



Organisation of Islamic Cooperation
STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
AND TRAINING CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES
"Cooperation for Development"



First Session of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Social Development

Address by

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بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,**

I am very pleased to join you at the First Session of the OIC Ministerial Conference on Social Development.

At the outset, I want to express my gratitude and congratulations to our host, the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services of the Republic of Turkey, and particularly to Her Excellency Minister Zehra Zümürüt SELÇUK and her team, for the excellent organization of this event and for the fruitful cooperation with SESRIC.

I would like also to take this opportunity and congratulate the General Secretariat of the OIC for keeping social development issues high on its agenda and for steering a productive cooperation in this important field.

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Looking back at the period of the last two decades, we can conclude that the OIC cooperation in the area of social development has reached an important juncture. More than ever before, our collective efforts are now endeavouring to improve the well-being of the various segments of our societies, and thus inspire socio-economic development of the OIC Member States.

Today the OIC engages with a wide range of social issues, which include women and youth empowerment, advancing children's rights, ensuring the welfare and social security of the elderly and persons with special needs. In this regard, considerable progress has been observed in the augmenting of the OIC Member States' ability to display a common stance on formulating joint attainable social goals. Clear examples on that is the OIC Youth Strategy and the OIC Plan of Action for Advancement of Women (OPAAW).

Now, it is high time to further our cooperation on the remaining segments of our societies, namely, children, elderly and people with disabilities, and families, for which we still to have joint frameworks or strategic documents as well.

Allow me here to, proudly, share with you the SESRIC contribution to the joint efforts of the OIC and its MCs in this regard. SESRIC team has been actively leading the preparation of the following strategic plans and frameworks documents in cooperation with the OIC General Secretariat and relevant institutions in the MCs:

- 1) The draft OIC Strategy on the Elderly;
- 2) The framework on the draft OIC Plan of Action on People with Disabilities;
- 3) The draft OIC Strategy for Empowering the Marriage and Family Institution, and Preserving its Values in the Muslim World, and,
- 4) The draft OIC Strategy for the Well-being of Children in the Islamic World.

I truly believe that these documents which have been submitted for consideration and adoption to your august Conference will bring new momentum to further our cooperation on social development.

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The agendas of our governments and OIC institutions have to be increasingly focused on the issues of social development as we have many common challenges that need to be addressed. For example, our work at SESRIC has shown that the OIC Member States as a group currently host around 13% of the world's elderly. This share is expected to increase to 15% by 2030. However, right now, unfortunately, only half of the retired persons in the OIC Member States receive an adequate pension.

Another example about people with disabilities is that 1 out of 7 people in the world have a disability, and around 80% of them live in developing countries, including the OIC Member States. Due to the lack of investments in healthcare and rehabilitation services and lack of effective policies, millions of our citizens with disabilities face serious challenges and obstacles in their daily lives.

When it comes to family, which is a divinely inspired and ordained institution in Islam, SESRIC's findings show that it is threatened by rapid urbanization, globalization and changing social values and norms. Further, the population of 22 OIC Member States is expected to decrease by 2050 due to the substantial increasing trend in late marriage and divorce cases.

Nevertheless, different reports of SESRIC indicate significant progress recorded on various dimensions of social development in some OIC Member States. With increased intra-OIC cooperation, we have to share many success stories and best practices of our countries. Let me mention the experience of Turkey in establishing institutions for elderly that could be considered as a successful model to be transferred to some other Member States. Again, the experience of Indonesia regarding the establishment of a "National Commission for Older Persons" could also constitute a good example.

**Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Having shared these findings with you, allow me to mention three SESRIC reports, namely:

- 1) State of Elderly in OIC Member Countries 2018: Responding to the Needs of Elderly,
- 2) People with Disabilities and Special Needs in OIC Countries, and
- 3) The Institution of Family and SDGs: The Key Roles Families Play in Sustainable Development.

All these reports are available in three languages and have been circulated to you in advance. I am glad to notice that these three reports have provided important inputs to constructive discussions of the Senior Officials Meeting over the last two days.

On the other hand, as a subsidiary organ of the OIC, SESRIC has organized many training and capacity building activities, as a contribution to the OIC overall collective efforts to address the social development challenges in our societies. For example, in cooperation with the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Services of the Republic of Turkey, we organized a conference on the “Employment of Persons with Disabilities in OIC Member Countries” in Istanbul in 2016. Last year, we also co-organized with the General Secretariat of the OIC a workshop on improving the state of the elderly, where we discussed the framework of the draft Elderly Strategy and exchanged experiences in this domain.

I am also pleased to say that SESRIC’s activities in the area of statistics also contributes to the social development efforts of the OIC Member States. Our main statistical database (OIC-Stat Database) includes more than 750 indicators, out of which 59 are directly related to social development. Moreover, over the last few years, we have been increasingly providing statistical capacity building training services to the National Statistics Offices of our Member States within the framework of the Centre’s Statistical Capacity Building Program (Stat-CaB), with the intention to improve the collection and dissemination of the social development indicators.

Overall, as SESRIC, we will continue making pertinent steps towards the realization of the goals endorsed in the resolutions adopted by your august Conference. In this regard, we have placed socio-economic development of OIC Member States at the heart of the Centre's activities. SESRIC will capitalize on your support in moving forward towards facilitating the implementation of our joint strategic documents on social development.

Honourable Ministers,
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like to express that it is an honour to be part of this august Ministerial conference, which I believe, will lend stronger political support and perspective to understand social development gaps, identify challenges and propose sound policy recommendations for the Islamic World. I wish Her Excellency Zehra Zümürüt SELÇUK, the Minister of Family, Labour and Social Services of the Republic of Turkey great success and very productive Chairmanship of the First OIC Ministerial Conference on Social Development.

May Allah Almighty support and help us all and guide our efforts and steps towards the prosperity and welfare of our Member States and the Islamic Ummah at large. Thank you very much for your attention. Wassalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu.