

Fifth Session of OIC Statistical Commission

12-14 May 2015, Ankara – Turkey

FINAL REPORT

The Fifth Session of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom) was co-organised by the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) on 12-14 May 2015, in Ankara, Turkey.

The participants list is attached in annexes.

The agenda items of the Fifth Session of OIC-StatCom are as follows:

- Opening Session
- Implemented and Planned Activities of the OIC-StatCom
- Modernisation of NSSs of OIC Member Countries through Innovative Approaches and Effective Usage of Alternative Channels in Communicating Official Statistics
- Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (Peer Assessment) for Official Statistics towards a More Efficiently Functioning National Statistical System
- Strategic Priorities for National Actions to Transform NSSs to Embrace Post-2015 Development Agenda
- Open Discussions and Closing Session

1 Opening Session

After the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, the Fifth Session of OIC-StatCom commenced on 12 May 2015 with the welcome speech of Amb. Kulaklıkaya followed by a message of Mr. Abdullah Albatil, Director General of the Central Department of Statistics and Information (CDSI), Saudi Arabia. The session continued with the welcome addresses delivered by Mr. Jakhongir Khasanov on behalf of H.E. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary General of the OIC, Mr. Abdullateef Bello, Director of Economic Research and Policy Department, IDB. Mr. Mehmet Akif Alanbay delivered the message of the COMCEC Coordination Office.

In his inaugural address, the Director General of SESRIC, Amb. Kulaklıkaya, underlined the key role of NSOs for the success of conducted projects with the sense of ownership by the countries,

the commitment of stakeholders to the strategic objectives as defined in the OIC-StatCom Vision 2020, the hard-work, and the timely and continuous communication and interaction among the members. In his closing remarks, Amb. Kulaklıkaya emphasized the necessity of the involvement of National Statistics Offices (NSOs) in the recent discussions regarding the Post-2015 Development Agenda by means of determining the strategic priorities for national actions to transform National Statistical Systems (NSSs), and to partake in the “Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (Peer Assessment) for Official Statistics” initiative for the benefit of NSOs of OIC member countries.

In their addresses, the speakers thanked the organisers of the Fifth Session of OIC-StatCom, namely SESRIC and IDB, for their excellent hospitality and also for the numerous and successfully implemented capacity building activities undertaken since the Fourth Session, held on 21-23 April 2014, in Ankara, Turkey. The speakers highlighted the importance of adequate frameworks for building and sustaining the national statistical capacities of the NSOs to enable them to produce better national statistics for better national development policies and strategies. In their speeches, they also commended the role of NSOs on new approaches, priorities and initiatives for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the NSSs, particularly with a view to embracing the Post-2015 Development Agenda. They also focused on OIC-StatCom’s on-going work to develop a core set of statistics for Islamic financial products, including waqf and zakat. On the other hand, they highlighted the need for coordination among OIC institutions in order to enhance efficient data collection. They thanked the former Bureau Members of the OIC-StatCom, including Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as Chair, Republic of Indonesia and Republic of the Sudan as Vice-Chairs, and Republic of Senegal as Rapporteur for their invaluable contributions in making first four sessions of the Commission a success.

An election of the Bureau Members took place afterwards in which the delegates elected Indonesia (Chair), Kuwait (Vice-Chair), Senegal (Vice-Chair) and Palestine (Rapporteur) for the biennium 2015 and 2016.

2. Implemented and Planned Activities of the OIC-StatCom

During the session titled “Implemented and Planned Activities of the OIC-StatCom”, the participants took notice of the following topics through a bundled presentation;

- Overview of Activities of the OIC-StatCom Secretariat since the Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom

- Enhancing National Capacities of OIC Member Countries in Poverty Statistics (2013-SESRIC-028 & 2014-SESRIC-016)
- Improving Statistical Capacities of Tourism Sector in the Mediterranean and Gulf Region of OIC (2013-SESRIC-111)
- OIC Accreditation and Certification Programme for Official Statisticians (OIC-CPOS)
- Integration of the ‘Tobacco Questions for Surveys’ (TQS) into the National Surveys in OIC Member Countries
- Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics (IBFStat)

The presentation reporting the activities and initiatives implemented based on the resolutions of the Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom and the planned projects and programmes has been delivered by Mr. Hüseyin Hakan Eryetli, Director of Statistics and Information Department, SESRIC.

The SESRIC project titled “Enhancing National Capacities in Poverty Statistics of COMCEC Member Countries – Phase II” which has been awarded the COMCEC financial support for the second time from among the 17 final-listed projects entitled to receive grants for the year 2015, has been introduced to the attendees. The report titled “Measurement of Poverty in OIC Member Countries” as one of the main outcomes of the first phase of the project has also been shared with the delegates. The overall objective of the second phase of the project is to build and enhance the statistical capacities of the NSOs of the member countries in the compilation, production and dissemination of poverty statistics, and ultimately, to contribute to the NSSs. The project will be implemented through conducting a series of around 10 short-term capacity building and training programmes in addition to organizing one comprehensive training workshop with the participation of all the stakeholders. The activities of the second phase have been identified based on the outcomes of the 2014 project.

The SESRIC has reflected its enthusiasm to take the current 2013-SESRIC-0111 project to further phases by broadening the project scope to all OIC member countries. Given the wide spectra of the needs of the OIC member countries in tourism statistics themes, the second phase of this project to be implemented by the SESRIC will involve the OIC member countries in cooperation with the UNWTO. In this regard, the delegates have been briefed that a new questionnaire has recently been designed with the collaboration of the UNWTO to continue organising new and more country needs focused tourism statistics trainings in interested OIC member countries. The questionnaire results will be evaluated by the OIC-StatCom Secretariat to

match the training needs and capacities of the OIC member countries for the sake of organizing the relevant statistical capacity development activities in the near future.

The attendees have been enlightened on the efforts of the OIC-StatCom Secretariat in bringing the OIC-CPOS project to a mature level. In this next phase of the project, the training materials and examination questions are planned to be submitted by the Examination Committee (ExCom) members by the end of February 2016. The OIC-StatCom Secretariat made an initial evaluation from the nominations and found out that 33 experts from 17 OIC Member Countries appear to have the necessary qualifications to be working as an ExCom member for the preparation of the relevant training materials and examination questions on 47 statistical activities as per the Classification of Statistical Activities (CSA) taxonomy. From this end, the OIC-StatCom Secretariat shared its intention to proceed with the signing of the contracts with the current body of the ExCom members. In addition, the OIC-StatCom Secretariat informed the delegates that it would proceed with the acquisition of the services for the development and maintenance of an e-learning and online examination platform for the dissemination.

In the following parts of the SESRIC presentation, the progress in the Integration of the ‘Tobacco Questions for Surveys’ (TQS) into the National Surveys in OIC Member Countries has also been highlighted. The project aims to build capacities in health statistics in collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO), Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and CDC Foundation. Moreover, the Commission has been informed regarding the recent developments in “OIC Islamic Financial Industry Database” project undertaken collaboratively by SESRIC, the World Bank Global Islamic Finance Development Centre and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB). The project will be undertaken in three phases, namely project design, analysis and implementation.

The delegates extended their appreciation for the efforts of the Secretariat in the field of poverty and tourism statistics, capacity building programmes and other ongoing projects. The comments focused on increasing the number of training courses through e-learning systems. Discussions were made on further phases of OIC-CPOS project regarding the need especially at the national level and the heavy burden on the secretariat due to participation of the experts from different countries.

Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya, Director General of SESRIC, provided some explanations on the comments and inquiries stating that based on its mandate and the diverse need of member

countries, SESRIC is ready to increase the number of trainings not only in statistics but also in more than 20 other different fields.

3. Modernisation of NSSs of OIC Member Countries through Innovative Approaches and Effective Usage of Alternative Channels in Communicating Official Statistics

The Fifth Session of OIC-StatCom continued with the session titled “Modernisation of NSSs of OIC Member Countries through Innovative Approaches and Effective Usage of Alternative Channels in Communicating Official Statistics”. In the first part of the session, Mr. Nyakassi M. B. Sanyang, Statistician General, Gambia Bureau of Statistics, Mr. Mohammad Sadegh Alipour, Deputy Head for Economy and National Accounts, Statistical Centre of Iran, Ms. Mariam Al Aqeel, Director General, Kuwait Central Statistical Bureau, and Mr. Juraj Riecan, Director of Statistics Division, UNESCWA, made presentations on modernisation of NSSs through innovative approaches. Mr. Mustafa Hakkı Özel, Head of Statistical Coordination and Special Topics Unit, ILO, introduced the applications of ILO in collecting and disseminating the data globally.

In the second part of the session, Mr. Harouna Kone, Assistant Director General, National Directorate of Statistics and Informatics, Mali, Ms. Habsah Saleh, Director of Data Coordination Division, Department of Statistics of Malaysia, Ms. Ayisha Hamood Muslem Al-Asmi, Acting Director of Macroeconomic and Sector Statistics Department, National Center for Statistics and Information, Oman, and Mr. Doğan Böncü, Head of Department, Turkish Statistical Institute, Turkey, shared country experiences on the effective usage of alternative channels in communicating official statistics in their respective countries.

In the questions and answers (Q&A) part, the delegates cross-examined the speakers with the following questions such as:

- Is there a limit for modules that Mali attaches to the surveys? Is there any sampling size?
- How does TurkStat achieve a high response rate for its user satisfaction surveys? How is privacy handled during the survey process?

In response to these questions, the respective country delegates have stated that there is a limitation on the attached modules as the questionnaire is collected four times with an inclusion of two modules at the same time. 200 samples are being used to produce the desired statistics. The TurkStat delegation mentioned that they are keeping close ties with the stakeholders to keep

the responses from such surveys high. As for the privacy part, the Turkish Law on Official Statistics dictates the TurkStat to keep the collected information from such surveys confidential. The user satisfaction survey conducted by the TurkStat has a question asking the users if they believe whether the TurkStat does not share information with third parties.

4. Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (Peer Assessment) for Official Statistics towards a More Efficiently Functioning National Statistical System

The second day of the Fifth Session of OIC-StatCom, 13 May 2015, started with the session titled “Monitoring and Evaluation Systems (Peer Assessment) for Official Statistics towards a More Efficiently Functioning National Statistical System”. Ms. Claudia Junker, Head of Statistical Cooperation Unit, Eurostat, made a presentation titled “Global Assessment”. Ms. Junker briefed the delegates on Eurostat's experience in implementing assessments of different kinds (peer reviews, global assessments, sector reviews, the snapshot tool) inside the EU (briefly touching upon the latest round of peer reviews in the Member States) and outside the EU, highlighting the process of assessments as well as the challenges and benefits from undergoing this type of assessment. Various options were also given on how to start an assessment of the NSS, such as using the snapshot tool or self-assessment questionnaires. Besides, Mr. Modou Sanda, Senior Executive, National Statistical Institute of Cameroon, Ms. Ghada Mohammed Abdelsalam, Statistician, CAPMAS of Egypt, Ms. Zgoulli Mouna, Central Director of Dissemination System Information and Coordination, National Statistical Institute of Tunisia, and Mr. Gürdal Gedik, Head of International Cooperation and European Union Coordination Group, Turkish Statistical Institute, Turkey, delivered presentations on their country practices in the peer and sector reviews undertaken by national and international stakeholders.

In the Q&A part, the delegates forwarded to the speakers the following questions including:

- Who funds the peer missions that are dispatched to an MC? Are countries required to provide evidence to justify their situation?
- What actions are taken to persuade the NSOs to involve in a peer assessment process?
- On what basis are the assessors chosen for a peer assessment task? Is there any accreditation system in place while choosing an assessor? Should a code of practice (CoP) be carried out by the NSO before the initiation of a peer assessment process?

In response to these questions, Ms. Junker said that either the budget of Eurostat or the budget of the respective cooperation programmes is used; however, for the peer assessment project

involving the OIC member countries, the funding mechanism should be explored in detail. Eurostat's peer assessments involving non-EU Member States necessitate the collection of evidence from the field yet the peer assessment team sometimes have difficulties in obtaining the translated versions of the documents provided in the official languages of the assessed countries. Ms. Junker added that a peer assessment is based on the consent of the NSOs. She has witnessed that some NSOs were reluctant in involving themselves in a peer assessment process; Eurostat has tried to show the benefits they would be achieving using the examples from similar institutions, and persuaded them to carry out the assessment. However, for some NSOs, a self-assessment could also be a good starting point. Some NSOs were afraid that the report published at the end of an assessment process might create problems for the NSO because it lists a number of improvement recommendations, which may be interpreted as bad results of the work of the NSO. However, as Eurostat does not intend to harm the position of the NSOs in the countries but give recommendations for improvements to align the statistical activities with international norms and standards, the conclusions of the report are discussed with the top management of the NSI at the end of the field mission and remarks and concerns of the top management are taken into account before the report is published. As for the selection of the assessors, Ms. Junker said that assessors are chosen based on their CVs and their experience in working in / managing a statistical office and in implementing peer assessments. In some situations, Eurostat trains the assessors. There is no accreditation system for peer reviewers. The benchmark against which a country's statistical system is assessed depends on the relevant framework – it could be the African Charter of Statistics, the Code of Practice for the European neighbourhood countries South, the UN Fundamental principles or others, depending on the region and countries.

5. Strategic Priorities for National Actions to Transform NSSs to Embrace Post-2015 Development Agenda

In the last thematic session titled “Strategic Priorities for National Actions to Transform NSSs to Embrace Post-2015 Development Agenda”, Ms. Keiko Osaki Tomita, Chief of Demographic and Social Statistics Branch, UNSD, focused on the development and the implementation of a national indicator framework for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in collaboration with all stakeholders and data providers. Mr. Pietro Gennari, Chief Statistician and Director of Statistics Division, FAO, Mr. John Hammock, Co-founder, OPHI, and Mr. Thilo Klein, Junior Analyst, PARIS21, contributed to the session by providing valuable insights on SDGs. In this

context, Mr. Hamid Zidouni, Deputy Director General, National Statistical Office of Algeria, Mr. Mohammad Abdul Kadir Miah, Joint Director, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, and Mr. Wynandin Imawan, Deputy Chief Statistician for Social Statistics, BPS-Statistics Indonesia, also made presentations mainly highlighting their national statistical activities to support the NSSs in the context of the Post-2015 Development Agenda.

The Q&A session after the presentations focused on the details of the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) and the training to be co-organized by SESRIC, IDB, and OPHI in Senegal in the fourth quarter of 2015.

6. Open Discussions and Closing Session

In the final session, Mr. Mahmoud Abdalrahman, Director General of Area Statistics Directorate, Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, briefed the delegates about Palestine's chairmanship in the International Association for Official Statistics (IAOS) Executive Committee for the term 2015 to 2017. Mr. Hussen Elmi Gure, Deputy Director General, National Statistics Directorate, Somalia, highlighted the current state of the national statistical system in Somalia.

Following the discussions, participants adopted the draft resolution of the Fifth Session of the OIC-StatCom. The upcoming session of the OIC-StatCom will be held in 2016.