

**Extraordinary Virtual Meeting of the Committee of
Permanent Representatives on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic**
26 October 2020, Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Statement

H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR
Director General of SESRIC

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,
السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته
Very good day to all of You

It is a great pleasure for me to address this distinguish gathering of the OIC Committee of the Permanent Representatives on the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic.

In my intervention, I would like to brief you on the activities undertaken by our Centre in its three mandated areas of statistics, research and training to support and contribute to the efforts of our member countries towards mitigating the impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The COVID-19 pandemic has caused unprecedented global health and humanitarian crisis with a large scale societal and economic disruptions.
- Being a substantial part of the developing world, the OIC member countries experienced dramatic negative impacts of the pandemic on their societies and economies especially due to the severe disruptions in the global supply chains, historic fall in oil prices and turmoil in their financial markets.

- As a subsidiary organ of the OIC dealing with the socio-economic development in our member countries, we have early recognized the expected negative impacts of the pandemic and worked on innovative IT based solutions to continue our operations with minimal interruptions.
- We have mobilized all our resources and prioritized specific actions and activities in all our three mandated areas of statistics, research and training to support the response and recovery efforts of our member countries.
- During these difficult times, the need for reliable statistics has become clearly notable more than ever before. The accurate analysis of the situation and formulation of prompt and prudent policies based on reliable statistics and data has been rarely as evident as in the course of such crises.
- In such a state of affairs and with the objective to raise public awareness and offer policy makers with a tool to guide their ongoing efforts, SESRIC developed and launched the COVID-19 Pandemic Database for OIC Member Countries in early April 2020. This Database hosts updated data on a daily basis dating back to late January 2020 concerning COVID-19 related cases, deaths, and recoveries in the OIC Countries.
- In addition, SESRIC prepared the OIC Statistical Outlook Report on the COVID-19 Pandemic in the OIC Member Countries in mid-April 2020. This Report has contributed to a better understanding of the scale of the initial phases of the outbreak and the response of OIC countries and OIC institutions to the pandemic.
- Furthermore, as the year 2020 marks the start of the “Decade of Action” to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, reviewing the progress achieved so far in the OIC countries is essential for understanding

how to better respond to challenges including the immediate threat of COVID-19 pandemic on public health and economy.

- In this respect, SESRIC prepares each year a progress report on the prioritised eight SDGs under the title “Towards the Achievement of Prioritised Sustainable Development Goals in OIC Countries 2020: A Progress Report by SESRIC”. The Report is submitted to the Ministerial Sessions of the COMCEC.
- In an effort to motivate our member countries to support each other in addressing the severe negative implications of the pandemic, the 2020 edition of this Report, which we have finalized just very recently, discusses the possible devastating impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on the progress of our member countries towards achieving the SDGs.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Given the nature and extent of pandemic, it was imperative to study and assess its impacts on our economies and societies in order to inform and tailor the responses of governments and support the recovery efforts.
- In this regard, SESRIC prepared a comprehensive research study which analyses the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in OIC member countries. The study investigates the major social and economic development indicators. It highlights national best practices in public health and safety measures, economic and social policy response and measures along with policy suggestions at both national and OIC level to minimize the socio-economic impact of the pandemic and speed up the recovery.

- The findings of this report were presented during a webinar on ‘Economic Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on OIC Countries’ which SESRIC organized in partnership with the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies (ORSAM), OSTIM Technical University and Istanbul University.
- For this year, we also included special thematic chapters and debate on the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic in all our regular sectoral research reports, which are prepared as technical background documents for the relevant ministerial sessions.

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Given the quarantine, social distancing and travel ban measures imposed in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak, holding physical training courses and capacity building activities were not feasible. In order to respond to this extraordinary situation, SESRIC undertook the necessary preparations to utilize the available digital platforms for conducting its training and capacity building activities and programmes.
- In this context, I am proud to inform this august gathering that SESRIC has successfully implemented 17 online training courses as of today with the participation of more than 450 trainees from 45 OIC member countries.
- Additionally, we have virtually conducted the 4th Meeting of the OIC Occupational Safety and Health Network (OIC-OSHNET) a few weeks ago with the participation of the National Focal Points and delegates from 37 OIC Member States with very fruitful outcomes and adoption of important documents that will guide this intra-OIC Network’s activities for the upcoming 2 years. These knowledge exchange opportunities definitely

helped to keep the participants motivated and enhanced their skills despite all the obstacles due to the pandemic.

- In addition, upon a request by the OIC General Secretariat, SESRIC conducted a mapping of the research institutions engaged in the production of medical equipment, development of vaccines and other therapeutics for the COVID-19 in an effort to help OIC member countries connect with each other, benefit from each other's best practices and experiences in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.
- I would like to report that SESRIC has also organized three Webinars with the main focus on the impacts of COVID-19 in our member countries as well as the pandemic's negative effect on various sectors such as the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) systems.
- These webinars brought together high level representatives of the relevant national institutions to share their institutions' expertise in managing and tackling challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic either through the revision of guidelines or setting new policies and regulations to maintain the continuity of their services and support the national emergency response efforts. The best practices and success stories shared by the panellists will help other institutions to get inspired and take further steps to improve the current situation.
- Before concluding, I would like to express once again our readiness at SESRIC to strengthen our cooperation and partnership with all the relevant OIC institutions, national, regional, and international organizations to

support the efforts of our member countries towards addressing the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for your kind attention!

والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته