

**Islamic Declaration on  
Sustainable Development**  
**(within the Framework of  
the Islamic World's Participation  
in the Rio+20 Summit)**



**Islamic Declaration on  
Sustainable Development  
(within the Framework of the Islamic World's  
Participation in the Rio+20 Summit)**

We, the Ministers of the Member States of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, participating in the fifth Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers, held in the city of Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, on 25-26 Jumada II 1433H (17-18 May 2012);

**Recalling** the provisions of the Ten-Year Programme of Action, adopted by the 3<sup>rd</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 7-8 December 2005, particularly with regard to addressing the developmental challenges facing the Islamic world in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, and promoting economic cooperation, sustainable growth and development among the OIC Member States, as well as fostering intra-OIC and international partnership in poverty reduction and investment promotion;

**Based on** the resolutions of the previous sessions of the Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers (ICEM), held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, respectively in 2002 and 2006; at ISESCO Permanent Headquarters in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, in 2008; and in the city of Hammamet, Tunisian Republic, in 2010; and of the current session in the city of Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan, in May 2012;

**Recalling** the General Framework of the Islamic Agenda for Sustainable Development (GFIASD) as issued by the First Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers, held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 2002 and its updated versions of 2006, 2008, 2010 and 2012; **and based on** ISESCO's efforts towards fulfilling the agenda of sustainable development and the Millennium Development Goals over the period 2002-2011;

**Appreciate** Kazakhstan's efforts in the development of the "Green Bridge" programme as a more stable basis for green investments and a technology transfer mechanism, as well as the Global Energy-Ecological Strategy;

**Inspired by** the principles of the Islamic perspective, which seize and codify the relationship of human ecological harmony in which the relationship normality and balance are achieved through the maintenance and preservation of the environment, and the Islamic approach calling for maintaining man's dignity and fulfilling lieutenancy on earth through good and constructive actions, which is the mainstay of sustainable development, as well as the spirit for promoting integration values and welfare in the sense that they are the legacy of successive generations; **and being conscious** that the environment and environmental resources constitute a common property as well as a prerequisite for sustainable development;

**Taking into consideration** the relevant international and regional instruments, particularly the Sustainable Development Initiative in the Arab Region (2002), the Arab Ministerial Declaration on Climate Change, the Doha Ministerial Conference, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, Agenda 21 regarding conservation and management of resources for development, and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change along with the Kyoto Protocol and the commitments ensuing therefrom;

**Recalling** the orientations of the international community, its organizations, bodies and programmes on environment protection and sustainable development, particularly the United Nations Environment Programme, and several major conferences and summits held under the auspices of the United Nations which defined for the world a comprehensive vision for the future of humanity;

**Believing that** the degradation and over-exploitation of the environment have become a pressing issue of today's world, which could lead to serious environmental problems with adverse impacts on sustainable development; **taking into account** the various complex and interrelated ecological problems and disasters which undermine development; **being concerned about** the over-utilization and abusive use of ecological resources, which disrupts the balance between the different components of sustainable development; **and being cognizant of** the serious threats such impacts pose to the safety and stability of people and property;

**Observing that** environmental challenges in the Islamic world, particularly growing pressure on water resources, declining agricultural output, desertification claiming more and more fertile land, shrinking agricultural lands in favor of dry areas, low-lying coastal areas affected by rising sea levels, flow of salty seawater into coastal freshwater aquifers, and an increasing number of sea storms and their impact on oil facilities, disasters becoming more frequent and more devastating, coupled with air, water and marine pollution disrupting life of millions of people, along with insecurity, instability, escalating poverty, illiteracy, high population growth rates, unemployment, debt burden and increased debt servicing among other aspects, are making the Islamic countries more vulnerable and posing a serious threat to social, economic, cultural, ecological, governance and administrative infrastructures,

**1. Welcome** the holding of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (UNCSD) also known as 'Rio+20' in June 2012 in Rio de Janeiro, 20 years after the first Earth Summit was held, and its outcomes, in particular, the relevant three conventions; **laud** its objective to secure renewed political commitment for sustainable development, assess the progress to date and the remaining gaps in the implementation of the outcomes of the major summits on sustainable development, and address new and emerging challenges; its focus on theme of green economy in

the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication; and also the institutional framework for sustainable development to advancing the global sustainable development agenda; **and confirm** our commitment to cooperating on achieving the goals of this Conference;

## I- Reaffirmation of Commitments

2. **Emphasize** the need for a renewed political commitment by the international community, including the Islamic world, to the international development agenda for sustainable development, in accordance with the internationally agreed principles and instruments, channeling all national and international efforts into achieving sustainable development, while stressing the importance of political will as a precondition to any progress in this connection, focusing more on filling the existing gaps by honoring the commitments, establishing or strengthening national structures for sustainable development to implement sustainable development plans and programmes, and endowing them with in-house follow-up bodies to optimize implementation, and also involve civil society organizations and the private sector in the implementation of sustainable development strategies, given their important active role in this regard.
3. **Endorse** the vision and programmes of OIC-affiliated institutions in relation to various aspects of sustainable development and disaster risk reduction and management, **acknowledge** the need for extending further support to these programmes, **and emphasize** the importance of avoiding duplicity of efforts and the necessity to enhance coordination and synergy in joint Islamic action dedicated to sustainable development.
4. **Reaffirm** the role of the UN environmental agencies, **stress** the need to further enhance collaboration with OIC Member States and provide them with the necessary resources both technical and financial for implementing sustainable development projects, **and urge** the international community to take concrete steps towards debt cancellation, easy access to markets, technology transfer and capacity building.
5. **Exhort** the international community to work in accordance with the principles and objectives of the UN Charter, for a settlement of the international disputes and situations of occupation of countries and peoples and all consequent displacements, exoduses, and control over natural resources in breach of the Geneva Convention and other international instruments, together with their negative impacts on Muslim countries and communities, in such a way as to promote sustainable development and repair, under Principle 23 of the Rio Declaration, the damage incurred by socioeconomic infrastructures as a result of this situation, given that sustainable development cannot be achieved amidst a context of wars, conflicts and occupation. We also **stress** the need for the developed

countries to honour their financial commitments towards developing and poor countries in order to achieve sustainable development.

6. **Emphasize** the need to promote and encourage the role of women and their active participation in sustainable development, and integrate gender concerns and perspectives in policies and programmes for sustainable development and involve women in environmental decision-making, **and urge** governments to promote dialogue with the youth and establish mechanisms that permit youth greater role in the protection of environment and establish a process to enhance their access to information and provide them with the opportunity to play an effective role in the promotion of sustainable economic and social development and at all levels.

## II- Green Economy

7. **Encourage** OIC Member States to consider developing strategies for enhancing the understanding of and capacities related to the concept of green economy, not as an alternative, but as a mechanism, for sustainable development, while assessing the opportunities and challenges related to this concept and identifying requisite implementation tools, such as necessary funding and support, especially in the context of sustainable development and poverty eradication as well as institutional development; bearing in mind that reducing poverty and improving income distribution are among the most important economic goals of Islam and the achievement of Islamic goals; **and call for** the involvement of the civil society and for dynamic interaction between socio-economic processes and environmental priorities in order to support the Islamic concept of sustainable development. This concept includes producing an equitable economy, a better society and a world that is worth living for present and future generations, given that the OIC Member States have the right conditions for green entrepreneurs and initiatives to provide innovative solutions to social, economic and environmental challenges.
8. **Affirm** the necessity to address green economy, not only from an environmental perspective, but also as part of endeavours to achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty, while avoiding its instrumentalization in putting barriers to trade and development in a way that undermines sustainable development or prevents access to the markets of developed countries for the products of developing countries.
9. **Appreciate** cooperation with governmental systems as well as international organs and institutions by promoting the Islamic perspective on the environment and integrating the Islamic Action Programme for Sustainable Development in many national planning processes, **but reiterate** that most of the OIC Member States presently lack ample resources to get out of the vicious circle of poverty and inequality, face the challenges of rapidly

growing population, lack of food, water and energy security that are hovering over many economies, and the threats of climate change, uncertainty and climate extremes which are adding to the adversities.

- 10.Call upon** the international community, in general, and donor countries and parties, in particular, to take concrete steps to alleviate the debt of developing countries and convert it into investments and initiatives favouring a gradual transition to green economy, open markets, facilitate movement of goods and people, technology transfer and capacity building and ensure that all requirements are met to allow for the transfer of appropriate technologies for promoting green economy in line with Member States' specificities, while securing necessary funding to accelerate this process.
- 11.Take into account** the impact of the global economic crisis on the developing countries, **and underscore** the need to adopt more productive and sustainable patterns of development through the rational use of natural resources with focus on placing ecosystem balance at the core of economic development.

### **III- Institutional Framework for Sustainable Development**

- 12.Stress** the imperative to adopt a holistic and integrated approach to sustainable development and strengthen the existing international framework in such a way as to ensure a balanced response to the existing gaps, maintain and invest in the cultural, civilizational and religious heritage that is unique to Islamic countries, and request UN agencies and programmes as well as international and regional organizations to reform the relevant international institutions and mechanisms in order to enable countries, particularly poor ones and those under occupation, to rise to the pressing socioeconomic and ecological challenges of sustainable development.
- 13.Call for** developing this institutional framework, in line with a consensual approach among OIC Member States, to enable it to address the issues of sustainable development with its economic, social and environmental dimensions, without imposing additional burdens on the OIC Member States.
- 14.Urge** the OIC Member States to set up the national councils for sustainable development or promote similar existing national councils and structures, and strengthen their capacities to conduct the necessary studies and research with a view to developing green technology and adapting it to Member States' economic, social and environmental specificities, and devise, implement and assess national strategies and policies for sustainable development; **and call for** enhancing coordination among these councils and with relevant UN organs and international institutions.

#### IV- Poverty Eradication

- 15. Realize** the importance of eradicating poverty for achieving the agenda of sustainable development, human capacities building and rehabilitation through education, training and strengthening of capacities, generalization of small income-generating environmental projects, particularly in rural areas, as well as civil society participation; **and emphasize** the need to facilitate the process of selecting the most appropriate applications and projects necessary to eradicate poverty in the most feasible economic and technical terms and to encourage cooperation between all stakeholders for the implementation of comprehensive programmes.
- 16. Affirm**, in light of the Rio principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, that green sectors require a more sizeable effort than the less environment-friendly alternatives, while also noting potential for “green jobs” in the different economic sectors, such as renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, ecosystem rehabilitation and protection, ecotourism, and waste management. In this context, the transfer of appropriate advanced technology and development of policies are needed to support small and medium enterprises - considered as a main source of employment opportunities - to help them adapt to green economy requirements.
- 17. Express** concern about deteriorating health conditions in poor and neglected localities, worsening sanitation services, escalating pollution and lack of waste management practices, rural exodus, and rapid urbanization process, **recommend** effective measures to alleviate the sufferings of the population in these localities, particularly for the benefit of people with low-income in rural areas, **and suggest** introducing measures for raising awareness of the problems caused by population growth and environmental degradation and its implications for millions of people.

#### V- Food Security and Sustainable Agriculture

- 18. Reaffirm** that food security is a real issue in most of the OIC Member States, particularly in those having faced famine and food-related problems in the past. As soils, freshwater, and oceans, forests and biodiversity are being rapidly degraded, and since climate change is putting even more pressure on the resources of the countries, a profound change of the global food and agriculture system is needed to nourish today's 925 million hungry and the additional 2 billion people expected by 2050.
- 19. Also underscore** that the food and agriculture sector offers key solutions for development, and is central for hunger and poverty eradication, through localization of scientific research outputs and transfer of appropriate technology, and that agriculture, forestry and fisheries, if utilized properly, can provide nutritious food for all and generate decent incomes, while supporting people-centered rural development and protecting the environment; **and recommend**

added attention to ensure a rational and safe use of chemicals and insecticides in order to secure access for local communities to affordably priced GMO-free and safe food containing the fibres necessary for an active and healthy life.

## VI- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management

**20.Note** that the OIC Member States, with their limited resources and their high vulnerability, are the most affected by extreme climate events and the many challenges associated with them, on top of which are water depletion, drop in food production, rising sea levels, drought waves and deterioration of human health; **and express** support for measures to reduce the risks resulting from anthropogenic activities and natural disaster (earthquakes, floods, storms..), by promoting a culture of preparedness and early warning, incorporating disaster reduction strategies into international and national sustainable development policies, encouraging technological innovation, increasing the investments allocated to disaster risk reduction and reaching an international binding agreement to reduce and address climate change effects.

**21.Emphasize** the necessity for the developed countries to assume their environmental responsibilities in terms of disaster risk control and management and take resolute measures to reduce emissions, in accordance with the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Kyoto Protocol, pay more attention to alarming loss of biodiversity and habitat around the world, which could cause even more economic loss than global warming, and manage rampant water and air pollution, uncontrolled release of dangerous pollutants in water streams, which are negatively impacting water and land biodiversity.

**22.Request** the UN and other international organizations specially the Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and Recovery (GFDRR), development banks, donors and global funds to support the executive work plan to implement the Islamic Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction and Management which aims to strengthen DRR capacity in the OIC Member States; improve understanding of risks and access to data, promote disaster risk financing and insurance strategies; help countries prepare for disasters and strengthen post-disaster response and reconstruction capacity; and implement disaster risk management programmes in all the OIC Member States that are prone to natural hazards and require support to increase their resilience capacity.

## VII- Water Challenges and Sanitation

**23.Realize** the crucial importance of water to human life and ecosystem protection, as well its central role in sustainable development processes, including environment integrity, food security, eradication of poverty, transformation to green economy,

and its indispensable character for human life, health and well-being; further **realize** that there is increased stress on fresh water resources which may create crises situation in vulnerable member States, which requires the signing of just and equitable conventions on the distribution of water between riparian countries and the preservation of its quality, and **stress** the importance of enabling countries and peoples under occupation to obtain their water-related rights and take control of their natural resources. As such there is need to further reaffirm our commitment to improving water situation and bring more actions under the Strategy for Management of Water Resources in the Islamic World and the OIC Water Vision 2025.

- 24. Stress** the need for international support for facilitating the implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and Sub-Saharan countries, and for curbing fertile land degradation rates.

### **VIII- Improving Energy Efficiency and Energy Rationalization**

- 25. Underline** the importance of achieving energy sustainability for its vital role in economic and human development and improved living conditions and basic services, using modern and advanced energy systems in the various economic sectors, and achieve human development through education and training in the different areas.
- 26. Call for** promoting research on energy efficiency and energy rationalization, together with renewable energy technology, transfer of technology and industrial know-how, scientific research and technological enhancement of energy operating systems, **and also call** for the transfer of appropriate technology from the developed countries to the developing ones to meet their needs in terms of energy.
- 27. Recommend** encouraging communication and interaction between the experts of the Islamic world, their international counterparts, industrialists, business people, technology developers and users, policy makers, education and training specialists, and professionals specializing in the environment and climate change to promote, popularize and enhance understanding of sustainable development in the context of the Islamic world and assess the best possibilities to fulfill international commitments.
- 28. Advise** promoting appropriate energy technology localization in the OIC Member States as an agent of economic and human development, in such a way as to improve livelihoods and services, developing the global industrial fabric in the different areas of energy use and energy resources management and facilitating option for the most economically and technologically efficient applications and projects of renewable energy generation to achieve sustainable development, while at the same time broadening the scope of cooperation between all stakeholders in implementing such projects and ensuring adequate funding thereof.