



Address by

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**The Director General of the Islamic Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
(ISESCO)**

At the opening of

**the Second Islamic Conference of
Ministers in Charge of Childhood**

Khartoum: Republic of the Sudan: 2-3 February 2009

***Praise be to Allah, peace and blessings be upon the Prophet,
his family and his companions,***

***Excellency Mr Ali Osman Mohamed Taha, Vice President of the Republic;
Excellency Mrs Nouzha Skalli, Minister of Social Development, Family and
Solidarity of the Kingdom of Morocco, President of the First Islamic Conference of
Ministers in Charge of Childhood;
Excellency Mrs Samia Ahmad Mohammad, Minister of Social Welfare, Women and
Child Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan;
Excellencies heads of delegation;
Excellencies the Ministers;
Excellencies the Ambassadors;
Excellency Ambassador Hemayetuddin, Representative of the OIC Secretary
General;
Excellency Mrs Sigrid Kaag, UNICEF's Regional Director for the Middle East and
North Africa;
Excellency Mrs Sima Bahouth, Assistant Secretary General for Social Affairs in the
League of Arab States;
Ladies and gentlemen;***

Assalamu Alaikum Warahmatu Allah Wabarakatuh,

I am pleased to talk to you at the opening of the Second Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood, which is being held in Khartoum, this fortified capital which has withstood all covetous attempts and thwarted ill-intentioned plans.

I should like to begin my address by extending my sincerest thanks and gratitude to His Excellency President Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, for bestowing his patronage on this conference, and for his unwavering support for the joint Islamic action. I also commend the generous country of Sudan for hosting the conference, and ask Almighty Allah to grant success to the Sudanese leadership in the service of this people deeply steeped in glory, and to guide Muslim world leaders to secure prosperity and progress for our Islamic Ummah.

***Excellency the Vice-President of the Republic,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,***

Four years ago, we had held in Rabat, capital of the Kingdom of Morocco, the first session of the Islamic Conference of Ministers in Charge of Childhood. This first session was crowned with the **Rabat Declaration on Child Issues in the Islamic World**, which reaffirms the right of all children to live and thrive to reach their full potential, as well as the respect for their rights in our societies without any discrimination based on race, colour, sex, language, religion, political opinion or social status. The Rabat Declaration was the first Islamic document to approach in an integrated and comprehensive manner the general rights of children, based on the principles of Islamic Sharia, international law, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the international instruments and declarations on the Child.

In the light of the Rabat Declaration which is endorsed by the three organizing parties (ISESCO, the OIC and UNICEF), and is binding to all Member States, we have devised the background document of this current session titled **“Towards a better future for our children”**, which will lay the groundwork for another key document of the conference titled: **“Khartoum Commitments towards a Brighter Future for Our Children”**.

This correlation and integration between the first and second sessions confirm that we are heading with sound planning and steadfast determination to build firm foundations for the future of coming generations towards whom all governments, organizations and elites shoulder the responsibility of ensuring a secure, stable, and prosperous life.

We may say now with assurance that we have completed the legal framework for the joint Islamic action in the field of childhood, and we can move to the next stage of setting an institutional framework for that action. To this end, our conference will debate the project for establishment of **“ISESCO Forum for the Children of the Islamic World”**, and other projects that will hopefully achieve the sought-after goals.

Our action is in line with the spirit of international documents on care of children, ensuring their healthy development, decent life and protection of their rights. As we are a part of this world, we are committed to international instruments that are compatible with our spiritual, cultural and civilizational values, constants and specificities.

As you know, all OIC Member States adhered to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, an international reference document in child issues. They also reaffirmed their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, in addition to the objectives of the **“A World Fit for Children”** document issued by the UN General Assembly in a special session in 2002. Further, the OIC Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs issued a resolution on care and protection of children in the Islamic world. This resolution was adopted by the 10th Islamic Summit of Malaysia in 2003. The combination of these adopted documents forms the basis for our action within this conference to promote the living conditions of children, who make more than the third of population in the Islamic world and who will be the shapers of tomorrow’s world.

We all are required, each from his/her position, and through the joint action and coordination of efforts, to be up to the responsibility placed by our innocent children upon us, and to seek to promote sustainable, comprehensive development that will benefit present and future generations.

***Excellency the Vice-President of the Republic,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,***

This conference is being held in the immediate aftermath of the Israeli savage aggression on the Gaza Strip, which killed and injured thousands of Palestinian children, women and the elderly and wreaked havoc on buildings, deploying internationally prohibited weapons.

I should therefore, and by virtue of my responsibility, reiterate on your behalf my strong condemnation of the Israeli terrorist offensive against the Palestinian people in Gaza, and appeal to all Member States and to the international community, in the name of Gazan children, martyrs, wounded, homeless and disadvantaged to extend prompt and full support to those victims who cry out for help in the face of the Israeli savage and unjust assault.

The Gaza carnage, which reached unprecedented proportions of horror since 60 years of Israel's bloody record, should be propounded in this Islamic conference, which, as you may all agree with me, needs to issue an appeal to the international community to bring those Israeli criminals to justice for killing children, causing many of them to go homeless and depriving them from their right to a decent life, to education, to health, to natural development in peace and security. In this respect ISESCO will convene at its headquarters in Rabat from 14 to 15 February an international conference on Israel and its war crimes and genocide.

From this rostrum, I call on the United Nations to find mechanisms for the protection of Convention on the Rights of the Child against flagrant breaches at the hands of war criminals among the leaders of Israel, who wreak havoc on the occupied Palestinian territories and show contempt for all international instruments and covenants as well as moral values. I also call for the protection of innocent children in Darfur, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia who are engulfed by foreign interference that deprives them of the right to a decent living.

***Excellency the Vice-President of the Republic,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,***

The Republic of the Sudan is coming under colonial pressures which seek to undermine its stability, obstruct its development and distract it by fake issues with no foundation either in law or in reality. On top of these is leveling baseless accusations and deceptive claims at His Excellency the President of the Republic. In the meantime, scant regard turns out to be the rule when it comes to real crimes committed by the leaders of the Zionist entity against the unarmed Palestinian people. It is those criminals whose hands are stained with the blood of children, women and the elderly, who are to bring to justice for the war crimes and genocide they have committed in total breach of international laws armed with prohibited weapons. Therefore I call upon this conference as well as on all Member States to condemn these colonial pressures and to stand up with the President, government and people of the Republic of the Sudan against any plotters and malevolent parties. The Sudan is a stronghold of our Islamic Ummah in the frontline of defense of its dignity, independence and supreme interests.

***Excellency the Vice-President of the Republic,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,***

Islam is the religion of mercy, compassion and solidarity. The Prophet, peace and blessings be upon, says "All Muslims are one body, when one part of the body has pain the whole body suffers with pain and fever."

Let us work together within the framework of joint Islamic action, as one body to rise up to all challenges, with a genuine spirit of solidarity and sincere devotion, pooling efforts together with the specialised international and regional organizations to better serve our Ummah and humanity at large.

Thank you all. I wish this conference every success, and ask Allah to grant us wisdom in our deeds and words.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.

