

11th SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE

DAKAR DECLARATION

We, the Kings and the Heads of State and Government of member states of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) meeting on the occasion of our 11th Ordinary Conference in Dakar, capital of the Republic of Senegal, from 6 to 7 Rabiul Awwal 1429H (13 – 14 March 2008),

Have taken stock of the Summit's historic importance in these early years of the third millennium, which is marked by major world developments at the ideological, political, economic, scientific and technological levels.

Furthermore, the 11th OIC Summit Conference is the first to be held since the 3rd Extraordinary Session was held in Makkah Al Mukarramah in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from 5 to 6 Dhul Qa'ada

1426H (7 – 8 December 2005), which was a landmark and a source of pride for the Ummah as illustrated by the Ten-Year Programme of Action adopted on the occasion.

We have underscored, once again, the guidelines of the Programme in order to rise up to the challenges facing the Ummah in the 21st century in its bid to seize any opportunity to ensure sustainable development in peace, brotherhood for the sake Allah and solidarity.

We are proud to proclaim, once again, to the entire world that the Ummah is fortunate, in the face of such challenges, to find in the Holy Quran's lofty teachings the right solutions to the problems currently besetting human societies. Islam, a religion of total devotion to Allah the Almighty, is also an irreplaceable vector of progress in this world in that its message of human salvation encompasses all walks of life.

In light of the foregoing, we believe that the 11th OIC Summit Conference (The Ummah's 21st Century Session) is a happy continuation of the Makkah Al Mukarramah Extraordinary Summit because it has helped to give impetus to our collective willingness to achieve gradually the Ummah's set objectives.

In this vein, we believe that the Ummah's unity should remain, in our hearts and minds, an ultimate goal that dictates on our countries a conduct that prefers abnegation, values and common interests to division, hatred and confrontation.

The Leaders of Muslim countries hereby renew their pledge to preserve world peace and security, one of the OIC's objectives, and thus to fully adhere to the United Nations' key mission in this regard as well as international legality as a rule for all without any political double standards.

This is the reason why we proclaim, once again, our resolve to make sure that the Ummah's entire causes prevail in accordance with resolutions adopted in this regard by the Islamic Conference and the United Nations.

From this standpoint, in order to ensure just and lasting peace in the Middle East, we reaffirm solemnly the need to comply with all Security Council resolutions on Al Quds, an issue for which the OIC was established, and on the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to establish an independent state within internationally guaranteed borders.

We reiterate our condemnation of Israel's pattern of refusal to fully comply with the resolutions in question, to allow the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital without any territorial discontinuity, to pull out of the Golan Heights of Syria and to respect Lebanon's territorial integrity and sovereignty.

We reaffirm our respective countries' solidarity with the Palestinian people's heroic struggle and applaud their exemplary courage, which appears prominently on the most beautiful pages of the Ummah's history.

We proclaim, once again, our common position on the overall settlement of the Palestinian question in accordance with OIC and UN resolutions, the Arab Peace Initiative and the Road Map of the Quartet within the spirit of the OIC's constant commitment to the Middle East peace process.

Our faith in such a strategic option for the quest for peace in that part of the world, where had originated many spiritual messages that advocate love for one's fellow human being, illustrates our strict adherence to the values of Islam, a religion of peace that forbids all forms of exclusivity and extremism and that warrants the following quotation "You have been made a Prophet only to restore peace in the world", which is based on a verse from the Holy Quran.

Based on this deep conviction, we the Kings and the Heads of State and Government of the OIC renew our pledge to work harder to make sure that Islam's true image is better projected the world over in line with the guidelines contained in the Ten-Year Programme of Action issued by the 3rd Extraordinary Summit of Makkah Al Mukarramah, which seek to combat an Islamophobia with designs to distort our religion.

Consequently, we continue to strongly condemn all forms of extremism and dogmatism, which are incompatible with Islam, a religion of moderation and peaceful coexistence. It is in this vein that we support the dialogue of civilizations, and we believe that it is important to plan along such lines a preparatory phase by organizing a major international gathering on Islamic – Christian dialogue that involves governments, among other players.

Owing to such considerations based on our religious beliefs, we reiterate our condemnation of all forms of terrorism by referring to the Ten-Year Programme of Action adopted at our 3rd Extraordinary Summit and in which it is stated that terrorism is a “global phenomenon that is not related to any religion, race, colour or country” and that the scourge should be distinguished from “legitimate resistance against foreign occupation that prevents one from shedding the blood of innocent civilians”. The adoption of an OIC convention on terrorism and other international initiatives by the Islamic geographical sphere to combat terrorism as well as the OIC’s involvement in efforts to adopt an international code of conduct on how to fight against the heinous phenomenon are an indication of our total rejection of it.

Since we share the international community’s major concerns over terrorism, we would like to confirm that the OIC always seeks to make sure that it is not found wanting when it comes to joint actions designed to overcome the major challenges facing nations as a result of globalization. We therefore set great store by human rights and good governance so that our respective countries would uphold

them continuously as essential factors of human progress and prosperity.

It is the same drive of enabling the OIC to play fully its role in handling problems brought about by globalization that we reaffirm our political will to take or support any initiative designed, among others, to combat natural disasters, overcome the environmental problems endangering mankind, eradicate poverty and take part fully in the global campaign to bridge the digital divide through voluntary contributions so as to address the blighting energy problem as a vital development factor and to promote women, the family and children as a major social requirement.

Since the OIC is keenly interested in helping to gradually overcome challenges currently facing the world, it cannot but work harder for its member states and Muslim minorities by taking inspiring from the precepts of Islam, especially the obligation to ensure Islamic solidarity.

Intra-Islamic cooperation in the areas of competence of the OIC's standing committees is a duty dictated by the foregoing lessons as well as the new development requirements, whose advantages our governments should make use of and identify their adverse effects, especially on our Islamic culture, so as to combat them effectively.

We the Kings and the Heads of State and Government of OIC member states, being fully aware of such a duty, which should always

underpin Islamic solidarity, reaffirm the priority that we give to the implementation of such an exalting objective by mobilizing both governments and the private sector, whose pivotal role in achieving such a huge enterprise of intra-Islamic cooperation is quite obvious.

On this score, Africa's situation, while the 11th Islamic Summit is taking place in Senegal, has drawn our attention because the problems of poverty besetting the continent should give rise to a solidarity drive among the other sections of the Ummah on account of the huge economic resources and potentials that Allah the Almighty has endowed them with to purposely address such livelihood difficulties and to bring their weight to bear on the international scene. In view of such a fact, we, the leaders of OIC member states, have given utmost importance to the need to urgently implement the provisions of the Ten-Year Programme of Action on "development assistance and the fight against poverty in Africa". We have thus agreed to include among the priorities of the joint Islamic action bilateral and multilateral debt relief by donor member states in favour of low-income OIC African member countries in view of the fact that, under the Ten-Year Programme of Action, "special attention should be given to Africa, the region most plagued by poverty, disease, illiteracy, famine and debt". The debt relief should be conducted according proportions and deadlines taking into account the heavy debt burden on African economies.

It is in the same spirit of solidarity that we pledge that our Governments will do whatever it takes to make contributions amounting to US\$ 10 billion, as soon as possible, to the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, established within the Islamic

Development Bank (IDB). In this regard, we applaud the pledges made so far by some OIC donor countries.

As part of our common desire to make the 11th Islamic Summit in Dakar a landmark in the embodiment of Islamic solidarity, we have shown great interest in the need to mobilize Zakaat funds in the OIC geographical area and allocate them rationally and efficiently to the needy so that such a pillar of Islam is made a vital aspect of Islamic solidarity.

The Islamic renewal we have sought to introduce since the 3rd Extraordinary Summit in Makkah Al Mukarramah should also materialize through a speedy human resource development process of high quality in OIC member states by giving special importance to science and technology, among other educational disciplines, outlined as priorities under our Ten-Year Programme of Action.

Consequently, we urge OIC member states to strive for high-level training, good quality education designed to promote creativity, research, innovation and development as outlined under the Ten-Year Programme of Action, particularly with the IDB's support under its Scholarship Programme.

Within the same drive of Islamic renewal, we call on member states and their scholars to seek to unify the Islamic calendar and thus boost Islam's image in the world.

For all the foregoing aspirations to materialize progressively and resolutely, not only must OIC member states make a contribution but the OIC General Secretariat's capacity to take action must be boosted properly and its operational mechanisms improved continuously through a review of its charter. We have pledged to comply with its orientations so as to ensure that the OIC remains increasingly credible on the international scene.

In these early years of the 3rd millennium, we stretch our arms to other leaders of the world and to inter-governmental organizations pursuing the OIC's same goals of peace and cooperation so that, in a collective drive, we would build a humanity that is in harmony with itself by promoting values shared by peoples and fostering their interdependence through fruitful cooperation while respecting religious and cultural idiosyncrasies.

This is the true meaning of the dialogue of civilizations that took the shape of a declaration at the 8th Islamic Summit in Tehran; a noble idea that the United Nations endorsed by adopting an international convention for a code of conduct on mutual knowledge and closer ties between the peoples of our planet.