

**The 3rd Meeting of the OIC Public Employment Services  
Network (OIC-PESNET)**

02 June 2021, 12.00 PM Turkey Time

**Opening Statement of H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR**

**Director General of SESRIC**

**بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ**

**Excellences, Dear Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**السّلام علیکم ورحمة الله وبرکاته**

**I wish you all a very Good Day**

**It is my great pleasure to welcome you all to the 3rd Meeting of the OIC Public Employment Services Network (OIC-PESNET). We, as SESRIC, the Secretariat of the OIC-PESNET, have the honour to jointly organise this meeting with the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Turkey.**

**We are glad today to bring together distinguished representatives of the national focal points of the OIC-PESNET, the only cooperation forum at the OIC level in the field of public employment services. I would like, at the outset, to thank you all for accepting our invitation and allocating part of your valuable time to attend and participate in this important virtual meeting.**

**My thanks and appreciation are also extended to the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), the Chairman of this Meeting and our strategic partner, particularly to H.E. Mr. Bekir AKTÜRK, the Director General and his team at the Turkish Employment Agency, for their continuous support and close cooperation with SESRIC in the preparation of the strategic documents of the Network as well as the organisation of this virtual meeting.**

**Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**It is well known that unemployment stands as a major concern globally, and particularly in developing economies, including the OIC member countries. It is a matter of fact that the OIC countries, as a group, suffering a significantly higher average unemployment rate compared to the world average and the averages of other country groups.**

**According to last year's edition of SESRIC's "OIC Labour Market Report", the average unemployment rate of the group of OIC countries was 6.7% in 2019 compared to the world average of 5.4%. In particular, the unemployment rates of youth and women are still significantly at high levels in most of our member countries, with an average unemployment rate of 14.5% and 8.1% respectively.**

**These two important segments in the societies of our member countries are still facing greater challenges in finding jobs. It is especially worrisome to observe that almost 26% of youth in OIC member countries are not registered or enrolled in employment, education or training.**



**This situation has been, unfortunately, worsened since the beginning of the last year due to the unprecedented impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has seriously affected all the sectors of the economy in almost all the countries around the world.**

**Globally, with high levels of unemployment and inactivity rates, the labour markets were, in fact, the most severely affected by the pandemic. According to the mentioned SESRIC Report, it was estimated that 8 million people are at risk of losing their jobs in the OIC member countries during the first year of the pandemic.**

**There is no doubt that this extraordinary situation, like anywhere else, put further burdens on the public employment authorities in the OIC member countries. In fact, many of OIC member countries were already faced with a range of complex challenging labour market issues, such as chronic unemployment, skills gaps, demographic structure, and the impact of digital change and technology, etc.**

**And, currently, all our member countries are also facing the new challenges generated by the pandemic, which require further efforts to mitigate the negative impacts on the labour market, particularly the challenge of addressing the high unemployment rates through upskilling and reskilling of the people.**

**Dear Participants,**

**Public employment services institutions were established in most countries many years ago to act as the primary mediator between the supply and demand side of the labour market in addition to their key role in addressing labour market inefficiencies and mitigating the adverse impact of various socio-economic changes that affect labour markets.**

**To do so, they follow multiple approaches and instruments that help workers find jobs and firms fill vacancies. They also play a key role in facilitating labour market adjustments and cushion the impact of economic transitions through playing different functions such as providing job and vocational counselling, provision of labour market information and implementation of active labour market policies.**

**Therefore, it is important to invest in the institutional and human capacities of these institutions in our member countries so that they can effectively plan and execute efficient labour market and public employment services policies and programmes, and, thus, reduce unemployment and alleviate poverty.**

**Dear Participants,**

**It is worth mentioning here that the OIC-2025 Programme of Action, the strategic programme of the OIC, which was adopted during the 13th Islamic Summit held in Istanbul in April 2016, aims to encourage cooperation for exchange of expertise and transfer of knowledge, experience, and best practices.**



**In the field of labour and employment, the OIC-2025 POA promotes carrying out joint actions and training programmes with a view to improving labour market conditions in OIC countries, and accordingly reducing unemployment, building a better quality of life and creating adequate social protection in the member countries through enhancing workforce competitiveness and promotion of decent work for all.**

**Here, I would also like to mention that the “OIC Labour Market Strategy 2025”, which was prepared by SESRIC and welcomed by the 4th Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers held in Jeddah in February 2018, established a set of common objectives and targets for improving labour market and employability in OIC member countries by emphasizing the key role played by public employment services institutions.**

**Distinguished Participants,**

**As you may all recall, the OIC-PESNET was established in accordance with the “Resolution on the Cooperation on Labour, Employment and Social Protection among the OIC Member States” adopted by the 2nd Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers held in Baku, in April 2013.**

**The Conference called upon the establishment of a forum among public employment authorities of OIC member countries to promote collaboration, facilitate the transfer of knowledge and experience, as well as to generate joint action towards enhanced employment services and overcoming common labour market challenges.**

**Since its establishment, two networking meetings were organised jointly by SESRIC and the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR):**

**- The 1st Meeting of the OIC-PESNET was held in April 2014 in Ankara, Turkey. It brought together senior-level representatives from the public employment authorities of 17 OIC member countries. During the meeting, SESRIC was requested to undertake the role of the Secretariat of the OIC-PESNET, and initiate a capacity building programme to develop human resources capacities of the public employment services institutions in the OIC countries.**

**- Following this meeting in 2014, SESRIC initiated its Public Employment Services Capacity Building Programme (PES-CaB) with a view to supporting and contributing to the efforts of the OIC member countries towards strengthening the institutional and human capacities of their public employment services institutions.**

**- The 2nd Meeting of the OIC-PESNET was held in September 2016 in Ankara, Turkey. It brought together senior-level participants from the public employment authorities of 32 OIC member countries to review the progress achieved since the 1st Meeting and to explore advanced cooperation opportunities among the public employment services institutions in the OIC Member States.**



**And now, we aim, in this important Meeting, at reactivating the work of this crucial Network through discussing and adopting two important documents: the “Rules of Procedures” and “OIC-PESNET Work Plan for the two years, 2021-2022”. We believe that these two instrumental documents will ensure more functional and effective bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the field of public employment services within the framework of the OIC-PESNET.**

**Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Before concluding my remarks, let me, once again, express my deep thanks and appreciation to all of you. I am confident that the deliberations and recommendations that you will make during the upcoming two days will be instrumental in improving our work and better targeting our activities and programmes within the framework of this important Network.**

**I wish you all very fruitful discussions, and I look forward to significant outcomes of this meeting that reflect our solidarity and commitment to this important Network.**

**Thank you all for your kind attention**

**و السلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته**