

**THE THIRD SESSION OF OIC-STATCOM
10–12 April 2013, Ankara – Turkey**

REMARKS AT THE OPENING CEREMONY

ON BEHALF OF DELEGATES FROM AFRICA

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Thank you very much Mr Chairman, Representatives of COMCEC, OIC, SESRIC, International and Regional Agencies, and Distinguished Delegates.

I speak on behalf of the over 20 other Distinguished Delegates from Africa, unfortunately without their election!! We are all very happy to have been invited to participate in the Third session of the OIC-STATCOM Statistical Commission.

I start with thanking the organisers for the funding plus the excellent arrangements to bring us all here. We look forward to very fruitful deliberations. The Agenda includes very useful and important topics, including labour statistics. This has been very weak in many of our countries, especially in Africa. The situation has been made worse by the global economic slow-down which has rendered many youth un-employed. So, any improvements in data availability becomes even more important. Secondly, the discussion of the movement from MGDs to SDGs is also timely as there were many issues with the MDG indicators. We need to be more pro-active this time around. Thirdly, “Open Data” is very useful as currently a lot of time is spent answering to data requirements from various users – both international and national. However, a number of issues need to be cleared. There will be sharing of experiences between countries on these and other topics.

I would also like to use the opportunity to thank the OIC, SESRIC and IDB for all the support to our countries in statistical development. I urge colleagues to ensure that they use all the available technical assistance and exchanges between our countries. In the same breath, I congratulate SESRIC for having obtained a permanent home. Where I come from, there is a saying to the effect that when a BOY builds his own house, then HE is NO longer a child! We salute those countries that funded the building project.

Finally, we thank the government and people of Turkey for hosting us in the great City of Ankara. We all look forward to seeing other parts of the country as part of the social programme on Friday, morning.

I thank you all very much and wish you good deliberations.