

**Training Course on “Effective Strategic Planning for the  
Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Development”**

24-26 August 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

**Very Good Day to all of you**

**I am pleased to welcome you all to the training course on “Effective Strategic Planning for the Promotion of Sustainable Tourism Development”, which we are organising within the framework of SESRIC’s Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB).**

**Let me, at the outset, express my sincere thanks and appreciation to H.E. Mr. Adébayo Aristide ADJIBODOU, Secretary General of the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Arts of the Republic of Benin, for accepting our invitation to collaborate with SESRIC and nominating a competent expert to deliver this important training course.**

**We are delighted to organise this training course which carries great importance with a view to supporting the efforts of our member countries towards enhancing the capacities of their national tourism authorities during this critical time in which the world continues fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic.**

## **Dear Participants,**

**In the pre-pandemic period, international tourism had become one of the main economic activities and an important source of foreign exchange earnings, economic growth and employment in many countries, including the OIC member countries. According to the latest edition of 2020 edition of SESRIC report on “International Tourism in the OIC Countries”, the tourism sector accounted for around 10% of the world’s GDP.**

**In the period 2013-2018, the number of international tourist arrivals worldwide increased from 1,087 million to 1,407 million, which corresponds to the compound annual growth rate of 4.4%. In the same period, international tourism receipts, in current US dollar prices, followed a similar trend by increasing from USD 1,240 billion to USD 1,462 billion, which corresponds to the compound annual growth rate of 2.8%.**

**These figures indicate that almost all countries in the world have been observing an increase in their tourism activity, and for many of them, the tourism sector turned out to be an important economic sector due to its multiple advantages.**

**In this regard, the sustainability of tourism has been given much attention in the national development strategies taking into account the challenges and opportunities for tourism development, including, among many others, funding and infrastructure, capacity building and management of tourism destinations, and environmental issues.**

**According to the definition of the World Tourism Organization, sustainable tourism is “*Tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment, and host communities*”.**

**Therefore, these impacts and needs have to be taken into consideration in the planning, development, and operation of tourism industry with a view to making tourism sector more sustainable.**

**With this in mind, it is essential that all the relevant stakeholders in the tourism sector, including policymakers, tour operators, owners of tourism facilities, etc., come together to develop effective and inclusive sustainable tourism strategies at the national and local levels. It is also important that relevant stakeholders continuously monitor the economic, social and environmental impacts of tourism and take adequate and corrective measures whenever necessary.**

**Dear Participants,**

**Before the COVID-19 pandemic, one of the main concerns of international tourism was how to sustain the dynamic tourism growth while minimizing the environmental impacts of tourism. Unfortunately, since the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic and its subsequent health requirements and restriction measures all over the world, tourism activities have come almost to a complete stop.**

**Tourism policymakers together with all the relevant stakeholders, should learn useful lessons from this unprecedented and unfortunate situation to be used while restoring the damaged touristic spots and designing effective strategies for making all potential types of tourism more sustainable during the recovery period and beyond**

**Many OIC countries, particularly the least-developed members in Africa, are still suffering serious challenges towards achieving sustainable tourism development. Among others, these include limited access to finance for tourism investors, limited number of tourism professionals, security and safety issues, visa requirements, and bureaucracy.**

**Yet, notwithstanding these challenges, we believe that better understanding and internalizing of the concept of tourism sustainability will contribute to the development of sustainable tourism industry in these countries.**

**It is within this context that we at SESRIC give special attention to the importance of this training course, which aims at strengthening the technical capacities of the participants in developing strategic planning techniques for the advancement of the tourism sector in their respective countries.**

**The training course will provide insights into various technical subjects, including the concepts and implications of sustainable tourism development, the approaches, methods and tools used towards elaborating effective strategic planning for sustainable tourism development in the OIC countries.**

**Dear participants,**

**Within the scope of its mandated areas of statistics, research and training, our Centre (SESRIC) has, over the years, initiated and implemented many programmes and activities in the domain of tourism.**

**Mainly, within the framework of our Tourism Capacity Building Programme, which we have initiated in 2015, we have been organizing training courses (like this one), training workshops, and study visits on various technical aspects related to tourism development.**

**We also prepare various technical background reports and research studies to analyse the current situation of the tourism sector at the OIC level and to suggest appropriate policy actions that need to be taken to face the challenges and strengthen the intra-OIC cooperation in this important domain.**

**The main example on these report is SESRIC Report on “International Tourism in the OIC member countries: Prospects and Challenges”, which we regularly submit it to the OIC Conference of Ministers of Tourism since the 1st Conference in October 2000 in Esfahan, Iran.**

**Dear Participants,**

**Availing myself of this opportunity, I would like to thank all the National Tourism Authorities in the OIC member countries for their active participation and cooperation with SESRIC in this important domain.**

**I believe that the exchange of knowledge and sharing of experiences among our member countries, especially during these difficult times, are important more than ever before. Therefore, I hope that this training course would contribute to our efforts in this regard.**

**Before concluding, I would like to assure you that SESRIC will continue to take an active role in enhancing intra-OIC cooperation and dialogue in this important domain through supporting the tourism development efforts of our member countries to gain a higher share in the global tourism market.**

**Thanking you once again, I wish you a fruitful discussions and productive exchange of experiences throughout the upcoming days.**

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