

Khartoum Declaration

Towards a Brighter Future for Our Children

We the heads of delegation of the Member States taking part in the Second Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood, held under the patronage of President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, in Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan, from 7 to 8 Safar 1430AH/ 2 to 3 February 2009,

Guided by the teachings of Islam which urge due care of children and granting them full rights and require that all children — girls and boys, in all situations, always and everywhere and even when they are still fetuses in the wombs of their mothers— have the right to live and thrive to reach their full potential;

Reaffirming our commitment to the lofty values and principles set by the Islamic religion to protect the family, uphold the dignity of its members and maintain their equal rights resting on freedom, justice, tolerance and peace, including the provisions relating to the environment, health, education, entertainment, culture and the protection of categories with special needs;

Recalling the resolution on Child Care and Protection in the Member States of the OIC, adopted by the 11th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (Dakar, March 2008), which stipulated the necessity to safeguard children's rights;

Also recalling the priority and importance to address the concerns regarding children and the provisions urging for their development contained in the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action adopted by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit held in December 2005 in Makkah Al-Mukarramah;

Recalling the commitments made in the Declaration of the First Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood, held in Rabat, in the Kingdom of Morocco, in November 2005;

Recalling the OIC Covenant on the Rights of the Child adopted by the 32nd Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Sana'a, Republic of Yemen, June 2005);

Recalling the principles and resolutions of the United Nations on the rights of children, as well as the UN Millennium Declaration, the Millennium Development Goals and the goals of “A World Fit for Children” document, which were adopted by the Member States;

Recognizing that the Convention on the Rights of the Child constitutes a frame of reference for the promotion and protection of the rights of the child;

Welcoming the constructive outcome of the World Summit of 2005, held in New York, in September 2005;

Commending ISESCO's outstanding efforts in the field of childhood and its fruitful cooperation with the relevant regional and international partners with a view to ensuring the safety, protection and development of children in the Islamic World;

Asserting that no investment rivals the investment in our children, and that without adequate investment in children we cannot hope to improve their well-being, advance sustained human development for future generations, and expect the countries of the Islamic world to occupy their rightful place as global leaders;

Noting with concern that in spite of our commitments and the notable examples of success in improving the well-being of children in the Member States, progress still falls short of expectations; hence the importance of taking immediate actions to fulfill the repeated commitments and consolidate the many notable examples of success;

Taking due note of the fruitful deliberations which took place during the sessions of the Second Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood, held in Khartoum, the Republic of the Sudan, from 2 to 3 February 2009;

A- DECLARE our Renewed Commitment and Strengthened Resolve to:

1. **Adhere to** the general principles of child rights, *inter alia*, the best interests of the child, non-discrimination, participation, survival and development, which provide the framework for all action concerning children and adolescents alike;
2. **Preserve** and enhance the common Islamic heritage to increase the awareness of the Muslim children and adolescents of the values of Islam, and instill into them a sense of pride in the achievements of the glorious Islamic civilization; and to contribute to more understanding and tolerance among peoples and religions;
3. **Publicize** the values of Islam with regard to family, women and children through mass media, to disseminate the true and honourable image of Islam and the essence of its eternal Sharia, and to promote, among Member States, Islamic solidarity on the child's issues;
4. **Adopt** accelerated measures to enhance the well-being of our children and strengthen the solidarity and cooperation among our group of countries in the service of children;
5. **Secure** the key role of the family and parents in caring of and protecting children as well as in upbringing future generations; and **ensure** commitment by the Member States to help them and provide all necessary means and aids to enable them to assume these lofty duties;
6. **Reiterate** our commitment to and respect for human political, cultural, economic and social rights adopted by the Member States as full-fledged integrated rights for our people and for the citizens in our Islamic world, with emphasis on the Islamic values and teachings advocating the honoring of Man and protection of their rights.

7. **Reaffirm** children's rights to enjoy all liberties without discrimination based on color, sex, language or religion; and call on the Member States to draw up any legislations likely to protect the child from discrimination and take the necessary measures to counteract customs and traditions preventing them to enjoy such liberties.
8. **Call on** the Member States to remain focused and strengthen their efforts towards realizing the goals envisioned in the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action concerning children of the Member States.
9. **Commend** the humanitarian actions and programmes undertaken by the Humanitarian Affairs Department in the OIC General Secretariat towards the development and advancement of the children particularly those affected by natural disasters, abuses and conflicts, and orphans, through providing food, shelter, education, and other necessary services and sponsoring the orphans.
10. **Carry out** cooperation and coordination among the Member States as regards human rights, considering that Islam honors human beings and recognize them all rights to security and decent living; and **reaffirm** refusal of any use of slogans to achieve political benefits aimed at distorting the image of Islam and the reputation of the Member States.
11. **Call on** civil society institutions and non governmental organizations in the Member States to assume their role and act jointly with governments to coordinate their programmes for the promotion of children, ensuring their protection and preserving their rights.
12. **Call on** the relevant competent organizations in the Member States to coordinate policies, develop strategies, exchange expertise and develop implementation mechanisms for the promotion of the situation of children in the Islamic world and achieving the sought goals in this field.

B- CALL FOR THE FOLLOWING MEASURES TO ACCELERATE PROGRESS in the areas of 'Child Health', 'Education', 'Child Protection', and 'Globalization':

CHILD HEALTH

13. **Reaffirm** the commitment of the Member States to provide health care to all children and **pledge** to take preventive and curative measures, organize awareness-raising campaigns to reduce maternal and child mortality, and combat malnutrition and chronic diseases that threaten the lives of children and undermine their future.

- 14. Call on** the Member States to allocate adequate resources and take all necessary measures to ensure the right of the child, without discrimination, to enjoy the best possible standards of health; to develop sustainable health systems and social services; to provide adequate and healthy food and nutrition to prevent the spread of diseases and malnutrition; to secure health services for mothers, newborn infants and children; as well as to ensure a special care for adolescents and protect them from drugs and smoking.
- 15. Urge** the Member States to break the silence on the HIV and AIDS epidemic, by reaching out to religious leaders, educational institutions, and NGOs and taking more efficient measures to combat this epidemic.
- 16. Call upon** the Member States to support and attend to children and families affected by HIV/AIDS; ensure an effective prevention of infections through education and information; and facilitate access to voluntary and confidential screening as well as access to affordable treatment, while giving due attention to the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of the virus.
- 17. Call on** the Member States to enhance the health systems and medical measures, and to ensure further coordination and cooperation with the competent bodies to address such diseases as malaria and tuberculosis which undermine the health of children and their lives, and hinder their natural development and their involvement in social life.

EDUCATION

- 18. Devote** further attention to education being a fundamental right for our children, and reiterate our commitment to provide free and compulsory education, as well as an appropriate environment for entertainment and cultural and artistic activities to all children without discrimination.
- 19. Stress** children's right to high-quality education, entertainment and recreational activities, conducive to unleashing their aptitudes, instilling into them the values of virtue, fairness and beauty, as well as enabling them to interact with the others, acquire life skills, and be aware of their identity and their civilizational *raison d'être*.
- 20. Redouble** efforts to raise the quality of primary education and make it available, free and compulsory to all; to progressively work towards making secondary, higher and vocational education and technical training generally available and accessible to all; intensively promote and strengthen science and technology education at secondary education level and adoption and/or development of science and technology at higher education through research and development; and to care for the gifted and talented, in coordination with the competent parties.
- 21. Reaffirm** the commitment to achieve gender equality in education by 2015, in the light of the decisions and recommendations issued by conferences on education for all, with a focus on ensuring girls' permanent and equal access to full basic education of good quality, in coordination with the competent parties.

22. **Seek** in coordination with the relevant sectors to provide children with a suitable education environment which encourage them to learn; and reaffirm our commitment to ensure that education programmes and materials fully reflect the principles of promotion and protection of human rights and the values of peace, tolerance, dialogue and gender justice, in the light of the provisions of the International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World, 2001–2010.
23. **Step up** efforts in order to ensure adequate educational services for early childhood stage, particularly in remote areas, combat school drop-out, and prepare adequate training programmes to prevent the spread of literacy in this stage.

CHILD PROTECTION

24. **Provide** a protective environment for children and preserve their rights through enactment of appropriate legislation and meeting the economic and developmental needs of poor societies and developing mechanisms for the implementation of laws on the prevention of exploitation and sexual trafficking and counteracting pornographic materials on websites.
25. **Encourage** and disseminate the leading experiences in the establishment of mechanisms for the protection of the family and child, and urge the Member States to take the measures necessary for building on these experiences to provide the highest levels of protection of the family and child.
26. **Take** the necessary measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against girls and all harmful traditional or customary practices, such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, in the light of the relevant declarations, instruments, and conventions.
27. **Ratify** the relevant human rights conventions and urge States that have not ratified and implemented yet the International Labour Organization's Conventions concerning Minimum Age for Admission to Employment (Convention No. 138) and Prohibition of the Worst Forms of Child Labour, (Convention No. 182) 1999, and the two Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict and on Child Prostitution and Child Pornography to do so.
28. **Protect** the handicapped children and their rights, and urge the Member States to sign and ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities;
29. **Condemn** the Israeli aggression on Gaza and urge the Member States to make every endeavour to provide the necessary aid to the Gaza children and call on the international community to condemn the criminal practices against the Palestinian people and its children, as acts contrary to the human and moral values and as war crimes and crimes against humanity.

30. **Condemn** the maneuvers, schemes and plots which target the Sudan, its integrity, and sovereignty, as they obstruct the efforts led by friendly and peace-loving countries for the establishment of peace in the Darfur region, and negatively impact the care and protection of children.
31. **Welcome** the adoption by the United Nations General Assembly of Resolution N° 59/165 (2005) on Working towards the Elimination of Crimes against Women and Girls Committed in the Name of Honour, by taking appropriate legislative and administrative measures and devise suitable programmes.
32. **Address** the phenomenon of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict, which constitutes a flagrant breach of our tolerant religious principles and values as well as the international and regional instruments and conventions and runs contrary to international law; and urge all parties to armed conflicts who are engaged in such practices to end them and to take effective measures for the rehabilitation and reintegration of those children into society;

GLOBALIZATION

33. **Redouble** efforts and develop strategies and action plans to address the social, political, environmental and cultural implications of globalization, and protect children from its adverse effects to enable them to preserve their cultural and civilizational identity and enhance their contribution to the development of their own societies.
34. **Reaffirm** the importance and necessity that children benefit from information and communication technologies to develop their knowledge capacities, enhance their creative skills and activate their contribution to scientific, cultural, literary and artistic areas.
35. **Face up to** the present world challenges, particularly food, energy and economic crises which affect children and strip them off their basic rights; and call on the Member States to prepare programmes and action plans to reduce the negative implications of such crises.

On the **COORDINATION AND FOLLOW UP** to this **Khartoum Declaration WE:**

36. **Entrust** ISESCO with the responsibility of following up on the implementation of this **Khartoum Declaration** in conjunction with the Chairman of the Conference, and with supporting individual and joint efforts of Member States with a view to assisting them in fulfilling their obligations and commitments towards children.
37. **Request** ISESCO to establish programmes and activities aiming to promote the situation of children, and to prepare, in coordination with Member States and the competent parties, studies, researches, data and indicators concerning the situation of children in general, with a view to assisting Member States in the implementation of the contents of **Khartoum Declaration**, and following up its implementation.

38. **Call upon** ISESCO to coordinate and cooperate with specialized Islamic and international institutions to undertake studies aimed at improving the status of women, children and families in the Member States, especially in the target areas identified in this **Khartoum Declaration**.
39. **Urge** Member States to report regularly to ISESCO on the measures taken in the implementation of this **Khartoum Declaration**.
40. **Call upon** the OIC and ISESCO General Secretariats to submit the **Khartoum Declaration** to the specialized conferences of the relevant Arab, Islamic and international organizations to highlight the Islamic perspective with regard to child issues and their specificities in the Islamic world, and propound the Member States' expectations and future action plans in that respect.

Final provisions

41. **Consider** the addresses of His Excellency Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, the Vice-President of the Republic of the Sudan; His Excellency Prof Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary-General of the OIC; and His Excellency Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, the Director General of ISESCO, as reference documents of the conference.
42. **Adopt** the resolutions issued by this conference concerning the items on its agenda; urge the Member States to provide the necessary support to these resolutions; and call upon ISESCO to follow up their implementation, in coordination and cooperation with the chair and the OIC General Secretariat.
43. **Thank** ISESCO for the convening of the Second Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood, in cooperation with the OIC General Secretariat and the Republic of the Sudan; and **call on** ISESCO to continue to convene this conference on a regular basis once every two years, follow up the implementation of its resolutions and recommendations, and submit comprehensive reports on the state of children in Islamic countries to the forthcoming sessions of the conference.
44. **Thank** the OIC General Secretariat for its contribution to convening this conference; and **urge** ISESCO to coordinate with the OIC General Secretariat in the convening of the forthcoming session of the conference as stipulated by the resolution of the First Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood, as part of the joint Islamic action.
45. **Thank** the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) for its effective participation and constructive cooperation in the convening of this conference, as well as for the expertise and experience it contributed towards addressing child issues; and calls upon it to further its cooperative action.

- 46. Thank** the Republic of the Sudan for hosting this conference and providing the means and facilitations necessary to organize it in the best conditions and ensure its success; and expresses gratitude for the kind hospitality.
- 47. Submit** a message of support to His Excellency Mr Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan, for having kindly bestowed his patronage on this conference; and express appreciation for the leading developmental achievements under his judicious leadership.