STRATEGY FOR DEVELOPING

UNIVERSITY EDUCATION IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Contents

Preface

- The Federation of Universities of the Islamic World believes that any effective educational activity should be based on firm foundations, a goal-oriented vision, well-defined objectives and clear plans, in conformity with the saying of Allah Almighty: " *To each of you have We prescribed a Law and an Open Way*" (Al-Maida:48).

- The Federation is also aware of the crucial role of education in preserving civilizational identity, as well as building creative and productive capacities of human resources. This is because human resources constitute the key to building humans who believe in their Creator, properly serving as His constructive vicegerents, and who are fully aware of the reason behind their existence, the requirements for their survival, as well as the challenges of their time.

- The Federation considers education in Islam as a channel of a religious and development message, in line with the teachings of Allah Almighty: "*I have only created jinns and humans so that they may serve Me*" (Al-Dariyat:56).

- This indicates that there is a pressing need to take interest in education so as to build a defensive shield for the future of humans, protecting them from the ills of poverty, illiteracy, war, pollution and disease. It would also build in them the Islamic values of faith, knowledge, work, cooperation, tolerance, peace and proper conduct, among others.

- On the basis of all this, there is a growing need for an educational strategy for developing higher education in the Islamic world, whose vision is founded on the following principles:

  - **Religious principle**, which derives its perception of instruction and action from the teachings of Islam;

  - **Educational principle**, which considers the value-related message as the basis of any learning and teaching action;

  - **Human principle**, which constitutes the means and objective of any prospective progress;

  - **Civilizational principle**, which relates education to all aspects of development, based on the fact that no progress can be achieved in the absence of education, which serves as the basis of any civilizational development;

  - **Cooperation principle**, which considers Arab, Islamic and international cooperation as a source of strength and enrichment to higher education;

  - **Equilibrium principle**, which is based on open principles and positive variables;

The strategy hinges on these various fundamentals, within the framework of three main levels:

1. **<u>Individual level</u>**, which aims at training humans in terms of their different mental, physical and relational dimensions;

2. **<u>Societal level</u>**, which focuses on promoting the values of cooperation and diversity within the framework of unity;

3. **<u>Universal level</u>**, which aims at consolidating shared human values, such as dialogue, peace and the preservation of the environment etc…

In order to enable the strategy to operate at these levels, the following frame of reference has been taken into account:

- The goals of the FUIW Charter "**which promote upgrading and developing higher education standards so as to match the requirements of human resources in Islamic countries**";

- Resolutions and recommendations of general conferences, the Executive Councils of the Federation of Universities of Islamic Countries and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO);

- Recommendations and orientations of Islamic and international conferences, as well as symposia relating to the issues of higher education;

- The needs and aspirations of the member Islamic Universities, which have been reported to the Federation;

- Knowledge strategies of ISESCO, UNESCO and ALESCO, relating to education, science, culture and information;

- Developments and challenges that higher education witnessed at the beginning of the third millennium.

The strategy has founded its vision of higher education on this frame of reference, delimiting the specificities of Islamic communities, their aspirations for civilization and development and the challenges influencing their progress. The vision of the Federation is characterized by the following features:

a) The two features of **<u>authenticity and modernity</u>**, which aims at relating higher education to its civilizational identity and contemporary positive variables,

b) **<u>Comprehensiveness</u>**, which is reflected in the diversity of the higher education concerns, as they involve cultural, social, environmental and legal issues, among others,

c) **<u>Integration</u>**, which aims at relating education to teaching, secondary to higher education, public to private, and relating education to all aspects of life as well as to all social classes,

d) Realism, which is seen in the educational issues satisfying the realistic educational needs of the Islamic world,

e) Futuristic vision: the present strategy is looking forward to a leading Islamic future, which would bring back to the Islamic nation its leading civilizational role and grant it its appropriate position in the course of human progress.

Such vision has shaped the selection of issues that this strategy deals with in five section:

Section I exposes the relevant foundations, frame of reference and challenges. Section II outlines the institutional areas for developing higher education. Section III tackles the issues activating higher education. Section IV highlights the role of higher education in dealing with current issues and problems. Section V presents the prospects of change and suggests the relevant development mechanics.

These objectives can only be achieved by reviewing the status quo of Islamic higher education, based on the Islamic value system and the civilizational specificities of its communities. In so doing, we would develop the structures of higher education, modernize its resources, widen its fields and specify its priorities as well as its challenges. We would ensure its quality, widen the scope of the knowledge it produces, and raise its awareness to current technological, information and communication challenges. We would highlight its Islamic educational vision in tackling the contemporary problems influencing its civilizational progress such as illiteracy, globalization, brain drain, poverty, unemployment, environment, and the ill-intentioned media which trigger sectarian animosity.

While presenting this project before the Islamic nation, the strategy expects to achieve two main goals:

- To develop and modernize the higher education system based on the invariable fundamentals of the Ummah and the specificities of its communities so as to satisfy its needs, in view of producing authentic and modern knowledge.

- To provide the needed will, resources and mechanisms and to mobilize the various institutions and parties involved in view of translating the orientations of this strategy into practice and to adapt it to local specificities.

Introduction

Higher education constitutes the best and most accurate model of the system which is highly appreciated by the citizen in Islamic countries. It is one of the components of the educational apparatus. More importantly, its primary function is to produce and provide advanced scientific knowledge, as well as ensure methodological training for specialized medium and high-ranking executives. Further, higher education strongly represents the Islamic communities' aspiration towards progress and building a better future.

Training for excellence and advanced specialization has always been among the main objectives of higher education institutions. At the same time, the university has often been an arena for teaching and research, and an institution for promoting the culture of the elite. In so doing, it keeps abreast of national development and supports the building of economic and social structures, through the intervention of its elite and academics to guide decisions, and through training efficient executives in society. The university also strives to provide opportunities to integrate the youth in society, and aspires to acquire and develop modern science and technology.

Higher education in the countries of Islamic world has witnessed various phenomena, in the current era, characterized by multidimensional challenges, some of which are:

- An intensively growing number of students, unprecedented in the history of these countries;

- An increasing provision of financial and human resources to satisfy this growing demand, which constitutes a burden on the budgets of these states;

- Diversity in structures, programs and training to meet the requirements of the labor market and to keep abreast of international scientific development;

- The increasing importance of non-university higher education, in line with international trends in this regard;

- Creation and growth of private universities and institutions of higher education due to the encouragement of public authorities to this sector, and because of the pressing need to launch new training programs;

- The determination to reform higher education, imposed on the authorities, which has led to inventing alternatives to the existing structures.

The fast-occurring developments in the Islamic world are manifested in the transition from a period of social seclusion to a period of openness, production and the acquisition of advanced knowledge. These developments necessitate a strategy in the field of higher education, which would serve as the basis for a full planning for the Islamic nation in this field. The importance of this ambitious endeavor is motivated further by the fact that the current economic and social fabrics are characterized by slow growth and limited competitiveness.

This ambition seems to constitute a challenging and complicated project, since more importance is currently given to what is called "qualitative education and training" or "quality training".

This awareness requires sensitizing decision-makers about the necessity of combining the qualifications, skills and needs of the Islamic world on the one hand, and the global development of the university as a universal institution targeting scientific comprehensiveness, on the other.

Such facts impose on higher education in the Islamic world new challenges that should be dealt with. The world today witnesses an unprecedented fast mobility in all fields,

governed by a frame of reference characterized by various types of economic and intellectual contradictions as well as cultural and religious conflicts. It is also characterized by the impact of globalization, in the absence of technological equality. This is exacerbated by the development of programs of dialogue among civilizations, religions and cultures, the issues of democracy and human rights, as well as the stereotypical images about Islam and Muslims in western educational curricula and media.

Within these conditions, most intellectuals, university academics and decision-makers in the Islamic world are aware of the crucial importance of working out a strategy anticipating the prospects of higher education in the Islamic world, with a view to developing its structures and revitalizing its mission.

Hence, the strategy in its general sense is an action plan, whose objective is to accomplish effective results, satisfying the relevant needs. It is also a goal-oriented project, or standard plan for the general guidelines that should be followed in this sector within these countries.

To prepare a goal-oriented, effective strategy, the current situation should be evaluated, and the relevant lessons should be drawn from the status quo of higher education domains. The evaluation should also include the cost of the strategy and the necessary mechanisms to implement it, such as mobilizing the competent actors and the required resources. It seems interesting to distinguish between the specificities of certain regions in the Islamic world and to specify the priorities accordingly, concerning objectives such as the institutional and academic structures, the quality of training in terms of its relation to economic and social development, as well the status of scientific research, *inter alia*.

The adoption of a strategy in the domains of higher education aims to make this sector contribute effectively to the development of the new requirements of scientific and technological progress, and to overcome the obstacles that hinder the targeted economic and social reforms. It also aims at making this sector closely related to its original heritage as well as its spiritual and cultural originality, positively opening on contemporary avenues.

Section 1

Background: Frame of reference and challenges

1. Structure and importance of the strategy

The importance of building a strategy for developing higher   education   in the Islamic world is ascribed to numerous considerations, chief of which seem to be the conditions and fallouts of globalization, and the need for the Islamic community to interact with these new developments so as to progress and occupy a leading position. In this regard, many questions are raised, outlined in the studies which have dealt with the assessment of the evolution of this domain in Islamic countries. Some of these questions are:

- Why is it that the policies and plans established to develop university education and scientific research have not achieved their set goals in most Islamic countries?

- Why is it that the quality standard of higher education is still poor and the number of enrolled students is still low in the Islamic world?

- Why is it that the number of unemployed university graduates has increased?

- Why is it that the gap between higher education and socio-economic development is still wide in many Islamic countries?

- Why is it that universities are unable to activate the contribution of scientific research in economic development, nor are they able, in many countries, to train creative minds among Muslims?

- Why is it that the lack of educational autonomy and academic freedom are still serious issues in most Islamic countries?

- Why is it that basic and civilizational illiteracy rate is still high in many Islamic countries, compared to the situation in developed countries? (55% for females, and 40% for all males in Islamic countries, for example; taking into account that the high illiteracy rate has a negative impact on higher education in terms of the inputs represented in students).

- Why is it that the standard of teachers and trainers is regressing, and the student-equal-opportunity index is decreasing?

The studies, researches, symposia and conferences organized by various organizations, such as ISESCO, have revealed many factors that explain this situation, chief of which are:

- **Very few effective strategies to develop higher education, genuinely are related to the requirements of sustainable development;**

- **Brain drain;**

- **Inefficient systems of admission;**

- **Dependence on foreign universities;**

- **Interference of the state in the sector of education in general, and higher education in particular;**

- **Inadequate teaching and research professionalism;**

- **Poor contribution of the surrounding environment to planning and implementation in higher education, due to the fact that higher education institutions are not open onto the outside world, claiming that the university grounds are sacred and private.**

- **Poor funding and reliance on a single financing source, namely the government;**

- **The mismatch between higher education outcomes and the various needs of development.**

Moreover, there are many questions that could be raised, not to exacerbate the feeling of frustration, but with a view to mobilizing the stakeholders and to enlightening them to move with confidence towards establishing the basis of a goal-oriented education in the Islamic world. This type of education would aim at appropriately serving the aspirations of Muslims, in the framework of a clear philosophy and distinctive identity, functionally related to development, in line with the latest positive developments in the new world.

In spite of these remarks, there are positive and encouraging aspects to develop higher education.

❖ <u>Motivating factors for developing higher education in the Islamic world</u>

Despite the shortcomings stated above, there are motivating factors in the Islamic world that would facilitate the setting up of an effective Islamic strategy. Some of these factors can be seen along the following lines.

The Muslim who is aware of the history of his or her Islamic nation, as well as its pioneering contribution to the construction of human civilization - through its creative and innovative achievements in various fields of knowledge and technology - would not accept to succumb to globalization and its fallouts. Nor would he or she accept the distortion of his or her cultural and civilizational identity.

Further, during the last two decades of the twentieth century, the Islamic world witnessed a leap forward that is reflected in the widespread growth of education with all its cycles. It is also seen in the setting up of the best high–tech communication media, through the creation of Arab and Islamic satellites and the use of international satellites as well as the Internet.

Many higher education institutions in the countries of the Islamic world have adopted a planning policy with a view to upgrading the quality of their action and to catching up with advanced universities. Other universities and institutions are striving to follow suit.

The youth represent the majority of the population in the Islamic world. Most of them would be capable of creating, inventing and producing knowledge if they were trained and encouraged in appropriately conducive conditions.

Various forms of legislation have been established in many Islamic countries, regulating partnership between the public and private sectors. These would ensure solidarity, cooperation and the creation of networks of higher education institutions.

There is a constant increase of the culture of self–study and distance learning among the youth in Islamic countries. This is a commitment to life–long learning, seeking to improve one's condition, and a tendency to overcome current circumstances. This phenomenon indicates that Muslim youth have a certain positive awareness, though it differs from one country to another.

In general, Islamic countries are witnessing the early signs of a growing movement of the private sector in education, a greater participation of NGOs, and the ratification of international agreements on human rights and children's rights.

2. Frame of reference and objectives

This frame of reference takes the form of tendencies extracted from previous analyses along the following lines:

- The distinction between considering knowledge in general as a commercial product within the framework of globalization on the one hand, and considering knowledge, on the other hand, as a springboard to achieve human development. That is saving humans from poverty, ignorance and absolute dependence, as well as making knowledge the subject of dialogue between different cultures through communication channels.

- Market liberalization and cost effectiveness would force higher education institutions to enter the market of competition for funding. These would lead to ensuring a balance between making money and producing knowledge as well as creativity therein. This requires a flexible and creative mentality that does not accept the standardization of intelligence, nor does it disregard autonomy in decision–making, while preserving its attractiveness in the competitive arena of science and knowledge.

- Starting from the elaboration of a comprehensive educational thought, which would serve as a frame of reference for planning and decision–making, for establishing the mechanisms to monitor global developments in the fields of education -including higher education- and for setting up a system allowing the reception of information, knowledge and electronically downloadable data. This system would also contain electronic networks and virtual institutions, permitting the reduction of time and space with a view to achieving a local system of development and production. It would also permit the admission of different age groups of trainees, the activation of self-study, and the freedom to choose

specializations, teachers and sources of knowledge. This system may also contain a computing infrastructure, private (or non-governmental) universities, governmental universities, cultural centers, open universities and international education, through external networks as well as virtual universities.

- Relying on Islamic terms of reference that emphasize the comprehensive vision in training, complementarity in teaching as well as authenticity and modernity in orientation;

- Respecting specificities and diversity, as well as strengthening the culture of moderation, alliance of civilizations and dialogue of cultures;

- Activating the message of the Arabic language, modernizing its methods of teaching, supporting the institutions disseminating it and training those working in its fields, all constitute a religious duty and civilizational necessity. This is because Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an and Islamic culture. It constitutes a shield protecting the civilizational existence and a cornerstone of the Ummah's cultural heritage.

❖ Objectives of higher education development

Higher education development goals in the Islamic world are based on its status quo and the challenges facing it now and in the future, at the national, regional and international levels. They are also based on the Islamic civilizational heritage as well as on the new developments, which have emerged since the last decade of the twentieth century, resulting in the changes the traditional professions have witnessed and the emergence of new professions, as well as changes affecting social and political roles. The goals could be divided into two sets: a set of goals concerning society and another relating to the student.

a. *The objectives concerning national and regional communities*

Higher education aims at achieving the following objectives in this regard:

- To preserve Islamic culture, to contribute to its dissemination, and to appreciate the creative achievements of its workforce so as to promote the Islamic cultural and civilizational personality.

- To contribute to sustainable development adequately and to participate in providing the needs of the labor market in all economic and social sectors, taking into account that they are changeable and renewable. This requires the continuous elaboration of educational curricula to be aligned with the labor market and the economy.

- To support the relation among higher education institutions, societal institutions and general education on the basis of partnership in all its aspects, so as to achieve economic and human development of society.

- To develop the sense of responsibility among individuals and communities in the Islamic world, as well as the sense of autonomy and commitment to national and Islamic principles so as to enable the community to confront contemporary challenges;

- To train a workforce with high professionalism to satisfy the economic, social, scientific and cultural needs of the Islamic community;

- To perform the role of objective criticism as to strategic choices, and to participate in the study of the problems and challenges facing humanity at the national, pan-national and international levels;

- To contribute to the establishment of a system of accountability with a view to ensuring a high standard of quality of the inputs, processes and outcomes of higher education in the Islamic countries;

- To upgrade the competencies of higher education institutions to fulfill their missions in society, and consolidate their links with the private sector and governmental as well as non-governmental organizations.

- To emphasize the value of the unity of knowledge along with the progress of research and studies.

6. Objectives concerning students

Since students constitute the kernel element in the process of teaching and learning, higher education is required to achieve for them a set of goals according to the considerations outlined above. The chief of these goals are given below:

- To strengthen the Islamic cultural identity in students and to consolidate their pride in their culture and community, as well as their loyalty to the values of their citizenship;

- To develop in students the tendency to open onto other cultures, along with the sense of mutual understanding and co-existence, on the basis of mutual benefit.

- To promote the values of labor and social participation through practicing these values within the university arena, whose organization and predominant culture should appreciate such values.

- To enable students to acquire the necessary competencies to seek job opportunities and to develop in them the sense of competition, for them to develop their own projects, as long as their endeavors are legally, socially and ethically acceptable; and to enable students to deal with new developments in the field and adapt to them.

- To enable students to acquire the skill of searching for the information they need and the competency to produce it and apply it according to their own needs and those of their community, relying on their own continuing effort.

- To make students fully aware of the overlap of science and information types, which would enable them to discover new fields of knowledge and technology related to theoretical or applied sciences in the various domains of life.

- To enable students to acquire the skill to deal with the constant change of science and knowledge within a framework of "actor" rather than "reactor" and to deal with their complexity as natural aspect of their development and progress.

- To upgrade their talents and critical awareness to achieve creativity and innovation;

- To develop in them the values of freedom of opinion, integrity, loyalty, dialogue and respect.

3. Challenges facing university education in the Islamic world

Today's world is undergoing a postmodernist process that makes it distinct from the preceding era, concerning higher education, in terms of a set of orientations, which in fact constitute challenges facing higher education. Some of these development challenges reside in:

- Achieving remarkable progress in scientific thought, especially in scientific fields such as natural sciences, biology and genetic engineering.

- Developing the educational criteria, theories and curricula with a view to upgrading the competitive capacity of higher education and qualifying it to contribute to solving the local and regional problems of the labor market.

- Empowering higher education to serve and influence society as well as create new ideas.

- Qualifying higher education so as to shift from an entity reacting and adapting to events to a producer thereof.

- Contributing actively to the achievement of sustainable development in the medium and long terms.

The technological challenges are numerous, involving the following:

- Using digital systems that ensure a better quality of processes and outcomes, and guarantee both the dissemination and the concentration of services in one space, in such a way as to ensure a more accurate standardization and to lead to a drastic change in lifestyles and production modes.

- Strengthening the complementarity and interaction between technological development and social, value-related and behavioral phenomena, along with all aspects of economic and cultural life, so that the world would move towards a global reconsideration of the facts of the predominant civilization. This orientation would include the futuristic dimension in the process of theorizing on the dynamics of societies, and would exert an influence on our behavior, and social and economic performance.

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- Benefiting from the internationalization of higher education and the positive change in its space and form. This is because universities now tend to use virtual networks more than buildings and administrations. Another outcome is the overlap between the educational, social and research domains, as well as the participation in decision-making. Higher education has also extended to all social classes and age groups. These new tendencies constitute challenges facing higher education in the Islamic world.

- Another challenge is that it is difficult to imagine a model concurrently satisfying the requirements of the world environment and those of local environment, without elaborating a new form of mutual cooperation, in line with the requirements of science, technology, environmental problems, as well as people's expectations. Nor is it easy to do so in the absence of a serious evaluation of the Islamic educational and cultural stock, as it is the case elsewhere.

- Another major challenge facing the Islamic world in general and higher education in particular is the fact that new economies are incessantly gaining ground, and a fierce competition has arisen in exporting services as well as acquiring knowledge and technology. This challenge cannot be dealt with if we remain secluded in whole or in part by adopting a protected development model, ignoring what is happening in the world markets.

In this connection, it seems that the Islamic communities are now aware of at least three elements:

a) Reformulation of the notion of knowledge and reconsideration of the notions of production, communication, and the role of the civil society, though at varying degrees;

b) Awareness that survival in the New World Order arena requires constant progress in human sustainable development. That is, the true wealth is liberating humans and qualifying them to produce knowledge, based on creativity and cultural diversity. This awareness is fraught with the increasing apprehension of the Islamic world concerning its poor competitive power, Arabic language and other local languages, as well as the culture of the Muslim family, facing an open world governed by an international corporation criss-crossing countries and continents.

c) Awareness that the key to sustainable human development is education, in general and higher education, in particular. Once again, this confirms the importance of establishing the present strategy for developing higher education in the Islamic world.

These international conditions and developments require higher education in the Islamic world to review its goals, orientations and strategies taking the following into consideration:

- It should align with the international environment; technological and knowledge-related progress as well as the new patterns of human interaction at the level of

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groups and communities. This would lead to the need for reconsidering the strategic planning methods so as to benefit from the transformations the world undergoes and its various applications. This, of course, does not hinder the preservation of the cultural, civilizational and religious frame of reference of the Islamic world.

- It should deal with these developments on a mutual benefit basis. It should contribute to developing them, on the understanding that this is conditioned by the standard of knowledge in the university arena, its caliber in theoretical, applied and practical sciences, in different fields of inquiry, without separating what is called exact sciences from human sciences, among others.

- Higher education should promote the link between teaching and training curricula, on the one hand, and the general social, economic and cultural life, both current and future, on the other, in line with the requirements of the sustainable development of local and international communities.

4. Higher education in the Islamic educational heritage

The long history of the Islamic world has witnessed many civilizational centers which brought together different interacting nations. The Islamic civilization was renowned for preserving local values, cultures and resources. The State strived to provide the basic needs for peoples and individuals, as well as to ensure justice in the distribution of resources, social solidarity and the respect of land property .

Throughout the centuries, educational institutions and schools were established within centers and mosques, financed by non-government sources such as donation and waqf endowments. These institutions had an outstanding academic role which extended to various regions of the world so that many scholars graduated from them in many fields of knowledge. Suffice it to mention that Pope Sylvester II had received part of his education at Al-Qarawiyin before he became Pope. Education in these mosques offered not only religious education subjects but secular sciences as well, such as mathematics, philosophy, astrology, medicine and geography. This was motivated by the openness of Islamic civilization onto the Persian, Indian, Greek and Roman civilizations. Many intellectual trends were generated in various fields of Islamic law-making, literary creation, artistic humor, scientific discoveries and philosophical paradigms. This made of Islamic culture an integrated structure that extended to the east and west as well as all Islamic countries. The development of these institutions made of them a catalyst for human civilizational progress. Other higher education institutions were subsequently established in many Islamic countries since the 19th century.

This educational, cultural and civilizational heritage constitutes a basic cornerstone, along with others mentioned above, so as to build the future of higher education in the Islamic world, and a vital reference to design a functional strategy in this domain.

Section II Domains

Institutional domains for developing higher education

The development of higher education in the Islamic world differs from one country to the other. It enjoys a relative development in certain countries, while in others its development is rather limited. Besides the institutions of religious, language and jurisprudence studies based in some countries, many Islamic countries adopted institutional organizations similar to those adopted in the western countries with which it had interacted either during the colonization periods or through cooperation and contractual relations.

1. Developing the structure of higher education

The preliminary facts on the university institution offer a mirror image of the various entities geared towards a dynamism that consolidates its basic missions relating to teaching, training and research. Since their inception, these institutions have been based on a system characterized by a relative autonomy in its organizational structures, which determined their specific working styles in the domains of management, governance and legislation regulating each institution.

Most Islamic countries have followed this model since the setting up of the early university institutions, the classical and modern ones alike. This orientation continued to develop in Islamic countries with regard to the universities created after the Second World War. However, the central administration in these countries, in many cases, still manages and steers the general apparatus of higher education, especially the overall orientations concerning the administrative organization of institutions as well as the specification of national degrees and funding, *inter alia*.

Throughout the first decades after their inception, higher education institutions in Islamic countries adopted the system of faculties, departments and specialized higher institutes. This system corresponds to the concept of the university as a comprehensive framework involving all types of knowledge and covering the advanced sciences created by human genius. This institution strived to ensure coordination between the entities under its authority. In many cases, this system has been two-tiered in structure. On the one hand, it contains higher institutions and faculties adopting a system of selection for students' admission; on the other hand, it comprises open-access faculties. These institutional models, however, differ from one country to another.

There is a pressing need to elaborate a development strategy for the organizational structure of these university institutions. This is partly because of the current developments in providing sciences and knowledge management, and partly because of the outstanding position of education in modern societies. Such a strategy is also motivated by the need to preserve the basic missions of higher education such as education, training, research development, as well as providing, promoting and extending services for the benefit of society.

2. <u>Autonomy of the university institution</u>

The autonomy of higher education structures is one of the crucial foundations for this sector to deliver its goals. Each university institution strives to carry out its mission in an atmosphere of autonomy, aligned with its principles of the serious handling of scientific knowledge and the accuracy adopted in training. Such an autonomy strengthens the role of university teachers and preserves the specificities of their mission, in line with the deep-rooted civilizational and historical roles of universities.

It is necessary for the Islamic university to consolidate this orientation through an administrative, financial and academic self-management. It should also control the conditions of students' admission, the training programs, the profile of its graduates, its scientific production, and its teacher hiring process. The objective of all this is for the university to become the master of its own academic, administrative, and financial instruments, and to produce competent graduates capable of adequately dealing with the social and economic reality of their countries. These factors would build the necessary foundations for positive competition between institutions, and would upgrade their performance as well as their outcomes.

Another targeted result of such autonomy is the direct participation of teachers in establishing, managing and steering academic structures, for the sake of the scientific goals of the university. For teachers to organize themselves is an orientation that constitutes a good practice adopted by prestigious universities with historical renown. The credibility of the university is upgraded when the management of its departments and institutes involves competent professors who are knowledgeable about training and research methods.

3. <u>University administration</u>

In the same context, the university administration is responsible for the general management of university institutions. It is also one of the effective factors towards accomplishing their objectives. Therefore, the selection of managers should be subject to specific criteria, chief of which are administrative competence, futuristic vision for education and the relevant multidimensional knowledge. The leader should be able to achieve the progress of academic action, as well as to trigger change and ensure its follow-up. Recent research and expert reports have demonstrated the importance of the personal characteristics and orientations of the leader in charge of university management. It has been recommended to transcend the bureaucratic model with a narrow legal and legislative orientation, and to opt for a courageous model which is open onto the opinion of others and onto the university economic and social context. This model promotes decentralization in the management of institutional affairs so as to upgrade the quality of management. It seems that it would be better to gear organizational reforms towards developing initiatives for setting up the necessary contractual procedures with the various partners in public and private sectors, and towards introducing more flexibility in relations with the central administration steering the educational sector.

Attaching importance to this type of institutional management would allow the university to overcome the structural stagnation. In some cases, it has been contended with preserving the institutional models inherited from the colonizers, or those still running in some classical Islamic universities.

The importance of modernizing higher education management lies in that the administration represents the pacemaker that determines all the renovation and quality trends for all educational and training institutions. It also determines their orientations, strategies and achievements. Moreover, it is noteworthy that reviewing administration involves not only education institutions, such as universities, faculties and higher institutes, but also the ministry itself, along with its various organizational entities.

If we consider the administration, or part of it, connected to the general policy regulating the management of the educational apparatus in all its dimensions and procedures, then there are at least two models in this regard: the first is the **executive model**, which could be qualified as classical administration, and the second is the **strategic model**.

The administration which adopts the executive model focuses mostly on providing administrative and educational services, running daily affairs, dealing with field conditions, and responding to unpredictable events. It is characterized by its weak tendency towards development and innovation, doing so only as much as contingencies require.

Whereas the administration adopting the strategic model focuses on establishing the overall plans, specifying procedure goals and setting up the strategies to implement them as efficiently and cost-effectively as possible. This indicates the vital importance of strategic planning in this model of administration.

Working within the strategic model requires the use of six general orientations, as the diagram below illustrates:

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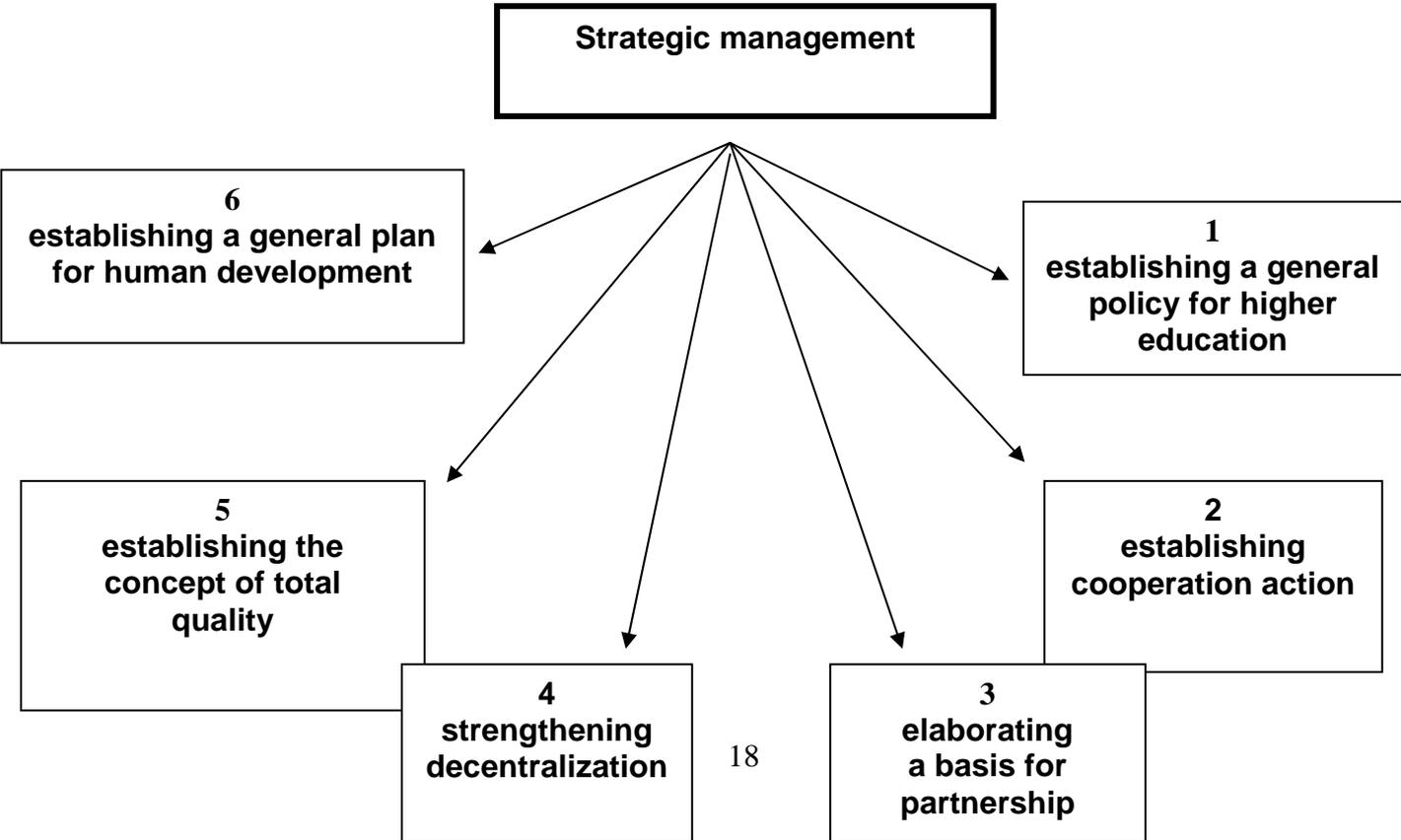
The orientations generated by the strategic administration model

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Orientation 1: Establishing a general plan for higher education at the ministry level

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The strategic model is based on establishing a national plan for higher education, constituting the framework within which the entire set of development programs and projects are subsumed. This plan would ensure that the programs are pertinent, coordinated and interrelated.

Orientation 2: Setting up cooperation action between administrations, institutions and organizational structures of higher education

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There is a pressing need for establishing cooperation action and teamwork between administrations and educational institutions, since programs and plans are interrelated within the framework of strategic management, though these plans and programs are, from an organizational point of view, ascribed to various administrations at the ministry level,.

Orientation 3: Elaborating and strengthening the basics forpartnership with public and non-governmental organizations and institutions as well as the civil society institutions

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Working on the basis of partnership is a kernel norm in the strategic model. It involves stakeholders, governmental and non-governmental institutions, entities of the civil society as well as local councils.

Orientation 4: Strengthening decentralization for higher education Institutions

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Some higher education institutions in the Islamic world have achieved success in this regard, which has increasingly raised the call for promoting this orientation further. This is because centralization, though motivated by the need to preserve national unity in the wake of independence in many Islamic countries, has become an obstacle to development, hindering progress and initiative after circumstances have changed. Innovation and development require a wide margin of self-reliance and autonomy, along with ensuring social accountability.

> **Orientation 5: Establishing the concept of total quality of higher education in the Islamic world**

There are many reasons to propose this orientation, the most important of which is that any development of the educational system, in part or in whole, should be conducted within a comprehensive vision, which confirms the need for quality input. International educational organizations   call for the adoption of the quality input to improve the standard of educational systems.

On the other hand, those concerned with improving the quality of education in the Islamic world generally agree on the importance of the quality system to achieve their development goals. However, they find it hard to agree on one definition thereof. Defining the concept of quality is of vital importance. It constitutes the basis on which the upcoming stages and processes are specified, such as the identification of criteria, the setting up of indicators, the choice of strategies as well as the adoption of steps, tools and evaluation techniques, etc.

Not to venture in choosing a ready-made definition that may not suit higher education in the Islamic world, we suggest that the definition of quality be established by the stakeholders based on the specificities of each country. They know what local higher education is expected to look like. They are also aware of the standards that they wish it should reach. They know their own ambitions and capacities to achieve such standards in the light of local, regional and international conditions. We recommend that the definition of quality be elicited through opinion polls so as to involve all the relevant stakeholders of higher education institutions. The survey should also involve respondents from outside the ministry and educational institutions, such as the workforce of other public and non-governmental institutions, as well as that of the labor market and the civil society. This would ensure a more comprehensive definition of higher education quality, reflecting a better representation of the concerned community.

> **Orientation 6: Establishing a comprehensive plan for human development at the ministry level**

Many studies have shown that training human resources is mostly restricted to teachers and directors of educational institutions, and does not include the administrative personnel inside and outside the ministry. They have also shown that training does not take into account the institutional dimensions concerning each administration. Hence, we propose establishing a human development plan based on an accurate specification of the needs of the workforce and the relevant administrations, which would allow engagement in professionalization as well as the institutional development of administration.

Other requirements and principles could be added to set up an efficient administration, at the level of both the central institution and educational institutions. These reside in the following:

- Developing information systems in all institutions, by setting up units specialized in this domain; this would allow making the appropriate decision by genuine data reflecting the reality of the relevant issues;

- Developing aspects of the administration with its various dimensions and levels in individual institutions or in the central administration, because development cannot occur if it is partial or restricted to only certain aspects.

- Establishing a system of evaluation, accountability and audit, targeting not only individuals but also the institution and the entire apparatus.

4. Applications for admission to universities

Most university institutions in the Islamic world have witnessed quantitative development in the number of students' applications for admission. This increasing number of students seeking enrolment in higher education has posed, at varying degrees, many problems, such as over crowdedness and the limited capacity of structures to contain them, as well as the problem of the funding allocated to this sector by the State.

What is striking in this respect is the soaring numbers in a short period of time. A relative pressure has been noticed for the last three decades, compared to the preceding period. A huge number of students who enrolled in schools after the nineteen sixties of the last century have been admitted to the university. It should be pointed out here that this increase in numbers was characterized by arbitrariness and lack of organization, as students enrolled in theoretical specializations whose contents are rather general. With the exception of the specializations that submit admission to the process of selection, the development of specializations has driven most students to opt for studies with professional prospects that are either closed or unstable (the profession of teaching, public administration, etc).

In this regard, the Islamic world is facing challenges that should be addressed:

- **Offering equal opportunity for enrollment in higher education should be based on the criteria of competence, hard work and regular attendance. The principle of providing this type of education on a large scale requires adopting a policy based on the competence of every individual. This would preserve the goals of such education, namely the transmission of specialized knowledge, the development of science and research as well as the fulfillment of the various needs of society**.

- The expansion of higher education in the Islamic world is ascribed, on the one hand, to the increasing demographic growth of the population whose age ranges between 18 and 24 years. On the other hand, it is related to the growing number of secondary school graduates, who immediately seek enrollment in higher education. The orientations adopted in secondary education have a great impact

on this increasing demand. The striking mismatch between studies in secondary education, due to the excessive weight of general training on the detriment of technical training, has a negative impact on the prospects of the training programs in which students are admitted. The training model in secondary education is frustrating to the students themselves because of the absence of specialized degrees with which they can face the labor market.

- **To avoid this contradictory situation, it is necessary to set up a planning with a view to creating short-term training programs at the secondary education that would allow secondary education certificate holders to access the job market. Concurrently, a reasonable system should be set up to guide students with the required competencies to access higher education**.

5. Types and prospects of higher education

The diversification of higher education is crucial to take up the challenges that the world is currently confronting. It is also considered one of the effective measures to satisfy the increasing needs of Islamic countries. The multi-institutional strategy is the most efficient method to open the classical structures of higher education onto advanced educational developments and types. It would qualify higher education institutions to appropriately satisfy the needs of their socio-economic context. Such a strategy of diversity could take various forms, some of which are:

a) The university patterns cannot remain monopolized by the classical institutions and training models related to the ancient types of knowledge and science. It is necessary to introduce internal changes in the intellectual and academic fields that they provide. These reforms could be in the form of subsidiary departments or institutes enjoying a certain degree of autonomy.

b) Taking into account the changing needs, it has been demonstrated that **short-term training programs** adequately satisfy the multi-dimensional growth that the sector undergoes. They could take the form of higher institution operating either dependently or independently of the university. These would offer training in various specializations, with a flexible system, open to change if need be, and at the same time open onto the labor market and predisposed to access higher training programs that are more advanced and specialized. These types involve many advantages, such as cost-effectiveness, as well as high productivity, in that they reduce the rate of waste in universities and they adapt graduates to the requirements of the professions that they engage in.

Short-term training programs also play a significant role in alleviating the strains put on the university by the ever growing demand. The data available on the Islamic countries which adopted this experience indicate that the number of students enrolled in these institutes has increased at highly significant rates.

c) Developing and supervising private higher institutions

While university studies were a quasi property of the State, many Islamic counties grew aware of the importance of the private sector of higher education. Hence, since the 1980s, public authorities have encouraged this type of education and worked towards developing it. It has even become an instrument of the reform project that it strives to achieve. This sector has served as a support tool, since the university sector faces expenditure funding difficulties. Developing the legislative and regulatory framework of private higher education would make of it a an element that would complement the other training categories. It would also be a channel for importing advanced technology, as well as providing the competent executives and workers needed in the economic context.

It is necessary that these private institutions serve as a good example to modernize training styles, providing students with new competencies and knowledge.

d) Most futuristic studies have shown that the growth rate of the demand for higher education will increase in the next years and decades, and that the pace of technological development will drive learners to change their specializations periodically. This would make it difficult for the classical university to provide the relevant educational needs. Given these facts, higher education is supposed to accommodate the various needs of trainees, whether they are teenagers, adults, or participants in continuing training. The classical institutional categories are no longer able to take up all these challenges. In response to this orientation, many countries have set up different types of university systems that are open, independent of the classical universities and enjoying a corporate body.

It has been shown that upgrading the academic and scientific performance of education is conditioned by promoting the successful leading experiences in the domain of diversification of higher education structures and categories. Hence, priority should be granted to keeping abreast of the new educational developments, as well as the technical and technological progress. These should be benefited from within the perspective of Islamic preferentiality and the cultural specificities of Islamic communities.

One of the advanced types that should be promoted is the open education model, which has the following characteristics:

- Adopting a flexible educational environment, where students are free to choose the goals of their studies, decide on the time and space of their studies, and select the contents, methods and tools to acquire knowledge;

- Choosing the appropriate pace of learning from the beginning to the end of studies;

- Choosing the relevant learning supervisors.

Besides this category, it seems obvious that the distance learning model will have a great future for education, in general. It would help remedy the aspects of deficiency which classical universities face in satisfying the various scientific needs.

After the development of institutions which offered courses through paper-based correspondence, new methods were elaborated based on the mass-media such as radio, television, audio tapes, video and the Internet. Some of the advantages of this educational category are given below:

- Cutting back the expenses allocated to higher education, due to the shortage of financial resources;

- Providing education through tools other than those of classical education, which is based on the direct supervision of the teacher in the lecture room;

- Satisfying the demand for higher education from large sectors of society, and creating the potential to produce and disseminate knowledge to all the individuals of the nation seeking it;

- Ensuring adaptability with the needs of all social classes;

- Satisfying the needs of continuing education and professional development so that the students may combine a profession with education, providing access to training with a timetable suiting their particular professional situation;

- Developing in students the sense of self-training;

- Meeting the needs of basic training, retraining and trainer-training at the same time.

The Internet has become one of the tools that strengthen and develop the concept of distance learning, which has allowed the creation of virtual universities. The intensive use of the Internet has led to achieving the goals of this type of universities, such as providing a large quantity of information, offering the content of books and references, and conducting direct evaluation, in response to the needs of a huge number of learners according to various timetables. The Internet has become a scientific encyclopedia and an open instrument for exposing ideas and experiments. However, it should be approached with caution, since much information on the web may be knavishly plotted or intentionally distorted.

The system of distance learning requires a teaching staff with more expertise than that of classical education. This is because its training curricula are accurate and they provide bi-directional communication allowing interaction between the teacher and the student. In addition to virtual universities, faculties and classrooms, the system offers the possibility of developing electronic libraries, using electronic mail and conducting workshops online.

The starting point of any strategy for developing the modern types of university can only be the existing experiences in the domain. It should work towards fostering and developing the advanced models launched in Islamic countries such as:

- Islamic Azad University in Iran

- Al-Quds Open University in Palestine

- Syrian Virtual University

- Lebanese Virtual University

- Higher Institute of Education and Continuing Education in Tunisia

- London Open University

- Open University in Libya

- Open University in Sudan

- Program of Distance Learning at Cairo University in Egypt

- Project of the Moroccan Virtual University in Agadir

- Project of the Virtual Islamic University, which is being prepared by the Federation of Universities of the Islamic World in collaboration with Islamic Azad University in the Islamic Republic of Iran

- Project of the International Virtual University of Medinah at Al-Medinah Al-Munawarah.

6. Complementarity and cooperation among universities in the Islamic World

Cooperation between universities constitutes a central part of their mission, due to their rich experience as well as the wide scientific scope which they strive to develop and research.

Dialogue between university academics, exchange of expertise and research results, and the transfer as well as elaboration of discoveries constitute one of the cornerstones of any university to be active and open onto its national, regional and international environments. A careful look at Islamic civilizational expertise would reveal that the Islamic civilization was open onto the various preceding civilizations. It adopted the benefits aligned with the principles of the Islamic faith, and in tern provided the people of the world with outstanding civilizational achievements, which contributed in building human civilization.

In this regard, we should consolidate the role of public and non-governmental organizations working in this field within or across Islamic countries. Each higher institution, therefore, should set up an appropriate structure or mechanism to strengthen bilateral or multi-lateral cooperation at all levels.

On this basis, we take it that cooperation between universities in the Islamic world is a fundamental condition to allow the elite of university academics in these countries to consolidate links and achieve a homogeneous and well-balanced development of advanced knowledge and scientific research. This could be accomplished by:

- **Conducting a large-scale cooperative activity, including the establishment of a credit transfer system;**

- **Mutual recognition of higher education studies, scientific qualifications and degrees;**

- **Organizing programs with a view to benefiting effectively from the available competencies among the universities of the Islamic world;**

- **Supporting innovative or reform projects in the domain of higher education and scientific research so as to upgrade the performance of Islamic universities in the various relevant fields, and intensifying high-level consultation to coordinate educational policies;**

- **Disseminating leading and successful experiences in the domain of organizational and academic innovation of higher education;**

- **Exchanging successful experiences between the universities of the Islamic world, and elaborating newly created structures and reforms;**

- **Ensuring the freedom of student mobility and the freedom of access to university institutions among Islamic countries;**

- **Promoting the projects targeting the setting up of university institution networks in specific fields such as medical, engineering or linguistic institutions;**

- **Exchanging information between Islamic universities through exchanging documents, and holding meetings of stakeholders and intellectuals;**

- **Establishing a translation center, so as to translate the existing pieces of research and the most recent developments in various sciences, into the national languages of the Islamic world.**

7. University departments and chairs

The current global cultural situation, which is characterized by the internationalization of political orientations and choices, has led to the creation of many multi-dimensional communication networks between countries and regional clusters. As a corollary of this situation, many centers of excellence and regional training as well as research programs have been established, along with coordinated networks concerned with issues of university research and training.

In this context, some university chairs of international educational and cultural organizations have proved their importance in consolidating quality teaching and research in specialized academic, economic and social fields.

To enrich the activities of the universities in the Islamic world, it seems interesting to promote the establishment of departments and chairs, targeted at teaching and researching subjects of priority to Islamic communities (teaching Arabic, combating illiteracy, children, technological culture, etc) .

The Federation of Universities of the Islamic World could play a chief role in elaborating university chair projects, in collaboration with the member universities, as well as training the university officers in charge of such projects. They are expected to be the center for teaching, scientific research, academic excellence. They are also expected to serve as a tool to advance the study of scientific issues. In the same context, it is necessary to keep promoting the establishment of university chairs and departments of Islamic studies at the universities of non-member states of the Islamic Education Scientific and Cultural Organization. These projects are of vital importance, as they contribute to the dissemination of Islamic education, science, culture and civilization. They also provide the correct perspective of Islam in these communities.

8. Libraries and documentation units

One of the missions and goals of the university institution is to organize and develop the necessary means for accumulating knowledge in areas of specialization. Libraries and documentation sections are crucial tools to achieve this objective.

Document clusters are gradually accumulated in university libraries. Over long periods of time, its accumulation looks like successive layers of a scientific, cultural and civilizational stock. The university documentation institution represents the diachronic development of the university and the circumstances of the history of knowledge of both the Islamic nation and humanity at large. The sets of documents it contains stands for the cultural and knowledge capital, serving as a kind of collective writing of knowledge throughout its history. It also represents the continuity of the scientific production provided by the university.

Classical university institutions have strived to make of libraries a kernel part of its academic structure, to serve as a function accompanying scientific activity, through providing the main publications and references, enriching it with the newly published literature, and opening it onto scientific production at large.

It is necessary to effectively promote the domain of documentation, making it aligned with the ever-renewable needs of this sector. The following should be done to that end:

- **Keeping abreast of the ever-increasing growth of libraries and documentation centers, which has become a universal trend in all advanced societies;**
- **Meeting the various scientific and academic expectations expressed by students, teachers and researchers to upgrade their knowledge (references, books and scientific periodicals);**
- **Developing production, publishing research and sources of heritage,**
- **Integrating the universities of the Islamic world in the ever-increasing development of printing and publishing, whose pace is unprecedented in modern history**.

The soaring amount of publications drives libraries to suffer from the lack of storing space and the difficulties of tracking published books and periodicals. This necessitates that libraries and documentation units consider setting up virtual or digital libraries, using the fast–developing media and techniques. (Project of the Virtual Library of Al-Medineh Al-Munawareh, Digital Library of the Islamic Virtual University).

The university is supposed to remain productive, preserving Islamic culture and civilizational identity of the nation. It should also contribute to the building of the personality of the Muslim intellectual according to the foundations of Islamic civilization including religion, history language and culture, while opening onto the avenues of our times in the fields of human knowledge. To that end, university libraries and documentation centers should give priority to fostering their scientific stock in this regard. This could be achieved by:

- Promoting the setting up of networks involving the documentation centers of Islamic universities, intensifying exchange between them, coordinating efforts to preserve and update the available stock, and providing it to students, researchers and the general public concerned;

- Making of libraries and documentation centers an axis to the new dynamism which the knowledge and information society witnesses, so as to link the library establishment with the cultural complex that promotes the recent publications as well as scientific and technological inventions, and to promote cultural activity;

- Encouraging the exchange of expertise among all entities of the Islamic library system, regarding the management of documentation units, as well as the exchange of the documentation stock available (published material, academic research works, slides, CDs, and assorted audio-visual materials, etc.)

- Establishing a system of data and information banks, similar to those available in international centers, which provides researchers with the necessary knowledge and scientific information through satellite communication.

Section III Issues:

Issues of developing higher education in the Islamic world

1- Strategic planning

1.1. Many issues are raised while diagnosing the reality of higher education in the Islamic world, and they play a vital role in its development. These issues vary across countries according to the nature of the problems they face, their economic development standard as well as their material and human resources.

Strategic planning is one of the central issues with a vital role in developing higher education structures and systems. It allows us to regulate the course of education, upgrade its productivity and guide it towards improvement. This tool also enables us to face current problems, drawing up the future orientations in order to overcome them and to achieve

development goals in a predictable and specific period of time. This could be considered a methodological and systemic approach targeting the development of the various cycles of the educational system so as to effectively meet the needs and specificities on the basis of the civilizational values of Islamic communities.

2.1. The challenges facing higher education in Islamic countries could be summed up as follows;

- The ever-increasing number of students and the pressure of social demand, along with the continuing diversity in specialization, while preserving the highest standard of quality in training and productivity.

- Raising the quality of learning and research programs and outcomes, taking into account the shortage of financial resources allocated to this sector.

- Integrating graduates into the labor market.

3.1. The strategic approach, as a philosophy and method, aims at rationalizing the facts and introducing the goal-oriented procedural perspective therein. It is founded on an analysis composed of preliminary studies in the form of a full descriptive overview of the current situation together with a diagnosis of the major obstacles, with a view to proposing the potential solutions to crises and the implementation thereof. Some of its benefits are:

- Avoiding arbitrary decisions,

- Setting goals and the orientations relating to each institutional system with accuracy and effectiveness,

- Specifying and categorizing priorities according to their urgency and importance,

- Raising awareness to sustainable development and breaking the cycle of stagnation,

- Improving the exploitation of resources and decreasing the squandering thereof,

- Setting up criteria to monitor the progress of the strategy, at the levels of the implementation plan, the scheduling process and the responsibility of the officers in charge of implementation and follow-up;

Strategic planning satisfies the need for developing university structures in the Islamic world, as a modern method which has proved effective in managing educational policy in many industrialized and developed countries. It reflects an attitude of willingness on behalf of decision-makers and planning officials. It relies on involving creative actors concerned with the management of higher education and training. Linking strategy planning with decision-making gives the former a central role in elaborating the major orientation and ensuring the goal of balanced development in its interaction with cultural, social and economic domains.

4.1. The prospective change involving Islamic university institution structures requires transcending the standard administrative centralization on which management is based

in Islamic countries. Many of these countries have opted for this limited type of administrative planning to manage the number of students with a view to monitoring charges and duties.

It turned out that the heavy administrative centralization of decision-makers usually constrains the creative initiatives of educational units. It also restricts the positive expression of the competence of teacher-researchers. Centralized planning hinders the possibility of creating institutional models, and constrains the diversity of the necessary training programs aligned with the economic and social needs. It may produce models with heterogeneous goals without any clear futuristic orientation.

5.1. Planning is often characterized by generazations and lack of analytical accuracy, which hinders efficiency. This is because a strategic planning likely to contribute to the development of higher education is expected to be an integrated, multidimensional approach involving the following:

a. Futuristic projections of the current situation based on specific hypotheses and scientific methods, and a guiding plan based on what is available;

b. Estimations based on quantitative data and accurate figures;

c. Experimental predictions in the form of scenarios and representational conceptions.

6.1. For strategic planning to be efficient, effective, functional and matching the expectations as well as real needs, it should contain all the factors directly or indirectly affecting the higher education system. Some of these fundamental elements are the population data, demographic growth of society, economic and financial pressures, cultural peculiarities, scientific and knowledge development, as well as collective and individual aspirations. Therefore, the conducive conditions should be provided for the strategy to be implementable, and for us to discard partial planning and adopt comprehensive planning.

7.1. Sometimes, planning action focuses mostly on the technical statistical dimension. It is limited to establishing projection accounts and introducing some amendments to the number of the students benefiting from training as well as distributing them in different majors of education. Rarely does it deal with development strategies, leaving this duty to the educational and political stakeholders. There should be a link and interaction between the orientations of experts and technical staff in this domain and in the general lines of principles, objectives and values. This should be achieved through the participation of actors from various socio-economic sectors.

8.1. The strategy that should be built and used as a starting point consists of a set of principles and objectives that should be achieved so as to elaborate a higher education system. It provides answers to questions such as: to what extent should its basis be expanded? What is the possible rate of admission? Is access to education open or subject to certain conditions? What are the characteristics of training? Is it academic, theoretical or vocational? What are the priorities of scientific research?

These objectives are dealt with through action plans and implementation methods, without any strict constraints that would hinder flexibility and amendment, with a view to confronting future developments. In this sense, the strategy would be a comprehensive plan placed between the general political guidelines and the plan, along with its goals and pathways, which is more detailed and constrained by time and space.

The importance of the political decision in elaborating and implementing the strategy, as well as in transforming the strategy from a desirable ambition into a targeted-then-implemented strategy, should be taken into account. On the other hand, the starting action should be based on correct information and accurate data about the reality of higher education, analyzing them in terms of quantity and quality to serve as a guide to the strategy.

9.1. Strategic planning of the university system requires choices that deal with this sector on the basis the historical and civilizational context of these communities, giving importance to educational as well as non-educational factors.

This strategy draft places the institution in the center of societal reality and satisfies the social objective of disseminating knowledge and exerting influence on society. This should be conducted in conformity with the principle of meeting the social demand for education and considering it one of the central inputs to any viable strategy in this connection. Moreover, access to higher education should be considered one of the rights granted to every holder of secondary education certificate. However, these convictions have driven the strategic plans to satisfy the demand and ensure the respect of the equal-opportunity principles and values, without taking into account the potential shortcomings of this procedure in the short and medium terms. It is remarkable that this ad hoc desire of the ambitions of youngsters and their parents has generated in many countries a quasi deadlock situation. One of the contradictions is that there are countries suffusing from the inefficiency to achieve primary education for children, while they face the pressure to provide higher education for adults and assume its burdening costs.

Many studies and expert reports have concluded that there is a mismatch between the variables of the social demand for higher education, along with the strategy based on the cost-effectiveness factor, and the development of a professionally competent workforce. The same analyses have shown that it would be better to adopt strategies considering training projects a beneficial investment that should lead to a specific productivity. One of these strategies is the orientation of higher education towards satisfying the needs of economic sectors, providing the required highly competent executives and workforce. This strategy may face obstacles and difficulties in Islamic countries, due to the lack of the necessary statistical data so as to specify the future needs and to define economic and social predictions in the medium and long terms. This requires elaborating connections and accurate techniques with the reality of other on-educational sectors. However, the situation of the economic system of most of these countries, which is characterized by fragility and unbalanced development, does not allow a full equation between training and employment. This has generated a surplus in the flow of university graduates in proportion to the available employment positions. Moreover, the state

may suffer from the shortage of professional graduates who would satisfy the needs of the various sectors. This leads to importing foreign workers, while many untrained national graduates remain unemployed.

10.1. Setting up a strategic planning aligned with the reality of the Islamic world requires striking a balance between meeting the demand for training and the need to rehabilitate the workforce, taking into account the necessary cost-effectiveness to monitor the available resources.

It is important to integrate strategic planning in an action program including all the relevant elements, such as inputs, financial and human resources, outcomes, and academic projects.

11.1. Conditions for successful strategic planning

Some of these conditions are:

- Constantly evaluating the adopted strategy and assessing its alignment with the requirements and needs of higher education systems;

- Placing strategic plans within in the framework of an accurate schedule amenable to contingency, and closely monitoring the follow-up and measurement of performance;

- Involving the relevant actors and experts in the assessment of the strategy;

- Elaborating the statistical methods to collect data, using modern technology to diagnose the reality of university patterns;

- Setting up centers specialized in strategic studies and research, in collaboration with university institutions and international organizations;

- Using the relevant methods to compare the experiences of Islamic countries with similar conditions;

- Creating channels and networks for exchanging expertise and experts in the areas relating to strategy building;

- Training national executives in strategic planning, along with rehabilitating educational leaders, providing them with the relevant expertise.

2. Funding and expenditure

Funding is a hot issue in Islamic countries, particularly with regard to seeking new sources of funding, other than government funds. This situation has been generated by a set of conditions relating to local development and regional as well as international current circumstances.

2.1. Reasons for seeking new sources for funding higher education

There are several reasons behind seeking new funding sources in Islamic countries, chief of which can be seen along the following lines:

- **Increase of the demand for higher education**

- **Government spending cutback in higher education**

- **Immigration of Muslim students to study in foreign universities**

This phenomenon represents a heavy burden at the level of spending in Arab and Islamic countries.

2.2. Potential funding sources

a- Funding through investment

In the countries of the Islamic world there exist some higher education institutions that are qualified to adopt investment to secure self-funding, some of which are given below:

b- Productive university

The productive university has many roles, the chief of which are fee-based tuition, theoretical and applied scientific research, professional services, internship, and consultancy services. Such productivity characterizes some schools of applied agriculture and veterinary medicine.

c- Community college

Community colleges ensure education for two years after the Baccalaureate. They provide learning curricula and continuing training for the workforce who have not been able to enroll in higher education. These colleges are considered semi-public institutions, since part of their budgets comes from government funding, and the other part from investment though tuition fees.

d- Open university

The open university offers various programs such as training programs to acquire specific competencies, university degree programs, as well as postgraduate Master and PhD programs. To finance its programs, it relies on government funding and students' tuition fees.

e- Private higher education (non-governmental higher education)

Private higher institutions make use of various funding sources, such as tuition fees and the donations of international institutions like the World Bank and USAID.

It emerges from this exposition that the investment areas vary according to the nature of social demand. These areas could be summarized as follows:

a- Investment

- Ensuring a general academic or technical education, taking into account that the investment service in the private sector is characterized by giving students the opportunity to choose the specialization they like in return for fees to cover the operating costs of studies, besides a specific benefit;

- Fee-based continuing training is considered an area of investment in some government institutions and most private higher education institutions. This training is related to development and the labor market, which has a positive impact on the economic and administrative institutions where the trainees work;

- Conducting funded scientific research, taking into account that scientific research is one of the areas that could be exploited by higher education institutions in basic, applied, and practical field research.

b- Consultancy services

These consist of providing expert-advice and guidance to the individuals and institutions concerned. These investment services are offered in offices specialized in the domains of agriculture, medicine, architecture and education.

c- Islamic sources of funding

Waqf (endowment) and *Zakat* (alms) are among the Islamic sources that could be used to finance higher education in the Islamic World.

- Waqf (endowment) as a source of funding

Waqf (endowment) had a vital role in Islamic history in funding many projects, some of which were related to education. This Islamic practice could be exploited to invite individuals, groups as well as financial and economic institutions to endow funds for the benefit of higher education.

- Zakat (Alms-charity)

Allah says "**The alms are only for the poor and the needy, and those who collect them, and those whose hearts are to be reconciled, and to free the captives and debtors, and for the cause of Allah, and the wayfarers; a duty imposed by Allah. Allah is Knower, Wise**" (At-Tawbah:60). The scholars interpreting the Qur'an believe that the phrase "for the sake of Allah" mentioned in this verse could be understood as "in order to establish charity and social projects benefiting Muslims". And education is part of what is "for the cause of Allah". From this perspective, Zakat could be considered a source of funding for higher education in the Islamic world.

d- Funding through partnership

Partnership could take many forms, such as the following:

- Creating investment companies involving higher education institutions and economic as well as social institutions in the domains of agriculture and industry;

- Establishing continuing training programs to be conducted by higher education institutions for the benefit of the workforce in various sectors of production, services and administration.

- Setting up collective consultative councils involving higher education institutions and entities in the domains of industry and commerce;

3. <u>Performance assessment</u>

3.1 The development of higher education patterns requires constant evaluation mechanisms so as to determine its scientific standard and to measure the performance rates at educational institutions.

3.2 The procedure of performance evaluation in university institutions imposes themselves currently, due to the pressing need to control the productivity and efficiency expected from university structures, and due to the importance of controlling and rationalizing the resources allocated to these institutions. Its assessment is a necessity because it is the best way to redress the course of educational institutions, improve their performance, and elaborate strategic plans and programs conducive to the appropriate decisions. In practical terms, evaluation is based on certain stages. The most important of these is diagnosing performance areas. The second is measuring the data concerning training, management and scientific research, determining their results with reference to indicators and criteria. The third stage involves recommending the reform and changes aligned with the principle of development and innovation.

3.3. One of the outstanding facts characterizing performance in Islamic countries is the ever–increasing flow of students seeking higher education, and the scarcity of the available resources to satisfy this demand. Consequently, the internal productivity has constantly decreased. This is reflected in the waste and failure, whose rate is high throughout students' training. Many statistics have shown the high rate of repetition of classes or dropout during training, especially in open–access university institutions. This rate decreases, however, in institutions where admission is contingent upon the selection of students.

3.4. One of the factors behind the poor performance of some university institutions in Islamic countries is the absence of guidance and orientation for candidates to access higher education. This would instigate students' lack of conviction while choosing their major. Moreover, there are structural discrepancies between secondary and higher education systems, in terms of both contents and pedagogical methods. This requires transitional measures qualifying students for higher education.

3.5. Performance assessment is based mainly on general indicators that could be used to pass a judgment about higher education in the Islamic world, the chief of which are:

- The training standard indicator, with reference to the international benchmarks adopted in this domain;

- The competence of graduates, taking into account the scientific knowledge and the competencies required in the relevant specialization;

- The fit between graduates and labor market needs;

- Contribution to the development of science and knowledge through scientific research which participate successfully in human scientific production;

- Quantity of scientific publications of basic sciences, research works and periodicals;

- Knowledge and technological excellence at the national and regional levels;

- Tangible contribution to social development by meeting the societal aspirations for progress and modernization, through participating in solving social problems (health, cultural development, etc);

- Contribution to economic development through upgrading the productive efficiency of the workforce at all levels;

- Availability of mechanisms to assess the training standard of researchers and graduate degree holders.

3.6. Performance evaluation is a central element in the management of the strategy for developing university institutions. It starts with assessing the normal running of the institution, continues during the follow-up of development plans, and ends by the stage of determining the final productivity of the entire university system. During all these phases, evaluation takes various dimensions:

- Evaluation of the efficiency of training curricula and programs, learning outcomes, the aspects of their acquisition, and their compatibility with students' needs;

- Measurement of the efficiency of teachers' pedagogical techniques, and the effectiveness of pedagogical methods, with a view to determining the reality of educational training in terms of both quantity and quality;

- Effects of administrative structure, its forms and governance models on the overall efficiency (financial resource management, the relation between management models and efficiency, the role of centralization or decentralization, the autonomy of institutions or their administrative dependence, the role of vertical controlled management and democratic management based on the participation of all the training components, etc);

3.7. **For the culture of evaluation to gain ground in the management of university institutions in the Islamic world, it is necessary to create national agencies to evaluate institutions and monitor the standard of their performance. They should also publish their evaluation reports. More importantly, these agencies should be**

linked to every project which aims at developing institutions and upgrading their performance.

The use of evaluation, follow-up and accreditation systems is per se an important indicator to ensure the capacity of the institutional system for development.

4. Academic issues and the problems of quality

4.1 The distinguished position of the university institution has driven the legislator to allocate strategic missions to this entity, with a view to developing society. The contents of university education reflect a variety of cultures and advanced sciences, enriched by teaching and research so as to attain the highest standards. The status of a university institution is determined through its openness and liberty to access all types of knowledge. This has been the case since its inception during the climax of Islamic civilization until the advent of the modern university, after other historical periods during the European Renaissance or the Industrial Revolution. The university institution has always been founded on the principle of the unity of knowledge, rational research, and the universality of investigation and verification methods.

A reading of the relevant reports and studies of the situation in Islamic countries would reveal that educational curricula, in spite of some variation across countries, are characterized by several weaknesses, the most outstanding of which are:

- The classical character of such curricula, which is reflected in the discrepancy between the discourse announced about it and the reality of the university as it is experienced by students within the university grounds.

- Inability of these curricula to accommodate technology and communication revolution and the huge facilities that would develop their outcomes, which has negatively affected graduates' capacity to adapt to the requirements of work in real-life situations;

- Most of the numerous curricula in the countries of the Islamic world are imported in whole or in part, and do not take into account the conditions of the local environment, which has triggered the following:

  ▪ The appearance of the phenomenon of acculturation which contributes to the brain drain towards advanced countries;

  ▪ Most higher education systems in the countries of the Islamic world focus on humanities on the detriment of scientific and technological sciences, which does not necessarily match the needs of the labor market, and exacerbates the phenomenon of unemployment among university graduates;

  ▪ The focus of most curricula on memorizing knowledge and reproducing it instead of stressing the skills of analyzing, synthesizing, generating, abstracting, and investigating, which enables students to acquire responsible criticism, and foster in them the sense of initiative and self-confidence. This problematic poses serious challenges for teaching methods and techniques;

- It is undeniable that most higher education institutions are equipped with computers and advanced technological tools. However, the use of these facilities is still problematic. That is the extent to which these are fully exploited in classrooms, laboratories and workshops so as to achieve the competencies mentioned above relating to the objectives of higher educations.

Developing higher education requires the elaboration of teaching and training curricula according to the following orientations:

- Enabling trainers to have a mind capable of producing ideas to solve problems, developing knowledge, as well as practicing legal competitiveness. This starts with consolidating self–confidence, acquiring knowledge and accepting intelligence diversity. It also requires setting cross-specialization curricula to ensure integration between the architect, the research and the teacher;

- Giving more importance to the social studies which combine technology, economy, environment and science, which enables the student to be socially efficient;

- Setting up curricula based on futuristic studies, local and international environmental requirements, and the needed theoretical and applied sciences;

- Ensuring an education based on students' participation, dividing them in research groups while working in workshops and laboratories. It should also be based on involving outstanding students in assisting other students, using interactive and cooperative teaching, which would trigger their skills, motivation and talents.

- Using information and technological facilities to achieve the general and specific objectives planned for higher education.

4.2. The pressing demand for higher education in Islamic countries in general has led to focusing on satisfying the contingency priority needs and providing the most useful services, such as organizing courses and providing the necessary seats. It has not given due importance to the elaboration of training contents and keeping abreast of the development in these domains, by making contributions in the scientific and technological fields.

4.3 It should be noted that university organization in general is characterized by heterogeneous structures in terms of hierarchy. It is organized into a network of institutions concerned with scientific sectors with different training objectives. The hierarchy between institutions is based on the assumed value allocated to them. The content of training, except for technology, architecture and medical sciences, consists of general subjects of the wide classical fields of knowledge, taught through lectures and guided practice. This conservative type of learning is predominant in most institutions.

4.4. The Islamic world is now obliged to seek alternatives so as to transcend the stagnation characterizing teaching contents in certain specializations. This could be done through introducing reforms at the level of the structures regulating training programs, contents and organization.

It is now clear that higher education in the Islamic world has to abandon the models founded on unified programs or compulsory curricula imposed on all students concurrently, where studies last for the whole academic year and end with one general annual examination. In spite of the easy implementation of this model, its compatibility with the huge number of students and its adaptability to the shortage of financial resources, it does not allow the development of study programs, nor does it enable students to polish their individual talents and upgrade their capacities and competencies.

4.5 Most recent studies have demonstrated the efficiency of the academic systems that are flexible and adaptable to the specificities of subjects and learning tracks. Some of these models are given below:

- The Semester System, based on dividing the academic year into independent study periods;

- The Stage System, used in specialized technical studies, in which the student needs continuous guidance;

- The Credit Hour System, based on accumulative study units integrated with one another, according to the student's learning track and training pace. These are typical units that could be put together to obtain a certain grade point.

These models could be integrated with one another in the framework of a homogenous system, generating a sequence of study in the form of programs as well as major or elective requirements related to the academic status of the student. These programs should be subject to constant revision and continuous development so as to keep abreast of scientific developments and various needs, taking into account the respect of Islamic referentialities of Islamic countries.

4.6 The innovative trend is heading towards an increasing educational autonomy of institutes, faculties and departments. It is building study units with strong scientific content, amenable to transfer from one specialization to another according to the learning track of every student. It is important to ensure the integration of the entire set of programs of each area to achieve comprehensiveness, along with specialized programs and general ones, on the one hand, and the programs related to cultural, pan-national and religious identity, on the other.

4.7. In the light of these facts, the following conclusions hold:

- Islamic countries should adopt a dynamic development policy in academic domains, in view of the organic relation of this field with the scientific, learning and social goals that the university strives to achieve;

- The necessity to preserve the comprehensive method of training at the university. That is connecting the specializations related to the academic domain, as well as approaching, through various means, the status quo of the field phenomena relative to the effective and objective role of the university in society.

- Emphasizing the comprehensive method, based on links and exchange between scientific disciplines in academic policies, due to its merits that are reflected on the entire set of intellectual, theoretical, scientific, applied and technical activities of the university.

4.8   Promoting Islamic culture in training contents

Since higher education is a vital element in the civilizational and cultural structure of the Islamic nation, training therein should be characterized by conscientiousness, hard work and Islamic insightfulness. Hence, programs should be open onto all components of society and scientific as well as intellectual trends. The rationale behind this is to build the student's personality with its intellectual and spiritual dimensions, based on the Islamic conception of culture and life.

It seems necessary for the university to transcend its academic seclusion so that it could engage in dialogue on knowledge. The university should also engage in the relevant debate in order to highlight the genuine nature of Islamic culture and to redress the distorted image of Islam and Muslims. It should strive to strengthen the culture of peace and justice, and study current issues, exposing   the attitude of Islam towards them.

4.9 Quality in higher education

Developing higher education structures requires quality assurance at the level of the entire set of its components, and within the framework of system analysis relative to inputs, processes and outcomes. Quality management is subject to a set of requirements, some of which are:

- The commitment of all actors inside and outside the higher education institution to engage in the total quality management system, and the full awareness of the requirements of this choice;

- Establishing strong and efficient leadership to ensure "less administration and more leadership". In this sense, leadership stands for the capacity to motivate the talents of all stakeholders of the quality system to achieve the set goals, and the capacity of the leader to serve his or her "clients".

Some of the characteristics that the leader should have are:

- Possessing a crystal clear vision about the total quality management   system;

- Capacity to communicate easily with others;

- Ability to finish the planning to set up total quality in line with the relevant schedule;

- Capacity to lead the innovation process at the institution;

- Capacity to facilitate the planned processes of innovation;

- Capacity to elaborate the appropriate mechanisms to support, follow up and evaluate the degree of success;

- Capacity to establish efficient working teams to accomplish the total quality system;

- Training university executives to perform the roles assigned to them, to participate in decision-making, and to work according to the relevant values and orientations;

- Granting priority to the needs and aspirations of students in specifying objectives, establishing strategies and determining roles,

- Implementing the stages of quality management without any disruptive haste, due to the complexity and overlap of the relevant processes and domains;

- Constantly analyzing the achievements of actors, evaluating their performance and the results of their intervention;

- Using a scale to determine the quality standards achieved, and making the necessary changes if need be.

Without getting into technical details, here is a summary of a practical plan for total quality management, inspired from the Guide of Total Quality Management of Higher Education in the Arab World, taking into account that this plan is only one model among many others.

The plan consists of four sections, namely:
- Preparation to work in line with to the provisions of total quality management;
- Establishing the plan;
- Field implementation;
- Evaluation.

a.   Preparation to work in line with the provisions of total quality management

The preparation process involves many aspects, chief of which are:
- Disseminating the culture of quality at the institution among the actors inside it, and the parties with whom they deal outside it. This culture amounts to saying that quality is a lifestyle at the institution and an ongoing effort to seek the best standards. To disseminate such culture, several techniques could be used such as visiting institutions that apply the total quality system, inviting experts in the area and organizing workshops;

- Gaining committment of active parties to engage in the project of total quality management, out of the belief in its usefulness both for the institution and for its staff;

- Consolidating the awareness of the fact that total quality management is generally used in the service of the institution rather than the educational processes, where the quality management system of teaching and learning is used.

b.   Establishing total quality management

This stage requires full awareness of the relevant techniques, and it involves fieldwork experience. It consists of the following processes:

- **Strategic planning**, which requires the specification of a set of elements:

  - Specifying the general objectives to be achieved through total quality management, as well as the goals of each stage;

  - Setting up a superior leadership to supervise the achievement of total quality;

  - Specifying the success indicators (benchmarks) and the relevant evidence for each indicator;

  - Providing a database;

  - Determining funding sources.

- **Specification of the components involved in total quality management, some of which are**:

  - Elements of the teaching and learning process: students, teachers, books, etc;

  - Teaching and training curricula;

  - Teaching methods;

  - Learning premises: rooms, laboratories, workshops, library, computing centers;

  - Evaluation system.

- **Specification of implementation stages**. These stages are determined according to the adopted strategic planning and the areas which constitute the subject of quality management, in the light of the institution's reform pattern. These stages could look like the following:

  - Making a decision about total quality management at the institution;

  - Setting up a team of leaders;

  - Conducting a comprehensive study of the provisions of total quality management;

  - Specifying the "clients" and determining their needs;

  - Specifying the areas of implementation;

  - Determining roles and responsibilities;

  - Establishing a training program for the actors in total quality management;

  - Determining the organizational aspects;

c. Implementation stage

This concerns the implementation of the steps that have been established, ensuring a participative atmosphere, the right to initiative and experimentation, and conducting the follow up as well as making the necessary changes.

d. Evaluation

The following types of assessment are used in total quality management:
- Diagnostic evaluation of the existing status quo before applying total quality management
- Pre-evaluation of strategic planning and the scheduled stages;
- Evaluation during implementation;
- Post or final evaluation.

5. Teaching staff and university pedagogy

5.1. The teaching staff has a vital role to play in developing university education. The pillar of education at the university or the mosque has always been the teachers who strive to produce and disseminate knowledge through various means.

5.2. With the increasing growth of modern universities in the Islamic countries, the number of the teaching staff members has multiplied. Concurrently with the diversity of structures and the changing scientific and cultural orientations, teachers have assumed renewable roles. They are now convinced that training activities should strike a balance between general theoretical teaching, professional training and scientific research. Moreover, with the constant increase in the types of professions and the categories of professional structures permeating many Islamic communities, the mission of teachers has changed and their role has varied. While their initial mission was to provide basic comprehensive knowledge, their role now is also to ensure that the student is qualified for social integration, and sensitized to professional practice.

The teachers are no longer the only source of knowledge. There are numerous sources increasingly competing with them, accessed though various communication tools. Another factor gradually gaining ground in the university arena is the need to consider the teaching efficiency and productivity indicator with reference to the learning outcomes and the satisfaction of students.

In spite of all this, the teaching staff constitutes one of the most important inputs in any educational system, at any level of the teaching scale. It is also one of the decisive elements in the quality standard of outcomes. On this basis, the caliber of the teaching staff and their working conditions constitute one of the variables that determine their efficiency and the quality standard of the missions assigned to them, such as teaching, supervising students' research and serving society.

The published literature and research reveal that the overall standard of the teaching staff and their working conditions in many Islamic countries involve several problems, chief of which are:
- The general conditions of higher education are not encouraging in most Islamic countries. This could be seen in the decline in appreciating science and scholars in

some communities, the deterioration of social and political conditions and the shortage of opportunities for academic and educational development.

- A big number of teaching staff members have not benefited adequately from the huge development in computing and information technology, to do their job in faculties and higher institutions, which has not motivated them to upgrade their teaching methods.

5.3. Many university institutions experience a crisis of communication between teachers and students. This is because the university has kept adopting teaching models that are classical and vertical. However, students aspire to an interactive communication with the trainer and to a dialogue through which they would express their interests, concerns, and opinions. Teachers are supposed to develop in students the capacity of self-teaching, to encourage them to set their own academic goals and foster in them the sense of responsibility. The principles on which this model is founded promote the training that drives the students to acquire their own training and professional careers.

In the same context, university educational methods tend to transcend the delivered lesson based on the lecturer's rhetorical speech, on the highly organized content, on academic authority of the teacher and on persuasion. Many pieces of research seem to prefer encouraging students' initiatives, building their scientific capacities, involving them in producing lessons through presentations, activities organized into groups with a specific number of participants in each, or goal-oriented and well-organized debates. Besides their outstanding position as researchers and academics, teachers could be required to focus more on guided practice, in the form of round tables, workshops and practical activities.

5.4. Evaluating teachers is now based on the standard of their competence in conducting research, training students to investigate and fostering in them scientific curiosity. While delivered lessons used to take the lion's share in university teaching methods, practicals are gradually taking the time slots devoted to teaching. Since 1950s lectures have taken only one third of contact hours in most western universities. This orientation has changed the models of higher education professions, by creating new teaching and administrative positions such as Associate Professor and Assistant in charge of practical activities. These positions increased in number and then became the predominant of all categories of university teachers.

The hierarchy within the teaching staff should be based on academic competence, and the capacity to produce and disseminate knowledge, as well as academic excellence in the university arena, through various activities (supervising research, acting in social, economic and cultural domains through conducting research and investigation, public lectures on scientific or social issues, etc..).

In the light of this situation, many challenges should be taken up:

▪ Strengthening academic freedom in education institutions, with a sense of responsibility;

- Establishing a training program for the teaching staff to enable them to use computing tools, modern information facilities, and advanced teaching instruments;

- Motivating and training them to engage in professional career development so as to upgrade their competence and the adequacy of their educational institution. Given the importance of this issue, here are some suggestions concerning the input for professional development.

There are many inputs for staff professional development, which could be summarized as follows:

❖ **Reflective practice input**

Reflective practice is defined as a reflection upon the teaching situation before performing it, in all its components and in the expected performance. It is also a prior planning to this situation and its implementation (reflexion–on–action); it is a rethinking process during implementation (reflexion–on–action), a reflexion after implementation so as to determine the potential discrepancy between the objectives and the actual achievements.

Reflective practice is a circular course, starting with the observation and description of the teaching–learning situation, followed by an analysis of the factors governing the phenomenon. The third phase is drawing general conclusions and new concepts, followed by establishing an experimental plan to improve practice. The final stage is implementing it on the basis of the general conclusions and concepts. The figure below illustrates:

Description of the teaching situation

Establishing an experimental plan
and an active experimental practice

analysis of governing factors

Drawing general conclusions and new concepts
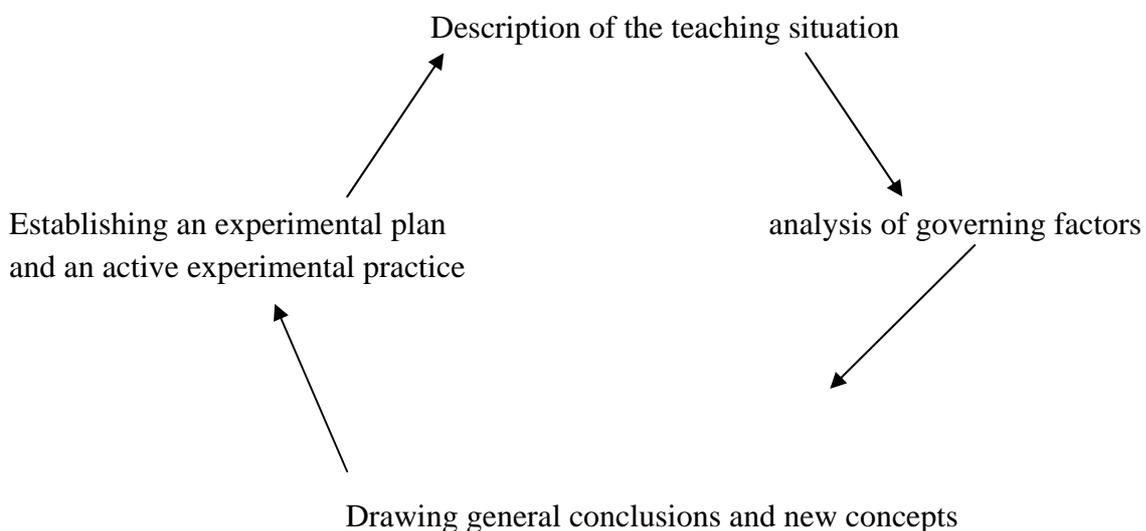
❖ **Practical research input (or procedural research)**

Practical research emerged particularly during the last three decades of the twentieth century in England and the United States within the framework of a movement known as Improving the Educational Institution Movement. It spread afterwards to many countries such as France and Canada. Under this concept, the teaching staff   should observe their teaching

practice, and decide to develop it, along with their teaching strategies. They should also specify the problems that they face and the relevant dimensions. They should assess their performance, choose the best practices, and make the decisions that would be implemented to bring trigger change. Hence, practical research constitutes one of the inputs for professional development.

5.5 Professional ethics as an input for professional development

The ethical dimension of professional development was barely available in the education literature before 1990s, taking into consideration the fact that teaching is a technical performance-based profession, governed by well-defined criteria and subject to accountability. However, the professionalization trend has imposed ethical dimensions in professional development, which has led to what is called "professional ethics". Studies have reported the emergence of many concepts and values such as teachers' aspiration to achieve professional development, the value of mutual respect between teachers and students, the concept of the influence of emotional aspects in professional development, as well as the concept of teacher's ethics.

Another movement, which has gained ground in this connection, claims that teaching ethics require teachers to sustain their professional development and acquire the necessary competencies that would allow them to carry off their professional duties towards their learners and educational institution. This amounts to saying that ethical commitment towards oneself and the others has become a motivating factor in professional development. Personal motives, in turn, have become a pivotal element in this development, regardless of material motivation, and an input for professional development.

5.6. Tools for developing university pedagogical methods

While the current situation is characterized by advanced institutional structures in universities, the teaching staff competence imposes itself as a vital condition for the development of educational structures. With reference to either the ancient historical conventions of Islamic universities or those of western universities, the mission of the university teacher has always been based on their academic competence and teaching skills. The values of integrity and scientific honesty remain part of the ethics of such elite. Also, the image of the teacher should be preserved, as an intellectual, considerate enough to avoid inflammatory public arguments that disturb society. University academics are expected to serve as a bridge between the social current values and the advocates of a culture founded on comprehensive knowledge and universal objective opinions.

Another management tool that could be used in universities is the setting up of administrative units in charge of the follow-up of pedagogical activity. It would take care of upgrading the productivity of studies and improving the quality of the academic relation between teachers and their students. It would also be in charge of advice and information about the relevant curricula for each specialization, as well as the organization of educational activity campaigns, involving both students and teachers.

This unit could also promote the use of modern techniques in teaching such as audio-visual media and computers. Some of the means to develop teachers' performance are:

- **Developing and modernizing higher education.**

- **Organizing training sessions for beginning teachers, or awareness-raising sessions on modern pedagogical methods for all teachers working in the institution;**

- **Elaborating tools and mechanisms of teacher's self-evaluation, for teachers to benefit from them so as to upgrade their delivery and supervision methods**.

5.7. Materials and facilities

Developing higher education in terms of administration, curricula and teaching methods, according to quality management, requires the development of the relevant materials and facilities. It is undeniable that higher education institutions in the Islamic world have achieved a great deal in this regard. That is regarding the infrastructure as well as the equipment of laboratories and administrations with the necessary modern materials. This has led to strengthening a new administration for the institution and conducting studies in advanced conditions. Islamic institutions have also accomplished a lot in terms of computing facilities and strived to engage in regional and international networks.

However, this progress has been in varying degrees across university education systems in the Islamic world. Development is conditioned by various variables such as financial resources, in particular, and poor planning in this regard, as well as the tendency to adopt classical methods in the management of some higher education institutions.

Since development is a comprehensive process, it is necessary to develop materials and facilities so as to vitalize the development programs in the other components of the system, concerning both the central level and the educational institutions. It is also necessary to adopt provisional plans if required. It is worth noting here that developing materials and facilities is as important as developing the other components, due to the impact the latter has on the effectiveness of the former. Introducing information technology, for example, has a vital impact on the management of the institution, especially the management the teaching–learning process. Some aspects of this direct effect are:

- Making changes in the form and content of educational curricula. For example, new subjects and sciences have emerged, such as artificial intelligence systems, genetics, bio-technology, information systems, robotics, materials science, and environment science.

- Emergence of new teaching methods, such as the use of multimedia, which combine sound, image, drawings and writing, the use of virtual laboratories based on computer programming, non-synchronized teaching, and the use of virtual libraries. It is worth noting here that these methods which are based on technological materials and modern information techniques are being used in

many universities in the Islamic world such as Anadol University in Turkey, Tarbuka University in Indonesia, and Azad University in Iran.

5.8. Students

Students constitute the most important input in the higher education system. They are the pivotal element of this system. It is through their standard and characteristics that the education quality standard is determined. However, the nature of students' features are in turn determined by several factors such as knowledge-related factors, social factors, cultural factors and psychological factors such as motivation, preparation, orientations and tendencies, all of which constitute the substance for admission criteria.

It should be pointed out that in many universities, students are the result of a secondary education which focuses on memorizing and reproducing information, and provides a poor standard for various reasons. Hence, higher education receives students who do not represent a suitable input to ensure good quality education, in spite of the good standard of the other inputs. To avoid this situation, we should strive to provide qualifying programs to improve students' standards in the relevant specializations.

Further, students in most higher education institutions do not participate in the management of their institutions and in decision-making in this regard, which has a negative impact on university life in general. This should be reviewed, taking into account students' participation in the social, political and cultural life, as well as their contribution in decision-making, providing the conditions conducive to triggering their skills and creativity. Otherwise, higher education may not contribute in building   citizens capable of generating insightful ideas, listening more than speaking, communicating extensively with others, participating socially and expressing their tendencies.

5.9. Evaluation of student's learning

Developing university pedagogy and upgrading university teachers' performance seriously raise the problematic of the methods of students' performance evaluation. This is due to the vital importance attached to tests, competitive examinations and selection methods in higher educations, either during the process of admission to institutions, in the course of training or at the end of the training program.

One of the main objectives of developing the activity of the university institution in this regard is to reach goal-oriented objective methods that truly reflect the capacities of the student. Criticism has been leveled against the classical examinations based on open-ended questions, which do not adequately measure the capacities of the student, and involve subjective considerations of the teacher. It is recommended to introduce well-defined methods to measure students' knowledge and competencies, and to use continuing assessment throughout the period of studying the subject in question.

6. The university and labor market

6.1 All studies in developing countries promote linking higher education with economic development. This principle is based on the idea that progress can not be achieved in any country in the absence of a qualified and specialized workforce. For decades all Islamic countries have claimed that the education system in general, and higher education system in particular, have positive impacts on sustainable development. The issue of integrating professional graduates is raised in this framework. It is considered one of the qualitative indicators to provide the necessary competencies. It also relates to the system's capacity to satisfy the needs of the economic context in a suitable and adequate fashion.

6.2 Most Islamic countries remained until recent years limited to the perspective that economic progress is contingent upon developing human capital, especially the executives trained in universities. However, the number of university graduates soon increased without generating any corresponding development of the economic condition in these countries, and without any parallel expansion of opportunities in the administrative and economic sectors. With the emergence and increase of university graduate unemployment on the one hand, and the pressing need for executives that meet the needs of comprehensive development on the other, along with the clearly slow economic take-off, the decision-makers of universities and higher institutes were obliged to reconsider higher education patterns, targeting the principle of integration with the needs of the labor market. With reference to the unemployment rates of university graduates, it is clear that degree holders in the areas of literature and humanities find it more difficult to integrate in the job market, compared to graduates of institutes and schools with technical specializations such as architecture, medicine, finance and management, etc.

The rigid educational organizational structure in the institutions with general specializations has not allowed for a compromise between training and the status of university degree holders when they graduate. The relation between these institutes and the job market remains quasi virtual, and they seem to grow on the margin of world economy. It should be noted that the areas of specialization which involve a shortage of job opportunities are still widespread in many universities of the Islamic world, and they contribute significantly to the decline of the value of degrees. Consequently, the academic titles which used to be the key to access positions and executive posts are now insufficient for these positions. This does not mean, however, that the cause is ascribed to the decline in the training standard or the intrinsic academic value of these studies. It seems that there is little or no harmony in the interactions between the system of training and that of production. The university system is growing under the pressure of social demand for training, and under the strain of unreasonable ambitions of students and their parents, while the job market witnesses a sharp decline of vacancies in the public sector. This has led to the lack of protection for the market of university executives, and its tendency to become a more competitive market. Moreover, the labor market in the Islamic countries which are not endowed with important natural resources, has always been linked to an economy characterized by a disrupted balance, and a fragile system in general, where classical agriculture predominates and national companies are unwilling to recruit a highly qualified workforce.

6.3. The strategy for developing higher education, to be aligned with the secular social and economic needs of the Islamic world, requires considering the interaction between the university and the labor market as a complex relation that cannot be limited to a mechanical mutual influence of the two systems. The degree held by the graduate is only an indicator of a specific competence   the job market uses as a selection criterion according to the productivity objectives that the company seeks. As for the hierarchy imposed by the job market on the graduates, it does not necessarily correspond to the academic hierarchy of the domains of scientific knowledge. In many cases, graduate unemployment could be explained along the following lines. On the one hand, it is ascribed to the surplus in training university students; on the other hand, it is a consequence of the transformations permeating jobs and professions.

6.4. Some of the elements that the development strategy involves in this regard are:

- **Specifying a general strategy, at the national level, targeting the 18-24 age bracket, and accurately outlining the potential training methods and the techniques of integrating graduates in the labor market;**

- **Creating divisions and units in charge of advising and guiding students to assess the motives of those seeking admission to higher education, and to assist them in outlining training tracks aligned with their competence, guiding them towards promising professional prospects, and driving them away from the tracks with little or no prospects.**

- **Implementing a clear strategy concerning the admission of students in higher education, by selecting the competent elements among them, to avoid the excessive graduation of a huge number of degree holders, which leads to the decline of the value of academic degrees;**

- **Striving to create vocational specializations in parallel with the classical academic majors, taking into account a meticulous planning of the needs of the workforce with medium and higher competence, and decreasing the specializations with a considerable proportion of literary and theoretical orientation, which generate unemployed youth holding university degrees.**

- **Adopting a strategic planning based on a new perspective that can be seen along the following lines. Higher education is required now more than ever before to transcend the classical approach for which the modern national universities were established in the last decades, namely training the executives and civil servants needed in public administration institutions. On the other hand, it is required to provide society, including all its productive and administrative sectors, with the promising competencies and efficient executives who would satisfy the conditions of competition at the international level, and contribute to the development of the various aspects of the local reality.**

- **One of the strategies concerning the fit between training and employment is the organization of partnerships and alliances between the stakeholders, involving economic actors and employers in the management of university life. They should contribute to the elaboration of training programs, choosing the specializations aligned with the requirements of the phenomenal developments permeating professions and specializations, as well as the new needs of corporations, based on the capacity of graduates to show flexibility and initiative, and to create job opportunities.**

- **Reviewing higher education administrative and financial management, seeking resources beyond the budget allocated by the public authorities. This could be done through new self-funding methods for institutions, by establishing contractual relations with corporations and public administrative bodies**.

7. Scientific research

7.1. Scientific research is a vital pillar for the development of higher education system, since it has a central position is its objectives. As one of the channels that enrich studies and teaching, and a vital component of university training programs, it contributes significantly to upgrading the scientific standard of the university system and ensures its quality. Scientific research is at the same time a producer of knowledge, a factor of scientific and technological progress of society, and a channel to exchange knowledge among researchers at the international level.

Due to the effective impact of scientific research on the economic and industrial fabric, all industrialized countries have invested in this domain, devoting to it between 2% and 4% of their gross domestic product (GDP).

7.2 The genuine development of higher education requires that its structures contain spaces fostering scientific research concerning different types of knowledge, where studies are in full swing relating to the national and regional socio-economic environment. There is an organic interaction between the university institution and scientific research activities at the level of its structural organization as well as its production and excellence.

7.3. Scientific research should be one the missions allocated to each higher education entity, as it is expected to foster intellectual curiosity in students and develop their academic character. It should accompany all training levels, especially the graduate levels such as the Master's and PhD programs. Training students to do research and apply its methods would develop in them the competence of investigation, analysis and constructive criticism. It would qualify students to create, to choose, and to adapt scientific and technological discoveries to the context where they operate.

7.4 Scientific research is conducted in a framework where the teacher combines teaching and supervision for the benefit of university researchers. Hence, the university dynamism

multiplies and develops when doctoral studies are meticulously organized. This is manifested in the amazing success of German universities in the nineteenth century, the excellence of American universities last century, or the modernization of studies in French universities in 1950s. Given that the university teacher is also a researcher, any viable development in this domain should be founded on a rational balance for teachers' activities, granting a special value to scientific research in terms both teachers' promotion and the evaluation of their professional standard.

7.5 It is wise to point out that scientific research activities should not be confined to the academic arena. Activating bridges and mechanisms should be established with the social context, business sector, as well as economic and industrial domains. This could be achieved through setting up an administrative structure in the form of research institutions concerned with development planning and research in coordination with production corporations and industrial laboratories.

7.6. It seems that there should be a national perspective for research, and it is necessary to set up a body to coordinate research activities among universities on the one hand, and the organizations and institutions that conduct research for their own purposes, on the other. This orientation is important in that it allows transcending the weaknesses relating to organization, resources, equipment and cost-effectiveness.

7.7. Scientific research not only plays a vital role in the progress of knowledge as well as in renewing and enriching specialization, but it also significantly contributes to the strategic programs of the state, and it constitutes a real challenge to build an advanced state. Therefore, it is necessary to promote useful inventions and integrate them into long-term plans concerning the general objectives and needs of society. In this regard, we should specify the scientific and technical fields to be granted priority in the planned research works, or those in progress, in Islamic countries, such as agricultural and medical research, research in water resources and the environment, as well as research in the Islamic heritage, etc.

7.8. We should strike a balance among theoretical research, applied research and development research. We should also consolidate research in the other various branches of knowledge such as humanities and exact sciences. In this connection, it is necessary to guide experts in Islamic countries and encourage them to establish paradigms founded on field work data in various domains, so as to reach scientific solutions capable of linking higher education and scientific research with development areas. This involves the transfer of research practice in university laboratories and workshops to the problems of the cultural, economic and social reality.

The researcher is expected to be an expert capable of adaptation, invention and modernization. He or capable of the transfer of knowledge in a society undergoing transitions and successive changes.

7.9. Other strategic orientations for this sector involve the strengthening of partnership with the fabric of corporations and the economic context in general, through the integration of

partnership in plans and research programs. This could also be done through the establishment of entities for the coordination between the production sectors, which would outline priority themes in research programs. Scientific research is   expected to support corporations in their development projects and guide their programs towards the domains related to the requirements of sustainable development.

7.10. To achieve the development and excellence of scientific production in Islamic countries and the rest of the world, researches should transcend their confinement and seclusion. That is, collective rather than individual research should be encouraged. This measure would require intensifying communication, exchange, contracts, and cooperation agreements among Islamic countries. This endeavor would result in exchanging scientific references and documents, participating in specialized scientific symposia, conducting collective research, and benefiting collectively from funding sources.

7.11. To conduct the coordination activities of scientific research in Islamic countries, exchange mechanisms should be activated, such as providing catalogs to the existing scientific research institutes, specifying their objectives, identity and products. It is also necessary to elaborate digital stations which present these institutes, and to establish networks of researches working within the same specialization, strengthening solidarity among them. Besides, it is recommended to devote awards at the Islamic level so as to compensate academic excellence and the best scientific research in various specializations. The publication and distribution of such works should be funded and science and technology periodicals should be encouraged.

7.12.   Within the framework of the constant action to provide scenarios for developing scientific production, it is necessary to grant priority to the research works targeting the preservation of the Islamic heritage and its spiritual, cultural and civilizational foundations, with a view to linking Islamic thought with scientific developments and Islamizing science and knowledge. This should be coupled with the development of the intellectual competencies capable of inventing, rather than sticking narrow issues and keeping perspectives with rather limited prospects. Scientific research in the Islamic world needs intellectuals and scientific talents with international standards, and should establish intensive scientific cooperation with international scientific trends. In so doing, they would asses the contribution of national research to the development of the entire human thought, following the model of Islamic sciences at the zenith of Islamic civilization.

This sector needs development in terms of quantity and quality, as well as the encouragement of its human resources. Any strategy for developing this activity should strive to prevent Islamic scientific talents from migrating to foreign countries, by providing incentives for the workforce in this domain. This can only be achieved through intensifying efforts in terms of infrastructure, including laboratories, moral and financial incentives, and various technological facilities.

In the furtherance of these orientations, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -ISESCO- has carried out the following activities:

- Establishing ISESCO's Center for Promotion of Scientific Research.

- Devising the Strategy for the Development of Science and Technology in Islamic Countries, which was adopted by the eighth Islamic Summit Conference held in Tehran in 1997.

- Drawing up the action plan on the prevention of migration of scientific competencies in Islamic countries.

Section 4

The role of higher education in addressing current issues

1. The role of university in promoting the values of dialogue, peace and human rights

Human rights and the values of peace and dialogue enjoy an outstanding position in the Holy Qur'an and Prophetic Tradition, as well as elsewhere in the Islamic heritage. This is so obvious that there is no need for further elaboration here. Moreover, human rights and the values of peace and dialogue among individuals and groups still constitute a hot issue in the Islamic world, debated in studies, research works, conferences, symposia and official declarations. Some of these are given below, by way of example:

- Declaration of the 19th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers on Human Rights in Islam, in August 1990 in Cairo;

- The Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, issued by the Federation of the Islamic World, in Rome in 2000;

The Holy Qur'an has called for dialogue. Allah Almighty says: "**Argue with them in the best way**" (An-Nahl: 125). It has also called for tolerance and admonished extremism in dealing with others, as well as animosity towards other religions, calling for belief in the previous Messengers. Allah Almighty says: "**The messenger believes in what has been revealed unto him from his Lord, and so do the believers. Each one believes in Allah and his angels and His scriptures and his messengers – We make no distinction between his Messengers**" (Al-Baqarah: 285).

The Islamic Scientific, Educational and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) has significantly contributed in defining the Islamic perspective of dialogue and human rights, through its publications and the conferences it has held in various regions of the world. Some of these contributions are:

- International Symposium on Dialogue and Coexistence between Civilizations and Cultures (Germany, 2000);

- International Symposium on Dialogue between Civilizations in a Changing World (Morocco, 2001);

- International Symposium on Dialogue among Civilizations for Co-existence (Syria, 2002).

- International Symposium on the Peculiarity of the Islamic Cultural Perspective in Dealing with Human Issues (United Arab Emirates, 2003);

- International Symposium on the Role of Islam and Christianity in Building Concord (Tunis, 2004).

- International Symposium on Civilizational and Cultural Dialogue: its objectives and Scope of Action (Saudi Arabia, 2005);

- International Symposium on Human Civilizations and Cultures: from Dialogue to Alliance (Tunis, 2006).

Higher education is strongly invited to enhance human rights along with the values of dialogue and participation, through its educational curricula, its organizational structure, and its legislation. It should sensitize students to understand, apply, disseminate, and defend these values. On this basis, it is wise to enhance these values so that they enjoy an appropriate position in the project of the strategy for developing higher education in the Islamic world.

2. The role of the university in dealing with contemporary problems

The importance of higher education stems from the diversity of its roles and missions to serve individuals, communities and humanity at large. On this basis, it confronts many societal and global issues, in an interaction characterized by mutual influence. Some of these issues and phenomena are:

a) Globalization

Chief among the characteristics relating directly or indirectly to higher education, as they have been exposed in many studies in this regard, are:

- Hegemony of multinational corporations on the countries they deal with and hence on world economies, which contributes to the decline of the importance of the State dealing with these corporations,

- A huge revolution in information technology so that the world has become a universal information network, which has saved time and space;

- Many issues have become universal, such as drought, environment pollution, unemployment, global warming, and bird flu;

- Tendency towards the standardization of demand and consumption, which contributes to the disappearance of specificities and identities;

- Spreading concepts of democracy, political plurality and human rights.

Of course globalization involves merits and demerits. We may benefit from it if we approach it with caution, through studying it carefully and insightfully while sticking to our Islamic identity and culture.

From this perspective, higher education is required to deal positively with globalization and the phenomena it involves. The aspects of this approach include the gradual shift from the classical practices resulting from the industrialization era, which are still predominant in many regions of the Islamic world, to the advanced practices aligned with the new international developments such as virtual education, distance learning, and e-learning. This could be conducted in such a way that universities and schools become networks rather than mere buildings and bureaucratic administrations.

Another aspect of dealing with globalization is the adoption of the principle of the overlap of educational, social and scientific research endeavors with a view to producing,

analyzing, applying and commercializing knowledge, based on a futuristic perspective of needs and requirements. This would develop the economy, on the one hand, and preserve as well as enhance the Islamic national persona, on the other.

Therefore, the university should contribute to the formation of a generation whose mind is capable of creativity and positive competition. Only individuals with such a mind would able to produce new ideas and original strategies and to solve the pending problems locally, regionally and internationally, while proud of their Islamic identity. They are also equipped with civilizational awareness which would protect them from the dangers of acculturation and typification that globalization involves.

It is also necessary to take into account the economic and social conditions in the various regions of the Islamic world, as well as the extent to which they are amenable to change. The bottom line here is to set up a development strategy that is convincing and implementable in its context, and to obtain an explicit willingness to translate it into practice.

6) Adult education and literacy

The contemporary concept of adult education involves almost all the stages of human life, including the children who have not had the opportunity to access public education, unschooled youngsters, employed or unemployed adults, retirees and the elderly. Accordingly, the concept of adult education has been associated with the concept of life-long education, continuing education and non-formal education.

The concept of adult education, on the other hand, is founded on the cornerstones of the Islamic society, some of which are knowledge, justice and freedom. These are closely linked with the principles of the divine method calling for learning, consultation and perfection at work. Seeking knowledge in Islam is a kind of worship and lifestyle for humans, as God's vicegerent on earth, for them to lead their life in this world according to the teachings of Allah Almighty.

Further, Islam has made of seeking knowledge an obligation, and the knowledge seeker a militant for the cause of Allah. This amounts to saying that education is an obligation to confirm and preserve the divine instinct. This is because failing to respect it amounts to derailing away from the faith in Allah and His Divine Unity. (Madkur, 1996)

Adult education includes also literacy, which covers many areas. Some of these are:

- **Basic literacy**, targeting those who do not possess the competencies of reading, writing and arithmetics,

- **Functional literacy**, which aims at enabling trainees to acquire skills related to a specific job or profession so as to upgrade the professional competence of those engaged in the labor market and to qualify the unemployed to find a suitable job,

- **Civilizational literacy**, whose training targets the development of the skills of social participation, adaptation to social reality, contribution to societal development, and integration into the social fabric.

In all cases, the phenomenon of illiteracy should be handled with a positive spirit. From this perspective higher education is invited to contribute to this project, by training highly qualified technical staff that would establish policies, draw strategies, lay down plans and outline the relevant follow-up and evaluation techniques. It is also required to conduct research and studies to pin down the nature of this phenomenon and uncover the factors governing its development. This would allow proposing the ways to curb it, taking into account that these functions are hardly available in higher education in the Islamic world.

Another area of adult education is continuing training for the workforce in various domains, regardless of their academic qualification or hierarchical position. This area of adult education has increased, especially as of the last two decades of the 20th century. This is due to the emergence of modern technologies and advanced information media such as the Internet, and the introduction of computers in most work places, which significantly changed working methods and institution management. The workforce has been required to adapt to this new reality and deal with it through training so as to learn new techniques and working methods and acquire advanced competencies.

In the light of these considerations, adult education has become the focus of the higher education system to confront social challenges and the pressures of globalization, as well as its information facilities that allow high quality training, for individuals to acquire new skills so as to upgrade their capacities. The integration of adult education in the higher education system makes of this type of education a crucial component for social development needs.

c) The environment

Environmental issues involve both local problems, such as the pollution of a specific river, and universal ones, such as the deterioration of the ozone layer and global warming. The term "environment" concerns not only nature and the climate, but it used in social life as well. For example, poverty and unacceptable human behavior are referred to as "environmental pollution". Likewise, the environment is closely linked to sustainable development and resources. The environmental movement is a strong intellectual trend that is increasingly expanding to cover various fields of knowledge and different activities. It has its own orientations and methods to describe and explain the relevant conditions so as to propose solutions and take decisions. Accordingly, a specific institution of higher education is considered an environment separate from another one, though they have certain features in common. The former would have its own characteristics and needs. And they way to deal with it is also unique. The same thing holds for the latter. Consequently, there is no way we could generalize development procedures on different institutions.

The environmental conditions, especially those confronting all countries and regions, require the participation of all stakeholders to solve the problems it involves. Individual efforts are neither effective nor sufficient, which confirms the importance of collective participation and commitment in this domain.

The role of higher education in this connection is to sensitize students and society to the importance of preserving the environment, in coordination with the relevant local and international associations. Higher education should conduct scientific studies to further understand the factors behind the deterioration of the natural and social environment, with a view to resolving the problems it involves. That is, its role is to produce the relevant knowledge and disseminate it at the local and international levels.

In the furtherance of that move, ISESCO has convened many conferences on the environment in Jeddah (Kingdom of Saudi Arabia), as well as in some other Islamic countries, and issued "the Islamic Declaration on Sustainable Development" in 2002.

d) Health

Health is one of the most important issues for societies, including the Islamic one, in terms of prevention and treatment. It is usually the responsibility of the state as well as that of the private sector.

However, higher education should to be involved in different areas such as:

- Training medical doctors and their assistants, taking into account the new discoveries and advanced methods in the prevention and treatment of diseases. Though this constitutes their traditional role, Islamic universities should be modernized with regard to the working methods and equipment, in accordance with the available and affordable conditions. Besides, Islamic universities should engage in partnership with universities and higher institutes in developed countries;

- Raising awareness of the people in the Islamic countries to the necessity of preventing diseases by upgrading their educational standards;

- Conducting research on the problematic issues in local environments and experimenting the potential procedures and techniques to resolve them. In this area, it is possible to call on foreign expertise for assistance;

- Engaging in partnership with governmental institutions, and non-governmental organizations and associations with common concern at the local, regional or international levels.

e) Population

Any viable strategy for developing higher education must take into consideration the population situation as well as the local languages and cultures of the Islamic world. It seems that Muslims are the fastest growing population in the world.

Muslims use many languages, some of which are written, others are not. Most of these languages are closer to dialects than to standard languages, whereas Arabic is considered the most widespread language, used as an official language in Arab countries. It is also used in many non Arab countries such as Mali, Senegal, Niger, Chad, and Malaysia. Likewise,

Indonesian is used in Indonesia, Urdu in Pakistan, Bengali in Bangladesh, Turkish in Turkey and Cyprus, Hausa in Cameroon, Nigeria and Chad, Persian in Iran, Swahili in South Africa, Pashto in Afghanistan, Somali in Somalia, and Amharic in Ethiopia (ibid.).

The plurality of languages in the Islamic countries poses various challenges related to the socio-economic development, population growth, the natural environment, maternal healthcare, education, job opportunities, poverty, and immuno-deficiency. These challenges should be integrated in educational curricula, in general, and in higher education, in particular, respecting the specific characteristics of each country, as well as its cultural specificity.

f) Brain drain

The brain drain from Islamic countries to other countries with luring development is detrimental to their progress. It has a negative impact on their higher education, and hinders the capacity of the Muslim people to gain knowledge, to become productive, and to generate high technology. Research has shown that this phenomenon is the outcome of a number of factors, such as the mismatch between the socio-economic and political conditions. It is also ascribed to the poor connection between educational curricula and the local socio-cultural environment. This is because these countries tend to import these curricula from other contexts that are completely different in nature, the send students abroad for studies, and their local infrastructure is in unsuitable condition.

This situation is likely to worsen in the future due to the internationalization of higher education and the globalization tendencies which encourage the migration of creative brains from Islamic countries. Some of the measures that have been suggested to face this problem are:

- Developing higher education and scientific research in Islamic countries and modernizing their structure;
- Encouraging cooperation among Islamic countries in order reverse the brain drain, and setting up a strategy to motivate those who have migrated to return home.
- Benefiting from the expertise of these emigrants by inviting them to fulfill specific missions in their home countries;
- Motivating them to contribute to the development of the Islamic world;
- Consolidating their sense of belonging to their religion, civilization, and home countries.

In an endeavour to prevent brain drain, ISESCO devised the "**Strategy for Benetting from Muslim Competencies in the West**", which was adopted by the tenth Islamic Summit Conference in Malaysia in 2003.

g) The Stereotypical image harming Islam and Muslims

Western people, in general, have a stereotypical negative image of Muslims as being prone to extremism and violence. This image is probably the outcome of some old historical

events. The events of September 11 could be said to constitute part of the circumstances that have contributed to such an image.

Higher education has, therefore, an important role to play to rectify this image and change the current attitudes towards Islam. This mission consists in (a) producing convincing scientific knowledge and publishing it in western countries, (b) educating Muslim students so that they become creative in different areas of knowledge, and (c) encouraging the mass media addressed to the West to work towards these goals . This is part of the evidence that could be put forward to demonstrate the capacity of Muslim societies to take part in current human civilization, which would induce respect for Islam and Muslims.

As part of the efforts to refute these stereotypes about Islam, ISESCO convened-and took part in-many international symposiums, including:

- The International Symposium on "the Image of the Islamic World in Western Media: between Fairness and Bias" (Morocco, 2002);

- The International Symposium on "Islam in Europe" (Italy, 2004);

- The International Conference on "Islam: religion of peace" (Moscow: 2005);

- The International Conference on "Islam and Youth" (Azerbaijan, 2006).

Technology

In the last few decades, the world has witnessed a scientific and technological revolution unprecedented in human history. The technological discoveries and inventions grew even further at the beginning of the third millennium. Accordingly, the capacity of computers has enormously increased and that of the Internet has doubled every year. Furthermore, great discoveries have been made in various scientific and technical domains, such as genetic engineering and space exploration, which has had a remarkable impact on the socio-economic and cultural aspects of life. Thus, new industries have replaced old ones that prevailed for decades or even centuries. New concepts and classifications have emerged, such as Symbolic Economy, Post-Industrial Economy, Information Economy, inter alia. This situation has also generated new social behaviors among individuals and in societies, as well as new life-styles.

Likewise, there has been a tendency to integrate both science and technology in the socio economic planning so that these, put together, would have a prominent position in the local and pan-national policies of the Islamic world. The objective here is to accomplish comprehensive development, since this is fundamental to achieving sovereignty and independence. In order to achieve these goals, it is necessary to take the following measures:

- Adopting a special policy to sponsor the gifted students after selecting them on the basis of special tests;

- Preparing a generation of young citizens capable of interacting with new developments in the technical and scientific domains, and participating in the production, implementation and dissemination thereof;

- Establishing a database of researchers and innovators in science and technology in the Islamic world.

As far as higher education in the Islamic world is concerned, the technological revolution should be allocated a prominent position in their development strategy, not only with regard to their resources and equipment, but also with respect to the training and educational curricula.. This policy would make it possible to generate productive and creative brains that can interact with international developments, with a futuristic perspective. This would enable university education to deal with technology based on the awareness of "educational technology" rather than "technology in education".

Section 5

Prospects for change and suggested development mechanisms

The current higher education system in the Islamic world is not fully in line with the missions assigned to it. This situation is intricate and cannot be handled easily, given the current historical period where the university roles are no more as stable as they used to be. Today, university institutions are called upon to permanently adjust and even change their roles. The most important roles of the university are motivated by the necessity to respond to the requirements resulting from the ever-increasing inventions and abundance of knowledge. In the light of the new changes permeating the Islamic world, the university is inevitably one of the instruments that help the social structures to adapt to new changes. The university has always played this role and has proved the application of this model to a certain extent.

The regress of the university in some Islamic countries and its failure to adapt to new changes have resulted from its inability to invent a specific model that would ensure its progress. That is "an academic and scientific model".

Since the relevant authorities are aware of this situation, higher education in most Islamic countries is undergoing some dynamic changes. Serious endeavors are made, seeking strategies to establish renewable missions and reforms for this system. The rationale behind this is to cope with the transformations dictated by the cultural and socio-economic environment of these countries.

The strategy for developing the structures of higher education requires advanced research in its general roles and renewable orientations of its activities and services. This process aims to set up suitable structures and an efficient policy, and to endow higher education with the capacity to actively take part in progress. This would make higher education institutions productive in terms of qualification and academic research, and consolidate the management capacities in the central administration and the relevant academic institutions.

It is also a requisite, under the present conditions, to set up a comprehensive or selective strategy to develop higher education in the Islamic countries, taking into account the following considerations:

1. Considering the university as one of the axes of progress, one of the top priorities in the modernization process, and one of the fundamental instruments to revive and sustain the authentic cultural heritage as a source of knowledge serving to reinforce knowledge, culture as well as the culture of constructive criticism.

2. Another main principle of the development strategy is that higher education should satisfy the needs of society and, at the same time, anticipate these needs so that it can reach a standard suitable enough to meet the aspiration and expectations of the Islamic countries.

3. Given the progress the Islamic world is witnessing and the current knowledge revolution, university top grades will no longer be monopolized by a set of outstanding individuals, but will become a popular demand claimed by all categories of people. By transcending such elitism in education, it is imperative to set up a specific strategy to change the teaching methods and objectives, adapting them to the new scientific trends and job opportunities.

4. The university should be considered an open institution, serving as an observatory for different kinds of scientific and technological developments, as a site for competent researchers, and as a laboratory for discoveries and innovations. The university may also be attributed other roles like a workshop for professional training that students can access and return to, if need be, whenever they have the required skills. The university is also a locomotive for progress, and a space where basic and applied research is conducted in different areas of knowledge.

5. Admitting some basic principles that aim to set the roles of higher education within an equation between the obligation to provide quality and excellence in training, and the obligation to ensure equal opportunity in admission. The objective is to build a strategy which can strike a balance between qualitative and quantitative development.

6. It is clear that quality in the university output has become a preoccupation in the current changes. Therefore, meeting this objective to satisfy the nation's expectations depends on the ability to control the factors related to the institution, such as the demand for training, the objectives of training, the competence of teachers and the scientific output, among others.

7. The organization of higher education operates in conditions that constantly raise questions about the efficiency of the accomplished reforms. The current tendencies move toward establishing systems that transcend stagnation. These systems are multi-dimensional, independent in structure, and integrated in their local and regional environment, whose components are interwoven. Also, these systems avoid the university patterns founded on the division or hierarchy of studies.

Taking the elements analyzed above into account, some of the implementation mechanisms to materialize the present development strategy can be seen along the following lines:

7.1 Monitoring the different directions that the process of university intellectual development might take, in order to serve the knowledge and scientific goals assigned to higher education. In so doing, the university system would remain related to the specific socio-cultural aspects of the country, with no risk of any potential dependence;

7.2 Increasing the number of training and research specializations, including institutes, departments and units. This would satisfy the latest scientific evolutions, the necessity of modernization, and the different tendencies and qualifications of students.

7.3 Admitting that secondary education has a direct impact on the running of higher education, and that it is essential to establish mechanisms in the form of a transitional stage to qualify students for post secondary education. This stage should be closely linked to professional training and to the specificities of the economic environment.

7.4 Building the capacity of institutions to ensure continuous self-development by fostering a culture of evaluation targeting the organizational structures, the teaching methods and tools, as well as scientific research systems; it is also important to establish appropriate mechanisms for the assessment of institutional performance and for the follow-up of a total quality implementation.

7.5 Providing diversity in types of institutions, such as public and private institutions, since this will serve scientific competition and generate intellectual evolution; concurrently, a coordination is to be established on the basis of legislative frameworks as regards academic grades and diplomas, and a system of specialization and quality criteria should be adopted.

7.6 To activate the development mechanisms of university patterns, it is necessary to organize training sessions for the administration executives, and regional workshops to train leaders in education who can organize and reform Higher Education, and carry out studies to develop it; it would also be important to prepare experts in strategic planning.

7.7 Establishing institutes for research in higher education in Islamic countries. These would develop quality assurance studies and ensure the best practices as well as evaluation methods. They would elaborate the norms and components of general plans. They would set up scientific foundations for guidance and follow-up of the outcomes of higher education system, and provide the relevant remedies for its deficient pathways.

7.8 Integrating higher education in the production process and relating its educational and research institutions to the different sectors of production.

7.9 Connecting the labor market to the university by involving economic actors in the elaboration of programs and by offering internship to students in their companies;

7.10 Providing job opportunities in companies for university graduates and highly qualified technicians, and encouraging companies to raise the standards of their workforce;

7.11 Offering continuous training opportunities for at universities and laying emphasis on post-recruitment training, in coordination with the relevant actors;

7.12 Avoiding excessive expansion of theoretical courses at university plans so as not to induce intellectual unemployment Also an integrated approach should be adopted in the elaboration of specialization studies, taking into account the socio-economic status of university institutions.

7.13 Encouraging different types of partnership and alliance between higher education institutions and other societal institutions, cultural or administrative, to monitor the shift

in social needs and in various intellectual trends,　placing the educational institution at the heart of social events;

7.14 Adapting　　higher education structures to the new technologies, and developing the mechanisms for setting up open and virtual universities to meet the ever-growing demand for high level training;

7.15 Promoting relationship with other educational institutions in the industrialized countries to benefit from　their leading experiences, and fostering a rational integration into the contemporary world of knowledge;

7.16 Highlighting the Islamic perspective and cultural orientations in handling and assimilating the contemporary intellectual, scientific and technological developments;

7.17 Fostering all sorts of bilateral and multilateral cooperation among　Islamic countries to enhance the exchange of information, experience, teachers, experts, researchers, and students, along with the mutual recognition of university degrees.

7.18 Consolidating democracy in education through equal opportunity　with regard to the conditions of admission, and with reference to individual skills in the course of training. Also, the stakeholders should create various and impartial forms of the contribution of students and other beneficiaries to the costs of developing and modernizing the higher education system.

Implementation Mechanisms of the Strategy on the Promotion of University Education in the Islamic World

Preamble

- Based on the objectives enshrined in the Charter of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World, Article (4)b, calling for upgrading and developing higher education to meet the Islamic countries' requirements and needs in terms of human resources,

- Pursuant to the recommendations of the Third General Conference of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World, held in the University of Sharjah (State of the United Arab Emirates, 9-11/03/2004), inviting the Federation's Secretary General to "devise specialized projects to develop higher education in the Islamic world",

- In response to the Resolutions of the Second Islamic Conference of the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in Tripoli (Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, 6-9/09/2003), which called for energizing the role of higher education and scientific research institutions in developing the society, improving the performance of the educational system, upgrading the quality of educational institutions and developing the skills of their human resources,

- Based on the awareness of the Federation's General Secretariat about the growing educational and learning needs as well as the increasing internal and external challenges in Islamic countries,

The General Secretariat, drawing on its accumulated expertise and relying on the experiences and references of educational institutions concerned with university education, has drawn up the Draft "**Strategy on the Promotion of University Education in the Islamic World**", with a view to stepping up the efforts exerted by higher education institutions in the OIC Member States, and in appreciation of the mission of education aiming at edifying the personality of the Muslim, enhancing the integrity of the society, protecting its cultural identity and keeping abreast of universal achievements in the different knowledge subjects.

Definitions

1. **The General Secretariat**: the General Secretariat of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World

2. **The Federation**: the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World

3. **The Charter**: the Charter of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World

4. **The Strategy**: the Strategy on the Promotion of University Education in the Islamic World

5. **The Body**: the Consultative Body for the Implementation of the Strategy on the Promotion of University Education in the Islamic World

6. **Member Universities**: the Member Universities of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World

7. **The Fund**: the Fund for financing the projects and programmes of the Strategy

In view of the role entrusted with university education in the developmental and civilizational revival of the Islamic world, the Strategy features five parts.

The first part deals with the groundwork of the Strategy represented in the importance, the references, the objectives and the challenges. The second part tackles the fields of the promotion of university education. As for the third one, it includes the issues and topics that are of strategic priority to the concerns of university education. The fourth part highlights the role of the university in addressing the current problems and the issues of the Ummah. The fifth part puts forward proposals and recommendations for the promotion mechanisms. Based on the Federation's belief that the efficient action is the one which has direct bearing on reality, the General Secretariat, in a bid to abide by the fulfilment of the Strategy objectives and orientations, gives each university free choice of the most suitable among them to its priorities and specificities, and suggests the following mechanisms for their implementation:

I- At the level of the General Secretariat of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World

The setting up of the Consultative Body for the Implementation of the Strategy on the Promotion of University Education in the Islamic World

The Consultative Body shall be composed of the Federation's Secretary General or his representative, a representative of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation, and six representatives of the Member Universities representing the Arab, Asian, African, European and American areas to be elected in rotation for three years. The Body may set up specialized commissions whose functions shall be determined by the Body's Rules of Procedure.

Its objectives:

- to translate the Strategy objectives into practical projects and programmes;
- to identify the priorities according to changing circumstances and challenges;
- to look for funding sources for the Strategy projects and programmes;
- to step up universities' efforts in devising and developing its plans and programmes;
- to draw up the broad lines of future programmes and projects as part of the Strategy objectives;
- to enhance the exchange of expertise, experiences and relations among Islamic universities;
- to create a strategic observatory within the Body to follow the new developments and challenges which affect, either positively or negatively, university education, and to put forward proposals on the orientations and conceptions to be included in the Federation's plans;
- to plan for the universities' future knowledge environment and to evaluate the achievements in this regard;
- to examine the plans, projects, programmes and strategies submitted by the Federation's General Secretariat.

II- At the level of Member Universities

   a) to set up a unit for strategic action within the university to provide counselling for the means to implement the Strategy and to make it consonant with the specificities and needs of the university;

   b) to propose projects and programmes to be implemented as part of the Strategy objectives;

   c) to supply the Body with the experts of the university who are specialized in the issues of university education;

   d) to supply the Body with the activities of the university;

   e) to set up a joint coordinating council between national universities and the Consultative Body.

III- At the level of civil society

Giving attention to university education should not be confined to specialized institutions. Also, the means to pursue this attention should not be limited to the official and traditional ways. Rather, all categories with their artistic, social, economic and religious specializations should contribute to energizing the mission of the Strategy as university education affects the different spheres of society. All its outputs converge at the social reality in all its dimensions. Hence, there is a mutual relationship between university education and the remaining components of society. In order to activate this reciprocal servicing and benefit, it is recommended that an agreement for cooperation and partnership be concluded between this Body and the following institutions:

- media corporations;
- economic and banking institutions;
- artistic institutions;
- research and scientific institutions;
- social institutions.

IV- Setting up a fund for financing the projects and programmes of the Strategy

A Fund shall be created to finance the projects and programmes which are proposed by the Consultative Body for implementation as part of the Strategy objectives and under the supervision of the Federation's General Secretariat. Its resources shall be made up of the following:

   a) subsidies, grants and donations which are not counter to the Federation objectives;

   b) revenues generated from knowledge services that are delivered in this regard;

   c) Contributions of Member Universities to the implementation of proposed projects and programmes.

The Organizational Chart proposed for the Consultative Body

General Secretariat of the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World

Representative of the Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Coopera

President

Officials in charge of	Rapporteur	Vice-President

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Affairs

Administrative, Financial and Legal Affairs

Planning, Strategic Studies and Evaluation