

10th SESSION OF OIC STATISTICAL COMMISSION

(OIC-StatCom)

05-07 October 2021, Virtual, Ankara-Republic of Turkey

Opening Speech of H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR

Director General of SESRIC

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

- **Mr. Chairman,**
- **Distinguished Delegates of the NSOs of OIC Member Countries,**
- **Distinguished Representatives of the OIC General Secretariat,**
IsDB, Regional and International Institutions,
- **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

السّلام علیکم ورحمة الله وبرکاته

I wish you all a very Good Day

It is a great pleasure for me to address your august Commission today, in my capacity as the Director General of SESRIC, the Secretariat of the OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom), the only cooperation forum at the OIC level in the field of statistics.

I welcome you all to the 10th Session of the OIC-StatCom, which we again organize it virtually this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. I thank you all for accepting our invitation and allocating part of your valuable time to attend and participate virtually in this session.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to our strategic partner in organizing the annual sessions of the OIC-StaCOM, the IsDB Group, for their continuous support extended to this important forum.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are witnessing an unprecedented global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic with startling implications for our societies and economies. The pandemic is far from over yet, the human toll is still rising worldwide, but thankfully, we now have multiple vaccines available that can help us reduce the risk and severity of infection, easing the lockdowns and restarting the economic and social activities to pave the way for a strong recovery.

We are determined to travel down up to the end of the long road to recovery Insha'Allah; and we hope the pandemic will be over very soon, and meet physically in the next Session at our Headquarters in Ankara-Turkey as usual Insha'Allah.

In addition to the dramatic implications for the health of people, the pandemic has triggered a major global economic and financial crisis. In the last year, almost all the economies have significantly deteriorated all over the world, and the OIC MCs were no exception. This year, however, projections signal for recovery in many indicators, though some of them are only partial.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

During these difficult times, the importance and the need for reliable statistics become crucial more than ever before. The accurate analysis and diagnosis of the situation and the formulation of prompt and prudential policies based on reliable statistics and data have been rarely as evident as in the course of such crises.

In such state of affairs, the ‘official statistics’ are required to respond quickly to the ever-changing circumstances. The NSOs are expected and requested to go beyond the traditional methodologies and approaches for the production of the national statistics. New methodologies and instruments are needed to collect and manipulate new statistics even from non-traditional data sources.

In this context, the results of the latest global online survey conducted by the UNSD and the World Bank indicated that the NSOs are still facing difficulties for adapting to a “new normal” posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The results of the survey showed that the effects of the pandemic on the official statistical system is beyond what was expected, and will remain until an indefinite time.

These are new challenges, which are currently facing many NSOs, particularly in the developing countries, including almost all our member countries. As reported by almost half of the NSOs responded to the survey, further financial and technical support is required to overcome these challenges. This is however still a bottleneck, as since the beginning of the pandemic, governments and donors funding's have been decreased while the costs of data collection are increased.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In response to this extraordinary situation, as you may recall, the 9th Session of your august Commission recommended SESRIC last year to continue with the virtual modality for the implementation of the statistical capacity building activities within the framework of our Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme.

In pursuance of this resolution, we continued to organise our planned capacity building activities, particularly the training courses, virtually and made them open to all member countries instead of postponing them to other dates. Here, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our NSOs and international partners for their collaboration, support, contribution, and participation in the implementation of these virtual training activities.

I am pleased to inform you that, since the last session of OIC-StatCom in October last year, we have conducted 42 statistical activities, 20 of them were statistical training courses, 18 webinars, and 4 international meetings/workshops. Around 2,000 participants from 51 OIC countries took part in these statistical activities.

As you know, we plan our training activities based on the responses of our NSOs to our questionnaire while considering as much as possible the equitable geographical distribution among the member countries.

Currently, we are reviewing and planning our statistical capacity building activities for the next year based on the responses received so far with a close follow-up on the developments regarding the pandemic, and, thus, the possibility of conducting these activities physically. Nevertheless, we plan to continue with the virtual training courses modality in the future, even after the pandemic is over. Therefore, I would like to call upon all our NSOs to respond to our Questionnaire on Stat-CaB Program for the two-year period 2022-2023 to help us better planning for our future training activities.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may recall, at the Follow-Up Meeting of the Commission, which we have organized virtually on 25 February last year, the Members of the Commission have been briefed on the progress of the resolutions of the 9th Session. We also received the feedback of the Members of the Commission on the composition of the new bureau members, the draft agenda items, and the date and venue of this Session; the 10th Session.

In this connection, I would like to congratulate the agreed on elected members of the Bureau of the 10th Session of OIC-StatCom, Tunisia as the Chair from the Arab Group, Pakistan and Uganda as Vice-Chairs from OIC Asian and African groups, respectively, and, in line with the Rules of Procedure, Palestine as permanent Vice Chair. In its capacity as the Secretariat, SESRIC assumes as usual the role of the Rapporteur.

Based on the feedback that we have received from the NSOs and the outcome of the virtual Follow-Up Meeting of the Commission in February this year 2021, the 10th Session of the OIC Stat-Com will cover the following agenda items:

- The Report of the OIC-StatCom Secretariat on the Implementation of the Resolutions of last Session, and**
- The Implementation and Follow-up Mechanism of the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision for 2030 and the Programme of Action 2021-2025.**

The Session will also cover the following technical topics:

- (i) Monitoring and Reporting SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-Being) Indicators;**
- (ii) Population and Housing Census Editing; and**
- (iii) Efforts to Maintain Statistical Capacity Development during COVID-19 Pandemic;**

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Before concluding, I would like to thank you all once again and wish you all the success in your deliberations. I am confident that the deliberations and recommendations that you will make during this Session will be instrumental in improving our work and better targeting our activities and programs for more benefit to the NSOs of our member countries.

Thank you all. والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته