

Federation of the Universities
of the Islamic World

Executive Council
First Session

FINAL REPORT

Damascus : 25-26 Shawwal 1412 H
27-28 April 1992

1. The Executive Council of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World held its first session in Damascus, Arab Republic of Syria, on 25-26 Shawwal 1412H/27-28 April 1992.

The meeting was attended by all Council members, except the representative of the Sultanate of Brunei Darussalam and of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah. Representatives of several Arab and Islamic organizations and university federations also attended the meeting.

Opening Session

2. Professor Abdellatif Benabdeljalil, representative of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chairman of the Federation's Executive Council delivered an address in which he expressed, on behalf of participants, deep gratitude to the Arab Republic of Syria, its President, Government and people, for the generous hospitality and warm welcome extended to the participants. He also welcomed participants and praised their high academic calibre, adding that their contributions would certainly promote the Federation's action.

He expressed hope that the Federation would manage to use all potentials in order to ensure continuous interaction among universities through the preparation of programmes and plans on the basis of the Islamic cultural heritage and through an open-minded policy in various fields related to comprehensive developments.

3. Taking the floor on behalf of Dr. Abdulaziz Bin Othman Altwaijri, Secretary General of the Federation, Ambassador Ahamdou Ali Diaw, ISESCO Deputy Director General for Education, thanked in his turn the host country and added that the Arab Republic of Syria was characterized by an ancient history and a glorious civilization. He then addressed the issues confronting Islamic World universities in the light of the new world order and laid special emphasis on unequal opportunities for access to higher education, inadequacy of training in comparison with the changing needs of society and emphasis on academic training instead of development requisites, namely science and technology.

He then tackled the role which must be discharged by Islamic Universities in terms of training for the development of human resources, disseminating culture, promoting scientific research and technological progress and thereby ensuring economic and social development.

4. At the end of the opening session, H.E. Dr. Kamal Sharaf, Higher Education Minister of the Arab Republic of Syria and guest of honour of the opening session took the floor and recalled the historical achievements of the Islamic World whose impact is still clearly felt today and which nurtured the human civilization for many centuries. He added that a survey of the features of today's world clearly show that there is a gap between the Islamic World and developed nations. Hence the need to acquire knowledge and master the factors of progress in order to keep abreast of civilizational evolution. He then welcomed participants and wished them a pleasant stay in their country, Syria,

5. The Executive Council took cognizance of the draft agenda and programme of the first Council session and adopted them as presented in the annexed documents,

6. The Council considered the list of universities which applied for membership in the Federation. It approved the list and asked the General Secretariat to add the Federation's founding universities to it and ensure follow-up to membership modalities. Two Syrian universities, Damascus University and Al-Baas University, in addition to the Libyan Islamic Da'wa Faculty joined the Federation during the Council's meeting. In view of the large number of universities and higher education institutes in the Islamic World and the various fields of specialization they cover, the Executive Council requested the General Secretariat to keep up efforts to ensure that as large a number of universities would join the Federation before its first General Conference session is convened in 1993.

7. The Council praised the high quality of the working paper submitted by the Secretary General on the general orientations and prospects of the Federation. It adopted it after having enriched it with further ideas and proposals, asked the General Secretariat to include the new ideas and proposals in the document and decided to call it "*General Orientation Plan of the Federation*".

The Council stressed the need to start actual implementation of the activities included in the plan, namely through setting priorities and defining detailed implementation steps for each activity.

Having considered priorities of action, the Council asked the General Secretariat to continue to gather information and data on higher education institutions, curricula, research projects and human resources, and disseminate this information to member universities with a view to facilitating cooperation and promoting contacts. Accordingly, the Council requested the General Secretariat to join the Paris-based TRACE network and to speed up the organization of exchange programmes for teachers, researchers and students. It also asked that in addition to the Federation's first General Conference session, a broad-based seminar be arranged for the largest possible number of universities, to discuss the topic of "Islamic Universities and the Challenges of the 21st Century."

8. The Executive Council decided to look simultaneously into the questions related to the programme and budget of the Federation, and the identification of financing sources in view of the interrelation between the two issues.

Concerning the first question, the Council adopted the General Orientation Plan for the upcoming period and asked that it be turned into a programme of action and budget to be submitted, for adoption, to the first General Conference session prior to implementation in the light of the priorities set by the Council and the material resources available.

As regards the second question, and having studied the statement of the contributions settled by member universities during the previous period and having examined extensively the sources of financing for the Federation's activities, the Council decided the following :

a- Urge as many universities of the Islamic World as possible to join the Federation. This will secure additional funds for the Federation.

In this respect, Council members promised to encourage universities in their respective countries to join the Federation.

b- Make an appeal to member universities to regularly honour their financial obligations towards the Federation.

c- Urge the General Secretariat to regularly ask member universities to settle their contributions to the Federation's budget.

d- Contact the relevant government authorities for additional funds in the form of grants, donations or subsidies.

e- Set prizes for outstanding researchers, teachers and students, bearing the names of their Majesties, Highnesses and Excellencies the leaders of the Islamic countries.

f- Recommend that the General Conference increase the Federation's membership fees from US\$ 100.00 (one hundred US dollars) to US\$ 200.00 (two hundred US dollars), annual contributions from US\$ 600.00 (six hundred US dollars) to US\$ 1,000.00 (one thousand US dollar) and the fees for associate members from US\$ 100.00 (one hundred US dollar) to US\$ 200.00 (two hundred US dollars).

The Council opted only for this symbolic increase in order to encourage the universities of the Islamic World to join the Federation.

g- Entrust Council members with undertaking the necessary contacts with their respective governments to secure additional funds for the Federation.

h- Invest the Federation's available resources in projects whose proceeds would be used in others projects, such as book-writing and publishing in order to guarantee steady income.

i- Contact organizations and institutes in order to secure material support for the Federation in the form of subsidies, donations and interest-free loans.

9. The Council considered and approved the draft agenda of the first General Conference session.

10. It was agreed to hold the Federation's second Executive Council session and the first General Conference session as well as the proposed seminar, within the first semestre of 1993. The exact date is to be jointly decided by the General Secretariat and the country wishing to host both meetings.

11. The Council addressed a message of thanks and gratitude to H.E. the militant President Hafez Al-Assad for his high patronage of the Council session and for the generous hospitality and warm welcome extended to participants.

12. Council members thanked the Federation's Secretary General and his assistants for providing the opportunity to hold the meeting and for the good organization of its proceedings. The Council also thanked the Ministry of Higher Education and the Ministry of Education of the Arab Republic of Syria for the facilities provided to ensure the meeting's success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Council :

1- Thanks the Arab Republic of Syria, its President, Government and people for their generous hospitality and warm welcome. It also thanks the Secretary General of the Federation and his assistants for the efforts made to convene this first Council session and ensure its success.

2- Commends the working paper submitted by the Secretary General and adopts its guidelines after having introduced some amendments and additions. The Council called it "*The General Orientation Plan of the Federation*" and requested the Secretary General to prepare a programme of action and budget of the Federation for the 1993-1996 period in the light of the priorities set by the Council.

3- Calls on higher education institutions in the Islamic World to join the Federation and requests the General Secretariat to send membership forms to all these institutions. The Council also requested its members to establish the necessary contacts with the other universities in their countries to urge them to join the Federation.

4- Makes an appeal to Islamic countries, regional and international organizations to provide full moral and material support of the Federation to enable it to discharge its mission in the best conditions.

5- Requests the Secretary General to lay down the rules of procedure of the Federation and consider the possibility of amending the statute of the Federation and to submit it to the first General Conference session in order to complete the statutory and organizational texts of the Federation.

6. Urges member universities to engage in fruitful and constructive cooperation through university twinning and the exchange of experiences, curricula, teachers, researchers and students.

7. Makes an appeal to higher education institutions in the Islamic World to provide moral and material assistance to Palestinian higher education institutions in the Arab occupied territories and condemns the policy of judaization and obliteration of the cultural identity practised by the occupation authorities.

8. Invites higher education institutions to work constantly and diligently for the promotion of fruitful cooperation through optimal utilization of their scientific, technological, educational and cultural potentialities.

9. Requests member universities to use all possible means in order to facilitate access to students from Islamic countries and communities and help them pursue their education through granting them scholarships.

10. Calls on the universities of the Islamic World to seek, as much as possible, to adopt an equivalence system for university diplomas, studies, degrees and titles for people from Islamic countries and communities in order to facilitate the exchange and movement of students, teachers and researchers.

11. Requests member universities to work continuously for the development of higher education in Islamic countries and communities through the preparation of educational programmes which take into account the characteristics of the Islamic cultural identity and the requirements of economic, scientific, technological, social and cultural progress.

12. Recommends to the Secretary General to ensure that the Federation join, as an associate member, the International Federation of Universities and other university federations in order to assert its role at regional and international levels.

13. Calls on member universities to settle regularly their contributions to the Federation's budget. It further recommends to the General Conference to raise the Federation's membership fees from US\$ 100.00 (one hundred US dollars) to US\$ 200.00 (two hundred US dollars), annual contributions from US\$ 600.00 (six hundred US dollars) to 1,000.00 (one thousand US dollars) and annual contributions of associate members from US 100.00 (one hundred US dollars) to US\$ 200.00 (two hundred US dollars).