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ACTIVITIES****DIRECTOR GENERAL GOES ON RETIREMENT**

A career diplomat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Turkey, His Excellency Ambassador Erdiñ Erdün was appointed Director General of the SESRTCIC on 1st May 1998. After two successful terms at the helm of the Centre, he now wishes to retire as of 30 April 2006.

Hereafter is his assessment of the Centre's achievements during the last eight years.

"My mission at the SESRTCIC will come to an end on 30 April 2006. Eight years will have elapsed since Dr. Şadi Cindoruk handed me the helm of this prestigious subsidiary organ of the OIC. He had been heading the SESRTCIC since its establishment in 1978 and, together with an able team of experts and professionals, remarkably succeeded in turning it into an indispensable and highly instrumental socio-economic research tool for the OIC and its member countries. My apprehension of the new mission entrusted to me by the Turkish Government was, therefore, evenly matching the solid reputation and great respect enjoyed by the SESRTCIC within the OIC system in particular and the international statistical and economic research circles in general.

Today, I can safely affirm that the SESRTCIC has maintained its course of success. It even further enhanced its position as the main statistical and socio-economic research organ of the OIC and intensified its contribution

to the common efforts being made towards capacity building in the OIC countries and achieving a better integration of their economies.

During the last eight years, our research activities expanded to cover additional areas of the OIC Plan of Action to Enhance Commercial and Economic Cooperation among its Member Countries, such as Telecommunications, Tourism, Environment etc, to identify the capacities and needs of the OIC community in those areas, and others, and delineate workable schemes for cooperation and joint ventures. Our technical contribution to the relevant OIC meetings and conferences has also been increasingly solicited to provide background papers and analytical reports on a wide range of subjects with a view to help the decision-makers, at the community level, come out with clear-sighted strategies and well-targeted actions for intra-OIC cooperation.

Our activities in the area of information and statistics witnessed major developments too. The number of our statistical publications increased by three fold. Their coverage and scale of circulation greatly enlarged especially due to the successive improvements we made on the technical capacities and design features of our web site. The SESRTCIC has been a leading OIC organ in electronic publishing and the first to operate a full-fledged electronic library.

SESRTCIC's contribution to capacity building and improvement of human capital in the OIC community has been intensive and diversified. The number of training workshops, seminars and experts meetings we organised during the last eight years reached 36 and benefited to 765 staff from various departments and ministries in our member countries. The subject matters of our activities in this area ranged from the prevention of land degradation and the use of saline water in

agriculture to business incubators and migration statistics.

All the above-mentioned achievements and the many others we realised during the past eight years were obviously well received and highly valued by our member countries. One aspect, and certainly not the least, of that support was their stronger commitment to pay their contributions to our annual budgets and their high responsiveness to clear their outstanding arrears. We consequently recorded unprecedented rates of budget realisation and our finances are today healthier than they have ever been before. The OIC Finance Control Organ has constantly commended the transparency of our financial management. I would like here to convey my appreciation to our member countries for their interest and encouragement and express the wish that the SESRTCIC will continue to serve them at the same level of professionalism and with the same spirit of dedication to the noble objectives it was created for.

I would not finish this message without expressing also my thanks to their Excellencies the OIC Secretaries General, Azzedine Laraki, Abdelouahed Belkeziz and Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu for their kind support and valuable cooperation and understanding that greatly contributed to the success of my tenure. I thank my colleagues the heads of the other subsidiary organs for their fruitful collaboration and highly value the activities we have jointly undertaken in fulfillment of the OIC objectives. I should also express my gratitude to the members of our Board of Directors for the wise guidance and far-sighted advices they offered us during their last three terms. My heartfelt thanks and appreciation go as well to the staff members with whom I have been working during the last eight years and to whom primarily we owe the brilliant achievements we realised.”

RELIABLE PRICE INDICES FOR SOUND ECONOMIC PLANNING

The SESRTCIC organized in Ankara on 20-22 February 2006 a Training Workshop on "Price Statistics and Indices". The event was held in collaboration with the Turkish Statistical Institution (TURKSTAT), the Islamic Research and Training Institute (IRTI) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It was attended by 22 participants from 11 member countries, namely Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Tunisia, Turkey and Yemen.

At the inaugural session, Mr. Jalel Chouchane, Assistant Director General, briefed the participants on the mandate of the SESRTCIC, as a subsidiary organ of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, and stressed the high priority it gives within its annual work programmes to capacity building in the OIC countries particularly in the fields of statistics and economics.

Mr. Chouchane also highlighted the importance of reliable price indices to sound economic analysis and planning and expressed the wish that the participants would fully benefit from the opportunity that SESRTCIC was offering them to develop their capacities in this regard.

The objective of the workshop was in fact to make the participants better acquainted with the principles and practices of price index number construction and upgrade their skills to produce meaningful consumer and producer price indices in their countries. The deliberations were based on the internationally accepted standards and guidelines as promulgated in the *Consumer Price Index Manual* (2004), the *Producer Price Index Manual* (2004) and the *1993 System of National Accounts*. They were also enriched by the relevant presentations made by the participants on the actual practices and future programmes in their respective countries.

OIC NEWS

A ROAD MAP FOR THE OIC

The Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held in December 2005 adopted an OIC Ten-year Programme of Action to Meet the Challenges Facing the Muslim Ummah in the 21st Century. To determine the most effective ways of implementing the various chapters of the said Programme of Action and ensure a coordinated contribution thereto of all its concerned institutions, the OIC General Secretariat called a coordination meeting of its subsidiary,

affiliated and specialised organs and standing committees to deliberate on the practical modalities of implementing the Programme of Action.

The meeting convened in the OIC headquarters in Jeddah on 5 March 2006 where all concerned OIC organs presented their views and put forward their propositions as to their respective contribution to the actual achievement of the objectives targeted by the Programme of Action.

After detailed deliberations and enriching exchange of views in two separate committees, the meeting adopted a Road Map which assigned to each organ specific projects to be carried out individually or in cooperation with other organs. The following tasks have been assigned to the SESRTCIC:

- Reviewing the existing economic cooperation agreements and statutes and reporting thereon to the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC).
- Undertaking the necessary study on the possibility of establishing a Free Trade Area between the Member States.
- Creating and maintaining a special database on environmental indicators and a roster of environmental experts in the OIC Member States.
- Undertaking the necessary studies for working out a special development programme for Africa.
- Developing a special poverty index for the OIC Member States.
- Publishing rosters of Muslim experts and directories of universities and research institutions in the OIC Member States with a view to encouraging and facilitating the full utilization of the human resources and institutional capacities available to the OIC communities.
- Creating a special database of the main indicators on education and education-related fields in the Member States.
- Undertaking studies on the state of literacy, education services and employment of university graduates in the OIC Member States with a view to identifying the problems and shortcomings and exploring the possible areas of intra-OIC cooperation.
- Creating a statistical database on women, youth, children and family in the OIC Member States to provide the decision makers with accurate and timely information that would enlighten them on the appropriate actions to be taken for the promotion and protection of those vulnerable segments of the society.
- Undertake research studies on women's rights in the OIC Member States with particular emphasis on education, employment and participation in the social and political life.

OIC COMMITS TO PROVIDING MORE SUPPORT TO ITS LDCs

The Third UN Conference on the least-developed countries (LDCs), held in Brussels in May 2001, adopted an ambitious programme of action that addressed, among others, development assistance, debt cancellation and private investment in the 50 least developed countries (LDCs). Within this framework, the OIC General Secretariat

convened in Jeddah on 6-7 March 2006 a meeting of intergovernmental group of experts to consider the ways and means of implementing the various objectives targeted by the said programme of action with respect to its least-developed members. Twenty-two of the world's 50 least-developed countries are OIC members.

The meeting was attended by representatives of 33 OIC member countries, the General Secretariat and its relevant subsidiary, specialised and affiliated institutions as well as by the COMCEC Coordination Office. Messrs. Jalel Chouchane, Assistant Director General, and Nabil Dabour, Director of Economic and Social Research Department, represented the SESRTCIC thereat.

The Centre contributed to the meeting its two major working papers. In the first, it presented, in figures and detailed analysis, the economic situation of the least-developed and land-locked OIC countries. In the second, it put forward some recommendations for intra-OIC cooperation in implementing the programme of action in favour of the LDCs and proposed the most appropriate ways

and means of implementing the said programme of action.

After the general debate, the delegates praised the special programmes adopted by some OIC member countries to help alleviate poverty in the least-developed members. They also paid tribute to Malaysia for initiating a capacity building programme for poverty alleviation in the low-income and least-developed OIC member states, and to the Republic of Turkey for initiating a programme named "African Development Strategy (ADS)" which aims at contributing to the development of African member countries, improving their living standards and reducing poverty of their populations. They also discussed the draft recommendations proposed by the SESRTCIC and other OIC institutions and adopted them for submission to the higher concerned fora .

CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE SECOND SEMESTER OF 2006

MAY

9-11 May 2006, Twenty-ninth Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

13-15 May 2006, Thirty-fourth Session of the Permanent Finance Committee, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

23-25 May 2006, Twenty-second Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC, Istanbul, Turkey.

JUNE

19-21 June 2006, Thirty-third Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, Baku, Azerbaijan.

ANKARA CENTRE PUBLICATIONS

Latest Publications

InfoReport, vol. 18 nos: 64 and 65, (Arabic, English and French editions).

Journal of Economic Cooperation Among Islamic Countries, English, vol. 27 nos: 1 and 2.

WHAT'S NEW IN THE CENTRE LIBRARY

For a complete listing of the Library Acquisitions visit our e-library at:
<http://www.library.sesrtcic.org>

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**WORLD BANK POLICY RESEARCH
WORKING PAPERS (PRWP)
November 2005-February 2006**

PRWP; 3771 / Kristensen, N. and Verner, D. (Nov.). *Labor market distortions in Côte d'Ivoire: Analyses of employer-employee data from the manufacturing sector.*

PRWP; 3776 / Dasgupta, S., Meisner, C. and Huq, M. (Nov.). *Health effects and pesticide perception as determinants of pesticide use: Evidence from Bangladesh.*

PRWP; 3777 / Dasgupta, S., Meisner, C. and Mamingi, N. (Nov.). *Pesticide traders' perception of health risks: Evidence from Bangladesh.*

PRWP; 3793 / Baschieri, A., Falkingham, J., Hornby, D. and Hutton, C. (Dec.). *Creating a poverty map for Azerbaijan.*

PRWP; 3794 / Filmer, D. (Dec.). *Disability, poverty, and schooling in Developing countries: Results from 11 household surveys.*

PRWP; 3798 / Bigsten, A. and Söderbom, M. (Dec.). *What have we learned from a decade of manufacturing enterprise surveys in Africa?*

PRWP; 3804 / Agénor, P.R., Jensen, H.T., Verghis, M. and Yeldan, E. (Jan.). *Disinflation, fiscal sustainability, and labor market adjustment in Turkey.*

PRWP; 3808 / Hurlin, C. (Jan.). *Network effects of the productivity of infrastructure in Developing countries.*

PRWP; 3826 / Jacoby, H.G. and Mansurir, G. (Feb.). *Incomplete contracts and investment: A study of land tenancy in Pakistan.*

PRWP; 3829 / Bogetic, Ž. And Fedderke, J.W. (Feb.). *Forecasting investment needs in South Africa's electricity and telecommunications sectors.*

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