



MESSAGE OF
H.E. MR. ISMAIL OULD CHEIKH AHMED,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE OIC,

TO
THE FIFTEENTH SESSION OF THE STATISTICAL COMMISSION
OF THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC COOPERATION
(OIC-STATCOM)

JEDDAH, KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA,
29TH-30TH SEPTEMBER, 2026

Bismillahi Arrahmani Arrahim

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the OIC Statistical Commission,
Your Excellency Mrs. Zehra Zümrüt Selcuk, Director General of SESRIC,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalamu Alaikum Wa-Rahmatullahi Wa-Barakatuh

It is a great pleasure for me to address the Fifteenth Session of the OIC Statistical Commission, which is the first gathering of this nature since my assumption of duty as the OIC Secretary General on 27th August 2026.

Let me at the onset express my sincere appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting this session and for the traditional hospitality extended to all dignitaries and participants.

I also wish to commend Mrs. Zehra Zümrüt Selcuk, Director General, and the entire staff of the SESRIC, for the elaborate preparations made for this meeting and for the generous hospitality accorded all participants. By the same token, I hereby acknowledge the outstanding support of the Islamic Development Bank to the activities of the OIC Statistical Commission.

Today, we celebrate a significant milestone - the 15th Anniversary of the OIC Statistical Commission, and this occasion provides a good opportunity for us to reflect on accomplishments, challenges, and identify action points for the coming years. Accordingly, the insights from your work play a critical role in shaping the future of this Commission.

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the OIC Statistical Commission,**

We are living in a world undergoing rapid transformation, and this is especially true for the data ecosystem. In the past, national statistical offices and public institutions were the primary producers of data and in OIC Member States this still remains the case. Today, however, we operate in a far more interconnected environment where the private sector, civil society, and academic institutions play significant roles in the collection and collating of data. Advancements in technology, such as artificial intelligence and big data, have also changed how we should collect, analyze and use data. In this environment, the work of this Commission remains essential.

As data shapes nearly every aspect of our lives and societies, and is the foundation of decision-making for development policies and interventions, it is important to bear in mind the fact that many OIC countries, especially Least Developed Countries, face significant challenges in terms of financial and technical resources.

In this context, I am pleased to note that the Commission is considering the implementation of the OIC-StatCom Programme of Action for 2026-2030 aimed at addressing the challenges in statistical infrastructures and closing persistent information gaps about OIC countries. The continuous monitoring and evaluation of this framework by the Commission remains an essential tool to assess progress in specific sectors, providing a clear view of the achievements made, and requiring more attention on areas where progress is stalled or lagging. I, therefore, call upon National Statistical Offices in OIC Member States to support the implementation of this Programme and align its goals with their national statistical priorities.

Similarly, it is important that the Commission maintains its focus on developing and disseminating Islamic financial indicators, as we seek to leverage the Islamic financial products, especially Islamic social finance, to bring about financial inclusion and wealth creation among our populations. Certainly, the consequent channeling of existing resources into productive investment would stimulate productivity, create employment, provide individuals and enterprises with basic utilities, as well as contribute to efficient resource management. I, therefore, strongly advocate for more work on building the capacities of OIC countries in production and dissemination of Islamic financial indicators. Intra-OIC trade also remains a critical area of concern to all of us, and having up-to-date data is critical to enhancing cooperation in this sector.

I am also pleased to note that this Commission is addressing, along with indicators on Sustainable Development Goals and OIC Programme of Action, the statistics on the informal sector, which constitutes a substantial portion of many OIC countries' economies. Informal economy is pervasive in many OIC Member States measuring on average 30% of GDP and 80% of employment. Accordingly, developing customized methodologies for collecting statistics on the informal economy will enable better policymaking, accurate measurement of economic output, and targeted strategies for workforce protection and improvement, which remains a critical priority for our Organization.

**Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Members of the OIC Statistical Commission,**

I am convinced that the deliberations of this 15th session of the Commission will result in the adoption of action-oriented measures towards modernizing data ecosystems, harmonizing official statistics and tracking development across OIC Member States.

In conclusion, I would like to reaffirm the OIC General Secretariat's commitment to working closely with you to further strengthen and enhance intra-OIC cooperation in the development, production, dissemination and communication of statistics. The collaboration strengthened through this framework not only enhances data quality but also promotes transparency and reliability in the generated statistics. This, in turn, will contribute to sustainable development by facilitating informed decision-making and the effective implementation of policies in the OIC context.

I thank you for kind your attention and wish all of you successful deliberations at this meeting.

Wassalamu Alaykum wa-Rahmatullah wa-Barakatuh.