

Second Session of OIC Statistical Commission

13-15 May 2012, Izmir – Turkey

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The Second 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 13-15 May 2012 in Izmir, Turkey.

The delegates of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) from 40 OIC Member Countries; namely, Afghanistan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Egypt, Gabon, Guinea-Bissau, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Kyrgyzstan, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Sudan, Tajikistan, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Uganda, Uzbekistan and Yemen attended the Second Session of OIC-StatCom. The representatives of 6 international/supranational and national organisations including the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC), OIC General Secretariat, Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT), United Nations Economic and Social Council for Western Asia (UNESCWA), and Statistics Sweden also took part in the Commission.

The Agenda of the Second Session of OIC-StatCom included the following items:

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- Opening Session
- OIC–StatCom Working Groups: Implemented Activities and the Way Forward
- Country Experiences on the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses
- Break–Out Session: Better Visibility, Outreach and Effectiveness
- Quality Management from an Institutional Perspective: Generic National Quality Assurance Framework
- Quality Management from a Production Process Perspective: Generic Statistical Business Process Model
- Statistical Capacity Building: Concerted Efforts for Coordination
- Closing Session

1 Opening Session

After the recitation of some verses from the Holy Quran, the Second Session of OIC-StatCom commenced on 13 May 2012 with the Welcome Addresses of Mr. Mohanna al Mohanna (Chair of the OIC-StatCom and Director General of the Central Department of Statistics and Information (CDSI) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), Mr. Mustafa Tekin (Head of the International Programmes and Projects Department at the COMCEC Coordination Office), Mr. Jakhongir Khasanov (Professional Officer at the Economic Affairs Department of the OIC General Secretariat), Dr. Abdullateef Bello (Director of the Data Resources and Statistics Department (DRSD) at the IDB) and Dr. Savaş Alpay (Director General of SESRIC). The Welcome

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Addresses were followed by the Opening Remarks of Mr. Ousmane Abdoulaye Haggar, Director General of INSEED, Chad (representing the African region), Mr. Abu Bakr Mahmoud Mohamed Bakr Al Gendy, Director General of CAPMAS, Egypt (representing the Arab region), and Mr. Birol Aydemir, President of TurkStat, Turkey (representing the Asian region).

In their speeches, the speakers focused on the importance attached to the production of reliable and updated statistics that allows decision-making based on evidence, evaluation of programmes and prevention of crises in a context where most of the OIC Member Countries are in a transition period. The speakers also stressed the importance of statistical cooperation to strengthen and increase the capacities of Member Countries, and Working Groups established at the First Session of OIC-StatCom in April 2011. Besides the significance of capacity building programs carried out by IDB and SESRIC during the recent years, the development of a code of practice for quality statistics was also mentioned by the speakers.

2 OIC–StatCom Working Groups: Implemented Activities and the Way Forward

Throughout the session “OIC–StatCom Working Groups: Implemented Activities and the Way Forward”, the participants listened to the presentations of

- Working Group on “*Statistical Indicators Specific to OIC Member States*” delivered by Mr. Ali Zaitoun (Expert at the National Accounts Directorate of the Jordanian Department of Statistics);

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- Working Group on “***Development of a Strategic Vision Document for the OIC-StatCom***” delivered by Dr. Suryamin (Chief Statistician of BPS-Statistics Indonesia); and
- Working Group on “***Development of an Accreditation Program for Statistical Professionals in OIC Member States***” delivered by Dr. Nabeel Mohammed Shams (Director General of the Statistics Department at the Central Informatics Organisation (CIO) of Bahrain)

regarding the progress reports of OIC-StatCom Working Groups, which were established at the First Session of OIC-StatCom. After the presentation of each speaker, the floor was opened for the discussions.

2.1 Discussions on Working Group on “***Statistical Indicators Specific to OIC Member States***”

The delegation of Oman stated that international indicators including development goals should be incorporated within the scope of work of the Working Group to identify the advantages and disadvantages for the OIC Member Countries.

The delegation of Sudan brought forward the issue of contradictions concerning the definitions of indicators specific to OIC Member Countries. The delegation said that the future works of the Working Group should focus on the reflection of economic indicators to national economy as a priority field. The delegation also mentioned that the Commission should focus on the kinds of decisions to be made for benefiting at the utmost level from these indicators specific to OIC Member Countries.

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The delegation of Kuwait stressed the need that definitions of indicators specific to OIC Member Countries should be within the internationally accepted structures. The delegation articulated the varying levels of implementations among the Member Countries concerning some of these specific indicators. The delegation went on to say that the Working Group should also concentrate on Islamic finance indicators as Islamic finance has emerged as a significant method to remedy the shortcomings of the current financial understanding. Additionally, the delegation asked if the Working Group could find the requirements for the collection of data concerning the specific indicators for further discussions.

The delegation of the United Arab Emirates declared that the multi-dimensional issue of violence against women has gained importance as it was discussed among the international forums. The delegation underlined the need for a working group to work on this issue by measuring its scale based on the definitions developed concerning medical, legal, statistical and cultural dimensions. The delegation went on to say that the working group should examine the ways for coordination among the Member Countries for statistical cooperation in this field. The delegation also stated that the international organisations should take part in the working group that will report to the Commission in its Third Session in 2013.

The delegation of Turkey told that the objective and content of the Working Group should be reviewed in line with the question what an Islamic/non-Islamic indicator is. For that purpose, the delegation gave the example of indicators on social protection. The delegation stated that there exist some indicators within the Report of the Working Group, which in fact should not be disclosed by the individuals; such as sadaqa, and should not be included as

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de facto. The delegation asked if the Commission should solely focus on the specific indicators or the more fundamental ones.

The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire gave some examples regarding the interpretation of collected data from households in their country such as the identification of Muslim population based on the religion of the head of the family while the rest of the household may also be non-Muslims. Consequently, the delegation drew attention to the need for discussing how to measure such dimensions.

The delegation of Iran stated that there should be a comparison between the OIC Member Countries and the other countries regarding this issue.

The delegation of Qatar asked about the objective of collecting specific indicators and either to concentrate on civil registries or censuses concerning the collection of such data.

The delegation of Iraq mentioned about the differences observed among countries regarding the processes for specific indicators. As to the issue of zakat, the delegation wanted the OIC act more proactively for channelling humanitarian assistance to those OIC Member Countries in need.

The delegation of Bahrain stated that the United Nations and other international organisations have methodologies for the calculation of transfer of savings. Additionally, the delegation affirmed their belief in that the Working Group should concentrate on the unique and distinctive characteristics specific to OIC Member Countries.

The delegation of Pakistan emphasized the central role of family within the OIC Member Countries and mentioned that the Commission members

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should focus on the positive side of specific indicators. Therefore, according to the delegation, the Working Group should determine those values on which they need to concentrate.

The delegation of IDB wanted the scope of the Working Group to be extended as not all regions of the OIC are reflected in full. The delegation said there is a need to include the legal scope, which will facilitate the National Statistical Offices to collect data concerning specific indicators.

The delegation of OIC General Secretariat called the OIC Member Countries to select an indicator among the ones given in the Report of the Working Group and start working for elaborating a methodology how to collect them. After the required processes on the collected data, they could be hosted on an OIC level database.

The delegation of Jordan, as the Lead Country of the Working Group on “Statistical Indicators Specific to OIC Member States”, answered the questions asked by the Commission members. The delegation stated that a consensus among the OIC Member Countries should be constituted to set the basis for further activities. A technical committee should be set up to examine the extent of the specific indicators to the development efforts. The definitions for specific indicators are parallel to the internationally accepted definitions. The delegation went on to say that the indicators concerning violence against women has not been mentioned in the current report but can be added later. The national accounts do not include all aspects of development. If wanted, some of the specific indicators can be included in the national accounts. The delegation stressed the need for developing a common language for the training of decision makers concerning the use of specific indicators. The delegation appreciated the comments of Kuwait on

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Islamic finance and the comments of UAE on violence against women. As a reply to the question of Turkey, the delegation mentioned that there are cases like Zakat to be done overtly. However, there are differences among the Member Countries concerning the implementation of such issues. The delegation additionally told that the civil registries could be used for data collection. The delegation finally called the Member Countries to submit their completed questionnaires to the Secretariat, which have not done so.

The Secretariat took the floor as the last intervener. The delegation shared its opinion that the Working Group should follow its future activities as Technical Committee of Experts on the themes such as Islamic banking and finance, and halal food and products industry. The Technical Committee of Experts should prepare a report on the methodology concerning the selected specific indicators. According to the delegation, to reach a consensus among the Members, the theme of violence against women could be considered under the theme gender-based statistics. In this respect, the international community could be informed about their different cultural and traditional aspects on this issue.

2.2 Discussions on Working Group on “*Development of a Strategic Vision Document for the OIC-StatCom*”

The delegation of IDB contributed to the discussions by stating that the brain drain should have been incorporated in the Challenges section of the document. They also shared their view on the status of OIC-StatCom by telling that they would like to see the Commission not only as a platform but also as an organisation dealing with the issues of methodology development, etc. The Commission could contribute to the OIC Ten Year Plan of Action by enhancing the statistical capacities of the Member Countries. The

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delegation went on to mention that the strategic goals should be simpler and connected to the activities of the OIC at large.

The delegation of Turkey emphasized that challenges were summarized in the Strategic Vision Document in detail. However, the missing part was how they could be overcome and fixed. For this reason, the document should be supported with an Implementation Plan describing the short-, medium-, and long-term activities to be carried out. The Working Group, after developing the Plan, then should report to the Commission on the progress recorded concerning the activities defined. As a follow-up, it is necessary to operationalize results-oriented studies; such as, observing and discussing the implementation of the Plan by OIC Member Countries, deficiencies faced and results obtained.

The delegation of OIC General Secretariat accentuated the need for such a document, as it would serve to develop the statistical cooperation and collaboration among the Member Countries.

The delegation of Côte d'Ivoire highlighted that under its current "platform" structure, the Commission could not speak on behalf of all Member Countries; thus, the current structure of the Commission should be institutionalised that would set implementation plans and programmes with a defined budget. The delegation stated their agreement with the vision set for 2020. However, not only sharing experiences but also guiding the Members in the same direction should also be considered. The delegation gave the example of AFRISTAT concerning its functions and role on harmonising the

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practices of National Statistical Offices found in the region and asked the question how the Commission could enrich itself by taking the current organisations and practices into account.

The delegation of Malaysia called for a synergy among the different international experiences concerning the issue. There are current standards developed as a result of the International Comparison Programme. The activities to be carried out in accordance with the strategic objectives should contribute to the capacity development of experts. In addition, different stakeholders including the data users should be given more opportunity to voice their demands.

The delegation of Sudan elucidated that the Member Countries based on their levels should decide how to implement their National Strategies for Development of Statistics. The delegation mentioned that the Members should think the Commission becoming a statistical body like EuroStat in the future. Therefore, the Vision should be in line with this purpose.

The delegation of Bahrain put forward some semantic issues regarding the Document. Instead of “togetherness”, the term “synergy” would reflect better what was tried to be meant in the Mission Statement. The promotion of synergy should be mentioned inside the Document. The delegation also stated about the status of OIC-StatCom concerning its relations with the international organisations (assisting the other international organisations or peers of them).

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For the last intervention, the Secretariat took the floor. The delegation stated that the Working Group should be re-structured as a Technical Committee of Experts that would work on the development of a Executive Work Plan for the Short, Medium and Long Term Implementation of the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision.

2.3 Discussions on Working Group on “Development of an Accreditation Program for Statistical Professionals in OIC Member States”

The delegation of Uganda asked questions regarding the four levels of the accreditation programme as it would require a statistician six years to complete all the required exams. The delegation wanted to learn if any other criteria would also be considered concerning accreditation of experts with different backgrounds; such as an expert with 20 years of official statistics experience.

The delegation of Côte d’Ivoire mentioned that there are not many schools in West Africa offering the courses as demanded by the accreditation system. Indeed, the training provided by these few schools involves statistical technicians, statistical engineers and statisticians with a specialisation on economics. The delegation wanted to learn if the accreditation programme could have an effect on the promotion of statisticians, as they are all civil servants.

The delegation of IDB commented on the levels offered in the accreditation programme and asked if the levels could be dropped to two (basic and advanced) because of the difficulty in classifying the experts with different backgrounds.

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The delegation of Egypt offered to have an age limit imposed to complete all the levels in the accreditation programme. In doing so, this would be an encouraging factor for experts to complete the accreditation programme.

The delegation of Turkey stated that the trained people should be subjected to examination and the examinations should be carried out on a serious basis. The delegation also emphasized that the training and examination bodies should be carried out by two distinct organisations. The standards for each level should be set clearly. Based on those standards, the trainings could be organised and exams could be carried out by an independent body. In order to produce high quality statistics, this process should be implemented, but this should be a long-term process.

The Secretariat provided comments as the last intervener. The delegation accentuated that the proposed programme of accreditation could constitute an example for the global community as the Working Group focused on a niche area. The delegation went on to say that it would be better to establish Technical Committees to follow-up on the procedural details of the Accreditation Program.

3 Country Experiences on the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses

The speakers from Bangladesh (Md. Shamsul Alam, Director in-charge of the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics), Iran (Mr. Ghodrat Taheri, Director General of the Office of Calculation of Macro Plan and Policies Indicators of the Statistical Centre of Iran), Kuwait (Dr. Abdullah Sahar, Director General of

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the Central Statistical Office of Kuwait), Oman (Mr. Hamed AL-Dagheishi, Statistician at the National Census Bureau of Oman) and Turkey (Mr. Enver Taştı, Head of the Social Statistics Department at TurkStat) gave presentations in the session “Country Experiences on the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses”.

While the presentations of Bangladesh, Iran, and Oman focused on the use of latest technology in their censuses, the presentations of Kuwait and Turkey also mentioned about the use of administrative records and civil registries during their censuses.

After the presentations, delegates discussed their problems such as varying levels of census unit cost ranging from 0.5 to 19 USD, and achievements during the implementation phase of censuses and their plans for the future censuses. To sum up the interventions by the Members, the Secretariat took the floor. The Secretariat stated that it would be better to organise an Experts Group Meeting to take place between the Second and Third Session of OIC-StatCom with the aim of producing a reference publication including different country experiences and practices concerning censuses in the OIC Member Countries. In addition, study visits could be organised among the OIC Member Countries that would like to know new approaches in the implementation of censuses.

4 Break-Out Session: Better Visibility, Outreach and Effectiveness

The first day of the Second Session of OIC-StatCom ended with the Break-Out Session on “Better Visibility, Outreach and Effectiveness”. At the beginning of the session, Mr. Mahmoud Abd- Al Rahman Hadeya (Director General of the Area Statistics at the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

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(PCBS)) gave a presentation on the visibility, outreach and effectiveness of the PCBS. Besides the discussions on how to initiate various Statistical Outreach and Awareness Competitions/Projects at both the national and the OIC level, the delegates also mentioned the following approaches regarding the dissemination and communication of data they produce to different stakeholders and how to increase effectiveness in their operations:

- Organising training workshops on use of statistics and dissemination of statistical operation results;
- Having regular meetings with the media due to their important role in disseminating statistical information;
- Developing electronic publications;
- Using social networks such as Twitter and Facebook;
- Campaigning at the level of decision-makers for allocation of budgets to ensure statistical visibility,
- Collaboration with the Ministries of Education to integrate statistics in school curricula.

Following the discussions, it was recommended that the OIC Member Countries send their outreach methods to the Secretariat to be publicised through the Secretariat's website.

5 Quality Management from an Institutional Perspective: Generic National Quality Assurance Framework

On 14 May 2012, the second day of the Second Session of OIC-StatCom, Ms. Claudia Junker (Head of Statistical Cooperation Unit at the

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EUROSTAT) delivered a presentation on Generic National Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), a formulation of the basic requirements of achieving good quality management in the NSOs. In her presentation, Ms. Junker informed the participants about the quality approach of EUROSTAT from the European Statistical System perspective, Code of Practice (CoP) and QAF currently used by EUROSTAT.

Ms. Junker also emphasized in her presentation the importance of strengthening the legal framework and the independence of statistics. The quality management in the European Statistical System is based on the European Statistics CoP which is although not mandatory, followed by Member States. Ms. Junker summarised the most important of the 15 principles found in the CoP and explained how the CoP is developing and how its implementation is followed-up by the EU Member States. Ms. Junker stated that the Quality Assurance Framework implemented within Eurostat is based on a review of all statistical processes done through either self-assessments or external evaluation by peers. The framework includes layers of documentation, evaluation and benchmarking and the first two layers are now being implemented through an intensive 4 years long evaluation programme. The QAF is currently under review for adapting it to more generic statistical production processes.

The Turkish delegation, referring to the studies conducted on quality management in TurkStat, emphasized that the legal infrastructure is the basic requirement for the implementation of the principles of CoP and quality in statistics. It also underlined that TurkStat built the legal infrastructure in 2005 in line with these principles and TurkStat gained both professional and technical independence. It furthermore emphasized that such a statistical law

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is the main requirement for reliability. It also recommended that Peer Review studies could also be conducted in OIC Member Countries with external support and such a system could also be built.

The session ended with a Question and Answer part where the participants asked questions to Ms. Junker to learn more about the Generic National Quality Assurance Framework.

6 Quality Management from a Production Process Perspective: Generic Statistical Business Process Model

Following Ms. Junker, Mr. Mats Bergdahl (Deputy Head of Process Department at the Statistics Sweden) shared with the participants the Swedish experience in his presentation regarding the Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM) for quality based statistical production processes at the Statistics Sweden. Mr. Bergdahl stated that Statistics Sweden customised the model originally developed in New Zealand for their needs and requirements. The current Generic Statistical Business Process Model employed at the Statistics Sweden is composed of nine stages ranging from assessment of user needs to the dissemination of statistical information. After the presentation, the participants discussed how to employ good practices, strategies and policies towards the development of models for the production of high-quality statistics.

The main recommendations made by the Members after the presentations was regarding the organisation of study visits and other capacity building programs with the support of SESRIC and IDB to pioneer countries with a

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National Quality Assurance Framework and Generic Statistical Business Process Model (GSBPM).

7 Statistical Capacity Building: Concerted Efforts for Coordination

The participants listened to the presentations of Dr. Abdullateef Bello (DRSD Director at the IDB), Mr. Atilla Karaman (Researcher at the SESRIC), and Dr. Suryamin (Chief Statistician of BPS-Statistics Indonesia) during the session “Statistical Capacity Building: Concerted Efforts for Coordination”. In his speech, Dr. Bello mentioned about the IDB Statistical Capacity Building (IDB-STATCAP) Initiative which is aimed at assisting member countries to build and strengthen their statistical capacities to enable them produce reliable, timely, consistent and accurate economic, financial, socio-demographic and other data (in accordance with international good practice and frameworks) for policy formulation and decision making, and for monitoring development and poverty reduction as the cornerstone of IDB’s strategic objective.

After Dr. Bello, Mr. Atilla Karaman presented the new in-house development version of the SESRIC Motion Chart (SMC) Module. Mr. Karaman mentioned that the new version of SESRIC SMC Module is based on the Flex open-source application framework, which gives much more flexibility to developers when compared to the current SESRIC SMC version. Mr. Karaman also briefed the participants about the outcome of the SESRIC Statistical Capacity Building (StatCaB) Programme Survey for the Biennium 2012-2013.

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Following Mr. Karaman, Dr. Suryamin gave a presentation on the Institute of Statistics (STIS), an official higher education institute offering 4-year undergraduate programs under the administration of the BPS-Statistics Indonesia. At the end of his presentation, Dr. Suryamin stated that STIS is ready to receive new students from the OIC Member Countries.

After the deliberations, the Members of the OIC-StatCom recommended the cooperation between the OIC Member Countries and Indonesia or any other OIC Member Country having education facilities such as STIS. The Secretariat also called the Member Countries to submit the completed StatCaB Surveys for the Biennium 2012-2013 to initiate new statistical capacity building programmes among the Member Countries.

8 Closing Session

The Meeting ended with the adoption of the Draft Resolutions of the Second Session of OIC-StatCom. In addition, the OIC-StatCom Members endorsed the amendment to the Rules of Procedures of the OIC-StatCom, which states that the IDB and SESRIC are permanent ex-officio members of the Bureau undertaking the organisational matters related to the activities of the Commission. The OIC-StatCom decided to have their next Session in Istanbul, Turkey in April 2013.