

THE THIRD SESSION OF OIC-STATCOM

10-12 April 2013, Ankara

OPENING STATEMENT

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Members of the Commission and Delegates of Member Countries,

It is a great honor and privilege for me to participate in the Third Session of Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) Statistical Commission and to meet you again in Turkey after our last meeting in İzmir.

I would also like to welcome you to Turkey and wish you a nice stay in our capital city, Ankara.

I sincerely believe that the Commission has undertaken such an important mission by bringing Member Countries together and supporting the collaboration and cooperation by various means.

A clear indication of this fact is the creation and successful studies of the working groups and technical expert committees.

Dear Members and Delegates,

The importance of Organization of Islamic Cooperation for international peace, cooperation and development in the Muslim World has increased; as the organization is a unique structure that performs a role of the UN in the Islamic World uniting 57 States on four continents.

With the total population of OIC Member States is over 1.4 billion, the organization is "the collective voice of the Muslim world".

We can confidently say that the OIC has become more active and an indispensable actor among international institutions.

Looking at the general figures, we find out that OIC member countries control two-thirds of the world`s crude oil and natural gas reserves while their GDP is 8.3 percent of the global economy.

Furthermore, although Muslim countries constitute 20 percent of the world population, their contributions to the world`s income do not exceed five percent.

All these figures indicate that Islam World is facing serious challenges today in a dramatically changing world.

One of the main reasons for this landscape is the serious imbalances in development levels among the OIC countries.

In order to uncover the inexhaustible potential of the Islamic World, we need to unite efforts to develop effective mechanisms for cooperation, mutual aid and promotion of development.

With this understanding, we as Turkey attach great importance to OIC and cooperation initiatives with member countries as one of the founding countries.

As we all know, in the recent decades the world has been moving at a faster pace.

New technologies, increased globalization and great financial crises have led to uncertainty throughout the world.

For this reason, in order to visualize this uncertainty, we all need extremely powerful, dynamic, and multi-dimensional means which is for sure statistics.

Dear Members and Delegates,

Taking this opportunity, I would like to emphasize my pleasure that the agenda covers prominent issues such as labor statistics, open data initiative and Sustainable Development Goals.

These topics are certainly among our important focal points and I do hope that sharing our experiences would be beneficial in our future studies.

For instances, labour statistics plays an essential role in measuring the impact of the recent global economic and financial crisis on the labour market.

These statistics are also needed for the development and evaluation of policies of the OIC member states and for assessing their progress in this field.

Sustainable Development Goals as a global initiative of UN especially in view of both economic and social cohesion is more and more increasing.

Therefore, I would like to say that this meeting is an important step and platform for initiation of studies in creation of future partnerships among the OIC member countries under the agenda of SDGs.

Lastly, we attach particular importance to the Open Data Initiative in which best ways of dissemination methods in a country will be discussed.

We will certainly discuss these agenda items in detail; however, we believe that there are two significant factors for NSO's to produce reliable, accurate and timely official statistics covering these topics.

The first one is ensuring the professional independency of NSO's in order to conduct the statistical systems in accordance with European Statistics Code of Practice and United Nations Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics.

As you all know that these Principles such as impartiality, reliability, accuracy, timeliness, comparability and accessibility are widely adopted by all the global statistical society.

I would like to underline that trust in official statistics and NSOs is the key element in social and economic development of a country, which can only achieved by the professional independence.

The second significant factor directly affecting national statistical systems and NSOs is the access to administrative registers of other public institutions within the national statistical system.

As we are all aware, producing official statistics meeting all these Principles is a great challenge.

The statistical production is a complex and comprehensive process that requires serious financial resources and time.

Furthermore, the response burden also contributes to the costs of statistics for the society.

In order to overcome these problems, increasingly using administrative registers is the key factor.

We all have to use these registers in a much more efficient manner.

Advantages of using the administrative registers are lower response burden and costs, lower production costs and increase in timeliness.

One of the most important challenges for national statistical offices is access to administrative registers kept by other public authorities.

Although most national statistical offices are granted legal right to obtain and use these registers, that is not practically applicable in many cases.

Other public authorities usually do not contribute to this process actively.

This reluctance and reservation mostly depend on;

- lack of statistical consciousness,**
- administrative burden on other public authorities, and**
- weaknesses within the implementation of statistical laws.**

For this reason, national statistical offices have to be consistent and committed as regards the coordination and coherence on administrative registers.

These authority and power have to be supported both politically and legally.

If these two important principles are successfully put into practice by NSOs, it would be easier to produce high quality official statistics, which is necessary for achieving the evidence-based policy making.

At this point, we can say that most of the NSOs have the legal infrastructure in terms of ensuring these principles.

However, the question appears in practical applications. Even though you have legal right; you can still face problems both in professional independence and access to administrative registers.

We therefore strongly believe that this issue should be undertaken by the international organizations as well as national statistical offices.

As the NSOs are not quite strong within the bureaucracy and government; the lead of these international and regional organizations is of particular importance on this issue.

It is needed that these organizations take the initiative within the governments of the countries in order to raise the awareness on these principles, particularly professional independence and access to administrative registers.

In this way, initiatives at governmental level could be more powerful and more visible.

Dear Members and Delegates,

As for our region, I sincerely believe that we should have a common approach regarding the use of administrative registers

and highlighting their importance on global, regional and national platforms.

I also think that we should exchange our experiences and best practices regarding legal and practical applications.

Completing my words, I would like to reiterate that the economic cooperation and development in our region requires continuous and institutionalized dialogue.

In this context, I sincerely believe that the road to an effective and fair world system also passes through dialogue and cooperation.

In this regard, we as TurkStat stand ready for giving further momentum to the joint activities in order to stimulate the spirit of cooperation.

In conclusion, on behalf of my Institute and my country, I would like to extend our sincere thanks and appreciation to OIC, Islamic Development Bank and SESRIC for their invaluable and intensive studies.

Thank you.