

SEVENTH SESSION OF OIC STATISTICAL COMMISSION

2-3 May 2018, Ankara-Republic of Turkey

WELCOME SPEECH of H.E. Amb. Musa KULAKLIKAYA, DG of SESRIC

Bismillāhirrahmānirrahīm,

Excellencies, Chairman of the OIC-StatCom,

Distinguished Delegates of the National Statistical Offices of OIC Member Countries,

Esteemed Representatives of the General Secretariat of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and Relevant Organs, Regional Organizations, and International Institutions, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,

It is a true pleasure for me to welcome you all to the Seventh Session of the Statistical Commission of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation here in Ankara, Turkey. Thank you for having accepted our invitation and allocating your precious time to attend this Session organised in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Year 2018 is one of the milestones in the history of SESRIC as it marks *the 40th anniversary* of the establishment of our Centre in accordance with the resolutions of the Eighth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) held in Tripoli, Libya in 1977.

Since the start of our operations in 1978 in Ankara, Turkey, history has continuously proved itself that robust and sound policies build on *accurate, valid, reliable, timely, relevant, complete, and accessible* data. **The value of statistics is best understood when these sound policies based on high quality data lead to “development outcomes” and life-saving results.**

We agree that the **sustainable development policies** should “*leave no one behind*”. And in order to achieve that **national statistical systems** deserve continuous and increasing allocation of financial, technological, and human resources.

Celebrating its 40th anniversary, SESRIC has always exerted and still exerts its maximum efforts to the extent of its capacity to support the steps taken in **official statistics** by OIC countries spread over four continents through its many initiatives; **including this very platform, the OIC-StatCom.**

Esteemed Colleagues,

We all know that **without national ownership and investment into the NSSs, there will be difficulties in coming up with systems to monitor and evaluate progress and thus design sound policies based on the evidence available.** In this regard, your **ownership and involvement** in the undertakings of the OIC-StatCom encourage us to increase our statistical activities to cover more topics of common interest to OIC countries.

From my assumption of the title of Director General of SESRIC in March 2015 until this very day, 197 statistics activities have been conducted. This makes up more than 60 percent of the total 317 statistical activities conducted in the last decade.

The more benefits our member countries reap from SESRIC activities and improve their processes, the more activities they request and the broader the impacts generated are. This is an exemplary indication of our sisterly and brotherly solidarity based on **our very belief system and embodiment of the South-South Cooperation (SSC) principles.**

In this connection, I would like to underline that year 2018 also coincides with the **40th anniversary of the adoption of the Buenos Aires Plan of Action for Promoting and Implementing Technical Cooperation among Developing Countries (BAPA)** in 1978.

In light of these past four decades, SESRIC enjoys the justified pride of being the **main facilitator of cooperation in official statistics** among the OIC countries, and thus, truly following the SSC principles enshrined in the BAPA. In March 2019 again in Buenos Aires, the Global South will find the opportunity to discuss and explore the new avenues and modalities of SSC during the BAPA+40 Conference.

I am sure that the firm cooperation mechanism existing among the OIC-StatCom members and facilitated through SESRIC can be a good case study to be covered during the BAPA+40.

Distinguished Participants,

Being the Secretariat of the OIC-StatCom, SESRIC has continued to conduct statistical activities and projects. Additionally, to bring about synergies by avoiding duplication of efforts, we continue to take part in different statistics related cooperation schemes and sign agreements with regional and international organisations. I do not want to take your time about the details as my colleagues from **Statistics and Information Department** will provide you comprehensive information about the progress recorded since the last Session of OIC-StatCom in Konya.

Respected Delegates,

If you allow me, I would also like to **briefly introduce you the topics to be covered in our Seventh Session.** As you all know, within the framework of **our participatory approach** with the OIC-StatCom members, the Secretariat had previously distributed a questionnaire for the identification of the tendencies of respondent countries concerning the possible themes of the Seventh Session.

The results of the survey then were shared with the delegates who participated our **traditional side-event** held on 8 March 2018 in New York in the margins of the 49th Session of UN Statistical Commission.

In light of the feedbacks received from the delegates that participated in our New York side-event, the Secretariat then finalised the draft agenda.

Following that we will focus on those four significant themes including:

- *Improvement of Census Conduct and Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems (CRVS)*
- *Prioritisation and Measurement of SDG Indicators*
- *Enhancing the Production, Dissemination, and Use of Migration Statistics*
- *Break-Out Session on the 2030 Vision of the OIC-StatCom*

which, I believe, are harmoniously aligned with the current discussions going on among the international statistical community.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Population and housing censuses are probably the most critical source of data required by all governments to be able to appropriately plan the development plans and programmes for the future. From this perspective, censuses may be the most expensive projects in the portfolios of the NSOs.

Given the magnitude of resources required to be mobilised for its successful handling and accordingly reporting to the decision makers, it is no surprise to find the NSOs exploring alternative means and sources which can produce faster and less expensive results in comparison with the censuses implemented only on the field. Therefore, well-structured civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) systems not only project births and deaths data and determine population estimates in the interim years between censuses thus reducing the financial burden on NSOs but also improve the quantity and breadth of timely data required to monitor and evaluate the SDGs in countries.

I am glad to announce that our guests from **UNFPA and UNSD** will enlighten us about the recent developments in CRVS and censuses while the presenter countries will share their experiences with you.

Speaking of the **SDGs**, our morning session on 3 May will be covering the presentations of SESRIC, PARIS21, and AFRISTAT on the prioritisation of SDGs from the perspective of international organisations to be followed by presentations by member delegates. In accordance with its role tasked by the COMCEC, SESRIC will brief you about the **Results of the Tendency Survey on SDG Priorities** of OIC Countries in which the findings call for concerted action for closing the SDG data gaps as it shows trend analysis being possible for only 69 out of 244 SDG indicators and data unavailability for 112 indicators.

Our morning session on 3 May will also cover a very critical topic. As you witness the daily news by the mass media outlets, **movement of humans across borders** – either voluntarily or forced – attained a

scale never seen before. The political uncertainties in the Middle East and North Africa, atrocities committed in South Asia and elsewhere, and hope for finding better opportunities in the Global North have translated into higher rates of migration.

For instance, our host country Turkey and its neighbouring countries of Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon have received and continue to receive millions of people from Syria alone. As I mentioned in the beginning of my speech, statistics in this case plays a life-saving role to remove the mist in effective policy making for meeting the needs of the refugees and their integration to the societies they are found in.

I am again pleased to see our colleagues from **IOM, OECD, and UNHCR** to cover the migration statistics based on a multidimensional perspective and I am sure the presentations by our country representatives will definitely shed light on their experiences and challenges concerning the migration statistics.

In the afternoon of 3 May, we will be organising a break-out session in which small groups composed of our participants will be discussing the **Strategic Vision 2030 of OIC-StatCom**. We do value your feedback which you will be providing during the group discussions and guide us in planning the next steps in the preparation of the new vision.

Distinguished Colleagues,

Before concluding my remarks, I would like to express once again my thanks to the outgoing **OIC-StatCom Bureau Members** composed of BPS Statistics **Indonesia** (as *Chair*); Central Statistical Bureau of the State of **Kuwait** and National Agency of Statistics and Demography of the Republic of **Senegal** (as *Vice-Chairs*); and Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics of the State of **Palestine** (as *Rapporteur*).

Excitingly looking forward to working with the incoming Bureau members for the term 2018-2019, I would also like to extend my cordial thanks to the Islamic Development Bank for their generous support allocated to this event.

May Allah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) bestow his mercy on the undertakings of this **Seventh Session of the OIC Statistical Commission**.

In conclusion, I would like to wish you fruitful deliberations and express my appreciation of your professional contribution to our gathering.

Wassalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu