

9th SESSION OF OIC STATISTICAL COMMISSION (OIC-StatCom)

28 September - 01 October 2020, Ankara-Republic of Turkey

Opening Speech of H.E. Mr. Nebil DABUR Director General of SESRIC

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Delegates of the NSOs of OIC Member Countries,
Distinguished Representatives of the OIC General Secretariat,
Islamic Development Bank, Regional and International Institutions,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

السَّلَامُ عَلَیْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللّٰهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ

I wish you all a very Good Day

- It is a great pleasure for me today to address your august Commission, the OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-StatCom), at its 9th Session in my capacity as the Director General of SESRIC, the Secretariat of this important and the only cooperation forum at the OIC level in the field of statistics.
- I welcome you all to this Session, which is for the first time to be organized virtually online due to the continuous breakout of COVID-19 pandemic. I would like to thank all the members and the representatives of international organisations for accepting our invitation and allocating part of their valuable time to attend and participate virtually. I hope the pandemic will be over soon and we meet physically in the next Session at our Headquarters in Ankara as usual Insha'Allah.

- My thanks and appreciation are also extended to our strategic partner in organizing the annual sessions of the Commission, the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB), for their continuous support to the organization of this important forum.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- The breakout of COVID-19 pandemic poses an unprecedented global health and humanitarian crisis with large-scale societal and economic disruptions. The public health and safety measures taken by the governments to contain the pandemic have pushed the global economy into one of the worst recessions since the Great Depression of 1929.
- Being a substantial part of the developing world, the OIC member countries are also experiencing dramatic negative impacts of the pandemic on their economies especially due to the severe disruptions in the global supply chains, historic fall in oil prices and turmoil in their financial markets.
- Our recent research at SESRIC on the socio-economic impact of the Pandemic in our member countries shows that the economies of the OIC member countries are expected to shrink by -2% this year compared to the previously estimated positive growth rate of 3.7%. The number of unemployed people this year is also projected to increase from its previously estimated level of 47.7 million to 55 million.
- It is during these difficult times that the importance and the need for reliable statistics become clearly notable more than ever before. The accurate analysis of the situation and formulation of prompt and prudent policies based on reliable statistics and data have been rarely

as evident as in the course of such crises. In such state of affairs, the 'official statistics' are required to adapt quickly to the fast-changing circumstances, where the NSOs are requested to go beyond the production of traditional statistics to many new statistics even from non-traditional data sources.

- The NSOs should play crucial and indispensable role particularly in producing timely and reliable data to support the plans and initiatives of the governments in addressing the socio-economic challenges of the pandemic, especially in complex decision-making processes in such unprecedented times.
- In this context, the results of a recent global online survey by the UNSD and the World Bank indicated that the NSOs in low- and lower-middle income countries showed insufficient coordination of national statistical systems in response to COVID-19 pandemic. The results also showed that these NSOs are in urgent need of sound technological infrastructures and digitization to pave the way for a prompt and effective conversion to remote operations. This shows that the NSOs in many of our member countries are indeed in a need for urgent additional financial support to overcome these challenges.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- In an attempt to respond to this extraordinary situation, we at SESRIC have early decided and already started to conduct many of our activities, particularly our training and capacity building activities, virtually online instead of postponing them to other dates.
- In this context, I would like to make use of this opportunity to say that we would very much appreciate if our NSOs could support us and cooperate with us in implementing these virtual training activities in these challenging times.

- As you know, we plan our training activities based on the responses of our NSOs to our questionnaire while considering as much as possible of the equitable geographical distribution among the members. Therefore, I would like to urge the NSOs, that have not done so, to respond to our StatCaB Questionnaire for better planning and organisation of our future training activities.
- We will be reviewing and planning our statistical capacity building activities for the next year 2021 based on the developments regarding the pandemic. Nevertheless, we plan to keep virtual training courses in our modalities in the future, after the pandemic as well.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- As you may recall, in an attempt to improve our work in this important forum, we have introduced and adopted last year during the 8th Session a new approach for both the rules of procedures and the agenda of this Commission with a view to aligning the Commission's rules of procedures with those of other official OIC fora.
- Accordingly, the Commission decided to hold its Annual Main Sessions regularly in the 1st week of October and its Follow-Up Meetings on the margins of UN Statistical Commission in the 1st week of March each year. This year, we organised the Follow-Up Meeting of OIC-StatCom on 5th March on the margins of the 51st Session of UN Statistical Commission in New York with the participation of the representatives of the NSOs of the member countries and international organisations.

- At our Follow-up Meeting in New York, we briefed the participants about the progress of the resolutions of the 8th Session of OIC-StatCom and received your feedback on the composition of the bureau members, draft agenda items, date and venue of this Session; the 9th Session. At the end of the follow-up Meeting, we also organized a session with CDC, and CDC-Foundation where we discussed the Tobacco Questions for Surveys (TQS) and TQS-Youth Module.
- In this connection, I would like to congratulate the agreed on elected members of the Bureau of the 9th Session of the OIC-StatCom, Gambia as Chair from the African Group of the OIC, Morocco and Uzbekistan as Vice-Chairs, and in line with the Rules of Procedure, State of Palestine as permanent Vice Chairman. In its capacity as the Secretariat, SESRIC as the Rapporteur and together with the IsDB Group as permanent ex-officio members.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- According to the proposed draft agenda items of the 9th Session of the OIC-StatCom, the today's session will cover the Report of the OIC-StatCom Secretariat on the Implementation of the Resolutions of last Session and Adoption of the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision for 2030 and the Programme of Action 2021-2025 that has been finalised by the Secretariat.
- Based on the feedback that we received from the NSOs on our Note Verbale that we have circulated to all NSOs at the beginning of this year and the feedback we received during the Follow-Up Meeting in March in New York, the 9th Session will also cover the following technical topics:

- (i) Generating SDGs Indicators from Population, Housing, and Agriculture Census Data;
- (ii) Emerging Approaches for Strengthening Capacities of National Statistical Systems;
- (iii) Utilisation of Non-Traditional Data Sources in Official Statistics; and
- (iv) Monitoring and Reporting SDG #1 (No Poverty) Indicators.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- Before concluding, I would like to remind that the Third World Statistics Day will be celebrated on 20th October 2020 with the motto “Connecting the world with data we can trust”. This motto reiterates the fact that the quality and soundness of data in national statistical systems is of utmost importance. It also motivates us to increase collaboration among Members of the Commission and other regional and international statistics actors and partners.
- I would like to thank you all once again and wish you all the success in your deliberations. I am confident that the deliberations and recommendations that you will make during this Session will be instrumental in improving our work and better targeting our activities and programs.

Thank you all. والسلام عليكم ورحمة الله وبركاته.