

Final communiqué
of the First Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers
(Jeddah, 10 - 12 June, 2002)

Under the patronage of His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Rahman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Minister of Defence and Aviation, and General Inspector, and at the invitation of the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) and the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment Protection of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the First Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers was held in Jeddah from 29 Rabia I to 1 Rabia II, 1423 A.H, corresponding to 10-12 June, 2002, in attendance of a large number of Environment Ministers or their substitutes of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The opening ceremony of the Conference was attended by His Royal Highness Prince Turki bin Nasser bin Abdulaziz, President of Meteorology and Environment Protection of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, His Excellency Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the representative of the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the representative of the Executive Director the United Nations Environment Programme and several of their Highnesses the Princes, senior officials of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, their Excellencies the Ambassadors of the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, representatives of Islamic, international and regional organizations and personalities from the scientific, cultural and media communities.

His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Rahman bin Abdulaziz, Patron of the Conference, delivered an address in which he highlighted the importance of convening the Conference in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to come up with an Islamic perception reflecting the particularities of the Muslim world and called for highlighting the Islamic perception of sustainable development and world issues that have emerged on the international stage such as globalization and international experiences.

His Highness said that the Conference was a significant landmark in the history of Islamic environmental action and important step in cooperation and coordination among the Islamic States in the run up to the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development.

His Highness further added that the Conference was convened pursuant to the resolution issued at the 9th Session of the Islamic Summit Conference held in the State of Qatar, as a continuation of the First World Forum on Environment from an Islamic Perspective, held in Jeddah, as well as the materialization of cooperation between the Islamic States to achieve the welfare and prosperity of the Muslim Ummah; and in coordination of the positions that concern all of the Islamic States vis-à-vis the rapid developments being witnessed by the world today.

The floor was then taken by His Royal Highness Prince Turki bin Nasser bin Abdulaziz, President of Meteorology and Environment Protection of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who started his address by underlining the special importance of the Conference, stressing the Islamic perception of environment and sustainable development, thanking the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for its cooperation with the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment Protection in the organization of the

Conference. He emphasized the necessity to activate the Muslim world participation in the World Conference on Sustainable Development and strive to preserve the economic interests of the Islamic countries and highlight the efforts made by the latter in order to achieve sustainable development.

His Highness said that coming up with a joint Islamic declaration on sustainable development, highlighting the challenges facing the Muslim world and defining the general framework for action programmes in order to achieve aspects of sustainable development in the Islamic States, all this will help support the positions of the Islamic States, achieve their developmental objectives while preserving environmental factors and their natural resources.

His Excellency the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) delivered an address in which he first expressed thanks and gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, to His Royal Highness Prince Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, Crown Prince, and to His Royal Highness Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz, Second Deputy Premier, for hosting the Conference by the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and for the support extended by the Presidency of Meteorology and Environment Protection to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and for its cooperation with ISESCO in preparing for this Conference.

H.E. the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization stressed the special importance of the Conference which he characterized as reflecting the collective resolve and determination of the Member States to back up the international resolutions on development and environment. He, further emphasized the Islamic perception of environment which is underlain by the firm belief that man is the deputy of Almighty Allah on earth, entrusted with the noble task of populating this planet and made responsible for reforming it as much as accountable for causing mischief in its environment and misuse of its resources. He also made clear that Islamic values that promote and strengthen international rules for environmental protection, are likely to deepen modern human concepts of environment and sustainable development. Moreover, he indicated that those eternal values advocated by Islam not only urge for environmental protection but also for environmental care which is even deeper and more encompassing as a concept.

Addressing the Conference, His Excellency the Director General pointed out that the Muslim world was presenting the international community, represented by the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development, with a deep and all-embracing Islamic vision that covers all the aspects of the issue engrossing humanity today.

The address of Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, was read out on his behalf by His Excellency Dr. Khalid Salim, Assistant Secretary General for Science and Technology in which he stressed the paramount importance of the participation of the Islamic world -represented by the Member States of the Organization of the Islamic Conference- in the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development, highlighting by the Islamic approach to development in its various dimensions, and with regard to the rich treasures of human values embedded therein, which are yet another asset added to the modern international concepts of environment and sustainable development.

The address of His Excellency Dr. Klaus Topfer, Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme was read out on his behalf by Mr. Shafqat Kakakhel, UNEP Deputy Executive Director.

At the procedural session, the Conference elected its bureau as follows:

- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chairman
- Arab Republic of Egypt, Federal Republic of Nigeria and People's Republic of Bangladesh Vice-chairmen
- Syrian Arab Republic, Rapporteur.

The Conference discussed at great length several reports and studies prepared by the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization on the following subjects:

- 1- Efforts to coordinate preparation for the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development and implementation of Agenda 21.
- 2- ISESCO's efforts and future perception on the water resource management in the Muslim world.
- 3- ISESCO's efforts in the field of environment, health and population education.
- 4- Sustainable development from the perspective of Islamic values and the Muslim world's specificities.
- 5- Environment challenges in the Muslim world.
- 6- Environment and sustainable development in the Muslim world: Islamic perception of sustainable development.
- 7- Islamic declaration on sustainable development.

The Conference also followed several reports presented by some chief delegates on the efforts of their respective countries for environmental protection and sustainable development. The Conferees also heard speeches delivered by several heads of delegation which addressed the Conference topics.

The Conference adopted the document on efforts to coordinate the preparation for the World Summit Conference on sustainable development and implementation of agenda 21, as well as the General Framework for the Islamic Agenda for Sustainable Development and called upon the Member States to step up coordination and consultation for an active participation in the World Summit Conference on sustainable development, to ensure that the representation is of the highest level and to bring into focus the Islamic perception of sustainable development in the Conference's deliberations, results, resolutions and recommendations.

The Conference condemned Israel's continuous aggressions against the Arab people of Palestine, the occupied Syrian Golan and Shaba Farm lands in South Lebanon, as well as its destruction of institutions, facilities and infrastructures of Palestine, its profaning of holy shrines, thus causing the degradation of the Palestinian environment, destruction of natural resources, hampering economic and social development in the occupied Arab territories and depriving younger and future Palestinian generations of the fruits of sustainable development; and called upon the Member States and the international community to intervene to bring those aggressions to an end, and step up efforts to end occupation according to the resolutions of international legality, adopted in this respect.

The Conference also invited the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development to stimulate the World Solidarity Fund established by the United Nations and

its specialized agencies as an instrument for the fight against poverty in the most needy countries; and urged advanced nations and donor countries to mobilize new resources by rescheduling the debts of poor countries and earmarking them for environmental projects.

The Conference entrusted the members of its bureau, in collaboration with the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization with the task of stimulating and coordinating the Member States' efforts in respect of sustainable development as well as providing expertise and advice about plans, policies and projects to improve sustainable development mechanisms and coordinate the Member States' participation in the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development.

It invited governmental, national and regional non-governmental bodies and Islamic Organizations specialized in the field of sustainable development, to actively participate in the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development, in coordination with the Member States and the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The Conference took cognizance of the Member States' reports on environment and sustainable development in the Muslim World, and invited them to pursue their efforts and implement the resolutions of the First Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers according to the needs of each state and in consistence with their respective general policies.

The Conference adopted the document on ISESCO's efforts and its future perception on water resource management in the Muslim world taking into consideration the related legal aspects as well as the Member States' drinking water and water desalination needs.

The Conference invited the Member States to step up coordination with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in order to back up efforts in the field of water resource management in the Muslim World and in developing the programmes, activities and projects designed for this purpose, and urged national, regional, governmental and non-governmental bodies and Islamic, Arab, international and regional organizations to cooperate with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in order to implement as many projects and programmes as possible on developing ways of preserving water resources and using them in a rational manner in the Muslim World.

The Conference invited ISESCO to pursue the preparation of a strategy for a rational use of water resources in the Muslim world and mechanisms of its implementation and to submit it to specialized Islamic committees and conferences for adoption and present it at the second session of the Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers for endorsement.

The Conference adopted the document on ISESCO's efforts in environment, health and population education, and invited the Member States and the specialized organizations and bodies to cooperate with the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and to support its activities in the field of environment, health and population education.

The Conference invited the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to pursue its efforts in the field of environment, health and population education by participating in organizing and sponsoring Islamic and international conferences and by holding symposia and expert meetings and preparing related studies and education curricula. It also requested the Director General of ISESCO to submit a report on ISESCO's efforts in the field of environment, health and population education to the second session of the Conference of Environment Ministers.

The Conference adopted the study on sustainable development from the perspective of Islamic values and particularities of the Muslim world and stressed the necessity to have Islamic values and Islamic cultural particularities, in connection with the environment issues, a basis for the general approach to sustainable development in the Member States and a linchpin for their plans, policies and main guidelines in the fields of sustainable development. The Conference also invited the Member States and the competent organizations to conduct on-site studies and specialized action programmes to publicize the Islamic approach to sustainable development and the relevant Islamic specificities and secure their integration into educational programmes and curricula of the Member States.

The Conference mandated the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to prepare a draft Islamic ethical charter for sustainable development, based on Islamic principles, values and concepts, on the Muslim Ummah historical heritage and on its civilizational accomplishments; as well as with submitting the draft to the Islamic committees and conferences for adoption and to the next session of the Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers for endorsement, in coordination with the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The Conference adopted the study on the challenges of environment in the Muslim World and invited the Member States to consult together and further coordinate efforts to specify the means liable to help take up the challenges facing the Islamic world in the field of sustainable development through the holding of specialized conferences and symposia and preparation of on-site studies, statistical data and reference reports.

It affirmed the necessity to boost efforts in the field of rehabilitation of human resources capable of contributing effectively to the promotion of sustainable development programmes and carrying out action plans, projects and collective initiatives to work out educational policies centered on specialized vocational training and continuous training in the field of sustainable development.

It further urged the Member States to allocate further material and technical support to help develop the mechanisms of environment conservation, likely to enforce the relevant rules and regulations on all production, industry and investment sectors, leaving, thereby, the door widely open before individual and collective initiatives and stimulating additional involvement on the part of governmental and non-governmental institutions and agencies by means of initiating national legislatures, at country-level, on the protection of environment.

The Conference also exhorted Islamic, international, regional and national organizations to supply Member States with the needed technical advice and expertise to help them take up the environmental challenges facing the Muslim world.

It likewise invited the Member States which have not yet joined the international conventions on environment protection (conventions on biodiversity, fight against desertification and climatic changes) to do so, as long as any of the conventions would not violate Islamic precepts or national laws of the Member States, and, further, mandates ISESCO to follow up the matter, in coordination with the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

The Conference adopted the study on environment and sustainable development in the Islamic countries and affirmed the necessity to consider the Islamic perception of sustainable development a basis for the strategies of Member States in this domain, in view of the fact

that the Islamic ethics in the field of environment are the pillars supporting the Islamic perception of sustainable development.

It invited the Member States to assign further attention to developing the methods of production and management and promoting the general social behaviour to help strike a fair balance between the economic and social aspects of development and the environmental component, responding thereby to the current development needs -without prejudice to the right of future generations in the amenities brought about by development - and setting up the appropriate mechanisms for achievement of sustainable development.

The Conference stressed the need to take into account the common features shared by the whole Islamic world and the local specificities at the national and regional levels, upon elaboration of policies and strategic plans and studies relating to sustainable development, and underscores the need for integration of these policies and plans into the comprehensive global approach to sustainable development.

It affirmed the need to activate the role of regional and international organizations, as well as governmental agencies, in the promotion of sustainable development and consolidation of complementarity between their efforts and those of governments in the fields relating to sustainable development.

It further invited the Member States to engage seriously in a profound reflection on economic, legal and social reforms to be taken at the national, regional and Islamic levels to keep pace with the new developments in the field of sustainable development, taking due account of the Islamic teachings, precepts and values and, above all, safeguarding the Islamic cultural identity.

Besides, the Conference urged the Member States to assign further attention to the standards and to secure their integration in the mechanisms of industrial production, calling upon the developed countries and the donors to extend technical and material support to help Member States prepare and update their own specific standards.

The Conference mandated ISESCO to elaborate an Islamic strategy for sustainable development along with its implementation mechanisms, in coordination with the Member States and Arab, Islamic and international organizations. The strategy shall be submitted, in coordination with OIC General Secretariat, to the specialized Islamic committees and conferences for adoption, before submission to the Second Islamic Conference of Environment Ministers.

The Conference adopted the Islamic Declaration on Sustainable Development and decided to submit it to the World Summit Conference on Sustainable Development. It also mandated the Conference bureau to follow up the items of the Declaration and integrate them into the documents of the World Summit Conference, in coordination with the Member States, the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the United Nations Environment Programme.

The Conference thanked the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, along with his assistants, for the efforts they had exerted to prepare the documents and studies, and invited them to pursue ahead in the follow-up of the implementation of the Conference's resolutions and recommendations.

Last, but not least, the Conference addressed messages of thanks to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Fahd bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to His Royal Highness Prince

Abdulla bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, to His Royal Highness Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz, Second Deputy Premier, and to His Royal Highness Prince Abdul Rahman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Minister of Defence and Aviation, Inspector General, for the lavish hospitality and the higher patronage bestowed on the Conference.