



## **Seventh Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers**

### **Final Communiqué**

*Algiers, People's Democratic Republic of Algeria,  
18-19 December 2011*

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1. With the help of Allah, the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers held its seventh session in Algiers, under the high patronage of His Excellency Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, on 23-24 Muharram 1433 A.H. / 18-19 December 2011, on the theme “**Towards Consolidating the Outcome of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and Enhancing the Youth's Role in Building a Culture of Peace and Dialogue**”.
2. The conference's opening session was attended by H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO); H.E. Mrs Khalida Toumi, Minister of Culture in the Algerian government; H.E. Mr Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan; and H.E. Ambassador Samir Bakr Diab, OIC Assistant Secretary General. Also in attendance were a host of Algerian ministers, representatives of Islamic, Arab and international organizations, heads of participating delegations, Member States' ambassadors to the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, and a panel of prominent personalities.
3. After the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, H.E. Mrs Khalida Toumi, Minister of Culture in the Algerian government, made an address, in which she welcomed the participating delegations and H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, ISESCO Director General, and hailed his sustained efforts to promote Islamic culture and raise joint Islamic action to high levels. Besides, she lauded his continuous work towards enhancing the Organization's objectives and programmes and promoting ISESCO to become an important regional organization that furthers the strategic vision to foster peace and understanding among nations and peoples through inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue.

Moreover, Mrs Toumi hailed Palestine's accession to UNESCO, which is a significant landmark in the history of the Palestinian Cause. She deemed it as a positive response of the world's conscience since it put an end to more than six decades of Israeli lies about the identity as well as the archeological and religious sites of Palestinian

territories. She added that this accession, being the legitimate and international framework of action, would help ISESCO, with the assistance of UNESCO, to protect these rights from Israeli violations and aggression.

Furthermore, the Algerian Minister of Culture pointed out that the convening of this conference is a firm indication of ISESCO's intense interest in reinvigorating cultural roles to serve sustainable development and enhancing the role of civil society to promote culture to become a significant contribution to democratic practices. Likewise, she underlined the importance of the roundtable, which was organized on the sidelines of the conference on the theme of: **“The Cultural Roles of the Civil Society in the Promotion of Dialogue and Peace”**, while underscoring that it is a sound choice by ISESCO. In addition, she said that the convening of this roundtable constitutes a substantial change in the approach adopted by the conference of culture ministers in dealing with the ever-changing developments in the international arena where civil society has become the tremendous force to build a better future for peoples.

By the same token, she commended the choice of the conference theme, namely **“Towards Consolidating the Outcome of the International Year for the Rapprochement of Cultures and Enhancing the Youth's Role in Building a Culture of Peace and Dialogue”**, while stressing the necessity to come up with positive and firm recommendations that should in turn support the youth's cultural roles to develop and carry out cultural programmes.

She further commended the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for dialogue among followers of religions and cultures which was greatly appreciated by leaders of all revealed religions around the world. In the same vein, she described the relevant document prepared by ISESCO as transcending the traditional notion of Christian Islamic dialogue which had no profound impact on policies and practices, adding that it represents an integrated project that provides a set of visions and mechanisms likely to enhance inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue.

At the close of her address, Mrs Toumi expressed her thanks to all non-Islamic countries, which participated in Tlemcen celebrations by organizing beautiful and interesting cultural weeks, be they countries that share the Islamic heritage with the Islamic countries such as China, India, Italy and Spain, or countries that host Muslim communities such as France Germany, Mexico, Poland, Russia and the USA.

4. In his address to the conference, H.E. Mr Abulfas Garayev, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Azerbaijan, called for developing cooperation between the Republic of Azerbaijan and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation along with its specialized organizations, particularly ISESCO, as it is a priority in the foreign policy and in the cultural policy of the State. He also said that Azerbaijan's active cooperation with ISESCO in many events, particularly in staging the Azeri cultural days at

ISESCO's permanent headquarters in Rabat and selecting Baku as the 2009 Islamic culture capital. Furthermore, he stated that the number of national and international activities implemented in this regard amounted to more than 100. Besides, he conveyed his deep appreciation of H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri for his active efforts in developing these relations. In addition, he underscored the importance of protecting cultural and religious diversity following Azerbaijan's experience as a cultural centre and a space for intercultural dialogue having played host to relevant international fora in collaboration with its international partners such as the AoC, UNESCO, ISESCO, the Council of Europe and the North-South Centre.

In addition, he informed the participants of Azerbaijan government's decision to organize, every two years, the World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue. On the same occasion, he invited attending delegations to take part in its 2013 coming session.

Azerbaijan's minister also mentioned that a part of Azerbaijan's territories has been occupied for twenty years, and called on the ministers to give due care to the Islamic cultural heritage in Member States.

At the close of his address, Mr Garayev emphasized the importance of developing bilateral and multilateral practical projects on culture, arts and the heritage. He also called for involving youth, civil society and various stakeholders in these areas to support development. In this regard, he pointed to the establishment of special websites on cultural tourism to introduce the various tourist and cultural destinations in Member States.

5. For his part, ISESCO Director General H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri made an address in which he first expressed his heartfelt appreciation to H.E. Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Patron of the Conference, for the support extended by his esteemed country to ISESCO and for the great care and high esteem he accords to the Organization and its civilizational mission. He also pointed out that this conference was held for the second time in Algiers and under the high patronage of H.E. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. He added that the fourth session of the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, which was held in Algiers, in 2004, was one of the successful sessions which was marked by the adoption of two key strategic documents, namely the "**Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity**" and the "**General Framework of the Action Programme to Refute Media Smear Campaigns against Islam and Islamic Civilization**", together with the amended version of the "**Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World**". Besides, Dr Altwaijri stated that ISESCO, in keeping with these rules established at the 4<sup>th</sup> Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers in 2004, devised two supplementary documents to the major cultural strategy, namely the "**Strategy of Cultural Takaful to Serve Muslim Developmental and Civilizational Causes**" and the "**Strategy for ICTs Development in the Islamic World**", the "**The Action to Renew Cultural Policies in the Member**

**States and Adapt them to International Changes”**, along with the **"Strategy for the Development of Cultural Tourism in the Islamic World"**. Moreover, he said that all these key, strategic documents have drawn the roadmap for joint Islamic cultural action which the Organization has meticulously followed in developing the present three-year action plan, due to end in 2012, and the draft Broad Lines of the Action Plan for the years 2013-2015. In this regard, he confidently asserted that ISESCO's cultural programmes, activities and projects contribute substantially to building the cultural base of renaissance in the Muslim world, considering that culture is a core and significant component of comprehensive, sustainable development processes.

Furthermore, ISESCO Director General stressed that the Organization has given special attention to the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud for dialogue among followers of religions and cultures. In this regard, and in a bid to provide strong impetus to this very important initiative, wholly compatible with the Islamic civilizational mission undertaken by ISESCO, he underscored that ISESCO has drawn up a document on this initiative, and included it in the Conference's agenda for discussion and adoption. He also pointed out that this document came at an opportune time to open up promising avenues for joint action in the area of dialogue between followers of religions and cultures.

At the close of his address, Dr Altwaijri emphasized that the application of this arsenal of strategies, plans, programmes and projects that consolidates joint Islamic action and offers great prospects for its expansion will deliver a positive change for our societies and turn into a driving force for the required reforms. This, he added, will satisfy peoples' demands for free decent life and for preservation of their identity and the independence of their states, while giving a fresh impetus to inter-Muslim solidarity.

6. Afterwards, H.E. Ambassador Samir Bakr Diab, OIC Assistant Secretary General, read out the OIC Secretary General's statement wherein he expressed his appreciation to H.E. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, and the Algerian government and people, on the occasion of selecting Tlemcen as the 2011 Islamic culture capital. Such choice, he added, asserted the rich Islamic heritage of Algeria that testifies to its originality.

Ambassador Diab also pointed out that the OIC asserts the centrality of the issue of Al-Quds Al-Sharif for the Muslim Ummah and the necessity to maintain its Islamic hue and protect the sanctity of holy Islamic and Christian sites. He also said the OIC condemns as illegitimate the Israeli measures in Al-Quds Al-Sharif that aim to annex and judaize it, change its demographic and geographic nature and isolate it from its Palestinian surroundings. He also called on the international community, especially UNESCO, to pressure Israel to abide by the international law and cease its illegal and illegitimate practices against the occupied city of Al-Quds.

He also expressed satisfaction with the State of Palestine winning full membership of UNESCO, considering it a historic event and a positive step toward full membership of the United Nations.

He went on, “One of the biggest challenges we are facing today is escalating Islamophobia which has exceeded mere personal conduct to be a rather systematic political action used by some politicians to gain supporters.” He added, “This phenomenon concerns us deeply and countering it requires solidarity and mobilization of efforts in cultural, educational and media fields, along with bilateral and multilateral diplomatic action.” He also underlined that the OIC is exerting ongoing efforts to monitor this phenomenon and take necessary countermeasures against all form of instigation of hate and discrimination against Muslims.

He also said that the OIC heartily welcomes the efforts toward dialogue between civilizations, cultures and followers of religions and actively engages in the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, for the Dialogue among the Followers of Religions and Civilizations, which it describes as being one of the most distinguished of its kind.

At the close of the address he read out on behalf of the OIC Secretary General, Ambassador Diab also commended the efforts made by ISESCO amid tremendous challenges in education, science and culture in today’s Muslim world, and praised the level of cooperation between various specialised Islamic organs, on top of which ISESCO and IRCICA (Research Centre for Islamic History, Arts and Culture), inviting them to increase and promote cooperation.

7. A ministerial roundtable was held with the moderation of ISESCO Director General Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, Algerian Culture Minister Mrs Khalida Toumi, and Azerbaijan’s Culture and Tourism Minister Mr Aboulfas Garayev. The main focus of the roundtable was on the cultural roles to be taken by the civil society to promote dialogue and peace within Muslim communities.

Introducing the roundtable, ISESCO Director General pointed out that civil society organizations still are conventionally treated with caution and accused of improperly taking state organs’ roles in public affair management. He said that with globalization stretching its leverage to political, economic, social and cultural aspects of life, ICT advancements, and rising demands for greater human rights and good governance, such a cautious stance seems to be unjustified. A major area of concern for the international community since mid-90s, he explained, has been to involve the civil society in the management of cultural affairs.

He stressed that strong will is needed to allow for open dialogue with civil society organizations to assist governmental institutions in addressing Muslim world problems. Due focus, he said, is to be placed on Member States’ priority areas, at local, national,

regional and international levels, regarding educational, cultural, social and other matters. There is growing awareness that civil society organs across the Islamic world are becoming increasingly vulnerable and weak, due to the lack of adequate training, clear vision, and well-articulated strategy, he further explained. Working singly, with support from international organizations, makes civil society organs easy to infiltrate and takes away from their ability to coordinate with counterpart NGOs in promoting Muslim world issues and interests, he added.

At the close of his address, Dr Altwaijri expressed hope that the ministerial roundtable would produce a communiqué explaining the kind of cooperation to be expected between governmental institutions involved in cultural action and civil society bodies. This, he explained, would enable the civil society to take on cultural roles toward promoting dialogue, justice and peace.

The ministerial roundtable closed with a communiqué which called for considering the civil society as a key partner in the effort to achieve political, economic and social development, promote social peace and the values of understanding and concord between all segments of the society, and counter all forms of violence, extremism and exclusion. Also stressed in the communiqué was the need to build and expedite cooperation between government cultural institutions and relevant civil society organizations, in order to promote change for democracy and make necessary reform for justice, dialogue and peace. The communiqué also called for activating cooperation and coordination between civil society institutions and government cultural institutions to achieve harmony in cultural action, both at the local community and official levels, and stimulate creativity in literary and artistic areas for all sectors of the civil society, as part of its individual and collective cultural roles toward fostering dialogue and peace at the national, regional and international levels. Equal emphasis was placed by the communiqué on the need to benefit from the technology boom in information and media, especially the various platforms offered by social media networks, with the view to promote communication, dialogue and joint cultural action among all sectors of the civil society, including youth and women leaderships and child parliaments, in areas of sustainable development, toward fostering the values of justice, equality, tolerance, peace and dialogue. The communiqué also stressed the need to draw a cultural charter for the civil society across the Muslim world, in order to set priority areas for action according to a participatory vision involving relevant governmental institutions. The participants also called for establishing a civil society observatory to promote documentation, study, research and networking among relevant civil society sectors across the Islamic world. The roundtable also called for launching an intercultural alliance initiative for peace and dialogue which involves all civil society organizations active in education, culture, information and artistic creation. The initiative, the communiqué explained, will have to establish priority areas for action in these fields and coordinate efforts to achieve the sought-after goals.

8. At the beginning of the first working session, the Conference adopted its draft agenda and draft programme.
9. The bureau of the seventh Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers was composed as follows:
  - **Chair:** People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.
  - **Vice-Chairs:**
    - People's Republic of Bangladesh.
    - Republic of Cameroon.
    - State of the United Arab Emirates.
  - **Rapporteur:** Republic of Azerbaijan.
10. The heads of delegation delivered statements and presented national reports on their countries' efforts in implementing the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World.
11. In their statements, the heads of delegation commended ISESCO's efforts in implementing the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, promoting Islamic cultural action for Muslims outside the Islamic world, strengthening dialogue and cultural diversity, as well as preserving and protecting sanctities and Islamic culture monuments in the Member States.
12. The Conference also commended Mrs Khalida Toumi, Culture Minister of Algeria; Mr Aboulfas Garayev, Culture and Tourism Minister of Azerbaijan and Chair of the Conference's previous session; H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the OIC; and Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director General of ISESCO, for their statements and for the efforts to project Islamic culture. The Conference also expressed appreciation for the action by the OIC and ISESCO to promote inter-cultural and inter-civilizational dialogue.

The Conference highly commended the OIC Secretary General and the General Secretariat for taking strong and appropriate measures to combat Islamophobia and discrimination against Muslims, and for sensitising the international community to the issue of incitement of hatred and stereotyping of Muslims and their negative profiling. It equally expressed appreciation for the commendable work by the Islamophobia Observatory at the OIC General Secretariat in monitoring Islamophobia incidents, taking necessary countermeasures and producing annual reports thereon.

13. The Conference also lauded the activities and programmes geared by the OIC General Secretariat and its specialised subsidiary and affiliated organs for promoting Islamic values and Muslim culture and civilization.

The Conference re-commissioned ISESCO to continue implementing the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, with follow-up to its implementation mechanisms, in consultation with the Consultative Council, as well as in coordination with the OIC General Secretariat, and in cooperation with the Member States and relevant regional and international organizations.

14. The Conference agreed that all forthcoming sessions of the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers be organized by ISESCO in full coordination with the OIC General Secretariat as provided for by relevant resolutions. It also welcomed the offer by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to host the Conference's eighth session in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, and invited ISESCO to take necessary measures in this connection, in coordination with the host country and the OIC General Secretariat.

The Conference also commended the OIC General Secretariat for its efforts and for actively engaging in the Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for the Dialogue between the Followers of Religions and Cultures.

The Conference highly appreciated the important role by the OIC Secretary General and General Secretariat to pool necessary support for the State of Palestine to win membership of UNESCO. It also commended the efforts of the OIC General Secretariat to raise the international community's awareness about Israel's systematic actions to alter the historical Arab-Islamic identity of the holy places in Palestine, as well as judaize and tamper with its history, particularly in the historical, religious and cultural heritage sites in Al-Quds.

15. The Conference also commended the OIC Secretary General for his efforts that paved the way for the consensual adoption of the Human Rights Council Resolution 16/18 on combating intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, discrimination, incitement of violence, and the use of violence against persons on grounds of religion and belief, during the 16<sup>th</sup> session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva in March 2011. It also welcomed the meetings held by the OIC on this matter in coordination with other international stakeholders.

The Conference welcomed the establishment of the Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights (IPCHR) as a major step that would contribute to upholding Islamic values and principles and promoting cultural diversity and tolerance in the Muslim world.

16. The Conference welcomed cooperation between ISESCO and ICYF-DC to engage the youth of the Member States in the effort to preserve common cultural heritage and disseminate historical truths on the mass killing by the Armenian forces of Azerbaijani civilians in the town of Khojali. Moreover, the Conference endorsed the international civil awareness campaign "**Justice for Khojali**" as its priority for 2012 in the Member States, in commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Khojali massacre.

The Conference also commended the initiative by ICYF-DC to establish the international award “**10 Young Muslims who can Change our World**”, which will reward efforts towards success and recognize the potential of young Muslims, based on ten (10) wide-ranging categories of excellence including entrepreneurship, music, art, the environment, sports and fashion.

**17. ISESCO Director General presented his Report on the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World**, pointing out that 264 activities have been carried out by ISESCO in the areas of culture and communication, with special focus on safeguarding Islamic cultural heritage, promoting Member States’ cultural policies, while increasing the role of civil society in developing these policies for optimal benefit, fostering respect for cultural diversity, activating dialogue of cultures and alliance of civilizations, addressing Islamophobia, protecting cultural rights for women, the youth and children, facilitating rapprochement of Islamic schools of thought (madhahib), promoting Islamic cultural action outside the Muslim world, advancing ICT in the Member States, and supporting the Islamic Culture Capitals' programme as an outstanding cultural event reflecting the rich and diverse aspect of the cultural and artistic landscape of the capitals celebrated. These activities included conferences, symposia and experts’ meetings, training sessions, seminars and workshops, national and regional. As well as developing various specialized studies, researches, guides and reports, ISESCO dedicated prizes to stimulate literary and artistic creativity. In addition, the Director General set forth the focus areas of the Strategy, explaining the action by ISESCO in each of these areas.

In the area of **dialogue and cultural diversity**, ISESCO continued its mission of promoting dialogue between cultures, civilizations and the followers of religions, through intensive contact by the Director General with relevant regional and international bodies, and his academic participation in various specialized forums. Also in this area, the Director General explained, a number of relevant field activities have been geared to the youth, students, imams, preachers, journalists and civil society organs.

The main focus in **ISESCO’s activities addressing Islamophobia**, between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Conference, has been on correcting misconceptions about Islam and Muslims, based on the key elements and recommendations of the reference document which the Conference adopted: namely, the “**General Framework to Refute Media Smear Campaigns against Islam and Islamic Civilization**”. Similarly important works done by ISESCO in this area include the “**guide to improving perception of the culture of one another in history textbooks in Europe, the Islamic world and the Arab world**”, developed by ISESCO in concert with regional and international partner organizations, and the “**action plan on the role of western universities in redressing stereotypes of Islam and Muslims in western communities**”. These offer concrete

guidance for teachers, researchers and authors of history textbooks on how to perceive of the other with objectivity and intellectual integrity.

ISESCO's activities towards **safeguarding endangered cultural and civilizational heritage in the Islamic world**, between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Conference, focused on Al-Quds Al-Sharif, in particular, and the Palestinian territories in general. Not only did ISESCO convene its Committee of Archaeology Experts, tasking it with developing legal reports to uncover attempts by Israel's occupation authorities to judaize Al-Quds Al-Sharif, with recommendation that these reports be translated and distributed on a large scale, but it also called on the international community, especially UNESCO and the World Heritage Committee, to immediately intervene to stop these violations.

In the same context, ISESCO held the first meeting of the **Islamic Heritage Committee** (ISESCO's permanent headquarters, Rabat, 15-16 September 2010). The meeting was dedicated to examining and adopting the Committee's working means, functions and internal regulations. The Committee's second meeting, held in Cairo on 17-18 September 2011, was dedicated to adopting the **Islamic Heritage List**, with focus on inscription criteria for tangible and intangible heritage resources, and the **List of Islamic Heritage in Danger**, along with forms distributed to the relevant parties in the Member States and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, in order to nominate archaeological sites and cultural heritage resources for inscription on either of the lists. And as part of dedication to promoting exchange of expertise and experience between the Member States, the Committee also adopted an **action plan, with implementation mechanisms, to address heritage issues in the Islamic world**.

As part of its programme on **Islamic culture capitals**, ISESCO in 2010 celebrated three (3) capitals: namely, **Moroni** in the Comoros, **Tarim** in Yemen, and **Dushanbe** in Tajikistan. In 2011, three (3) other capitals were celebrated: **Tlemcen** in Algeria, **Conakry** in Guinea, and **Jakarta** in Indonesia.

- 18. The Conference adopted the Director General's Report on the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World**, taking into consideration the observations of the Conference's members. It also called on ISESCO to continue publicizing the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, in its amended version, among Members States' relevant parties, civil society organs, as well as parallel regional and international organizations, and increase activities and programmes under its action plans to activate the Strategy and achieve its objectives of promoting Islamic cultural action. As well as urging the relevant parties in the Member States to increase effort to push forward the Strategy and its key elements, gear cultural action to comprehensive development, and increase public and private financial support for cultural projects under this Strategy, the Conference endorsed the recommendations by the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the

Islamic World, in its meetings between the Conference's 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sessions. It also thanked the Council for the effort to prepare for the 7<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference, through examining and contributing to its documents, and invited it to pursue action in this regard in coordination with ISESCO. In addition, the Conference commended the efforts by the Member States to celebrate capitals of Islamic culture for 2010 and 2011, and invited relevant parties in the Member States with cities nominated for celebration as capitals of Islamic culture in the coming years to combine efforts and coordinate with ISESCO, drawing on previous experiences, in order to raise this cultural and civilizational programme to the sought standard. Also significant, the Conference endorsed the recommendations by the Islamic Heritage Committee at its first and second meetings, and thanked it for endeavoring to protect Islamic cultural and civilizational heritage in danger in the Member States. The Conference invited the Committee to dedicate greater attention to protect Al-Quds Al-Sharif from constant judaization attempts by Israel's occupation authorities and coordinate with the World Heritage Committee to issue effective resolutions to immediately stop Israeli violations. The Conference also expressed utmost happiness and satisfaction at the State of Palestine winning full membership of UNESCO, considering it an important step toward joining the United Nations, a resounding victory for right and international legitimacy, and a contributing factor to protecting Islamic and Christian heritage in Al-Quds Al-Sharif against judaization attempts by Israel's occupation authorities. It also invited OIC member states that are financially able, along with major countries like Russia and China, to contribute voluntarily to covering the budget deficit caused by the US and other countries cutting funds for UNESCO and thereby taking a negative attitude toward this just, human issue.

Also commended by the Conference were the measures by the Director General to promote the action of the Islamic Heritage Committee. In this regard, the Conference welcomed the establishment of the Islamic Heritage List, and invited relevant parties in the Member States to nominate natural and archaeological sites, along with intangible heritage items, for inscription on this List, in accordance with the mechanisms and criteria prescribed by the Islamic Heritage Committee. Finally, the Conference hailed the programmes and activities implemented by ISESCO to curtail incitement of hatred, racism, fanaticism, violence and extremism, promote the culture of justice and peace, and entrench the values of respect for plurality and cultural diversity inside and outside the Member States. It also commended the action by the Director General to redress misconceptions about Islam as a culture, a civilization and a people, and invited him to continue efforts to correct stereotypes of cultures, civilizations and religions.

**19. The Conference adopted the Report of the Director General on ISESCO's Efforts in Implementing the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World,**

taking into account the observations of the Conference's members. It commended in the meantime ISESCO for its Islamic cultural action activities geared to Muslims outside the Islamic world, including through holding at its permanent headquarters the first forum of the heads of Islamic cultural centres and associations outside the Islamic world, and promoting the action of the Supreme Council of Education and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World, and invited it to continue efforts in this connection. The Conference also lauded the quality of the educational, cultural and information activities carried out by ISESCO for Muslims outside the Islamic World, namely as regards redressing misconceptions about Islam and Muslims, curbing Islamophobia, promoting dialogue between cultures, civilizations and followers of religions, and developing Arabic language and Islamic education programmes. It also invited ISESCO to intensify contact with Islamic cultural centres and associations in Europe, Asia and Latin America, through the Supreme Council of Education and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World, in order to enforce the Implementation Plan of the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World. The Conference went on to praise ISESCO for its programme to train Imams serving Muslim communities outside the Islamic world in ways to spread the values of dialogue, middle stance and moderation, and invited it to continue holding relevant training sessions and symposia. It also commended ISESCO's methodology to strengthen cooperation and coordination with governmental authorities in Europe, Asia and Latin America and involve them in implementing its activities geared to Muslim communities in these countries.

**20. The Conference also adopted the Report of the Director General on the Follow-up of the Implementation of the Strategy for ICTs Development in the Islamic World,**

taking into consideration the observations of its members. In this regard, it praised ISESCO for the quality of the information and communication activities implemented inside and outside the Islamic world, between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> sessions of the Conference, with a major portion dedicated to promoting education, science and culture, and providing training to relevant staff, in follow-up to the Strategy for ICTs Development in the Islamic World. In the same vein, the Conference invited ISESCO to focus more on activities designed to promote harmony between ICT ethics and human right principles and values, and identify the best tools to enhance the cultural and moral content of information and communication technologies in the Islamic world. It also called on the relevant parties in the Member States to increase focus on developing digital content under their national ICT development policies, and urged for encouraging partnership with public libraries to enhance working mechanisms in such a way as to harness ICT for the transfer of digital knowledge for users. As well as urging relevant parties in the Member States to continue effort to provide equal

access to communication and information, with due respect for legal, cultural, religious and moral standards, the Conference called for further action to promote institutional mechanisms towards greater media exposure in the Islamic world.

21. **The Conference adopted the document drawn up on the Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for Dialogue among the Followers of Religions and Cultures: Achievements and Future Prospects**, and commended the outcome of the Initiative. It also invited the relevant parties in the Member States, along with specialised regional and international organizations and bodies, on top of which is ISESCO, to increase effort to gear the Initiative's constructive proposals and implementation mechanisms to achieve the lofty objectives which have been set for it. Emphasis was put by the Conference on the necessity to coordinate to successfully implement projects for dialogue of religions and cultures, and ensure complementarity between the Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and other similar initiatives aimed at dialogue among the followers of religions and cultures, mutual acquaintance and alliance of civilizations, following the methodical frames and practical measures outlined in the document. In addition, the Conference invited the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to submit this document to the parties in charge of the Initiative in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in order to adopt it, publicise it and activate its proposals, taking it as a roadmap for the noble goals set for it. The Conference also voiced support for the initiative to establish King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Dialogue between the Followers of Religions and Cultures, and called on the Centre to draw on the insights and recommendations given in this document in performing its tasks, in furtherance of the Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for Dialogue among the Followers of Religions and Cultures. Furthermore, the Conference invited ISESCO to prepare a detailed action plan to carry out the conclusions and recommendations contained in this document, in such a manner as to achieve its goals, and to bring international organizations, civil society bodies, in addition to intellectual, academic centres and institutions focusing on dialogue of religions and cultures, to bear in bringing these efforts to successful conclusion, towards promoting world peace and common human values. Finally, the Conference invited the Director General to prepare a report on the efforts made to implement the conclusions and recommendations contained in this document, and the value added which these efforts have contributed to the implementation of the Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for Dialogue among the Followers of Religions and Cultures, and submit it to the Conference at its eighth session.
22. **The Conference adopted the document on the "Cultural Roles of the Civil Society for the Promotion of Dialogue and Peace"**, taking into consideration the observations of its members. It stressed in the meanwhile the importance of the civil society taking cultural roles to preserve social cohesion, promote the values of justice,

peace and citizenship, and build strong cooperation and partnership between governmental and local community institutions to achieve the sought-after goals. The Conference invited the relevant parties in the Member States, along with civil society organizations and bodies, to cooperate and coordinate to activate the civil society's cultural roles, as expounded in the document, enact necessary legislation, and carry out relevant programmes and projects, toward promoting dialogue and peace. It further invited ISESCO to hold a forum of civil society bodies across the Islamic world, in order to consider ways to enable these institutions to take on cultural roles aiming to boost dialogue and peace, and submit the forum's outcome to the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, and the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, at their next sessions. In addition, the Conference called on the Director General to further cooperation with international and regional organizations to carry out joint programmes and activities toward greater cultural roles of civil society organs catering for the youth, women and children. The Conference also thanked the Director General for inviting the representatives of civil society to engage in dialogue with the Culture Ministers, so as to discuss issues of interest to them during the Conference, and continue this initiative in the forthcoming sessions.

- 23. The Conference adopted the study titled “Cultural Enterprises in the Member States”**, taking into consideration the observations of its members. Stressing the importance to encourage establishment of cultural enterprises in the Member States, with the view to stimulate artistic and cultural creativity, promote cultural diversity, harness cultural heritage to highlight Islamic civilization, and use the economic gains from cultural enterprises for comprehensive development, the Conference invited the relevant parties in the Member States and the private sector to provide necessary support to young entrepreneurs, in order to establish cultural enterprises which would boost cultural and artistic creativity, based on the rich cultural heritage of the Ummah, and meet the required business management standards for continuity and competitiveness. The Conference also invited ISESCO to prepare a comprehensive programme to train and qualify cultural staff and promote cooperation with the Member States and specialized regional and international organizations, in order to encourage establishment of regional centres for training in various creative, industrial areas.
- 24. The Conference adopted the Course in Training Journalists and Broadcasters to Counter Stereotypes about Islam and Muslims in Western Media**, taking into consideration the observations and proposals of its members, especially as regards integrating e-media in education and focusing on social media networks. It invited the relevant parties in the Member States to adopt this training course and draw on it in developing curricula of training schools for journalists and broadcasters and information institutes and colleges, in order to upgrade professional skills in redressing misconceptions about Islam and Muslims. It also invited ISESCO both to

continue providing training for journalists and broadcasters inside and outside the Islamic world, with a view to wielding technologies to redress stereotypes of Islam and Muslims and counter Islamophobia, guided by this training course, and to promote cooperation and partnership with similar journalism and broadcasting institutes in the West.

- 25.** The Conference decided to hold its forthcoming session during the first half of December 2013, in Al-Madinah Al-Munawwarah, to follow up its celebration as the Islamic Culture Capital for 2013.
- 26.** At the closing session, the Conference's members addressed a message of gratitude to H.E. Mr Abdelaziz Bouteflika, President of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, in which they expressed thanks to the state, president, government and people of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, for hosting the Conference, the warm hospitality granted to the participants, and the support and facilities provided to hold the Conference in the best conditions.
- 27.** ISESCO Director General, Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, made an address to the Conference, wherein he praised the generous support offered by H.E. President Abdelaziz Bouteflika of Algeria, and extended deep thanks and appreciation to H.E. Mrs Khalida Toumi, the Algerian Minister of Culture and to her assistants for their efforts to organize the Conference and provide the suitable conditions for its success. He also thanked the participating delegations, and expressed great satisfaction with the important resolutions reached by the Conference.

The Conference closed with a speech by H.E. Minister of Culture of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, wherein she expressed Algeria's honour in hosting the Conference, and highly commended the performance put in by ISESCO Director General and the Conference's members. Moreover, she underlined Algeria's readiness to continue cooperation with ISESCO on promoting joint Islamic action in the areas covered by the Conference.