



*Address by*

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*At the opening of*

**The sixth session of the Islamic Conference  
of Ministers of Higher Education  
and Scientific Research**

**Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan: 20-21 November 2012**

*Praise be to Allah, prayer and peace be upon the Messenger of Allah,  
his family and companions*

*Excellency Dr. Al-Haj Adam Youssef, Vice-president of the Republic of the Sudan,  
Excellency the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research of the  
Republic of the Sudan,*

*Excellency Deputy Minister of Higher Education of Malaysia, President of the  
Fifth Islamic Conference of Higher Education and Scientific Research Ministers,*

*Excellencies Heads of Delegation,*

*Excellency the representative of the General Secretariat of the Organization of  
Islamic Cooperation,*

*Excellencies the representatives of diplomatic bodies and regional and international  
organizations,*

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

*Assalamu alaikom warahmatu Allahw wabarakatuh,*

It gives me great pleasure to address you at the opening of the sixth session of the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research which is hosted by Khartoum, capital-city of the Republic of the Sudan. On this occasion, I would like to extend my deepest thanks and heartfelt gratitude to the President, government and people of the Sudan for their generous hospitality and good cooperation in the organization of the current session of the Conference, while wishing more progress and prosperity for this Muslim country deeply steeped in history and glory, under the wise leadership of His Excellency General Omar Hassan Ahmad Al-Bashir, the President of the Republic. Almighty Allah I ask to protect this generous country from the malicious designs of enemies and assailants.

I also seize this good opportunity to express my deep appreciation and profound gratitude to their Majesties, Excellencies and Highnesses heads of Member States for the unflagging support given to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which clearly reflects their strong belief in the civilizational mission advanced by ISESCO. I sincerely wish further progress for all Member States so that the Muslim Ummah can access to the highest levels of knowledge advancement and civilizational prosperity.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

The current session is being held under a highly significant theme which fits perfectly with the mission and goals pursued by the Conference. The "**Role of Higher**

## **Education in Development of Science and Technology for Prosperous Future"**

accurately sums up the role entrusted with this Conference whose first session was held in Riyadh, capital of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 2000. Indeed, the Conference has, over its five previous sessions, issued an important set of resolutions which laid down firm foundations for joint Islamic action through developing science, technology and innovation, and promoting higher education by developing and modernizing systems and curricula and ensuring quality and accreditation at all levels. These dedicated efforts are aimed at supporting comprehensive, sustainable development in these vital areas, considering that the building of the individual is the cornerstone of every integrated and balanced development process. This basic premise holds true for building the knowledge society which provides an environment conducive to the flourishing of science, technology and innovation. This will ultimately be highly instrumental in building the right path for civilizational revival through which the Muslim Ummah would continue its pivotal role of enriching the human civilization.

Developing the system of higher education constitutes the essential prelude for developing research on a larger scale and promoting innovation in the various areas of scientific knowledge, technological expertise, higher education and scientific research. In fact, the organic relationship between higher education and academic research provides the most promising path towards the progress to which our glorious Ummah aspires to resume its civilizational part within the international community in the productive stakeholder engagement process of establishing international peace and security.

While convening this session, we keep in view the current trends of higher education and scientific research in the Muslim world which reflect self-evident and shocking realities. However, this grim reality gives us a warning signal and prompts us to redouble our efforts and review educational, scientific and technological policies based on factual data and in line with regional and international developments. This also requires that Muslim countries bring about extensive and far-reaching changes based on scientific sound plans, comprehensive and forward-looking visions and enlightened thought, to enable the Member States to reach their development goals.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

The Muslim world suffers from inadequate scientific capacities. Low expenditure on scientific research is one of the fundamental inadequacies. The rate of expenditure on developing science, technology and innovation stands at less than 1%. Worse than that, some Member States spend less than these meager rates. Besides, scarce resources are allocated to the development of higher education and promotion of the educational system.

Against this backdrop, a fundamental question asserts itself at this session: what are the substantial causes having triggered the current situation of higher education and scientific research in many countries in the Muslim world despite the

integrated set of scientific strategies adopted over the previous sessions of the Conference?

The responsibility lying with this esteemed Conference and with ISESCO resides in drawing the roadmap for the promotion of higher education and scientific research and development of science, technology and innovation through the strategies, action plans, declarations and resolutions adopted at the Conference's successive sessions and presenting them to the Member States to implement them in line with their domestic policies, financial resources and scientific and technical capabilities.

In this context, ISESCO devised five scientific strategies which were all approved by the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research and three of which were endorsed by the Islamic Summit Conference, namely the **(Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation in Islamic Countries)**; the **(Strategy for Development of Biotechnology in the Islamic World)**; the **(Strategy for Management of Water Resources in the Islamic World)**; the **(Strategy on the Promotion of University Education in the Islamic World)**; and the **(Strategy for Promotion of Nanotechnology in the Islamic World)**, in addition to the **"Project on Atlas of Science and Innovation in the Islamic World"**, the Document on **"Recent Trends in Emerging Technologies and Current Commitments in the Islamic World"** (which were adopted by the fifth session of the Conference); the **"Action Plan on the Prevention of Migration of Scientific Competencies from the Countries of the Islamic World"** (which was adopted by the third session of the Conference); and the document on the **"Islamic Area of Higher Education"** (which was adopted by the fourth session of the Conference).

In the same line of action aimed at the strategic planning for the future of science, technology and innovation in the Muslim world, the Organization set up the **Islamic Body on Ethics of Science and Technology (IBEST)** and **ISESCO Center for Promotion of Scientific Research (ICPSR)** by virtue of a resolution of the second session of the Conference. ISESCO also set up an educational network linking the universities of the Islamic world pursuant to a resolution issued by the 5<sup>th</sup> session of the Conference. Besides, the Conference, at its extraordinary session, adopted the document on **"Key Performance Indicators: Guidelines for Assessment, and Quality Enhancement for Universities in the Islamic World"**.

The vigorous action taken by ISESCO in the field of higher education, scientific research and technology are aimed at stepping up the efforts exerted by the governments of Member States, for ISESCO is a house of expertise in the first place and not the implementing party of the resolutions adopted by this Conference. Similarly, the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation in Islamic Countries which is operating under the aegis of ISESCO is but a channel to provide support and guidance for the Member States with regard to the processes intended for the implementation of national plans on science and technology.

Based on these data and in fulfillment of its responsibilities towards enhancing Member States' capacities in the fields of its competence, ISESCO will spare no effort to extend technical and academic support to Member States, the objective being to promote higher education and scientific research. Other major objectives include developing science, technology and innovation, modernizing national policies on social and human sciences, raising awareness about respect for ethics of science and technology, enhancing integration between scientific and technological researches, boosting competitiveness between universities and educational institutions in terms of quality, developing knowledge-based economies, fulfilling the relevant objectives enshrined in the Organization's Charter, implementing the resolutions adopted by this esteemed conference, and enforcing the decisions of the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation in Islamic Countries.

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

The convening of the sixth session of the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research coincides with the celebration of ISESCO's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary. On 3 May of this year, the Organization's permanent headquarters hosted an official ceremony which was marked by the message addressed by His Majesty King Mohammed IV of Morocco to ISESCO. Indeed, the royal message reflects the trust placed in ISESCO to perform the mission entrusted to it. This royal move has increased our determination and resolve to continue action in the right direction to sustain the supreme interests of the Muslim Ummah within the Organization' ambit. Therefore, we are making every endeavour to enhance joint Islamic action at this level and contribute to shaping a prosperous future for our glorious Ummah.

With the Islamic world aspiring to a wide-ranging reform of the educational, scientific and technological situation as part of the comprehensive reform advocated by the peoples in our countries; amid the enormous challenges facing our Muslim Ummah and the serious state of division within the Muslim world; and faced with Zionist arrogance and violation of international law, this Conference is being convened with the hope of producing satisfactory outcome which would step up our concerted efforts to promote higher education and scientific research, develop science, technology and innovation, and establish the base of scientific revival in these vital areas.

Thank you for your attention and I wish every success to our Conference in achieving its sought objectives.

*Wassalamu alaikom warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.*