



**Statement of DG of SESRIC at the Fourth Session of the  
Islamic Conference of**

**Youth and Sports Ministers**

**19 April 2018, Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan**

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

**Honourable Ministers,**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**



**Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,**

It is a great pleasure for me to address this important OIC Ministerial Conference. At the outset, I would like to express my deep thanks and gratitude to the Ministry of Youth and Sport of the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting this important conference in this beautiful city of Baku and for the excellent efforts, they made to ensure the adequate and smooth running of the proceedings of the conference.



My thanks are also extended to the OIC General Secretariat, the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), and the Islamic Conference Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF) for their active role in the preparations for this Conference.



**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The OIC member countries are, as a group, home to nearly 500 million youth representing about 28.5 of the world's youth population. While the relatively high share of youth in our countries could be considered as an important strength and opportunity for the sustainability of the growth in our societies and economies.



However, there are also a number of critical challenges associated with youth bulge that need to be addressed.

In this connection, there is still a need for enhancing the active involvement of youth in the socio-economic development process in our member countries through providing the opportunity for the young qualified people to participate in the entrepreneurial sector and technology adoption and innovation.



Moreover, the OIC 10-Year Programme of Action (OIC 2025) requires the OIC and its member countries to put forward coherent and prudent strategies and policies to facilitate the empowerment of youth and enhancing their role in the development of our societies.

This will not only contribute to enhancing innovation and industrial output and strengthening strategic human capital reserves, but also help bridging the gap between the state policy and civic society and effectively reducing violence and extremism in our societies.



**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The issue of socio-economic challenges of youth in OIC Member Countries falls within the three mandated areas of our Centre, namely statistics, economic and social research and training. In these areas, SESRIC has initiated and implemented various programmes and activities. I would like to make use of this opportunity to very shortly brief you on some of these activities and programmes.



In the area of statistics and research, SESRIC prepared the first edition of the “State of Youth Report” in collaboration with ICYF-DC in line with the resolution adopted during the Third Session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers. The report identifies key challenges and proposes some policy recommendations. In that report, SESRIC also developed the OIC Youth Policy Score Indicator, which aims to reveal the state of youth policies and governance in OIC member states. Some of the key findings of the Report are as follows:





- 1. Many young people still cannot read or write.** In 2015, 85 per cent of youth in OIC Countries are literate, which was well below the world average of 91 per cent and the average of non-OIC developing countries of 93 per cent.
- 2. The labour force participation rate among youth is on the decline.** In OIC Countries, the average labour force participation rate among youth decreased from 46 per cent in 2000 to 43.5 per cent in 2016.



3. **High youth unemployment rates continue to remain as a major challenge.** As of 2016, the youth unemployment in the OIC group was found to be 16 per cent. It was far above the average of the non-OIC developing countries of 11 per cent.
4. **Being a young entrepreneur in OIC Countries is harder when compared with developed countries.** The Global Entrepreneurship Index (GEI) score of OIC countries, on average, was found to be 25 where the average of developed countries was 58 in 2017.



5. **A significant amount of youth are excluded from education, employment and training in OIC Countries.** In 2014, 22 per cent of youth in OIC Countries are excluded from education, employment and training whereas the global average was only 12 per cent.
6. **Family values are still strong among youth.** In OIC countries, 98 per cent of youth still thinks that “family is the most important institution in their lives”, however, this will change with the emergence of the new generations that are



being influenced by a number of factors such as individualism and career pressure.

At the research front, SESRIC also played a critical role in re-drafting the OIC Youth Strategy in collaboration with ICYF-DC.

The re-drafted strategy was presented by SESRIC during the Intergovernmental Experts Group Meeting to Finalize the OIC



Youth Strategy that was held on 8-9 January 2018 in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

In the area of training and capacity building, SESRIC launched the **OIC International Internship Program (OIC Intern)** with the aim of facilitating the entry of students into the labour



market by contributing to the development of their knowledge and skills about the working environment.

Moreover, SESRIC in collaboration with the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), and UNDP Istanbul Center for Private Sector in Development (IICPSD) launched **the Skills, Employment and Entrepreneurship Development (SEED)** for



Inclusive Growth to address the unemployment of youth, women and other disadvantaged groups in OIC Countries.

SESRIC together with the partner institutions launched **the “Syrian Palestinian Employment and Entrepreneurship Development – SPEED”** Project during the 33rd Ministerial Session of COMCEC. The project underlines the partnering



institutions' mutual concern to enhance the effectiveness of their development efforts that will serve as the driver of economic empowerment and resilience of youth living in an environment of continuous fragility, violence or conflict.

SESRIC organised a Training Workshop for the Junior Diplomats from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of OIC Countries on “**Dynamics of OIC Decision Making and Functioning**” in November 2017.





The aim was to provide a distinct opportunity to enrich the knowledge of junior diplomats on the OIC system, its organs and modalities of cooperation.

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Before concluding, I would like to express once again our readiness at SESRIC to strengthen our cooperation and partnership with all the relevant OIC institutions, national,



regional, and international organisations in all our youth-related programmes and activities.

We stand ready to deepen our cooperation and implement joint activities with relevant stakeholders in our member countries working in youth related issues with a view to building up a better future for Islamic Ummah.

I am confident that the deliberations and resolutions of this Ministerial Conference will be highly instrumental in improving the state of youth in our member countries.



I wish you all the success and thank you for your kind attention.

Wassalamu Alaykum we Rahmatullahi we Barakatuhu