

Welcoming Statement by Amb. Musa Kulaklıkaya
Director General of SESRIC
At the “Third Meeting of Occupational Safety and Health Network”
İstanbul, Turkey, 10 May 2016

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Your Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen
Assalamu Alaikum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu,

Good Morning. I am honoured to address the “Third Meeting of Occupational Safety and Health Network” which we have the pleasure to jointly organize it with General Directorate of Occupational Health and Safety (İSGÜM) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, Republic of Turkey. Let me at the outset express my sincere appreciation and thanks to all of you for accepting the invitation and designating time to attend this very important event. Taking this opportunity, I also would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Ministry of Labour of Turkey for their logistic support and hosting this significant meeting on the sideline of the 8th International Conference of Occupational Health and Safety.

As the Director General of SESRIC, I am excited about being here and I extend greetings to all of you. Here we all share common interests in protecting workers and seeking solutions to improve workplace safety in OIC Member Countries. I hope our meeting would provide us a valuable opportunity to collaborate, share ideas and, together, develop solutions to key occupational safety and health problems to advance the cause of occupational safety and health. It is my earnest hope that the discussions taking place during the Conference will strengthen our partnerships and lead to enhanced worker rights.

Your Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen

As you all know, the scope of occupational safety and health has evolved regularly and continuously in response to social, political, technological and economic changes. In recent years, globalization of the world’s economies and its impacts have been superficial as the extreme force for change in the world of work, and subsequently in the scope of occupational safety and health, in both positive and negative ways. Liberalization of world trade, fast technological progress, substantial developments in transport and communication, shifting patterns of employment, changes in work organization practices, the diverse employment

patterns of men and women, and the size, structure and life cycles of enterprises and of new technologies can all generate new types and patterns of hazards, exposures and risks. Demographic changes and population movements, and the consequent pressures on the global environment, can also affect safety and health in the world of work.

It is no coincidence that the protection of workers against sickness, disease and injury related to the working environment has been a central issue for the ILO since its creation in 1919, and continues to be so today. The human, social and economic costs of occupational accidents, injuries and diseases and major industrial disasters have long been cause for concern at all levels from the individual workplace to the national and intra OIC Level. Methods and policies designed to prevent, control, reduce or eliminate occupational hazards and risks have been developed and applied continuously over the years to stay even with technological and economic changes. Yet, despite continuous improvements, occupational accidents and diseases are still too frequent and their cost in terms of human suffering and economic burden continues to be noteworthy.

A recent survey conducted by World Health Organisation (WHO) revealed that the abovementioned consequences effect for about 70 percent of adult men and up to 60 percent of adult women in the world, estimated 40 million adults are finally affected in the industrial sector. A research made by WHO found that poor occupational health and reduced working capacity of workers may cause economic loss up to 10-20% of the Gross National Product of a country. As for the figures with respect to estimated number of occupational accidents and fatal work-related diseases in OIC Member Countries in 2014, more than 80 million occupational accidents causing more than 4 days of absence; almost 86 thousand fatal occupational accidents, and more than 390 thousand fatal work-related diseases. OIC Member Countries, according to SESRIC estimation, together with other developing countries, account more than 96% of total occupational accidents and almost 90% of total fatal work-related diseases in the world.

According to a research conducted by ILO, annually, occupational accidents and work-related diseases cause over 2.3 million fatalities, out of which over 350,000 are caused by occupational accidents and close to 2 million by work-related diseases. As a result, approximately 6,300 people die every day due to these causes: occupational accidents kill nearly a 1,000 people every day and work-related diseases provoke the death of approximately 5,400 more individuals. There were also over 313 million non-fatal occupational accidents in 2010, meaning that occupational accidents provoke injury or ill health for approximately 860,000 people every day. According to ILO estimation, world's annual GDP lost as a result of occupational accidents and diseases is 4% of overall.

Your Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen

Occupational safety and health remain neglected in developing world as well as OIC because of competing national and sector issues and challenges. One big challenge is how to ensure that workers in both the informal sector and formal sector have adequate health and safety education and are able to actively use this information to better their health and safety practices. It is clear that OIC Member Countries have poor OSH review mechanisms; second, majority have inadequate OSH policy; and third, only some have developed OSH infrastructures. There is the need for OSH investments in the areas of research, education, policy formulation and implementation, training and OSH promotion in OIC region.

Against this background, the OIC-OSHNET was established as an international network for systematic sharing of knowledge and experience in occupational safety and health issues among professionals, to build public awareness of occupational safety and health in OIC Member Countries, as well as to improve the quality of the service in this area. With the OIC OSHNET, apart from generating awareness on the issues of occupational safety and health in public level, the knowledge and skills of professional in the concerned fields was substantially enhanced and a better understanding of the current situation at the country and regional level was developed. Furthermore, the fact that these findings were started to be reflected into respective reports and country projects on issues of priority to the member countries for effective capacity building is a promising feature of the Network.

As a manifestation of collective commitment of member countries to the Network, 27 National Focal Points have been nominated through which several activities were accomplished. To name some of them, 17 training programmes, three study visits, and three network meetings have been organised; the OSH Portal and the OSH General Guideline on

Occupational Safety and Health in OIC Member Countries were developed. At present, we are in the eve of accomplishing a project in Mauritania that involves; providing support for legislative arrangement, establishment of occupational hygiene laboratory and realization of necessary trainings for the staff of OSH Authority.

Your Excellencies, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen

I have the pleasure to inform that the General Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health, which was prepared by the members of the Network was endorsed by the Third Islamic Conference of Labour Ministers held in Jakarta, Indonesia in October 2015 in response to the OIC Framework for Cooperation on Labour, Employment and Social Protection which defines six areas of cooperation, including occupational safety and health, and calls upon member countries and OIC institutions to adopt and enforce international OSH regulations and standards; as well as to popularise occupational health and safety standards with regard to projects financed by relevant OIC institutions.

Pursuant to the decision of the Third ICLM, the OIC OSHNET is willing to develop relevant standards in accordance with the General Guidelines on Occupational Safety and Health and make these standards available for the use of relevant bodies in OIC Member Countries. These standards will mainly be used with regard to projects financed by relevant OIC institutions within the scope of OSH; progressively the standards will be popularised among the OIC Member Countries.

Your Excellencies, distinguished participants, ladies and gentlemen

The problem of workplace safety and health in the world and the strategies for its reduction should be considered with a new vision at both the individual country and international cooperation levels. In this spirit, we came together today in this conference to deliberate and exchange our views and expertise on one important aspects of cooperation in the field of workplace safety and health. The main objective of this Third Meeting of the OIC OSHNET is to review the progress of the actions and activities accomplished since the inception of the Network in May 2011 in Ankara and discuss the modalities for closer collaboration among OSH authorities in member countries. The Meeting will also adopt the “Istanbul Declaration on Sustainable OSH Services in OIC Member Countries”, towards accomplishing Sustainable Development Goals of 2030 Agenda.

We at SESRIC welcome the opportunity to work with you to ensure that all workers return home safely from their jobs each and every day. As we all look forward to the successful outcome of this meeting, I wish you all the success.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Wassalamu Alaykum wa Rahmatullahi wa Barakatuhu