

Final Report

The Executive Council of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) held its 35th session in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco, on 25 Sha'aban 1435 A.H/ 23 June 2014. Taking part in this session were the Council members and their accompanying delegations, except for the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Djibouti, the Republic of Tajikistan and the Republic of Suriname.

1. The opening session was presided over by H.E. Dr Boubacar Doukouré, Chairman of ISESCO Executive Council, in the presence of H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajjri, ISESCO Director General, H.E. Mr Mohamed Ben Abdelakader, as representative of H.E. Salaheddine Mezouar, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Morocco, *ex-officio* Chairman of the Moroccan National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, and H.E. Dr Khalid ibn Faraj Al Mutlaq, as representative of H.E. Dr Khalid bin Mohammed Al-Ankary, Minister of Higher Education of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, President of the 11th session of ISESCO General Conference.
2. After recitation of verses from the Holy Quran, H.E. the Chairman of the Executive Council declared open the Council's 35th session, expressing gratitude and appreciation to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, for the unyielding support the Moroccan government lends to joint Islamic action in general, and to ISESCO in particular; and lauding the achievements ISESCO has made since its inception, thanks to the great efforts H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajjri has been making as its Director General.

He also expressed the Council's pride in ISESCO's remarkable achievements as well as in the special activities it implemented in 2013, calling for greater cooperation and partnership between the member States in education, science, technology, innovation, culture and communication in such a way as to rise to the challenges facing the Islamic world in this critical stage. He equally expressed his pride in H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajjri's special track record as Director General of ISESCO, wishing him further success in delivering more achievements for the Organization and for its member States. At the close of his address, Dr Doukouré wished every success to the Council's 35th session.

3. The floor was then given to ISESCO Director General, H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, who welcomed the Council's Chairman and members, and expressed gratitude and recognition to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco and to Their Excellencies and Highnesses the heads of the member States and their governments for their continued support to ISESCO to forge ahead with its duties in the best conditions.

His Excellency explained that, as the first year of the current Action Plan, 2013 was a special year during which the Organization has managed to materialize 385 out of the 445 pre-defined achievements, with an implementation rate of 87%. This high percentage, the Director General explained, reflects the extent of the continuous efforts made by ISESCO, and the importance of ISESCO's track record over more than thirty years of existence.

Meanwhile, the Director General recalled that the resources ISESCO obtains from the member States are still below the standard required for a full implementation of its three-year Action Plan, which compels the Organization to seek off-budget resources to cope with this situation, noting particularly the unremitting rewarding efforts he has been devoting to this end. In the same vein, he explained that the initiatives he carries out under the General Policy item are aimed at strengthening cooperation ties with Member States, parallel institutions and Muslim minorities and communities, expanding the organization's outreach and role in international affairs, and ensuring field follow-up to its activities. This, he added, has contributed a great deal to the steady development of the Organization.

His Excellency the Director General stressed that any effective response to the challenges of integrated development in the Islamic world must inevitably involve targeted action aimed to overhaul the education system, develop science and technology, promote innovation, modernize culture and enhance its role as a powerful vector of community service, and boost access to the information society, which together constitute the vital fields of ISESCO's action. The Director General concluded his address by wishing every success to the current session of the Council.

4. Afterwards, the Council heard the address of H.E. Mr Salaheddine Mezouar, Minister of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of the Kingdom of Morocco, Chairman of the Moroccan National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, which was read out on his behalf by H.E. Mr Mohamed Ben Abdelkader, member of the Executive Council for the Kingdom of Morocco. In his address, Mr Mezouar welcomed the members of the Executive Council, lauding the valuable efforts carried out by the working team of ISESCO, under the wise leadership of H.E. the Director General, Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, and reiterating the commitment of the Kingdom of Morocco to maintaining its full support for the organization to fulfill its noble mission. He pointed out that the role of ISESCO has

proved relevant more than ever before, since the future of the Muslim countries and their peoples hinges upon their work today in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, all of which form the vanguard of comprehensive cultural development and investment in the future, based on the valorization of the human capital as the most precious asset of the Muslim world. In the same vein, he invited ISESCO to develop an advanced education strategy aimed to promote spiritual, intellectual and social development, and to consolidate the cultural identity of Muslim communities. At the close of his address, the Minister wished success to the current session.

5. At the close of the opening session, a tribute was paid to H.E. Mr Ismail Mohammed Abdel Ghani Khader, Secretary General of the Palestinian National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, and member of ISESCO Executive Council, on the occasion of the end of his mandate. On that occasion, Mr Khader expressed gratitude and appreciation to the Organization, to its Director General and staff and to the members of the Executive Council, praising the development achieved by ISESCO over more than three decades, during which it has become a reference institution in the fields of science, education and culture thanks to the efforts of its Director General and staff.
6. Afterwards, the members of the Executive Council posed for a souvenir photo at the Islamic Solidarity Hall.
7. At the beginning of the first working session, the Chairman of the Executive Council expressed his thanks to the Organization's Director General and his assistants, including directors, heads of division and experts, for their support and compassion following the loss of his son. He then praised the major achievements of the Organization, the latest of which was the organization, at its headquarters, of the 25th Annual Session of the Crans Montana Forum, which was marked by the participation of a host of African and European heads of State, heads of government and businesspeople, and which was devoted to the theme: "Heading to the South-South: Not Only a Strategy but a Necessity".

His Excellency then welcomed the new members of the Council, namely the representatives of the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Republic of Togo, the Republic of the Sudan, the Republic of Gabon, the Republic of Guyana, the Union of the Comoros, the Republic of Maldives, Malaysia, the State of Libya, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Kingdom of Morocco and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

Thereafter, the Chairman of the Executive Council presented the Draft Agenda and Draft Programme of the 35th session of the Executive Council, which were adopted.

8. For his part, the Director General presented the reports and documents placed on the agenda of the Council's 35th session, providing an account of ISESCO's major achievements in 2013, which was the first year of the Action Plan for 2013-2015. He also presented the financial data and figures concerning the closing accounts for 2013, as well as those relating to the Member States' contributions to ISESCO's budget and the efforts being made to redress the financial situation of the Organization for the same year. He then presented the Broad Lines of the Draft Three-Year Action Plan and Budget for 2016-2018. Similarly, the Director of the Audit Company presented the Company's audit report for 2013, and the Chairman of the Financial Control Committee presented the Committee's report for 2013.

9. After the introductory notes and presentations made by the Director General, and following due consideration and discussion of the relevant reports and documents placed on the agenda of the Council's 35th session, the Council members made several observations and suggestions which can be summed up as follows:

10. With regard to the Report of the Director General on ISESCO's Activities for 2013 (Document EC 35/2014/2.1)

- Welcoming the proposal of H.E. the Director General to appoint two new Muslim ambassadors of ISESCO for dialogue between cultures and civilizations, namely H.E. Dr Yahya Pllavicini, Vice President of the Milan-based Italian Islamic Religious Community (COREIS), and Dr Rashid Shaz, a young scientist from India.
- Commending the Organization's outstanding achievements in its fields of competence as detailed in the Director General's activity report, and congratulating the Director General and his assistants on their efforts.
- Intensifying the Organization's efforts towards the integration of children with special needs and providing appropriate training for those in charge of this sector.
- Paying more attention to addressing attacks against schools and their affiliates in the members States, and inviting the Organization to coordinate with human rights organizations to respond to such attacks and to ensure children's right to education.
- Intensifying efforts to address the root causes of extremism, zealotry and terrorism, and calling for the adoption of new programmes under the organization's plans devoted to the management of related crises in the member States.
- Enhancing coordination with the regional and international organizations having similar interests in a bid to avoid overlap and duplication of programmes and projects.

The Council then adopted the Report of the Director General on ISESCO's Activities for 2013 as contained in Decision EC 35/2013/D.2.1.

11. The Council then adopted the Financial Report of the Director General and Closing Accounts for 2013, Report of the Audit Company and Report of the Financial Control Committee for Financial Year 2013 as contained in Decision EC 35/2014/D.2.2.

12. The Council also adopted the Report of the Director General on Member States' Contributions to the Organization's Budget and on Redressing the Organization's Financial Situation for 2013 as contained in Decision EC 35/2014/D.2.3.

13. With regard to the Broad Lines of the Draft Three-Year Action Plan and Budget for 2016-2018 (Document EC 35/2014/3.1)

- Commending the Broad Lines of the Draft Three-Year Action Plan and Budget for 2016-2018.
- Emphasizing the importance attached by the General Directorate of ISESCO to youth issues in the Draft Three-Year Action Plan and Budget for 2016-2018, and calling for addressing the role of youth development and their participation in development-related issues as a strategic goal of the plan, through the establishment of a youth council under the supervision of ISESCO that will be convened ahead of the Executive Council's sessions, with as mission to contribute to formulating projects and proposals to activate young people's role in the development of their communities.
- Suggesting the holding of a coordination meeting of the Executive Council members as part the Council's sessions in order to discuss and adopt educational, scientific and cultural projects to be implemented for the benefit of the member States, using off-budget resources.
- Stressing the need to focus on quality projects and inviting ISESCO to technically support such projects and approach donors to finance them.
- Allocating more activities for promoting the true image of Islam and countering Islamophobia, extremism, violence and extremism, especially among young people.
- Reviewing the educational systems, the education ladder and the curricula, as well as textbooks in a bid to remove all their content inciting to intolerance and rejection of the other, and designing curricula on moderate Islam to be taught at all education stages.
- Promoting respect for cultural diversity and dialogue among cultures, civilizations and followers of religions, fostering a culture of human rights, and urging support for the relevant programmes and conferences of the member States.
- Highlighting the achievements of the member States in the fields of education, science and culture and facilitating exchange of relevant successful experiences among them.

- Paying greater attention to strengthening governance and equal opportunities at all education stages, and adopting uniform quality standards of education in the member States to ensure highly competitive outputs likely to meet the requirements of the labor market.
- Inviting ISESCO to develop scientific cooperation among the member States through facilitating exchange of visits and experiences among scientists and publishing their works and findings to facilitate access to them, and identifying the available educational, scientific and cultural competencies in the Muslim world.
- Responding to international agreements pertaining to the Organization's fields of competence and to member States' commitments in this connection when developing and implementing the Action Plan and Budget for 2016-2018.
- Giving further attention to the development of original education as well as to its institutions, curricula and staff, and conducting field studies on its state, particularly in African countries, in order to evaluate it and incorporate it into the formal education system and formalize recognition of its degrees.
- Intensifying efforts to promote the Arabic language in the member States and in the institutions of Muslims outside the Islamic world through providing appropriate mechanisms for training teachers, developing modern curricula, setting the relevant academic standards and organizing specialized conferences.
- Taking note of the written proposals and observations presented by some members of the Executive Council to the General Directorate regarding the items placed on the session's agenda. It was recommended to take these proposals and observations into account, given their importance.

The Council then adopted the Broad Lines of the Draft Three-Year Action Plan and Budget for 2016-2018 as contained in Decision EC 35/2014/D.3.1.

- 14. The Council invited the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to nominate H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri for a new three-year term as ISESCO Director General, as from 1 January 2016, in accordance with the relevant procedures in force, recommending to ISESCO General Conference that it re-elect him to the said post and for the said period. On that occasion, the Council thanked the Director General for his sustained tremendous efforts which earned the Organization its successful track record in its areas of competence, and an outstanding position on the international scene, as contained in Decision EC 35/2014/D.**
- 15. The Council decided to issue a communiqué denouncing the extremist acts and sectarian conflicts taking place in some parts of the Islamic world, and urging officials in the Muslim world to intensify their efforts to strengthen the bonds of harmony and reconciliation, and to preserve the unity and cohesion of the Ummah.**

16. The Council mandated the Director General to fix the Date and Venue for the 36th session of the Executive Council, taking account of the Date and Venue of the next session of the General Conference, as contained in Decision EC 35/2014/D.4.1.
17. During its closing session, the Executive Council's 35th session adopted its Final Report and relevant decisions. In the same vein, H.E. the Deputy Director General of ISESCO, Dr Amina Al Hajri, addressed the Council members, thanking them for the trust they placed in her at the Council's previous session by approving her nomination to the post of ISESCO Deputy Director General. On that occasion, she commended the great efforts of H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri as head of ISESCO General Directorate.

At the request of H.E. the Director General of ISESCO, and on the occasion of his participation in the Executive Council as representative of the Republic of Guyana after its admission to the Organization, Mr Moeenul Hack, in this capacity, made an address in which he presented a brief profile of his country gave an overview on the situation of Muslims in Guyana in the fields of education, science and culture, and reviewed prospects for cooperation between ISESCO and specialized institutions in his country. Mr Moeenul Hack also thanked H.E. the Director General for his support to the Muslims of Guyana.

For his part, the Director General expressed his delight at the outcome of the 35th session of the Executive Council, along with his gratitude to the Chairman and members of the Executive Council for the ideas and suggestions they presented on that occasion, which all converge towards the Organization's development.

The floor was then given to H.E. the Chairman of the Executive Council, Dr Boubacar Doukouré, who praised ISESCO's achievements in terms of administrative and financial management and in terms of programme and project implementation, commending, by the same token, the wise leadership of the Director General and the crucial role he, as head of the General Directorate, undertakes towards in the development of joint Islamic action in the areas of education, science, culture and communication.

At the close of the session, the Director General read out the Communiqué issued by the Council in which it denounced the acts of extremism, disputes and conflicts plaguing some parts of the Muslim world. He also read out the Council's message of thanks to His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco in which the Council expressed gratitude for the support the Moroccan government lends to ISESCO as part of its contribution to the promotion of joint Islamic action.