First Meeting of
the Consultative Council for the Implementation
of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World

Final Report

Rabat, 4-5 Rajab 1421 A.H./2nd-3rd October, 2000
Final Report of

The First Meeting of the Consultative Council
for the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World
Rabat, 4-5 Rajab 1421 A.H./2-3 October 2000 A.D.

Upon invitation by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization and pursuant to the resolution of the Second Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, which was adopted by the 27th Islamic Conference of Foreign Affairs Ministers held in Kuala Lumpur, on 27-30 June 2000, the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World held its first meeting in Rabat, capital of the Kingdom of Morocco, on 4-5 Rajab 1421 A.H./2-3 October 2000. Except for the Republic of Indonesia, which did not nominate a representative, all the Member States represented at the Council have attended, namely: Islamic Republic of Iran, Burkina Faso, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Republic of Senegal, Republic of Mali, Malaysia, Arab Republic of Egypt and Kingdom of Morocco. The meeting was also attended by H.E. Ambassador Sayyed Kaseem Al-Massri, Assistant Secretary General for Information, Cultural and Social Affairs at the Organization of the Islamic Conference. (Annex 1: List of Council members).

After recitation of verses from the Holy Qur'an, H.E. Mr. Mohamed Al-Achaari, Minister of Culture and Communication in the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco and Chairman of the Second Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, took the floor and welcomed the members of the Consultative Council. He, then, recalled the orientations enshrined in the lofty royal message addressed by the late King His Majesty Hassan II -may his soul rest in peace- to the Second Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

Talking about the importance of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, H.E. the Minister pointed out that the worst enemy to our “cultural balance” was the gradual transformation into a society of consumers for the cultural products of other peoples and nations, at the expense of the production of cultural products living up to our common ingenuity and reflecting our distinctive cultural traits. He called upon the Muslim world to take care of its rich cultural diversity and its distinct heritage and to build on them in its social and economic enterprise.

The Moroccan Minister of Culture and Communication urged the Consultative Council to join ISESCO in its action aimed to build a strong Islamic cultural edifice in a world driven by fierce competition among the major cultural powers.
The Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, then took the floor and underlined that the anniversary of liberation of Al-Quds Al-Sharif at the hands of Salah Addine Ayoubi—coinciding with the 2nd October—should be an urge for the Muslim Ummah to pool efforts and join ranks in the face of Zionist expansion and hegemony. He affirmed that Al-Quds was the first of the two Qibla and the third Holy Mosque as well as the site of the Night Journey of the Prophet Mohammed (PBUH), and indeed, a dear part of our Islamic homeland and a perennial symbol of our history and civilization that we would never relinquishe at any cost.

Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri stressed the fact that we were duty-bound to support the valiant struggle of our Palestinian brothers to halt the savage assaults of which they are victims and stop the horrible bloodshed, as well as to liberate the occupied territories and set up the independent Palestinian State with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as a permanent capital.

In this connection, the Director General added that the incursion of Ariel Sharon, the criminal, into the esplanade of Al-Aqsa Mosque under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces was a desecration, an insult and outright provocation of Muslims’ feelings.

The Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Dr. Abdulaziz Othman Altwajri, stressed, in his address, the importance of the meeting and pointed out that the Consultative Council had come to being as part of the Second Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, held in Rabat, under the high patronage of the late King Hassan II, may his soul rest in peace. IESCO’s Director General praised the late king and recalled that he had been a staunch defender of Muslim causes and fervent supporter of the joint Islamic action, geared towards achievement of the supreme interests of the Muslim world.

His Excellency the Director General affirmed the importance of implementing the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World which he described as a trust and indeed a heavy responsibility devolved on all of us. He then reviewed the steps to be taken by the Islamic Organization with a view to implementing the recommendations and proposals issued by the Consultative Council, recalling the lofty mission entrusted to this Council, which should be discharged in accordance with the Resolution of the Second Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers.

ISESCO’s Director General, further, expressed the readiness of the Islamic Organization to endow this Council with every possible means likely to help it achieve
its objectives most satisfactorily. He urged the Member States to support the action undertaken by the Islamic Organization and to supply adequate means to the Organization so that it could discharge the mission conferred on it by the Second Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers. He concluded by noting that the Consultative Council was a steadfast step onto the way of achieving the objectives pursued.

H.E. Ambassador Sayyed Kaseem Al-Massri, Assistant Secretary General in charge of Information, Cultural and Social Affairs at the Organization of the Islamic Conference, also took the floor at the opening session and reviewed the different stages of preparation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World and its adoption by the relevant bodies. He highlighted that the meeting of the Consultative Council marked the beginning of implementation of the Cultural Strategy, indicating that the Council was set up with the aim to examine carefully the projects submitted, to evaluate their financial cost and to consult together with the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, ISESCO and the Islamic Development Bank, with a view to collecting funds necessary and implementing the projects under the supervision of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -ISESCO-. His Excellency also recalled the hideous aggression perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against the helpless Muslim populations in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and specifically in the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Finally, the floor was taken by Hujat Islam Dr. Mohamed Saeed Noamani, Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who expressed, on behalf of the Council members, his thanks to the people and government of the Kingdom of Morocco for their unflagging support to the Islamic Organization. He then hailed the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, commended its efforts and praised the perfect preparation of the meeting. He, likewise commended the efforts exerted by the Director General and held in high esteem his determination to promote the Organization’s action and achieve its set objectives. Referring to the holy war launched, today, by the brave Palestinian people against ugly occupation forces supported by malicious powers recognizing no moral or ethical values and defying international law and practises, Dr. Noamani pointed out that the Muslims were invited to co-operate with peace-loving nations in the world to restore peace and spread the values of justice and tolerance far and wide across the entire world.

The steering bureau of the Consultative Council on Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World was elected as follows: H.E. Dr. Saleh Ahmed Ibn Nasser, Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as Chairman, Hujat Islam Dr. Mohamed Saeed Noamani, Representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, as vice-Chairman, and H.E. Mr. Mohamed Demba Sissoko, Representative of Mali, as
Rapporteur. The Council then adopted the agenda (Annex 2) which included such items as the implementation mechanisms of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World; activation of cultural co-operation among Muslim peoples, and study of cultural projects submitted within the framework of implementation of the Cultural Strategy (Annex : 3).

Then, the Consultative Council held five working sessions amidst an atmosphere of seriousness and Islamic brotherhood. The sessions focussed on the study of 26 cultural projects submitted by eleven Member States of the OIC to the Consultative Council. The projects addressed different cultural fields lying within the framework of implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World.

The members of the Consultative Council on implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World affirmed the necessity to promote Islamic cultural co-operation among the Member States and to translate the collective Islamic will into viable applications of the Cultural Strategy and into practical cultural projects benefitting to all Muslim nations and likely to spread Islamic civilizational radiance far and wide. Then, the Council adopted the “guidelines” proposed for preparation of projects to be submitted to the forthcoming Council meeting. (Annex 4).

Following a thorough and in-depth examination of the proposals and projects put forward in the light of the criteria and objectives set for the Cultural Strategy, the Consultative Council decided the following:

First: Projects approved on grounds of their response to the criteria adopted by the Council at its first meeting (Annex : 5):

1- Project of Ibn Battuta Museum in Tangier, Kingdom of Morocco.
2- Project of establishing a city of Islamic handicrafts in the Arab Republic of Egypt.
3- Project of preparing a panorama of films of Islamic countries, submitted by the Arab Republic of Egypt.
4- Project of inventorying and preserving the Islamic heritage of the Republic of Mali.

Second: Projects returned to countries of origin for redrafting and submission in a detailed, rigorous form that fulfils the criteria adopted by the Council. They are:

1- Project of Islam in Africa, submitted by the Republic of Senegal.
2- Project of exchange of cultural relations between ISESCO and Malaysia, submitted by Malaysia.
Third: Projects not meeting the guidelines of the Strategy, but some of their programmes are carried out within the framework of the plans and budget of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization:

1- National Islamic Library and International Centre for Studies and Cultural and Intellectual Exchange on Islam, submitted by Burkina Faso.
2- Projects of Gabon on museums and handicrafts, submitted by the Republic of Gabon.
3- Setting up Arabic information and documentation centres, submitted by the Islamic Federal Republic of Comoros.

Fourth: Projects not approved by the Council in view of non-fulfilment of the criteria adopted by the Council:

1- The Muslim woman in a plural society, submitted by the Republic of Lebanon.
2- Establishment of the Islamic Centre for Documentation and Information on Social Researches, submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic.
3- Documenting the Islamic landmarks of Maqli Hill, submitted by the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.
4- Islamic Arts Museum in Al-Badia Palace, Marrakech, submitted by the Kingdom of Morocco.

Thereupon, the Council recommended the following:

1- Support the special bank account for the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, opened by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization through the contribution of the Member States, cultural institutions and Islamic individuals and personalities to increase the financial resources of that fund.
2- Establish national funds to support the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World in the Member States which have not yet created funds for that purpose.
3- Urge and remind Member States to establish national councils for the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World in the Member States which do not have such councils.
4- Appeal to the Member States to send to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization well-studied cultural projects that would benefit the entire Muslim World.
5- Invite the Member States and UNESCO to step up their efforts in order to safeguard the cultural and civilizational identity of the Palestinian people in the face of the Zionist onslaught that seeks to wipe out the foundations of their civilization, and call upon them to give utmost importance to this issue.

6- Urge the Member States to include the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World in their own cultural policies, and invite them to adopt the principles and objectives of the Strategy as a basis for their national orientations and programmes in the field of cultural action.

7- Invite UNESCO to draw up a questionnaire and send it to the Member States to report on their present and future programmes developed within the framework of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World. The results shall be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the Council.

8- Include programmes in UNESCO’s action plans that would strengthen cultural co-operation among the Islamic countries in the form of festivals to be staged in the Islamic countries and elsewhere.

9- Develop programmes and mechanisms for co-operation between training and research institutions in the Islamic countries.

10- Invite UNESCO to develop a comprehensive programme for Africa, in general, aimed at preserving its heritage and civilization and for the Sahel countries, in particular, with the aim to entrench Islamic values therein.

11- Establish public libraries in the African countries and appeal to the Islamic countries to support them and enrich them with Islamic books.

12- Develop a project on Islamic manuscripts aimed to restore, index and collect them.

13- Emphasize, in the projects, the culture of unity and intellectual and doctrinal rapprochement among the Muslims.

14- Urge the Member States to include in the implementation protocols of cultural co-operation agreements among the Islamic countries such items as would bring about the implementation of the Strategy.

15- Lay down draft rules of procedure for the Consultative Council by UNESCO, to be considered during the next meeting of the Council.

16- Commends the role of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the excellent preparation of the first meeting of the Consultative Council for the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, and pays tribute to the efforts of His Excellency the Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in
following up the implementation of the Cultural Strategy and in developing the joint Islamic cultural action.

17- Praises the co-ordination and co-operation between the General Secretariat of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the follow-up of the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World.

18- Invites the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to submit the final report of the first meeting of the Consultative Council for the implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World and its recommendations to the Sixth Session of the Standing Committee for Information and Cultural Affairs (COMIAC) (Dakar, 25-26 October 2000) and to the Ninth Session of the Islamic Summit Conference (Doha, 12-14 November 2000) for adoption.

During the Closing Session, the Final Report of the Council was adopted, and a message of thanks and consideration was addressed to the Sovereign of the Kingdom of Morocco His Majesty King Mohammed VI (Annex : 4).

Drafted in Rabat, on 5 Rajab 1421 AH/3 October, 2000

Dr. Saleh A. Bin NASSER  
Prof. Mamadou Demba SISSOKO

Chairman of the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World  
Rapporteur of the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World