

**STATEMENT BY MR. MEHMET METİN EKER
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Assalamu 'Alaikum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuhu

Mr. Chairman,

Distinguished Heads of the National Statistics Offices of the Member Countries,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to address the participants of the Third Session of OIC Statistical Commission. I would like to thank Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group for co-organizing this important session.

With the emerging challenges for development, the demand for specific, reliable and comparable statistics at national, regional and global levels have substantially increased. Statistics are crucial for setting realistic, achievable targets, making decisions and measuring the progress in fields we cooperate.

As international and regional organizations, we also need high quality statistics for initiating feasible programmes and projects for realizing the economic and commercial potentials of our Member States. In this connection, we have to admit that statistical infrastructure in most of OIC Member Countries is far from ideal levels. This commission, as a strong technical body for overseeing and setting direction for OIC-level statistical activities will contribute substantially to strengthening statistical infrastructure in our member countries and production of reliable and updated statistics.

Distinguished Delegates,

COMCEC is the highest level political forum for economic and commercial cooperation among the OIC Member Countries. Nowadays, COMCEC activities gain a new momentum with, the adoption of a new vision document, namely the COMCEC Strategy. The COMCEC Strategy aims to deepen cooperation among the Member States through working groups in six main cooperation areas namely trade, agriculture, transport, tourism, poverty alleviation and finance. In order to design sound programmes to enhance cooperation in all these fields, we are in dire need of accurate and reliable statistics. I am confident that this Commission will undertake a very important mission in this regard as well.

I believe that your valuable efforts will enable us in implementation of the COMCEC Strategy to better project our activities through your contributions for producing reliable and comparable statistics in the member states. It goes without saying that we will also be one of your main supporters. COMCEC Coordination Office will, Insha Allah, continue to cooperate with our brotherly institutions SESRIC and IDB in their endeavors in building strong and efficient statistical systems in our member countries.

Before concluding, I would like to thank SESRIC and IDB Group once again for the excellent arrangements made for the meeting and wish you all the success in your deliberations.

Thank you.

Wassalamu 'Alaikum