broadband network, high market penetration rates of mobile communication means and applications, well-trained human resources and consolidated administration of disperse but attached e-government applications cause discrepancies among the OIC Member Countries. Of the 55 OIC Member Countries for which data is available, only 22 managed to move their positions upwards from 2005 to 2007 in the ERI Rank List. In 2007, as opposed to other regions, in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and South Asia (SA), strong performing OIC Member Countries appear to be more in number than the weak performing ones.

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen;

SESRIC is the main focal point for implementing and promoting technical cooperation among OIC member countries. In doing so, SESRIC undertakes strong and close cooperation with the most relevant international and regional organizations with a view to promote the cooperation level up and far to the best. This is done through providing training and capacity building programmes to the OIC member countries by effectively plan, and implement training programmes and workshops through matching needs and capacities of the related institutions of the OIC Member Countries. As well as the newly designed Vocation Education and Training program which has officially launched by H.E. Abdullah Gul, President of the Republic of Turkey and the chairman of COMCEC at the COMCEC Economic Summit held in Istanbul November,2009. Such programmes are strengthening the member countries cooperation and relations and have them acting together to stand the challenges as one strong unity.

Experience is a hard teacher because she gives the test first, the lesson afterwards. Among the esteemed participants, there are the ones who have already taken the test in e-government initiatives. *Experience is also an expensive teacher but every step is an opportunity.* Among the esteemed participants also, there are the ones who try to take the steps in e-government implementations which have already been taken by others.

In this sense, I believe that eGovShare2009 is an opportunity not to be missed towards increasing the cooperation and capacity building efforts both among the OIC Member Countries and other nations. We would be able to discuss effective ways for responding the challenges to e-government, managing information flow at different levels of public administration, establishing efficient models overcoming the security issues in e-government, measuring the benefits and economics of e-government, last but not least, and exchange experiences and establish networking.

Before closing my speech, I hope eGovShare2009 will enhance the efforts to elevate effective and coherent cooperation among the OIC Member Countries and other countries in the field of e-government implementations.

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

Thank you for your kind attention.