

Bismillahi Ar-Rahmanir-Raheem

Distinguished Participants,

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullah wa Barakatuh

It is a great pleasure to welcome you, on behalf of SESRIC, to the Second Meeting of Statistical Working Group taking place today at SESRIC Headquarters. I would also like to express our thanks and appreciation to you for honouring our invitation. The First Meeting of Statistical Working Group was held on 25-26 March 2009 at IDB Headquarters. It was the first time in the annals of OIC, where representatives of OIC Institutions dealing with statistical activities were brought together during that Meeting to discuss and put in place a coordination mechanism for achieving greater synergy between OIC Institutions and for better organizing statistical programs and activities with a view to avoiding duplication of efforts and reporting conflicting statistics. It is a great pleasure now to welcome the representatives of some of the National Statistical Offices of the member states as well in addition to the OIC Institutions to get their views on the role of National Statistical Offices in Statistical Working Group.

I do not want to get into details of the progress observed since the First Meeting of the Statistical Working Group since this august committee will be discussing this and the way forward during these two days of the Second Meeting. However, I believe that there are some points which are worth mentioning. Firstly, it is very important that in the history of COMCEC Sessions, coordination of statistical activities at the OIC level took place for the first time in the agenda of COMCEC during the 24th Session of COMCEC which was held in Istanbul on 20-24 October 2008 and the Framework of Statistical Working Group had been presented during the Session.

Secondly, it is very exciting to notice that there is more synergy now among the institutions of OIC. Since the First Meeting of the Statistical Working Group, institutions started sharing their statistical publications for review and feedback before they are printed and released. Moreover, there are links provided to the databases of institutions in the web sites. BASEIND of SESRIC had been started to be used as the main source, rather than World Bank or UN databases, in most of the OIC publications. More than 1000 people are visiting SESRIC web site everyday and most of these visits are to BASEIND. In addition to this, I would like to mention that SESRIC receives many requests of data related to Islamic Countries from various research institutions and universities which shows the acceptance and trust to SESRIC as a provider of data.

Distinguished Guests,

It also gives me great pleasure to observe that the relations with the National Statistical Offices of the member states are improving continuously. The initial steps of improving synergy between the institutions and the National Statistical Offices were taken during the Meeting with the Delegates of National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the OIC Member States to the 40th Session of UN Statistical Commission which was held on February 26, 2009 in New York. IDB and SESRIC represented Statistical Working Group during that Meeting. Introduction of the new interface of online data submission to the National Statistical Offices during that Meeting was very important and I am very honoured to inform you that some of the countries started to use the interface. One other very important outcome of that Meeting is the decision on organizing regular meetings of National Statistical Offices of the OIC Member States. The first Meeting is planned to be organized during the first quarter of 2010 in Istanbul and it is in the agenda of this Second Meeting of Statistical Working Group to discuss the agenda and work programme of this exciting event.

In concluding, I wish all the success to this Meeting, and may Allah SWT bestow his mercy on the undertakings of this august committee.