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SESRTCIC ORGANIZES A SPECIAL MEETING WITH NATIONAL STATISTICAL OFFICES IN OIC AFRICAN COUNTRIES

The SESRTCIC organized on 17 January 2007 a special meeting for the delegates of the African OIC member countries on the sidelines of the 2007 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development, which was held in Kigali, Rwanda, on 15-19 January 2007. Representatives of 16 member countries, namely Cameroon, Chad, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Gabon, Gambia, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Somalia, Sudan, Togo and Tunisia, and the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) attended the Meeting. Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General, and Ms. Sevgi Reçberoğlu, researcher, represented the Centre thereat.

During the Meeting, Dr. Alpay briefed the delegates on the mandates of the SESRTCIC in general and in the field of statistics in particular. In this context, he introduced the Centre's new training programme on statistical capacity building in the member countries which is based on matching the needs and capacities of their respective National Statistical Institutions. For this task to be carried out in a more efficient way, the Centre requested the delegates to provide it with the necessary contact information and the training needs and capacities of their institutions through two questionnaires distributed by the SESRTCIC for this purpose. The delegates were also informed that those questionnaires could be obtained by visiting the Centre's web site.

Also discussed were the ways and means to facilitate the participation of the member countries in the World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy which will take place in Istanbul in June 2007. In this connection, Dr. Alpay informed the delegates that the SESRTCIC is a co-organizer of the said Forum of concern and that it will try, in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank, to facilitate participation from the OIC member countries by providing financial support.

SESRTCIC PARTICIPATES IN THE OECD WORLD FORUM'S REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR AFRICA

The SESRTCIC has participated in the OECD World Forum's Regional Conference for Africa: Building Capacity to Measure and Foster the Progress of Societies on 14 January 2007 in Kigali, Rwanda. The Conference, which was attended by almost 50 delegates from African countries and international organizations, constitutes one of the regional pre-conferences of the OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, to be held in Istanbul on 27-30 June 2007. Dr. Savaş Alpay and Ms. Sevgi Reçberoğlu represented the Centre thereat.

At the first session of the conference, the participants exchanged views on the ways to improve cooperation between statisticians and the rest of the society in order to better

understand the needs of the society and develop more appropriated statistics. The attitudes of policy makers and the media towards the national statistical offices were also discussed.

At the second session, discussions centered on the special needs of African countries to improve their statistical capacity with a view to monitoring the progress made by providing economic, social and environmental data.

At the last session, the participants discussed the relevance of the current Millennium Development Goals (MDG) for African countries and the possible changes of indicators after 2015, the expiration year of the MDGs.

SESRTCIC CO-ORGANIZES THE OECD WORLD FORUM'S REGIONAL CONFERENCE FOR ASIA

The SESRTCIC together with the OECD and Korean National Statistical Office co-organized the Asian region conference on "Measuring and Fostering the Progress of Societies," in Seoul, South Korea on 8-9 February 2007 as one of the regional pre-conferences for the OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, which will be held in Istanbul-Turkey on 27-30 June 2007. Delegates from some Asian OIC member states, namely, Indonesia, Brunei, Malaysia and Bangladesh were among the participants in this conference.

The conference started with opening remarks by Dae You Kim, Commissioner of the Korean National Statistics Office (KNSO) and Enrico Giovannini, Chief Statistician of the OECD, followed by a welcome address from Deputy Prime Minister of Korea.

The first session of the conference, titled "Statistics, Knowledge and Policy: Measuring Progress in Reality" was chaired by Dr. Savaş Alpay, who also presented a paper titled: "Real Progress, Shared Progress."

The conference highlighted important issues covering the definition of progress from an Asian perspective and how it could be measured. Beside that, changing demography with aging population and low fertility rate, globalization and free trade, energy and environment, evaluation of usefulness of international indicator sets to monitor progress with respect to MDG's indicators, importance of collaboration between statisticians, policy makers and civil society, improvement of national statistical systems effectiveness and efficiency in developing countries, measuring democracy and human rights were among the issues addressed in this conference.

SESRTCIC ORGANIZES TRAINING COURSES ON LABOUR STATISTICS AND DATA ANALYSIS IN YEMEN

Within the framework of statistical capacity building for the National Statistical Offices (NSOs) in the OIC member countries, the SESRTCIC has organized training courses on "Labor Statistics" and "Statistical Data Analysis" on 18-21 February 2007 in Sanaa, Republic of

Yemen. The training was supervised by an expert from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the course was attended by 15 participants from the Yemeni Central Statistics Organization. The course aimed to give training on international concepts and terms as set by the International Labor Organization, classification of labor force according to labor statistics indicators, labor market indicators, the mechanism of preparing a labor force survey form to measure labor statistics indicators, methodology of labor force survey, calculation of labor force indicators based on labor force survey form and a simple application using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS).

At the end of the course, the trainees expressed their satisfaction with its content and their thanks to the trainer for his performance and to the Centre for its efforts in organizing the courses.

SESRTCIC ORGANIZES A TRAINING PROGRAMME ON WEB-BASED DATA COMPILATION TECHNIQUES IN AZERBAIJAN

At the request of the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan, the Centre organized a training programme on “Web-based Data Compilation Techniques” on 26-29 February 2007 at the State Statistical Committee in Baku, Azerbaijan. The objective of the training programme was to consider the architecture of web-based applications and practices of applications. An expert from the Turkish Statistical Institute was designated to instruct the trainees on the topic of concern. 12 people from the State Statistical Committee of Azerbaijan participated in the training. The participants had the opportunity to learn how to develop a web-based application in detail. They were supplied with the necessary documents, programmes and application codes.

OIC NEWS

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONVENES IN JEDDAH

The 30th session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs of the OIC was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 3-5 March 2007 with the participation of delegates from thirty-seven member states and representatives of the OIC General Secretariat and its subsidiary, specialized and affiliated organs. Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General, and Mr. Nabil Dabour, Senior Researcher, represented the Centre thereat.

The Commission convened first in its capacity as the Joint General Assembly of the OIC subsidiary organs. As such, it reviewed the activities of these organs during the elapsed year and commended their efforts to strengthen economic cooperation among the member states, in particular their follow-up and implementation of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action. In this connection, the Commission noted the increase in intra-OIC trade to 15%,

which means that the 20% target can be reached before the end of the Ten-Year Programme of Action.

The Commission also considered the proposed budgets and work programmes of the OIC General Secretariat and its subsidiary organs for the period July-December 2007 as well as their audited final accounts for the financial year 2005/2006 and recommended their submission to the 35th Session of the Permanent Finance Committee (PFC) in preparation for submission to the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers for final approval.

The Commission then took up its technical agenda whereby it reviewed and discussed a number of issues concerning the member states in the fields of economic, science and technology, cultural and social affairs. In this connection, the Centre presented five technical reports on prominent issues of interest to the OIC countries, namely 1) Annual Economic Report on the OIC Countries 2006, 2) Economic Problems of the Least-developed and Landlocked OIC Countries 2006, 3) The Basel II Accord and its Implications for the OIC Countries, 4) International Tourism in the OIC Countries: Prospects and Challenges and 5) The Possibility of Establishing a Free Trade Area among the OIC Member Countries. The Commission expressed its appreciation of the work accomplished by the SESRTCIC and encouraged it to continue with its outstanding performance.

After the deliberations, the Commission adopted the draft resolutions on economic affairs, science and technology, cultural and social affairs and Dawa activities for submission to the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers.

**THE HEADS OF THE SUBSIDIARY, SPECIALIZED AND AFFILIATED ORGANS
DISCUSS THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE OIC TEN-YEAR PROGRAMME OF
ACTION**

Within the framework of the implementation of the OIC Ten-year Programme of Action, adopted by the 3rd Extraordinary Islamic Summit, the OIC General Secretariat organized a meeting for the heads of the OIC subsidiary, specialized and affiliated organs in order to follow up the implementation of this Programme.

The meeting was held on 4 March 2007 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on the sidelines of the 30th Session of the Islamic Commission for Economic, Cultural and Social Affairs. It was chaired by H.E Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC, and attended by all the heads of the OIC institutions and the executive staff of the General Secretariat.

In the opening session, statements were delivered by H.E Prof Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC, H.E. Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali, President of the IDB Group, and some of the heads of the OIC institutions. In his statement, the Secretary General noted with satisfaction the special interest that the OIC institutions are undertaking in the implementation of the Ten-year Programme of Action and requested them to pursue their efforts in carrying out the implementation of the said Programme.

The participants then discussed the progress so far made in the implementation of the various areas of the Programme of Action and the planned actions for the future. During the discussion, Dr. Savas Alpay, Director General of the Centre, made two presentations under two different agenda items of the meeting as follows:

Under the agenda item “Supporting Development and Poverty Alleviation in Africa”, Dr. Alpay briefed the participants of the meeting on the report titled “Poverty in Sub-Saharan Africa: the Situation in the OIC Member Countries” which has recently been prepared by the Centre as a preliminary contribution to the special programme for the development of Africa stipulated in the Ten-year Programme of Action. He informed the participants of the meeting that this preliminary report would be complemented with a series of publications by the Centre on the same subject. Together, they would constitute a significant contribution in attaining the targets of poverty alleviation in the African OIC member countries set by the Ten-Year Programme of Action.

Under the agenda item “Action Plan for the OIC Cotton Producing Countries’ Cooperation Development Strategy (2007-2011)”, Dr. Alpay presented the main findings of the paper titled “The Cotton Sector in the OIC Countries: Problems and Possibilities of Cooperation” which has been prepared by the Centre recently. In his presentation, the Director General highlighted the importance of cotton in the OIC member countries and the challenges facing the OIC cotton producing member countries, particularly those in West and Central Africa. He informed the participants that the paper elaborated on some possible ways of cooperation among those countries in this important sector and concluded with the recommendation of establishing an OIC Cotton Alliance among OIC cotton producers and traders to coordinate such cooperation.

TRADE NEGOTIATING COMMITTEE HOLDS THE SECOND MEETING OF THE SECOND ROUND OF TRADE NEGOTIATIONS ON 27-30 MARCH IN ANKARA

The Second Meeting of the Second Round of Trade Negotiations was held in Ankara on 27-30 March 2007 with the participation of delegates from 15 countries of the Trade Negotiations Committee (TNC), 6 OIC member countries attended the meeting as observers and representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, ICDT, IDB, SESRTCIC and GCC.

The Meeting was inaugurated by Dr. Ahmet Tıktık, Undersecretary of State Planning Organization of the Republic of Turkey and chaired by Mrs. Ulker Güzel, Deputy Undersecretary of Foreign Trade of the Republic of Turkey. Messages from H.E. Kürşat Tüzmen, Turkish Minister of State in charge of Foreign Trade and from H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary General of the OIC were read out in the opening session of this meeting. A presentation was made by the TNC Secretariat on the background and the issues to be discussed during the Second Round of Trade Negotiations. Except for some articles, the draft of TPSOIC Rules of Origin proposed by the Republic of Turkey was agreed to be taken by the TNC. Regarding the articles on which there was no consensus, the Committee decided that the participating states should submit the Draft Rules of Origin to their capitals for the finalization of their positions regarding these

articles and decided that the adopted articles would not be reopened for negotiations in the future. The committee reiterated the mandate given by the Ministers of Commerce of the member countries of the TNC for finalizing the TPSOIC Rules of Origin before the 23rd COMCEC in November 2007.

It has been agreed that the member states will submit the data on their Para-Tariff and Non-Tariff Measures to the TNC General Secretariat before the next meeting of the TNC. The Committee noted the presentation of the delegate of Brunei Darussalam about the experiences of ASEAN in eliminating the Para-Tariff and Non-Tariff Measures. The Committee also accepted the proposal for the organization of an Expert Group Meeting on Para-Tariff and Non-Tariff Measures and authorized ICDDT to organize the meeting and submit the outcome to the TNC. The Committee reiterated the need to expedite the signature and ratification of the Agreement on TPSOIC and PRETAS in order to be able to establish the TPSOIC by the target date of 1st January 2009.

In the closing session the TNC decided that the Secretariat would communicate with the TNC member countries regarding the date and venue of the next meeting of the TNC.

OTHER MEETINGS

SESRTCIC PARTICIPATES IN THE 2007 AFRICA SYMPOSIUM ON STATISTICAL DEVELOPMENT

The United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, the National Institute for Statistics in Rwanda and Statistics South Africa co-organized the 2007 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development: Africa Counts: “Towards a Complete Enumeration of the African Population during the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses”. The Symposium was held in Kigali, Rwanda, on 15-19 January 2007 and attended by heads of National Statistical Offices in Africa, heads of Census Offices in African NSOs, and regional and international organizations. Dr. Savaş Alpay, Director General, and Ms. Sevgi Reçberoglu, researcher represented the Centre thereat.

The Symposium was the second of a series of symposia aimed at encouraging African countries and governments to improve the use of evidence-based decision-making and plan population and housing censuses in a better way. Among the issues discussed were the reasons for the need for complete enumeration of population and housing censuses in African countries, the roles and attitudes of statisticians and politicians in the process and the way how to finance the censuses.

The Symposium provided an opportunity to review the progress achieved with regard to the resolutions adopted at previous symposia. A number of African countries also shared their experiences in the process of population census.

It was decided that the 2008 Africa Symposium on Statistical Development be held in Ghana.

**SESRTCIC PARTICIPATES IN THE NINTH SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE
FOR THE COORDINATION OF STATISTICAL ACTIVITIES**

The Ninth Session of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) was held in New York on 26 February 2007. Dr. Sıdıka Başç1, Senior Researcher represented the Centre thereat.

The CCSA was established on 19 September 2002 to promote coordination and integration among the statistical programmes of international organizations. The SESRTCIC has been welcomed as the newest member of the Committee at its eighth session, held in Montreal, Canada, on 4-5 September 2006.

The Committee took up the various issues on its Agenda including: the “Report on Common Open Standards for the Exchange and Sharing of Socio-economic Data and Metadata: the SDMX initiative by the OECD; progress in the implementation of the recommendations by the Friends of the Chair on Millennium Development Goals (MDG) Indicators and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution on Statistical Capacity Building, by the United Nations Statistical Commission (UNSC); the “Note on the project on the use and convergence of international quality assurance frameworks”, by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat); the “Note on progress with the proposed action plan on training in statistics for staff of the international agencies”, by the IMF; and the “Reporting System on Partner Support to Statistical Development” by Paris 21.

The participants were informed with the CCSA training website on which the SESRTCIC could consider presenting its training activities. The Centre will also investigate two of the 12 modules constituting the e-learning course being developed by the World Bank. The Centre is also involved in the CCSA Task Team 3 on improving the coordination of technical cooperation programmes in statistics at the sub-regional level.

The Committee also discussed the draft agenda of its tenth session, to be held in Madrid on 10-12 September 2007.

**SESRTCIC PARTICIPATES IN THE THIRTY-EIGHTH SESSION
OF THE UN STATISTICAL COMMISSION**

The Thirty-eighth Session of the UN Statistical Commission was held at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 27 February-2 March 2007. The Session, which marks the 60th Anniversary of the Committee, was attended by representatives from the

24 Member States of the Commission as well as observers from other Member States of the UN, representatives of organizations of the UN system and observers from inter-governmental, non-governmental and other organizations active in international statistical work. Dr. Sıdıka Başçı, Senior Researcher represented the Centre thereat.

The session's agenda included items for discussion and decision and others for information. The items for discussion and decision were Programme Review, Education Statistics, Population and Housing Censuses, Disability Measurement, Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Statistics, Agricultural Statistics, National Accounts, Integrated Economic Statistics, Environmental Accounting, International Economic and Social Classifications Management issues in National Statistical Offices, Access to Microdata, Development Indicators, Statistical Capacity-Building, and International Comparison Programme. Items for information included Migration Statistics, Health Statistics, Industrial Statistics, Distributive-Trade Statistics, Energy Statistics, Finance Statistics, Price Statistics, Coordination and Integration of Statistical Programmes, Common Open Standards for the Exchange and Sharing of Data and Metadata; and Follow-up to Economic and Social Council policy decisions.

SESRTCIC's representative informed the participants of the Session that the Centre was working on a computer programme which will enable direct data transfer from the National Statistical Offices (NSO) of the OIC member countries to the Centre's web site which will save much time and effort and enhance the reliability of the data used by the Centre in its statistical work.

Dr. Başçı also attended a seminar on "Dialogue on Statistical Development with International Agencies" which was intended to encourage an exchange between national chief statisticians and international agencies on existing and planned initiatives in statistical capacity building. It also provided an opportunity for international agencies to present an overview of their programmes and for country representatives to provide a feedback based on their needs and experience. In this context, Dr. Başçı pointed out that the SESRTCIC had carried out a survey for matching the needs and capacities of the NSOs in the OIC member countries and that, in light of the responses it receives from the NSOs, it organized two training programmes in February 2007 and intended to organize 10 more by the end of September 2007.

SESRTCIC's representative also had discussions with a number of delegates from Palestine, the OECD, World Bank, FAO and the Arab Institute for Training and Research in Statistics on the possibilities of future cooperation between both sides.

At the end of the session, the Commission approved the provisional agenda for its thirty-ninth session and recommended that it be held on 26-29 February 2008.

**SESRTCIC PARTICIPATES IN A REGIONAL MEETING
ON STATISTICAL TRAINING IN AFRICA**

A regional meeting on statistical training in Africa was organized on 12-13 March 2007 in Kampala, Uganda within the framework of the PARIS 21 Task Team on Statistical

Training and Human Resources. The meeting was organized jointly by the PARIS 21 Secretariat, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Makerere University's Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics with the Logistical Support of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

This meeting brought together directors from statistical training institutes of the Francophone and Anglophone countries as well as representatives from African Countries of Portuguese Official Language (PALOP). Representatives from 35 sub-regional, regional and/or international organizations participated in the proceedings. The Centre was represented by Mr. Suleyman İslamoğlu, Senior Researcher.

The meeting's objectives were to assess the state of statistical training in Africa, highlight difficulties, and propose concrete solutions. To achieve this, it adopted a format that encouraged discussion among participants. Three sessions sorted by language groups (English, French and Portuguese) were held around the following themes:

- Funding and functioning of statistical training institutes in Africa
- Adapting training to the demand: how can we meet the demand?
- Financing scholarships

Participants reported back in plenary sessions on their thoughts and proposed actions. Finally, a set of recommendations were drafted with general consensus on: adaptation of training to the demand, funding of statistical training, and actions to be taken on establishing an African Forum on Statistical Training.

CENTRE'S AGENDA FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 2007

April

Meeting/Workshop on "Development of Islamic Microfinance Services", 14 April 2007, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Meeting of Senior Officials Preparatory to the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, 14-16 April 2007, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

Thirty-fifth Session of the Permanent Finance Committee, 17-19 April 2007, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Third Arab Forum for Capacity Building and Development, 17-18 April 2007, Sanaa, Yemen.

OECD Regional Conference for Middle East and North Africa, 19 April 2007, Sanaa, Yemen.

UNECA, Fifth Session of the Committee on Development Information-Statistical Capacity Building: 29 April – 6 May 2007. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

May

Second Expert Group Meeting on Tourism Development, 3-5 May 2007, Istanbul, Turkey

SESRTCIC Special Session on Statistical Capacity Building for Africa, 04 May 2007. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Thirty-fourth Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, 15-17 May 2007, Islamabad, Pakistan.

IFSD Forum on Islamic Microfinance Development: Challenges and Initiatives, 27 May 2007, Dakar, Senegal.

Twenty-third Meeting of the Follow-up Committee of the COMCEC, 29-31 May 2007, Ankara, Turkey.

June

Sixth Meeting of the OIC Task Force on SMES, 11-13 June, Malé, Maldives.

First Islamic Conference of Ministers of Health, 12-15 June 2007, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

The 11th General Conference of the Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), 18-20 June 2007, Ankara, Turkey.

Second World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy, 27-30 June Istanbul, Turkey.

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