

OIC/COMIAC-8/2006/REP-RES/FINAL

**REPORT AND RESOLUTIONS OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
(COMIAC)**

**DAKAR, REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL
22-24 SHAWWAL 1427 H (13-15 NOVEMBER 2006)**

.....Page Break.....

OIC/COMIAC-8/2006/REP/FINAL

- 1 -

**REPORT OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
(COMIAC)**

**DAKAR, REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL
22-24 SHAWWAL 1427 H (13-15 NOVEMBER 2006)**

OIC/COMIAC-8/2006/REP/FINAL

- 2 -

**REPORT OF THE EIGHTH SESSION OF THE
STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS
(COMIAC)**

**DAKAR, REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL
22-24 SHAWWAL 1427 H (13-15 NOVEMBER 2006)**

1. In response to the kind of invitation of the government of the Republic of Senegal, the Eighth Session of the Standing Committee on Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC) was held in Dakar, Republic of Senegal, from 23-24 Shawwal 1427 H (13-15 November 2006).
2. Enclosed is the list of the participants.

Opening Ceremony

3. The session opened with a recitation of verses from the Holy Koran.
4. H.E. Sheikh Tidiane Gadio, Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Senegal, welcomed the ministers and members of delegations. The Minister has pointed out that the Islamic world is facing various challenges requiring joint efforts to meet them and work towards the highlighting the true image of Islam. He called on the Member States, within the framework of COMIAC, to initiate prospective strategies for joint Islamic action. In this context, he underscored the willingness of the Government of Senegal to re-energize COMIAC and set up a national permanent secretariat in Dakar to coordinate the activities of the Committee and enhance the fields of information and cultural affairs with a view to promoting the Ummah in these fields.
5. At the opening of the proceeding of the eighth session of COMIAC, H.E. the Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference, Professor Ikmal Eddine Ihsan Uglu, delivered a speech in which he welcomed all the participants. He underscored the importance of the session, held in the wake of the new conditions witnessed by the Organisation of Islamic Conference, particularly after the organisation of the third Extraordinary Islamic Summit, convened in Makkah al Mukarramah in December last year. The Summit adopted a ten-year Programme of Action in which the objectives of the Islamic Ummah were set to face the challenges of the 21st Century. The Secretary General highlighted the huge efforts exerted by the Organisation and its subsidiary organs in order to promote information, cultural and social cooperation, in accordance with the means available. The Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Conference added that the Islamic world must upgrade its information discourse aimed at the outside world and fight against the adverse campaigns seeking to corrupt the true image of Islam and debase its symbols.

The Secretary General called for the necessity to give all due importance to the cultural and social issues of the Islamic Ummah in order to meet the challenges of the 21st Century, in particular the issue of women, children and youth. In this context, he said that Turkey will host on 20 and 21 November

OIC/COMIAC-8/2006/REP/FINAL

- 3 -

2006 the first OIC conference on women, and called on all Member States to take part in its proceedings.

6. The representatives of the Three Geographical Groups – the Republic of Yemen for the Arab Group, the Republic of Turkey for the Asian Group and the Republic of Gambia for the African Group – took the floor to extend their thanks and gratitude to the Republic of Senegal for hosting the Eighth Session of COMIAC and for their warm welcome and hospitality and for the excellent arrangements they made in preparation for the meeting. They reiterated the willingness of the Member States to fully cooperate with the Committee chair in order to ensure the success of the objectives aiming to promote joint Islamic action in the information, cultural and social fields.

H.E. Dr Iyad Amin Madani, the Minister of Culture and Information in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, expressed the thanks of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Ibn Abdelaziz Al Saoud and his wishes for the full success of the meeting. H.E. the Minister underscored that the Third Extraordinary Summit held in Makkah Al Mukarramah laid the foundations of

an ambitious plan to promote the Ummah within the framework of the Ten-Year Programme of Action aiming to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century. H.E. added that the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs at the very heart of joint Islamic action. He commended the wise leadership and vision of H.E. President Abdoulaye Wade I re-energizing such action and reiterated the necessity for joint Islamic action to go beyond empty discourses and good intentions to achieve real, effective and concrete action, reiterating the support of the Government of the kingdom of Saudi Arabia to COMIAC.

7. H.E. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and COMIAC Chairman, delivered the opening speech for the session, in which he commended the outcome of the Makkah Third Extraordinary Summit, and the efforts exerted by the Organisation of Islamic Conference in defence of the cause of Islam and Muslims, its steadfast stand against the ferocious information campaigns which, on the one hand, purposefully confuse between Islam and terrorism, fanaticism and violence, and on the other hand defile the person of the Prophet (PBUH). He added that these attacks were part of a provocative and demonic action directed against Islamic communities. He further stressed that these libellous campaigns against the image of Islam and of the Muslims partake of coordinated actions and are not due to actions by specific individuals, that response to these attacks is legitimate, and that Islam is the epitome of tolerance. He also highlighted the necessity to foster ongoing dialogue aiming at showing the genuine image of Islam, taking advantage of the new Information of Communication Technologies.

In this context, he appealed to the Ummah intellectuals and scholars to do their best to spread the good word and resort to persuasion so as to counter such campaigns. He underscored the necessity to harness and benefit from the new Information and Communication Technologies so as to defend in a more effective way the lofty ideals of peace, justice and tolerance propounded by the teachings of Islam, thus standing in the way of extremist movements.

OIC/COMIAC-8/2006/REP/FINAL

- 4 -

He reminded the participants of his proposal to set up a Digital Solidarity Fund, urging the Member States to make donations for this Fund. H.E. President Abdoulaye Wade commended the huge efforts exerted by OIC Secretary General to reform the Organization and called on the member States to support the efforts of the Secretary General aimed to promote joint Islamic action and to reinforce COMIAC follow-up committee which was set up at the Sixth Session in order to follow-up the implementation of the Recommendations and Resolutions issued by the Committee.

H.E. also dealt with the extremely serious situation prevalent in Palestine, where the Palestinian people are victims of cruel occupation and continuing torture. In this context, he reiterated the support of the Republic of Senegal to the Palestinian people in their legitimate right to create an independent State and to exercise their inalienable rights.

In conclusion, His Excellency paid special tribute to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Ibn Abdelaziz Al Saud, for the continuing and valuable support which his government has consistently extended to the Organisation of Islamic Conference in general, and COMIAC activities in particular, to help the functioning of its various affiliated organs. By the same token, he paid tribute to the Member States which, each in their own way, support COMIAC. He declared open the eighth session of COMIAC.

8. The Committee adopted the Draft Agenda and the Draft Work Programme (Documents No. COMIAC/8-2006/DA, and No. COMIAC/8-2006/WP), as well as the Report of the Senior Officials (Document No. COMIAC/8-2006/SOM/DR/REP/REV/2.)

9. The Committee elected the members of the Bureau, as follows:

Republic of Senegal: →Chairman

Republic of Turkey
State of Palestine →Vice-Chairmen
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

Islamic Republic of Iran → Rapporteur

10. The Committee decided to consider the speech of H.E. the President of the Republic of Senegal as an orientation, reference document for the Session.

II. Working Session

11. The Committee took note with appreciation of the reports prepared by the General Secretariat on the various issues submitted to this Session.

OIC/COMIAC-8/2006/REP/FINAL

- 5 -

12. The Member States representatives addressed the assembly and exchanged views on the items on the Agenda. They raised the issue of the ferocious attacks on Islam and its symbols in the West. They insisted on the necessity to highlight the rational values of Islam in the objective response to these attacks, taking advantage of the components of the civil society and urging the private sector to invest in information and launch information stations that are credible and complying with professional standards.

The speakers insisted on the necessity of using reason and logic in dealing with adverse opinions, while adopting firm stances in the face of those parties intent on harming Islam. They denounced the ferocious assaults on Islam and its accusations of fascism, terrorism and the confusion between legitimate resistance to occupation and violence. The Islamic media need to use all rational and documented arguments to show that we are a nation of justice, benevolence, moderation and tolerance; a nation which preaches good deeds

and cautions against evil-doings. They reaffirmed the importance of continued dialogue with the West to prove that Islam is a religion of moderation and tolerance. The mass media in the Member States should highlight this dialogue to refute the allegations that information in the Islamic countries is not compatible with the freedom of speech. A certain number of participants have underscored the importance of a proactive position vis-à-vis “Islamophilia” without putting emphasis on Islamophobia by highlighting the positive aspects of Islamic heritage and the radiant image of Islamic civilization, by means of innovative media and modern information technologies.

The participants stressed the importance of capitalizing on the rapid progress of ICTs in the building of a knowledge and information-based society. In this context, they hailed the initiative taken by H.E. President Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and chairman of COMIAC, to create the Digital Solidarity Fund, an appropriate mechanism likely to bridge the digital divide, threatening to widen the gap between the developed world and the developing countries, to which belong the bulk of Islamic states. Furthermore, they insisted on the necessity to pay sufficient attention to social issues, in particular for poverty reduction and economic partnership for the promotion of the economies of the Member States.

13. The Committee expressed its most sincere thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting the seventh session of the OIC Information Ministers, in Jeddah on 13-14 September 2006. It stressed the necessity of effective action for the implementation of the resolutions of the Session.
14. Following the general deliberations, the Committee adopted the resolutions annexed hereto, aiming to reinforce Islamic solidarity and prepare the Islamic Ummah to meet the challenges of the century, achieve the aspirations of Islamic societies and uphold the values of Islam.

OIC/COMIAC-8/2006/REP/FINAL

- 6 -

15. It welcomes with appreciation the decision of the Government of Senegal to set a permanent national secretariat to follow-up the activities and resolutions of COMIAC.
16. At the end of the working session, the Senegalese Minister of Information, Dr. Bakr Jahe expressed his thanks to the participating delegations for their contribution to the deliberations. He also expressed his appreciation of the spirit of fraternity which prevailed through the session and enabled the Conference to reach positive results, aiming at enhancing Islamic solidarity in the face of the various challenges confronting the Ummah, in particular within the framework of globalization, stressing the fact that the creation of a permanent secretariat and a Follow-Up Committee will surely reinforce joint Islamic action in the field of information and cultural affairs through the adoption of adequate strategies to promote the Ummah, allowing it to keep

abreast of the developments of the century and to meet the challenges facing the Islamic Ummah.

III Closing Session

17. The Closing Session was chaired by H.E. Mr Cheikh Tidiane GADIO, Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Senegal, in presence of the Minister of Information, the Minister of Cultural Affairs in the Senegalese government, and OIC Assistant Secretary General, representing H.E. the Secretary General. The Head of the Tunisian delegation took the floor on behalf of the participants to extend his thanks and gratitude to H.E. President Abdoulaye Wade, the Government and people of Senegal for their warm hospitality and for the excellent arrangements, which contributed to the success of the Session. He expressed his thanks to the OIC Secretary General for the efforts he is exerting in order to carry out properly the OIC task.

H.E. the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Senegal, pointed out the establishment of the permanent secretariat and the Follow-Up Committee of COMIAC. The membership of the Committee, which will include the OIC Secretary General, or his representative, will be decided on later.

In conclusion, the Minister submitted the report which had been unanimously adopted.

18. The participants decided to address a motion of congratulations and thanks to H.E. Abdoulaye Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal and COMIAC Chairman.

Dakar, 24 Shawwal 1427 H
(15 November 2006)