

**TRAINING COURSE ON “CULTURAL DIPLOMACY”
FOR THE OIC JUNIOR DIPLOMATS**

Virtual, 13-16 September 2021

Opening Statement of H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR

Director General of SESRIC

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

H.E. Mr. Yavuz Selim KIRAN,

Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey,

H.E. Dr. Lhoucine Rhazoui

Director of Cultural Affairs, OIC General Secretariat

H. E. Prof. Mesut ÖZCAN,

Director of the Diplomacy Academy of the Ministry of Foreign
Affairs of the Republic of Turkey

Distinguished Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

السّلام علیکم ورحمة الله وبرکاته

Welcome to SESRIC's Training Course on "Cultural Diplomacy for the OIC Junior Diplomats".

This is the fifth edition of SESRIC's annual Diplomacy Capacity Building Program, which was launched in 2017.

As was the case in the last year, we are also conducting this year's training course virtually due the continuous COVID-19 pandemic.

The pandemic has had unprecedented impacts on our world; however, we are determined to travel down up to the end of the long road to recovery Insha'Allah.

This is why we at SESRIC have invested in and developed our online distance-learning platform to ensure that our Junior Diplomats, who have persevered to be here today, do not lose this opportunity to better their skills and improve the situation in their countries in these difficult times.

Once again, I celebrate the continued and fruitful partnership with the Diplomacy Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey (the host country of our Centre) in organizing this training program for junior diplomats from OIC Member States.

Here, allow me to express my profound gratitude to H.E. Mr. Yavuz Selim KIRAN, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, for his continued patronage of this Training Program.

My deep thanks are also extended to Prof. Mesut Ozcan and his team at the Diplomacy Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey for their invaluable technical support in organizing this Training Course.

We are happy today that we have been able to assemble a total of 111 talented junior diplomats from 32 OIC Member States to benefit from this training. To train our talented junior diplomats, today we have with us four outstanding experts in the field of cultural diplomacy, namely:

- **Prof. Dr. Deniz Bayrakdar, Kadir Has University,**
- **Assoc. Prof. Zeynep Akture, Turkish National Commission for UNESCO,**
- **Dr. Ahmed Erman Aral, Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University,**
and
- **Mr. Emir Salim Yuksel, Deputy Director General for Cultural Diplomacy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkey.**

I am grateful to all of them for dedicating their valuable time and energy to this Training Course.

Dear Participants

In the 21st Century, cultural diplomacy has become one of the special tools of a modern diplomat.

This is because factors such as the country's territorial size, the strength of its military, and even the richness of its economy are no longer enough to confront the global and interconnected challenges and threats.

Today, any country – no matter how small – can build strong global alliances, achieve regional strategic goals, and promote national interests beyond its borders through the exchange of language, culture, traditions, ideas, arts, and normative customs.

For us, cultural diplomacy takes on an added significance when we see the negative perceptions linked with several OIC member countries around the world.

Cultural diplomacy is a vital tool that can help OIC countries in combatting ignorant narratives and misinformation.

OIC countries can build fruitful global alliances and partnerships by utilizing their culture as a tool of diplomacy.

This will enable them to come up with mutually beneficial solutions to many interconnected problems through negotiation and cooperation.

This is why, we chose ‘Cultural Diplomacy’ as the theme for this year’s Training Course.

The primary focus of this training is to provide knowledge on how cultural diplomacy and foreign policy are associated and how cultural diplomacy is practised around the world.

The course will also equip our participants with a working knowledge on how to design and evaluate effective practices of cultural diplomacy.

Dear Participants,

I am certain that this Course will not only advance the skills and expertise of the participated junior diplomats, but it will allow them to further the diplomatic prowess of their respective countries.

I wish our junior diplomats who are with us today all the success in this training course and in all their future endeavours.

Thank you for your kind attention. و السلام عليكم و رحمة الله و بركاته