

Second Coordination Meeting of Education Ministers of ISESCO's Member States

(Alongside the 29th Session of UNESCO General Conference)

Final Report

**Paris, 21 Jumada II 1418 A.H.
23 October 1997 A.D.**

Final Report

**Second Coordination Meeting of Education Ministers of the
Member States of the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization**

(Paris, 21st Jumada II, 1418 H / 23rd October 1997)

a) In compliance with the objectives set out in its Charter; being responsive to the recommendations issued by the First Coordination Meeting held by Their Excellencies the Ministers of Education in ISESCO Member States on 26 October 1995 in Paris; as part of unchanging resolve to support Joint Islamic Action and take up civilizational, intellectual and scientific challenges levelled at the Islamic Ummah while it stands on the threshold of the 21st century; and in the light of the positive assessment made of cooperation activities between UNESCO and ISESCO during the last years, and on account of the civilizational and humane mission they are discharging together by dint of convergence and, indeed, complementarity among their objectives, ISESCO called for the convening of the Second Coordination Meeting among the Ministers of Education in Member States alongside the 29th General Conference of UNESCO. Member States responded favourably to the invitation and the meeting was held on Thursday 21st Jumada II 1418 H /23rd October 1997.

b) The meeting was presided over by H.E Mohamed Ghassan Al-Halabi, Education Minister in the Syrian Arab Republic, President of the 5th Session of the General Conference of the Islamic Organization and attended by His Excellency Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, ISESCO Director General, His Excellency Dr. Federico Mayor, UNESCO Director General, Their Excellencies the Ministers of Education or their representatives. The meeting was also attended by His Excellency Dr. Ali Mohamed Altwaijri, Director General of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States, the representatives of the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO) and the Agence de la Francophonie (ACCT), and a number of representatives from Muslim countries not members of ISESCO, as observers.

c) The meeting was opened by a statement delivered by H.E Mohamed Ghassan Al-Halabi, President of the 5th Session of ISESCO's General Conference, in which he commended the initiative taken by H.E. Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, ISESCO Director General, to call for convening the meeting at the highest levels. He, likewise, commended the quality of preparation and organization of the meeting as well as the working document presented by ISESCO which combined comprehensiveness, precision and objective evaluation. He thanked Their Excellencies the Ministers for their favourable response to the invitation extended by the Islamic Organization, which proved, if need be, their renewed appreciation for ISESCO's active action and unstinted coordination efforts with parallel organizations and institutions, especially UNESCO, as part of service to the educational, scientific and cultural causes of the Muslim Ummah. He further expressed gratitude and appreciation for H.E. Dr. Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO, for his kind cooperation with ISESCO and for the facilities he provided for the holding of the meeting in good conditions.

d) In the address he delivered, H.E. Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, ISESCO Director General, expressed deep gratitude and thanks to Their Excellencies the Education Ministers of ISESCO Member States and to the heads of delegations for their favourable response to the Organization's invitation to attend that important Coordination Meeting which would widen the scope of UNESCO-ISESCO cooperation relations, on the one hand, and on the other, would contribute to the consolidation of joint Islamic action and the taking up of educational, cultural and scientific challenges levelled at the Muslim Ummah as it stood on the threshold of the 21st century. He extended his thanks and appreciation for H.E. Dr. Federico Mayor, UNESCO Director General, for his kind cooperation with ISESCO, his follow-up of different areas of cooperation between the two Organizations, and his personal

commitment to promote cooperation relations with ISESCO in various fields of common interest.

e) H.E. Dr. Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO, delivered an address in which he commended the convening of the Second Coordination Meeting at UNESCO's headquarters, expressing on the same occasion his happiness to see cooperation relations between the two Organizations developed within the framework of a well-balanced partnership geared towards the achievement of shared objectives; which cooperation conducted to positive results, especially after the two Organizations had signed a Joint Action Programme in Sarajevo (March, 1996). He affirmed that those relations would witness further promotion and diversification in the areas and countries of common interest.

f) The Meeting focused on consideration of the proposals put forward by the Islamic Organization regarding the cooperation programmes with UNESCO within the framework of ISESCO's Draft Action Plan for the years 1998-2000 and UNESCO's Draft Action Plan for the years 1998-1999, and evaluation of past cooperation experience between the two Organizations and in particular during the years 1996-1997. The participants examined the different items contained in the Working Document and looked into such ways of implementation as would be conducive to the achievement of scientific development, cultural and educational renaissance of the Muslim world, within the general framework of the Islamic virtues and the principles of tolerance, coexistence, dialogue and peace among peoples.

g) The heads of delegations praised unanimously the outstanding efforts exerted by the Director General of the Islamic Organization with a view to convening that Meeting in excellent conditions in terms of good preparation and rigorous no-fault organization.

h) The heads of delegations, taking part in the Meeting, likewise, underlined the paramount importance of coordination among Member States in such a comprehensive way and elaborate, rigorous style. They were unanimous in upholding the necessity to enhance such cooperation and proceed unto that path so that the Islamic Organization might keep abreast of the international conferences and fora operating in common fields of competence, through holding coordination meetings among Member States alongside these conferences or fora, the aim being to arrive at further complementarity and coordination among the Member States.

The deliberations, discussions and exchange of views, which took place at the Meeting gave way to the following recommendations by participants :

- 1- Recommend the achievements and programmes realized by ISESCO within the framework of joint cooperation programmes with UNESCO in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, which benefitted most Member States and Muslim communities in non-Member States and countries of emigration, and urge ISESCO to carry forward the implementation of its lofty objectives.
- 2- Congratulate ISESCO Director General for his unflagging efforts in the fields of consolidation and promotion of cooperation relations with international, Arab, Islamic, governmental and non-governmental organizations, which efforts helped affirm ISESCO's radiance and credibility, drained to it sustained extra-financial resources which contributed to the funding of programmes and activities of paramount importance, and allowed for the dissemination of the righteous Islamic principles which reflect the real image of Islam.

- * Praise the favourable response by UNESCO Director General Dr. Federico Mayor, to the recommendation issued by Education Ministers of ISESCO Member States aimed at making of the Coordination Meeting a periodic meeting held every two years alongside UNESCO's General Conference, and recommend the support and assistance provided by different UNESCO directorates with a view to holding the meeting in excellent conditions.
- 3- Appreciate ISESCO's efforts and take pride in the outcomes of joint cooperation with similar organizations which unquestionably boosted the implementation quality of ISESCO's programmes by means of fruitful contacts with parallel international, Arab and Islamic organizations and by capitalizing on their long experience and vast expertise, thus avoiding duplication and repetition, and achieving interdependence and complementarity with these organizations within the framework of respect to the specificities of the Muslim society.
 - 4- Commend ISESCO's Working Document on the outcomes of cooperation between ISESCO and UNESCO and its future prospects characterized by comprehensiveness and elaboration, and adopt the draft plan put forward by ISESCO on the fields of cooperation with UNESCO, subject to observance of the proposals made by a number of Member States.
 - 5- Take pride in the participation of ISESCO in sponsoring and organizing a number of international conferences, the themes of which fall within the purview of ISESCO's competence, a fact which enabled the Organization to make the Islamic voice heard and express the Muslim stance vis-à-vis all major issues of the time.
 - 6- Urge ISESCO to adopt a number of international and regional organizations' leading programmes destined to the Islamic world, and exert every effort to have the implementation of these programmes conferred on it as well as their budget allocations.
 - 7- Call for the promotion and consolidation of cooperation among UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO and ABEGS.
 - 8- Stress that the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is the Organization of the Islamic world which specializes in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, and that it is the specialized Islamic organ whose fields of competence include, *inter alia*, the coordination in all fields, whether at Islamic or international levels.
 - 9- Welcome the idea of setting up a representation of ISESCO at UNESCO, a fact which would heighten the Organization's radiance on both the international and regional levels, contribute to good follow-up of its cooperation programmes, and help correct the image of Islam in the West; invite the General Conference of ISESCO to adopt the proposal in its coming session on 6-9 December 1997 in Riyadh.
 - 10- Express all support to the Palestinian application for UNESCO membership and call upon friendly states and parallel organizations to back up this application which will be considered during the 30th session of UNESCO General Conference, and commend ISESCO's efforts and good offices in this connection.

The Closing Session was marked by the presence of His Excellency President Yasser Arafat, Head of the National Palestinian Authority who was keen on meeting with the heads of Member States' delegations. In the address he delivered at the meeting, President Arafat commended ISESCO's support to the Palestinian educational and cultural institutions, and the Director General's efforts exerted with a view to defending the Palestinian causes pertaining to the civilizational resurgence by means of promoting education, science and culture. He, then, invited the Education Ministers of ISESCO Member States to arrange for convening a meeting in Al-Quds. Addressing the deteriorated educational conditions in his country, President Arafat called upon the international community and, in particular, the Islamic world, to extend further support and assistance to the Palestinian people. He, finally, expressed his happiness to attend the Coordination meeting.