



**Efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation
and its Organs in Serving Islamic Causes
and Addressing the Effects
of the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19)**

Overview

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CHAPTER I
OIC'S EFFORTS IN ADDRESSING ISLAMIC CAUSES

INTRODUCTION

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) was established in 1969 as the collective voice of 57 Islamic States following the historic initiative of the late kings, His Majesty King Faisal Bin Abdelaziz of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and His Majesty Hassan II of the Kingdom of Morocco - may their souls rest in peace. The Jeddah-based OIC is the second largest international organization after the United Nations.

The OIC membership extends from Indonesia in the far east to the Republics of Suriname and Guyana in South America, covering the four continents, Asia, Africa, Europe and South America. It works through blocks known as regional groups, namely the Arab group, the African group, and the Asian group. The OIC operates in three official languages, namely Arabic, English, and French. Its permanent headquarters is staffed by more than 30 nationalities.

The OIC has a secretary-general and six assistant secretaries-general for Palestine affairs, political, economic, humanitarian, cultural, social, science and technology, financial and administrative affairs. Assistant secretaries-general are all elected and represent the three regional groups.

The OIC holds a summit of kings and heads of State every three years, a meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers every year, a number of sectoral ministerial meetings, and meetings of the Permanent Representatives to the OIC on a regular basis throughout the year. In addition to regular meetings, the Organization holds extraordinary conferences and meetings at the levels of the Summit and Foreign Ministers, sectoral ministerial meetings, senior officials meetings in the Islamic world, and the Permanent Representatives Committee. These meetings discuss any emerging events related to Islamic causes.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia chairs the current session of the Islamic Summit, while the United Arab Emirates holds the current chairmanship of the Council of Foreign Ministers.

The General Secretariat is supported in performing its tasks in the service of Islamic solidarity by 34 Subsidiary Organs and Specialized and Affiliated Institutions. Notable among these are the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), and the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), which are based in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and the Islamic World Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), based in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco.

The OIC also has Standing Committees chaired by some leaders of the Islamic world, namely Al-Quds Committee, the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC), the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), and the Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH).

The OIC also has an executive committee consisting of seven States headed by the Chairman of the Summit, and a number of Ministerial Contact Groups.

The General Secretariat works continuously on several issues, areas and activities, most prominent of which are:

1. The Cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif
2. Political Field
3. Combating International Terrorism
4. Sawt Al-Hikmah (Voice of Wisdom) Center

5. OIC Festival
6. Cultural and Social Domain and Women Issues
7. Humanitarian Field
8. Economic Field
9. Science, Technology, Health and Environment

Hereunder is a review the OIC's salient efforts in dealing with the aforementioned issues, areas and activities during the past recent months.

I. CAUSE OF PALESTINE AND AL-QUDS AL-SHARIF

The Palestinian cause in general, and Al-Quds Al-Sharif in particular, are at the forefront of the concerns of the OIC. The Organization harnesses all its efforts to address the Israeli aggression and its political, cultural and economic impacts on the Palestinian people. Through its General Secretariat, its Offices in New York, Geneva, and Brussels, the OIC seeks to coordinate with international organizations and mobilize international support for the Palestinian rights. It issues statements condemning Israeli practices affecting the Palestinian people, the sanctities and rights guaranteed by international law for the Palestinian people. The OIC has an office in Ramallah that oversees the coordination of humanitarian and political efforts and organizes activities to bolster Palestinian steadfastness.

Since the beginning of the year 2019, the Palestinian cause has witnessed serious and important developments, most prominent of which are the continued impediments to the political process, the escalation of the Israeli military aggression, the intensification of the colonial settlement policy, the continued illegal blockade of the Gaza Strip, and the intensification of judaization schemes in the occupied city of Al-Quds.

These developments have been at the center of the OIC's attention and action of the Islamic Groups in international fora, especially at the UN Security Council, General Assembly, and Human Rights Council, through the periodic meetings held, and the resolutions adopted. The OIC's action has been slated to reiterate and uphold the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, reaffirm the legal and historical status of the Holy City of Al-Quds, and address the violations and aggressive policies of the Israeli occupation.

Among the OIC's most prominent efforts in support of the Palestinian people and their just cause are:

1. The General Secretariat and the Islamic Development Bank have endeavored to activate a development endowment fund (*waqf*) to support Palestinian refugees in implementation of the Resolution issued by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers at its Forty-sixth Session held in Abu Dhabi over 1 and 2 March 2019, to extend humanitarian, financial and political support from Member States by contributing the necessary sustainable financial resources for the benefit of UNRWA's budget and programs, and providing the UNRWA with political support for it to continue playing its role in accordance with its UN General Assembly's mandate.
2. Thanks to OIC Member States' action, the UN General Assembly adopted a draft resolution renewing UNRWA's mandate. This constituted an international commitment to the refugee issue and a political support for the UNRWA to continue to play its role as a living witness to the Palestinian refugee issue and a symbol of the permanent legal, political and moral responsibility of the UN towards the issue of Palestinian refugees in accordance with UN General Assembly Resolution 194.
3. In continuation of OIC Member States' sustained efforts, the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution inviting the OIC to participate as an observer member in the meetings of UNRWA's Advisory Committee. The OIC new status will enhance the existing cooperation between the OIC and the UNRWA, and contribute to mobilizing wider political and financial support by OIC Member States to the Palestinian refugees.
4. The OIC appealed to the States of the world to recognize the independent state of Palestine on its 1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital; and to support the endeavors of the State of Palestine and its right to join UN Agencies and international covenants and agreements.

5. The OIC has issued several statements condemning the Israeli violations in the occupied Palestinian territory, especially in connection with the policy of settlement construction and attacks on Islamic holy sites, particularly the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.
6. In cooperation with the European Parliament and with the participation of many European institutions championing the Palestinian cause, a symposium on Israeli settlement expansion policy was organized on 6 March 2019, with wide attendance by European civil society institutions, European boycott and solidarity movements, human rights organizations, parliamentarians, diplomats, media professionals, and representatives of friendly European parties and associations.
7. The OIC sponsored the national conference on "The Role of the Palestinian Private Sector in Supporting the Resilience of Al-Quds", organized by the OIC's Representative Office in Ramallah on 15 April 2019, to mobilize support for financing the 2018-2022 strategic plan for sectoral development in Al-Quds.
8. In cooperation with COMIAC, the OIC sponsored a media symposium on Al-Quds and Palestine, in Bamako, Mali, from 29 April to 1 May 2019.
9. The OIC organized and sponsored an international conference on Al-Quds Al-Sharif from 26 to 28 June 2019 in Geneva in cooperation with the UN Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People. The aim was to enlighten world public opinion on the grave violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the City of Al-Quds.
10. The OIC held a symposium entitled "Half a Century of Occupation and Discrimination: Accountability and Justice" on the sidelines of the Forty-first Session of the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, on 9 July 2019, in coordination with the Permanent Observer Missions of the OIC and the State of Palestine to the United Nations in Geneva.
11. The OIC held, on 19 July 2019, an extraordinary open-ended Executive Committee meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers to discuss Israeli violations in the holy city of Al-Quds at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. The meeting was chaired by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the current session of the Islamic Summit.
12. At the request of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, an Extraordinary Meeting of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 15 September 2019, on "the announcement by the Israeli Prime Minister of his intention to annex territories of the occupied West Bank".
13. The annual meeting of the Six-member Ministerial Committee on Palestine was held in New York on 25 September 2019, on the sidelines of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly.

The Islamic Development Bank, the Islamic Solidarity Fund, Bait Mal Al-Quds Al-Sharif Agency and development institutions in Member States have continued to support development plans and programs in Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif with the aim of empowering the Palestinian people economically.

The Resolutions adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers regarding the Islamic Bureau of Boycott of Israel has constituted a legal and legitimate tool to reaffirm the rejection of Israeli occupation policies based on settlement and racial discrimination against the Palestinian people, and the need to address such policies. The Palestinian National Committee for the

Boycott of Israel, consisting of dozens of non-governmental organizations, political parties, trade unions, bodies and federations, has continued to organize awareness-raising campaigns about the importance of boycotting Israeli products, encouraging Palestinian national products, and providing alternatives to Israeli products in terms of quality and price in domestic markets, organizing campaigns intended to mobilize international public opinion about Israeli crimes and violations, and calling for boycotting the products of companies operating in Israeli settlements.

II. POLITICAL AFFAIRS

Among the major activities carried out by the OIC at the political level in the past few months were the holding of the 14th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the 46th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in the United Arab Emirates. The OIC also held the preparatory Senior Officials Meeting for the 47th Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, which was scheduled to convene in Niger in April 2020. The planned session, however, was postponed because of the global health conditions associated with the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

➤ FOURTEENTH ISLAMIC SUMMIT CONFERENCE – MAKKAH, MAY 2019

In coincidence with 50 years since the inception of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, the 14th Session of the OIC Islamic Summit hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was held in Makkah al-Mukarramah, under the chairmanship of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman Ibn Abdulaziz Al-Saud - May Allah preserve him. The Summit saw a large participation of leaders of the Muslim world.

Held under the theme “Makkah Conference: Hand in Hand towards the Future,” the Summit discussed and elaborated unified positions vis-à-vis various issues and key developments in the Muslim world. It also examined developments related to the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif and support for Palestinian refugees. Other issues discussed include the prevailing situation in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, and Somalia. The Summit also considered the latest developments concerning the launching by the Houthi militias of missiles targeting the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the related aggression against Saudi territory. Muslim minorities, Islamophobia, combating terrorism and extremism, as well as other political, economic, social and cultural issues on the OIC agenda were also discussed by the Summit.

➤ FORTY-SIXTH SESSION OF THE OIC COUNCIL OF FOREIGN MINISTERS (CFM) - ABU DHABI, MARCH 2019

The United Arab Emirates hosted the 46th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers in Abu Dhabi under the chairmanship of His Highness Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, under the theme “Fifty Years of Islamic Cooperation: Roadmap for Prosperity and Development.” The ministerial conference set for itself, among other objectives, the coordinated follow-up of economic matters in the OIC Member States in a bid to push forward and upgrade cooperation to new levels.

The Conference also discussed a range of issues, including the latest pressing developments, the issues of peace and stability in the Muslim world, combating extremism, instrumentalization of religion and hate speech through the inculcation of the values of the right balance, moderation and tolerance. Also discussed were the issues of integration and cooperation among OIC Member

States and means of promoting development and intra-OIC cooperation as a reflection of the Conference theme “Roadmap for Prosperity and Development”, and to translate it into concrete reality by anticipating favourable opportunities likely to foster economic development and cooperation.

➤ **POLITICAL ISSUES**

With the Coronavirus Pandemic and its impact dominating all issues as well as international and regional developments, the OIC General Secretariat continues to follow up on the issues on its agenda in accordance with the Summit and CFM resolutions. These include:

✓ **Asian Issues**

• Afghanistan

In accordance with Summit and CFM resolutions on Afghanistan, the OIC has contributed to the efforts to push forward the peace process in Afghanistan, renewing its firm commitment to assist the Afghan people in their efforts to achieve comprehensive and lasting national reconciliation, stability and development. With peace in Afghanistan being closer than it has ever been, the Secretary General carries on his efforts to provide various forms of support for those undertakings. In this regard:

1. The General Secretariat has put out several press statements to appeal to all leaders and parties in Afghanistan to work together to bring about an immediate and lasting cessation of violence. He urged the Afghan parties to engage in constructive dialogue to resolve their differences and reach comprehensive reconciliation and lasting peace as part of an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace process. The OIC has underscored the importance of engaging in negotiations that will include all Afghan parties in order to achieve a peaceful political resolution to the crisis.
2. The OIC hosted, in its capacity as a member, the meeting of the international contact group on Afghanistan twice, the latest being in 2017.
3. The OIC convened the International Peace Conference of Afghan Ulama (Scholars) in Makkah and Jeddah in July 2018, which was graciously hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. During the Conference, the Custodian of The Holy Mosques met a delegation of participating Afghan scholars who listened to the King’s speech on the importance of embracing a dialogue-driven, reconciliation, and tolerance approach in accordance with the dictates of Islam in order to fulfil the aspirations of the Afghan people for security and stability. The conference concluded with the “Makkah Declaration”, which called on the conflicting parties to end hostilities and resume direct negotiations to achieve security and peace in Afghanistan.

4. The OIC welcomed the signing of the agreement between the United States and the Taliban Movement on 29 February 2020 which was followed by the release of prisoners and detainees.
5. The OIC urged all leaders and Afghan parties to embrace solidarity and national unity to fight the Coronavirus Pandemic, stressing the importance of supporting the efforts and precautionary measures taken by the Republic of Afghanistan to stem and prevent the spread of the pandemic.

- Jammu and Kashmir

The OIC is closely monitoring the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, constantly calling on the international community to find a solution to the conflict in accordance with the relevant Security Council resolutions. The OIC issued a number of press statements to express support for the cause of the Kashmiri people and their right to self-determination. It voiced deep concern about the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019. This law may change the demographic structure of the Jammu and Kashmir region. The OIC sees it as another instrument to further complicate the difficult situation in this contested region since the unilateral announcement on 5 August 2019 by the Indian authorities to abrogate the constitutional provision granting Jammu and Kashmir a special status. The OIC declared its rejection of any attempt to illegally alter the demographic structure of the region.

As part of his mandate as the OIC Special Envoy to Jammu and Kashmir, Ambassador Yousef Bin Ahmad Aldobeay, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, undertook a visit to Pakistan from 2 to 6 March 2020, during which he held series of meetings with the Pakistani Prime Minister and other senior officials in the country. He visited the Azad Jammu and Kashmir province to discuss the developments on the issue and the role of the OIC. It is noteworthy that the OIC has a ministerial contact group on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir; it meets regularly.

- Nagorno-Karabakh Region Conflict

The OIC continues to follow-up on this issue for which there is a dedicated ministerial contact group which monitors developments linked to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. In its press statements, the OIC stresses its unflinching and principled position in support of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and the importance of finding a peaceful solution to the conflict on the basis of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. The OIC also considered the recently conducted election in the occupied Nagorno-Karabakh region a violation of the relevant Security Council resolutions on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

- ✓ **Arab Affairs**

- Yemen

The OIC is closely following the unfolding developments in Yemen. It continues its support and backing of constitutional legitimacy in a sustained bid to articulate a political

solution to the Yemeni crisis based on the implementation of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative and its implementation mechanism, and the outcomes of the Yemeni national dialogue anchored in international legitimacy resolutions, Security Council resolution 2216 and other relevant UN resolutions.

The OIC has adopted several resolutions at the summit and CFM levels on the situation in Yemen. It has a special contact group that follows up the developments of the crisis in Yemen and meets regularly.

Recently, the OIC welcomed the announcement by the Joint Forces Command of the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen on a two-week cease fire that was extended for one more month starting as of 23 April 2020. The Secretary General expressed the hope that the initiative would help create appropriate conditions conducive to the success of the political efforts being made to reach a comprehensive and just political solution agreed upon by the Yemenis. Such a solution, so the OIC believes, would mitigate the plight of the Yemeni people and confront the challenges posed by the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. The Secretary General reiterated the OIC support for the Yemeni people and for the peace efforts in Yemen.

As a follow-up to the developments unfurling in Yemen's interim capital, Aden, and some southern provinces of the Republic of Yemen in the wake of the declaration of a state of emergency by the Transitional Council in April 2020, the OIC expressed its support for the statement by the Coalition to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen. The statement underscored the need to return to the status-quo and reverse any move violating the Riyadh Agreement. The OIC Secretary General affirmed the importance of implementing the Riyadh Agreement which will unite the Yemeni ranks, restore state institutions and address the danger of terrorism. He also emphasized the imperative of shunning any act that could escalate the situation and undermine the efforts to end the Yemeni crisis peacefully. He called on the Yemeni concerned parties to endeavor to carry through the implementation of the Riyadh Agreement and to place the interest of the Yemeni people above other interests.

- Iraq

In implementation of the resolutions adopted by the Council of Foreign Ministers, the OIC joined in the Iraqi reconciliation efforts and held a conference of Iraq's elites that paved the way for the reconciliation in Iraq. Within the same perspective, the OIC is striving to convene an international conference on the reconstruction of areas devastated by the Iraqi war.

The OIC has been closely following the political developments in Iraq over the recent months. In a press statement, it welcomed the constitution of a new Iraqi government led by Mr, Mustafa Al-Kadhimi after earning the confidence of the Iraqi Parliament. The Secretary General reiterated the OIC's unwavering and full support for Iraq's sovereignty, security, stability and development.

- Sudan

The OIC attaches huge importance to the situation in Sudan. It has adopted several ministerial resolutions to support this member State, particularly in the wake of the recent developments in the country. The Secretary General participated in the signing of the Constitutional Document, which sets out the functions of the transitional period in Sudan as the OIC was selected as one of the international witnesses signatories to the Agreement.

- ✓ **African Affairs**

The OIC has been closely monitoring developments in African member States, particularly the Sahel countries and issued several press statements in that regard.

- As part of following up the peace process in the Republic of Mali, the OIC participated in the fourth high-level meeting of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement held in the Malian capital, Bamako, on 19 January 2020. The meeting sought to give new momentum to the work of the follow-up committee and review the implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement. The meeting witnessed large-scale participation, including of the Malian government, the signatory parties to the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement, and representatives of the members of the international mediation group comprising the OIC and other international organizations. The OIC participated in the 38th and 39th ordinary sessions of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement Implementation Committee held in Bamako on 27 February 2020 and 5 May 2020, through video-conferencing due to Covid-19 pandemic.

The General Secretariat's participation in the meetings of the Follow-up Committee on the Implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement was an opportunity for the OIC, as one of the guarantors of the Agreement and a member of the Agreement Follow-up Committee, to reiterate its support for, and solidarity with, the Republic of Mali. It was also an occasion to demonstrate the OIC's support for the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement and for the Sahel region in its efforts to achieve peace, security, stability and development.

- The Secretary General participated in the 15th Session of the Parliamentary Union of OIC Member States (PUIC) held on 29 January 2020 in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He commended PUIC for striving to foster linkages among member states' parliaments and promote the principles and objectives enshrined in the OIC charter. In addition, the Secretary General stressed the OIC's support for all efforts and initiatives to coordinate the necessary measures to eradicate terrorism in the African Sahel region.
- The OIC participated in a donor's ceremony to finance the construction of a women's center for cancer diagnostic and treatment, held in Ouagadougou on 28 February 2020 at the invitation of the First Lady of Burkina Faso.

The OIC is vigilantly and attentively following the situation and developments in some Member States and conflict zones.

➤ **THE SITUATION OF MUSLIM MINORITIES**

The OIC pays special attention to the situation of Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC member states in line with the provisions of the OIC charter “to assist Muslim minorities and communities outside the Member States to preserve their dignity, cultural and religious identity.”

The OIC is closely following the developments in these communities, including the following:

- Rohingya

The OIC places the Rohingya issue at the top of its priorities. It established a dedicated ministerial contact group to follow the issue. The OIC has played a fundamental role in the adoption of resolutions supporting the rights of the Rohingyas at the United Nations and the Human Rights Council.

The OIC has also adopted several resolutions at the summit and CFM levels, calling for an end to violence and the barbaric practices targeting this minority group, while insisting on the need to grant them all their rights without discrimination or ethnic segregation. In following up the implementation of the resolutions on the Rohingya dossier:

1. Ambassador Ibrahim Khairat was appointed as Special Envoy of the OIC Secretary General to Myanmar to follow up on the issue of the Rohingya Muslims from the political, humanitarian and legal dimensions.
2. The General Secretariat has played a pivotal role in coordinating the meetings of the ministerial group on the legal accountability of Myanmar, which emanated from the ministerial contact group on Myanmar. It was also essentially involved in the support of The Gambia and its legal team during the legal sessions held so far.
3. The General Secretariat participated, through a specialized team, in the sessions of the International Court of Justice at The Hague. The most recent such participation was in the session held on 23 January 2030 during which ICJ pronounced interim measures to prevent further genocide against the Rohingya. The OIC issued a statement welcoming the Court’s decision.
4. The General Secretariat continues its coordination with The Gambia to mobilize financial resources for the case filed against Myanmar.
5. The General Secretariat held several meetings with the Rohingya Federation of Arakan and various Rohingya leaders to exchange views on the latest developments and raise awareness about the efforts of the OIC in supporting the Rohingya Muslims.

- Southern Philippines

The General Secretariat dispatched a delegation to the Philippines from 27 to 30 January 2020, comprising the new OIC Special Envoy on the peace process in the

Philippines. The delegation met with Philippine senior officials and leaders of both the National and Islamic Liberation Fronts and representatives of the Bangsamoro Transitional Authority to review developments bearing on the peace process in Southern Philippines and prepare for the upcoming visit of the Secretary General to the Philippines post Covid-19 Pandemic.

- Southern Thailand

The General Secretariat held a working meeting with the Consul General of the Kingdom of Thailand in Jeddah on 24 February 2020 to discuss and exchange views on the latest developments, the role of the OIC in supporting the peace process in Southern Thailand and the proposal for a delegation of Member States and the General Secretariat to visit Thailand in 2020.

- Sri Lanka

The General Secretariat issued on 6 May 2020 an OIC official statement rejecting the targeting of Sri Lankan Muslims, particularly in the wake of the Coronavirus outbreak.

- United States, New Zealand and China

The General Secretariat held a series of meetings with officials of the American Consulate in Jeddah on cooperation between the two sides and exchanged views on issues of Muslim minorities.

On 20 February 2020, the General Secretariat held a meeting with the new special envoy of the Kingdom of Sweden to the OIC to exchange views on the OIC's efforts on the Rohingyas issue.

On 14 March 2020, the General Secretariat issued an official statement on the occasion of the first anniversary of the terrorist attacks against two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, in which it recalled the danger of terrorism and Islamophobia.

The General Secretariat followed the outcome of the visit by a delegation of Member States, together with the General Secretariat, to China at the end of December 2019 to take stock of the conditions of Uighur Muslims and hold meetings with Chinese senior officials in the capital Beijing and Xinjiang province.

The General Secretariat held meetings with officials of the Chinese Embassy on strengthening cooperation between the OIC and China and coordination on Chinese medical assistance to support the General Secretariat's efforts in combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

➤ **RELATIONS WITH OIC'S REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS**

- United Nations

In the context of cooperation and partnership between the OIC and the United Nations, the OIC General Secretariat has continued its consultations with the UN General Secretariat on their 15th general meeting and agreed to hold it in the near future.

As combating terrorism figures among the OIC priorities and in line with the agreement of the OIC Secretary-General with the UN Secretary-General during their meeting on the sidelines of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly to strengthen cooperation between the two organizations, especially in the field of countering terrorism, the OIC General Secretariat held a working session with a delegation from the UN Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT). The two sides reviewed the aspects of future cooperation.

- **Consultations with Regional Partners**

In the context of the OIC's endeavors to support bilateral relations with its regional partners, the General Secretariat has engaged with the League of Arab States (LAS), the Cooperation Council for the Arab Gulf States (GCC), several European countries, and the Russian Federation on holding bilateral consultations within the framework of existing joint consultative mechanisms.

➤ **ELECTION OBSERVATION IN MEMBER STATES**

In accordance with the OIC's commitment to dispatch observers to the elections taking place in Member States and at their request, the General Secretariat assigned a mission to the Togolese Republic to monitor its presidential elections on February 22, 2020. It also sent other missions to monitor the presidential elections in Kazakhstan, Nigeria, and other countries during the recent months. In application of the CFM Resolution No. 43/46-POL on “Convening a Symposium for Electoral Boards of Member States” adopted by the CFM in Abu Dhabi, the General Secretariat conducted a series of consultations with the UN, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the Independent High Authority for Elections in Tunisia. Towards that end, the General Secretariat participated in preparatory meetings in Tunisia in January to organize the forum in the Tunisian Republic in 2020.

III. COMBATING INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The OIC has consistently drawn the attention of Member States and the international community to the urgent need to address the root causes and underlying factors of violent extremism and terrorism. The OIC has cooperated in numerous programs and initiatives with international and regional organizations on issues related to combating terrorism and preventing violent extremism.

Dr. Yousef A. Al-Othaimeen, the OIC Secretary-General, agreed with the UN Secretary-General, Mr. Antonio Guterres, on the sidelines of the 74th Session of the UN General Assembly, to enhance cooperation in several areas, especially with regard to strengthening the capabilities of the OIC General Secretariat according to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on December 25, 2018, on cooperation between the two organizations in the field of counter-terrorism.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the OIC General Secretariat organized a seminar on "Islamic Convergence Initiatives: Prospects for Peace and Conflict Resolution in the OIC Member Countries" over 22-24 April 2019. The event offered a platform for generating ideas on the practical implementation of the Islamic Convergence Initiative, which intends to set a new relational model within the Muslim world, by demonstrating good faith and adopting a constructive approach to issues related to inter-state relations and the settlement of disputes and conflicts.

The Peace, Security, and Conflict Resolution Unit of the OIC General Secretariat, in strong partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other UN agencies, has also prepared a draft additional protocol to the OIC Convention on Combating Terrorism that uses legal definitions and terminology approved by the OIC Member States through various UN forums. It also includes trends and manifestations of terrorism not duly addressed in the Convention. Moreover, this project complements the Convention to bring it up to a level comparable to international instruments of a similar character and to enhance cooperation between the OIC Member States.

The first meeting of the OIC Peace and Dialogue Contact Group was held in Jakarta on July 29, 2019, in cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Indonesia, and at the ministerial level on September 23, 2019, on the sidelines of the annual coordination meeting in New York. The contact group adopted a plan of action on Islamophobia, religious discrimination, and intolerance and hatred against Muslims, which was prepared by the meeting in Jakarta.

The OIC General Secretariat participated in the high-level expert meeting of regional and sub-regional organizations engaged in mediation and conflict prevention activities organized by the United Nations Mediation Support Unit and EU Conflict Prevention and Mediation Support Team in Brussels on December 4 and 5, 2019. This meeting was an opportunity for the OIC to highlight its efforts, programs, and measures regarding mediation and conflict prevention and to enhance cooperation with international partners in these areas.

On January 9, 2020 in Riyadh, the OIC signed an MoU with the Islamic Military Counter-Terrorism Coalition, to boost joint action in combating terrorism, and in implementation of relevant resolutions calling on the OIC General Secretariat to develop effective international cooperation in the fight against terrorism. The MoU stipulated many important practical provisions that would integrate the organization's political and intellectual efforts in its war against extremism and terrorism and the military and field efforts undertaken by the Coalition. The MoU also aims to develop a common vision between the two parties regarding common issues related to extremism and terrorism.

IV. 4. SAWT AL-HIKMAH (VOICE OF WISDOM) CENTER

The General Secretariat considers the Voice of Wisdom Center one of its most important priorities, in view of increasing activity of extremist movements, which benefit from the rapid spread of its ideas through social media. The OIC considers the Center to be its intellectual arm in its war against extremism and terrorism using social media and provides it with all the material and administrative facilities to undertake its tasks and activities.

The activities of the Voice of Wisdom Center in 2019 saw a fundamental transformation. It activated an innovative strategy for formulating the contents focusing mainly on publishing content that keeps abreast with the daily events related to the scourge of terrorism. The level of the Center's influence on social networks has significantly risen with hundreds of thousands of followers in the Muslim world, with high interaction rates. The approved content strategy is based on innovative daily positive messages and the production of the largest possible number of infographics, video graphics, and documentaries on topics of concern to the general public.

In April 2019, the General Secretariat signed a cooperation agreement between the Voice of Wisdom Center and Naif Arab University for Security Sciences for cooperation in areas related to fighting terrorism. The aim is to expand the network of the Voice of Wisdom Center with specialized international centers to make the most of these efforts in facing extremism and violence committed in the name of Islam.

The General Secretariat also works with companies from the public and private sectors to develop the content of the Voice of Wisdom Center and raise the level of its performance and impact across the Muslim world. Thanks to this coordination, the Center has gained a foothold among the most influential and active centers in the field of addressing violent and extremist discourse.

The Voice of Wisdom Center held several international events and activities, foremost of which is the 'International Conference on the Role of Education in Combating Extremism and Terrorism: Experiences of Leading Countries in Consolidating the Values of Coexistence and Peace' held in Riyadh in cooperation with Naif Arab University for Security Sciences. The vent was indeed a great success. The Voice of Wisdom Center also organized an international conference on 'Intellectual Security in the Context of Combating Terrorism' in Mogadishu, Somalia, in implementation of Resolution No. 1/46-POL.

V. THE OIC FESTIVAL

The idea of holding the OIC Festival came into being out of the desire to embody the basic principles of the OIC Charter, specifically enhancing and consolidating the bonds of fraternity and solidarity among Member States, safeguarding the rights, dignity and religious and cultural identity of Muslim communities in non-Member States, and promoting inter-state relations based on justice, mutual respect and good neighborliness to ensure global peace, security and harmony. The Festival also aims to consolidate the true values that distinguish authentic and moderate Islam, which do not contradict the arts and culture, and contribute to the spread of a culture of moderation and tolerance just as they call for communication, compassion, coexistence, and the rejection of extremism, violence and terrorism.

The Festival is a comprehensive popular event in which ideas, politics, economics, culture, science and technology, humanities, art, and literature interact through seminars, folklore shows, youth, sports, social, and humanitarian activities, exhibitions of handicrafts and traditional products in addition to the various popular and different foods that characterize Member States. These activities and events highlight the diversity that characterizes the aspects of life in those countries to deepen the bonds of cooperation between the peoples of the Muslim world and bring them together through a popular event that encourages exchange of cultures and openness to Muslim communities in non-Member States. The Festival is also part of the OIC's steadfast endeavors to develop joint Islamic action by deploying endeavors that address the concerns of peoples and highlight the OIC and its role in its Islamic and global surroundings.

In each edition of the Festival, the OIC honors figures from the three geographical groups of the Muslim world in appreciation of their efforts in serving the OIC mission and goals. For example, the OIC honored the First Lady of Burkina Faso, the First Lady of the Republic of Niger, Allahshükür Hummat Pashazade, H.E. Sheikh Dr. Saad Al-Shathri, H.E. Dr. Nizar Madani, H.E. Sheikh Juma Al-Majid, New Zealand Policewoman Raeda Hassan, and other influential figures in the Muslim world.

The constructive engagement of the Member States with the idea of the OIC Festival has carried a positive impact on the success of this nascent initiative of the OIC General Secretariat, which supervises its organization in coordination with the host countries. After the great success of the first two editions of the OIC Festival in Cairo and Abu Dhabi in February and April 2019 respectively, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the OIC host country, expressed its desire to host the third edition in conjunction with the celebration of the 50th OIC Anniversary from 26 to 28 November 2019 in Jeddah under the slogan of the 50th Anniversary 'United for Peace and Development'. The Festival saw a remarkable public turnout.

VI. THE CULTURAL AND SOCIAL FIELDS

➤ CULTURAL MATTERS

The OIC cultural arm of the organization, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), holds the OIC Conference of Culture Ministers in cooperation with the OIC General Secretariat. The 11th Session of the Conference took place recently in the Tunisian capital Tunis and issued the Tunis Declaration to develop the current cultural policies in the Muslim world.

Similarly, the OIC participates periodically in the UNESCO General Conference. Besides, the OIC General Secretariat Has launched several initiatives to raise intellectual and cultural awareness in the Muslim world, familiarize audiences with its various issues, and highlight the OIC role in addressing major Muslim issues. A recent such initiatives has been the General Secretariat's "Lectures Series".

• **The General Secretariat's Lecture Series:**

One of the valuable initiatives of the OIC General Secretariat is to organize a monthly series of intellectual lectures that address many vital topics of interest to the OIC and its Member States in the cultural, economic, political, humanitarian, and other important topics. The aim of these lectures is to enhance communication between the General Secretariat and society at large and to spread knowledge and general culture in all fields. The initiative has received a positive response from the speakers and the attendance of a large number of invitees and the media, especially since most of the speakers are eminent and influential figures in the Muslim world and beyond.

• **Ramadan Iftar**

The OIC General Secretariat organizes Ramadan Iftar ceremonies in some Member States as well as in non-Member States with Muslim communities. These functions aims to foster the spirit of fraternity, solidarity, coexistence, and tolerance among Muslim peoples, and affirm the OIC's constant eagerness to support Muslim societies outside Member States and preserve their dignity and cultural and religious identity while celebrating together the holy month. A delegation from the General Secretariat, in addition to representatives of non-governmental organizations and members of the diplomatic corps in those countries, have participated in each of these Ramadan Iftar events.

The Ramadan Iftar events organized by the General Secretariat included one in Al-Quds Ash-Sharif during the month of Ramadan 2019 to emphasize the solidarity, support, and interest that the OIC attaches to the Holy City of Al-Quds Ash-Sharif, highlight the spirit of cohesion and unity among segments of the Maqdisite community, and activate the role of Palestinian institutions, enabling them to serve the Maqdisites and support their steadfastness.

A delegation from the General Secretariat also participated in the Ramadan Iftar hosted by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen in 2016 and 2019. The last ceremony witnessed the presence of 4,500 people and the broad participation of the Muslim community in Cambodia, with the aim of promoting the value of religious coexistence between Muslims and Buddhists, which characterizes Cambodian society.

➤ SOCIAL MATTERS

Prominent achievements of the OIC in the field of social and family affairs (women, children, youth, the elderly and people with special needs)

The field of social affairs is one of the priorities of the OIC since its foundation, based on the stipulations of its Charter on social development. This includes attending to issues of women empowerment, protecting the family, building youth capacity, promoting the rights of people with special needs and the disabled, and caring for children and the elderly, to achieve comprehensive and sustainable community development in Member States.

According to the OIC Program of Action 2025, the Department of Social Affairs and Family seeks to achieve the following strategic goals:

- 1- Gender parity and family empowerment;
- 2- Promoting policies geared to strengthening family and social security;
- 3- Providing and facilitating effective and reliable social services for the family, children, the elderly, and people with special needs;
- 4- Developing appropriate legislative and administrative measures to combat violence against women;
- 5- Improving the policy framework to respond to the emotional needs of women and children;
- 6- Building the capacity of youth and promoting youth exchange programs;
- 7- Improving youth employment strategies, providing quality education, and developing entrepreneurial capabilities and professional skills.

The most important achievements of the OIC in this regard are:

In the field of empowering women and enhancing their role in development

- **Launching a sectoral conference on women:** Seven sessions of the Ministerial Conference on the Role of Women in Development in the Member States have taken place so far. The Arab Republic of Egypt is scheduled to host the eighth session by the end of 2020 in Cairo.
- **Adoption of the Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW) in 2008,** which was revised in 2016 to align it with the United Nations Development Agenda and the OIC Program of Action 2025. The General Secretariat is following up on its implementation:
 - Adoption of the National Progress Report Preparation Manual on the implementation of OPAAW by the 7th Ministerial Conference on Women and holding of a training course in 2019 for national institutions working in the area of women empowerment on the use of the guide and preparing national reports.
- **The establishment of the Women Development Organization:** The objective is to have a specialized OIC organization concerned with the development of women and the advancement of their status in the Member States, based in the Arab Republic of Egypt. After the adoption of its statute, the General Secretariat has deployed great efforts to ensure its ratification by Member States and kick-start henceforth its operation.

- Preparing the administrative and organizational statutes of the Women Development Organization
- **The creation of the OIC Award for Women Achievements** whose first edition was organized during the 7th Ministerial Conference on Women in Burkina Faso. The OIC is preparing to organize the second edition during the 8th Ministerial Conference on Women hosted by the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- **The establishment of the OIC Women Advisory Council** to act as a consultative mechanism and provide recommendations in the field of women empowerment.

In the field of empowering marriage and family institutions and preserving their values in the Muslim world:

- **The establishment of the Department of Family Affairs** to emphasize the importance of the role of the family and its protection and development as the natural and fundamental unit of society in accordance with the relevant ministerial resolutions.
- **The 1st Ministerial Conference on the Marriage and Family Institutions** was hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 2017.
- **Appointment of a Goodwill Ambassador:** Her Royal Highness Princess Lalla Maryam, Kingdom of Morocco, was appointed in 2018 as the first OIC Goodwill Ambassador in the field of empowering marriage and family institution and combating underage marriage.
- **Preparing the OIC strategy in the area of empowering Marriage and Family Institutions and preserving their values in the Muslim world** adopted by the 1st Ministerial Conference on Social Development in 2019.

In the field of childhood care:

- **Childhood Ministers Conference:** The OIC Conference of Ministers of Childhood in the Muslim World held five sessions in coordination with the ICESCO.
- **Reviewing the OIC Covenant on the Rights of the Child** in coordination with the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) to align the Covenant with international instruments in this field.
- **The OIC Child Welfare Strategy:** Coordination with ICESCO to develop the strategy. The general framework of the strategy was presented to the 1st Ministerial Conference on Social Development.

In the field of welfare and social security for the elderly and people with special needs:

- **Preparing the OIC Strategy for the Elderly** that was adopted at the 1st Ministerial Conference on Social Development.

- **The OIC Strategy for Inclusion of People with Special Needs:** A workshop was held on 23-24 December 2019 in Conakry to discuss the draft strategy.

The Ministerial conferences on family, childhood, the elderly, and people with special needs were merged into one ministerial conference under the name “Ministerial Conference on Social Development” whose first session was held on 7-9 December 2019 in Istanbul, Turkey.

In the field of youth capacity-building and promotion:

- **The establishment of a youth unit** entrusted with youth issues within the Directorate General of Cultural, Social, and Family Affairs in accordance with the relevant ministerial resolution.
- **Launching a sectoral conference on youth:** Four sessions of the OIC Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers have been convened so far. Saudi Arabia is preparing to host the fifth session by the end of 2020.
- **Preparing the OIC Youth Strategy** and its executive action plan.
- **Establishing a joint committee** that includes institutions operating in the field of youth within the OIC to enhance coordination and joint action.

VII. HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

Mass displacement, food shortages, and scarcity or total lack of financial resources are the main features of the humanitarian landscape. These constraints have been exacerbated recently by climate change, which has caused heavy losses in many OIC Member States due to hurricanes, floods, torrential rains, landslides, droughts etc. that destroy the livelihoods of vulnerable segments of society. According to UN reports, climate change alone could increase the number of IDPs to 140 million by 2050, while disasters affect 350 million people annually. As for food insecurity, it affects about 800 million people in 41 countries. Besides, the total number of forcibly displaced persons is close to 70.8 million, of whom 41.3 million are internally displaced, 29.7 million are refugees while the remainder represents asylum seekers. It should also be noted that eight of the ten countries hosting the largest refugee population are OIC Member States. In fact, forced displacement remains a real threat and a global challenge affecting many countries. The international community is still striving to stem the flow of refugees and the displaced, albeit with little success.

The OIC faces growing humanitarian needs with limited resources and a lot of efforts, partnerships and coordination between Member States, international donor institutions and the OIC offices in Ramallah, Kabul, Niamey, and Mogadishu.

The most prominent efforts of the OIC in the humanitarian field include the following:

- 1- The OIC signed an agreement with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center (KSRelief), especially in Somalia. The General Secretariat and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) also cooperate and organize dozens of activities and training programs annually that support humanitarian action.
- 2- In order to enhance coordination between the OIC institutions, the OIC held the 5th Annual coordination meeting of the OIC institutions at the headquarters of the General Secretariat in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on 4-5 December 2019. The General Secretariat holds workshops that include experts concerned with humanitarian affairs to discuss humanitarian issues of critical importance to the General Secretariat and Member States.
- 3- The General Secretariat and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) held consultations at senior level and at policy-making level to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. The two sides agreed that the humanitarian situation in some countries do not receive proper attention at the global level, and that the humanitarian needs in several Member States and Muslim communities rarely receive the required amount of attention. These forgotten crises need funding and closer attention. A new report issued by CARE International in 2018 highlighted the ten most unattended humanitarian crises during 2017 half of which were faced by Muslim communities and three were located within the Muslim world.
- 4- In February 2019, the General Secretariat and OCHA organized a meeting of senior officials on "Reporting on Aid Provided by Member States". The meeting offered a platform for exchanging information on humanitarian assistance granted by Member States and providing them in an accessible manner by policy makers, researchers, and humanitarian workers as well as a guide base to support policy decisions on humanitarian assistance and providing context for executive decisions.

- 5- The General Secretariat and the International Committee of the Red Cross held consultations at a high level and at the policy-making level to discuss public policy issues related to the humanitarian field to explore possible areas of cooperation on the humanitarian front, including operational and policy issues, and to meet the challenges facing several Member States. The two sides agreed to sustain the current partnership and to enhance existing cooperation.
- 6- The OIC has embarked on a humanitarian project in cooperation with the Afghan Red Crescent Society to treat Afghan children with congenital heart diseases through surgery. Through its office in Kabul, the OIC General Secretariat provided on February 17, 2020 a grant to the Afghan Red Crescent Society in support of the project.
- 7- In the context of cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and in a follow-up to the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants, the OIC, in cooperation with the UNHCR, held a joint workshop for Member States and specialized agencies in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to share best practices, solutions, and ideas to be presented during negotiations related to the Global Compact on Refugees.

VIII. ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

The OIC efforts continue to develop a framework for economic cooperation among its Member States. The OIC holds ministerial conferences on labor and employment, tourism, food security, and agricultural development. It also carries out many other activities related to agricultural development and food security, promotion of trade and investment between OIC Member States, private sector development, and implementation of OIC initiatives to alleviate poverty and economic assistance to Member States in need.

➤ OIC-2025: PLAN OF ACTION

The new Ten-year Program of Action (OIC-2025: Plan of Action) is grounded in the provisions of the OIC Charter and includes 18 priority areas and 107 goals. It addresses issues of peace and security, Palestine and Al-Quds Ash-Sharif, poverty alleviation, anti-terrorism, investment and project financing, food security, science and technology, climate change, sustainable and intermediate development, culture and interfaith dialogue, women empowerment, and joint Islamic action in the humanitarian field, human rights, good governance, and other issues

IX. SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, HEALTH, AND THE ENVIRONMENT

The OIC places high priority on promoting science, technology and innovation, advancing higher education, improving the health sector, and taking effective measures to address challenges related to climate change and environmental degradation. These issues are at the top of the priorities identified in the OIC Program of Action for Science, Technology, and Innovation 2026 (1st Islamic Summit on Science and Technology, Astana, 2017), and the OIC Program of Action 2025 (13th Islamic Summit Conference, Istanbul, 2016) and Vision 1441 AH of Science and Technology (10th Islamic Summit, Putrajaya, 2003). Within this perspective, science, technology, innovation, higher education, health, water resources, and the environment are deemed critical areas that are consistently covered by the activities and programs of the OIC General Secretariat, its Subsidiary Organs, and its Specialized and Affiliated institutions.

The ICESCO, one of the OIC Specialized Institutions, holds sectoral ministerial conferences on education and the environment in cooperation with the OIC. Besides, the OIC holds a conference of health ministers.

CHAPTER II
EFFORTS OF THE OIC AND ITS ORGANS
IN
ADDRESSING THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

INTRODUCTION

Proceeding from the goals and principles of the OIC Charter, which provides for coordinating and uniting Member States' efforts to address the challenges facing the Muslim world; as part of the OIC's role in promoting cooperation and coordination in cases of humanitarian emergency; and considering COVID-19's multi-dimensional effects on all Member States, the OIC and its various Institutions launched a set of initiatives, within the framework of the joint response to the challenges posed at the current juncture with a view to supporting Member States in facing this pandemic.

The following pages of this chapter set forth a number of initiatives the OIC and its Institutions have deployed in response to Coronavirus pandemic and in support of Member States' efforts to counter the pandemic and its adverse effects, including through implementing the orientations of the Final Communiqué of the virtual meeting of the Executive Committee held on 22 April 2020.

I. EFFORTS OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT

➤ POLITICAL FIELD

In response to the grave situation and serious challenges posed by COVID-19 Pandemic to the OIC Member States and the world at large, the OIC has expeditiously assumed its responsibility to support the national efforts of Member States and coordinate among them. In this context, the OIC has contributed to regional and international initiatives to overcome those challenges.

Under these circumstances the OIC's attention has been focused on Palestine and to conflict-torn countries and regions in Africa and Asia, as well as the least developed countries and refugees wherever they are to assist them and to call for unfettered passage of humanitarian and medical assistance to the needy and affected.

Since some countries are not in a position to grapple with this pandemic unless wars and conflicts come to a halt, the Secretary-General appealed to parties to conflicts in the OIC region to initiate an immediate ceasefire and stop violence, protect their peoples, preserve lives, and focus their attention on combating and preventing the pandemic while striving to reach peaceful solutions to disputes.

In this context, the Secretary-General welcomed the announcement of the Joint Forces Command to Restore Legitimacy in Yemen, led and supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, of a two-week comprehensive ceasefire in Yemen effective Thursday, 19 April 2020, which was later extended for one month. The Secretary-General indicated that this announcement is a commendable humanitarian initiative at this critical juncture during which Yemen is facing up to the challenges posed by COVID-19 outbreak.

• **Executive Committee Meeting:**

The General Secretariat took a set of measures in the context of its urgent drive to consult and coordinate with the Member States regarding holding an extraordinary virtual meeting of the OIC Executive Committee at the level of foreign ministers on Wednesday, 22nd April 2020, in coordination with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the Islamic Summit and the Executive Committee.

Following the Executive Committee meeting, the General Secretariat held a series of meetings chaired by the Secretary General to follow up on the implementation of the Final Communiqué of the meeting, particularly as regards the internal measures and consultation and coordination with OIC Member States and institutions and communication with the United Nations and regional organizations.

• **Palestine and Al-Quds:**

The General Secretariat has been following up the repercussions of COVID-19 on the cause of Palestine and Al-Quds, attaching special attention to supporting the Palestinian people to counter the pandemic. Among the efforts exerted by the OIC and its different organs in this regard are:

1. The Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) announced a financial contribution in support for the Ministry of Health of the State of Palestine to help in fighting the global novel coronavirus pandemic. For its part, the Islamic Committee of the International Crescent (ICIC) launched a humanitarian appeal to support the efforts of the Palestinian Red Crescent Society's program to fight the COVID-19 Pandemic.
2. The Secretary-General addressed letters to their Excellencies the Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States and relevant international organizations including the United Nations, the World Bank, and the European Union, urging them to provide financial assistance to the Government of the State of Palestine and the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA).
3. Coordination is underway with various OIC Organs, especially the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF) and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) following the latter's subsequent announcement of a \$35.7 million assistance package to the State of Palestine in response to the COVID-19 Pandemic, at the request of the Palestinian government.
4. Continued consultations are conducted continuously with UNRWA regarding its current financial situation and the challenges faced by Palestinian refugees and the ways to address them jointly, during this unprecedented health challenge.
5. The OIC Representative Office to the State of Palestine exerted many efforts, including formal consultation with government officials, monitoring, assessment, and reporting on field developments and conveying to the General Secretariat requests for OIC intervention to mitigate the repercussions of COVID-19 Pandemic.

➤ **HUMANITARIAN FIELD**

As part of its efforts on the humanitarian front, the General Secretariat has been following carefully the ramifications of COVID-19 pandemic worldwide and across OIC Member States in particular. In this perspective, the General Secretariat maintains permanent coordination with different relevant OIC Institutions and international partners to help as many Member States as possible, particularly LDCs and those most affected by the pandemic, grapple with COVID-19 pandemic's impacts in the health and relief areas.

Humanitarian measures to fight the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid19)

1. The Secretary General endorsed the initiative launched by the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), a Subsidiary Organ of the OIC, to earmark an account to assist the Member States, especially OIC LDCs, to enhance their capabilities in facing the Coronavirus pandemic, mainly in the health sector. In this context, financial aids were allocated for the first group of LDCs, including four states from the three regional groups. This assistance is intended to provide medical items and equipment to support and boost the capacities of health ministries in those countries to face COVID-19 pandemic. Coordination with the ISF is ongoing to finalize the allocation and delivery of the remaining assistance to other LDCs and those States most in need.
2. The General Secretariat continues its efforts to deal with the various requests by Member States seeking assistance to fight COVID-19. In this regard, the requests received from the Member States are immediately transmitted to the ISF for consideration, while

undertaking daily follow-up of request-processing and urging other Member States to provide financial support for the account reserved for the support of the most affected countries.

3. Similarly, all requests received from the Member States have been relayed to the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) to provide assistance to the concerned Member States. The IsDB has responded positively to the requests of some affected Member States.
4. Intensifying consultations with international partners in the humanitarian field, including the United Nations, the World Health Organization, the European Union, China, the United States of America and international agencies.

➤ **HEALTH AREA**

1. On 11th March 2020, the OIC General Secretariat participated in a teleconference of the Executive Committee of the Islamic Advisory Group for Polio (IAG). IAG is a consortium of three leading institutions, namely the OIC General Secretariat, Islamic Development Bank, International Islamic Fiqh Academy, and Al-Azhar Alsharif. It also includes in its membership eminent Islamic Scholars, religious leaders, and medical experts. The purpose of the teleconference was to discuss potential collaboration between WHO and IAG regarding COVID-19 outbreak, and specifically the areas where IAG can contribute by using its network of religious and community leaders in raising awareness about the Pandemic and sensitizing communities to abide by the measures and guidelines put in place by authorities to prevent further spread of the disease.
2. The OIC, in coordination with the Government of UAE, Chair of the 7th Islamic Conference of Health Ministers, convened an Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Steering Committee on Health via video conference at the level of Ministers on 09 April 2020. The Committee adopted a Joint Statement that called, *inter-alia*, on the Member States to scale up timely and transparent sharing of information on the issues of global public health concern on the prevention, detection, and treatment of the cases of COVID-19, epidemiological and clinical research data exchange, and materials necessary for research and development of medical treatment for this virus.
3. As a follow-up to the above Statement, the General Secretariat requested the Member States to regularly share their respective experiences in the fight against the Pandemic. The OIC General Secretariat will disseminate the information among the Member States to create an effective network for sharing knowledge, experiences, and materials in the fight against COVID-19 Pandemic.
4. In follow-up of the provisions of the Final Communiqué of the Virtual Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee held on 22 April 2020 to discuss the Novel Coronavirus, the General Secretariat requested the Member States to share the details of the institutions involved in the production of medical products, equipment, and other related medical supplies. It also requested the OIC relevant institutions to map the institutions engaged in the production of medical equipment and supplies as well as those undertaking

research activities for diagnostics, vaccines, and therapeutics for the Novel Coronavirus and share the information with the General Secretariat for it circulate it to all Member States. The aim is to improve coordination among manufacturers, scientists and health professionals to accelerate the research and development process, and expand manufacturing capacity among the Member States, to meet the increasing demand for medical supplies and ensure that these are made widely available at an affordable price as quickly as possible.

➤ **ECONOMIC FIELD:**

Like in other parts of the world, almost all OIC countries are affected by COVID-19, a situation that seems poised to worsen dramatically. The disruption of the world economy through global value chains, the abrupt fall in commodity prices and fiscal revenues, and the enforcement of travel and social restrictions will have a negative impact on production and employment in OIC countries. Some key sectors of the OIC countries' economies are already experiencing a slowdown as a result of the pandemic. Tourism, air transport, and the oil sector are visibly impacted, leading to both lower demand for and supply of goods and services. In order to limit the social and economic impact of the COVID-19, governments in OIC countries have announced fiscal measures to support households and businesses during the emergency.

Against this background, the General Secretariat will use all the resources at its disposal to help OIC Member States to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic, in particular through ensuring the effective implementation of the Final Communiqué of the Virtual Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Executive Committee held on 22 April 2020.

In this context:

1. The Secretary-General has addressed a letter to the President of the World Bank Group and the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) respectively, on the outcome of the above-mentioned Executive Committee Meeting and the need to consider easing debt burden of LDCs, including providing concessional loans and basic support to combat the consequences of the pandemic.
2. The General Secretariat requested SESRIC to prepare a research study on the impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the economies of OIC Member States. This study would enable OIC Member States to understand the possible socio-economic repercussions as well as develop policy recommendations to respond collectively to the COVID-19 crisis. On their part, the relevant OIC Institutions, such as SESRIC, IsDB Group, and IOFS, have launched several initiatives towards this end.

➤ **INFORMATION DOMAIN**

Since the outbreak of the Novel Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), the General Secretariat in its media efforts focused on sensitization campaigns slated to highlight the efforts of the OIC Member States and its Institutions. The General Secretariat took the following steps with regards to its media/sensitization campaigns:

1. Several press releases have been issued and many media interviews conducted to shed light on the need to reinforce global cooperation to combat the pandemic and support the

various measures taken by the Member States to constrain its spread. It has also sought to raise awareness of its dangers and the ways to prevent it.

2. A large-scale media awareness campaign was launched under the hashtag #OICCountriesCombatCOVID19 in English and (#دول_التعاون_الإسلامي_تواجه_كورونا) in Arabic on the OIC website and social media platforms. Hundreds of video clips, graphics, pictures, and other content have been posted to highlight the efforts of the different OIC Member States, the General Secretariat, and OIC Institutions in combating COVID-19 and raise awareness about preventive means.

The awareness-raising media campaign launched by the General Secretariat on social media to combat the disease has been widely well-received in the different OIC Member States and non-member states; the messages of the campaign reached millions of people in the three working languages of the OIC (Arabic, English and French). Followers continue to interact with the content published on the issue.

3. The OIC General Secretariat has established a special window on the OIC website, which features news and basic statistics on the spread of COVID-19 in the OIC Member States, including the numbers of cases, recovered cases, and deaths. The statistics are updated every 30 minutes.

Sawt Al Hikma Center (OIC Voice of Wisdom Center):

Starting March 16, 2020, the activities of the Voice of Wisdom Center focused on following the crisis of the spread of the coronavirus, methods of confronting it, and adopting the OIC's approach to dealing with this issue which has been the focus of the whole world. In this context, the Center has published a wide range of different forms of content that mostly focus on the pandemic.

1. The most prominent activities carried out by the Center during this period include the Voice of Wisdom Contest for Short Films, in which we encouraged the participants to produce attractive and distinct content through simple resources available under home quarantine and lockdown. The Center has received some posts that focus on the issue of Coronavirus. This generated great interaction by followers with the films that qualified for the finals of the contest.
2. Since March 16 until the end of April 2020, the Voice of Wisdom Center has published many forms of content that focus mainly on the issue of Coronavirus outbreak, while showing Islam's great keenness on hygiene and personal care.

II. EFFORTS OF OIC ORGANS IN ADDRESSING THE PANDEMIC

Many relevant OIC Organs launched urgent initiatives to respond to the challenges confronting OIC Member States, particularly LDCs, due to the Novel Coronavirus outbreak.

The following is a set of initiatives by some OIC Organs. The websites of OIC Organs include more details:

➤ ISLAMIC DEVELOPMENT BANK (OIC SPECIALIZED INSTITUTION)

IsDB Group's Strategic Preparedness and Response Programme for COVID-19 Pandemic

On 4th April 2020, the IsDB Group has launched a US\$2.3 billion Strategic Preparedness and Response Programme. The programme aims to support Member States' efforts to protect against this pandemic, curb its impact and promote recovery. It follows a holistic approach at the short, medium and long terms and highlights priorities that go beyond health sector immediate and urgent response. In the meantime, the programme endeavors to put Member States on the track of economic recovery again by restoring livelihoods, building resilience and resume economic activity.

The following are the contributions of IsDB Group members and partners to the programme:

1. Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) :	US\$1.52 billion
2. Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD):	US\$50 million
3. International Islamic Trade Finance Corporation (ITFC):	US\$300 million
4. Islamic Corporation for the Development of the Private Sector (ICD)	US\$250 million
5. Islamic Corporation for the Insurance of Investment and Export Credit (ICIEC)	US\$150 million
6. King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Fund for Charitable Action (KAAP)	US\$8.5 million
7. Science, Technology and Innovation Transform Fund	US\$ 1 million

Within the framework of this initiative, the IsDB Group announced on 29th April 2020 funding support for OIC Member States to help them overcome the pandemic. This support is as follows:

Kyrgyzstan:	US\$11 million
Tunisia	US\$ 279 million
Uzbekistan	US\$143 million

Sudan	US\$35 million
Senegal	US\$162 million
Mauritania	US\$33 million
Guinea	US\$20 million
Benin	US\$20 million
Turkey	US\$250 million
Guinea-Bissau	US\$15 million
Uganda	US\$20.2 million
Mali	US\$ 22.5 million
Côte d’Ivoire	US\$46.2 million
The Maldives	US\$25.6 million
Sierra Leone	US\$25 million
Chad	US\$20 million
Palestine	US\$35.7 million
Mozambique	US\$28.3 million
Libya	US\$62.5 million
Jordan	US\$10.5 million
Burkina Faso.	US\$11 million

In addition, negotiations are underway for the provision of an emergency assistance package to Suriname, Cameroon, Nigeria, and Pakistan.

- **IsDB-TWAS Joint Programmes for the Sustainability Science, Technology and Innovation Capacity Building**

The IsDB and the World Academy of Science (TWAS) have partnered to promote and support quick-response research on key challenges related to the COVID-19 Pandemic and the possible consequences. To this end, two programs - Joint Research & Technology Transfer Grant and Postdoctoral Fellowships – were launched in April 2020 to support researchers from OIC Member States in academic fields that focus on science and sustainability. Through these joint programs , IsDB aims to build the capacity of talented young researchers in OIC Member States.

The IsDB-TWAS Joint Research & Technology Transfer Grant Programme is fully funded by the IsDB and established to develop collaboration between researchers of OIC Member States. Under this program, qualified researchers from all OIC countries are invited to form a joint research collaboration consisting of two groups from different countries working on areas related to the COVID-19 Pandemic. The program will choose one joint- project per year. The grant amounts to a maximum of USD 50,000 per research group – USD 100,000 total for the joint-

project. One of the two groups must be based in an OIC Least Developed Country. The IsDB-TWAS Joint Research & Technology Transfer Grant will be awarded to the project, which demonstrates the best potential to advance knowledge and help address the challenges created by the coronavirus and future pandemics. The deadline for receiving applications is 4th June 2020.

On the other hand, the IsDB-TWAS Postdoctoral Fellowship Programme aims to support young scientists from 21 OIC Least Developed Member Countries to enable them to undertake postdoctoral research in areas of science relevant to sustainability science such as sustainable agriculture, climate change, energy, waste management, population growth, and water and hygiene, among others. The deadline for receiving applications is 8th June 2020.

- **Transform Fund Call for Innovation 2020**

On 1st April 2020, the IsDB, within the framework of its US\$500 million Transform Fund, which was launched in 2018, announced the Call for Innovation 2020. This initiative is aimed at supporting innovative ideas that help curb the spread of COVID-19, minimize the socio-economic impact of the Pandemic, and build the resilience of the OIC member states in responding to outbreaks of pandemics. The grant amount foreseen by the call ranges from US\$50,000 to US\$150,000. It also foresees IsDB's equity participation up to US\$ 1,000,000 in business start-ups. The deadline for applications is 1st June 2020.

- **ISLAMIC ORGANIZATION FOR FOOD SECURITY (OIC SPECIALIZED INSTITUTION)**

- IOFS Strategy to address the food security crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic**

On April 06 2020, the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS), which is a Specialized Institution of OIC, has unveiled its strategy to address the food security crisis in its member states in the wake of the COVID Pandemic. The strategy features actions in the immediate and medium terms at national and OIC levels.

At the national level, IOFS supports the current national actions of member states to cushion the effect of social confinement due to COVID-19 through providing food aid, cash transfer, job security, and free volunteer programs to assist poor and vulnerable segments of the populations. IOFS commends and encourages the actions of OIC Member States for the utilization of national strategic food reserves and providing food aid shipments to fellow member states, which are in dire need of emergency food supplies. IOFS also undertakes to accelerate the take-off of the Islamic Food Processing Association (IFPA) as a B2B mechanism for addressing post-harvest losses through increased collaboration within the downstream food supply sub-sector.

At the intra-OIC level, IOFS undertakes to pursue the implementation of the various OIC agreements on free trade and investment promotion. On pest control and transboundary animal diseases, IOFS would take urgent measures in concert with relevant corporate and state stakeholders to combat the menace of locust invasion, which has adversely affected food production in many countries within the region. As a sustainable strategy to addressing perennial food shortages due to crop failure and related problems, IOFS is vigorously pursuing the creation of the OIC Regional Food Security Reserve while encouraging the expansion of various national food security reserves via PPP schemes. On research and development, IOFS shall develop its

Food Balance Database, while mainstreaming science, technology, and innovation through the development of a regional mechanism for conservation and sharing of plant and animal genetic resources for food and agriculture, in collaboration with FAO and COMSTECH.

In the medium term, it is expected that implementation of the OIC Programme of Action for Development of Strategic Agricultural Commodities (Rice, Wheat, and Cassava, incl. Palm Oil) will scale-up the respective capacities of Member States to ensure relative food sufficiency, income generation and increased balance of payment equilibrium. To this end, IOFS commends the efforts of Member States to host the meetings of Centers of Excellence on Strategic Commodities in Kazakhstan, the Workshop on National Gene Banks in UAE, and the Roundtable on Water Management for Agriculture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during 2020.

➤ **ISLAMIC WORLD EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (OIC SPECIALIZED INSTITUTION):**

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) launched on 30th April 2020 the “Societies We Want” initiative to spread knowledge and implement innovative programs to build healthy, peaceful, prosperous, inclusive and resilient societies, a need that surfaced at the time of COVID-19. It also launched ‘ICESCO Digital Home’, a knowledge platform for digital content. It includes several programmes including distance access to culture, ICESCO suitcase for educational content and other efficient programmes and initiatives. It is worth mentioning that the ICESCO launched the convening of its virtual extraordinary Conference of Education Ministers on 14 May 2020 in cooperation with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to discuss the challenges facing the education system due to the spread of Coronavirus pandemic.

➤ **INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC FIQH ACADEMY (OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGAN):**

The International Islamic *Fiqh* Academy (IIFA), an OIC Subsidiary Organ, held an Islamic jurisprudence - medical symposium on the spread of Covid-19 on 16th April 2020 via video conferencing. The Symposium brought together eminent Islamic scholars and medical experts to discuss the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic and its implications from religious and medical points of view. The Symposium also considered a range of issues including the *Shariah* provisions on isolating the confirmed and suspected cases, social distancing, acts of worship, including congregational prayer, Friday prayer, and Ramadan fasting during the lockdown, personal hygiene, and the necessary precautions, especially adherence to health directives issued by the competent authorities.

Earlier on 1st March 2020, the IIFA had issued a statement supporting the precautionary measures taken by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in order to protect citizens, residents, and all Muslims. The statement appreciated the measures taken by the Kingdom to protect *Umrah* performers wishing to visit holy sites and the Prophet's Mosque, calling for abiding with instructions issued by the Kingdom.

➤ **STATISTICAL, ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGAN)**

In the framework of its response to COVID-19 Pandemic in OIC Member States, the Statistical, economic and Social Research and Training Center (SESRIC), a Subsidiary Organ of the OIC, has recently launched the following programmes:

1. SESRIC COVID-19 Pandemic Database for the OIC Member States

SESRIC's COVID-19 Pandemic Database for the OIC Member States was launched during the Extraordinary Meeting of the OIC Steering Committee on Health on COVID-19 Pandemic, on 9th April 2020. The objective of the initiative is to raise public awareness and offer policymakers a tool to guide their ongoing efforts in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. SESRIC's COVID-19 Pandemic Database for OIC Member States is accessible through https://www.sesric.org/sesric_covid_19.php. It provides statistics, data visualisation, dashboard, and map on the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in OIC Member States in terms of three main indicators, namely (i) number of confirmed cases;(ii) number of deaths; and (iii) number of recoveries. The data, which the Centre updates on a daily basis, starting from 25 January 2020, covers 54 OIC countries. In addition, SESRIC has also published, on 15 April 2020, a new report under its OIC Statistical Outlook series, titled "COVID-19 Pandemic in OIC Member States". This report can be accessed through <https://www.sesric.org/publications-so-covid.php>.

2. A research study titled "Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 in OIC Member States: Prospects and Challenges"

In line with the request of the General Secretariat, SESRIC is currently preparing a comprehensive research study titled "Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19 in OIC Member States: Prospects and Challenges". The Study seeks to assess the socio-economic impact of this Pandemic in OIC Member States by looking into major social and economic development indicators such as production and growth, trade and finance, employment, tourism and transportation, agriculture and food security, health, education and vulnerable segments like children, women, elderly and people with disability. The study is also expected to highlight the national best practices of some countries in public safety measures, like social distancing, lockdown, and curfew. The Study is set to further highlight some socio-economic policy responses taken by OIC countries to counter the negative effects of COVID-19 on their economies and societies. The Study is further expected to provide policy suggestions at both national and OIC cooperation levels to minimize the socio-economic fallout of COVID-19 in OIC Member States.

To conclude, the intensive efforts exerted by the OIC and its different Organs reflect a response to the humanitarian appeal made following the Novel Coronavirus pandemic outbreak in fulfillment of the OIC's values and objectives. The OIC will continue to resolutely serve the causes of the Islamic Ummah by delivering on its mission, living up to the aspirations of its leaders and expectations of its peoples.

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