

Training Programme for Agricultural Extension Experts in OIC Member States

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OPENING SPEECH

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Distinguished Representatives Ministries of Agriculture of OIC Member Countries, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,

At the outset, I would like to welcome and thank you all for accepting our invitation and designating these three days from your valuable time to participate in this important training programme. Our thanks and appreciations are also extended to the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) Group and Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for their support and contribution to the organisation of this unique event. I am pleased to note that 32 agricultural extension experts representing 18 OIC Member Countries from different regions are together here today to share and exchange their experiences, practices and knowledge on one of the most significant issues of our Member Countries.

Before I go into the aim and expected outcome of this meeting, I would like to make use of this unique opportunity to dwell, very briefly, on our Centre and its main activities. The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) is a subsidiary organ of the OIC operating in Ankara, Turkey, since 1978 as the economic research arm, statistics centre and training organ of the OIC. The Centre has been engaged in statistical data collection, collation and dissemination on and for the member countries, undertaking the preparation of research papers, reports and studies on various economic cooperation and development issues, organising of training programmes on subjects of immediate interest to the member countries, triggering technical cooperation among

various partners from member countries, and putting out periodic and other publications in its areas of mandate.

SESRIC's Vocational Education and Training Programme for OIC Member Countries (abbreviated OIC-VET) launched in 2008, aims to improve the quality of vocational education and training in the public and private sectors with the aim of supporting and enhancing the opportunities for individuals in the Member Countries to develop their knowledge and skills and thus to contribute to the development and competitiveness of the economies and to facilitate the sharing of knowledge between OIC Member Countries. Under OIC-VET, SESRIC has 15 Capacity Building Programmes (CaB) in the field of statistics, agriculture, environment, health, economy, information and communication, poverty alleviation and several initiatives in the field of tobacco, skill development and e-government. Since its inception in 2008, we initiated programmes and projects in the fields of immediate interest of OIC Member Countries.

In this connection, I would like to inform you that since November 2007, our Centre has been preparing short outlook reports on various socio-economic development topics related to the OIC Member States. Using the Centre's main database "BASEIND", these reports present statistical information and analytical investigations on the topics under consideration, enriched with figures and tables. The topics of these reports include, among others, demography and structure of population, size and structure of the economy, saving and investment, structure and direction of trade, labour productivity, health, tourism, gender, food security, etc. So far several OIC Outlook reports on various topics have been prepared and published in the Centre's website. Among these reports, we have five reports related to the agricultural development in OIC Member Countries. These reports are Agricultural Productivity in OIC Member Countries, Water Resources and Their Use in Agriculture in the OIC Member Countries, Water Resources and Water Related Issues in OIC Member Countries, Climate Change: Impacts on Agriculture in OIC Member Countries and Agro-Industry in the OIC Member Countries: An Overview of Potentials.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Agricultural extension is defined as the application of scientific research and new knowledge in agricultural practices through education of farmers. Training and knowledge sharing

provided under the agriculture extension programs help the farmers to optimise their output by using their resources in a more efficiently and sustainable manner. These new techniques and practices are usually developed by agriculture extension workers - trainers/experts who act as bridge between the researchers/scientists and farmers- by combing theory with practice.

OIC member states differ greatly with respect to development and application of agricultural extension programmes. Some member states have more efficient and effective programs compared to others which underlines the need for OIC wide cooperation to share best practices and transfer knowledge on agricultural extension. Based on the feedbacks to relevant questionnaires circulated among OIC Member Countries such as OIC Agricultural Capacity Building Programme (OIC-AgriCaB) Questionnaire, SESRIC recognized the potential need in this area and identified related trainers and institutions in OIC Member Countries to provide them trainings in agricultural extension. In this regard, SESRIC has started an initiative under its OIC Agricultural Capacity Building Programme to organise training program for agricultural extension experts.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

While agriculture is widely known to be a primary economic activity and is assumed to play a major role in the economies of most developing countries, this feature does not stand firm in the case of many OIC countries as well as in the case of OIC countries as a group. On average, the share of agriculture in the total GDP of the OIC countries amounted to only 11.5% in 2007, gradually declining from 17.6% in 1990. In fact, in many OIC countries, agriculture has been slightly replacing over time by services and, to a lesser extent, by industry. This is due to a combination of policy, structural, climatic and geographical factors.

These factors include economic transformation and structural diversification efforts in some countries, the increasing migration of agriculture labour force from rural to urban areas seeking higher wages in other sectors, mainly in the services sector, inadequate agricultural investment and infrastructure, low level of agricultural machinery and technology utilization, the fluctuations in world agricultural commodity prices and trade difficulties that many of these countries are still facing in the international commodity markets, and the scarcity of water resources in many OIC countries, which are located in arid and semi-arid sub-regions of West Asia and North-eastern Africa.

However, employing 37.4% of the total population of the OIC countries in 2008, agriculture is still considered as an important economic activity with high potential to play a significant role in the economic development of many OIC countries. This is particularly true for the 22 OIC least-developed countries (OIC-LDCs), where the agriculture sector accounts, on average, for 25% of their total GDP in 2008, and reaches more than 30% of the GDP in half of them. Moreover, 18 OIC member countries from different climatic regions figure among the top 20 producers of major agricultural commodities worldwide.

These commodities vary from cereals such as wheat, rice and maize to tropical/temperate zone commodities such as cocoa, coffee, rubber and sugar. In this respect, the development of a modern agriculture sector in these countries would, therefore, help reduce poverty, secure food sufficiency, provide additional job opportunities for millions, and promote other sectors in the economy that are related to agricultural production.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Agricultural Activities of SESRIC

Food and Life Safety Support Programme in Nouakchott, Mauritania

SESRIC and the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), under the patronage of Turkish Embassy of Nouakchott, jointly organised “Food and Life Safety Support Programme” in Nouakchott, Mauritania, on 5-10 May 2012, within the framework of the OIC Agricultural Capacity Building Programme (OIC-AgriCaB). The trainings were provided by academicians from various universities of Turkey. 33 veterinary surgeons, food engineers, medical and private sector staff from food sector attended this programme. The aim of the programme was to enhance the capacities in producing red meat, fish and other food in compliance with international level of standards.

Training Course on Crop Cultivation: Cultivation of Arable Crops

The Centre organised training on “Crop Cultivation: Cultivation of Arable Crops” at the Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation of Republic of the Sudan, on 29-31 January 2013. The course was provided by Dr Abbas Ajeel Mohammed, an expert from Ministry of Agriculture of Iraq, and was attended by approximately 25 scientists, farmers, and officers.

Training Course on ‘Land Management: Soil Analysis and Mapping’ in Lebanon

The Centre organised training on “Land Management: Soil Analysis and Mapping” at Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture, on 4-6 February 2013. The course was provided by Ms Fatinah Rashid Abdulteef, an expert from Ministry of Agriculture of Iraq, and was attended by Mohamad Abou Daher, Head of Agriculture Education and Training Department of Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture, scientists, agriculturists, and officers.

Current Status and Future Perspectives of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Somalia

SESRIC organised, in collaboration with Aegean International Federation of Health (ESAFED) and Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (TIKA), a workshop on “Current Status and Future Perspectives of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries in Somalia” on 2-4 February 2013 in Mogadishu, Federal Republic of Somalia.

COTTON

OIC Cotton Training Programme (OIC-CTP) has been developed by SESRIC within the framework of the implementation of the OIC 5-Year Action Plan on Cotton to organise short and long term training courses in close collaboration with the Centres of Excellence specialised in cotton research and training in OIC Member Countries in 2011.

- **Within the framework of the implementation of the OIC 5-Year Action Plan on Cotton**
- **13 Training Programmes in 9 OIC Member Countries since 2011**

Participating Countries:

Uganda, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Senegal, Sudan, Mali, Mozambique, Turkey, Nigeria, Togo, Egypt, Pakistan

IMPLEMENTED

- Training Course on “Agronomy: Crop Management and Rotation” in **Mozambique** on **14-18 January 2013.**
- Training Course on ‘Agronomy: Soil Tillage’ in **Uganda** on **15-17 January 2013.**

- Training Course on “Fiber Technology: Lint Quality” in Koutiala, **Mali** on **15-17 October 2012**.
- Training Course on “Plant Protection: Diseases and Insects” in Wad Medani, **Sudan** on **27-29 August 2012**.
- Training Course on “Agronomy: Fertilization” in Kampala, **Uganda** on **11-13 June 2012**.
- Training Course on “Cotton Diseases and Control” in Gence, **Azerbaijan** on **11-13 June 2012**.
- Training Course on “Breeding and Biotechnology: Hybridization” in Dhaka, **Bangladesh** on **15-17 November 2011**.
- Training Course on “Plant Protection: Insects” in Kolda, **Senegal** on **15-17 November 2011**.
- Training Course on “Quality Improvement: Seed Quality and Preparation” in Astana, **Kazakhstan** on **28-30 September 2011**.

PLANNED

- Training Course on “Plant Protection: Diseases” in **Pakistan** on **15-17 May 2013**.
- Training Programme on “Fiber Technology: Contamination” in **Togo** in **the third quarter of 2013**.
- Training Course on “Agronomy: Irrigation” in **Yemen** in **the third quarter of 2013**.
- Training Course on ‘Quality Improvement: Seed quality and preparation’ in **Azerbaijan** in **the last quarter of 2013**.
- Training Course on ‘Agronomy: Crop Management’ in **Bangladesh** in **June 2013**.
- Training Programme on «**Development of Cotton Production and Technology in Afghanistan**» in **Turkey**, in **June 2013**.
- Training Course on ‘Fiber Technology and Contamination’ in **Egypt** in **September 2013**.

SESRIC will submit the Report on STATE OF AGRICULTURE AND FOOD IN OIC MEMBER COUNTRIES: OPPORTUNITIES FOR COOPERATION to the seventh OIC Ministerial Conference on Food Security and Agricultural Development in Dakar, Senegal. The report includes several topics including:

1. **Agriculture sector: resources and potential**
2. **Agriculture production and trade**
3. **Impacts of climate change on agriculture**
4. **Agriculture development: major obstacles and challenges**
5. **Agro food industry**
6. **State of food security**

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

SESRIC, with its vast experience in initiating cooperation and collaboration, will support cooperation in agriculture especially through its capacity building and training programmes, model transfers, study visits and workshops and will also coordinate agricultural research centres and Ministries of agriculture in regard with the implementation of the outcomes of this meeting.

Given this state of affairs, I am confident that the deliberations you will hold and the recommendations and proposals you will provide us will be highly instrumental in improving our work and better targeting our objectives in this training programme. I wish you most fruitful and successful meeting and deliberations.

May Allah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) bestow his mercy on the undertakings of this meeting.

Wassalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu