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Final Communiqué of
The Eighth Islamic Conference of
Information Ministers (ICIM)

Rabat - Kingdom of Morocco

27-28 January, 2009

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1. Upon a kind invitation from the Kingdom of Morocco, the Eighth Islamic Conference of Information Ministers convened in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, on 25-28 January, 2009 under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohamed VI of the Kingdom of Morocco.

2. The following Member States participated in this session:

- Republic of Azerbaijan
- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Islamic State of Afghanistan
- State of the United Arab Emirates
- Republic of Indonesia
- Republic of Uganda
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Kingdom of Bahrain
- Brunei-Darussalam
- People's Republic of Bangladesh
- Burkina-Faso
- Republic of Turkey
- Republic of Chad
- Tunisian Republic
- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- Republic of Djibouti
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Republic of Senegal
- Republic of Sudan
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Republic of Iraq
- Sultanate of Oman
- Republic of Gabon
- Republic of the Gambia
- State of Palestine

- Union of the Comoros
- State of Qatar
- Republic of Kazakhstan
- Republic of Cameroon
- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- State of Kuwait
- Republic of Lebanon
- Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahirya
- Malaysia
- Arab Republic of Egypt
- Kingdom of Morocco
- Islamic Republic of Mauritania
- Republic of Niger
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Republic of Yemen

(List of participating delegations in Appendix 1)

3. The following OIC Specialized and Subsidiary Organs took part in the Conference:

- International Islamic News Agency (IINA)
- Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU)
- The - Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA)
- Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)
- Islamic Center for Development of Trade (ICDT)

Bayt Mal Al-Quds (BMQ) Participated as invitee.

Opening Session:

4. The conference started with the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran.

5. His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco, addressed a message to the Conference that was read out by his personal advisor Mr. Mohamed Moatassim. In his message, His Majesty the King welcomed the participating delegations and commend the decision of the Organization of the Islamic Conference to place the Palestinian cause and the question of Al-Quds Al-Sharif at the forefront of this conference's agenda, particularly in the painful circumstances that are afflicting the grieving Palestinian people. In this context, he reiterated the

commitment of the Kingdom of Morocco to pursue its efforts, at all levels and in all regional and international forums, so as to put an end to the aggression and to the occupation, lift the siege imposed on the steadfast Palestinian people, and seek to achieve a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict through the establishment of an independent Palestinian State, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, on the basis of the Arab Peace Initiative and within the framework of international legitimacy resolutions. As Chairman of the Al-Quds Committee, His Majesty the King stated that he would spare no effort to preserve the legal status of this subjugated city, defend its spiritual and cultural identity as well as the holy religious symbols therein, and confront all violations which undermine the holiness and sanctity of the Al-Aqsa Mosque.

His Majesty added: “You do, I am sure, realize the magnitude of the profound changes currently affecting the world since the advent of the information and communication era. The continuous, uninterrupted flow of information and data now influences all aspects of life and impacts development projects. Hence, it has become absolutely necessary to lay the groundwork for bridging the digital gap between developed countries and OIC member states so that our citizens may gain access to knowledge, which is the gateway to development, progress, cooperation and joint action. It is also important to access the networks of intangible knowledge in order to join global information systems that are based on sophisticated information technology systems and networks.”

His Majesty added that in order to achieve these lofty goals, there is need to observe high professional standards and have a clear vision which translates into specific projects and programs that reflect the true image of Islam, Muslims and Islamic civilization. We should also be able to react swiftly to various developments and crises and, more importantly, to confront with wisdom and professionalism all those who seek to monopolize Islam in our countries, as well as all those abroad who try to distort its image.

His Majesty stated that information is the weapon of modern times and that our religion urges us to proclaim the clear message (*al-balaagh-ul-mubeen*), urging for more efforts to be made in order to enable the media in OIC member states to improve their performance, taking into account pluralism and diversity, and to act responsibly, observe ethical standards and stand united to defend the cultural and spiritual values and ideals of Muslim societies and serve their best interests. For the vigor and effectiveness of joint Islamic action in the information domain are inexorably affected by the efficiency of the policies and means of information and communication in Islamic countries. Information should therefore be perceived as a productive sector in the new knowledge and communication-based economy, and not just another of the commonplace consumer goods.

6. Following that, the Minister of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chairman of the Seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, Mr. Iyad Bin Amin Madani, delivered a statement in which he extended sincere thanks and appreciation to the Kingdom of Morocco for hosting the Eighth Session. He also lauded the noble message of His Majesty King Mohamed VI which was delivered by his adviser and called for the adoption of the message as a basic document of the conference.

The Minister expressed his hope that this session would form a cornerstone of developing Joint Islamic Action. Mr Madani also addressed the restructuring of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA) and the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU), restructuring and improvement studies of which have been completed. He expressed the hope that these two studies would constitute a real starting point for IINA and IBU. In this regard, the Minister extended thanks to the Islamic Development Bank for financing the studies, and, in his capacity as Chairman of the Executive Council of IINA and the IBU, announced that the OIC was in the process of writing off the arrears that have not been settled, hence opening a new chapter for Member States to support these two organs effectively starting from this session.

In addition, the Minister proposed the constitution of a supervisory and follow-up committee of the session that will include the chairs of the 7th, 8th and 9th sessions and the Secretary General of the OIC. He stated that time had come for the committee to set up specific mechanisms to implement the resolutions of the Eighth Session and those which could not be implemented in the Seventh Session.

Mr. Iyad Madani added that his Ministry had proposed that a new and changing item of an in-depth intellectual debate be introduced in every session, and that the Eighth Session address the theme of “Islamic media and its role in consolidating dialogue among religions and cultures in the framework of correcting the image of Islam”. He called upon the Member States to submit research papers to the General Secretariat which will summarize and submit them to the next session to discuss their key ideas and proposals.

7. In his speech to the ministerial meeting, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, OIC Secretary-General, stated: "It augurs well that, as we are about to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the OIC, our conference is being held in Rabat, the capital city of the Kingdom of Morocco, where in September 1969 the first Islamic Summit and the constitutive conference were held, effectively launching the Organization". In this context, he extended thanks and appreciation to those who have made the efforts and kept the promises until our organization has become a concrete reality and an effective player on the international scene. We remember with great appreciation those efforts made by Their Majesties the late King Hassan II and King Faisal Ibn Abdulaziz, may God bless their souls, and the leaders of the Islamic world with the

purpose of uniting the Ummah under one umbrella that voices their shared aspirations, defends their existence and champions their causes". He also expressed sincere thanks and appreciation to His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Chairman of Al-Quds Committee for his high patronage of this session.

The Secretary General mentioned the preparations underway at the OIC General Secretariat for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Organization.

The Secretary-General also underscored the special importance of this session, given the unprecedented revolution currently characterizing the fields of communication and information, the major challenges facing Member states, the Islamic religion and the influential, strategic capacities the media now have and the crucial role they play in clarifying the picture, remove imperfections and defend principles and values.

The Secretary-General commended the importance of engaging with the foreign media so as to make the voice of the Islamic world heard and enable it to express its viewpoint on developments in the world arena, convey the true image of Islam and its lofty values which call for brotherhood, tolerance and justice. He called for setting up a fund to which Member States, institutions and individuals would make voluntary contributions to finance projects relating to interaction with foreign media. In this regard, he commended the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for expressing readiness to contribute to this fund.

The Secretary-General indicated that the ferocious campaign against Islam has now taken a dangerous turn, particularly with respect to Islamophobia which, he said, has now become a form of racism. This leads to exacerbated conflicts among peoples and societies and has adverse effects on Muslim communities in Western countries. He further stressed the important role of the media in exposing fallacies about Islam and Muslims.

With regard to restructuring the Organization's information system, the Secretary-General announced that the restructuring of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA) had reached its final stages following completion of the study, and that the Agency would be re-launched in its new format soon.

The Secretary-General hailed the support extended to the Agency's restructuring project by the Saudi Minister of Culture and Information, chairman of the IINA Board of Directors. He also commended the Agency's new director general Mr. Erdem Kok, for his valuable and committed efforts.

As regards the Palestinian cause, the Secretary-General said: "The situation in Palestine and the brutal aggression against the defenceless citizens in Gaza has made us clearly aware of the huge responsibility we bear in defending our just causes and

has exposed the lies and untruths which, by being widely disseminated, make it acceptable to violate all human values and flout fundamental human rights". In this respect, Ihsanoglu stressed the need for information media in Member States to expose Israel's aggressive policy, patent crimes and plots aimed at desecrating all Islamic sanctities in Palestine and achieving the judaization of Al Quds. He also underscored the need to bring into the limelight the crimes characterizing the recent heinous aggression against civilians and children in the Gaza Strip. He went on to say that it was also necessary to shed light on and draw media attention to the repercussions of the situation in Somalia, the denigration campaigns targeting Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), the recurrent media coverage distorting the image of Islam and Muslims and the growing hate-mongering campaigns against Islam and Muslims.

Concluding his address and with respect to internal joint Islamic action, the Secretary-General urged Member States' media institutions to appreciate fully the crucial juncture the Ummah is currently going through in order to rise to challenges, to act on the basis of an information strategy based on training qualified human resources that master the skills and competences required, and to seek to revamp their information organs in order to keep pace with the age of globalization and meet its technological and digital requirements.

8. His Excellency Mr. Khalid Naciri, Minister of Communication and Spokesman for the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco delivered a statement emphasizing the need to adopt a constructive dialogue with a new type of communication, guaranteeing diversity and pluralism and not restricted to protesting the wrongs of our opponents. Such communication should rather have a positive tone, conveying a lofty message founded not only on the capability to address oneself, or even question oneself, but also on the capacity to talk to the other with strength, conviction and argumentation, in a language and a discourse tallying with his social context and mentality. He added that such a dual form of communication should, undoubtedly, be based on our commitment to the virtues of dialogue and mutual respect. For our divine religion is indeed not a religion of confrontation, nor is it one of gratuitous violence as it is portrayed by the extremists, from outside as well as from inside the Islamic World. It is rather a religion of openness and brotherhood. Our media is, therefore, required to live up to the level of communication in order to reach this shining image, which is, indeed, our deep-rooted truth.

His Excellency the Minister pointed to the challenges facing the Islamic world and the responsibilities it must shoulder in order to consolidate the communication edifice in our countries in such a way as to make it a major component in shaping the developmental changes of Islamic peoples, and a genuine tool of enlightenment and knowledge dissemination as well as an efficient means to preserve the civilizational identity of Islamic peoples, protect their lofty religious values, and defend their just and legitimate causes, on top of which is the cause of Palestine and al-Quds al-Sharif.

The Minister added that it would be fair to admit today that the changes and evolution that the communication realm is witnessing in a number of Islamic countries give us the feeling that this field is starting to cleave its way gradually and to take the initiative in decisive battles, namely defending our just causes, showing the true image of Islam and Muslims, bringing the others closer to the lofty values of our religion – which is based on tolerance and moderation – and highlighting its age-old civilization, its rich cultural heritage and its huge achievements throughout history, as embodied in its skills, arts, inventions, and innovation.

The Minister stated also that the fierce communication competition, which has become one of the components of the current international context, prompts our media, more than ever, to shoulder the responsibility to double efforts and keep pace with the technological evolution in media and communications, develop high professionalism and accumulate broad-based expertise in order to take influential positions in a rapidly changing and highly competitive world in all fields, and so as to acquire the required skills to stand as a strong voice both inside and outside.

9. The Conference unanimously elected its Bureau as follows:

Kingdom of Morocco	:	Chair
State of Palestine	:	Vice Chair
Republic of Gabon	:	Vice Chair
Republic of Indonesia	:	Vice Chair
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia	:	Rapporteur

10. The Conference then adopted the Agenda and Action Plan as proposed by the Senior Officials meeting:

(Documents No.OIC/ICIM-8/2009/DA and OIC/ICIM/8-2009/DR.WP)

11. Their Excellencies Ministers and Heads of Delegations of Malaysia, Senegal, Djibouti, Palestine, Pakistan, Kuwait, Bangladesh, Gabon, Qatar, Lebanon, Uganda, Egypt, Iran, Azerbaijan, Indonesia, Sudan, Syria, Libya, Turkey and Afghanistan delivered statements during the conference.

In their statements the speakers talked of the need to focus on the role of information in the current phase in continuing to expose the savage acts committed by Israel in its criminal aggression against the Gaza Strip in a way that will help mobilize Islamic and international world public opinion to defend the cause of Palestine. They also addressed the importance of coordination among the media circles in member states for the purpose of projecting the true image of Islam and confronting the media attacks against the symbols and sanctities of the magnanimous Islamic religion. They

also stressed the urgent need to make use of the information and communication revolution the world is currently witnessing.

Concerning the upgrading of the information tools of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the speakers commended the restructuring process of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA) and the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU), the information arm of the OIC for becoming useful and affective in serving the causes of the Muslim world.

The speakers noted the determination of the OIC General Secretariat to develop a comprehensive, detailed and rich programme to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the OIC, and regarded this conference as the starting point of the celebrations. They assured of the readiness of member states to participate in ensuring the success of this historic and important event.

12. The representatives of the Director General of Al-Quds Bayt al-Mal Agency and the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) as well as the Director General of the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) delivered statements at the conference.

13. The Director General of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA), Mr. Erdem Kok, and the Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Information for Engineering Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Riyadh Najm made a presentation on the restructuring and upgrading of both IINA and the IBU.

14. Pursuant to the report forwarded to it by the meeting of the senior officials (Document No.OIC/ICIM-8/2009/SO-REP/FINAL*), the conference adopted the following resolutions:

- a. **Islamic Information and the Cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif in the Palestine:**
The Conference adopted a draft resolution presented by the Representative of the State of Palestine in this context (draft Resolution- 7/8-Inf. on Islamic information and the cause of Al-Quds Al Sharif and Palestine).

It also adopted the following additional measures:

- i. Coordination with the Al-Quds Committee;
- ii. Invitation to media organs in the Islamic States to leverage the status of Al-Quds as the 2009 Arab Cultural Capital in order to project this Holy City;
- iii. Invitation to television channels to develop a unified logo for the City of Al-Quds in addition to the logos of television channels in the Member States. The representative of the State of Palestine provided the unified logo.

b. Interaction with the External Media:

The Conference recommended the implementation of the resolution of the previous session to constitute a mini supervisory ministerial committee to convene at the earliest opportunity in order to prepare a comprehensive plan to address the external world in the languages and methods it understands, which are logical and in line with its mindset with a view to correcting the image of Islam and clarifying its noble mission and lofty values. In this context, the participants approved the establishment of a fund for this purpose to which Member States, institutions and individuals would contribute voluntarily. (Draft resolution no. 1/8-INF on Interaction with the External Media) was adopted.

The delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia proposed that a budget in the range of US \$25 million be approved for the fund to be financed through contributions from all Member States.

c. Energizing the Sector of Information and Communication in the OIC:

Following the commendation of the Secretary General's efforts to create awareness about the tolerant image of Islam and to explain the positions of the OIC on current issues, the participants called on the mass media in the Member States to accord more attention to the programmes and activities of the General Secretariat and the Secretary General, highlighting them in their print, audio visual, and electronic media. For this purpose, the participants adopted (draft resolution no. 2/8-INF on Energizing the Session of Information and Communication in the OIC).

d. Adoption of the Code of Conduct for the Media in the Member States:

The Conference commended the draft code of ethics prepared by the OIC General Secretariat and, considering the need by many Member States for an in depth study of this draft, decided that it should be referred to an open-ended work group, which, with the help of journalists and the lawyers in the Member States, would review it for presentation to the next conference for decision. (Draft resolution no. 3/8-INF on the Adoption of the Code of Conduct for the Media in the Member States).

e. Finalizing the Restructuring of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA and the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU) and Supporting the Information Department at the OIC General Secretariat:

The Assistant Undersecretary of the Ministry of Culture and Information for Engineering Affairs in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr. Riyadh Kamal Najm, made a presentation on the strategic plan to restructure the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU). The participants commended this presentation and the ambitious ideas it contains including time-frame for bringing into effect.

The Director General of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA), Mr. Erdom Kok, also made a presentation on the comprehensive study conducted to form the basis of the restructuring, which was funded, thankfully, by the Islamic Development Bank and approved by the Executive Council of the IINA at its 24th Session, held in Jeddah on 14-15 January, 2009. The Executive Council also approved the financial and personnel regulations and the proposed budget of the IINA for 2009 in the amount of US\$ 3,750,000.

The Conference commended the study and the clear will to work exhibited by the IINA Director General and for the real shift he has achieved in the work of the IINA in the interest of the Joint Islamic Action.

The Conference expressed its supports for the projects and called for the finalization of the restructuring process. They approved (draft resolution no. 4/8-INF on the Finalizing the Restructuring of the International Islamic News Agency (IINA) and the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU) and Supporting the Information Department at the OIC General Secretariat).

f. Support for the Digital Solidarity Fund (DSF):

The Conference urged the Member States that are yet to join the Digital Solidarity Fund to do so as soon as possible, to contribute to its funding, and to implement the principle of 1% for digital solidarity, and to extend this support to the program aimed at providing 500.000 computer sets for the benefit of the least developed OIC Member States. In commending the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the OIC General Secretariat and the International Digital Solidarity Fund, the participants called on both institutions to cooperate in implementing the resolution in this regard which was adopted by the Eleventh Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held in Dakar in March 2008. The Conference adopted (draft resolution no. 5/8-INF on Support for the Digital Solidarity Fund).

g. Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC Day):

The Conference took great interest the determination of the General Secretariat to celebrate the 40th Anniversary of the OIC in 2009 in a distinct way that befits the stature of the OIC in the international scene. They called on the mass media in the Member States to provide appropriate media coverage for this important event and mandated the General Secretariat to prepare a comprehensive media work programme by 15 February, 2009.

It called on the Member States and institutions to enrich the programme with information materials relevant to the Organization in their possession. The

Conference adopted (draft resolution no. 6/8-INF on Commemoration of the 40th Anniversary of the OIC).

h. Launching a Satellite for the Islamic World:

The Conference regarded the project as ambitious and an idea with a noble objective. However, they stressed the need for an in-depth and proper study. It also underscored the importance of providing qualitative and professional information materials that will attract the interests of viewers. Some other participants thought that although the idea is important, it should be disregarded and that focus should instead be placed in the current phase on restructuring the Islamic Broadcasting Union, which will be in the position to play a key role in providing audio-visual programmes, training and exchange among the Member States.

i. Any other business:

The Conference discussed the proposal made by the delegation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia that, effective from this session, an issue of Joint Islamic Action to be the subject of deep discussion and debate by the session in the form of intellectual dialogue should be included.

The Conference commended the Saudi proposal and agreed to include an item titled “Intellectual Dialogue” in the work programme of all sessions of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers. It decided that theme of the 8th session should be: (Islamic Information and its Role in Consolidating Dialogue among Religions and Cultures within the Context of Correcting the Image of Islam). It also called on member states to provide the General Secretariat with research papers for the purpose. It also mandated the General Secretariat to prepare a paper containing the salient ideas proposed which should be distributed for discussions at the subsequent session. The Conference adopted the draft resolution No. 8/8-INF on the inclusion of a constant item of scholarly dialogue on an issue of joint Islamic action in the agenda and work programme of sessions of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers.

15. The Conference decided to adopt the message of His Majesty King Mohamed VI as a key document of the conference.

16. The Conference decided to constitute a follow-up committee comprising the Chairs of the current, previous and upcoming sessions respectively: the Minister of Information of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Gabon and the Secretary General of the OIC. This Committee shall be convened by its chair when necessary, in coordination with the Secretary General of the OIC.

17. The Committee decided to hold the 9th session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers in the Republic of Gabon in 2011 in response to a kind invitation of the Government of Gabon.

18. The Conference extended profound gratitude and veneration to His Majesty King Mohamed VI, Sovereign the Kingdom of the Morocco for his high patronage of the Conference. It also thanked the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco a very warm hospitality. It also expressed its appreciation to the Minister of Communication and official Spokesman of the Kingdom of Morocco His Excellency Mr. Khalid Naciri, for presiding with wisdom the proceedings of the Conference. It also thanked the staff of the Ministry of Communication for the efforts preparing for the Conference and holding it in the best condition.

19. The Conference lauded the efforts of His Excellency the OIC Secretary General and the staff of the General Secretariat for organizing the Conference in the best circumstances thus enabling its to achieve the desired success in the service of Joint Islamic Action.

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