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ISLAMIC COOPERATION**

AT

**THE THIRTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE COUNCIL OF
FOREIGN MINISTERS OF OIC MEMBER STATES**

DJIBOUTI, REPUBLIC OF DJIBOUTI

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Bismillahi Rahmani Rahim

**Your Excellency President Ismail Omar Guelleh,
Your Excellencies the Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Assalamu Alaykum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh

I have the pleasure to welcome you all as we start - with the help of Allah - the proceedings of the thirty-ninth session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States under the motto: “*Solidarity for Sustainable Development*” in this beautiful city at the heart of the Horn of Africa which constitutes a strategic depth for the Muslim Ummah.

I am pleased also to begin this statement with congratulating the people and leadership of Djibouti, particularly His Excellency Ismail Omar Guelleh, for hosting this new Islamic gathering. To all of them I express my thanks and appreciation for their gracious patronage of this important meeting and my recognition for the efforts and arrangements made to ensure the warm welcome and generous hospitality and the smooth running of the meeting in optimal conditions.

It also gives me pleasure to express thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan, Chair of the last session of the CFM, for the sincere efforts and constructive contribution to the work of the OIC during its chairmanship of the CFM, and for the outstanding achievements of the Astana Meeting which are of significant importance throughout OIC’s history, as well as for the initiatives aimed to enhance joint Islamic action, support Islamic solidarity and defend the supreme interests of the Muslim world.

**Your Excellency the President,
Your Excellencies the Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Allow me, at the outset, to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to all Member States for their continued interest in the OIC affairs as well as for their gracious support and care. This has had a tremendous impact on the Organization's activities in various fields and has helped realize many great achievements that have advanced the Organization making it a pioneer in the international, diplomatic and development spheres. That is why we look forward to this meeting as a new session that will have a positive impact on our work and will support our efforts to further our causes and ensure the progress of our Ummah.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the midst of the current global upheaval, the Muslim world is going through the most testing moment in its modern history since the end of World War I. It is going through decisive and critical changes, with successive developments taking place in some of its States. The awakening of peoples and their aspirations for decent life and good governance which gives primacy to the supreme interests of peoples and in which leaders serve their peoples, and the determination of the masses not to live outside the context of history, all that has engendered a shift in the balance of power, leading to an unprecedented movement. Wisdom has it that the purpose of government is to meet people's demands through peaceful dialogue and that goals should be achieved gradually. This session in the Republic of Djibouti is particularly important in that it is held at a time when some countries in the Muslim world are hit by severe crises.

In occupied Palestine, Israel, the occupying power, still persists in its positions rejecting just peace and escalates its aggressions against the blessed Al Aqsa Mosque in al Quds Al Sharif. It storms its esplanades and exposes the Holy Mosque to collapse as a result of the excavations it is carrying out underneath and around it. This is in addition to the increasing settlement activities. I wish to take this opportunity to remind everyone here to fulfil their obligations

regarding the implementation of the strategic plan prepared by the OIC in collaboration with the Palestinian Authority and Al Quds institutions with a view to developing the vital sectors in the city of Al Quds, supporting the steadfastness of its people in the face of the challenges facing them, and backing the efforts made to grant Palestine Observer State status in the United Nations System.

In the Gaza Strip, the Israeli blockade imposed on the socio-economic reconstruction of the Strip is considered as illegal and a collective punishment of 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza, and the consequences of this blockade are an ongoing crime against humanity which has to end immediately.

With regard to Syria, we condemn the ongoing killings, bloodshed, deliberate killing of civilians, and destruction of homes and property. We were the first to intervene in order to solve the crisis in Syria since its beginning. For that purpose, we held an extraordinary meeting of the OIC Executive Committee with Syria in attendance. Similarly, the Fourth Islamic Summit Conference convened by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques in Makkah Al Mukarramah, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 26-27 Ramadan 1433H (14-15 August 2012), adopted a resolution condemning the acts of violence, the bloodshed and the widespread systematic human rights violations, calling for an immediate end to those violations and suspending the membership of Syria in the OIC. The Syrian leaders have caused all endeavours to put an end to violence to fail by insisting on the military option to silence the voices demanding freedom and dignity. We call upon the parties concerned to respond positively to the mission of the joint envoy Lakhdar Brahimi to stem the bloodshed of Muslims and reach a peaceful solution to the legitimate demands of the Syrian people in the framework of Syria's unity, security and stability. In this connection, we welcome the Syrian opposition's agreement in the recent meeting in Doha to unify their ranks.

The situation in Mali and the Sahel region is a matter of deep concern for us because it destabilizes peace and security in the entire region. In this connection, I wish to reiterate our solidarity with the National Transitional Government of the Republic of Mali in the face of the looming challenges to its sovereignty and territorial integrity. We also support the Burkina-Faso-led

mediation efforts put in by the ECOWAS. Recently, we have dispatched a joint mission with the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to assess the humanitarian needs of Mali. We will also dispatch a high-level delegation from the General Secretariat to Mali and Burkina Faso to discuss the possibilities of starting peaceful negotiations that would spare the country the evils of war.

I have the pleasure to express satisfaction and happiness for the recent developments in Somalia which indicate that this brotherly country is recovering and is moving toward peace and security after the completion of the transition period and the formation of an elected government. I have visited Mogadishu and met with His Excellency President Hassan Sheikh Mahamoud, the Speaker of Parliament, the Prime Minister and senior Somali officials. At the same time, we continue to support humanitarian action in Somalia through our office in Mogadishu.

Afghanistan is about to enter a decisive phase in its history where it takes control of its own security and army. In this connection, we reiterate our support for the people and government of Afghanistan in their efforts to lay the ground for a more secure and more peaceful future. I am fully confident that the package of confidence-building measures adopted by the Istanbul Process and backed by the international and regional parties concerned paves the way for greater cooperation and confidence in the region. Similarly, we support the efforts to enhance cooperation between Afghanistan and its neighbours.

Concerning the Sudan, we reiterate our solidarity with and support for this country in meeting the daunting challenges it is facing. In this context, we condemn the Israeli violation of its sovereignty and we appeal to the international community to honour its commitments with regards to writing off Sudan's debts and supporting its economy to face the post-cessation challenges. In another respect, we call upon the Sudan and South Sudan to continue their negotiations in order to settle the outstanding issues in a spirit of brotherhood and good neighbourliness. We also call for a peaceful solution to tension in South Kordofan and the Blue Nile and for the implementation of the Doha Peace Process for Darfur.

We have also continued to demonstrate our support and solidarity for the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their legitimate rights and aspirations. Our full solidarity continues to be extended to the Republics of Azerbaijan and Djibouti on their occupied territories. In addition, our support remains with Bosnia, Kosovo and the Turkish Cypriot State.

**Your Excellencies the Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I have given due attention to the issues of Muslim minorities and communities around the world. Since I took office as Secretary General of the Organization, I started my endeavours to reach a political solution between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) through negotiation with a view to establishing security and stability. We succeeded through our efforts to get the Chairman of the MNLF out of prison. In 2007, we held a tripartite meeting which brought together the Government of the Philippines, the MNLF and the OIC in a bid to overcome the stumbling blocks to the required settlement, determine the area of the autonomous region and reach an agreement on the transitional government and the sharing of natural resources.

However, the Government of the Philippines unilaterally granted self-rule to a region that is less than 9% of the autonomous region provided for in the agreements between the Government of the Philippines and the MNLF, particularly the Tripoli Agreement of 1976, which led to the failure of the attempts to reach a settlement.

On 15 October 2012, a framework agreement was signed at the State Palace in Manila between the Government of the Philippines and the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) in the presence of the Prime Minister of Malaysia in its capacity as the facilitator of the negotiations since their beginning. I personally attended the signing of this agreement in my capacity as the Secretary General of the OIC which has played a major role in the settlement of this dispute since its beginning.

The framework agreement provides for the establishment of an autonomous entity in the region which later came to be known as “Bangsamoro” to replace the current entity called “the autonomous region of Muslim Mindanao”. While we welcome the signing of this framework agreement, we are hopeful that it will be implemented in good faith and that it will not suffer the same fate of the previous agreements such as the Memorandum of Agreement signed between the Government of the Philippines and the MILF in 2010, to which the Government renounced under the pretext of the Constitutional Court’s objection to it, or the aforementioned Peace Agreements of 1976 and 1996 which have not been fully implemented to date.

Concerning the situation in Myanmar, the OIC has raised the international awareness about the serious violations perpetrated against some 2 million Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar. It has also followed closely their suffering and the stages of their displacement. In follow-up of the recommendations of the 4th Extraordinary Islamic Summit in Makkah, I dispatched a fact-finding mission to investigate the situation of Muslims there.

At a time when we were conducting these contacts with the Government of Myanmar, a new wave of violence, expulsion, killing and deliberate arson attacks on homes broke out against thousands of Muslims during the holy Eid Al-Adha in the last week of October 2012. In the light of this accelerated deterioration of the situation and the systematic measures which amount to ethnic cleansing, I recently sent a letter to the US President, Barrack Obama, on the occasion of his forthcoming visit to Myanmar. On 31 October 2012, I sent another letter to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in which I put forward the international community’s responsibility in protecting minorities which are victims of genocide, and the responsibility of the UN Security Council in particular in addressing any situation whose continuation might turn into a threat to regional security which is an integral part of international security. I also raised the responsibility of the Security Council in demanding that Myanmar take the measures necessary to protect Muslim communities on its territories. Furthermore, I sent similar letters to Islamic States members of the Security Council and the Member States of the Contact Group established by the Islamic Summit, and held contacts with the OIC Groups in New York

and Geneva with a view to intensifying pressure on the Government of Myanmar through collective action of Islamic countries within the UN in order to keep the issue at the forefront to regain the legitimate rights of Rohingya Muslims, chief among which is the right to citizenship. I call on Islamic States members of the United Nations to submit draft resolutions to both the UN General Assembly and the Human Rights Council including OIC's viewpoint pursuant to the resolutions of the Islamic Summit, to avoid that the relevant draft resolution of the European Union remains the only draft resolution at the UN.

With this continuing escalation, Member States are under an obligation to make out the case to the Security Council since the acts committed against the Rohingya take the form of ethnic cleansing.

On the other hand, we continue our efforts to improve the conditions of Muslims in Greece, Bulgaria and in other countries. As for Bulgaria, I raised this issue during the meeting I had with the President of the Republic of Bulgaria in New York recently. It was agreed to send an OIC delegation to Sofia to discuss the issues of Muslims in this country. While welcoming this positive development and the launch of dialogue with the authorities in Bulgaria, we hope that these contacts will solve the problems facing Muslims there. I am also determined to continue my efforts in this regard with the authorities of both Greece and Bulgaria.

**Honourable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

On the economic plane, our activities have featured positive results since I last reported to you last year. OIC economic growth has improved on both the global and intra-OIC levels. With a combined GDP of US\$ 5.7 trillion representing 8.3% of the global economic output, the OIC remains a very strong international economic actor. In the same vein, and thanks to the various efforts aimed at sensitizing our Member States about issues relating to the implementation of our common trade agreements, intra-OIC trade has also increased in monetary value from US\$205.07 billion in 2004 to US\$687

billion in 2011. In terms of percentage, intra-OIC trade moved from 14.44% in 2004 to 17.71% in 2011.

I should also seize this opportunity to express our appreciation to our ministers for responding favourably to my series of appeals for the signing and ratification of the various OIC instruments, including the very crucial ones on the Trade Preferential System (TPS). I have the pleasure to thank our Member States for having responded to our calls by securing 101 signatures and 65 ratifications of economic agreements since 2005, which is indicative of the responsiveness of our Member States to the need for the rigorous implementation of the TYPOA.

Similarly, there has been a remarkable progress in the execution of our various programmes in the domain of poverty eradication, financial sector cooperation, agricultural development and tourism. The Special Programme for the Development of Africa, which was put in place in 2008, has made all the targeted disbursements to the tune of US\$ 4.5 billion in favour of a total number of 428 development projects. While the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development has increased its interventions in such sectors as micro-finance, vocational training and social services to the tune of US\$ 1.06 billion, the Islamic Solidarity Fund financed 2253 projects amounting to US\$195 million. This is notwithstanding the robust interventions of the various IDB Group entities and national development institutions.

While we commend our various economic institutions for their dedicated support for the various programmes as set out in the relevant OIC resolutions, I wish to inform that our target in the coming year would feature the convening of investment forums to activate our dedicated development programmes, such as the OIC Action Plan on Cotton and Agro-Food Industry', the Regional Project on 'Sustainable Development of Tourism in a Cross-Border Network of Parks and Reserves in West Africa', and the Plan of Action for Cooperation with Central Asia, as well as the Stakeholders' Conference on Post-conflict Reconstruction in Somalia.

**Honorable Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

In the humanitarian field, the Humanitarian Affairs Department (ICHAD) has continued its work to alleviate crises and disasters in many Member States for the profit of Muslim communities. ICHAD's activity expanded this year to include 13 countries. The Department also issued a pilot report on disasters in the Muslim world, which is a basic statistical and a reference document in the field. The relations of ICHAD with the international humanitarian community were boosted remarkably and the sources of its funding were multiplied.

In this context, I would like to thank all those who contributed to supporting the OIC humanitarian action, particularly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the State of Qatar, Brunei Darussalam, Kazakhstan and Cameroun. I would also like to thank the Australian Agency for International Development (AUSAID) for having financed a US\$ 2 million programme on building ICHAD's capacity in the technical and professional fields in a way that enables it to play its role with greater efficiency as in the case of other similar international organizations.

The significant expansion in ICHAD's activities, its multiple relations with international and civil society organizations and the increase in the number of disasters and crises compel us to consider the elaboration of a more ambitious vision for humanitarian action within the OIC consistent with the challenges facing the Muslim world in this area. We invite all Member States to provide us with their ideas in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Islamophobia remains a source of great concern for us. We have, at the OIC, exerted considerable and dedicated efforts to combat this phenomenon whose pace has increased recently as shown in the reports of the OIC Islamophobia Observatory, the last of which is the fifth report submitted to you. We have raised this issue with political and religious elites we have met in different parts of the world, underscoring its dangerous impacts on the prevalence of international peace and security.

Thanks to these efforts, we managed to convince the UN Human Rights Council, consistent with the eight points I proposed, to adopt the consensual resolution 16/18 which includes a genuine condemnation of the defamation of religions and discrimination against people on religious grounds. Paragraph 6 of the resolution provides for the adoption of measures to criminalize incitement to violence based on religion or belief. The UN General Assembly adopted the resolution by consensus under number 66/167.

To enhance the chances of these two resolutions being implemented on the ground, I put forward 'the Istanbul process' initiative in July 2011 which reaffirms the two resolutions, followed by a similar initiative in Washington in December of the same year. A third initiative will follow in England in the name of the European Union in December this year. Meanwhile, we are still struggling to overcome the obstacles preventing the actual implementation of these initiatives. The adoption of these two consensual resolutions by the UN Human Rights Council and the General Assembly respectively is indeed a positive development that gives us the opportunity to concentrate on important issues away from politicization and polarization. It also gives us the opportunity to introduce the 'Istanbul Process'. I am convinced that the confidence-building efforts exerted in the 'Istanbul Process' meeting and approved by international and regional stakeholders will pave the way for increased confidence and cooperation between all parties.

After the launch of the defamatory film 'Innocence of Muslims' which insults Islam and Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and the subsequent disorders which caused many deaths including the killing of the US Ambassador in Libya, I condemned in the strongest terms the film, the killing of US officials and the attack on the US Embassy in Cairo, insisting that the expression of anger and condemnation should not be through killing or the destruction of property. Moreover, we issued a joint statement with the European Union, the League of Arab States and the African Union denouncing strongly the perpetrators of these crimes.

In the field of human rights, the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission was established in half the time set by the TYPOA. The Commission was established and became operational during the CFM meeting

in Astana where Member States also elected the Commission's 18 members. The Commission held its first session in Jakarta where it elected a lady as its first Chairperson. The commission is implementing the vision outlined by the TYPOA. It has finalized its rules of procedure which are submitted to you for adoption after their examination by the Senior Officials Meeting.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In view of the progress made in the areas of science and technology, innovation, higher education and research centres, I am delighted to say that the Global Innovation Index 2012 (GII) published by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) ranks many OIC Member States including Malaysia, Jordan, Senegal and others, among the good performers. In this regard, the General Secretariat is taking part in many impact projects which are now in different phases of implementation.

In the domain of higher education, I have the pleasure to inform you that 9 universities from OIC Member States are among the top 400 world universities according to QS university rankings for 2012. OIC's educational programme 'Solidarity through Academia in the Muslim World' receives increasing attention at the international level as it was evaluated by EU educational experts as being a very good programme. These positive developments testify to the success of our continued efforts to raise awareness about the importance of promoting efforts in the fields of science and technology, innovation and scientific research in Member States.

As for health, we are pursuing our cooperation with relevant international organisations including the Global Polio Eradication Initiative and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, in order to prevent the proliferation of diseases and epidemics.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You can see from the above the amount of the activities undertaken by the OIC, which are due to expand in view of our growing relations both at the intra and the international levels so as to better accommodate the causes of the Muslim world. We will submit to Your Excellencies a draft resolution through

which we seek to open new OIC regional offices in order to reinforce our presence at the regional and international arena and to develop cooperation with countries and international organizations. Likewise, the scope of responsibilities and functions of different departments has expanded.

In view of the above, it is expected that the estimated expenditures of the current year will not be sufficient enough to cover the ever-growing activities due to the increasing needs imposed by our working conditions. Considering our future activities, we will need a 9.7% increase in next year's budget, but the 41st Session of the Permanent Finance Committee recommended only a 3% increase. It goes without saying that this increase is not adequate to the needs of the 2013 budget. I would like, in this regard, to express my sincere thanks and utmost gratitude to the governments of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Republic of Azerbaijan which made a voluntary contribution of US\$ 3 million each to the General Secretariat which was in dire need thereof. I would also like to thank the Member States which pay their financial contributions regularly. To this effect, the General Secretariat is considering the application of resolution 6/32-AF adopted by the 32nd Session of the CFM held in Sana'a, Republic of Yemen, on 21-23 Jumada Al-Awal 1426 H. (28-30 June 2005) on the measures to be taken against defaulting Member States in line with the practice in other international organizations.

In the end, we look forward to the next Islamic Summit Conference due to be held in Egypt; a summit on which we count in order to deepen the vision of our organization and take its activities to new horizons. This will enable the Muslim world to overcome its crises and ensure a more prosperous and brighter future for its peoples.

I wish you success in your deliberations,

Wa Salamu Alaykum wa Rahmatu Lahi wa Barakatuh.