

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

The Fourth Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers

5-6 October 2010, Hammamet, Tunisia

“Your Excellencies, Ministers of OIC Member States,

Your Excellency, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC,

Your Excellency, Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director General of ISESCO,

Your Excellency, Prince Turki bin Nasser bin Abdulaziz, President of Meteorology and Environment Protection in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu

It gives me a great honor to address this important gathering on the occasion of 4th Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers. At the outset, I would like to express that we are honored to attend this important evening and present our sincere appreciation for the kind patronage of H.E. Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Tunisian Republic and the efforts of Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), General Presidency of Meteorology and Environment Protection in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (PME), General Secretariat of the OIC and the Tunisian Ministry of the Environment and Sustainable Development to organize this significant event together.

As we are all aware, many countries in the World, including OIC member states, suffer from different types of environment connected problems such as climate change, water resource scarcity, overexploitation of groundwater resources, recurrent floods and droughts, limited supply of fertile land, land degradation, pollution, food security, inappropriate use of fertilizers

and pesticides that need to be solved to safeguard all types of environmental resources providing sustenance and foundation for socio-economic development.

Taking the agenda into consideration, I do believe that this conference is a great opportunity towards discussing various environmental issues and building a thorough understanding of the current situation of OIC member states. Additionally, it provides a platform to share knowledge and experiences, identify best practices to be followed to reach a successful management of natural resources, develop sufficient capacities and investment strategies, frame an integrated environment plan for the Islamic World and increase the cooperation and collaboration among member countries. In this connection, the role of Environment Ministers would be vital.

Efforts to achieve the environmental standards, food, water and energy security targets reflected in the Millennium Development Goals also call upon the international organizations to assist developing countries and complement the efforts of individual countries in facing challenges of climate change, natural disasters, rising food prices, water scarcity, growing energy demand with limited resources. As a part of international community and subsidiary organ of OIC, SESRIC is also dedicated to support our member countries in their efforts of preparing the ground for a brighter future.

Esteemed Participants,

SESRIC has been designated as the OIC implementing agency of the Project titled “Support to policy consultation and actions to boost sustainable use of water and energy resources for agricultural production and livelihood improvement in the Near East Region in the context of climate change”. It is a one year joint project between the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO).

Covering 30¹ OIC member countries, the Project will be implemented in a context of a global financial crisis and will also be an opportunity to address water control projects within the framework of an undergoing program “Special Program for Food Security (SPFS)”.

In an attempt to enhance our efforts to provide the necessary and latest information on the issues of immediate concern to our member countries, including the major developments in the World, SESRIC has started preparing OIC Outlooks since November 2007. In four of the outlook series, environmental topics such as climate change and its impacts on agriculture, water resources and their use, commercial energy sources and use were analyzed and coherent policy recommendations were given. In addition to these up-to-date outlooks, the Centre had published three reports titled “*Environmental Sustainability in the OIC Member Countries*”, “*Environmental Performance of the OIC Member Countries*” and “*Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol Implications for the OIC Member Countries*”.

To conduct a comprehensive assessment of the current situation and future trends about environment at the national and OIC level, accessing accurate data is of paramount importance. SESRIC periodically disseminates data of both environment and environment connected topics such as agriculture, energy, infrastructure through our main database, BASEIND. Moreover, I am also very pleased to inform that these categories will be enriched and water use and resources indicators will be added to BASEIND within 2011. However, there is still need to establish research facilities in OIC member states to revolutionize the process of environmental data collection, dissemination and analysis. In this context, we strongly support the project on the establishment of the Islamic Environment Information Centre (IEIC) in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

¹ Afghanistan, Algeria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, United Arab Emirates, Uzbekistan, and Yemen.

Another area of our activities at SESRIC is the Micro Credit Financing that began to gain more importance after the financial crisis being one of the vehicles to mitigate its negative impacts. Of the many areas that will be affected by the downturn, the environment stands out in particular. It's closely tied to the tempo of resource consumption, and significant efforts to ameliorate environmental decline will prove very expensive and out of reach for already-stretched budgets. In this regard, micro financing may act as a substitute for decreased subsidies to environmental projects and agricultural sector. Hence, it not only will support poor segment of population in our member countries, but it could also be used to help small farmers.

Distinguished Delegates,

Coinciding with the celebration of 2010 as an International Year of Biodiversity, I am confident that the outcome of this conference will significantly contribute to increasing awareness about environment and also enhance the efforts towards achieving more sustainable development and higher environmental standards. At the end, I wish this meeting to improve the collaboration and cooperation among ministries and institutions of OIC member states and pray God Almighty to help all of us and guide our steps to leave a better World to the next generations.

Wassalumu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatahu ”