



Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World

**As amended and adopted by the Fourth Islamic Conference
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Preface

Since the start of joint Islamic action in 1969 on the occasion of the 1st Islamic Summit Conference and the subsequent establishment of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in 1972, the Islamic world endeavoured to develop an instrument of solidarity and modernize cooperation channels within the framework of the values, principles and objectives enshrined in the charters governing international Islamic action, such as the Declaration of the 1st Islamic Summit Conference, the Charter of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Makkah Declaration which was issued by the Third Islamic Summit Conference held in 1981 in addition to all the resolutions issued by the Islamic Summit Conference at its successive sessions.

Joint Islamic action entered a new phase with the adoption by the 6th Islamic Summit Conference, held in December 1991, in Dakar, of **the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World** which constitutes, by all practical, political and cultural standards, a breakthrough in Islamic cultural action which is instrumental in the achievement of the objectives of the cultural unity of the Islamic world on the basis of unity of faith, perception, goal and destiny.

Prepared by ISESCO in cooperation and coordination with the OIC General Secretariat, the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World clearly indicates, for the first time ever, the path to be followed by Islamic countries in order to make a qualitative leap in cultural action methods, tools and objectives as well as in the distinct, important role played by culture, in the general sense, in the achievement of comprehensive, integrated and balanced human development. The aim is to achieve the development of the Islamic world through cultural action which covers, both at theoretical and practical levels, all aspects of human activity in the fields of creativity, expression, awareness-raising, instruction, education and training.

In addition to laying down the general groundwork of the mission of culture in Islamic countries, this Strategy expounds its functions, tasks, concepts and characteristics and identifies its references and objectives. It also highlights the issues and topics to be addressed and outlines the fields and mechanisms of action, shedding light on the role of culture in development and stressing its vital necessity. Erecting cultural action on these bases, the Strategy gives substance to the general framework of the role of culture in the development of the Islamic world both in terms of form and content; the goal being to meet the aspirations of the Muslim Ummah as it prepares itself for a new renaissance at the turn of the 21st century with the greatest measure of cohesion and determination to take up the challenges of this new century and with deeper awareness of the requirements of civilizational development and progress within the framework of the Islamic cultural renewed identity and within the faith realm which is sensitive to the cultural specificities of all nations and peoples.

Islamic cultural action within ISESCO has entered a stage of scientific planning based on the exploration of future prospects, the study of the Islamic reality, the utilization of potentials and capacities, the investment of energies and resources, the assessment of obstacles and difficulties, the analysis of developments and the confrontation of probabilities and challenges wherever they may come from. Islamic cultural action has also kept abreast of the modern epoch, opening to developments and adapting itself to modern time requirements. When it entered the realm of international cultural action, it preserved its specificities and distinct characteristics.

The Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World is a first step towards asserting the Islamic civilizational identity of the Muslim Ummah in order to demonstrate its capacity to deal with all cultures whatever are their tendencies or sources, in addition to interacting with modern issues regardless of their nature or trend, and adapting to the intellectual, literary and artistic creative undertakings with an approach based on analysis of the present, planning for the future and tackling the cultural problems which hinder cultural growth in Islamic countries.

Islamic cultural action started on modest bases at the outset, relying more on the stimulation of humane emotions than on rekindling the scientific spirit. Nevertheless, some civilizational accomplishments of paramount importance have been achieved over the last thirty-seven years (1969-2006). These accomplishments conferred on the Islamic presence on the international scene further distinction and strengthened the Muslim Ummah's commitment to its values and principles. Likewise, they consolidated the policy of Islamic solidarity in terms of philosophy, faith, conduct, methodology and tools. As a result, distances among Islamic countries have shrunk, resources pooled, efforts concerted and Islamic cooperation gained importance concurrently with the development of interaction and coexistence among Islamic countries. Not only did the areas of joint Islamic action become more diversified but the educational, scientific and cultural fields also benefited largely from such an evolution since the establishment, in 1982, of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization up to the holding of the 6th Islamic Summit Conference, whose proceedings were marked, in the cultural field, by the adoption of **the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World** and the 4th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers held in Algeria in December 2004 which adopted the amended version of this Strategy in a bid to keep abreast of new changes and meet the requirements of cultural action in the third millenium.

May Allah grant us success and guide us on the right path.

Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri

*Director General of the Islamic Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
- ISESCO -*

Introduction

1. The importance of identifying the future of Islamic culture

1.1. Need of the Islamic world for a cultural strategy

A- The Emergence of Islamic Culture

The objective of Islam is to enable man to rise from the darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge in order to achieve complementarity. In fact, a great many Quranic verses and Prophetic Hadiths have paid tribute to knowledge and elevated the status of the mind. "Men of understanding" and men "of great knowledge" are deemed to be commanding the greatest respect, as they stand out against other creatures thanks to their special intellect, deep understanding and accurate communication, and thanks to their capacity of weighing different statements and contradicting views by contrasting the evidence underpinning them and by considering the supportive evidence in terms of tradition and reason, so that they could opt for the most congruent with the Sharia, the closest to its objectives and the most likely to achieve the interest of mankind for which God's Sharia is originally designed. And just as Allah associated the Holy Quran with light in His Saying *"There hath come to you from God a (new) light and a perspicuous Book"* (Surah Maïda : 15), He equated the Torah and the Gospels with guidance and light : *"We sent him the Gospel: therein was guidance and light"* (Surah Maïda : 46) and *"It was We who revealed the Law (to Moses) : therein was guidance and light"* (Surah Maïda : 44). The Almighty levelled this challenge at mankind when He asked :

"Are they equal, those who know and those who do not know ?" (Surah Zumar : 9). The Almighty also says : *"Those who truly fear God, among His servants, are those who have knowledge"* (Surah Fatir : 28).

The Prophet - Peace and Blessings upon him (PBUH) - advised his companions : "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." ; "Seeking knowledge is obligatory on every Muslim" (Sunan Ibn Maja, Kitab al-Muqaddima, 220) ; "Anyone who goes out in search of knowledge is in the way of Allah until he returns" (Attirmidhi, Chapter on knowledge,

Hadith No 2571). This only underscores the Prophet's keenness that the mind of the Muslim should excel and innovate, as it should be involved in developing society, tackling its problems, and seeing to it that factors of progress are ensured.

Taken in this sense, knowledge is so broad and deep that it could hardly be confined within the limits of Sharia sciences or human sciences at large ; rather, it is a comprehensive process which is involved in all fields of scientific, intellectual and cultural activities in the life of Muslim societies. In fact, a man who has been driven out of the darkness of ignorance, polytheism and superstition into the light of faith, science and true knowledge is a man whose mind, insight and affect are enlightened. Enlightenment as such amounts to the Creator's guidance of man. Hence, enlightenment is correlated with Allah's Will. Allah the Exalted says : *"God is the Protector of those who have faith : from the depths of darkness He will lead them forth into light. Of those who reject faith the patrons are the Evil Ones : from light they will lead them forth into the depths of darkness"* (Surah Baqara : 257); *"And leadeth them out of darkness, by His Will, unto the light"* (Surah Maïda : 16). The Islamic conception of enlightenment is underpinned by a steadfast basis of faith and science, which is nothing more than the enlightenment of the mind and the heart while maintaining a delicate and integrated balance, as Allah says : *"For any to whom God giveth no light, there is no light"* (Surah Nur : 40).

Abu al-Darda' - May God rest his soul – related : I heard the Prophet (PBUH) say : "Whomsoever seeks knowledge will find his path to paradise eased. The angels shall shelter the seeker of knowledge in recognition of his endeavours. Every creature on earth and in heaven - even the whales in the seas - shall intercede in favour of the learned man. The merit of the learned man over the worshipper is akin to the transcendency of the moon over all constellations. Learned men are heirs of prophets. They did not inherit Dinars or Dirhams, but inherited knowledge, and whomsoever inherited this knowledge reaped a bountiful legacy."

Abu Huraira -May God rest his soul- quotes as follows the Prophet (PBUH) "Whomsoever alleviates one of the burdens of a believer on earth will have one of his burdens alleviated by the Almighty on Judgement Day.

Whomsoever assuages a difficulty of a man in straitened circumstances will find his path smoothed by the Almighty on earth and in the Hereafter. God shall succour His servant inasmuch as His servant succours his brother". "Whomsoever seeks knowledge will find his path to Paradise eased. Those who meet in a place of worship shall enjoy serenity, deserve divine mercy and feel the angels surrounding them. They will be mentioned among those who are blessed by God. Whomsoever is remiss in his quest for knowledge shall not be helped by his lineage."

Thus, knowledge is the catalyst of renaissance and the radiant facet of Islamic culture, as it is a culture of knowledge and action. However, as all other fields of human endeavour, shall be governed by Islamic ethical guidelines and value system, as well as the magnanimous precepts of the Islamic Sharia.

We had the first Islamic schools in Al Madina Al Munawwara and Makka Al-Mukarrama, and in the various Mosques of Baghdad, Basra, Kufa, Cairo, Esfahan, Shiraz, Damascus, Tunis, Fez and Timbuktu ; elsewhere, centres which disseminated knowledge and morals in a correlated way which is dictated by the spirit of Islam along with its lofty principles, such as Beit Al Hikma, al-Madrassa Al Nizamiya, Al Madrassa Al Mustansiriya in Baghdad and Al Maktaba Al Suleimaniya in Istanbul, were born.

The book "Al Fehrest" (index) of Ibn Nadim refers to over 60,000 books. It is probably the index of the books of Beit Al Hikma which are treasures of the Islamic culture and thought.

Islam's stand vis-à-vis knowledge has truly created a community which raised the learned man and his pen, the library, and the school to the highest level, worthy of respect and deference.

Men of knowledge and precatators left with merchants and travellers to the various countries of the world, where they settled and erected Islamic educational centres to propagate the teachings and values of Islam. Each and every believer raised the banner of Islam upheld by the knowledge he has acquired, distinguished by his personal behaviour, his self-confidence and the interest he took in his brothers. He could not have manifested these

qualities had it not been for his submission to God. These travels sought multiple goals: calling to Islam and dissemination of human thought and innovations on a wide scale. Because of their outward look to the world and their constant quest for knowledge, Muslims offered to the societies that came to them the religion of Islam, as well as creed and knowledge. Besides, they truly interacted with other cultures, enriched them and benefited from them.

Now that mankind is at a fork, what do we see today, several centuries after the spread of Islamic civilization passed off ?

We note perplexity and confusion in the face of challenges and the distinct western civilization with its technological means and tools whose effectiveness is ever-spreading. The vision of the cultured Muslim is blurred as he feels the need to rethink his cultural heritage and make use of it once again in the service of his causes in this juncture, so as to recover his self-confidence before he can take precedence in the future, in a scientific and technological contest, over his peers in human society. It would not be an overstatement to say that the twenty-first century is the era of knowledge, information highways and artificial intelligence. It is obvious that the major shifts in the history of mankind will be witnessed in this century, where the ownership of science and knowledge will supersede the ownership of natural riches, where the power of science and knowledge will supersede the power of capital, and where the intellect will supersede manpower. One of the most outstanding radical changes in the economic field consists in the changing relative importance of the forces of production, along with its interrelations. In fact, the technological revolution has brought an end to the conventional distinction between manual work, intellectual work, and administrative work. Likewise, the distinction between production, trade and services is no more valid. Thus, the material and non-material aspects of the economy complement each other. Any main activity in the new technological revolution entails, in fact, a large intellectual part, besides the administrative and manual parts which go hand in hand with it. And any economic activity includes production, services and marketing elements that are interrelated, no matter what their proportions are. In light of such a revolution, the effective man is the one who has many skills, who is capable of continuous learning, and who lends himself to training and qualification during his professional life.

B- The flourishing of civilization and its dependence on the soundness of the Cultural Strategy

To change this reality necessitates the formulation of a reform Strategy with sound contents characterized by realistic analysis and deep conception of the near future, together with a meticulous long-term forecast study. It also necessitates development of the social, political, economic and educational structures that constitute a receptacle which receives the contents of this strategy and which forms the fabric of the implemented programmes and achieved objectives. In order to implement and deepen the impact of any serious study aimed at formulating a sound cultural strategy in a certain society or nation, it is conditional to have a democratic environment which crystallizes and mobilizes the ideas and conceptions that the strategy contains and recommends.

Culture, as described by the late Malik Bin Nabi, "is not a discipline confined to one class of people but is a constitution demanded by the public of all shades of thinking and social diversity, especially if it forms the bridge which leads society to advancement and civilization. It also forms the fence that prevents individuals from falling into the abyss."

C- Conditions for the soundness of the Cultural Strategy

Given that culture is the bridge that leads to civilization and advancement, the flourishing of civilization is then dependent on the soundness of the cultural strategy.

That is why when we want to summarize the concept of Islamic culture, it suffices to say that this culture will come into being once Islam becomes the way of life of the people. This will be realized through several means which may ensure the validity of the achievements of the strategy of Islamic culture :

- That the Quran and the Sunnah as well as meditation on the universe be sources of knowledge in the Islamic society.
- That every Muslim accept the Messenger (PBUH) as example for him.
- That science and justice be essential objectives of such knowledge.

- That an atmosphere of freedom based on criticism and constructive dialogue be established.
- That an elite group of scholars and thinkers as well as sincere politicians dedicated to the way of Allah and His religion and who strive to spread His word be established. These shall form a nucleus for the advancement of noble objectives of Islam aimed at strengthening its wise systems.
- That the wish of officials and individuals, who are effective in the cultural arena, to create the necessary intellectual, educational and cultural system so as to realize a climate of intellectual and scientific output, an atmosphere of individual and social freedom, constructive criticism and dialogue as well as a system for serving science and justice, and that their wish to ensure the renaissance and modernization of society be fulfilled.

D- Cultural Strategy : Acceptance of Reality and Change

At the end of 1978, the French Ministry of Culture carried out a study through the International Futuribles Society on forecasting the future of cultural development. The studies and discussions on the question "which culture in the future" led to the conclusion that there were two strategies of culture.

- The strategy of the acceptance of reality

This is a strategy in which the masses progressively forego any competition with the elite in the face of continuous changes within society and give up all attempts to control change. This strategy is likely to increase tension in the status quo and enhance the centralization of authority and administration in the hands of the elite. It drowns society under a flood of problems resulting from the negative and untreated effects of change. It leaves decision-making and the determination of alternatives in the hands of an isolated group of actors and decision-makers.

- The strategy of change

Under this strategy, all conscious minds in society are mobilized in order to attain a qualitative civilizational level. It aims at the actual

participation of the individual in shaping his life, caring for his environment and society, contributing to self-promotion and in having a posture bearing on the development and reform of his society, thus making of the changes in society a natural process, aimed at developing society instead of being a sort of frenzy which curbs and paralyzes society's potentialities. This strategy allows for the development of a kind of culture which makes it possible to move on from a society with an active majority which states its problems, discusses them and participates in formulating reform-programmes. Such a strategy permits a transition from reckless authority to conscious authority.

Many cultural directorates in the Islamic World remained committed to the first strategy, namely the strategy of resignation. However, it has become necessary for all cultural institutions and directorates in the Islamic World, to resort to the second type, i.e. the strategy of mobilization.

It is clear that the second type stimulates and induces potentials to move from a state of ambiguity, negative consumerism and rigidity of thought and creativity to a state of mobilization, collective inventiveness and participation in the process of change by all actors in social life in a way that may make it possible to develop society's structures in order to preserve its quality, strengthen its identity and relations and promote and develop its thought.

This strategy has general as well as specific objectives. It has its own specificities and is confronted by obstacles and impediments which it must overcome so that it may shape, or contribute to shaping the desired future of the Muslim Ummah. Its general objectives, as will be detailed in a special chapter, consist in building the Islamic identity of the individual and society, reforming intellectual methods, developing the cultural pattern and achieving Islamic authenticity. This necessitates an assimilation of modernity as well as inspiration from scientific and technological innovations in order to enable the Ummah to assert its civilizational pre-eminence and regain its previous position as the best of nations evolved for Mankind, enjoining what is right and forbidding what is wrong.

In order to achieve these objectives, prospective science implies first the study of prospective hypotheses required for the achievement of those objectives; then the method of achievement is analytically retraced until we reach the present. This requires first the analysis of the current cultural

situation followed by an analysis of the cultural progress in the near future and then determining all activities through participation and decision-making in order to find out the seeds of the present which will shape the future. We can go as far as to say that unless development is based on the principle of 'renewal from the inside', it will not achieve the sought results. Renewal from the inside is a cultural issue which requires some sort of conglomeration and organic interaction between all active elements, that is to say between the State and society, between society and the individual, between the old and the new, between the traditional and the modern, between tradition and modernism, between the country and the city, between an elite that reads the past in the future and another one that reads the future in the past. The promotion of the Muslim society is then the responsibility of all schools and trends, without all the more renouncing the essential components of the Ummah, which only confirms the idea of diversity within unity.

1.2. The necessity of forecasting the future of cultural action

A- Features of forecasting the future of culture

Several studies were carried out with a view to formulating a cultural strategy in the Islamic World. Nevertheless, no prospective study was carried out beforehand. The most available studies are characterized by short-term perspective and suffer from shortcomings in methodology or analysis which become manifest only when they are put into practice.

These shortcomings are the result of obstacles which the strategy's author should have overcome in order to achieve the desired objectives. Among these obstacles, there is the duplication of efforts and the wastage of energy owing to perpetual start from scratch or the conclusion that all previous achievements in the cultural field are inadequate. In fact, present achievements, although theoretical, have their merits in spite of the imperfections and confusion characterizing them.

Among these obstacles there is also the cyclical nature of the adoption of ideas. This cyclical approach leads to two other obstacles : riding the wave without prior convictions and imitating others. Anyone who wishes to

undertake a prospective study of the future of culture should be aware of these obstacles and arm himself with patience as well as determine the methodology and the way of thinking and be aware of obstacles and loopholes.

The reason behind the duplication of efforts and wastage of energy on outdated issues is the desire of each institution to be the initiator of any planning, strategy or working methodology in the field in the Islamic World. The same applies to various authors and thinkers who present self-limited and repetitive cultural projects in total disregard of the work of others. The need for co-ordination, solidarity and complementarity, as well as for avoiding duplication in programmes and projects, is no more a luxury; rather, in a globalized world, it has come to be a vital necessity that makes the common interest of all the only way out of the situation prevailing in the Islamic world, namely a situation of disintegration, disunity, confusion, and failure to contribute effectively to international decision-making.

Before we embark on the prospective study of culture, we should first determine the concept of forecasting and then the prevailing trends in the cultural, social and economic situation. We need to determine the concept of forecasting in order to highlight its role and the need for it. When we forecast the future and investigate the concepts related to the development of the present situation, we are not fleeing from the present. The representations we have of the future are but landmarks aimed at assisting us in avoiding obstacles and in selecting the right path with a view to reforming the present in order to pave the way for a healthier and better future. This will be dealt with in the first chapter on concepts.

In order to determine the trends, we refer to what the experts forecast in terms of mega trends for the next decade. These are not conjectures or prophecies. They are embedded in the accurate analysis of the direction the present situation is taking, a comprehensive and profound study of its impact, the changes it has witnessed in the near past, a conscious knowledge of the internal and related factors which altogether determine the shape of its development and its possible manifestations in the future. Such an analysis is not void of prediction or imagination but it involves a logical deduction of and submission to universal laws and regulations.

B- Predominant trends of the present situation

We shall not attempt to explain the causes of each one of these predominant trends as the purpose of this paper is to direct the researcher in cultural planning to the trends most likely to prevail in the near future and take stock of what should be undertaken before it is too late.

It is sufficient to refer to a summary of the modern international forecasting studies and their statement of the trends which they perceive as most likely to happen during the next decade on the basis of an analysis of the recent past as well as current facts.

All these studies agree on the prevailing of the following eight trends:

- 1- Intensification of cultural struggle and the supremacy of culture in all fields because the great challenge facing the world in the coming years is essentially cultural. At a time when there is an overriding priority in the Islamic world to enhance its effective presence on the international arena, an arena of civilizational emulation which some consider to be some sort of struggle between cultures, culture will become over the few coming decades the first line of defence in such a struggle. In fact, the survival of peoples in the future may become contingent upon their cultural presence in the first place.
- 2- Greater demographic growth and increase in the world population which shall reach 8 to 10 billion people by the year 2025. This trend leads to four major problems :
 - Social and vocational assimilation of the youth; securing their right to employment and helping them contribute to development and decision-making ; listening to their concerns and educating them in cultural values that will help them integrate into the contemporary logic and assimilate contemporary contradictions and challenges ; training them in self-consciousness and enhancing their awareness of such values as dialogue, tolerance and peace ; shunning reclusion through an education based on cultural interaction and knowledge dissemination with a view to attaining the highest levels of maturity in a world founded on diversity and intertwined interests;

considering women's rights part and parcel of human rights, as it is inconceivable that women are still victims of some practices denying them their right to education, employment, production and participation in civil and cultural life.

- Demographic old age in industrialized countries; it is suggested that life expectancy is expected to rise in such a way that the majority of the population will be made up of age categories ranging between 65 and 85.
- Worldwide emigration and its impact on the emergence of multi-cultural and multiracial societies.
- Urbanism and the expansion of cities; protection of the environment and natural resources management; transfer of polluting industries; fighting aberrant behaviours that jeopardize the natural and human environment. According to Islam, every Muslim is duty-bound to protect the environment, starting from removal of nuisance from the way and getting to the prohibition of suppressing life except by way of justice and law. The Sharia has laid down the foundations of dealing with the environment. It has also laid down norms that are likely to preserve such resources from unfair depletion or misuse, as it has emphasized the moral aspect in dealing with the components of the environment, namely animals, plants and minerals, as well as water, air and earth. In other words, the magnanimous Sharia has attached special attention to the purity of man's intellect, heart, body and behaviour. Allah the Exalted is the Creator of the environment, and it is He Who has instituted the laws that are likely to ensure environmental balance and provided all the earth's resources for all men, and not some of them : *"It is He Who has spread out the earth for (His) creatures"* (Surah Rahman : 10). It is a shame that some modern States which boast their programmes pertaining to the protection of the environment are always keen on damaging the animal and plant resources of their enemies in wars, under the pretence that they have to deny their exploitation to the enemy, undermine his economy and hamper his development so that he would surrender to the victor.

- 3- Difficulty in ensuring food security for people, particularly in the countries of the South.
- 4- Spread of illiteracy in the world where one out of every four people will be illiterate and the interdependence between poverty, illiteracy and communicable diseases.
- 5- Crises in the Third World due to the deterioration of commodities' prices and the debt increase. In fact, in a world where everything is being globalized, the market is the determining factor of all relations, be they political, social, cultural or intellectual.
- 6- Global dangers such as the aggravation of natural and technological catastrophes, increase of pollution, the spread of desertification due to global warming, and the increasing demand on water at a higher rate than that of population growth, due to the expansion of agricultural, industrial and environmental activities. Likewise, air pollution and acid rains contribute to drying lakes and damaging forests.
- 7- Impact of modern technology (computer science, biotechnology, genetic engineering, new fibres and materials) on culture.
- 8- Rise of the computer science society. This will be accompanied by three rifts :
 - increasing rifts between economic development and the consumption of energy and non-energy-producing raw materials, and the yawning of the digital gap between countries ;
 - rift between money exchange and real economics ;
 - rift between economic development and job opportunities. Modern technologies entered all fields to the extent that ordered goods are produced immediately according to specifications; thus, companies will increasingly respond to personal needs, and the economy will turn into a global economy.

This shift has been associated with the emergence of new principles based on the privatization of economic activity, the emergence of globalized

firms, otherwise known as multinationals, which run their investments independently from the State, and the rise of such principles as the freedom of international trade, namely the free flow of capital, free commercial exchange, free movement of goods and people and free employment, especially after the WTO was created.

In fact, some of such trends prevailed during the Eighties through the Nineties of last century, and are continuing at the outset of the third millennium. Some persist in a weak state and are not likely to develop; they may also exist in a clear form. It is difficult to introduce the trends relating to the Islamic World because the latter was never subject to a comprehensive study that was interested in its future, using serious scientific methodology carried out by a multi-disciplinary group, dedicated to Islam and the Ummah. However, there exist various attempts in this respect, in several fields, but carried out without any appreciable co-ordination.

Among the tendencies which we feel likely to prevail, judging from reality and based on relevant studies are the perennial laws, set by the Almighty Allah, which are unchangeable and ever-lasting. Yet, there are others which shall expand and give rise to other prevailing tendencies. Some of these tendencies are negative and others are positive. The negative ones are :

- 1- Intensification of the struggle to surround the Muslim individual and the Ummah by the enemies of Islam and the enemies of justice and freedom. This calls for instituting a new world value system and morals that are likely to ensure "cultural coexistence" and to consecrate the democratic tradition. Such morals would draw on the tenets of the revealed religions and on the common human values shared between peoples, along with their experiences and history, their spiritual trends and the interaction of their cultures, within integrated international relations, and with a view to promoting the effectiveness of the cultural sector and preserving its diversity through the implementation of training programmes designed for specialists at the national level, and for the officials in charge of running and organizing cultural affairs and of providing equal

opportunities for all social strata in order for them to benefit from these programmes.

- 2- Increase in population growth; increase in urban populations and overpopulation in the suburbs. Increase in the willingness to emigrate and decrease in job opportunities at national level as well as abroad. Improper infrastructure in most countries, especially in rural areas and suburbs.
- 3- Collapse of the citizen's purchasing power in the Islamic World as well as the spread of poverty, illiteracy, and unemployment among all categories of the young.
- 4- The fact that "culture" is marginalized and considered as a secondary sector, and that it lacks clearly-defined policies and programmes that are based on a strategy integrating the other vital social sectors, especially the educational, economic and tourist sectors. The lack of these policies is also due to the insufficient budgets and poor human resources allocated to this sector, primarily from the professional point of view.
- 5- Escalation of the information, ideological and linguistic invasion together with mobilization of the elites benefiting from such invasion, so that they could endorse its origins, defend its contents and expand the scope of its discourse. The failure to take stock, quantitatively and qualitatively, of the technological needs in terms of culture in the Islamic world ; the absence of any technology transfer strategy or planning ; and the poorness of cultural industries.
- 6- Multiplication and intensification of crises in most countries of the Islamic World and the resulting conflicts which distract and fetter the Ummah, and which are stirred in some Islamic countries by racist or ethnic groups, or by ideologically hostile groups, be they internal or external. The theories put forth by Huntington, along with other theorists of the West, make us look at some institutions and slogans that have gained wide currency in the Islamic world with apprehension, especially those referring to human rights, democracy and "good governance". It looks as though they are basically odd

ideas, whose aim is to violate the sovereignty of States and impose the hegemony of a civilisation over the other ones. In fact, some circles in the West are willing to use such slogans in order to interfere with the internal affairs of the peoples and nations whose religious and cultural concepts differ from the Western concepts and values.

As for the positive trends, they are :

- 1- Return of the individual and society in the Muslim Ummah to fundamentals and heritage, striving to strengthen their identity and avoid its loss.
- 2- Insistence of Islamic peoples on Shura and the prevalence of an atmosphere of freedom, the rule of Shari'a, law and justice.
- 3- Beginning of disenchantment with western civilization and growing wish of the Islamic peoples to take up scientific and technological challenge and achieve pre-eminence in this field as well as the rise in serious scientific studies, albeit slow, aimed at surmounting the crisis.
- 4- Crystallization of Islamic thought, especially in social sciences, in order to attain a level that enables it to confront challenges, and progression of the Islamic revival from self-assertion to the formulation of an alternative civilizational project.
- 5- Intensification of the call for Islamic unity and the emergence of institutions that formulate effective and practical means to realize it.

This is not the place to expound these tendencies. It seems however that the pressure will intensify on the Islamic World. This is not a new development ; invasions and divisions have affected the Islamic world for more than two centuries. Although they paralyze the Islamic World and shackle it with secondary issues that lead nowhere, they may otherwise play a stimulating role and boost the energies of fervent Muslims, be they individuals or institutions, thus freeing them from the grasp of dependence and backwardness, and allowing them to fulfil their invested mission of taking the helm of the civilizational march. Such a situation may also enhance and generalize a critical and objective knowledge of the

"civilizational self" and to renew the Islamic intellectual discourse in all its aspects -political, religious, legal, social and artistic- at a time when we have to enhance and generalize a critical and objective knowledge of the "civilizational other". And there is no way to achieve this unless the role of cultural production institutions concerned with academic, research-related religious, and political issues is promoted, at all its levels and in all its fields of specialization, and unless interaction between them is promoted. This would ensure in fact interaction between tradition and modernity, between traditional account and critical reasoning, between "reproduction" and innovation, and between the "mental" and the realistic, in a closely related manner, in such a way as to consolidate the "dialogue" and interaction relations with the institutions conversing with the civilizational other.

2. Changes and interactions inside the Islamic World

2.1- The Islamic World : A demographic and geographical reality

The most recent statistics indicate that the population of the Islamic World is approaching one billion, i.e. about one fifth of the world population and a third of the population of the Third World, at the rate of 22 million per country and that the population of 22 Islamic countries is less than 5 million people. It is noticeable that hundreds of millions Muslims live in countries that are not normally referred to as part of the Islamic World. Geographically, this World occupies a huge part of Africa and Asia along a strategic belt that controls several natural resources, as well as animal and mineral wealth.

Yet, despite the increase in the number of Muslims, the lack of investment in creativity deprived this demographic reality of its positive aspects and strength in the face of a horrifying increase in the rate of illiteracy, an increase in poverty and malnutrition as well as lack of social and health care. Contrary to what happens in developed nations, the Islamic World lacks investment in the field of bringing up the youth, in creating the institutions and climate for scientific research, in books and the book industry, and in developing thought and its tools. This resulted in the prevalence of ignorance in several Islamic countries and the absence of freedom and justice in many parts of the Islamic World.

In fact, the insufficient financial resources available for scientific research and the absence of technology transfer will keep the Islamic world unable to solve its irremediable crises and will deprive it of successive generations of young researchers specialized in modern sciences and technology, as they will opt for migration to settle in scientific research centres outside the Islamic world. The capacity of the Muslim societies to interact in a positive way with the post-modernism being witnessed by advanced, industrialized societies in the era of globalization is conditioned by their well-advised ability to benefit from the brain drain out of the Islamic world into the West, as well as their ability to encourage a great many of the Muslim brains to return to their home countries, set up advanced scientific research centres, and continuously promote modern sciences. Developed countries have, in fact, attached special importance to human development, modern sciences, advanced technology, economic liberalism and democracy, as well as to extending the peoples' involvement in running public affairs.

A development based on a primitive and extensive exploitation of natural resources, while virtually overlooking manpower and advanced technology, is likely to inhibit the innovative power of man rather than thoroughly putting it to use.

Instead of making demographic growth a valuable asset, of which the Prophet (PBUH) will be proud vis-à-vis other nations on the Day of Judgement, it turned into a disease that saps the economic and social potentials of Muslim Communities, enormously contributes to the intensification of their chronic social maladies, and increases the impact of their worsening economic crises.

2.2 Changes and interactions and their essential factors

The contemporary Islamic World is witnessing large-scale and intensive interactions and changes, some of which are self-generating, while others result from the impact of the geographic factors, the thrust of civilization and the policies of foreign hegemony. Such interactions and changes keep coming together and separating constantly. Thus they create a fragile, unstable and ever-changing climate. This is due to several factors, namely :

- 1- A feeling of the acceleration of time: recent years witnessed huge events, the impact of which equals that of centuries in human history. Scientific advancement, technological development, the spread of cognitive interaction, artificial intelligence and demographic growth have all contributed to accelerate the march to an extremely high speed, which would not allow the unprepared people to follow and take a quick decision thereon. In a few years, the size of knowledge and data multiplied. The world began to witness every few seconds a new manufactured product or a fresh scientific invention as well as shades of cultural, civilizational and scientific struggle, resulting from political and economic struggle, technological and industrial competition and information and scientific explosion.
- 2- Intensity of change emanating from the rapid tempo of history and intensification of the complexity of issues based on the accumulation of events which, due to the lack of time, were not understood or studied, especially in underdeveloped countries. Furthermore, constant development in the field of communications has contributed to shortening distances in a way that suggests narrowness and diminishment of space. On the other hand, it led to the enlargement of work programmes and racing against time in a way that suggests narrowness and diminution of time.
- 3- Shrinking of the role of matter vis-à-vis human and mechanical intelligence, the transformation of contemporary human society from a society of production into a society of knowledge where intelligence plays the essential role in every innovation, and where it has precedence over matter and capital in production. Indeed, competition over innovation in the field of industrial intelligence is the main feature of the technological struggle among developed industrial states.
- 4- Complication of several issues which were not dealt with in due time or were postponed pending availability of necessary capabilities and which developed beyond what was allocated to them. In this way, the Islamic world is burdened with a heavy load of political, economic, educational, social and Fiqh problems and issues which still lack

settlement. It has resorted to western and international institutions that impose conditions and demand guarantees which it is unable to provide. This increases its dependence and impinges on its sovereignty, militarily, financially or technologically.

- 5- Divergence of the rate of demographic growth between the poor states and the rich states in the Islamic community on the one hand, and between the states of the North and the states of the South at the world level, on the other hand. In the South, the population is young compared with the old population in the North. 50% of the population of the Islamic World is under 16 and more than 2/3 is under 30. Furthermore, there is rural migration, the overpopulation of urban and suburban areas as a result of the intensification of demographic development and the accompanying inability to meet social, educational and economic needs.

Futurists believe that culture has become, as a consequence of these changes and interactions, the most important factor in the relations between states. Cultural contact and cultural clashes may generate, in the future, numerically huge issues than those resulting from unequal economic and social exchange. Without cultural foresight, and in the absence of a well-formulated cultural strategy, the Islamic World would be incapacitated by complex and chronic problems which would further its disability and increase its subjugation to and dependency on others.

3. The role of culture in the development march

3.1- Culture is the basis of development

Development means growth. Internally, growth is manifest through stimulation of the constituent parts of the developing entity ; externally, it is manifest through the change of its shape, size and constituents. We emphasize stimulation and change only because Islam, being a consistent, integrated and comprehensive religion, draws the attention of Man to the existence of constant dialectic between Right and Wrong where the latter is always defeated by the former. Islam also points to the everlasting check of people by other people which is the essence of good life on earth. It states the

causal and organic relationship between this life and the Hereafter. Allah says : *"And did not God check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief."* (Surah Baqara : 251) Allah also says : *"Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)"* (Surah Ra'd : 11).

There are two types of change : a forward change and a backward change. The basis of the first is creativity, innovation, courage, continuity, righteousness and patience. It is self-change which results from belief, effort and work. The second is automatic and happens whenever righteousness and patience are lacking. Innovation and creativity come to a stop. By innovation and creativity, we do not mean an addition or an alternative to Allah's religion. Innovation and creativity according to divine laws of the universe and life are the basis of change and the generator of the check that prevents mischief on Earth. Every living matter that lacks mobility and change is threatened with death. This is an established law for the universe, life and people.

One of the contemporary definitions of development is that of René Maheu, former Director General of UNESCO, who maintains that "Development is science that turns into culture". Before discussing the relationship between science and culture, we refer to the fact that under the advice of western institutions, we imported patterns of development that do not match with our reality or components of our societies. The best we got from them was a blind imitation of western sources as well incurring debts disguised as aid and assistance.

Development has the same requirements as culture: an established atmosphere of culture, criticism and strong guarantees of right and justice. Development needs freedom of expression, creativity and innovation, the freedom of disagreement, criticism and publication. Such freedoms do not exist without the rule of justice and law. In their absence, culture and purposeful development disappear and are replaced by sham development, which only adds to the problems of society, retards its powers and effective energies. Improper development also leads to further drainage of brains, powers and financial resources which eventually benefits non-Muslims, thus leading to further yoking and exploitation of the countries of the Islamic

world. One should not perceive development as consisting of one quantitative dimension, while overlooking its dimension fulfilling the spiritual and cultural needs of man, besides his material needs. Culture is in fact embodied in development insofar as it is an essential aspect of the developmental process. This is not about involving culture in areas that typically fall outside its scope ; rather, it is about redressing the situation and setting things back on the straight path as culture is a main component of humans. That is why the international community has devoted, through UNESCO, much space to the cultural dimension of development. It thus stressed the fact that development should be based on man along with his integral entity, that development starts from culture, that man is the ultimate goal of development, and that the latter is the outcome of his culture. This is why development should rely on the multifarious cultural values of societies.

3.2- Science is part of culture

Scientific, technological and educational programmes throughout the industrialized West raised the question of whether science was part of culture⁽⁵⁾ ; a fact that opened the way to forecasting the future of culture in general. It was realized that culture could not have a sound future without investigation of the future of science and its technological applications. Scientists became more vocal during the last decade in rebuking those attempting to separate science from culture and in condemning any research or project which was not based on the premise that science was an active part of culture.

Ilya Prigorine, Nobel Prize winner and author of many scientific studies and research work is one of these scientists. In his book *The New Alliance* he indicated that it has become urgent for science to consider itself an integral part of the culture within which it has developed. He goes on to say that science will become universal when it ceases to deny the interests of society and stops considering itself alien to it. Only then will it be able to interact with people and respect peoples from diverse cultures.

René MAHEU, former Director General of UNESCO, who had Dr. Al-Mandjra as deputy director for many years, was misunderstood by the UN bureaucracy. According to Dr. Al-Mandjra, had he been understood, we

would have gained years of effort and saved millions of dollars through simply abandoning the illusion of the possibility of the transfer of technology. Maheu was the first expert to use the concept of endogenous development within a social and cultural context, particularly with respect to science. Maheu provides a definition of development as he considers that development is science that turns into culture.

Dr. Al Mahdi Al-Mandjra himself says that science may not be transferred as it is the product of a cultural pattern. Cultural values determine scientific thought, creativity and inventiveness. Hence, it is not possible to buy or transfer output without cultural input which makes it possible to understand, assimilate and enhance the value of what has been transferred. Otherwise, you are simply purchasing gadgets⁽⁶⁾.

The close relation between science and culture is one of the divine laws of the universe. The close relations between science and culture and the influence of each one of them on the other's present and future in order to indicate that any forecasting of the future of culture may not be carried out clearly and scientifically unless it is accompanied by forecasting the future of science and technology through applying science to the industrial, economic and social reality of society.

4. People in charge of cultural action

The afore-mentioned strategy of mobilization cannot be fully achieved unless the following five conditions are fulfilled :

- Democracy in formulation and implementation ;
- Decentralization of operations ;
- Diversity of fields ;
- Administration and planning ;
- Provision of the necessary capacities and financial resources.

As such, this strategy may not be formulated by a centralized body or a specifically appointed agency to the exclusion of the various other sectors, including the private sector, associations and institutions. Culture is no

longer monopolized by the State ; rather, it concerns all parties and is a common denominator between all other sectors. Alongside freedom and democracy, creativity requires diversity and multiplicity. Culture is creativity, reproduction and continuous giving through discovery and inventiveness ; otherwise, there is no hope for continuity. The rules of life have no mercy for those who lag behind in matters of creativity and inventiveness. Almighty Allah never promised prosperity to an idle man in this world. The idle and backward are crushed in the struggle for survival, their identity is lost and their knowledge eroded through ensuing cultural homogeneity.

No wonder then that many cultural institutions and directorates in the Islamic world should be paralyzed whenever they are beset by crises. Similarly, it is hardly a surprise that similar institutions and directorates in industrialized countries are thriving. In Islamic countries, culture is financed mostly from public funds and consequently the authority in power has the final word in both planning and implementation in the cultural field. In industrialized countries, on the other hand, over 50% of financial and human resources (54% in France) come from the private sector. Culture is thus characterized by diversity and multiplicity, and hence creativity and productivity. In light of the various formidable challenges it is facing either under the cloak of the sweeping globalization or under the slogan of fighting “terrorism” and “extremism” or else while professing such theses as “cultural dialogue” or “inter-civilizational dialogue”, etc. the Islamic world is today in need of bringing the views of Muslim peoples on various issues closer together, and of accepting the diversity of views in matters that allow disagreement without overstatement or fanaticism. Out of such challenges arises the importance of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, and its main objectives take shape with a view to opening up new vistas before culture so that it could express itself in time and place and be present among contemporary cultures.

Chapter I

Concepts, characteristics and sources

I- Concepts :

Concept of Strategy :

The word (Strateegiya) is the arabized term of the French word "Stratégie" or the English word "Strategy" which takes its root in the Latin word "strategos" which comes from "Stratos", meaning the army. The verb "agein" means to command. Thus the word "Strategos" means army commander conducting war campaigns. With the evolution of weapons and advance of battles, the word (strategy) has come to refer to the art of military command exercised from outside the combat. The usage of the word then gained a broader scope in the modern age whereby it covers the rules of planning or arts of management in all the fields of modern life.

Moreover, (strategy) differs from (tactics) which means the art of implementing plans. "Strategy" actually means the deployment of all means, material and know-how to attain specific objectives. This means that the objectives set out and the means adopted are inter-complementary and inter-related. Besides, the levels of taking decision vary in as much as objectives are arranged and the most appropriate means to achieve them are adopted.

Many linguists and intellectuals interested in planning and future forecasting, studied the lexical meaning of this term and its validity as an expression of plans or programmes which fall under this noun such as "development strategy" or "confrontation strategy" or "deterrence strategy". They concluded that the arabized term (Strateegiya) means the art of mobilizing and directing human and material resources aimed at realizing better and ideal objectives, set out by the organizing party which supervised the drawing up of the strategy.

In most cases, "Strateegiya" is used as a synonym for "planning". Planning, however, consists of numerous processes including selection and determination of the goals whereas strategy is "how to attain these goals", and therein lies its contents and substance. When dealing with a subject in terms of strategy, we have to answer the following questions : What ? why ? when ? and how ? These questions provide us with the framework and the

manner that are to be used in the process of mobilization, coordination and direction of the human, material, moral and financial energies, resources and means available at present and will be available in the future with a view to realizing specific objectives determined by the organizing party which supervises the process of planning or that of the drawing up of strategy.

Since "Strategy" means the art of conducting war campaigns, it would depend basically on the consideration of the factual evidence and a prospective look as it includes two basic elements : approach and anticipation. The element of approach has more to do with the form of armies and means to be utilized in the military strategies since it requires complete knowledge of the factual evidence. Anticipation is mainly linked to the expectation of the reaction which requires an outlook, knowledge about and examination of the various scenarios so that the strategist is enabled to accommodate the various possible and probable reactions.

The concept of strategy underwent major developments throughout history. If we limit ourselves to the contemporary history, according to Karl von CLAUSEWITZ, the senior military author in the 19th century, the art of using battles is a means to achieve the objectives of war. Then comes Commander Helmut von MOLTKE, one of his students who developed this concept and gave it the meaning of the art of using the means made available to the military commander to achieve the objectives of war.

Following the disintegration of Prussia, the Prussian school moved to Germany where the German General Erich LUDENDORFF defined "Strategy" as "involvement in conclusive battles" in order to destroy the enemy's army and to undermine its capabilities.

In the early Sixties, the French General Andre BEAUFRE published his well-known book *Introduction à la Stratégie* which became a reference book for the students of military and strategy schools, and in which he offered the following definition "I believe that the spirit of Strategy is latent in the abstract game resulting from two contradicting desires. It is that art which, far from being technology, brings difficulties under control, so as to pave the way for technology to be used most effectively. Thus, it is the art of dialogue between forces or rather the dialogue between the desires to use force to settle their disputes".

It is clear from these definitions that the concept of "Strategy" developed according to the theorists' scope of force and their degree of certainty in scoring victory. However, we find that the more recent definitions do not say that it is necessary for the commander to enter into conclusive battles so as to smash his enemy's army as was explained by Ludendorff. Yet, it may be preferable, under certain circumstances, to use a plan of limited objectives which depends on demoralizing and paralyzing the enemy by attacking its rear guard, communication points and provisions and by avoiding involvement in any decisive battles with it. It is not important for the commander to fight, but it is more important for him to win. The plan he follows and the policy he adopts in order to win by the means, under his control, would be termed "strategy".

While making reference to the above, we should stress the fact that Strategy is not based, as it is thought, on obtaining complete information nor on total certainty of victory. It would be called "strategy" when it seeks to attain specific goals without having adventurous or boastful ambitions. It also plans to achieve them through the available means by endeavouring to collect all possible information. However, it takes into consideration that in case of failure, it would adopt a studied behaviour in order to reform its forces and recollect its equipment so that it may, once more, take its enemy by surprise so as to achieve its objective while using audacity as its motivation and anticipation as its guide.

Concept of anticipation :

"Istishraf" in Arabic or anticipation means to look at something in a manner that enables the viewer to have a clear view such as putting one's hand over one's eyebrows so as to cover them like the person who protects his eyes from the sun light, or looking at it from a lens or a high place, or extending one's neck and directing one's eyes towards it. He does all this in order to encompass that object and consider it carefully.

In Lissan Al-Arab, we read : (Tasharrafa Al-Shaia wa istashrafahu) meaning to place one's hand over one's eyebrows like the one who looks for the shade in order to avoid sunlight so that he may have a clear view of something.

Ibn Mutair says :

"Oh how strange ! People scrutinize me as if they had not seen a lover before or after me."

"It was narrated by Abi Talha, may Allah be pleased with him, that he was very good at archery and that when he threw the arrow, the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) used to (istashrifahu) so as to look at the place of the arrow : i.e. looked at it attentively from a distance. "Istishraf" is to place your hand over your eyebrow and look at a distance. It is derived from "Alsharaf", i.e. height or highness, as one looks at a high place to be in a better position to take stock of it.

The author of Almuheet says "to 'stashrafa' something means to look up to it, to extend one's palm over one's eyebrow as if shading one's eyes from the sun".

We may add to the above that he looked up to him, in order to look at him carefully so as to have a complete and clear view of him, and that he extended the palm of his hand over his eyebrows in order to avoid any light rays that may distract his vision so as to enable him to see clearly and that the view he is looking at may be clearer. Hence, "Istishraf" in the future means to look at the future with a very deep sight with a view to creating an idea about the future on the basis of the present realities, bearing in mind the lesson drawn from the realities of the past.

Although we are inclined to hold fast to one of the names of sciences of the future which has its origin deeply rooted in the language of the early Arabs, we do not seek to opt for the projection of contemporary terms on the vocabulary of our linguistic heritage. We will neither endeavour, in vain, to lay on history a burden heavier than it has strength to bear, nor will we introduce foreign elements into our heritage by pretending to have Islamic or heritage-derived origins for the modern future sciences nor will we abridge texts to prove that Arabs and Muslims were the first to take interest in the field of future sciences.

The fact that Quranic Verses or sayings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) were meant for Muslims and requested them to pay attention to their worldly future in order to secure a bright future in the Hereafter, and urged them to

be well prepared and have in-depth reflection, is not enough in itself to confirm that Muslims were the precursors in the fields of prospective sciences, bearing in mind that the previous nations of the people of the Book enjoined the same preparation.

This is not to say that early Muslims had no sense of the future or that they did not possess any long-term planning. On the contrary, their strong faith and absolute belief that their future lay in the hands of Allah, the Most Exalted, constituted the best incentive for them to overcome the obstacles and face up to the challenges and to work for the welfare of their people and the coming generations to the extent that their perception of the future was not confined only to their times but extended to their descendants and the descendants of those who entered the religion of Allah in crowds therein, and those who left their homes and sacrificed their worldly life for the sake of their faith so that their successors may live an agreeable life and enjoy the freedom of faith which would secure their life and future and the future of their religion.

The concept of modernization :

The concept of "modernization" subsumes a prospective perception that tends towards delineating the future and its aspects, as well as its specificities and fundamentals. This prospective vision seeks, likewise, to gear culture and to benefit by its elements of flexibility, the aim being to keep abreast of the future and adapt to its exigencies, prerequisites and needs. In case of a disagreeable future, we have to plan to change it and to guard against its negative effects. Thus, the historical aspect of the modernization of culture is similarly a prospective view that takes into consideration what the constituents of culture -in the general acceptance of the word- and the Muslim and international communities should be like in the near and distant future. It is a prospective aspect that takes into account also the changes that might affect relations between the various societies and cultures, as well as the possible fields of creativity these changes and new conditions might give access to.

Hence, the idea of "modernizing" culture in the Islamic world emanates from the endeavour to achieve such a change in the light of a clearly set out and well-devised plan that takes into consideration the mutations taking

place at both the Islamic and international scenes; a plan that responds to changes and the elements of flexibility in the Sharia, and brings forth relevant solutions, transcending both the narrow acceptance of culture and its understanding as being associated with the elite to a broadest and more comprehensive, anthropological meaning of what culture and the world in general ought to be like. Indeed, the concept of "modernization" is an ever-changing concept that involves continuous transformation, revision and evaluation; the aim being to promote the Islamic culture, and adapt its civilizational heritage and intellectual repository to contribute to developing and modernizing culture, as well as integrating the constants of the Islamic civilizational and intellectual heritage with the constituents of the present time culture, in such a way as to give these components a new shape that preserves authenticity while adapting to the changes and prerequisites of the present era and meeting the expectations of the future, without in any way cutting loose from the heritage and intellectual foundations of the Islamic culture.

The issue is to preserve the Islamic cultural identity in this ever-changing world and adapt culture in its various historical aspects so that it should keep abreast of the modern time, without having to lose its distinguishing traits and fundamentals into the snare of the world's conflicting and contrasting cultures. It is equally significant to hurdle over the barriers between the past, present and future and level them into an integrated cultural entity and an organic whole of which the distinguishing traits are self-immunity, cultural interaction and conscientious exchange founded on peaceful coexistence, as well as understanding and mutual agreement and respect, rather than coercion as some foreign cultures tend to do on such pretext as globalization.

It is a presumptive fact that the Internet is one of the major instruments of globalization, in its cultural, economic and psychological aspects, given its spread, its accelerating pace and the role it plays in commercial exchange. Over the past few years, the Internet has become a major globalization set wherein the ever-growing e-business has encroached upon the concept of the states' conventional frontiers, so that it has become possible to procure goods and services from across the barriers. In fact, e-business is no longer confined to the exchange of goods and services but covers also the labour

force. Thanks to the Internet, many skilled people, like programmers, translators and authors, could market their skills and expertise via their personal sites.

The concept of Islamic culture and its content:

In order to speak of Islamic culture, we should, first of all, define the concept of culture, in general, then the concept of Islamic culture, in particular.

The Arabic language defines "thaqafa", i.e. culture, as dexterity and cleverness, derived from "Thaqaf" : to become well-versed, skilful. "Thaqaf" means to learn to know. The term in our times is devoted to the type of education through which methods of thinking and working grow in a manner suiting the time and the place.

Thus, culture is a dynamic concept which signifies fertilization of the mental faculties through acquaintance, investment of knowledge by guessing, contemplating and exerting efforts, and development of Man's personal energies. This comes in line with the French term "Culture", i.e. cultivation and fertilization.

Culture adds to the value of the cultivated individual, thanks to the fertilization of his mental faculties in the same manner as the value of land is increased by making investment in it in order to expand its proceeds.

Culture is the outcome of the accumulated information and methods of thinking differing in their range by virtue of their relationship with the issues of concern to the individual in general and with what is related to subjectivism and identity, in particular. The cultivated individual is quite different from the scholar ; the former is aware, through his social senses (contacts) of his being human whether the matter is related to his times or not. This is the humanistic aspect of culture. As for what he lives in, his identity and his national and spiritual affiliation and the interactions facing him, it may be said that this is the subjective psychological aspect of the cultivated individual.

The culture of an individual is measured by the extent and diversity of his knowledge, his ability to deduce, coordinate and compare the acquired

information so as to arrive at conclusions and take positions which may crystallize a given concept or rectify a mistaken idea/view.

Being rather a double-edged weapon that might be used either to bring change or to maintain the current state of affairs, culture is far from being unbiased. In fact, culture may be used as a ruminative instrument of past history or a moulding force for future progress. It might, likewise, be either an inclusive barrier or a wider horizon opening up on other cultures ; a cause for war, or a source of peace.

Every society is endowed with a specific culture which constitutes the ordering pattern of its whole life, and revolves around three interrelated components, namely :

1. The religious creed, principles, values, morals, characteristics, beliefs, traditions, customs, as well as the skills and means man deploys to react to his social and natural surrounding. This is what Ibn Khaldoun calls human ethics that subsume each people's specific creeds and life patterns.

2. Creative outlet to the in-depth content of the human mind, which finds its expression in the various works of art, especially fiction, poetry, drama, in addition to such expressive arts as music, painting, dancing, etc.

3. Intellectual, scientific, philosophical, literary and theoretical tendencies and debates. These elements are interrelated in such a way that it would be unjustified to draw a line between them in an attempt to fathom them as a whole. Indeed, the specific culture of a people, no matter how civilized they are, is the amalgamation of all these elements.

Culture is supposed to promote mental training, refine the senses and strengthen consciousness and awareness. Therefore, it is included in the education of the individual, as a right to enjoy and a duty to possess. Man has been created with the element of love for knowledge and curiosity, to be acquired through his social senses which may be vast or narrow, sometimes, in a manner which may develop in the cultivated individual the characteristics of selfishness, prejudice and hatred or the qualities of preferring others to himself, tolerance and humbleness. Culture has its impact on individual and collective behaviour in terms of morals, and ideological, political and ethnic tendencies and inclinations.

It is to be borne in mind that the nature of the elements of culture and that of its quality, sources and the methods followed in its communication makes this impact positive or negative and indeed advantageous or harmful. Here, we can see very clearly the importance of the divinely revealed Islamic religion which calls for decency and which dispraises inflexibility and prejudice. It recalls the unifying origin of all human beings. It also recalls that piety constitutes the sole measurement of superiority since Allah the Most Exalted says : *"O Mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things)"* (Hujurāt, verse 13).

It is needless to say that thought, science and creativity in arts are the basic components of culture. They correspond to the fields of human nature and mankind's ambitions and inclinations in general. Man experiences a persistent desire to know and understand and to let his senses enjoy the beauties of the image, colours and rhythms in accordance with the heavenly laws promulgated by Allah and contained in the Holy Book : *"Fair in the eyes of men is the love of things they covet"* (Al-i-'Imran, verse 14).

Here we raise a question : Does the desirable harmony between the elements of culture and the latent instincts and nature of mankind need to be linked to moral and spiritual criteria or not ? The materialistic and secular currents reject such a linkage and consider that no criterion be attached to thinking, sciences or arts and that thinking, sciences and arts be emancipated and rendered devoid of any external theology. They claim that this is an emancipation of mankind from illusions and backwardness.

Islam, however, does not go along this view. It considers that nature and instincts need to be guided and cultivated, and that is in keeping with the welfare of man who is the entrusted vicegerent. Islam also considers that reason and law should go hand in hand since they are complementary to each other, and that science and arts are not ends in themselves. They are rather means to these ends. The objective is, of course, the welfare and happiness of mankind. The end is to carry out the responsibility of being the vicegerent

in the short worldly life, the life of the hard work and affliction in preparation for the eternal life, the Day of Judgement and reward.

Therefore, the Islamic environment requires that the Muslim individual develop his culture and behaviour within the framework of his creed. The Muslim, in other words, should adapt his culture and behaviour, and all their elements, to the precepts and guidance of the Islamic Sharia so as to avoid the occurrence of any discrepancies between reason and law, between science and religion or between religion and state and also in order to preserve the oneness of his identity and to protect it from falling apart when he feels that there is a vacuum in respect of his objectives. In fact, it is very difficult to perceive a culture that is abstract and neutral, i.e. a culture not linked to historic or doctrinal background forming the resources of its balances, criteria and values. The western civilization, for instance, avoids the religious source due to reasons connected with the relations of its states with its religious and ideological institutions. Therefore, despite the general guidelines contained in the modern western culture, culture in various countries generally bears a description which determines its framework and dimensions. Hence, culture is affiliated to a language such as the French or German cultures or to a religion as the Islamic culture or an ideology like Marxism, or to a country or region such as the Pharaonic or Greek or Chinese cultures.

In all cases, its contents incorporate the concept of its name. The French culture, for instance, covers all that is linked to the French language as a vessel and all that is related to the sciences, arts, customs and morals of the institutions of France which constituted the source of this language.

The Islamic culture too, when put on the mantle of Islam, became wide enough to incorporate all the contents of this term, bearing in mind that Islam is a religion, a law, an ideological and civilizational trend and a system of values.

Thus, culture, in its concept which is harmonious with the Islamic methodology, would be the expression of the scope of progress and development in the different aspects of human life and its various fields and underlying the creativity displayed by man during his interaction with the universe bestowed on him by Allah for the service of His creed and human

values, and the presentation of his latent characteristics of thinking and behaviour which are in line with the reality of the individual and the society in accordance with Islamic criteria and contents emanating from the true Islamic creed based on the Holy Book, the sound tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH), Islamic order contained in the glorious Islamic Sharia, and the general principles of the political, economic and cultural aspects of the Islamic thinking agreed upon unanimously by the Fiqh schools, the righteous predecessors, and the contemporaneous scholars.

Proceeding from the above, it would be clear that the Islamic culture has distinctive dimensions. Its characteristics are based on Islam which stands as a creed and a law as well as an intellectual and civilizational framework. This last aspect is neglected in many cases whereas Islam constitutes one fabric of all these elements. It would be difficult to separate them one from the other or take away one of them from the domain of Islam. Islam calls upon the Muslim individual to honestly assume the responsibility of the vicegerency of Allah. It sets forth the preventive regulations for him, directs him to the behavioural and social aspects which are in conformity with Islam, and identifies for him the behaviour and manner, whether within the family or the society, which should be characterized by affection, exchange of views, counsel and social and economic interdependence.

The Islamic systems, whether political, economic, social or moral make it incumbent upon the Muslim individuals or groups, to subjugate their practices to the principles, values and laws of Islam in terms of faith and behaviour. Work is inseparable from faith in Islam ; the same way issues of the individual and the society in the day to day life are inseparable from creed and practices of worship.

In its system, Islam also is wide enough to incorporate a culture which would accommodate fields of thinking and reality. It extends to cover also the issues of knowledge, existence and values which include the humanistic characteristic in addition to the religious field which is of concern to Muslims in particular and which remains open to all who believe in the credibility and validity of this "Sharia" (Law) which came as the seal of the Divine admonitions and as a guidance to all mankind.

The concept of comprehensive cultural plan :

Since culture is the backbone of the identity of the nation, the expression of its hopes and aspirations and the real pillar of its overall unity, it is imperative to draw up a unified Islamic cultural policy through complementary coordination and Islamic cultural interdependence together with faith in the leading role of the Islamic culture and its importance in the service of humanity and being conscious of the responsibility to be shouldered by the Muslim Ummah to preserve the Islamic heritage and spread the Arabic language among Muslims in order to spread Islam through the teachings of the Holy Quran and the sound tradition of the Holy Prophet.

Therefore, it was necessary to draw up a comprehensive Islamic cultural plan to serve as an overall framework for the Islamic cultural policies in all Islamic countries and as a cultural unity which has its value and weight in the contemporary world which it would affect and by which it would be affected. It would cover all cultural sectors without any one being preponderant over the other. It would have a new outlook for a new cultural perspective which would be fast enough to keep abreast with the speedy international developments and interactions. Therefore, it is important to stress the need to build up bridges of dialogue and intellectual cross-fertilization between Muslims in the Islamic world, through school missions, Islamic books exchange, participation in Islamic activities, conferences and symposia that are held in Islamic countries, in addition to opening to the other, with a view to building a better world wherein the values of progress, justice and peace among all people prevail.

The comprehensive Islamic cultural plan may be elaborated at the level of one Islamic state, provided it covers the whole Islamic World. In order to realize the plan's objectives, attention should be paid to the cultivation of the individual and the group. All means of information, education and training should be used in its implementation in harmony and coordination.

The comprehensive cultural plan requires that term plans be determined. It may include short, medium or long-term plans. Concepts should also be defined, goals should be confined and reference should be made to the constants bearing in mind that this culture is linked to Islam as was mentioned above. The pursued objective is the transformation of the

Islamic society from a state incompatible with Islam in terms of spirit, laws and values, to a state of coordination and harmony among all the essential components of Islam, namely creed, laws, values, objectives and intellectual and civilizational orientations.

Given that transformation does not come from nought but rather from a series of strong developments resulting from pressures and circumstances difficult to overcome, it could be necessary that plans be characterized by the wisdom and flexibility required by the various conditions prevailing in the Islamic states, which could be accommodated by the local capacities in order to secure the reasons of its success.

It is known that all plans envisage certain objectives which they seek to realize. As for the cultural plans, these objectives may be limited to building the society and actively participating in the human march through :

1. Eradication of the factors of decline and subjugation following their diagnosis and identification.
2. Development and promotion of factors of progress and re-establishment of the society on the basis of the Islamic viewpoint and basic components.
3. To work for finding means of support and encouragement and seek to achieve success.

In fact, success in realizing these objectives depends on commitment based on true and strong faith on the part of those who are responsible for the realization of the Islamic cultural project. It is also dependent on injecting, once more, life and spirit in the heart and soul of society and also on reducing anything that may undermine the sense of responsibility.

The major action which should be taken within the framework of the plan (i.e. the major components of the plan) may be summarized as follows :

1. To face the battle of concepts and criteria in order to change applied alien views, concepts and criteria to Islamic views, concepts and criteria already agreed upon.

2. To identify the Islamic methodology in the field of humanities and social sciences, i.e. in politics, sociology, economics, education and psychology and to endeavour to cultivate the society on its basis and to promulgate laws and constitutions, based on its main components.
3. To rewrite the Islamic history with due adherence to truthfulness and honesty so that truth may prevail and reasons of progress and backwardness may be identified. It is to be noted that these actions are valid at the level of planning in the Islamic world with contributions from different Islamic states, under the responsibility of international Islamic political and cultural organizations. The Organization of the Islamic Conference can work together with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization towards promoting the spirit of cooperation between Muslims in the Mashreq and Maghreb, extending necessary support for the Islamic cultural and civilizational heritage, and highlighting the position of Islam and Muslims in the past, present and future, with a view to rising to the challenges posed and preserving the Islamic identity. They can, likewise, conjoin to give due attention to the actual situation of Islam and Muslims the world over, through lending them cultural and information support, and sensitising them about the reality of the close bond between Muslim peoples in a sober and recognizable way.

As for the level of each Islamic country, the matter falls within the field of cultural policy. The major features of this policy may be summarized as follows :

The concept of Islamic cultural policy :

Cultural policy is that which is interested in specific sectors, certain classes, age-groups, geographic areas or ethnic groups and is not characterized by comprehensiveness.

In most cases, cultural policies are affected by the degree of participation and awareness of peoples. Should the people of a given country not participate in the drawing up of its cultural policy and its implementation, the outcome of such a policy would be limited. The cultural policy in any country is affected by its educational programmes. The fact that a cultural policy does

not correspond to the needs of the individual and society, and that it does not keep abreast of the developments of its times, may be attributed in many cases to the defect in the educational and instructional programmes.

The cultural policy, at the level of a single Islamic state requires the following actions :

1. Adoption of the comprehensive Islamic cultural plan and indeed the participation, with whatever possible means, in its implementation.
2. Diagnosis of the cultural situations in the country in order to undertake a process of rectification and transformation on the basis of the conditions already mentioned which are simultaneously necessary for the success of the plan and the cultural policy, namely the adherence to faith and the sensitization of public opinion in the society, its involvement in and the thwarting of any thing that may prevent the implementation of the cultural policy or the general plan.
3. Elaboration of time-tables with their priorities and programmes in order to implement them with the flexibility and accuracy required by each particular case.
4. Delegation of the responsibility for realizing the pursued objectives and endeavours, to the faithful, conscious and cultivated cadres at the leadership positions.
5. Establishment of necessary specialized institutions concerned with cultural issues and which seek to give the cultural issues an Islamic orientation and control channels of coordination between them and the means of education and information in order to secure harmony and to overcome any discrepancies between them.
6. Careful refining of non-Islamic customs and traditions and adaptation of the various cultural works namely arts, theatre, literature, or folk-lore, with the spirit, objectives and values of Islam, in accordance with the process of transformation and change.

The concept of Islamic civilization :

A nation has civilization when it attains a cultural climax at a given stage of its history.

Thus civilization means that a nation has achieved vitality, attained self-confidence and self-reliance.

The term "civilization" and the term "culture" were first used by sociologists of the 19th Century. Their definitions remained undetermined to the same degree as that of indeterminacy of the relation between the two terms.

Malik bin Nabi, for instance, argued that culture is the bridge of civilization (vide his book *Conditions of Renaissance*, p. 130) or a landmark of civilization (cf. his book entitled *Birth of Society*, p. 20). Some consider civilization to be of a degree higher than that of culture. In a study presented to the Conference of the Association of Islamic Universities, Dr. Abdu Al-Raouf argues that "civilization is the sum total of the aspects of progress and development, achieved by a community or a nation, which would be higher than the minimum level of culture. Consequently, civilization is more developed and higher than culture as mentioned above. Sulaiman Al-Khateeb considers culture to be part of civilization". From the analysis of the above, we find that definition of the term "civilization" grows in emphasis on two dimensions; the first one is the ethical and spiritual dimension which demonstrates the moral and cultural aspects of civilization. The second one is the material dimension which includes the stage of urbanization.

From these and other definitions, we may deduce a definition which may demonstrate the strong and distinct relationship between civilization and culture. Civilization is a pattern of thinking, production, behaviour and treatment, resulting from a cultural platform with its beliefs, historical remnants and popular heritage that gave rise to special concepts, models and criteria and distinct political, economic and social systems. A civilization unfolds itself through Arts, Heritage, Scientific, Intellectual and Cultural efforts through the years, and indeed through the creativity offered by it in the various literary, artistic and social fields.

As for the Islamic civilization, it is known that it resulted from the spiritual, intellectual and cultural revolution launched by Islam through the Holy Quran and the glorious tradition of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) which produced new concepts, models and criteria and changed the cultural and civilization conditions that prevailed at time when the light of Islam shone for the first time.

In his above-mentioned study, Dr. Abdu Al-Raouf described civilization "as what was achieved by Muslims during the first centuries of the political, economic, scientific and technical domination of Islam over all the vital fields". In the same study, he adds "and on the basis of the principles of this moral, religious and humanitarian culture, emerged an overall civilization which covered religion and worldly life, religious sciences and physics, mathematics, engineering, chemistry, astronomy, linguistics and the humanities. It also covered arts, fine arts, politics, economics, vocations and industries. In addition, it had a profound effect on the lives and the ways of living of the people".

The concept of Islamic heritage :

Heritage is considered to be one of the aspects of individual and collective creativity of a nation throughout its long history. Heritage is also considered to be the best expression of the cultural identity and the cultural character of a nation.

Heritage includes numerous cultural, artistic and intellectual forms inherited from the early and recent past of a nation. It is the product of man and differs from one time to another, and from one place to another. In its general concept, it is related to the material heritage including archaeological monuments or things discovered through excavations or the antiquities available in museums which represent different ages. Indeed, it includes the intellectual heritage resulting from the works of creative scholars and thinkers each in his time.

There is also a social heritage which takes the form of customs and traditions prevailing in society and their effect on the individuals of that society. Therefore, this kind of heritage has a strong link with the cultural practices and the linkage between the present and past of a nation and its outlook to the future.

As we believe that the main source of the Islamic heritage is the Holy Quran and the sound tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) which resulted in scientific, intellectual and cultural achievements, we should not confine the sense of our heritage to the mere organized maintenance of monuments, their enlistment and exhibition, to the mere continuation of the traditional

ceremonies, or to the emotional attachment to the vestiges of the past. Heritage is rather one of the most important means capable of establishing cultural identity.

We also reject the sanctifying of the Islamic heritage bearing in mind that it was the understanding of man to the revelation and the interaction with the established norms of the universe, a product, however, that is neither part of revelation but that's human creativity related to revelation.

Therefore, it is our view that a critical objective study of the heritage is of use and that it forms a part of the attention to be accorded to heritage. Culture that dares to undertake auto-criticism of its history and draws lessons from its heritage could mould its future heritage with a creative spirit in order to keep pace with the changes without renouncing its originality. Those who discover heritage, understand and criticize it, would be better equipped to maintain continuation through changes.

We mentioned earlier in the first chapter that to anticipate means to look into the future with sharp sight with the aim of imagining the coming realities bearing in mind the present realities and taking into consideration admonitions of the departing realities.

If we consider this definition carefully, we would notice that the use of "reality" in three stages of time : past, present and future reflects the pursued objective of the study of future, namely changing the course of things, to the better and directing them towards the most ideal direction. In each of the three stages "the reality" presents a source of consideration not because of the reality itself but in order to push it forward to the right direction. We study and understand the past not because of our love to seek to protect it because we want to resort to it, but to explore it and think carefully about it so as to remove the obstacles and face up to the challenges. We take interest in the future not to entertain dreams and hopes but to put on the mantle of knowledge and improve the reality by analysis and studying the crisis that may take place in the future.

There are two categories of Islamic heritage : the written heritage which enriches thousands of libraries in different countries and continents, and the visual heritage including monuments, tools, architectural and

civilizational achievements and impressive and appreciable artistic skills, some of which are found everywhere.

The written and visual Islamic heritage is largely extended. It includes Sharia sciences of exegesis, hadith, origins, sira (biography of the Holy Prophet), linguistics, literature, critics, intellectual philosophical sciences such as theology, sufism, philosophy, logic, humanities and social sciences such as politics, economics, sociology, education, psychology, history, geography, travels, pure and applied sciences of mathematics, physics, chemistry, engineering, astronomy, agriculture, medicine, architectural and plastic arts such as decoration, sculpture, inscriptions and laceworks, some of which are still found in mosques, schools, palaces and mausoleums and other places. Some of these arts are still alive as they are practised by skilful artists. These arts and others, such as music, recitation, rhythmic arts and civilizational traditions were mixed with the Islamic values which gave the former a special character that suggests its unity despite its diversity and its difference from one nationality to another and from one Islamic country to another.

The concept of Islamic history :

History is a record of various events experienced by the individuals and groups of a nation throughout the ages. It stands as a mirror of its heritage and accounts for the different aspects of life in its past, particularly in the political, economic, social and cultural history. Therefore, true history is considered to be the real source of cultural identity of a nation.

It does not recognize the fabricated barriers since it puts on record the good and bad deeds and actions of a nation.

In many instances, attacks were directed in two respects against the history of Islam. The first was on its relationship with Islam, its laws and regulations. Contrary to the allegations of the adversaries of Islam, the history of Islam bears witness to the level of adherence of Muslims, during the better part of their history, to their laws "Sharia" and to what they established as economic, social and cultural institutions and their keenness to practise them. They are committed to the established rules and principles of laws. They use "ijtihad", in dealing with the issues which may arise in the

present and future. However, this history was not free from deviations from the Islamic line of thought especially in the political and ideological fields.

The second type of attacks is demonstrated by the limitation of records, references and analyses of this history, to political events with their fluctuations and disputes. No references, except for a few, are made to the history of economic, cultural and social policies of the various Islamic countries; nor are they made to the economic growth, scientific progress and social interdependence which served as evidence of the Islamic civilization throughout centuries in many Islamic areas. However, like the history of other states of the world, the Islamic history witnessed positive and negative aspects of many a break-through and drawbacks. It provides, however, evidence of the flourishing development attained by Muslims and the contributions they made to the development of sciences, arts and the rise of civilization. The Muslim famous heroes, intellectuals and pioneers, in many sciences, offered valuable services to the development of mankind.

The concept of Islamic thought :

The type of thought termed "Islamic" should be based on the Islamic principles, sources, objectives and values of Islam failing which it would differ from the basic constituents, methodologies and criteria of Islam. Otherwise, it would be no more than free thinking, not necessarily an Islamic one.

Therefore, Islamic thinking, as it is attributed to Islam, the Godly revealed religion, should have the following characteristics :

1. An overall outlook into the existence, with all elements of the Creator and the created including Man with his different dimensions of the unseen, the spiritual, the sensory and the psychological, and his effective relationship with Allah, the Almighty and his fellow human beings, and the universe.
2. A basis on Islamic perception and its guidance in the field of existence -with the nature of its elements- and the progress of the universe and life, and in the field of knowledge by commending reason and science and by drawing up the criteria for knowledge and

in the area of values by underlining Islam's call for righteousness, justice and liberty.

3. Every endeavour undertaken by man in the fields of science and action should have an end and an objective. Ibn Sirin, for instance, considers science as a debt that is owed to others and Al-Jahid states that "knowledge should be accompanied with action".
4. Investment in the methods, criteria and styles used in the Holy Quran and the Glorious Sunna.

Thinking is a stage whereon all forms of knowledge unfold. It acquires nobleness when its sources and objectives are noble.

We, the people of Islam, refer to thinking as "Islamic" when it is derived from the sources of revelation and the universe and when its objective and goal are science and justice. Revelation demonstrates clearly what man fails to be aware with his limited mental capacity without his Creator and his God's guidance. The universe is an open book which is subject to the norms laid down by the Creator that could possibly be discovered by the creature.

Justice is the backbone of life with which civilization reaches higher levels, and when justice disappears civilizations too disappear. Science is the core and spirit of justice, the absence of which means that no enlightening reading of the two essential sources, the Book of Revelation and the book of the universe - could be possible. It would also be impossible to attain what constitutes after the worship of Allah, the sublime objective, i.e. justice.

With this concept, the sound thinking, namely the Islamic one, would be similar to a stage where the forms of knowledge are based on and inspired by the Book of Allah, the Most Exalted and the tradition of the Holy Prophet (PBUH). These forms are enriched by the rules of the universe and the norms of creation which aim at emancipating mankind from worship of man and which call for the worship of the One and Only God, and the dissemination of science and administration of justice.

When the forms of knowledge unfold at the stage of thinking, they do not produce a sound thinking unless they are distinctively dynamic and forceful. But if they were frozen and dead, they would not represent a type

of thinking, rather they would constitute a structure of expressions and words which seek to become part of the heritage. Its movement would stem from the generation and elaboration of thoughts therein. In order to achieve this, freedom and criticism should be secured. The absence of one of them would mean the death of thinking.

Thought is like a living creature which when affected by its environment, repulses attacks and adopts positive elements. If it is weak because of weakness in criticism or absence of freedom, the attacking thought would manage to penetrate into it, then imbalance in the elaboration of thinking would follow and repetition and rumination would multiply.

Therefore, Islamic thought accords special attention to and underlines creativity and consideration of the graces of Allah, the nature and its secrets and the human character in terms of morals and behaviour. Islamic thought attaches, likewise, importance to seeking knowledge and wisdom in various cultures.

II- Characteristics :

The Islamic culture has two basic characteristics: Invariability in respect of absolute sources and creeds, laws, methodologies and values contained therein. The second characteristic is variability in respect of the efforts and creativity of Muslims which may be right or wrong and consequently are debatable. The part of the Islamic culture which is absolute has the same characteristics of Islam as a religion and method of life. This is natural, bearing in mind the divine source of the creed, laws and methodology of Islam, taking into consideration that the Creator of Man and the One who granted him vicegerency, is Allah who is infallible.

These characteristics unfold a number of features, namely universality, comprehensiveness, realism, intermediacy, objectivity and variety in unity.

Universality is demonstrated by the fact that Islam came as a guide to all mankind in all times (starting from the time of its revelation) and as a conclusion to all divine admonitions, especially, if we bear in mind that the mission of Mohammed (PBUH) came out when man was to be elevated to

the level of intellectual maturity which is commensurate with the nature of the Quranic call.

Man is now conscious of his nature; even if he goes against it, he depends on what his creative thinking may help him get even if it deviates from the right path and on his rhetorical ability even if he uses it in matters, not called for, by the law of Allah. Man became aware of all this and of his freedom to use these energies the way he likes and that he may return to refer to the right guidance, the guidance of Sharia, if he so desires.

The feature of comprehensiveness is demonstrated by the fact that it includes man in what is related to him as one of the types of creatures, in the total number of the components of his entity whether physical or moral entity, i.e. in his body with all his senses, in his mental, emotional and spiritual realizations, including the God given and the acquired one. This feature is also demonstrated by the attention accorded to man (individuals and groups) in terms of his thinking and behaviour.

Given that the Holy Quran and the sound Holy Sunna are the source of the Islamic culture, and bearing in mind that they have the quality of comprehensiveness in view of their search in all the dimensions for human entity and all the fields of the worldly life, in an extremely explicit manner, whether these were economic, political, social or educational, the Islamic culture, has the feature of comprehensiveness in all fields of culture. Therefore, the matter needs a long-term strategy to cover these fields with different methods.

This comprehensiveness has two characteristics : (1) the accommodation of man in his nature, behaviour and collective life and (2) the complete harmony between the creeds, laws and ideological orientations brought by Islam. No change may be found in the ways of Allah. He created man with a given nature and man will never find an alternative to mental creative emotional or spiritual abilities bestowed upon him by Allah. Man also will never find any difference between the creed called for by Islam and its laws, values of methodology, or between its teachings and man's executing energies and capacities: Harmony or agreement is the predominant feature.

Intermediacy is the feature which calls for moderation without which man will resort to extravagance, despair or adversity. Man used to be extravagant in respect of material and spiritual matters and in his understanding of the relationship between him and Allah, the Almighty. It was therefore necessary to lead man back to moderation and to a well-balanced position between matter and spirit, since Man is made up and is in need of both of these constituents, and is asked to preserve and fructify them. *"But seek, with the (wealth) which God has bestowed on thee, the Home of the Hereafter, Nor forget thy portion in this world: but do thou good, as God has been good to thee ..."*(Qasas, verse 77).

The Islamic methodology observes the balance between the interests of the individual and those of the society in such a way that none would overshadow the other. The individual is part of the society in which he lives. So, if the individual is righteous, the society will be righteous and vice versa. The methodology neither overlooks the spiritual nor the material needs of man. It calls for a balance to be struck between them in many of its teachings contained in the Holy Quran and the Sound Sunna of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Moderation is manifested in the spirit and rules of the Islamic legislation. Sharia is neither rigid and harsh nor forcible. It does not demand of man to do more than he can, nor does it hold him accountable for where he thinks (within himself) or what he does inadvertently, for the mistakes he makes (if he endeavours to do the thing rightly but fails) or for things he fails to do because of circumstantial reasons such as illness, travels, pests or permanent reasons such as senility or deformity.

Moderation can also be apparent in Sharia's respect for the rights and obligations of both the individual and the community. The human individual is the honoured and responsible vicegerent of Allah. Man does not live in isolation and the community is made up of a group of individuals. It has rights and obligations. Each of its individuals has rights and obligations. Its rights and obligations may or may not be in agreement with those of the individual. Therefore, should any conflict of interests arise between them, or should it deviate from righteousness and justice brought out by the Sharia, reference must be made to the objectives and values of Sharia.

As for the feature of realism, it appears clearly in the Divine Address which is based on human nature and on what can be considered by man in accordance with his mental and emotional energies, the level of his intelligence and culture and his dispositions.

This is part of the nature of divine address and its adherence to realism which enables it to penetrate into the soul according to their respective dispositions and aptitudes. It is based mainly on facilitation and avoidance of embarrassment.

This realism is also particularly clear in its legislation where it allows more than it prohibits and where it provides for easing the values or making exemption in practices of worship and transactions on the basis of the rule of origin "necessity knows no laws".

The realism of the Divine Address is also obvious in what it enjoins and what it prohibits to preclude pretexts and to protect and support the weak who, when blessed with good fortune, abstains from doing good, transgresses and forgets his Lord, and when evils befall him or when afflicted by misfortune, he grows impatient and repents.

Bearing in mind that every legislation is meant to be for this own good, its provisions aim at purifying the instincts of man and rendering flexible his attitudes. They are designed to help oneself to refrain from falling pray to man's soul that often commands evil and to resist the devil's temptation.

Finally, realism is manifest in the Quranic style which is of wondrous nature in terms of the text, the legislations and the sciences contained therein and which penetrates into the hearts with its theatrics, strong words, rhythm and its methodology which excites all the senses of the reciter or the listener including those of fear, contemplation, consideration and hopes.

Objectivity in the Islamic concept differs from that of the western concept. In the west, it refers to what is relevant to matter without involving the self element of the speaker. In the Islamic thinking, it refers to adherence to the truth when studying any matter. The "Islamic" objectivity requires research in matters which would be beneficial, and when there is an expectable result and

not in what is considered as sterile such as research in the quiddity of Allah instead of research in His signs, controversy unseen which is impossible for the human mind to grasp, or things which no one other than Allah knows about, such as the quiddity of spirit and time of the Day of Judgement.

In this regard, Islam stresses the importance of determining the objectivity of each science or any action undertaken by man so that his knowledge or action may not be in vain or may not lead to corruption or harm.

Islamic culture, despite the diversity of its sources, multiplicity of fields, the broad scope of its diffusion, constitutes one unity in its variety and multiplicity, because its Islamic source is divine and infallible given that the absolute reason will neither ever be characterized by the least contradiction nor discrepancy. In addition, Allah is one, His message will always be one and harmonious in all its teachings, commandments, prohibitions, and purposes of legislation which are never at variance with the interests of man and the call addressed to him to follow justice, righteousness and good.

Thus, Islam constitutes one system which is harmonious despite the multiplicity and diversity of its components, namely the creed, legislation, values, methods and keenness to check the relationship between man and his God, on the one side, between man and man, on another and between man and the universe, which is devoted to him on still another side.

The variable aspect of the qualities of Islamic culture is characterized by the abundance in creativity and production and diversity in methods of research. Muslims took very prompt steps to answer the call of the Quran and the Prophet (PBUH). They based their call "da'wa", on reasoning and on persistent search to acquire knowledge and on research in the Signs of Allah, i.e. in the human soul which is moulded in the best manner by Allah and in the universe with its apparent and secret signs made by Allah so that they may discover some of them and recognize the ever vast sciences of Allah and His great wisdom.

The Quran remains, throughout the ages the reference that provides guidance with its scientific, social and worshipping right guides which form the traits of its everlasting miraculous nature.

III- The Sources of Islamic Culture :

The Holy Quran

The Holy Quran is "*(This is a) a Book, with verses basic or fundamental (of established meaning), further explained in detail, from One Who is Wise and Well-Acquainted (with all things) ...*" (Hud, verse 1). "*No Falsehood can approach it from before or behind it ...*" (Fussilat, verse 42). Allah undertook to protect it from the mockery of the mocker, thus preventing it from damage, deviation or change. The text and meanings of the Quran were revealed by Allah, whereas in the case of the Hadith, only the meanings were revealed. The wordings were of the Prophet.

The Quran is considered to be the basis of the Islamic Science, Arabic language and the reference which guides the Muslims in their search for knowledge, existence, contemplation and behaviour.

The Holy Quran is also considered to be the main source of Islamic culture thanks to its religious, moral and social teachings and to its validity to be applied at any time and anywhere, in a manner corresponding to the requirements and new developments of the epoch. A Muslim finds in its wisdom the answer to all current questions. The Holy Quran is always kept by Muslims in all the Islamic countries ; they refer to its religious teachings covering practices of worship, transactions and moral demands. This created a strong bond which transcends the barriers of race, language, colour, geographical frontiers, leading to the unity of Islamic culture despite the diverse respective cultures of many countries.

The credibility and authenticity of the Holy Quran lie in its miraculous nature in terms of its texts, science and regulation. Thus, Muslims found in it the unforeseen reference, sanctuary and ideal example. It does not mention any phenomenon or fact without explanation or justification. The Prophets of Allah pronounce what should be the belief and thinking of man. Ibrahim Al Khalil, for instance, asks Allah to show him how He raises the dead in order to reassure his heart. The Quran denounces blind imitation and everything that would impede reasoning even in matters related to creed, worshipping practices or legislative rules.

The Holy Quran keeps commanding man to contemplate, reflect carefully and attentively, and consider the realm of the Heavens and the Earth. *"Then let man look at his food (and how We provide it) : for that We pour forth water in abundance, and We split the earth in fragments, and produce therein Corn, ..."* ('Abasa, verses 24-27). *"Now let man but think from what he is created"* (Tāriq, verse 5). *"Do they not look at the Camels, how they are made? And at the Sky, How it is raised high ? And at the Mountains, how they are fixed firm?"* (Ghāshiya, verses 17-19). The Holy Quran, however, prohibits excess of bounds and recklessness in thinking. It also calls upon man to seek goodness and avoid corruption, harm and mockery of any knowledge he acquires or any action he undertakes. Islam urges a Muslim individual to adhere behaviourally and intellectually to its principles and values and to treat people rightly on the basis of righteousness and justice, fearing no one in this regard but Allah.

The Sunna of the Holy Prophet :

The Sunna of the Holy Prophet constitutes the second basic source of Islamic culture since it adopts the line of the Quran, offers explanations and gives details. It was the Sunna which gave details of many rules of worshipping practices and transactions; it laid down the foundations of wisdom and guidance for Muslims. The Quran states that Allah, the Most Exalted, gave our Prophet (PBUH) the Book and wisdom and it commands us to follow him *"So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you."* (Hashr, verse 7). Thus, it placed Muslims on the right path of the Prophet's Sunna in legislation, morals, conduct, behaviour and the call to acquire knowledge and work.

Similarly, the Muslims depended on the Quran in their intellectual, scientific and civilizational renaissance; they depend on the Sunna of their Prophet (PBUH) after collecting and putting it on record, detailing its chapters and using it in their scientific endeavours and ways of life.

So when they exert efforts and when they are creative, they refer to two original references, the Book and the Sunna in order to evaluate their work. This gives to true Islamic culture, a strong and firm credibility and authenticity because it is based on the true source, i.e. the divine Revelation. It is to be mentioned in this context that this revelation does not bridle the

human intellect. Indeed, it offers a wide scope to work because man is entrusted with vicegerency, responsibility and is subjected to trials. Therefore, he should fully and freely exploit this tool which distinguishes him from other creatures ; did not Allah address His Prophet by saying *"Therefore do thou give admonition, for thou art one to admonish. Thou art not one to manage (men's) affairs"* (Ghāshiyah, verses 21-22). Did it not establish parallels between those who accept to freeze their minds and the animals and indeed from the animals those which went astray and the most evil ones.

In this way, we may come to the conclusion that Islamic culture, which is mainly based on the Quran and the Sunna, is an open one and calls for co-existence, dialogue and understanding.

There is a strong link between culture and language and each one has an impact on the other. If reference is made to the relationship between the Islamic religion and the Arabic language, then this compound (religion, culture and language) would have a great impact on identifying and distinguishing our Ummah.

Given the fact that the Holy Quran was the basis of and reference for the Islamic, scientific and civilizational renaissance, it goes without saying that the language of the Quran was the vessel for this renaissance. The origins of these bases and methodologies of this culture will not be understood without resorting to the Arabic language which was preceded by all the languages of previous great civilizations such as Persia, Hindi and Greek. It became the means of expression for Muslim thinkers, scholars, jurists and philosophers regardless of their race or nationality. It contributed to the unification of the Islamic World since understanding the Quran and the Sunna and applying their enlightening guidance were dependent on mastering the Arabic language.

The achievements of Muslims in various religious and worldly sciences confirmed that Arabic is a flexible language; that it can be developed and expanded to accommodate various sciences. It has the capacity to adapt itself to the scientific, intellectual and psychological needs. The Holy Quran managed, with its miraculous textual nature, to penetrate into the minds of millions of people. Muslims built their thinking and civilization on the basis

of this Holy text. Thus, Arabic language became a permanent reference-book for Muslims to understand the Quran and appreciate the great Islamic heritage.

Bearing in mind that much of the Islamic intellectual works appeared in other languages in the non-Arab Islamic countries, it would be necessary to pay attention to them and to endeavour to make known what was published in these languages on the Islamic culture, especially if we consider that a lot of these works appeared in the Arabic script.

The Islamic heritage :

The Islamic heritage -an outcome of sciences and arts, historic and architectural glories and their ongoing arts and industries created by Muslims- forms, in turn, a source of Islamic culture. Indeed, most of it is considered to be an important part of human heritage which can neither be denied nor ignored.

Dealing with heritage as both a repository of the identity of the Islamic Ummah and an outcome of the Muslim brain, irrespective of the various social strata and the intellectual and cultural trends in all the various Islamic countries, entails that efforts be directed towards reviewing it, with the view to remove all blemishes. It is equally important that the way be paved for jurisprudence in its various fields to serve the Islamic Ummah and its future. It is similarly indispensable to work towards reviving the intellectual and artistic Islamic heritage, preserving it and spreading it through deploying various relevant means. Equally significant is the need to translate the greatest works of the Islamic heritage into the world's living languages, publicise Islamic culture and give a wider hearing to the contemporary Islamic issues the world over. Indeed, heritage is the true expression of individual creativity in as much as it is a reflection of the collective creativity of the Ummah and its historic changes, and mainly consists in opening up new horizons for the Islamic Ummah, instead of shutting it away and imprisoning it in the past, in order that the Islamic cultural personality shall be best reflected.

It is well known that the Islamic heritage is mainly based on the spirit and purposes of Islam. Therefore, it is characterized by the Islamic features which make it, for most of the time, similar to its dogmas and basic components

which are rendered distinct owing to their qualities, methodologies and criteria. There is no doubt that many of these characteristics and criteria differ from many of the currently prevailing characteristics and criteria of civilization because of the differences between the historical and dogmatic bases and backgrounds. In the Islamic culture, neither is there any room for the materialistic, secular, positivist laws nor for many of the doctrines and ideologies which do not recognize the heavenly laws, their sources or references.

Some of the existing demonstrations of the Islamic heritage, in addition to the above-mentioned historic glories and arts industries, constitute a group of social institutions such as waqfs, libraries, scientific institutions, institutions to care for animals, cultural institutions such as Quranic schools, universities and libraries and also a number of religious and social manifestations such as celebrations of religious Feasts and festivals.

Local cultures :

The spread of Islamic culture in different countries reached by Islam led to the adaptation of the characteristics of the existing local cultures to the constituents of the Islamic culture. Consequently, rituals, customs and traditions became, in most cases, harmonious with the established elements of the Islamic culture even if they differed in terms of practice and application. It is to be noted however that this difference does not reach the point of dogma, values or purposes as in the case of the old and modern non-Islamic cultures.

The special characteristics of the local environment in an Islamic country, for instance, does not differ in its essence from its counterpart in another Islamic country. The difference is only in customs and tradition related to it. The basic manifestations, especially in social relations, its legislations and civilizational features, show clearly the affiliation to Islam in both environments. Unity remains in diversification. These local cultures should enrich, expand and diversify the horizons of Islamic culture and consequently, thus become an additional source of it.

However, local cultures which prevailed in some countries before the spread of Islam in them, left very clear traces therein which constitute a

source of distortion of the spirit of the Islamic culture whether through misinterpretation, distorted understanding of this culture or defect in adaptation and harmony between local and Islamic cultures because of various internal and external factors.

The Islamic World is rich in its local cultures which differ in their conditions and composition due to the changes in environmental circumstances and social life. If efforts are combined in different Islamic countries to maintain the Islamic heritage which constitutes an important source for Islamic culture, the identity of the Islamic Ummah would be strengthened and the spread of Islam would further be promoted.

Common human principles :

The credibility and force of the Islamic culture are not attributed only to its divine source, but also to its dependence, in its objectives, starting points and values, on human nature and on principles the validity of which no one could dispute and which would inevitably be accepted through sound reasoning. These are the principles of righteousness, justice and dignity of man. The best evidence in this regard is the Quranic intellectual, scientific and moral call supported by the Sunnah and life story of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

The more science makes progress and its discoveries multiply, the more the miraculous nature of the Quran, its methodologies, instructions in the field of knowledge about man, life and universe and credibility of values called for by it, are confirmed. Consequently, laws contained in the Quran are also confirmed, thwarting in this way many theories and philosophical baseless arguments regarding soul, society and morals.

Many of the Western thinkers and scholars started to admit the inability of science to discover by itself the fact of existence and life without resorting to religion and that Reason cannot do without revelation. We limit ourselves in this regard to two testimonies: the first one is that of the great scientist Einstein, who said that "faith without science is blind and science without faith is lame". The second one is that of the scholar Sullivan, who is known

for his reputed book Limits of Science, "science has become highly sensitive and relatively humble. We no longer teach that scientific style is the only effective way to acquire knowledge about facts".

Thus, expansion of sources of knowledge through dependence on revelation, human capacity and determination of purposes and objectives of knowledge so that its effectiveness in the service of man may be redoubled, is what Islam calls for and urges Muslims to theoretically and behaviourally adhere to.

Chapter II

Objectives

The Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World aims to bring about a fundamental change at the levels of the Muslim individual, the local Islamic societies, the Muslim Ummah and mankind in general. It also aims to explain the nature of the relationship between Islamic culture and the other cultures :

1- The Muslim individual, both in terms of the individual energies and in terms of the interaction and solidarity with the other members of Islamic society aimed at realizing social objectives as well as the individual's capacity to positively respond to the current changes in various fields. "Muslims are comparable to a single body." (Hadith).

2- The local Islamic societies, whether they are administrative units in the civil state or the modern state.

3- The Islamic Ummah with its different peoples and areas both at the level of internal structure and possession of Islamic features and at the level of its ability to contribute to human civilization, in keeping with its mission as "*the best of Peoples, evolved for mankind*". (Al-i-'Imrān, Verse 110).

4- Mankind in general constituting in its entirety, the field of Islamic action aimed at achieving the required harmony between mankind and the goal of human nature and carrying in the depths of its existence the basic factors of man's innate character which will never be effaced from the page of human existence and with whose requirements Islam is said in Islamic texts to be in harmony and seeking to bring it to light at the level of human thought and behaviour as well as guiding it to the right path which pleases its Creator "... *the pattern on which he has made mankind : no change (let there be) in the work (wrought)by God : that is the standard Religion ...*" (Rum, verse 30).

At the individual level, the Plan aims to build a Muslim individual who enjoys the following particularities and to protect him against deviation therefrom :

1. Possession of the conscious conception inculcated by Islam about the universe in general as a creation of God evolving in accordance with His will, in full harmony and coherent unity and based on right and justice ; about life as a manifestation of God's supreme power, and about man as the noblest and most conscious creature and as "the vicegerent of God on earth".
2. Achievement of total faith - in all past truths and their other details - an innermost faith that shapes one's feelings and perceptions and imbues all patterns of behaviour. *"Has not the time arrived for the Believers that their hearts in all humility should engage in the remembrance of God and of the Truth which has been revealed (to them)..."* (Hadid, verse 16).
3. Man's full perception and total awareness of his human rights such as freedom, dignity and life. He must not forsake these attributes which Almighty Allah has secured for him as indisputable rights. He must also seek to ensure fundamental rights for all mankind.
4. Practical compliance with all injunctions and prohibitions by Allah Almighty and refusal to act except within the boundaries of Sharia whether in the fields of worship ('ibadat), transactions (mu'amalat), rights or in any other fields of human life as a whole. *"So take what the Apostle assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withholds from you"* (Hashr, Verse 7).
5. Adoption of commendable qualities as prescribed by Islam for the individual (such as honesty, patience, courage, benevolence, altruism, justice, equity, etc.) and avoidance of depravities such as backbiting, defamation, envy, stinginess, greed, etc.).
6. Possession of a human personality open to every step of constructive solidarity both at the level of Islamic society to contribute to the achievement of Islamic objectives, and at the general level of mankind to work for the fulfilment of man's desirable goals.

On the level of the Muslim Ummah, the Plan aims to develop intellectual, fiducial, ethical, social and economic infrastructure in the Islamic world through the following major factors :

1. Assertion of the Islamic civilizational identity by explaining its theoretical and practical characteristics and seeking to turn these into general phenomena in Muslim peoples which they would incorporate into their Islamic personality and proceed from them to perform their civilizational and building role. To know these characteristics, guidance must be sought from the attributes conferred upon this Ummah by the Holy Quran, such as: the witness nation, the medium nation, the just nation, the nation that helps the helpless and opposes the arrogant and the idols, the God-fearing nation, the nation that enjoins justice and forbids evil, the nation whose members exhort one another to truth and patience, etc.
2. Action to reject all elements of blind dependence, to liberate the spirit, the mind and material resources from any foreign domination, and to move to an active and interactive, constructive condition instead of a condition of total passivity vis-à-vis other cultural currents. The world is now being faced by a brutal assault waged by a culture whose advocates contend that it is a universal one. In fact, it is a consumer-culture that only seeks to mould the various local cultures at varying degrees, commandeering their heritage and wrecking their bases, through casting them aside as being unfit to keep abreast of the modern time.
3. Action to apply all Islamic social systems to all walks of life - in particular the Islamic political system which is dependent on the participation of the Ummah in political and social construction and in bringing about justice and equity without infringement of the rights of individuals, thus putting into practice a deep-rooted ethical system.
4. Action to strengthen all factors of scientific creativity and progress by assimilating scientific production, striving to develop studies and resources, and continually discovering unknown scientific fields and thus occupying the vanguard position that Allah has willed for this Ummah, i.e. possession of all factors of strength and prestige.

On the world level, the Plan's objectives are as follows :

1. To enrich human culture in general as an element of world civilizational cooperation in all fields, moral as well as material, by strengthening all factors and pushing forward towards human communication among peoples.
2. To stimulate the moral sense which originates in human nature and to strengthen human inclinations towards realization of social justice, and rejection of the phenomena of oppression, tyranny, infringement upon the rights of helpless peoples, sucking up their resources, and, in pursuit of narrow interests, depriving them of the effective free will to build their own future.
3. To seek the rejection of all manifestations against human rights and, in particular, against human equality, the foundation of dignity. This means firm opposition to all types of racial, geographical, confessional, nationalist, tribal and class discrimination. It also means action to create human foundations and cadres emulation (science, struggle and endeavours towards moral perfection), and realization of greater solidarity in opposing human right violation at both international and bilateral levels among States.
4. Efforts to strengthen all social bonds that contribute to the realization of human unity on common foundations such as mutual contacts among work-related groups (e.g. workers, voluntary and cultural institutions, youth, women and children) as well as contacts among universities in various fields.

On the other hand, the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World aims at determining the relationship of Islamic culture with other human cultures, proceeding with Islamic culture itself as it involves the explanation of Islamic views on the sources, the bases and the characteristics of this culture including its constants and variables, and also involves a recollection of Muslims' contributions to the formation of human culture, and an account of today's all-round appeals made to them to revive Islamic culture on bases that meet contemporary requirements and can interact in a constructive

manner with present-day cultures insofar as they do not contradict its Islamic constants and fundamentals.

The information society is a historic opportunity the Islamic countries ought to seize in order that they might strengthen cultural cooperation among them, build the bridges of this cooperation with the world cultures and pave the way for investment opportunities in the various cultural fields.

In order to build up a comprehensive and integrated Islamic, cultural development, it is indispensable to form an actual Inter-Islamic and international partnership, with a view to benefiting from the new information and communication technologies and using them to produce contents and shore up cultural industries in order that culture shall become an actual developmental and economic mainstay and a means conducive to reducing the discrepancies and combating poverty. It is all the more an incessant urge since the corollary of the digital divide is the economic, social and cultural disparity that makes it difficult to combat poverty.

Chapter III

Islamic culture issues

As the Islamic culture is an expression of Islam's thought, approval and vision concerning life, man and the universe, the issues of Islamic culture encompass all fields of Islamic thinking, cover all aspects of human activity based on Islamic concepts, and therefore incorporate all aspects of Islamic life.

Some of the issues involved here relate to the preservation of cultural values and the process of reviving the authentic and deep-rooted cultural heritage. Other issues relate to reformulating cultural concepts in accordance with Islamic notions drawn mainly from the Holy Quran thereby giving them adequate force to counter contemporary cultural challenges and to consolidate existing cultural relations among Muslims.

Islamic cultural issues stem from the universal outlook brought in by Islam and developed into a permanent order of living. Culture has constantly been a reflection as well as an expression and an explanation of this outlook. It constitutes a framework for the Islamic identity which owes its attributes of universalism, continuity and effectiveness to Islamic culture.

1. The Islamic concept of existence (the universe, life, mankind, society, etc.) :

The belief in monotheism is the prime pillar of the Islamic, intellectual and cultural build-up. Therefore, monotheism is a spirit which pervades the universe, dominates social and political life and moulds ethics, learning and culture.

As the belief in the oneness of the Creator, praise be upon Him, is one of the major fundamentals of Islam, the universe and mankind cannot be soundly understood except on the basis of this belief. It is Allah the One, the Eternal God, praise be upon Him, that controls the existing multiplicity in the universe. The Almighty is the Creator of everything ; He has no partner in His sovereignty ; nothing can be compared with Him ; the entire universe has been created by Allah, the Most-High, the Compassionate, the Merciful, the Wise, the All-Knowing, the Gracious towards His servants.

This profound Islamic view of the universe, of life and of mankind is absolutely and essentially different from the perverted, worldly, and limited materialistic view. It is reflected in the concept of worship, has an effect even on scientific experiments and imbues the feelings of the Muslim when he looks at beauty, nature, life and the universe.

Considering that Islamic Sharia sciences are the basis of monotheism because they guide to the belief in Allah and highlight the wisdom, the justice and the mercy of the Most-High, it follows that all creatures have in fact been created in fulfilment of an act of wisdom willed by Allah, praise be upon Him, and there is no creature, be it the smallest atom, that does not glorify Allah the Most-High or does not move in accordance with His Will.

The theory of Islamic knowledge stems from this constant cognitive framework since comprehensive science can only be perfected through acceptance of the intangible along with the concepts that constitute an objective perception of the appearance of things. Indeed, Allah's wisdom is revealed in all manifestations of life and the universe and brings out a fiducial cognitive view based on the belief that Allah holds in His hand supreme power over everything.

The Islamic culture views life and death as a trial of mankind by God. For this reason, the Islamic culture stresses the value and dignity of man as well as the value and essence of life. The Muslim individual views his life as having a positive value and other creatures as valuable and that the universe has been subjected by Allah to mankind.

Allah has created man with the most noble image, has honoured him and has shown him the two highways of good and evil. Therefore, man in his relationship with science is interactive, responsive and creative. Allah the Most-High has endowed him with the will for change and building. Accordingly, he tries on earth to solve the problems facing him while at the same time planning for the future. Man has a natural disposition for good deeds and for serving the cause of his life in this world and in the hereafter.

This conception of man differs greatly from the conception which prevailed during the Renaissance period in Europe and which limits the view to worldly life without giving any weight to the hereafter.

2. Fundamental Islamic values :

The Holy Quran has instituted a just and equitable moral and social order. For Islamic society to be faithful to its essence, it has to be based on the ethical values which, in accordance with Quranic guidance, may be summed up as "enjoining good and forbidding evil". Unlike other societies which do not concentrate on spiritual development, the Islamic society is based on the belief that strength is within the community". As stated in the Holy Hadith, "Allah's help goes to the community". This strength is itself founded on a set of moral values such as justice, truthfulness, faithfulness, altruism, and courage which all assume the meaning of mutual "help in what is good and pious", and are of a collective nature. A believer feels he is a member of a community whose destiny is tied to his own. Man should therefore seek to improve himself, to improve other people and to eliminate perversity from the earth. Ignoring collective responsibility may expose to bad consequences. Allah the Most-High has said : "*The righteous among My servants shall inherit the earth*" (Surah 21, Verse 105).

Muslims are brethren without any discrimination on the grounds of colour, sex or race. "*The noblest of you in Allah's sight is the most righteous of you*" (Surah 49, Verse 13).

As the life of mankind is the most sacred thing in the universe, the right to life has precedence over all other rights.

Similarly, honourable life requires participation in the cultural life of the community, appreciation of its arts, and participation in scientific endeavours and in reaping their fruit. The Holy Quran emphasizes freedom, equality and human dignity and forbids such dealings as may be detrimental to human dignity as well as all forms of injustice and oppression.

The Quran calls for the protection of the rights and freedoms it has secured for all people. This requires the sponsorship of an order that applies the Sharia provisions containing these rights and freedoms as well as their modes of implementation, so as to serve the spiritual and material interests. With progress, there may be a multitude of social schemes but they only assume an Islamic character if their social and moral principles are inspired by the Quran. Such an order cannot be closed in upon itself, but has to be

open to innovative ideas, to changes and developments that are beneficial to the community. Nonetheless, such openness can only continue on scientific bases and according to rational planning and innovative thinking.

On the whole, Islam is a religion of science and reason. It connects the faith of the believer to his scientific, moral, aesthetic, social and economic life. The Quran invites mankind to use their minds to explore the depths of their soul, to bring to light its hidden parts and to search into nature and history. Through this sound contemplation, the believer can perceive Allah's greatness and loftiness ; and realize that the world can be discovered and comprehended ; and that human experience does not necessarily need the expertise of scientists in various fields, to be assimilated, echoed and thoroughly perceived. Contemplation with science allows man to see, to understand, to judge and to love. While the first two terms are related to the cognitive experience, the third one is related to the ethical aspect and the fourth one to the aesthetic aspect. Though we may separate these terms for theoretical or scientific purposes, they are not autonomous. This is also true for the entire cultural life. Indeed, all these living experiences can be expressed in different cultural fields but have an organic linkage among them. This is why the Islamic culture is both rational and universal. Faith is linked to science ; science is close to ethics ; and ethics is mingled with nature. This is also why, in Islam, there are no such assertions as "faith without science" or "art without ethics".

In order to guarantee and preserve the continuation of this linkage, and to carry out such changes as may be necessary, openness to innovate things and new ideas is essential. Every creative move assumes an Islamic character when it agrees with Islamic principles. This, however, does not preclude critical examination of historical aspects.

Based on these Islamic concepts, the Islamic ethical order exceeds in loftiness, tolerance, compassion and justice all the prevailing moral orders in the world. Yet, this distinction does not allow Muslims to exert any pressure on those who do not share their belief as "*there shall be no compulsion in religion*" (Surah 2, Verse 256). Accordingly, no one will be denied one's cultural and religious rights. Allah, the Most High, has said : "*Say : 'People of the Book, let us come to an equitable agreement among us that we will*

worship none but Allah, that we will associate none with Him, and that we will not set up one another lords besides Him". (Surah 3, Verse 64).

"Ijtihad" in accordance with Sharia rules and with the norms laid down by scholars is the Islamic term for openness. "Ijtihad" or independent judgement is the basic principle governing Islamic thought and practice. Life is constantly changing and development is a prevalent and continuous process in some intellectual fields such as science and technology. Whenever there is a move, there is opposition and criticism waiting for it. There is no cultural innovation without "Ijtihad" ; and there is no social reform or internal challenge without it.

The Holy Quran prompts the believer to think and use his judgement. Indeed, the Quran in many verses, proscribes blind imitation and irrational dependence. The believer has to use his free will to change what is in his heart and in his social and physical environment. Allah, the Most-High, has said : *"verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves (with their own souls)."* (Surah Ra'd 13, Verse 11).

Since culture surrounds us, as Claude Lévi-Strauss put it, should be given the opportunity to lead us not to the clash of civilisations, but to fruitful coexistence and concord between civilisations on the basis of the unity of the human origin and the necessity of difference.

As for the unity of the human origin, stressed in the Holy Quran, it consists in the single origin of all humanity, which is Adam and Eve. *"O mankind! Reverance your Guardian-Lord, who created you from a single Person, created, of like nature, his mate, and from them twain scattered (like seeds) countless men and women"* (Nisaa 4, Verse 1), *"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female"* (Hujurat 49, Verse 13).

As for the necessity of difference, it emanates from the divine will. Difference, indeed, is a sign of the glory of Allah the Almighty : *"and among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours : verily in that are Signs for those who know"* (Rum 30, Verse 22). The purpose of this difference in colour and language is mutual acquaintance and dialogue : *" And made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other"* (Hujurat 49, Verse 13).

Allah could have made people into one nation, because when He intends a thing, He but says the word “Be”, and it is. This entails that we have to accept the other as he is, admit his difference and not force him to be similar to us “*Let there be no compulsion in religion*” (Baqara 2, Verse 256). He who chooses the path of guidance has to do so out of free will and choice, in accordance with a fundamental principle that is confirmed by the Holy Quran and represents the essence of Islamic discourse.

Actually, the Holy Quran reminds us of the truth of this divine will, in the following verse : “ *if it had been thy Lord’s Will, they would all have believed, -all who are on earth ! Wilt thou then compel mankind, against their will, to believe !*” (Yunus 10, Verse 99).

Hence, the mission of Prophet Muhammad, peace and prayers be upon him, consisted in conveying the message, leaving the reckoning to the Creator and Owner of mankind : “*thy duty is to make (the Message) reach them : it is Our part to call them to account*” (Ra’d 13, Verse 40).

In this respect, the Holy Quran mentions an important point as regards the issue of openness to and dialogue with the others, as it stresses that human diversity in terms of form, race, culture and faith is an expression of divine wisdom. In fact, Allah the Almighty says : “*If thy Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one People*” (Hud 11, Verse 118). He also says : “*And did not God check one set of people by means of another, the earth would indeed be full of mischief: but God is full of bounty to all the worlds*” (Baqara 2, Verse 251).

Therefore, the Arab Islamic civilisation accepts and appreciates the other civilisations, since Islam respects all cultures, nations and traditions. The Islamic conquests and the wide propagation of the new religion in the ancient world enhanced the openness of the Islamic civilisation to the other civilisations.

Islam encourages coexistence with other religions and cultures. The message of Islam is identical to all revealed messages as it has come to confirm and complete them as the concluding message.

This religious openness and the spirit of dialogue have always had positive effects on Islamic culture which has in turn left the doors open to many human and cultural accomplishments on which it has drawn a great deal. The Islamic culture has proved its immense its ability to assimilate and incorporate a large number of alien cultural elements without forsaking any of its basic principles.

The situation, however, has changed nowadays. Muslims have added nothing significant to their cultural heritage for various historical reasons. As a result, contemporary Islamic culture has lost some of its integrative power and is no longer strong enough in a world dominated by competition.

Nor is it possible for any culture nowadays to live in isolation. Cultural plurality and interconnections have become a well-established fact. This does not mean that the Muslim has to remain open to all types of cultural influences without exception and without selection. We may use intercultural relations as a means of boosting up creativity as was the case in the past, but these relations may also lead to a cultural crisis or even to cultural schizophrenia. For this reason, it is necessary to put an end to copying alien cultures without careful consideration, and to adopt a selective approach to such cultures at least at the present junctures.

This problem assumes greater significance when we consider the cultural needs of the large Muslim communities living outside the Muslim world or in its occupied areas. Expatriate Muslims consist of various categories. Some of them live in countries which had been part of the Muslim world ; some have emigrated in quest of employment or better education or for political reasons. They number hundreds of millions at present, and while some of the countries where they live respect their Islamic culture, others are hostile to it. Each case, therefore, requires a different approach and different programmes of cultural action. The so-called second and third generations of immigrants are still faced with acute moral and spiritual problems. Some of them are living in the mire of a cultural dilemma for they can neither preserve their cultural values nor feel at ease with the culture of the society in which they live.

This problem can only be solved through detailed comparative cultural studies and a new type of education which takes into account the diverse

religious and cultural conditions. Moreover, one of the most important means to enhance research would be to focus not on borrowing and imitation, but rather on creativity and on linking research topics with the special national needs. Research is actually enhanced through fostering qualitative, analytical and critical thinking, instead of the descriptive and quantitative thinking. It would also be beneficial to deal with the new world order from a position that allows us to derive benefit from computer revolutions, provided the starting point is the training of children in acquiring these competencies and talents from the early educational stages. Besides, no further progress in higher education and scientific research can be achieved in the absence of both the freedom of thought and expression and competitiveness in production. In this respect, allowing intellectuals to set up their own non-governmental federations, unions and associations and encouraging prospective studies represent one of the most crucial requirements of culture enhancement. The culture sought understands well its future on the basis of its present reality and its openness to the future. The Islamic Ummah, in looking forward to the future, cannot ignore the reality of societies living in the age of modernism and postmodernism. Nonetheless, cultural awareness should, above all, concentrate on the contemporary problems with a view to understanding their essence and solving them efficiently.

As regards cultural problems in relation to non-Muslims living in the Muslim world, a number of points should be noted. These include the fact that non-Muslim minorities do not seem to meet with any major cultural problems in most Muslim countries. These minorities have traditionally preserved their cultural identity through various means which have become well-established with the passage of time. Yet, we must, here again, reconsider intercultural relations given the fact that work conditions, information media and other social activities have started to bring communities closer and closer together. Therefore, cultural education in its broad acceptance, which includes moral as well as religious education, should draw up plans and projects in light of the afore-mentioned phenomena.

The Muslim world must not let school and Fiqh differences prevail and impede cooperation and joint action as long as there is agreement on adherence to constances and fundamentals.

Nevertheless, the acceptance of differences as historical facts does not mean leaving them unresolved. Time has come to exert an intellectual effort aimed at understanding existing differences among the various Islamic schools. Thanks to the innovation which has occurred in the field of learning and methodology, a detailed critical and analytical study of Islamic history may lead to the solution of many problems. Naturally, this will not resolve all the problems of the Muslim Ummah but may, as a new outlook, help to study old problems in a new light and to rid the Muslim Ummah of problems with which it has become overburdened.

States in the Muslim world are in a position to render a great service in this respect, particularly in the field of education. Islamic solidarity which should be the focus of attention of all States in the Muslim world has been built on fundamental and eternal Islamic principles not on differences. The importance of such a service is all the greater because the official educational curricula in this century in a number of countries have listed among their priorities thorny problems and differences for political, nationalistic, ethnic and similar reasons, thus encouraging dissension. This policy has always enjoyed the support of those whose historical objectives have undergone little change through the ages and whose motto is "divide and rule".

The Muslim countries still do not know one another and a great deal of the information available about Muslim countries is taken from foreign sources whose scholarly and orthodox value is limited. In addition to that, the large amounts of cultural and computer terms transferred through the global communication channels are carried through means, modes or bodies that are not necessarily consistent with the cultural expectations of the Islamic world. "Cultural weakness" in the Islamic cultural system can favour international cultural inputs to the detriment of Islamic culture.

The second major service that the States in the Muslim world are able to render at least for the time being is to take Islamic issues away from daily politics. Muslims have suffered because of the linkage between particular issues - which have been and still are short-sighted and local issues - with the issues of the Muslim Ummah.

Language tuition has become an important science in comparative and comprehensive intercultural programmes. Language is the source and vehicle of culture. It is not only a passage-way to a given culture but also a factor that has a dominant influence over the mind and conscience.

There is no doubt that the Arabic language has a major role to play in understanding, teaching and disseminating the Islamic cultural heritage. The Muslim countries should seek to learn the languages of the Muslim peoples. They should also pay attention to major Western languages. Muslim scholars assume an essential duty in using these languages as a means to convey Islamic culture to the world as a whole.

The diversity of languages and the sound cultural accomplishments expressed by them are for the Muslim one of Allah's signs. Expressing Islamic cultural values with as many languages as possible should be considered as the result of Islam's global nature.

3. The challenges :

The Islamic culture has been faced, at the beginning of the third millennium, with many difficult challenges both internally and externally. Within the Muslim world, we are witnessing a number of challenges among which backwardness with its intellectual, economic and other forms, segregation, departure from Islam's teachings on the individual and society, the absence of intellectual vitality, the emergence of narrow nationalistic policies and the resurgence of ethnic and tribal feuds. The efforts aimed at reviving pre-Islamic cultural elements which had almost fallen into oblivion, have had a negative effect on Islamic culture in the recent past and at the present moment. There have been attempts in some parts of the Muslim world at reducing Islamic culture in terms of narrow and separate local cultures which is contrary to the spirit of Islam.

These attempts have met with a great deal of support from external circles which have rejoiced to the application of the policy of "divide and rule" in all parts of the Muslim world. Such Muslims have fallen victim to this policy which would not hear about the existence of a Muslim world let alone an Islamic culture or a recognized Islamic culture.

The crisis of culture in the Islamic world lies in the gap and lack of harmony between cultural infrastructure and the era's specificities as well as in the failure of culture to defend itself against the different dangers of foreign influences. As present age civilization, and hence culture, are somehow different from the previous civilisations and cultures, future society is full of changes and challenges based on "knowledge explosion", "technological revolution", in addition to the computer or communication revolution that has imposed high speed on global culture, abundance and interconnection of information and elimination of dimensions. This revolution has entrusted future with the strongest cultures that possess communication means. This has created what might be called "the future's shock", and Islamic culture has to face and deal with all that by means of a persistent cultural dialogue.

The effects of this shock constitute not only serious challenges to culture, but also dangers threatening the deep essence of the Ummah. It is a kind of complete cultural hegemony and intellectual subordination to the stronger. Because Islamic countries have not managed yet to benefit from these knowledge, technological and communicational revolutions, they are increasingly lagging behind and dependent. This has led to what must be called the search for cultural security, because inaction threatens the cultural and civilizational identity of the Islamic Ummah. Some of these dangers lie in imposing the values of consumption, transforming our societies into mere unproductive consumers, standardising cultural activities in such a way that they become underdeveloped marginal entities, and imposing the single, developed and technological cultural paradigm. This shears identity of its basic elements and behaviour of its reference values, prevents cultural identity from creativity and development, and ends up destroying it. This implicitly means that the social and natural environments disintegrate and deteriorate to blend with the new imposed dependency.

Indications and results of prospective studies show that the 21st century will be the century of dialogue and partnership. Isolated and reclusive nations cannot survive and cannot keep abreast of new developments unless they become open to the others and realize their strong and weak points. Therefore, admitting the principle of cultural diversity becomes a basic

framework of cooperation, action and partnership between Islamic countries in accordance with UNESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity and the Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity and of improving better understanding between the different nations and civilisations. One of the major challenges facing Muslims today is the modernisation of culture so that it becomes a mainstay of the process of modernisation and a beacon for freedom and the mind, especially that modernisation, belief in diversity and openness to the other are the fate of the present age. In our Islamic heritage, there is a great amount of principles that underline this. Today, there is a close relationship between dialogue and the concept of cultural diversity. Actually, constructive cultural cooperation or true dialogue between cultures and civilisations is inconceivable in light of the present international changes unless the principle of cultural diversity is recognised.

Accordingly, cultural diversity as a system of the founding principles and values of a multipolar world becomes a framework of joint Islamic action, a main source of cultural creativity, a means to support development and derive benefit from the universal cultural heritage and a tool to further support effective cooperation between the different peoples.

The true characteristics of cultural diversity lie in surmounting the negative aspects of the past and the tensions of the present, providing a solid basis of cooperation for sustainable development and establishing a positive atmosphere that allows consolidating diversity and shifting dialogue from the dualistic perception linked to the clash of civilisations (the West-Islam) to a positive and pluralistic perception open to the richness and diversity of the Islamic cultural heritage. The latter, in fact, harbours the factors of interaction, complementarity and cooperation.

External challenges have been and still are difficult to confront. Technological and scientific progress - for instance - is forging ahead leaving in its trail a multitude of problems mostly cultural and of a global nature. While trail old positivist philosophy has now passed away, the philosophy calling for the removal of the sacred character of almost everything is still alive and opposes virtually all the symbols of cultural distinction.

There is no doubt that the primary objective of technological and scientific developments is to improve the quality and esthetic framework of life. If this is the case, the result of any human action can only stem from disciplined moral incentives. Nevertheless, a number of responsible scientists are today unhappy about the way our science and technology are advancing.

The Islamic countries need more science and technology, and hence has to develop a broad concept of learning and lay down an Islamic policy which can present the Islamic principals through science and technology. This is urgently needed especially in the area of social sciences where assumptions and theories are legion and, though allegedly scientific, have prejudicial effects on such fundamental concepts as man, society, history and international policies and relations. In fact, the idea of development and progress in general needs to be thoroughly analyzed and appraised from an Islamic standpoint. It seems that the modern concept of economic development for instance attaches little importance to moral and spiritual aspects in the life of man.

Such moral values as honest work and legitimate profit, and their opposites such as the dissipation of wealth, profligacy, and monetary and commercial practices based on deceit are hardly mentioned in the field of economic activities. Most unfortunately, life in the entire Muslim world is exposed to the effects of this type of development which may result in material comfort for some, but makes man him lose his happiness and contentedness. Islamic culture cannot free itself from this idea of development and from practice without a new scientific view of progress impregnated with the lofty principles and values of Islam. Naturally, for this purpose, it is essential to lay down an effective cultural policy.

If we compare the information and communication centres in the materially developed countries with those of the Muslim world, we find that the latter are sub-standard and ineffective in terms of both the sources and the resources. It is regrettable that Muslims living abroad do not always have the opportunity to inform public opinion -even within their own communities- about Islamic cultural concepts in the world.

A number of Muslim and non-Muslim thinkers have realised the leading role that Muslims in the West might play in the inter-civilisational dialogue. They can indeed hold an actual dialogue in western societies between their own Islamic heritage and the other western heritages, especially as inter-civilisational dialogue should be a dialogue within and between human societies. Dialogue should be based on mutual respect, since its objective does not consist in eliminating differences between human beings, but rather preserving and celebrating them as a source of joy and strength.

These new universal values we are in need of represent a framework of joint values and confirm the belief that the different cultural traditions can coexist without wars that waste so much needed human potential and respect all cultural specificities and inherited sanctities.

Accordingly, people should be able to follow their heritage and to have enough freedom to exchange ideas and learning. This is confirmed by the Holy Quran in the following verse : *“O mankind ! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other). Verily, the most honoured of you in the sight of God is the most righteous of you”* (Hujurat 49, Verse 13). The one-sided view of globalisation threatens diversity and gives rise to challenges that favour the logic of economic power. All the above challenges take on numerous political dimensions and entail many results. Foreign assistance and loans as well as the sales of industrial and military products and programme are carried out on condition that the countries in need of assistance accept the values and policies of the rich countries.

Among the causes explaining the fact that small cultural differences, which were not major historical issues in the Islamic world but have grown into factors of division and political instability are the policies pursued by the enemies of the Muslim Ummah to encourage political disintegration. Such issues cannot be ignored within the framework of a comprehensive strategy and action plan in the cultural field.

In fact, all these internal and external challenges and their repercussions require reconsidering the whole Islamic cultural situation, endowing it with the necessary dynamism and liveliness and enabling it to keep abreast of the new global developments. If we take account of all this, we will realise that we can overcome our crisis –i.e. the crisis of culture in the Islamic world– only through a comprehensive progressive Islamic project with economic, social, political, educational and cultural dimensions, which recognises cultural difference with the other and considers it a motivation for creativity and renewal. This project also endeavours to consolidate the option of Shura (mutual consultation) and democracy, elevates man’s position and dignity and protects his rights, deals with the streams of global civilisation in an open spirit, is basically founded on the ability to exercise self-criticism, reproduce knowledge on the basis of present facts, limit the adverse effects of globalisation, make good use of new information technologies as well as of the World Wide Web, enhance dialogue and respect cultural diversity.

Chapter IV

Fields of action of Islamic culture

The tasks assumed by the Islamic culture form the underlying element which defines its fields of action and channels of activity through a clear understanding of its role in developing Muslim individuals, evolving a Muslim society, ensuring cultural security based on belonging to the same religion and the Islamic civilisation that encompasses all Islamic peoples, and establishing a proper climate conducive to the laying of solid foundations for thought, intellect and culture at all levels and on Islamic grounds.

Drawing up the general layout of the fields of the action for the Islamic culture should start with the definition of the basic concepts which form the core of the Islamic culture and determine the roles it assumes within the framework of the promotion of the Islamic society in accordance with the principal options, concepts and values of Islam.

The Islamic culture has evolved around man as a pivot, a means and objective, and aimed basically at the promotion of mankind in such a way as it may interact with Islamic guidance, and geared towards populating earth in the Quranic sense which advocates worshipping Allah as the main quest of man through life. Hence and proceeding from these convictions and belief, man's vital activities are considered to form the cornerstone of the psychological, spiritual, intellectual and cultural edifice founded on the Islamic culture. Dependence, therefore, on intellectual contribution with its multiple levels and facets forms the major starting point for the various fields of activity of Islamic culture, encompassing all issues which concern the human mind, through a comprehensive Islamic vision regarding the role of intellect, whether culturally, educationally, economically, politically, socially, legally, philosophically, or Fiqh-wise, urging man to be attentive to issues related to the life of individuals and communities, to address their concerns and seek solutions for the problems facing the Islamic society.

Through proper assimilation of the issues of concern to the Islamic societies in all these fields and based on Islamic enlightened awareness of the nature of the tasks entrusted to those active in these fields of learning, and through cognizance of the general problems which impede the

developmental progress of the Islamic world in these fields, in such a general, intertwined and integrated structure, Islamic cultural activity moves on to the direction which best serves the general goals convergent with the objectives sought by all nations in the Islamic world, and with the aspirations of all Islamic communities throughout the world, in as much as any cultural activity within the Islamic concept of culture, in its wide and comprehensive meaning, is bound to contribute in one way or another to the developmental efforts which enhance the promotion of societies in all fields.

Whereas the fields of cultural activity in general encompass all human activity without any exception, the Islamic culture is not confined to meeting the requisites of such activity, and is not meant to overlook any specific field for the benefit of another. Its effect should cover all these domains and encompass all the cultural fields that are recognized as proper fields for cultural activity, with one single and fundamental difference, that all the concepts on which Islamic cultural action is based and the objectives it seeks to achieve bear the hallmark of the Islamic culture.

In view of the dimensions characterising the present world and the cooperation and partnership relations linking the Islamic Ummah to the other nations in a world where borders are open, barriers are dismantled and opportunities for the flow of information, goods and culture are offered, the Islamic Ummah is invited to engage in dialogue and cooperation with all nations, cultures and civilisations. The only way to achieve this is through adopting partnership and cooperation as the optimum means to implement projects and programmes that serve the interests of all parties and humanity at large, regardless of the partial differences, relative disparities and personal particularities. Dialogue, indeed, is the evidence of cultures' liveliness. Since Islamic culture is based on this principle, it confirms to the world that it is a live culture.

With this in mind, the fields of action of the Islamic culture would all lead up to one common goal which is to generate incentives conducive to the achievement of an appropriate and reasonable level of cultural unity amongst Muslims based on a determined will to uphold the values, principles and ethics which form a set of fixed spiritual, cultural and civilizational components as a common denominator for the members of our single Islamic Ummah in all corners of the earth. This also forms the firm

foundation on which are created Islamic cooperation and joint action in all fields, and in particular, with regard to cultural Islamic action which constitutes the backbone of the new Islamic society guided by Islam, its tolerance, its accessibility, and flexibility.

Thus, the fields of Islamic cultural action may evolve around the following areas :

1. Intellectual production

1. Conducting research and studies dealing with issues crucial to the Islamic world in the fields of politics, history, fiqh, law, philosophy, sociology and economics.
2. Translation of foreign researches of special interest and focused on issues of the Islamic world, in addition to the publication and wide circulation of comments, reviews and replies thereon.
3. Educating people about the importance of purging intellectual Islamic productions from any misconceptions, whether through academic institutions or through the media.

2. The Arabic language and other Islamic languages:

1. Dissemination of the language of the Quran and its teaching to speakers and non-speakers of Arabic and providing the necessary material and human resources for that purpose, as well as the rehabilitation of Quranic schools and the provision of adequate support to them.
2. Inclusion of the teaching of Arabic at all levels of education in the Islamic countries and for the Islamic communities abroad.
3. Promotion of the Arabic language and development of scientific and technical terminology and its adaptation to the requirements of the modern media.
4. Insisting on the use of the standardized Quranic script in the writing of the languages of the Islamic peoples.

5. Preparing common dictionaries for the languages of the Islamic world.
6. Translation of the main Islamic books in the various languages of the Islamic peoples.
7. Establishing awards for writings in Arabic in the non-Arabic speaking Islamic countries, as an incentive for the dissemination of the language of the Quran.
8. Promotion of coordination between linguistic academies.
- 9. Elaborating a precise plan to translate the major parts of world heritage into Arabic and the languages of Islamic peoples, and to translate Islamic intellectual and cultural heritage into the most common languages with a view to extending its audience and benefiting from it.**

3. Literature and the humanities :

1. Promotion of research on the current situation of the Islamic thought and the study of difficulties facing it and the planning for its development and crystallization.
2. Reviewing from an Islamic viewpoint the human and social sciences, arts and literature and elaborating reference books on these subjects.
3. Encouraging research on Islamic economics and promoting the establishment of appropriate formulas for the building of an economic and social system drawn on the principles of the noble Islamic Sharia.
4. Establishing a system for annual stock taking of all intellectual works in all Islamic countries covering the various fields of history, fiqh, law, philosophy, as well as social, economic and political sciences.
5. Promoting publication all over the Islamic world and facilitating contacts between publishers and regulating their mutual dealings.
6. Encouraging studies which emphasize Islam's moderation, reject violence, terrorism and extremism, and highlight the situation of the

Islamic world as an extensive field which has the necessary requisites for the emergence of a major influential bloc in the field of international development, and ensuring wide dissemination of such studies.

7. Promoting production of literature for children, its dissemination and translation into the languages of the Islamic peoples.

4. Information and the means of communication :

1. Rationalization of the media in a way that accommodates Islamic beliefs and making use of them for the dissemination of the Islamic culture.
2. Considering Islamic information as one of the means of education to increase the Muslims' awareness of their culture, over the Islamic world.
3. Boosting technological potential in the field of Islamic information production and dissemination.
4. Working towards increasing the production of information material as well as collecting and disseminating it so that Islamic countries may present alternative programmes capable of limiting the negative impacts of the content of foreign media flow.
5. Promoting skills and competencies in the fields of information and communication through the establishment of higher studies and provision of training opportunities.
6. Guaranteeing the provision of all possible means for OIC Islamic information institutions so that they may carry out the tasks assigned to them in the field of Islamic information.
7. Promoting and developing cultural industries in view of their important role in enhancing people's education and consolidating their sense of being.
8. Disseminating computer culture and fostering the production of websites introducing Islamic culture and civilisation.

9. Establishing specialised institutes for the training of technicians and executives needed in cultural industries.
10. Encouraging the conclusion of free trade agreements between Islamic countries and fostering the exchange, transfer and circulation of cultural industries.

5. Education and instruction :

1. To review the educational programmes so as to include the teaching of the Islamic culture at all levels of education and to act for the unification of these programmes not losing sight of local features.
2. To define the guidelines of fundamental education and to spread it.
3. To develop educational and instructional equipment so as to keep abreast with current educational trends and ensure adaptation to the developed production infrastructure and any new developments in life styles.
4. To implement the system of equivalence of diplomas between universities and institutes in the Islamic countries.
5. To ensure widespread setting up of libraries, provide them with up-to-date books, references and major Islamic writings in all fields, and equip them with modern technical equipment and instruments.
6. To promote the exchange of students and teachers amongst the universities in the Islamic countries ; to hold meetings and organize camps that would provide opportunities for mutual acquaintance and exchange of views regarding decisive Islamic issues.
7. To institute merit awards for creative Muslim youth in the fields of education and culture so as to increase their enthusiasm and encourage them to be more creative and resourceful.

6. Contributions of the Mosque and the training of Imams to the dissemination of Islamic culture :

In consideration of the fact that any sound, integrated preparation of the Muslim should build on marshalling together all psychological and instinctive drives underlying genuine Islamic faith, and on account of the outstanding role played by the Mosque in promoting Islamic good demenour and spreading good values far and wide, any attendance to the Mosque intended to be comprehensive shall ensure the following :

1. Rehabilitate the Mosque through renovation of its integrated role consisting of the dissemination of Islamic culture, propagation of such Islamic virtues as unity, solidarity and collaboration, and fostering religious education and society.
2. Train competent Imams able to publicize Islamic culture through authorized channels like the Friday Sermon and such other original religious ceremonies.
3. Provide the mosques with diverse Islamic books pending the setting up of public-reading libraries attached to each mosque.
4. Encourage revival of the Mosque's education system and capitalize on the cost-effective learning opportunities offered by the mosque with a view to lightening government's burden.

7. Role of the Muslim family in the dissemination of Islamic culture :

The Muslim family, if committed to the Islamic values and rules of conduct could extend unvaluable contribution to the dissemination of Islamic culture and preparation of a generation imbued with a strong sense of attachment to the Islamic culture. Therefore, attendance to the Muslim family should take the following steps :

1. Gear the media towards further coverage of the Muslim family's issues in order to create proper conditions for discharging as effectively as possible the mission consisting of preparing generations imbued with the Islamic culture.

2. Bring into forms the concept of "Productive Family", and impart its virtues to the Muslim family as part of efforts intended to realize societal and environmental comprehensive development in the service of the dissemination of Islamic culture.

8. Importance of the culture of the Muslim child :

1. Allot greater importance to the Muslim child cultural means : books, audiovisual and written journalism, fora, camps, and diverse cultural competitions.
2. Promote children literature on both levels of writing and innovation and incite to inspiration from the Islamic cultural and literary heritage.
3. Make available to the Muslim child succinct Islamic study courses through information means and educational curricula with a view to promoting his attachment to the Islamic cultural sources.
4. Develop entertainment tools inspired from the Islamic educative system with all its ethical and cultural implications.

9. Scientific research :

1. To coordinate programmes of scientific research between universities, institutes and research institutions and ensure complementarity of their programmes.
2. To exchange experience and ensure mutual benefit from possibilities offered by scientific development.
3. To encourage teachers and researchers to spend their sabbaticals in Islamic universities and research centres.
4. To establish high level technological universities of international standard ; to host/ select successful youth, provided with the necessary material and human resources for these universities to carry out their natural role in the field of Islamic scientific research.

5. To coordinate in the fields of specialization between universities and institutes at the level of each state individually as well as at the level of the Islamic world, and to ensure complementarity between them, in this field.
6. To set up new bodies that would ensure adaptation of scientific research to the requirements of the production machinery in the various Islamic countries.
7. To prepare records and directories for the benefit of Muslim scientists and researchers in all fields of scientific research.
8. To prepare repertories of higher educational institutions and of the fields of specialization they offer as well as the scientific facilities available to them at the level of each state.
9. To provide material incentives in the form of international prizes at the level of the Islamic world, to be granted in the various fields of science and literature to eminent and outstanding figures, in the field of high level research.
10. To make allowance for the provision of material and human resources for the promotion of translation and publication of highly specialized scientific books in accordance with the requirements of integrated development in the Islamic world.

10. The Islamic heritage :

1. To highlight the basic constituents of the Islamic culture and define the concept of the Islamic heritage.
2. To pay attention to the Islamic heritage at the level of each state and at the level of the Islamic world in general, and to educate generations in respecting cultural plurality, positive cultural diversity, civilisational interaction and joint cooperation.
3. To propagate awareness of the Islamic heritage amongst Muslims so as to protect, safeguard, preserve and rehabilitate it through research, publication and popularization.

4. To elaborate standardized criteria for the codification and classification of cultural assets.
5. To accord a special interest to Al-Quds and Palestine through such activities as :
 - a- drawing up a complete list of monuments and sites in Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the rest of Palestine.
 - b- Drawing up a list of destroyed or decrepit monuments.
 - c- Fixing a schedule for repairing, restoring and preserving monuments of Islamic character in Palestine.
6. To publish collated major reference books on Islamic heritage.
7. To publish integral and abridged editions of the major works of Islamic culture and to have them translated into various languages of the Islamic peoples.
8. To extend material and human assistance to specialized centres for manuscripts so as to ensure their documentation, preservation and publication.

11. The patrimony of Palestine and its culture :

All possible and available means should be exploited to safeguard the cultural identity of the Palestinian people in the face of the Israeli onslaughts and the constant machinations to obliterate this identity and weaken the Palestinian question which should be emphasized as a focal issue of the Islamic world. It should be given the highest order of priority so that the Palestinian people may be enabled to safeguard their patrimony, their culture, their arts and their identity, through the intensification of Member States programmes in the cultural, educational and scientific fields. All possible assistance and support should be given to the Palestinian institutions involved in these fields so that they may cater for their legitimate hopes and aspirations as regards the establishment of the independent Palestinian State.

This is in addition to the following important priorities :

- a- Prepare an encyclopedia compiling the Islamic monuments and landmarks in Al Quds Al Sharif and other regions of Palestine, through an overall inventory of all buildings and sites ;
- b- Make an inventory of all buildings that were destroyed or are exposed to destruction ;
- c- Determine a schedule for the restoration of these buildings and take all measures needed to maintain them and safeguard the Islamic character of Palestine in general.

12. Arts and crafts :

1. To take care of the Islamic heritage in arts and crafts and to preserve its authenticity and evolve new customs which may enable Islamic arts to participate in promoting and improving the quality of life.
2. To revive old-standing illustrations of creativity, as a living heritage, and to include them in development plans together with devising solutions for the issues faced in terms of rehabilitation, training, production and marketing.
3. To define the present situation of skilled craftsmen and find out the problems and constraints affecting them.
4. To establish a communication network between institutions, agencies and organisms concerned with the preservation, development and promotion of technical and craftsmanship inventions.
5. To provide incentives to those who are taking care of art culture in the Islamic countries.
6. To adopt the necessary measures to claim the return of cultural assets which were misappropriated from the Islamic countries during foreign colonization.

13. Folk culture :

1. To consolidate the cultural structure in such a way as to allow for social, economic and intellectual evolution in the light of Islamic concepts.
2. To establish the right to education for all and set up a comprehensive schedule to combat illiteracy at the level of each state and at the level of the Islamic world.
3. To institute an educational press and promote the usage of audio-visual aids in combatting illiteracy and facilitate the educational integration of a large number of people.
4. To orientate the audio-visual media and innocent entertaining media in such a way that leisure time may be transformed into a real opportunity to educate the individual, train him and improve his capacity to develop within his own habitation.
5. To coordinate the efforts of the Islamic countries regarding issues related to emigrants in non-Islamic countries.
6. To institute Islamic missions and ties that may provide Muslims with the possibility to learn the precepts of their faith and the language of the Quran, and to complete their learning in terms of the Islamic civilization and their knowledge about the issues of Muslims and coordination amongst them.
7. To elaborate cultural plans for children and the youth, which are in line with the values of the noble Islamic faith and consolidate the culture of human rights and education to tolerance.
8. To work out plans to educate women and integrate them in the different fields of life so that they may contribute to the comprehensive development of society.
9. To urge production establishments to take interest in the cultural awareness of their workers and to make it possible for them to adapt to the developments taking place around them within a developing

cultural and educational environment based on the sound Islamic values.

14. Cultural exchange and dialogue :

1. To set up local structures in each state in order to increase the level of assimilation of the cultures of the different Islamic countries and understand their specific circumstances, and to provide them with the necessary tools and equipment for that purpose.
2. To create coordination structures between active institutions at the level of the Islamic world in all social and cultural fields.
3. To enhance links and contacts with Islamic researchers abroad and benefit from their experience.
4. To establish dialogue with non-Muslim scientists, thinkers and researchers involved in areas of interest to the Islamic world.
5. To promote the exchange of scientists, researchers and men of letters from Islamic and other states.
6. To coordinate action of cultural institutions within individual states and establish cooperation between the Islamic states on the one hand, and between these and the rest of the world on the other.
7. To encourage inter-Islamic-state tourism and develop means of communication between them, especially at the level of youth, bearing in mind Islamic principles.
8. To introduce special prices for services and materials considered essential for cultural exchange (postal services and telecommunications).
9. To introduce new financial subsidies for the transfer of cultural material linked to people or to commodities.
10. To approve customs exemptions for commodities and cultural services in compliance with relevant international commitments.

11. To organize exhibitions for culture, arts and crafts at the level of the Islamic countries and specialized Islamic institutions.
12. To organize travelling exhibitions for books, commodities and art products.
13. To improve legal and institutional procedures to guarantee copyrights to authorship, publication, translation, creativity and invention at the level of the Islamic world.
14. To introduce special regulations concerning authors and publishers' rights to be adopted by the Islamic countries.
15. To highlight the magnanimous values of our religion and its respect for communities professing other religions as well as its encouragement of independent judgement, honouring of the mind, glorification of science and rejection of ignorance and fanaticism.

15. Islamic communities and groups abroad :

1. To conduct a general census of **Muslims** abroad and find out about their problems from their different social, economic, professional, cultural and political aspects.
2. To establish comprehensive lists of cultural institutions and a database of Muslim competencies abroad according to the orientations and contents of the strategy for benefiting from expatriate brains in the West and its executive plan.
3. To extend assistance to Islamic cultural centres, associations and institutions outside the Islamic world within the framework of the strategy for Islamic cultural action in the West and its executive plan.
4. To set up new bodies to facilitate cultural exchange with Muslims abroad.
5. To establish an observatory of cultural streams in the West with a view to monitoring smear campaigns against Islam and Islamic civilisation, following up the most important publications and cultural productions related to Islam as a religion, civilisation and

culture, and coordinating with the different cultural organisations and institutions active in this field.

16. Need for coordinating cultural activities :

The Islamic culture which underlines the Islamic world's unity of thought, which is based on immutable principles, and whose foremost objective is the development of the Islamic countries and the promotion of their people, intellectually, culturally, scientifically, as well as at the level of literature, art and civilization, is facing major hurdles in its progress. Consequently, there is a need to accord considerable interest to the coordination of the activity of cultural establishments in the Islamic world. This includes the coordination of the activities of cultural institutions within the same country as well as at the regional levels where there is a similarity in working conditions. Such coordination is further to include the entire Islamic world whether within the framework of cultural cooperation amongst the Islamic countries themselves or between them and the outside world. This is indeed called for in view of the importance of collective action which is so helpful in overcoming difficulties and challenges and combatting the dangers which threaten the Islamic world and which make distinction between one country and another or one party and another.

And since the coordination of interaction policy forms the backbone of joint cooperation amongst the Islamic countries in the cultural field, cultural resolutions whose effect transcends national, regional or continental boundaries should be preceded by such fool-proof coordination, considering that the general trend of human culture today is directed towards forming groups and opting for flexible approaches conducive to greater benefits and interests.

17. Preparing the climate for cultural action :

Undoubtedly, the most important of these fields of action for Islamic culture, in the light of these general concepts, and on the basis of these crucial points, are to be found in schools and institutes, research centres and institutions, the media and its means and approaches, communication, with

its various methods, the art of oration and expression with so many intertwined trends, fields and perspectives.

Seeking efficiency in these noble fields of action requires first and foremost efforts to be made in reaching a consensus on the definition of the Islamic concept of learning, its moral dimensions, its sources and its implementation, as well as the classification of modern sciences within the framework of Islamic ethics, in addition to ensuring a tighter relation between science, technology and Islamic cultural development on the basis of a clear understanding of the Islamic view of science, technology and their use, as well as an adequate understanding of the adaptability of Islamic culture to science while focusing on giving prominence to the effect of Islamic ethics and to the way they offer incessant protection against scientific abuse which may take place if the Sharia constraints are disregarded, and if human values are not kept alive in the face of technological pitfalls.

Other fields of Islamic cultural action come within the fold of this general framework, such as the relation between the Islamic culture and information and communication through the formulation and management of Islamic information, as well as the stand of Islamic culture vis-à-vis the modern arts of information and the means provided by the Islamic culture to face up to the challenges imposed on Islamic societies by modern communication arts. In addition, there is the quest for the optional way to place modern means of communication in the service of Islamic Da'wa and the question of how to harness these developed means for the enhancement of cultural exchanges in support of Islamic solidarity which forms the ultimate objective of any international Islamic cultural activity.

Unless the activities encompassed by the above-mentioned fields of activity are based on a clear and sound Islamic concept, they would fail to attain their objectives. This calls for Islamic cultural action in a field of crucial importance, namely that of clarifying the basic concepts concerning the issues and questions dealt with, such as the Islamic view of heritage, and the clarification of the Islamic cultural features and merits which place Islamic culture at a unique and lofty level amongst other cultures, through the undertaking of scientific studies to highlight these features and merits in

accordance with the Quranic approach, in reiteration of the excellence of Islamic culture.

Such vital activities spread over several fields constantly remind one of the fact that culture is one of the prime elements of planning in all Islamic countries, with due consideration to the need to provide cultural action with a flexible system of rules and regulations and to encourage those in charge of culture, since culture in any country forms a considerable national resource and is one of the most potent means of development of the individual or the masses.

The Islamic culture which is scientific, humanitarian, guided by the teachings of Islam and enlightened by its principles, and which urges man to seek knowledge and use rational thinking in trying to solve problems related to nature and reality, follows a method of scientific planning in carrying out the tasks assigned to it. Indeed, its only criterion to determine its fields of action lies in the study of the needs of the Islamic communities to meet their objectives.

And as the Islamic world suffers from shortages and deficiencies in several fields, Islamic cultural action is expected to play a role which should encompass all possible fields for cultural action as such.

Such comprehensive action programmes are aimed at achieving independence from foreign cultural hegemony. They are meant, in the first place, to confront the dangers facing the Islamic cultural identity, while focussing a similar attention on the preservation and the scientific consolidation of the Islamic culture against cultural conquest and plundering originating from whatever quarter and under whatever banner.

Such fundamental principles form scientific criteria giving access to the various fields of Islamic cultural action. They form a sound basis for the roles to be played by the Islamic culture and an essential introduction to general cultural action spread over the conventional fields of all kinds of cultural action irrespective of its motives and objectives. Hence, the general perspective for cultural activity, based on an Islamic perspective and these pivotal themes, has a double objective :

a- Self-protection, consolidating of the identity and sense of belonging, and advocating the undertaking of action conducive to satisfying Allah, in the first place, and to the good of the Islamic society.

b- Confronting the intellectual and cultural dangers facing Muslims from any quarter on whatever grounds, and of whatever magnitude and foiling them through rational thinking, firm resolve and collective action, so as to protect the supreme interests of the Muslim Ummah and safeguard the cultural independence and intellectual security of the Islamic countries.

On these grounds, any field of action which may serve either of these two objectives or both at the same time, should be given prominence in the field of Islamic cultural action, and is to be considered by all Islamic, scientific or pragmatic criteria, a vital field of action worthy of every effort and every available resource, in a manner that would lead to the fulfilment of the Islamic goals, sought by Islamic cultural action. The fields of action of the Islamic culture provide an appropriate climate for a civilized and meritorious practice leading to the right direction which will meet the requirements needed for a comprehensive development of culture of which the first and last objective is man's progress.

Chapter V

Means of implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World

The questions of selecting the most appropriate means of action among those proposed, of programming the implementation of the strategy, and of identifying the necessary tasks according to the situation in each country and the general cultural policy of the State, must be left to the officials in charge of cultural planning in that country, considering the different conditions, available resources and levels of development.

I. Means of implementation at the State level :

1.1. Public, religious, political organizations, legislative, executive and judicial institutions and development of their statutes and procedures :

In view of the fact that cultural development is a fundamental objective of concern to all categories of the people, both the State institutions and those of the private sector working in the cultural field are to be involved. The State may decide to incorporate the objectives of present strategy into its cultural plans and urge independent institutions to adopt some of the elements according to their own possibilities or to participate in the financing of State projects within the framework of implementation of the strategy. In so doing, the State would benefit from the readiness of such companies as they may have financial resources and wish to sponsor cultural action.

1.2. Establishment of cultural institutions and facilities, provision of the human and financial resources necessary for cultural and institutional development :

It goes without saying that cultural development constitutes the foundation of sound economic and social development and that investment therein is a developmental necessity. Therefore, current economic difficulties should not prevent the generalization of the Islamic cultural centres. There should be at least one such centre in each region or province and many centres in each metropolis according to its demographic size.

These centres should be provided with the means of self-financing to secure their financial independence through financial assistance from individuals and organizations, donations from companies and philanthropists or through Islamic waqfs, so as to extend the scope of activities of public cultural institutions to include an Islamic dimension.

1.3. Education at different levels :

Education is the surest means to guarantee cultural continuity through the generations. Islamic sciences should therefore be taught in State schools and Islamic education made a compulsory subject for Muslims. The teaching of Islamic civilization and culture should be supported in all Islamic institutions, and Islamic books translated into international languages should be made available at public and private libraries. All the above should be part of the State educational policy and plans for its implementation.

1.4. Scientific research institutions :

These institutions would, in the framework of their annual programmes, carry out research projects in the field of Islamic culture and civilization. They would ensure wide dissemination of their works so as to contribute, on the one hand, towards supplying educational institutions with scientific and cultural material and, on the other, to providing libraries with general cultural tools. Researchers are called upon to participate in popular cultural education by giving lectures in the national languages through the media, in which they would present the results of their research in a simplified style more accessible to the general public.

1.5. Parental education :

In addition to the traditional means of parental education, the information media, written as well as audio-visual should be used to implement Islamic educational programmes of concern to the various categories under the supervision of the State agencies in charge of this sector, and in cooperation with the institutions of scientific research and other educational institutions, and to determine the substance of pedagogical programmes and methods that would ensure wide and profound impact.

1.6. Governmental and private science academies and specialized institutions :

Within the framework of complementarity among national institutions, cooperation among them may be coordinated so that each one may contribute to implementation of the aspects of strategy relating to its fields of competence without any duplication of effort.

1.7. Governmental and private associations of arts and culture :

These associations are to be used as a means of contact with the masses. Islamic associations are to play a dual role in this respect :

- Education and instruction in their schools and institutions.
- Awareness action through lectures, seminars, symposia, and cultural weeks to be organized in cooperation with concerned State agencies, particularly the information media.

If such associations are adequately assisted financially and technically and fully recognized, they will be able to implement - on behalf of the government - a significant part of the current strategy objectives.

1.8. Intellectual and arts festivals, conferences, seminars and exhibitions :

Festivals are an effective means to associate the masses. It is therefore necessary to organize annual Islamic festivals in the countries concerned. In addition, the Islamic dimension must be taken into consideration when developing the programmes of the intellectual and arts events may be placed within the scope of the Islamic cultural strategy.

1.9. Development of culture-related industries :

Action is required to highlight the Islamic dimension of culture in each industry so as to promote and firmly establish this dimension in the awareness of the masses. Such action may be translated in practice as follows :

- Encouraging Islamic architecture in particular.
- Supporting the production of materials needed for cultic practice.
- Producing films for the cinema and television serials on Islamic culture in general in its local manifestations in particular.
- Writing simplified books on multimedia supports to introduce Islamic culture to the masses.
- Carrying out elaborate studies on the financing of cultural projects.
- Organising an Islamic fair of computer and inventions in the Islamic countries.
- Producing video-cassettes, audio tapes and CD-Roms containing selected Islamic lectures and religious festivals, and facilitating their acquisition by the public.
- Encouraging Islamic arts in general.

2. Means of implementation at the level of the Muslim world :

2.1. Coordination and cooperation among joint Islamic international institutions and organizations :

The overlapping among objectives has created a kind of natural integration which makes coordination and cooperation a political and economic necessity and a basic factor of success to which the following may be added :

- Support of the existing economic and cultural institutions so they can carry out their mission.
- Establishment of a Cultural Development Fund to be financed as follows :
 - Financial assistance from companies wishing to participate in this action.

- Donations from philanthropists to be selected from the various countries and formally requested to contribute to formation of the capital of the said Fund.
- Deduction of a certain percentage from the loans made by the Islamic Development Bank to Member States, as a contribution from them to the financing of the Fund.
- Islamic Waqfs after being developed and generalized in all Islamic countries in cooperation with the Cultural Development Fund.
- Allocation of 1% of the GNP to cultural projects.

2.2. Development of regulations and facilitation of procedures for intellectual contacts among Member States and among their various cultural institutions as well as between them and Muslim communities in non-Member States :

These contacts would take the forms of : exchange of expertise, scientific and cultural work, and information materials ; encouragement of academic visits by university professors, researchers and intellectuals encouragement of cultural dialogue among Muslim peoples to promote rapprochement and cooperation ; consolidation of cultural and social links between the Muslim communities in non-Islamic countries and the Muslim world ; provision of moral and material support to the institutions of these communities ; facilitation of exchange between these institutions and similar ones in Islamic countries ; and development of a common stand with regard to basic issues they may be confronted with.

The said contacts could also be developed through promotion of cultural, economic and social relations between the Islamic world and Muslims abroad, by supplying their schools and institutes with textbooks and scientific reference books ; by assigning teachers to such schools and institutes ; by providing scholarships to allow their students to pursue their studies in Islamic countries universities ; and by organizing an Islamic Book Exposition once every three years to present the highlights of intellectual production in the Muslim world.

The proposed contacts would be strengthened also through encouragement of the translation of major Islamic works, academic reference books and research papers into international languages and the widely spoken languages of the Muslim peoples ; distribution of such works in the Member States ; establishment of dailies and academic and cultural periodicals to be issued in the said languages in the countries concerned ; awarding incentive prizes to outstanding authors, researchers, and literary men.

2.3. Focussing cultural guidance on Islamic solidarity and the spirit of Islam :

This may be achieved by highlighting the Islamic dimension in the relations among the countries concerned and linking cultural action with economic cooperation to promote solidarity and interdependence among the Muslim peoples.

2.4. Organization of symposia, exchange of visits and promotion of festivals, conferences, seminars and expositions among Islamic countries as part of the celebration of the capitals of Islamic and Arab culture :

It is very important to afford the opportunity of meeting and exchanging views, information and expertise to active social categories in similar fields such as teachers, researchers, writers, artists, sportsmen etc., within the framework of academic and specialized events such as a Conference on Islamic Fiqh, a Conference on Islamic History, a Seminar on Philosophy, a Human sciences Symposium, a Festival of Art and Literature, sport tournaments, cultural caravans, etc.

2.5. Sponsorship of major cultural projects among Islamic countries such as encyclopedias, projects of translation and critical study of heritage works, information software industry, issue of an economic, social and cultural yearbook of the Muslim world :

Such projects would facilitate the assignment of financial resources by some countries and of human resources by others. Through coordination, such resources may be used to implement joint ventures in order to meet development needs that cannot be dealt with separately by any one country.

2.6. Coordination of the Islamic countries' positions in international fora to ensure effective defence of the issues and interests of concern to the Muslim Ummah such as the protection of Holy Places and the defence of the rights of Muslims abroad.

2.7. World cooperation, coordination and human interaction within the framework of international organizations and on international occasions :

Such action requires first the strengthening of Islamic ranks by supporting the following : Islamic regional organizations ; trying to solve, within their framework, the problems involving Islamic countries ; discussing major international issues within the same framework; encouraging the exchange of information among such organizations; coordinating their activities ; and opening the door to dialogue and cooperation between them and similar international organizations.

2.8. Establishment of an agency to follow up implementation of the cultural strategy for the Islamic world and to extend necessary assistance for overcoming such difficulties as may arise, ensure coordination, and promote the exchange of information on the efforts made and results achieved in this field.