



Islamic Development Bank

**Welcoming Address by Dr. Ahmet Tiktik,
Vice President (Corporate Services) and Acting Chief Economist
at the 3rd Meeting of the OIC Statistical Working Group,
20 Muharram 1431H (26 December 2010),
IDB Headquarters, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia**

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Bismillahi Rahmanir-Raheem

Assalaam 'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh

H.E Dr. Savas Alpay, the Director General of SESRIC

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is a great privilege and honour for me to welcome you, on behalf of the IDB Group, to this 3rd Meeting of the OIC Statistical Working Group (OIC-SWG). I take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation to you for honouring our invitation. I understand that this is the second time the IDB is hosting the meeting, which shows the trust and confidence you all have in your institution.

Your presence here today is a testimony of your institutions' resolve and commitment to strengthen coordination, collaboration, and cooperation as well as improve harmonization of statistical activities and standardization of statistical methodologies with a view to avoid duplication of efforts and release of conflicting figures on indicators of OIC member countries; these are the reasons for establishing the OIC Statistical Working Group which is three years old today. I notice in this room that participants are drawn from both the national statistical organizations (the data producers) and the OIC statistical institutions (the data users), which provides a unique opportunity to share ideas and experiences and understand each other's challenges and needs.

Ladies and Gentlemen

When the first meeting of the OIC-SWG was hosted here by IDB in March 2008, the development challenges facing the world at that time were completely different from those of the past two years wherein the world economy collapsed due to financial and economic crisis, which was second only to the Great Depression of the 1930s. Apart from posing additional challenges, the crisis reversed all the gains made by OIC member countries to attain the targets set in both the Millennium Development Goals and the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action.

In my view, the crisis was a blessing in disguise for both data producers and data users for three reasons. First, it drew the attention of policymakers and researchers worldwide

to the importance of having available high quality data for assessing and quantifying the impact of the crisis on their economies. Second, it exposed the weaknesses in the global statistical system which failed to capture data on key statistical indicators relevant to the crisis. Third, for the first time the UN General Assembly asked all its member countries to celebrate the “World Statistics Day” on 20 October 2010 to raise the profile of statistics.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In the post-crisis era, the challenges of accessing quality data are daunting and no single institution or organization can alone address them; the solution lies in strengthening partnership, networking, and synergy between key data producers and users. This is where the role of OIC-SWG is paramount. I am glad to know that the OIC-SWG has achieved reasonable progress in two areas namely (i) sharing information and reviewing statistical publications and (ii) jointly organizing statistical events. While this is a positive development and encouraging, there is still need to do more in improving coordination of statistical activities and implementing some pending activities assigned to each member from all previous meetings of the OIC-SWG. I trust that you will use today’s meeting to review your achievements and develop a follow-up mechanism for timely completion of outstanding activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At IDB, we have been active in supporting statistical capacity building of member countries. In this regard, we launched the IDB Statistical Capacity building (IDB-STATCAP) initiative in 2007 long before the onset of the financial and economic crisis. The IDB-STATCAP mainstreams statistical capacity activities in the regular operations of IDB. It also finances statistical training, workshops, conference, and consultancy services as well as provides scholarships at M.Sc. level in statistics. Importantly, IDB-STATCAP is unique because it is the first in the world to include scholarships as one of its components.

In addition to its own resources for financing statistical activities, the IDB has mobilized external funds culminating in the United Kingdom’s Department for International Development (DfID) signing an MOU with IDB in November 2009 to provide £2 million in support of IDB-STATCAP for three member countries (Yemen, Iraq and Palestine) and regional statistical events. So far, the activities financed under the DfID fund are progressing well. We seek your help in managing the fund especially in organizing regional statistical events.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to assure you that the IDB stands ready to support the OIC-SWG activities and look forward to implementing your recommendations from this meeting. I wish you success in your deliberations and thank you all for your attention.