



COMIAC/11-2018/REP/DR

**REPORT OF THE
11TH SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS (COMIAC)
*(SESSION OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE AS DRIVERS OF
PEACE, DEVELOPMENT AND RAPPROCHEMENT OF PEOPLES)***

DAKAR, REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

**29 SHAABAN 1439H
15 MAY 2018**

REPORT OF THE

11TH SESSION OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS (COMIAC) DAKAR, REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL 29 SHAABAN 1439H 15 MAY 2018

- 1- At the kind invitation of the Government of the Republic of Senegal, the Eleventh Session of the Permanent Committee on Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC) convened in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, on 29 *Shaaban* 1439 AH (15 May 2018).
- 2- The list of participants is attached.

First: Opening Session

- 3- The session opened with a recitation of some verses of the Noble Quran.
- 4- The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Dr. Yousef bin Ahmed Al-Othaimeen, delivered his statement in which he commended COMIAC efforts, chaired by H.E. Mr. Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal, stressing his support to its programs and activities. Al-Othaimeen also commended the decision of H.E. Mr. Macky Sall to appoint H.E. Amb. Sheikhou Oumar SECK as the Directors of COMIAC Coordination Office established in Dakar to stimulate its work. Al-Othaimeen also highlighted the media and cultural programs and activities carried out since the Tenth Session of the COMIAC on 28-29 April 2015 CE - 9-10 Rajab 1436 AH, pointing to the dynamism resulting from concluding various agreements and holding many workshops on the media and cultural affairs to implement the media and cultural resolutions issued by the COMIAC. At the same time, he pointed to the important draft resolutions presented to the Eleventh Session of the COMIAC in the fields of media and culture. He commended the outcomes of the meeting on the OIC International Prize for Media Outlets and Journalists held on 13 May 2018 on the sidelines of the 11th session of the COMIAC.
- 5- His Excellency President Macky Sall, President of the Republic of Senegal and Chairman of the COMIAC, delivered the opening address in which he expressed his happiness for the member States' participation in the session. He mentioned the challenges facing the Palestinian people and the plight of the Muslim Rohingya community in Myanmar, calling on the UN to put an end to their humanitarian tragedy, and expressing support for the Palestinians' legitimate right to their own independent state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. President Sall called on the Islamic Ummah to promote Islamic solidarity and attach importance to education and culture as a source of knowledge and learning. He commended Islamic values and principles and highlighted their importance for the consolidation of coexistence between Islam and other divine religions, insisting on the importance of investing in education and training. His Excellency President Macky Sall expressed appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, for his constant invaluable support for the OIC and the COMIAC, and for the role being played by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz

International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) in Vienna in reinforcing inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue and coexistence.

- 6- The COMIAC adopted the agenda and program of work, as well as the report of the Senior Officials Meeting held in Dakar on 28 *Shaaban* 1439 AH (14 May 2018).
- 7- The COMIAC elected the members of the bureau of the 11th Session as follows:

Republic of Senegal as Chair

State of Libya as Vice Chair

People's Republic of Bangladesh, as Vice Chair

State of Palestine, as Vice Chair

Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as Rapporteur

Second: Working Session

- 8- The COMIAC noted with appreciation the reports prepared by the OIC General Secretariat on the various issues before the session.
- 9- Representatives of a number of Member States took the floor and expressed strong condemnation of the heinous acts of killing targeting unarmed Palestinians in the Palestinian territories on 14 May 2018 following their demonstration against the relocation of the US Embassy to Al-Quds, claiming the lives of scores of people and injuring hundreds others. The participants also expressed deep concern about the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia through violent attacks against Islam and its religious symbols and appreciated the efforts made by the OIC Secretary General and his full commitment to face these campaigns, stressing the need for Member States, and media and culture stakeholders to support these efforts. The speakers stressed the need to resort to thought, argument and logic to counter deviant views while taking firm positions when necessary towards the parties that would like to distort Islam. They also pointed out that the vicious attack on Islam, its accusation of fascism and terrorism, linking legitimate resistance to occupation and violence require our Islamic media to respond with arguments, proofs and evidence. The participants also stressed the importance of maintaining dialogue with the Western world to show that Islam is a religion of tolerance and moderation. They pointed out the importance of highlighting this discourse in the media in Member States to refute the claims that the media in the Islamic countries are not compatible with the freedom of expression, which, although sacred, is not absolute. The speakers emphasized the importance of focusing on the positive aspects of the Islamic heritage and the bright image of Islamic civilization in all its manifestations using innovative media.
- 10- The participants renewed their support for the Palestinian cause and Al-Quds and called upon all Member States and OIC institutions to provide all kinds of support to the State of Palestine to develop the capacities of the media and cultural institutions and to exchange programs and expertise with it in this field. They also noted the initiatives of those countries that signed agreements with the State of Palestine in this regard.
- 11- The participants called for the COMIAC to be effective in combating Islamophobia through media initiatives aimed at promoting Islamic values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among different cultures, religions and beliefs in cooperation and coordination with relevant OIC institutions.

- 12- The participants commended the Joint Communiqué of the Chair of Islamic Summit Conference (Turkey), the Chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers (Bangladesh), the State of Palestine, and the Secretary General, on behalf of the OIC, on the unfortunate measure taken by the United States of America to open its embassy in Al-Quds, and the ensuing serious repercussions on the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif.
- 13- The participants expressed support for the Libyan city of Sirte in all fields, particularly in the field of child care in education tracks, culture and information and the establishment of a public library including books and publications received as donations and as part of the support of countries of the Islamic world. They commended the victory of the Libyan people against *Daesh* terrorist organization, and took note of the willingness of all Libyans to have democratic elections despite the bomb attack that targeted recently the premises of the National Supreme Election Commission in Tripoli, in embodiment of their motto: “No to Terrorism; Yes to Elections”.
- 14- The participants expressed their support for Libya in submitting draft resolutions to the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, and the proposal of the popular assembly of the children of the Islamic world to hold the Libyan Children Parliament in the Libyan city of Sirte, which defeated *Daesh* terrorist organization, and affirmed their support for Libya’s hosting of an information forum on the African continent, parallel to the commemoration of Tripoli as the Arab Information Capital for the year 2019-2020.
- 15- The Meeting commended the scholarships programme supervised by the OIC General Secretariat and the webpage the OIC established on its website including scholarships for Islamic world youth. It called on Member States to provide the General Secretariat with information on their available scholarships in order to post them on this webpage.
- 16- The Meeting welcomed the Arab Republic of Egypt’s declaration to host the 1st edition of the Festival of Thought, Culture and Arts in OIC Member States, which signals the launch of the celebrations of the OIC’s Golden Jubilee.
- 17- The meeting highlighted the importance of the theme of COMIAC’s 11th session, ***“Education and Culture as Drivers of Peace, Development and Rapprochement of Peoples”***, for it underlines the importance of education and culture as key elements to achieve peace, development and rapprochement of peoples.
- 18- The meeting also recommended considering the possibility to conduct training session for cultural and social experts and journalists representing their member states, as part of the effort to energize the Committee, the aim being to enable recipients to gain a full understanding of COMIAC’s policies, programmes and areas of priority and ensure that these bear concrete fruit for the General Secretariat.
- 19- Participants commended the results of the meeting of OIC International Prize for Media Outlets and Journalists, held on 13 May 2018, in Dakar, on the sidelines of COMIAC’s 11th session.
- 20- The participants commended the role of the OIC in promoting culture promote culture as an engine for economic development and a generator of job opportunities for the youth and women, by supporting member countries in their cultural development initiatives, and their role in promoting and facilitating the movement of goods and cultural actors within member states. They condemned strongly the recurrent attacks on historical monuments and Islamic and cultural heritage sites in Mali and expressed unwavering solidarity with and support for this country against terrorism and aggressions; and expressed unwavering solidarity with and support for the Malian state and people against terrorism and aggressions, while commending the OIC’s commitment to promote cultural statistics in member states.

- 21- The Participants commended the interventions of their excellencies the Director of COMIAC Coordination Office, the Director General of IRCICA, the Director General of the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU) and the representative of the Union of News Agencies of OIC Countries (UNA) on their programmes and activities since the 10th session of COMIAC, as well as on their future projects.
- 22- The Meeting endorsed the composition of the Follow-up Committee of the 11th session of COMIAC. The Committee will convene at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah before the end of the current year for the reactivation of COMIAC. It shall be composed of:
- Representative of the President of COMIAC, President of the Republic of Senegal
 - Representative of the Chair of the Islamic Summit Conference (Republic of Turkey)
 - Representative of the OIC headquarters country (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia)
 - Two representatives of the Arab Group (State of Libya and the Kingdom of Morocco)
 - Two representatives of the African Group (Republic of Niger and the Federal Republic of Nigeria)
 - Two representatives of the Asian Group (Islamic Republic of Iran and the People's Republic of Bangladesh)
 - Representative of the OIC Secretary General
 - Representative of COMIAC National Coordination Office

Third: Closing Session

- 23- In the end of the general debate, the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC) adopted the resolutions on Information and Cultural Affairs, and the report and Dakar Declaration issued by the current session.
- 24- The participants commended the efforts of the OIC General Secretariat and the Government of Senegal aimed at activating the work of the COMIAC and supporting its coordination office in Dakar, to enable COMIAC to play a pioneering and effective role in the follow-up of activities and resolutions on Information and Cultural Affairs. They expressed thanks and appreciation to the President, Government and people of the Republic of Senegal for the good organization of the 11th COMIAC session and for its fruitful outcomes.

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