

Third Session of OIC Statistical Commission

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WELCOME SPEECH

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Bismillāhirrahmānir-raḥīm,

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

Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,

It is a great honour for me to welcome you all to the Third Session of OIC-StatCom and to have the opportunity to address this august body gathered here in the new Headquarters of SESRIC. First of all, allow me once again to extend the profound gratitude and appreciation of our Centre to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for granting this very valuable land in the Diplomatic District of Ankara, and to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, State of Kuwait, State of Qatar and State of United Arab Emirates for their generous financial contributions to the construction budget of the new Headquarters. This new Headquarters of SESRIC constitutes a big incentive for us to continue our efforts towards introducing more innovative approaches in order to enhance the services for more benefit to OIC Member Countries in all priority areas, including statistics. I would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to the Islamic Development Bank for their kind support in the organisation of the Third Session of OIC-StatCom. This year, we have representatives from 26 OIC Member Countries and 9 international and supranational organisations.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you are aware the agenda of the OIC-StatCom Sessions traditionally consists three main parts: For the Third Session of OIC-StatCom, firstly, the Commission will be reviewing the works and activities undertaken by the five Technical Committees of Experts (TCE) established in accordance with the Resolutions of the Second Session of OIC-StatCom that

was held on 13-15 May 2012 in Izmir, Turkey. Secondly, approved in the Fifth Meeting of the Delegates of the NSOs of the OIC Member Countries held in the margins of the Forty-Fourth Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission on 28 February 2013, the thematic sessions this year are Labour Statistics, Open Data, and MDGs/SDGs in which we will listen to the presentations of international/supranational organisations and OIC Member Countries. Last but not least, we have the Open Discussion Session in which all the participants will have the opportunity to exchange views on the outcomes of the Third Session of OIC-StatCom.

As mandated by the Second Session of OIC-StatCom, five TCEs have been established to carry out tasks concerning Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics, Executive Work Plan (EWP) for the Short, Medium and Long Term Implementation of the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision, Procedural Details of the Accreditation Program for Statistical Professionals in OIC Member States, Gender Related Issues, and Comprehensive Profile on the Population and Housing Census Experiences and Practices of OIC Member Countries.

In this connection, the Second Session of OIC-StatCom decided to follow a theme-based priority approach to identify a roadmap for depicting the relevant statistical indicators specific to OIC Member Countries. Three themes, namely “Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics”, “Halal Food and Products Industry Statistics” and “Waqf Statistics” are considered to be of high priority. Starting with “Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics”, a TCE was established to carry out activities in this field due to the fact that Islamic finance is emerging as an alternative source of finance in addressing the major development challenges faced by many OIC Member Countries. The global market for Islamic financial services is estimated to have reached \$1.1 trillion at the end of 2011. OIC Countries, owning 98% of these assets, continue to be the main actors in the industry. However, to produce adequate, sound and effective structural policies regarding infrastructure for Islamic Finance, the decision makers need data. We believe that the NSOs of OIC Member Countries should take a lead role in the collection, processing, and dissemination of such data. From this aspect, the Draft Interim Report of the TCE on Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics will be presented by the OIC-StatCom Secretariat in which the proposed indicators for Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics and the way forward for the period 2013-2014 will be shared with the participants.

Following the TCE on “Islamic Banking and Finance Statistics”, Indonesia, as being the lead country, will present the Draft Progress Report of TCE on the Executive Work Plan for the

Short, Medium and Long Term Implementation of the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision. As you will recall, the Second Session of OIC-StatCom endorsed the OIC-StatCom Strategic Vision Document prepared by the Working Group led by Indonesia to guide its future activities. The Commission also decided the establishment of a TCE to develop an Executive Work Plan. In their presentation, Indonesia will share with us the outcomes of the activities undertaken by the TCE in the preparation of the Draft Executive Work Plan.

Another TCE that we will review its activities is the TCE on Procedural Details of the Accreditation Program for Statistical Professionals in OIC Member States. The Accreditation and Certification Program developed in collaboration with the Central Informatics Organisation (CIO) of Bahrain will be one of the useful tools for statistical capacity development as it has the potential to improve the statistical competencies of the statisticians working in the NSOs and other relevant government institutions. In this respect, I am glad to share with you that the official application for financial support has been submitted to the IDB. We will keep this august body informed about the latest developments. The Draft Progress Report of this TCE to be presented by the OIC-StatCom Secretariat will share the activities undertaken in the period 2012-2013 with the participants.

During the past three decades, there has been growing concern about the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women in all walks of life which have also inspired the production of relevant statistics and indicators to assess the existing situation both within countries and at international level. In this vein, the OIC-StatCom organised the TCE Meeting on Gender Related Issues on 21 – 22 January 2013 at the SESRIC Headquarters in Ankara, Turkey. The Meeting brought together experts from seven OIC Member Countries and three international organisations. Today, as being the Lead Country of the TCE on Gender Related Issues, the United Arab Emirates will be making a presentation on the recommendations made at the end of the meeting and the report they prepared on gender related issues with a focus on violence against women.

In addition to the TCE Meeting on Gender Related Issues, SESRIC and IDB co-organized the “Seminar on Population and Housing Census Practices of OIC Member Countries” on 6-8 March 2013 in Ankara, Turkey. We hosted the representatives of seventeen OIC Member Countries and three international organisations. The objective of the Seminar was to define the structure of a profile including relevant phases of censuses and to compile the different country experiences and practices from OIC Member Countries in accordance with the

Resolutions of the Second Session of OIC-StatCom. I would like to thank the UNSD for sharing the aggregate results of the two surveys carried out for the 2010 World Population and Housing Census Program Review. The OIC-StatCom Secretariat, as the last presenter in the respective session, will be presenting the Draft Comprehensive Profile on the Population and Housing Census Experiences and Practices of OIC Member Countries.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I mentioned earlier, besides reviewing the works undertaken by the OIC-StatCom TCEs, we also have three thematic sessions. Our first thematic session is “Towards a More Comprehensive System of Labour Statistics”. According to the latest available data, OIC Member Countries recorded significantly higher unemployment rates, realised as 9.4% in 2010. The total participation rate of those aged 15 and above in our Member Countries stood at 58.9% compared to 64.2% in the world in 2010. As to the labour productivity, this indicator remained very low compared to the level of the world and developed countries. An average worker in OIC Member Countries produces less than one third of the output produced by an average worker in the world and one tenth of the output of average worker in the developed countries. In 2011, USA is the leader in the world with an average GDP per person employed of \$68,156. It was followed by Hong Kong (\$65,798) and Ireland (\$56,749). Among the OIC member countries, Turkey ranked first having labour productivity of \$29,174 and was followed by Saudi Arabia and Malaysia where GDP per person employed was 38.2% of that of USA in 2011. In this regard, labour statistics is essential not only because of evaluating how the labour market is performing to address the challenges raised but also promoting decent work through long-term policies and programmes for job creation and self-employment, enhancement of employability (i.e. capacity building, training and retraining schemes) and assistance for vulnerable groups, which may include young people, the aged and women. In this manner, the Conference of Labour Ministers of the OIC Member States to be held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, on 23-26 April 2013, will discuss various cooperation issues related to labour and employment in OIC countries; and furthermore, the 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in October 2013 will consider to adopt revised draft standards of labour force and work statistics that will update the resolution adopted in 1982, and related guidelines. In this respect, the representatives of ILO, Egypt, Malaysia, and Turkey will be making presentations on the topics related to labour statistics today.

We will continue with two thematic sessions on the second day of the Third Session of OIC-StatCom: “Open Data Initiative: Challenges and Opportunities for NSOs of OIC Member Countries” and “From MDGs to SDGs: Involvement of National Statistical Offices in Measuring Progress in the Post-2015 Period”.

Being one of the most recent emerging topics in statistics, open data is not only a product or service but a total new way of thinking in the liberation of data. The Open Knowledge Foundation, a non-profit organisation founded in 2004 and dedicated to promoting open data and open content in all their forms, formalized a definition for Open Data stating that “A piece of data is open if anyone is free to use, reuse, and redistribute it – subject only, at most, to the requirement to attribute and/or share-alike”. In recent years, governments have started to embrace public demand for access to information and have made increasing amounts of data accessible through various open data initiatives. In January 2009, the US launched its Open Government Initiative under data.gov website; the UK followed shortly thereafter as did other countries including Norway, Canada, Australia, Kenya etc. The number of countries joining the Open Data bandwagon increases based on the fact that opportunities offered by open data include not only transparency and accountability, but also economic growth and innovation, inclusive participation of citizens and civil society, and government efficiency. In spite of these opportunities, there are still challenges, including the lack of capacity, to be overcome by especially the developing countries. In this respect, the presenters from the Prognoz Corporation, Indonesia, Palestine, Senegal, and Turkey will be sharing with us the general concept on Open Data, and the challenges and opportunities their countries had in their Open Data or similar initiatives.

The last thematic session on “From MDGs to SDGs: Involvement of National Statistical Offices in Measuring Progress in the Post-2015 Period” will give the delegates 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. As you know, the United Nations officially established the eight international development goals; including eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and empowering women, reducing child mortality rates, improving maternal health, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases, ensuring environmental sustainability, and developing a global partnership for development; following the Millennium Summit in 2000. All 193 United Nations member states agreed to achieve these goals by the year 2015. So far, the achievement of countries in reaching the MDGs has been

uneven. As the reporting process for year 2015 is expected to start in the second half of 2013, the representatives of UNSD and Eurostat will review the MDG implementation to date, lessons learnt from MDG monitoring (as an input to post-2015 agenda), and on-going discussion and mechanisms for the development of SDGs and post-2015 framework at the UN and EU. Presentations of Cameroon, Niger, Oman, and Turkey will share the country experiences in this respect.

Distinguished participants,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have my 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 oriented towards helping the Member Countries become more efficient in managing their national statistical systems.

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

Wassalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu