

## **Fourth Session of OIC Statistical Commission**

**21-23 April 2014, Ankara – Turkey**

### **WELCOME SPEECH**

**Prof. Savaş Alpay, Director General, SESRIC**

*Bismillāhirrahmānir-raḥīm,*

*Distinguished Representatives of the National Statistical Offices of OIC Member Countries, OIC Institutions and International Organisations,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

*Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,*

It is a great honour for me to welcome you all to the Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom and to have the opportunity to address this august body gathered here at SESRIC. Since 2011, OIC-StatCom has become a dynamic platform for the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the OIC Member Countries to share and exchange knowledge, experiences and best practices on initiatives that can help them become more effective in managing their national statistical systems. Drawing an ever increasing attention of national and international statistical community, this year, we have representatives from 40 OIC Member Countries and 10 international organisations (AITRS, CDC, COMCEC, IDB, ICDT, WHO, OPHI, SESRIC, UNESCWA, UNSD). In this regard, I also would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) for their kind and continuous support in the organisation of the OIC-StatCom.

*Distinguished participants,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

As you are aware, the agenda of the OIC-StatCom traditionally consists of three main parts: Implemented Activities, Thematic Sessions and Open Discussion.

The Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom will begin with reviewing the works and activities undertaken in the past year. Regarding the tasks assigned under the Executive Work Plan, my colleagues will inform you about the outcomes of the Statistical Capacity Building (STATCAB) Questionnaire which was revised to incorporate development priorities for biennium 2014-2015, the OIC-StatCom Forum that has been recently initiated and the implementation plan for the first phase of the OIC Certification and Accreditation Programme

for Statisticians. In terms of Follow-up Reports and Activities, you will be briefed about “*Outcomes of the Training Programme on “Statistical Database Design and Visualization Tools Development”*” that was held on 11-12 December 2013, “*Results of the Survey on the UN Minimum Set of Gender Indicators*” and “*Outcomes of the Expert Group Meeting on the Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics*” organized by SESRIC with the support of the IDB on 25 – 26 March 2014 at SESRIC Headquarters.

As approved in the Meeting of the Delegates of the NSOs of the OIC Member Countries held in the margins of the Forty-Fifth Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission on 6 March 2014, we will have five thematic sessions which are on **Poverty, Health and Tourism Statistics, Post-2015 Development Agenda and Implications for NSOs, Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information**. I do believe that we will benefit a lot from presentations of international organisations and valuable experiences of Member Countries. The Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom will conclude with an Open Discussion in which all the participants will have the opportunity to exchange views on the outcomes.

*Distinguished participants,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The main aim the first thematic session titled “**Enhancing National Capacities in Poverty Statistics**” is to come up with ideas in order to formulate strategies for strengthening capacities in the compilation, production and dissemination of poverty statistics, and ultimately, to contribute to the National Statistical Systems (NSS) of the OIC countries in terms of poverty alleviation, monitoring poverty and aid effectiveness.

As SESRIC, my colleagues will brief you about the details of a poverty project we have initiated recently. I am very pleased to announce that, out of 100 competing projects, two projects of SESRIC related to poverty and tourism statistics have been listed among the final 15 projects that are entitled to receive grants under the new COMCEC strategy.

After SESRIC, Oxford Poverty & Human Development Initiative (OPHI) will enlighten us about the multidimensional perspective for measuring poverty. Taking this opportunity, I specifically would like to thank Dr. Sabina Alkire, Director of OPHI, for the tremendous efforts they exerted towards measuring poverty. Four of our member countries, Indonesia, Senegal, Turkey and Yemen, will also share their country experiences in poverty statistics. But as always the floor will be open to all of our participants during the Q&A at the end of each session.

The last session today will be related to **Post-2015 Development Agenda and Implications for NSOs**. Although statistics may not play a direct role, the complex process of development

activities cannot be thought without this essential component. Many developing countries have statistical systems and mechanisms where ‘*measuring for results*’ is still in its infancy period and has a wide room for improvement. Today, it is a well-known fact that the measurement of progress in terms of reaching objectives set for the development of countries can only be achieved through reliable and good quality statistics as they inform decision makers about the effectiveness of policies and programmes.

During this session, we will have the opportunity to discuss how NSOs should take part in forming and overseeing the post-2015 development agenda at the national, OIC, and international level. So far, the achievement of countries in reaching the MDGs has been uneven. As the future development agenda will build on the lessons learned from working towards achieving the MDGs, on-going discussions and mechanisms in this area are quite critical. To this end, Dr. Abdullateef Bello will share one of his studies on the post-2015 development agenda. UNESCWA and Egypt will also share their experiences at the regional and country levels, respectively.

Tomorrow, the Fourth Session of OIC-StatCom will continue with three thematic sessions titled “**Towards a More Comprehensive System of Health Statistics and Global Tobacco Surveillance System**”, “**Integration of Statistical and Geospatial Information**” and “**Improving Statistical Capacities in Tourism Sector**”.

Our colleagues from WHO will give information about what can be done to achieve a more comprehensive system of health statistics at the global level while TurkStat will share the current practice in the field of health statistics in Turkey. Following these presentations, representatives of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will inform us in detail about the **Global Tobacco Surveillance System**. Bangladesh will also take the floor to share the process undertaken by Bangladesh in terms of Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS).

**Statistics and geospatial information** have been considered as different entities with very little need for cooperation in the past. Due to technological progress, we know that it is important to embed a spatial dimension into statistical production. Further integration of the geospatial dimension into statistics would generate value-added outputs and would result in resource efficiency as long as harmonisation of infrastructure among both fields can be ensured. As UNSD has been working to bring these two communities together to evolve an integrated national and global information system, I think all of us are eager to listen to the presentation of Mr. Amor Laaribi from UNSD. To bridge the geographical-statistical divide in OIC Member Countries, cooperation on common projects combining geospatial and statistical methods is essential. In this respect, I do believe that the successful country practices

presented by the respective delegates of Bahrain, Qatar, Tunisia and UAE will trigger exchange of information at the end of this session.

The last thematic session of our meeting is about **Improving Statistical Capacities in Tourism Sector**. I would like to inform you that another project of SESRIC on "Improving Statistical Capacities of Tourism Sector in Mediterranean and Gulf Region" has been entitled to also receive a grant from COMCEC. The main purpose of the project is to build statistical capacity in the compilation, production and dissemination of tourism statistics and, ultimately, to contribute to the National Statistical Systems of the OIC Member Countries through capacity building programmes. My colleagues from the Statistics and Information Department will brief you about the details of this project. Malaysia, Oman and Turkey will also share their valuable country experiences during the session.

*Distinguished participants,*

*Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I have full confidence that the deliberations you will hold and the recommendations and proposals you will make will contribute significantly to the successful implementation of the activities of OIC-StatCom.

In concluding, I would like to thank all the participants for sparing time to attend this august gathering and wish all the success to this Meeting and pray Allah Almighty to help us all and guide our steps to achieve prosperity and welfare for the Islamic Ummah. May Allah (Subhanahu wa ta'ala) bestow his mercy on the undertakings of this Commission.

*Wassalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu*