



info REPORT

Volume 22

Number 81

April 2010

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ANKARA CENTRE UPDATE

Director General of SESRIC Visited the IDSC, CAPMAS and ERF in Cairo

Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of SESRIC and Mr. Nabil Dabour, Director of Research Department, visited the Egyptian Cabinet Information and Decision Support Centre (IDSC) on 27 January 2010 upon the invitation of Dr. Maged Osman, Chairman of the IDSC, to be acquainted with the IDSC's activities and programmes and to discuss the potential cooperation between the two institutions.

The visit started with a meeting with Dr. Osman, Chairman of the IDSC, and some senior staff at the IDSC Headquarters. At the outset, Dr. Osman welcomed and thanked Dr. Alpay for accepting his invitation. Then, a comprehensive presentation was made on the IDSC as the Egyptian Cabinet think-tank institution, which supports government decisions through providing advice on best policy scenario mix and analytical research to improve the socio-economic well-being of the Egyptian society. The presentation covered the IDSC's mission, objectives, approach, activities and programmes.

On his part, Dr. Alpay briefed Dr. Osman on the activities of SESRIC in the three areas of its mandate: research, statistics and training. In particular, he highlighted the recent initiatives and programmes of SESRIC in these three areas with the aim of enhancing the Centre's efforts to provide the necessary and up-to-date information and knowledge that would make the OIC Member Countries better informed of each other's capacities and needs as well as challenges and potentials to facilitate their efforts to initiate and elaborate on cooperation projects and integration schemes.

Following these presentations, Dr. Alpay and Mr. Dabour conducted a fruitful discussion with Dr. Osman on the possibilities of sharing and exchanging experiences in the areas of socio-economic research, statistical data and information, indicators and trend analysis as

well as the possibilities of cooperation between the two institutions in capacity building activities, particularly for the think-tanks institutions of the OIC Member Countries. The two parties agreed on exchanging their publications and inviting each other to the activities, such as conferences and workshops organized by their institutions, especially to those related to technical cooperation for evidence-based decision making process in the OIC Member Countries.

The two institutions also agreed on creating links to each other in their websites. Dr. Alpay also offered an invitation for the IDSC to attend and participate in the "Meeting of the Heads of the National Statistical Organisations (NSOs) of the OIC Member Countries", which will be organised by the SESRIC, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), in Istanbul on 22-23 March 2010. At the end of the meeting, Dr. Osman, Chairman of the IDSC, invited Dr. Alpay and Mr. Dabour to a short tour around some divisions of the IDSC, where the Heads of these divisions briefed Dr. Alpay on the activities and the work of their divisions.

The visit of Dr. Alpay and Mr. Dabour to IDSC was preceded, one day before on 26 January, by an official visit to the National Statistical Organisation (NSO) of Egypt: the Central Agency for Public Mobilization and Statistics (CAPMAS). During this visit, Dr. Alpay and Mr. Dabour conducted a fruitful discussion and exchanged views with H.E. General Abu Bakr El-Gendy, President of CAPMAS, and some senior staff at CAPMAS on the possible ways and means of enhancing collaboration and cooperation between the two institutions, particularly in the areas of providing statistics and technical training on statistical capacity building for the NSOs of the OIC member countries. Dr. Alpay briefed Mr. El-Gendy on SESRIC's statistical capacity building programmes, which are planned to be organized

during 2010 in the NSOs of some OIC member countries, where CAPMAS can provide some experts to give the training in these NSOs.

On his part, Mr. El-Gendy expressed his thanks and appreciations to Dr. Alpay and SESRIC for their great efforts in successfully organizing valuable statistical capacity building training programmes in the NSOs of many OIC Member Countries. He also expressed the welcoming and readiness of CAPMAS to contribute significantly to these programmes through sending experts from CAPMAS to provide their experiences on various areas of statistics to the needed NSOs of the member countries. On the other hand, Mr. El-Gendy assured Dr. Alpay that CAPMAS will continue to provide the national statistical data on Egypt to SESRIC to be included in the Centre's database regularly through SESRIC online data collection software system. He also confirmed his attendance and participation in the Meeting of the Heads of the NSOs of the OIC Member Countries, which will be organised by the SESRIC in Istanbul in March 2010.

Dr. Alpay and Mr. Dabour also paid a short visit to the Economic Research Forum (ERF) in Cairo, where they met Dr. Ahmed Galal, Managing Director of ERF and some senior staff members. During the meeting, the two parties briefed each other on the various activities of their institutions, particularly in the areas of economic research, statistics and technical training. They conducted a fruitful discussion, in which they elaborated on areas of possible cooperation between SESRIC and ERF. These included the possibility of sharing and exchanging experiences in the areas of socio-economic research, statistical databases and the possibilities of co-organizing some training activities such as workshops and seminars on issues of common interests for the two institutions. They also agreed on creating links to each other in their websites and exchanging their publications and inviting each other to the activities, such as conferences and workshops organized by their institutions.

SESRIC and ISMEK to Cooperate in OIC-VET Programme

A delegation from the SESRIC comprised of Mr. Mehmet Fatih Serenli, Director of Training and Technical Cooperation Department, and Ms. Sümeyye Erdoğan, Researcher at the same department, visited the Centre of Art and Vocational Training Courses of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality (ISMEK) on 27 January 2010. The delegates were welcomed and greeted by Mr. Mehmet Doğan, Director of Training of the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, Mr. Güven Çalışkan, General Coordinator of ISMEK, and other senior staff at the ISMEK Headquarters.

At the outset, Mr. Serenli expressed his thanks to the Director of Training of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality for his warm receiving of the delegation and gave a brief introduction to the SESRIC, wherein he indicated that SESRIC was the main statistical, research and training arm of the Organisation of

the Islamic Conference (OIC). He particularly highlighted the Vocational Education and Training Programme for OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET). In this regard, he stressed the fact that the Programme had been officially launched by H.E. Abdullah Gül, the President of the Republic of Turkey and the Chairman of the COMCEC during the COMCEC Economic Summit held in Istanbul on 9 November 2009 with the participation of the heads of states and governments. He related that H.E. Abdullah Gül, articulated his belief towards the vision of the OIC-VET Programme to improve the quality of human capital resources and realize socio-economic development in OIC Member Countries, and called upon OIC Member Countries to support and actively participate in the Programme.

As the Executing OIC Organ of the OIC-VET Programme, Mr. Serenli informed the gathering

about the actions so far taken by SESRIC since the First Meeting of the Monitoring and Advisory Committee held in Izmir on 13 May 2009. He mentioned that the OIC-VET Portal had been launched for providing the necessary guidance for both national focal points and potential beneficiaries of the Programme. Moreover, a special database called OIC-VET Partners Database has also been developed in the portal with the aim of providing information on potential partners who are able and keen to effectively participate in project implementations within the framework of the OIC-VET Programme. In addition to these preparatory works, SESRIC has already designed a number of pilot projects in consultation with the National Focal Points of the Programme to be implemented in our member countries. Mr. Serenli then expressed his desire to establish cooperation between ISMEK and similar institutions in OIC Member Countries in the area of vocational training, which is also the main purpose of the visit.

On his part, Mr. Doğan, Director of Training of Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality, pointed out that the vocational education and training had been on the global agenda of many developed and developing countries for decades; and the initiatives on this issue would turn to internationalization at the OIC level, where vocational training centers and institutions would strengthen their training capacity and cooperation in different aspects of vocational training. Mr. Doğan also explained, as a common-public education and training organisation supplementing formal education, that ISMEK was aiming at enhancing Istanbulers' personal background, improving their vocational skills and competencies, helping them to become an active producer instead of a passive consumer, contributing to their income generation and enhancing their employability.

Mr. Doğan further informed that being initiated in 1996 with 141 attendees in three branches in three course centers, the trainings had outreached, as of 2008-2009, to 230.000

participants in 123 branches in 218 course centers in 38 districts of Istanbul. So far, over 810.000 residents have benefitted from ISMEK trainings, a number which have exceeded many times the students enrolled in various universities. ISMEK has been taken as a model by many domestic and foreign institutions because of the number of course-takers, branch diversity and activity range that has reached to every neighborhood of Istanbul. Many district governments have opened similar vocational training programs by taking ISMEK's operating system as a model. Moreover; a number of delegations from Germany, Holland, Sweden, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Syria, Morocco, Ethiopia, Dagestan and Kazakhstan have visited ISMEK. He further expressed ISMEK's willingness and readiness to cooperate with OIC Member Countries in organizing common projects and activities, and providing technical assistance to any institutions or organisations operating in the Member Countries when needed.

The SESRIC delegation gave a positive review of the achievements established by ISMEK and declared their satisfaction by their cooperation intention on vocational training projects. During the visit, the two parties conducted a fruitful meeting in which they elaborated on the substantive contents of cooperation projects between both institutions. These projects included the possibilities of sharing and exchanging knowledge and experiences in organizing similar courses in Member Countries, coordinating study visits by the managers and experts of relevant institutions of Member Countries, and establishing a strong network of vocational training centres. They also agreed to set up a joint project working group to further discuss operational aspects of different pilot projects to implement in the course of the year 2010.

Director General of SESRIC Received a Delegation from the TCO of Iran

Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of SESRIC, received a delegation from the Technology Cooperation Office (TCO) of the Islamic Republic of Iran in his office on 28 January 2010. The delegation was comprised of Mr. Hamid Reza Amirinia, Chairman of the TCO of the Islamic Republic of Iran, two TCO advisors and one representative from the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Ankara, Turkey.

At the outset, Eng. Hakan Eryetli, Director of the Publication and IT Department of the SESRIC delivered a presentation on the initiatives undertaken by SESRIC. After the presentation, Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of the SESRIC, expressed his thanks and welcome to the delegates and briefed them on the activities of the Centre in the three areas of mandate: research, statistics and training. In particular, he highlighted the technical cooperation activities of SESRIC in statistics, vocational education and training.

On his part, the Head of the TCO delegation Mr. Amirinia expressed his thanks for the Director General of the Centre for his warm receiving of the delegation and informed him that the TCO was ready to cooperate with the Centre in the fields of biotechnology, nanotechnology, information technology and e-government through exchanging technical expertise in research and development as well as in technical training for the benefit of the OIC Member Countries. He also expressed that the TCO and Supreme Council of Information and Communication Technology (SCICT) of the Islamic Republic of Iran welcomed the Resolution No. 68 of the 25th Session of the COMCEC and took the initial steps with respect to the aforementioned COMCEC Resolution.

During the meeting, the two parties discussed on areas of possible cooperation between SESRIC and TCO. These included the possibility of setting up working groups on issues related to nanotechnology and e-government implementations in OIC Member Countries.

SESRIC Receives a Delegation from the Ministry of Labour of the Republic of Turkey

Dr. Savaş Alpay, the Director General of SESRIC, received a delegation from the General Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety of the Ministry of Labour, Turkey, in his office on 02 February 2010. The delegation was comprised of Mr. Kasım Özen, Director General of the General Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety, Mr. İsmail Gerim, Deputy Director General, Mr. Coşkun Demirci, Director of Research and Training Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, and two experts from the same Centre.

At the outset, the Director General of SESRIC, Dr. Savaş Alpay, expressed his thanks and welcome to the delegates and briefed them on the activities of the Centre in the three areas of mandate: research, statistics and training. He underlined the importance of occupational health and safety in OIC Member Countries, and stressed the need for cooperation and

collaboration among relevant similar agencies operating in member countries; particularly in the field of capacity building. He informed the delegation about the Vocational Education and Training Programme of OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET) as a strong cooperation ground among similar organisations in Member Countries.

On his part, the Head of the delegation Mr. Kasım Özer, Director General of the General Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety, expressed his thanks to the Director General of the Centre for his warm reception of the delegation and informed him that his directorate was ready to cooperate with the Centre in the field of occupational health and safety through exchanging technical expertise in technical training for the benefit of the OIC Member Countries. He also expressed his wish that OIC Member Countries would actively participate in

the XIX World Congress on Safety and Health at Work; scheduled to be held on 11-15 September 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey, and which will be hosted by the Ministry of Labour and Social Security of the Republic of Turkey together with the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the International Social Security Association (ISSA).

After the welcoming of the Director General, a technical meeting was convened with the participation of heads of technical departments of the Centre and the experts from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Turkey, on the ways and means of possible cooperation in the area of occupational health and safety. During

the meeting, the two parties briefed each other on the various activities of their institutions, particularly in the areas of economic research, statistics, training and technical cooperation. They conducted a fruitful discussion, in which they elaborated on many common areas of cooperation and identified several projects to be implemented in the upcoming years. These included the possibility of sharing and exchanging experiences in the areas of research and statistics, and the possibilities of co-organizing some pilot projects under OIC-VET sub-programmes; such as exchange of professionals, transfer of innovation and training networks on issues of common interests for the OIC Member Countries.

Director General of SESRIC Received MÜSİAD Delegation

Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of SESRIC, received a delegation from the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD), in his office on Tuesday 16 February 2010. The delegation was comprised of Mr. Ömer Cihad Vardar, President of MÜSİAD; Mr. Mehmet Nuri Görenoğlu, Deputy President; Mr. Nail Olpak, Deputy President; Mr. Dursun Topçu, Member of Board; Mr. Murat Kalsın, Member of Board; and Eyüp Vural Aydın, General Secretary.

Mr. Mehmet Fatih Serenli, Director of Training and Technical Cooperation Department of SESRIC, informed the delegation about the Vocational Education and Training Programme of OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET) as a strong cooperation ground among similar organisations in the member countries with the purpose of providing qualified workforce that our industries and businesses need, to improve knowledge and skills of people, and to increase the level of competitiveness in the global arena. He further explained that the OIC-VET Programme provides an opportunity for organisations and entities to build OIC partnerships, exchange best practices, increase the expertise of their staff and develop the skills and competencies of the participants.

In addition to that, Mr. Serenli also informed the visiting delegation about other technical cooperation activities of SESRIC. In this regard, he mentioned that, together with the Central Bank of Turkey, SESRIC convened the governors of the Central Banks and Monetary Authorities of OIC Member Countries on 3 October 2009 in Istanbul on the theme "Impacts of the Current Crisis on OIC Member Countries". The Centre also organised, in partnership with Turkish International Cooperation and Development Agency, the First Meeting of Development and Cooperation Institution of OIC Member Countries on 13-14 May 2009 with the aim of enhancing our efforts to achieve our national development goals.

Mr. Hüseyin Hakan Eryetli, Director of IT and Publications, made a presentation on the recently developed software and databases, including the enhanced version of the Basic Social and Economic Indicators Database (BASEIND) and the newly designed SESRIC Motion Charts (SMC) generator. Another project named as the "Member Countries in Figures" software, showing the latest figures available on over 260 indicators and operating on live BASEIND statistics data was also presented. The MÜSİAD delegation showed great interest in the SMC software and proposed

some related technical cooperation on this project.

After the presentations, Dr. Alpay highlighted the research and statistics activities of the SESRIC in business and related areas, and the ongoing study on the OIC Doing Business Index, which will elaborate the level of improvement in business and investment environment of OIC Member Countries for policy makers in general and businesspeople in particular. In this regard, the Director General underlined the importance of trade and commerce towards realizing the development efforts of OIC Member Countries, and stressed the need for enhanced cooperation and collaboration among relevant agencies operating in the Member Countries.

On his part, Mr. Ömer Cihad Vardar, President of MÜSİAD, expressed his thanks to Dr. Alpay for his warm reception of the delegation and informed him that MÜSİAD was ready to cooperate with SESRIC in the field of business and related areas through exchanging knowledge and expertise for the benefit of the OIC Member Countries. He also expressed his wish that the concerned institutions and enterprises in OIC Member Countries would actively participate in the XIV International Business Forum (IBF) scheduled to be held in Istanbul on 6-9 October 2010, hosted by MÜSİAD. In this regard, he mentioned that the theme of this IBF would be on “The role of Science and Technology in the Development of OIC Member Countries”, and expressed his desire to cooperate in the organisation of this particular Forum, given the expertise of SESRIC in research, statistics and training in the field of science and technology.

2nd Meeting with the Delegates of the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) of the OIC Member Countries to the 41st Session of the UN Statistical Commission

The 2nd Meeting of the NSOs of the OIC Member Countries and the SESRIC was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, USA on 25 February 2010 at 3.00 – 5.00 pm as a side event of the 41st Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission.

The meeting brought together 41 representatives from the NSOs of OIC Member Countries and it was also attended by the delegates of the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), the Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT) and the Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21).

At the outset, Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of SESRIC, thanked all representatives for their participation and expressed the determination of SESRIC for the continuation of this side event. In this regard, he acknowledged that the idea of an annual meeting of NSOs was also brought in the previous side event of SESRIC at the 40th UN Statistical Commission and informed the participants about the steps taken afterwards.

After addressing that the Meeting of the NSOs of OIC Member Countries was organized jointly with the IDB, Dr. Alpay briefed the participants about the tentative agenda in order to enhance the content of the meeting through their feedbacks. He especially noted that the theme of the meeting “*Statistics for Development in Post-Crisis World*” would be discussed under 4 topics, which are:

1. Better statistics for better policy response during and post-crisis world
2. NSOs and data demand on emerging development issues
3. Capacity building initiatives at the OIC level
4. Bridging the communication gap between data users and providers.

He mentioned that the meeting in Istanbul would be a valuable opportunity to increase cooperation and collaboration among OIC Member Countries. He also informed the participants that the SESRIC undertook strong and close cooperation with the international and

regional organizations with a view to promote the cooperation level up and far to the best through providing training and capacity building programmes to the OIC Member Countries. In line with this view, the relevant organizations were also invited to the meeting.

At the end of the side event, some Member Countries, namely Indonesia, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Palestine, Turkey and UAE took the floor to address their views and emphasized the importance of the coming event in Istanbul for the NSOs of the OIC Member Countries.

Director General of SESRIC visited the Headquarters of UNDP

Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of the SESRIC visited the Headquarters of the United Nations Development Programme, where he met Ms. Amat Al Alim Alsoswa, UNDP Assistant Administrator and Regional Director of the Bureau for Arab States, on 25 February 2010. Ms. Amat Al Alim Alsoswa welcomed and thanked Dr. Alpay for his kind visit.

At the outset, Dr. Savaş Alpay expressed his thanks to Ms. Alsoswa and her colleagues for their warm welcome, and talked about the activities of SESRIC in the areas of research, statistics and training where SESRIC and UNDP could collaborate on enhancing their contribution to the development agenda of the Member Countries. In particular, he highlighted the recent initiatives and programmes of SESRIC with the aim of enhancing the Centre's efforts to provide the necessary and up-to-date information and knowledge that would make the OIC Member Countries better informed of each other's capacities and needs as well as challenges and potentials to facilitate their efforts which would allow them to initiate and elaborate on cooperation projects and integration schemes.

In terms of enhancing opportunities for Member Countries, he especially emphasized the need to develop the human capital towards achieving knowledge-based economies. In this regard, Dr. Alpay informed them about the new programme of SESRIC, the Vocational Education and Training Programme (OIC-VET), which was officially launched during the OIC Economic Summit in November 2009, in Istanbul, Turkey. SESRIC is the executing organ of the OIC-VET Programme, which aims to support the Member

Countries in their efforts towards improving their human capital, and consequently increasing their competitiveness in the global arena.

Ms. Alsoswa expressed her appreciation to Dr. Alpay and SESRIC for the efforts in initiating such a programme, which would be very useful for the OIC Member Countries. She mentioned her interest about getting more information about the working mechanism of OIC-VET, and elaborated their intention for collaboration especially about the education of young and unemployed people.

During the meeting, Dr. Alpay invited the UNDP to participate in the "The Second Meeting of the Development Cooperation Institutions (DCIs) of the OIC Member Countries". He acknowledged that the meeting would be a joint organization by Abu Dhabi Fund for Development (ADFD), the General Secretariat of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), and would be held in Abu Dhabi, UAE on 3-4 May 2010. Dr. Savaş Alpay underlined the importance of this meeting for enhancing the impact of international development assistance in the least developed Member Countries, and stated that the experiences of UNDP would be highly valuable in this regard.

Dr. Alpay also offered an invitation for the UNDP to attend the "1st Meeting of the National Statistical Organizations of the OIC Member Countries", being organised jointly by the SESRIC and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB), in Istanbul on 22-23 March 2010.

On her part, Ms. Amat Al Alim Alsoswa highlighted the significance of statistics in general, and mentioned the data problems encountered in many countries around the world especially about segregated data, poverty, gender and e-governance issues. Ms. Alsoswa also mentioned that SESRIC could promote the enhancement of technical cooperation activities among the OIC Member Countries. She also expressed their expectations about a progress report about the status of OIC Member Countries towards achieving MDGs.

Having conducted a fruitful discussion, both parties agreed on increasing cooperation and

collaboration in the areas of concern to the Member Countries. They also decided to establish a steady communication between SESRIC and UNDP so that the two institutions could identify and jointly implement projects in order to enhance their contribution to the Member Countries.

The meeting was also attended by Mrs. Zehra Zümüt Selçuk, Researcher at SESRIC, and Mr. Amin Sharkawi, Senior Programme Adviser, Mr. Adel M. Abdellatif, Chief of Regional Programme Division, Ms. Susanne Siao, Adviser at the Regional Bureau for Arab States.

Training Course on 'Quality in Statistics & New Data Collection Methods' in Tajikistan

The Centre organized a training course on “Quality in Statistics & Applications of New Data Collection Methods” at the State Committee on Statistics of Tajikistan, on March 1-3, 2010. The course was provided by Mr. Inan Inanli, expert from the Turkish Statistical Institute (TurkStat) and was attended by 20 staff members of the State Committee on Statistics of Tajikistan.

The training course on “Quality in Statistics & Applications of New Data Collection Methods” mainly covered the following subjects:

- Sources and Measurement of Non-Sampling Methods

- Response Reliability Surveys
- Statistical Process Control
- Eurostat Quality Components

The aim of this training course was to improve the statistical capacity building and performance of the State Committee on Statistics of Tajikistan on “Quality in Statistics & Applications of New Data Collection Methods”.

For more information regarding the StatCaB Programme, please visit the Capacity Building Programme page through:

<http://ww.sesric.org/cbp-statcab.php>

Expert Mission to the Central Department of Statistics and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Upon the request of H.E. Mohanna Al Mohanna, Director General of the Central Department of Statistics and Information (CDSI) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, SESRIC conducted an expert mission for the period of 4 – 16 March 2010. Eng. Huseyin Hakan Eryetli, Director of IT and Publication and expert on IT Projects and e-Government was sent to this mission.

After several meetings, SESRIC agreed to cooperate on the following projects:

- CDSI Information Data Bank Project
- CDSI e-Government Intranet Project

- CDSI Web Site Enrichment Project

At this stage, various meetings were held with the CDSI Web Unit and a report on “How to Enhance and Enrich the CDSI Web Site?” was presented by the SESRIC expert to the CDSI.

It was agreed that these missions should be continued and SESRIC stressed its willingness to share its expertise on e-Governmental issues as well as other IT and statistics related fields.

It was decided that a second mission would be conducted by the end of June 2010.

Director General of SESRIC Received UNHCR Turkish Office

Director General of SESRIC received Mr. Michael Gaudé, Representative of the UNHCR Turkish Office, and Mr. Karim Atassi, Deputy Representative in his office on 9 March 2010. The Director General of SESRIC, Dr. Savaş Alpay, expressed his thanks and welcome to his guests, and articulated his appreciation with the role UNHCR was playing in providing assistance to millions of in dire conditions around the world.

On his part, Mr. Michael Gaudé expressed his thanks to the Director General for his warm

reception, and his willingness to cooperate with SESRIC in research, statistics and training in the field of refugees through exchanging data, information and technical expertise.

The two parties conducted a fruitful discussion and exchanged views and ideas on possible ways and means of enhancing collaboration and cooperation between the two institutions, particularly in the areas of providing statistics on refugees. The two institutions agreed on conducting a joint research project on the state of refugees in OIC Member Countries.

The Meeting of National Statistical Organisations (NSOs) of the OIC Member Countries

In the last decade, there has been proliferation of national, regional and international initiatives, each containing a set of goals and targets that must be monitored for progress and performance. In addition to these initiatives, our member countries are being challenged by new development issues such as financial and economic crisis, climate change, food security, etc. which are affecting all of us. It is crucial to have access to timely, accurate, consistent and reliable data to undertake studies and identify countries most affected by these issues and initiatives with the view to enable development institutions to respond to the need of the affected countries. To this end, given that the National Statistical Organizations (NSOs) of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) Member Countries -who are at different levels of development and face various constraints and problems are the primary sources of data, the effective cooperation among these institutions will be vital.

Against this background, in pursuant of the recommendation made by NSOs from the OIC Member Countries at the side meeting held in conjunction with the UN Statistical Commission Meeting of February 2009, the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) organized the Meeting of NSOs of the OIC

Member Countries on 22-23 March 2010, in Istanbul, Turkey.

During this meeting, the discussions centred around the theme ‘Statistics for Development in Post-Crisis World’ and the goal of the meeting was to find ways and means to bridge the communication gap between the data users and providers in Post-Crisis World.

Delegates of the NSOs of twenty OIC Member Countries; Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Egypt, Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Morocco, Niger, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Turkey, Uganda, United Arab Emirates and Uzbekistan; and of the COMCEC, ICDT, IDB, OIC General Secretariat, PARIS21, SESRIC, UNESCWA and World Bank participated in the meeting.

The Meeting started on 22 March 2010 with the welcome and opening message of the Secretary General of the OIC, H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, at the inaugural session. The Session proceeded with the welcome and opening speeches of Mr. Ifzal Ali, Chief Economist of IDB, Mr. Mohanna Al Mohanna, Director General of CDSI, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the SESRIC and Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General of SESRIC. The inaugural session was followed by the two Keynote Addresses made by

Mr. Mohamed-El-Heyba Lemrabott Berrou, Manager of PARIS21; and Mr. Ifzal Ali, Chief Economist of IDB.

Three of the six Sessions of the Meeting had the themes “Better Statistics for Better Policy Response During and Post-Crisis World”, “Capacity Building Initiatives at the OIC Level” and “Case Studies and Best Practices from NSOs”. During these Sessions, panelists made their presentations and each session was followed by discussions. Two of the sessions were the Breakout Sessions with the themes “NSOs and Data Demand on Emerging Development Issues” and “Bridging the Communication Gap between the Data Users and Providers” where the delegates were gathered into three separate groups. During the first part of each session the discussions proceeded within the groups and during the second part the reporters of each group shared the conclusions reached within their groups with all of the delegates.

During the last session of the Meeting, on 23 March 2010, the delegates of the NSOs of the OIC Member Countries and international and regional organizations agreed to issue the Istanbul Declaration on the Meeting of the National Statistical Organizations of the OIC Member Countries. The declaration consisted of eleven items. The delegates after expressing their thanks and appreciation to SESRIC, IDB and Republic of Turkey, itemized their agreements related to the topics:

- The importance of accurate, reliable and consistent data for policymaking and strategy development in OIC Member Countries
- The need to foster increased relevance, responsiveness, and results-orientation individually and collectively
- Working together, sharing knowledge, information/publications, and best practices, and helping one another through exchanging technical experts to provide training and hands-on experience
- Providing better statistical services
- Encouraging the governments of the OIC Member Countries to better integrate statistical development as a sector in their National Development Plans
- Providing statistical services to support demand for new indicators

Moreover, the delegates agreed to set up an Experts Group Meeting to look into the issue of providing support to demand for new indicators. They welcomed the initiative to set up OIC Statistical Working Group (OIC-SWG) to coordinate, harmonize and standardize statistical activities of OIC Institutions. Finally, they agreed to organize on annual basis the meeting of OIC-NSOs under the title “OIC Statistical Commission (OIC-SC)” and make SESRIC the secretariat of the OIC-SC.

For more information please visit:
<http://www.sesric.org/activities-nso-meetings.php>

Visit of the National Statistical Organization of Indonesia to SESRIC

The delegates of the National Statistical Organization of Indonesia, Budan Pusat Statistik (BPS), who participated at “The Meeting of National Statistical Organization of the OIC Member Countries” organized by SESRIC and IDB in Istanbul on 22-23 March 2010, visited the Headquarters of SESRIC in Ankara on 26 March 2010. The delegation of BPS was headed by Mr. Rusman Heriawan, Chief Statistician.

Mr. Heriawan briefly introduced the activities of BPS. Especially, he focused on the census that would take place the following month in Indonesia, and he touched upon the difficulties related to Indonesia due to its geographic conditions especially pertaining to widespread number of islands. Moreover, he gave information about their active roles within the United Nations Economic and Social

Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and the United Nations Statistical Institute for Asia and the Pacific (UNSIAP). Especially, the training activities of UNSIAP were interesting for the Centre for possible future cooperation.

On his side, Dr. Alpay briefly informed the guests on the statistical and research activities of the SESRIC. Both parties exchanged views on how to increase the relations between the BPS and the Centre.

The Minister of Economy and Planning of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia H.E. Dr. Khalid bin Muhammad Al-Qusaibi Received the Director General of SESRIC at his office in Riyadh

The Minister of Economy and Planning of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Dr. Khalid bin Muhammad Al-Qusaibi, received the Director General of SESRIC, H.E. Dr. Savas Alpay, at his office in Riyadh on 31 March 2010. During the meeting, Dr. Alpay briefed the Minister on various recent activities and initiatives of SESRIC in its three mandate areas of socio-economic research, statistics and training. In particular, Dr. Alpay briefed the Minister on the Vocational Education and Training Programme for OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET), which was initiated and designed by SESRIC and officially launched by H.E. Abdullah Gül, President of the Republic of Turkey and Chairman of the COMCEC, at the COMCEC Economic Summit, which was held on 9 November 2009 in Istanbul on the occasion of the 25th Anniversary of the COMCEC. In this context, he informed the Minister that the Centre started the necessary communications with all the OIC Member States through their respective national authorities, and requested them to designate their National Focal Points (NFPs) for the OIC-VET Programme. He also informed that, so far, thirty Member Countries have already designated their NFPs and that the Centre has launched a special OIC-VET Web Portal which includes all the information regarding the Programme for the use of both NFPs and potential project partners. Dr. Alpay also informed the Minister that a number of pilot projects had already been planned in consultation with the NFPs and relevant organisations to be implemented in 2010, and some of them were already under execution.

Dr. Alpay and H.E. Dr. Al-Qusaibi also exchanged their views on the challenges facing the OIC Member Countries and the priority

areas of cooperation among them, particularly those related to science and technology, education and youth. On his part, the Minister commended the role and the efforts of the Centre, as a subsidiary organ of the OIC, in providing the necessary and up-to-date information and knowledge that would make the Member Countries better informed of each other's capacities and needs as well as challenges and potentials. He also expressed the willing and readiness of the Ministry and the relevant institutions in the Kingdom to cooperate with the Centre and support its activities. At the end of the meeting, Dr. Alpay presented H.E. Dr. Al-Qusaibi with some samples of the various publications of the Centre and expressed his deep thanks for having this opportunity to meet with him and for his warm and kind receiving at his office. He also expressed his profound gratitude and appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its support and commitment to pay its contributions to the annual budget of the Centre and for its recent generous financial contribution to the construction budget of new Headquarters of the Centre.

The meeting of the Director General of SESRIC with H.E. Dr. Khalid bin Muhammad Al-Qusaibi, the Minister of Economy and Planning, was preceded by a visit of the Director General to the Central Department of Statistics and Information (CDSI) of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabi. The Director General was received by the General Director of the CDSI, H.E. Mr. Mohanna Al-Mohanna. During the meeting the two Directors exchanged their views on the best possible ways and means of cooperation between the two institutions, particularly in the areas of exchanging the statistical data and publications and cooperation in statistical capacity building

expertise. They also discussed the outcome of the Meeting of the National Statistical Organisations (NSOs) of the OIC Member Countries, which was organised by SESRIC and the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and held in Istanbul on 22-23 March 2010. Following their bilateral meeting, the two Directors attended a meeting with some senior staff at the CDSI where a comprehensive presentation has been made on the history, objectives and various

activities of the CDSI. Following the presentation, the General Director of the CDSI, Mr. Mohanna Al-Mohanna, invited Dr. Alpay to a short visit to some divisions of the CDSI which are responsible for conducting the General Population and Housing Census 2010, where the Heads of these divisions briefed Dr. Alpay on the various techniques and procedures they use for each phase of the currently conducting Census.

OIC NEWS

Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGGE) on Proposed Rules for the OIC Joint Staff Pension Scheme

SESRIC participated in the 'Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGGE) on the Final Review on the Proposed Rules of Joint-Staff Pension Scheme of the OIC Staff Members' which was held on 6-7 March 2010 at the OIC Headquarters in Jeddah.

Delegates of the Member Countries and representatives of the Subsidiary Organs of the OIC participated in the Meeting. After the statement of the Secretary General Professor

Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, the Proposed Rules of Joint-Staff Pension Scheme had been reviewed article by article and each article had been discussed in detail.

As a result of the discussions some modifications made with various articles and most of the Scheme had been agreed on. A few issues were left to be decided by a Committee at a higher level.

Second Coordination Committee Meeting on the Implementation of the 'Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism'

The Second Coordination Committee Meeting on the implementation of the "Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between the OIC Member States" was held in Antalya, Republic of Turkey, on 24-25 March 2010. The Meeting was attended by the representatives of the following Members of the Committee: Azerbaijan, Cameroon, Egypt, Iran, Malaysia, Senegal, Syria and Turkey. The representatives of the OIC General Secretariat and those of the following OIC institutions also attended the Meeting: SESRIC, IRCICA, ICDT, IUT, ISESCO, ICCI and COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO). Mr. Nabil Dabour, Director of Research Department represented SESRIC at the Meeting.

At the opening session, the representative of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the

Republic of Turkey, as Chairman of the 2nd Tourism Coordination Committee, made a statement in which he welcomed the participants and emphasized the need for enhancing tourism investments, education and marketing in OIC Member States. In this respect, he underlined the importance of the "Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between the OIC Member States".

The representative of the Ministry of Tourism of the Syrian Arab Republic, as Chairman of the 6th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers (ICTM), also made a statement at the opening session in which he expressed his deep gratitude to the Government of the Republic of Turkey for organizing this meeting and to the OIC General Secretariat for following up the efforts for enhancing OIC cooperation in this

important sector. He mentioned that, while the global financial crisis had negatively affected the tourism sector in many countries around the world, tourism in many OIC Member Countries showed a positive performance, and this was due to the increasing number of intra-OIC tourist arrivals in many Member Countries.

On behalf of H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, the Secretary General of the OIC, expressed his deep gratitude to the Government and people of the Republic of Turkey for the hosting and successful organization of the Meeting. He mentioned that the aim of this Meeting was to prepare a Progress Report on the Short Term Plan and Programme for the implementation of the “Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between OIC Member States”, which had been prepared and adopted by the First Coordination Committee Meeting held in Damascus in March 2009. This report will be submitted to the 7th ICTM, which will be held in Tehran towards the end of 2010, for final approval.

During the working sessions, the participants reviewed the Draft Progress Report on the implementation of the “Framework for Development and Cooperation in the Domain of Tourism between the OIC Member States”, which was presented by the OIC General

Secretariat. The Representatives of the Member States and Concerned OIC Institutions namely IRCICA, SESRIC, ICDT, IUT, ISESCO and ICCI submitted their proposals for the implementation of the Framework to be included in the Progress Report. The Meeting finally adopted the Draft Progress Report to be submitted to the 7th Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, to be held in the Islamic Republic of Iran, in November/December 2010.

During the working session, the representative of the ICCI made a presentation on the OIC Tourism Web Portal. In this respect, the representatives of the Member States expressed their appreciations for the importance of this portal and suggested that this portal should be presented to the Ministers of Tourism during the 7th ICTM. The representative of Azerbaijan announced that the Government of Azerbaijan will organize International Scientific Conference on Protection and Promotion of Intangible Heritage in Ganja in September 2010 and invited all the Member Countries and relevant OIC institutions to attend the conference. The representative of Senegal announced that the Government of Senegal would organize and host Dakar 2010 International Tourism Fair on 28-30 May 2010.

33rd Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs (ICECS)

The 33rd Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs (ICECS) was held at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on March 29th -31st, 2010 in preparation for the 37th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers due to take place in Dushanbe, capital of Tajikistan, in May 2010. The Centre was represented by Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General, Mr. Nabil Dabour, Director of Research Department, Mr. Mehmet Fatih Serenli, Director of Training and Technical Cooperation Department.

Following the Speech of the Representative of the Republic of Syria, chairman of the 32nd

Session of the ICECS, at the opening session, the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, His Excellency Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu also delivered his statement where he stated that the OIC had significantly succeeded in achieving some of the objectives outlined in the Ten-Year Programme of Action in the economic field. The OIC managed to establish the framework required for a joint Trade Preferential System with the entry into force of the Protocol on the Preferential Tariff Scheme (PRETAS / TPS-OIC).

He maintained that OIC's agenda was now based on a comprehensive approach to economic development and cooperation, highlighting in

this regard the continued efforts exerted for the implementation of the Dakar-Port Sudan railway line project.

The Committee commended the efforts of the General Secretariat and the Subsidiary Organs, each in their respective field of specialization, and particularly in strengthening cooperation among the Member States especially in the economic and commercial field with statistical indicators on intra-OIC trade showing that it is steadily increasing and that the growth rate of

the volume of intra-OIC trade increased from 14.5% in 2004 to 16.67% in 2009 despite the recent global financial and economic crisis.

The Committee discussed Draft Resolutions on Dawa, Cultural, Social, and Economic Affairs, and Science and Technology, and adopted them for submission to the 37th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) which will be held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on 18-20 May 2010.

OTHER MEETINGS

SESRIC participated in the 'Meeting of the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on Projects'

SESRIC participated in the 'Meeting of the National Focal Points (NFPs) of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) on Projects - Research Cooperation in Economic Research and Statistics' which was held on 15th February 2010 in Antalya, Turkey. During the meeting the representatives of the ECO Member States made statements on cooperation in statistics and economic research.

The participants were informed on the ongoing cooperation between the ECO and other international organizations, such as SESRIC and UNIDO. In this context, Mr. Cem Eyerci, Senior Researcher and representative of SESRIC, informed the participants on the planned joint activities of SESRIC and ECO, especially in the area of statistical capacity building.

The 15th Session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistics (CCSA)

The Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) held its 15th session in New York, USA on 22 February 2010 on the margin of the 41st session of the United Nations Statistical Commission. The 15th session of CCSA was chaired by the two co-chairs of the Committee - Mr. Pieter Everaers, Director of External Cooperation, Communication and Key Indicators of Eurostat and Mr. Henri Laurencin, Head of Development Statistics and Information Branch of Division on Globalization and Development Strategies of UNCTAD. Representatives of the member institutions of the CCSA participated to the Session. Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General and Mrs. Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, researcher, represented the SESRIC thereat.

presentation of National Institute of Statistics and Geography of Mexico (INEGI) about a website containing an inventory of global statistical standards. The Committee then took note about progress report prepared by UNSD on the organization of the World Statistics Day.

As the fourth item, the two co-chairs of the Committee, Eurostat and UNCTAD, made a presentation about "*Governance of the Global Statistical System: The role of CCSA: Roadmap for the development of a strategy on how to incorporate major projects in the CCSA Work*" and the Committee agreed that a discussion on one selected global project - the System of National Accounts 2008, to be held during the next 16th session.

Due to a minor change in the order of the agenda items, the Session started with the

The Committee also took note of the PARIS21 report on "Partner Report on Support to

Statistics (PRESS): Issues and Case Studies” for which the experience of EUROSTAT was presented as a case study on the use of PRESS data.

During the session, the proposed agendas of the below events were also discussed:

- 2010 Conference on Data Quality for International Organizations (Eurostat and UNSD)
- Special session on Human Capital to be organized in conjunction with the 16th CCSA meeting (Eurostat)

The Committee then listened to the oral presentations made by the relevant CCSA member institutions on the topics:

- Use of non-official data in imputations/estimations made by International Organizations (WTO)
- Establishments of a network of statisticians working in International Organizations (UNESCAP)

Under the other business item, ITU invited the CCSA members to take part in the upcoming Global Seminar on Information and Communication Technology Statistics which will be jointly organized by the UNSD, ITU, UNCTAD, Statistics Korea and in collaboration with the Partnership on Measuring ICT for Development in Seoul, Republic of Korea from 19 to 21 July 2010.

The Committee agreed that its sixteenth session would be held in Vienna, Austria on 1-3 September 2010 and confirmed that the meeting would be hosted jointly by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, United Nations Industrial Development Organization and with the help of International Atomic Energy.

For more information, please visit: <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/acsub/ccsa15.htm>

The 41st Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission

The 41st Session of the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC) was held on February 23-26, 2010 in New York. The representatives of National Statistical Organizations (NSOs) of UN Member States, observer countries and international organizations participated in the Session. SESRIC was represented thereat by Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General, and Mrs. Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk, Researcher.

On Monday February 22nd, 2010 SESRIC participated in the 15th Session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA). The meeting was attended by international organizations, such as the United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UNESWA), United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific

(UNESCAP), PARIS21, United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and World Trade Organization (WTO). The delegates discussed issues such as global statistical system and the role of CCSA, the final agenda of the 2010 Conference on Data Quality for International Organizations and the provisional agenda regarding the special session on human capital to be organized during the 16th CCSA meeting. They were also acknowledged about how the PRESS was used by PARIS21 and the progress reports of WTO, UNESCAP and UNSD.

The United Nations Statistical Commission convened a record number of delegations from many countries and started its deliberations on February 23rd, 2010. The delegates had a very dense agenda in front of them and discussed many issues including agricultural statistics, international trade statistics, environmental

accounting, development indicators, geographic information management, and world statistics day. During the UNSC meetings, SESRIC had conducted many useful discussions with the delegates of the OIC Member States as well as the delegates of the international organizations.

The background documents are accessible through:

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/sc2010.htm>

For more information about the 41st session of the UNSC, please visit:

http://unstats.un.org/unsd/statcom/commission_41st_session.htm

UPCOMING EVENTS

FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2010

April

- ▶ Meeting of Experts on the Ranking of Universities in Islamic World, April 24-25, 2010, Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

May

- ▶ Second Meeting of the Development Cooperation Institutions (DCIs) of the OIC Member Countries, May 3-4, 2010, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
- ▶ 26th Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of COMCEC, May 10-12, 2010, Antalya, Republic of Turkey
- ▶ Second Meeting of the Monitoring and Advisory Committee (MAC) of the Vocational Education and Training Programme for OIC Member Countries (OIC-VET), May 11-12, 2010, Antalya, Republic of Turkey
- ▶ The 37th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), May 18-20, 2010, Dushanbe, Tajikistan
- ▶ International Symposium on 'ICT Impact on Municipal Service Development: Towards E-Government', May 18-20, 2010, Doha, State of Qatar
- ▶ SESRIC's Meeting with the Qatar Statistics Authority, May 19-20, 2010, Doha, State of Qatar
- ▶ Study Visit on Occupational Health and Safety (OIC-VET Pilot Project), May 24-29, 2010, Ankara, Republic of Turkey
- ▶ 2nd Consultative Meeting of the OIC Institutions Operating in the Economic Field for the Implementation of the Road Map for Enhancing intra-OIC Trade, May 31-June 1, 2010, Casablanca, Kingdom of Morocco

June

- ▶ Strengthening VET through Local Vocational Courses: The Experience of ISMEK (OIC-VET Pilot Project), June 8-10, 2010, Istanbul, Republic of Turkey
- ▶ OIC Institutions Meeting on the 'Road Map for the Promotion of the Intra-OIC Trade', June 21-22, 2010, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan
- ▶ Networking and Knowledge Sharing Program for Senior Staff of Chambers of Commerce and Industry from Arabic Speaking Member Countries of OIC, June 22-25, 2010, Ankara, Republic of Turkey
- ▶ OIC-UN Biennial General Cooperation Meeting, June 29-July 1, 2010, Istanbul, Republic of Turkey