



**Statement of DG of SESRIC at the
Workshop on the Comprehensive Refugee Response
Framework**

(Presentation of the Report on Humanitarian Crises)

29-30 April 2018, Dead Sea, Jordan

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



**Distinguished Participants,
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,**

It is a great pleasure for me to address this important gathering and distinguished audience at this event. At the outset, I would like to extend my thanks to the OIC General Secretariat and UNHCR for their leadership in organizing this Workshop.



It is very unfortunate that a significant number of OIC countries have been affected by tragic humanitarian crises over the last decade.

While armed conflicts and natural disasters have been the main drivers of the surge in the number of humanitarian crises, these crises are usually more sophisticated than they appear. The different drivers of humanitarian crisis are also not independent from each other.



Fragility, poverty, conflict, governance, economic decline, displacement, natural disasters and human rights violations can be causes as well as consequences of one another. One element may increase the vulnerability to others and prevent people from building resilience to cope with shocks.

With a view to improving our understanding on the drivers and impacts of humanitarian crises and providing a short account of current humanitarian crises observed in OIC countries, SESRIC prepared a background report on this subject and published last year.



According to the report, 60% conflicts recorded worldwide in 2015 occurred in OIC countries. While trend in the number of conflicts is upward, quite a number of OIC countries are facing political and economic instabilities.

Increasing number of natural hazards, their impacts and the extent of epidemics are also among the major factors that put forth the urgent need for reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience. Natural disasters and conflicts can also substantially destroy assets and productive capacities of an economy.



Moreover, while such crises are highly associated with increasing number of human rights violations, a direct outcome is usually a surge in migration and forced displacement. Today OIC countries account for more than 60% of all displaced population in the world with more than 25 million displaced people.

On the other hand, the levels of exposure, vulnerability and coping capacity of OIC countries to various disasters and conflicts are quite heterogeneous.



While some countries are quite advance in managing risks associated with potential humanitarian crises, others require substantial improvement in capacities to reduce vulnerabilities and cope with the risks. This in turn creates an opportunity for intra-OIC cooperation in building collective.

Moreover, according to global indicators, OIC countries are not performing well in terms of good governance and inclusive development.



Lack of good governance and unequal distribution of wealth are just two examples reflecting the potential sources of dissatisfaction and frustration that are observed during the early stages of civil uprisings.

Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Despite the complicated nature of crises and challenges faced in formulation of effective intervention policies, there are always opportunities for peace, stability and resilient recovery.



However, these opportunities require again good governance, strong state institutions and international cooperation. There is a special need for strengthening institutions through cooperation and collaboration at OIC and international level.

In this context, recognizing the multifaceted nature of the crises and the urgent need for strengthening resilience in OIC countries, there is a need for a broader and longer-term perspective in achieving both lasting peace as well as



sustainable development in a rapidly changing development environment.

In our opinion, there are **five critical elements** for reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience in OIC countries from a long term perspective.

First one is promotion of inclusive societies and inclusive development through good governance. Institutional quality is



critical for effective governance, which is however relatively poor in OIC countries.

There is a need for developing and implementing inclusive development programmes and policies managed by strong national and local institutions, which target most vulnerable and marginalized people, ensure that everyone is involved in decision making process and allow for closely monitoring whether the policy choices are implemented.



Second critical factor is strengthening social capital, mediation and partnership. Vulnerability of OIC countries to conflicts is relatively high.

Weak social capital can be considered among the causes of conflicts and potential humanitarian crises. Promoting peace and dialogue along with functioning institutions and rule of law can contribute to strengthening social capital and prevent any potential conflict.



Third important factor in reducing vulnerabilities and building resilience in OIC countries is investment in human capital and facilitating social mobility.

Health, education and skills development are three critical areas where investment in human capital can make real difference in strengthening the resilience of people, reducing the likelihood of a crisis and recovering from a crisis situation.



However, OIC countries are lacking behind the world averages in all these indicators, reflecting their vulnerability to crises.

In this connection, there is a need to develop strategies and programmes to improve health and educational outcomes and capabilities of people in technical and practical knowledge.

Moreover, targeted policies should be developed to specifically address the needs of youth and women and to expand the



access to education in conflict-affected areas to reach out those with no access to education.

The **fourth one** is intensifying the disaster risk reduction and management practices. The geographic, social, economic and political diversity of OIC member countries make them susceptible to variety of natural hazards as well as man-made crises. In order to minimize human and development losses due to disasters, OIC member countries need to follow a holistic



approach involving disaster mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery.

Finally, it is critical to mobilize innovative financing mechanisms for humanitarian assistance and development. There is a significant resource shortfall in humanitarian assistance and the funding gaps are expanding over the years.

While alternative financing mechanisms can be explored in different contexts, Islamic Social Finance offers significant opportunities in the humanitarian sector.



As an innovative financing mechanism and under-explored opportunity, it can provide a sustainable solution to reducing the humanitarian funding gaps.

These five elements that I mentioned above require **long term commitment** and perspective for effective implementation. Investing in systems and capacities to reduce vulnerabilities will probably take years or decades.



However, there is a **need for immediate action**. The current humanitarian crises in OIC countries require more serious involvement with affected people to prevent further aggravation and escalation of current situations in these countries.

Therefore, an accelerated action plan is needed that focuses on primarily what is important only in addressing the root causes, with clear commitments and crucial measurable goals, although the sets of proposed actions have a longer term perspective.



It is evident that current international system is not effective in managing humanitarian crises, particularly the protracted ones. This fact underlines the need for a paradigm shift in humanitarian action and development cooperation policies.

These facts should be kept in mind while developing the global compact on refugees. Millions of refugees around the world today have no access to timely and durable solutions.



Given the immense increase in the number of refugees over the last years, it is important to seriously take account of the rights, specific needs, contributions and voices of refugees for immediate and durable solutions.



Distinguished Participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

At the end, I would like to express my thanks to all participants for dedicating time for this important meeting which is held at a time of great challenges to many OIC countries.

I wish all of us success in our deliberations, and thank you for your kind attention.