



بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

**Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Assalamualikom, السلام علیکم**

**Good evening, Ramadan Kareem**

Let me, at the outset, welcome you all and thank you for accepting our invitation to SESRIC traditional Ramadan Iftar Dinner.



I would also like to express my wholehearted congratulations and wishes for a blessed Ramadan to you and your families and to the entire Muslim Ummah.

Allah (SWT) says in the Holy Quran:

“ (يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا كُتِبَ عَلَيْكُمُ الصِّيَامُ كَمَا كُتِبَ عَلَى الَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ) “O you who believe, fasting is prescribed for you as it was prescribed for those before you, so that you may guard against evil”. (The Holy Quran, 2:183).



Fasting urges in us patience, unselfishness, and gratitude. When we fast we feel the pains of deprivation and hunger, and learn how to endure it patiently.

The meaning of this powerful experience in a social and humanitarian context is the real sympathizing with the oppressed and needy around the world, and responding to their needs. In fact, with a month-long fasting, Ramadan is a unique model of solidarity and mutual support – not only for Muslims, but also for all people.



The Holy month of Ramadan is a great opportunity to celebrate the values of moderation, tolerance and peaceful coexistence.

It is a great opportunity for all Muslims around the world to show empathy for those less fortunate, who, for example, have been observed fasting the month in refugee camps and migrant shelters, support them and keep them in their thoughts and prayers.



## Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The cries of the oppressed and the victims are rising from all corners of the world along with heart-breaking images of the slain. Unfortunately, the majority of these images and cries belong to Muslims.

Today, in the OIC region: violent conflicts cause great pain, sectarianism divides the Ummah, civil wars threaten our peace and security and terrorism and extremist movements target our stability.



This has resulted in great sufferings and the examples of suffering in the OIC region are abundant.

From Syria to Yemen to Libya to Afghanistan, millions have lost their lives to violence and conflicts and 25 million are displaced within or across the OIC boundaries.

Here, we should also not forget our Muslim brothers and sisters in Myanmar, where the Rohingya Muslim minority have been subject to one of the most gruesome episodes of ethnic cleansing in recent history.



Nor should we forget the tragedy of Palestine, where the latest events in Gaza and the massacre of civilian protesters have proved one more time that our Palestinian brothers suffer under Israeli occupation, and are a bleeding wound in the heart of the Islamic world.

In these bleak times, the Muslim World needs to bring the common values uniting it to the forefront and to demonstrate unity and solidarity.



By demonstrating unity and solidarity we will be able to eliminate the seditions that separate us from each other and divide the Ummah and we will become powerful capable of defending justice, peace, rights and freedom within and outside the borders of the Islamic World.

The crises that mark most Muslim countries today are calling for more solidarity. In today's Muslim world context, solidarity has become an urgent necessity.





**Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Our Iftar dinner program this year has a special meaning for us as it comes concurrently with the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of our Centre SESRIC (the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries)..

As most of you know, SESRIC is one of the earliest established OIC institutions.



The Centre started its activities in Ankara on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1978 with the mission of serving the OIC and its Member Countries in three broad areas, namely statistics, socio-economic research and training. In implementing its mandate in these three areas, SESRIC, has over the last four decades, introduced new measures and initiated new approaches with a view to undertaking more result-oriented activities and soundly coordinated actions to address the challenges facing the member countries in their developmental efforts.



## Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On this occasion, the 40th Anniversary of the establishment of SESRIC and its active involvement in the joint efforts towards the realisation of the noble objectives of the OIC, I would like to assure you that SESRIC will continue to enhance its role in bolstering the efforts of the OIC and its member countries towards enhancing cooperation, unity and solidarity and ensuring sustainable development, progress and prosperity of the Ummah.



At the end, I pray Allah the Most High to make this very special event of Mubarak month of Ramadan so dear to the hearts of all Muslims; a window of opportunity for wars and conflicts to be defused and ended in the Muslim world; a time of brotherly love in which Muslims unite and root out all seeds of chaos and division; and a chance to spread peace, security and stability in the Muslim world and beyond.

May Allah guide us on the right path and have mercy on us, and accept our good deeds.



والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته،،