

Draft Final Communiqué

Fourth Coordination Meeting of heads of delegation of OIC Member States

**(Held alongside the 31st Session
of UNESCO General Conference)**

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(Paris, 17 October 2001)**

The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization convened the Fourth Coordination Meeting of OIC heads of delegation alongside the 31st Session of UNESCO General Conference, in pursuance of the objectives set out in its Charter and in compliance with the recommendations issued by the first coordination meeting of higher education ministers in OIC Member States, organized by ISESCO, on 26 October 1995, alongside the 28th Session of UNESCO General Conference, requesting the holding of this Coordination Meeting on a regular basis alongside UNESCO General Conference Session, as well as the resolutions of the 9th Islamic Summit Conference (Doha, 12-14 November 2000), which commended this initiative and adopted the recommendations of the 3rd Coordination

Meeting. The Islamic Organization also convened the meeting as part of its keen interest in consolidating joint Islamic action and coordinating the stances of OIC Member States with a view to taking up the civilizational, intellectual and scientific challenges levelled at the Muslim Ummah as it stands at the threshold of the 21st Century, and further, as part of appreciation for the distinct relations linking ISESCO with UNESCO, by virtue of their civilizational and human objectives, convergence of their mission and in view of the positive results achieved by mutual cooperation between the two Organizations. In response to the decisions of the 28th session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Bamako, June 2001) which called on ISESCO to hold a meeting of Education Ministers to examine ways and means of their contribution towards the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -ISESCO- has called for holding the fourth coordination meeting of heads of delegation of OIC Member States, alongside the 31st Session of UNESCO General Conference. OIC Member States responded favourably to the invitation, and the meeting was held at UNESCO headquarters, on Wednesday 17 October 2001.

- A)** The Meeting was chaired by H.E. Dr. Najib Zerouali, Minister of Higher Education Executive Staff Training and Scientific Research the Kingdom of Morocco, President of the Seventh General Conference of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, and attended by H.E. Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, by H.E. Mr. Koïchero Matsuura, UNESCO Director General, by H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Ali Ghazali, Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and Their Excellencies the heads of delegation of OIC member States. The Meeting was also attended by H.E. Dr. Monji Bousninah, Director General of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization -ALECSO- and H.E. Dr. Said bin Mohamed Al-Mulais, Director General of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States -ABEGS-.
- B)** The Meeting was opened by an address delivered by E. Dr. Najib Zerouali, President of the Seventh General Conference of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, in which he thanked ISESCO Director General for the initiative to convene this high-level meeting and stressed the importance of coordinating efforts to secure advancement of the Muslim nation. He commended the comprehensive and objective working document presented by ISESCO and thanked their excellencies, the heads of delegation, for their kind response to ISESCO's invitation. He added that the attendance by the heads of delegation testifies to their appreciation for the laudable efforts undertaken by ISESCO to consult together with parallel organizations and institutions, especially UNESCO, as part of service to the educational, scientific and cultural interests of the Muslim countries. Dr. Zerouali also thanked most profoundly the Director General of UNESCO, Mr. Koïchero Matsuura, for the kind cooperation and assistance extended to ISESCO with a view to convening the present meeting in the best conditions.
- C)** H.E. Dr. Abdelwahid Belakziz, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference pointed out in his address delivered on his behalf by H.E. Ambassador Ahmed Ali Ghazali, Assistant Secretary General for Cultural Information and Social Affairs that the Islamic Organization -ISESCO- succeeded, most brilliantly, to lay down strong groundbase for joint Islamic action in the educational, scientific and cultural fields and developed a prestigious network of cooperation with dozens of

regional and international organizations, most important of which is UNESCO. The Organization also proved to be an effective means for achieving Islamic solidarity. OIC Secretary General also expressed his satisfaction with the positive results arrived at by the mutual cooperation between ISESCO and UNESCO in their respective fields of competence. He concluded by expressing his gratitude to UNESCO Director General for his kind cooperation with the institutions of the Islamic Conference System, especially, ISESCO.

- D)** H.E. Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization delivered an address in which he thanked the heads of delegation of OIC Member States for their kind response to the invitation extended by ISESCO to attend the proceedings of the present meeting, intended to coordinate action and promote cooperation actions with UNESCO, with a view to consolidating Islamic joint action and overcoming the educational, scientific and cultural challenges facing the Muslim nation. He extended his sincere thanks to H.E. Mr. Koïchero Matsuura, Director General of UNESCO for his kind cooperation with ISESCO and his personal interest in promoting that cooperation in all various fields of common interest.
- E)** In his address, H.E. Mr. Koïchero Matsuura, General of UNESCO, expressed his thanks to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for its cooperation with UNESCO to hold international conferences on issues of common interest. He affirmed that the Islamic Organization was successful in achieving the objectives for which it had been established. He, also expressed his satisfaction to see cooperation ties between the two Organizations develop within the framework of a fair and well-balanced partnership geared to achieving the joint objectives. He indicated that the meeting was an auspicious opportunity for strengthening the cooperation relations existing between UNESCO and the Islamic world, notably its organization specialized in education, science and culture. UNESCO Director General concluded by underlining that cooperation between ISESCO and UNESCO was marked by rationality and handwork and constitutes an example to be followed, wishing further success and advancement for those cooperation relations.
- F)** The meeting was devoted to the examination of the proposals put forth by the Islamic Organization with regard to the joint cooperation programme with UNESCO within the framework of ISESCO Three-Year Action Plan 2001-2003 and UNESCO Draft Plan for the years 2002-2003, as well as evaluation of cooperation action under previous years, notably the years 2000 and 2001. Participants have examined the different items contained in the working document most important of which is the contribution of Education Ministers to the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic world, and how to redress the image of Islam in the West in addition to highlighting Islam's stance on preservation of human heritage. It considered possible ways of implementing the Strategy in order to achieve the scientific renaissance and cultural and educational development of the Islamic world within the framework of respect for Islamic values and principles of tolerance, dialogue and pacific coexistence among peoples and nations. The meeting also discussed the decision of the Israeli government to include the Prophet David Mount under the name of Zion Mountain to the list of world heritage, and took the necessary measures to defeat this decision during the 25th Session of the World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, December 2001).

G) The heads of delegation highlighted the paramount importance of the Coordination Meeting being held among the Member States in such a well organized and practical manner. They called for further action in that connection and urged ISESCO to keep abreast of international conferences and fora, falling within the purview of its competencies, to hold alongside them coordination meetings geared to coordinate action among the countries of the Islamic world.

After deliberation, the Meeting issued the following recommendations:

- 1-** Commending the distinct role discharged by the Islamic Organization -ISESCO- and its contribution in the defence of Islam and the Islamic civilization; praising the programmes and achievements of ISESCO in the fields of education, science, culture and communication which benefitted most Member States and Muslim communities outside the Muslim world; and inducing the Organization to carry on its action in this field.
- 2-** Expressing appreciation for the outstanding efforts exerted by the Islamic Organization to convene the Meeting in excellent conditions, and lauding the action undertaken by the Director General to promote the programmes of the Organization and to gear these programmes towards the real needs of the Islamic world.
- 3-** Thanking the Director General for his efforts to foster cooperation relations with international, Islamic, Arab, governmental and non-governmental organizations, with a view to consolidating the credibility of the Organization, spreading far and wide its radiance, securing additional financial resources to fund programmes and activities of special importance, highlighting the crystal-clear image of Islam, disseminating the Islamic teachings and redressing the fallacies circulated against it.
- 4)** Commending the response by UNESCO Director General, Mr. Koïchero Matsuura, to the request for holding the present coordination meeting alongside the 31st Session of UNESCO General Conference, and extending thanks to the assistants of UNESCO Director General for their kind collaboration.
- 5)** Expressing appreciation for ISESCO's efforts and the results achieved at by its joint cooperation action with parallel institutions as well as the quality of programme implementation, owing to the fruitful contacts with international, Islamic and Arab organizations, which enabled ISESCO to avoid duplication and to preserve the specificities of Muslim societies.
- 6)** Taking pride in the sponsoring by ISESCO of a host of international conferences falling within the scope of its competence, and its efforts to make the voice of the Muslim World heard far and wide and the Islamic stance, vis-à-vis the contemporary issues, known and respected. The meeting called on ISESCO to further consolidate this presence in the international arena.
- 7)** Stressing the importance of the Cultural Strategy of the Islamic world in consolidating the Islamic civilizational entity and ensuring the ability to interact with the various trends of human civilization and contemporary issues, and to coexist with human intellectual and artistic creativity from a stance of strength and significance.

- 8)** Urging the enhancement of contribution of national, regional and international institutions in the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, and giving special attention to education in its various levels in order to ensure continuity of cultural contribution through generations, calling on Member States to integrate the objectives of the Strategy in their educational plans, to teach Islamic culture and civilization in all Islamic institutions and to provide the necessary educational means for this purpose, given that culture is a major element in the civilizational edifice.
- 9)** Calling upon ISESCO to hold a meeting of official in charge of formulating educational and cultural policies in Member States to coordinate on the best ways to implement the Strategy, prepare a conceptual framework to be submitted to the 4th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.
- 10)** Commending the decision of the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers entrusting ISESCO, being the specialized organ on education, science, culture and communication within the framework of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, with the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World and its follow-up with the concerned authorities in Member States.
- 11)** Commending the initiative of ISESCO and UNESCO to hold an international symposium, on the occasion of the 3rd Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Doha, 29-31 December 2001) in order to highlight the stance of Islam regarding preservation of human heritage, after the events in Afghanistan and the international and Islamic reaction following the demolition of Buddha statues.
- 12)** Supporting the endeavours by ISESCO to take over implementation of a number of major programmes initiated by regional or international organizations for the benefit of the Islamic World, and to have their budgets entrusted to it.
- 13)** Promoting further the existing cooperation relations between ISESCO and UNESCO, ALECSO and ABEGS within their common fields of competence.
- 14)** Praising the precise and comprehensive working document presented by the Islamic Organization on the outcome and prospects of cooperation between ISESCO and UNESCO and adopting the proposal put forth by ISESCO on the fields of cooperation with UNESCO for the years 2002-2003.
- 15)** Urging the countries of the Muslim World to coordinate action and efforts with a view to combating the outrageous campaign waged against Islam and the Muslim people, highlighting the Islamic approach, restoring the image of Islam, redressing Islamic cultural misconceptions, and stressing the important contribution made by Islam to enrich the universal civilization and to disseminate the principles and values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence among peoples and nations. The meeting also condemns the hostile campaigns of certain parties against Islam.
- 16)** Rejecting the Israeli government's decision to include Prophet Daoud Mount under the name of Zion Mountain in the world heritage list, calling on all Member States to participate in the 25th Session of the World Heritage Committee (Helsinki, 11-16 December 2001) by high-level delegations in order to defeat this request which is in contravention with the international legitimacy and the related United Nations

resolutions, and entrusting ISESCO Director General to continue his contacts with Member States and parallel organizations in this respect.