

Training Course on “Tourism and Hospitality Services”

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Opening Statement by

H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR

Director General of SESRIC

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Dear Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

السَّلَامُ عَلَیْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

I wish you all a very good day

I am very pleased to welcome you all to this training course on “Tourism and Hospitality Services”, which we organize in collaboration with the Gambia OIC-Secretariat within the framework of SESRIC’s Tourism Capacity Building Programme (Tourism-CaB) and the Vocational Education and Training Programme for the OIC Member States (OIC-VET) Programme. Thank you for accepting our invitation and designating your valuable time to participate in this important training course.

Let me, at the outset, express my sincere thanks and appreciation to H.E. Mr. Yankuba DIBBA, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Gambia OIC-Secretariat, for approaching SESRIC to organise this training course for the benefit of professionals and trainers from the relevant National Tourism and TVET Authorities of The Gambia.

My sincere thanks and appreciation are also extended to Her Excellency Mrs. Nazan ŞENER, Director General of the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education under Ministry of National Education of the Republic of Türkiye and her team for accepting our invitation to provide this training course through nominating a competent expert to deliver the training and share the knowledge and expertise of Türkiye with the relevant national institution of the Gambia.

We are delighted to organise this training course, which is the second activity out of three identified and agreed upon by SESRIC and the Gambia OIC-Secretariat in line with the “Projects for the Socio-Economic Empowerment of Women and Youth” in The Gambia.

Dear Participants,

In recent decades, international tourism has become one of the main economic activities, which plays a vital role in socio-economic development in many developed and developing countries, including the OIC MCs. Tourism activities constitute an important source of foreign exchange earnings, economic growth and employment in many countries around the world. According to the Global Economic Impact Reports of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC), before the pandemic in 2019, travel and tourism accounted for 10.5% of both the world's total GDP and jobs.

In the case of OIC countries, according to SESRIC's research studies, in 2019, international tourist arrivals accounted for 259 million, generated 216 billion \$ as tourism receipts. In the same year, the tourism sector accounted for 8.1% of the OIC countries' total GDP and 7.5% of all jobs.

However, these figures have been significantly decreased in 2020 due to the strict travel measures adopted by almost all the countries around the world since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, in 2020, OIC countries hosted only 70 million international tourists and generated only 78 billion \$ in tourism receipts.

In fact, many OIC countries are still facing a number of challenges towards developing a sustainable tourism sector. These challenges range from political and security instability to the lack of adequate tourism investment and efficient tourism infrastructures and from the lack of tourism destination management and marketing policies and strategies to the inefficient diversification of tourism products and services.

Therefore, it is of utmost importance that many OIC countries should design a new approach for developing more effective strategies towards upgrading the quality of their tourism services through learning and exchanging experience and best practices in addition to improving their physical tourism infrastructure.

This would, no doubt, help them during the recovery period and beyond the pandemic to compete with their international counterparts through leveraging on their existing diverse natural, historical, cultural, and religious tourism potential.

Dear Participants,

It is worth mentioning here that tourism hospitality and accommodation facilities, including lodging, catering and event planning, play an important role in attracting tourists. Therefore, it becomes crucial for the local tourism service providers to improve their services to achieve the high international quality and standards level that the global hotel chains brought into the tourism industry. This would, no doubt, help them to maintain their competitiveness in the global tourism market.

In this context, we organise this training course with the aim of developing and enhancing the technical skills and competencies of the participants, who work in this field as professionals and trainers, through familiarizing them and enriching their knowledge with the most recent global standards, practices and trends in tourism hospitality services.

Dear Participants,

Our activities, at SESRIC in the domain of tourism, are not only limited to capacity building and training. We also have various tourism-related statistical and research activities.

In its mandated area of research, SESRIC has been regularly since the year 2000 preparing the technical background report on the state of tourism in our member countries, which is titled “International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges”. This report, which serves as one of the main technical documents for the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Tourism (ICTM), provides an overview of the tourism performance of the group of OIC countries. The 2022 edition of this report will be submitted to the upcoming 11th ICTM, which is scheduled to be held in Azerbaijan during this year.

In the area of research, I would like to mention that SESRIC has also prepared the “Strategic Roadmap for Development of Islamic Tourism in OIC Member Countries”, which was adopted by the 10th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM) held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, in 2018.

In the area of statistics, we continued to make serious endeavours towards ensuring the availability of the necessary statistical data and information on our member countries that would make them better informed of each other's potentials, needs and capacities in order to facilitate their elaboration on cooperation projects and integration schemes in various tourism-related subjects.

In this context, our main statistical database, the OIC Statistics (OICStat) Database, currently contains data on 1,512 socio-economic indicators classified under 27 categories for the 57 member countries dating back to 1970. Out of these indicators, 12 are tourism-related indicators under the Tourism category.

Meanwhile, we continued to contribute to enhancing the technical capacities of the NSOs of the member countries through SESRIC Statistical Capacity Building Programme (StatCaB). Within the framework of this training program, so far, we have organized 26 tourism-related statistical training activities on topics such as “Tourism Statistics”, “Tourism Satellite Accounts”, and “SDG 8.9 (Sustainable Tourism Statistics) Indicators”.

Dear Participants,

I am confident that this online training course will have the desired impact on the transfer of knowledge and expertise and contribute to the development of participants' capacities and promote their continuous skills development.

Before concluding, I would like to say that, as SESRIC, we are very glad to collaborate with the General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education at the Ministry of National Education of Türkiye. We trust their wide experience in the field, and we look forward to furthering our collaboration in the near future.

I would like to thank you all once again and wish you a fruitful exchange of experiences and productive discussions throughout the upcoming days.

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