Address by

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri
Director General of the Islamic, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)

At the close of the

Celebration of Muharraq
as Capital of Islamic Culture for 2018

Muharraq, Kingdom of Bahrain: 28 November 2018

Praise be to Allah and peace and blessings be upon Prophet Muhammad,
his kith and kin
His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Crown Prince,  
First Deputy Prime Minister,  
Excellency Sheikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities,  
Highnesses,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and gentlemen,  

Assalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh,

I am pleased to address you at the close of the Celebration of Muharraq as the Arab region’s Capital of Islamic Culture for 2018. First, let me express my wholehearted thanks and gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, for his high patronage for this Celebration and the important projects he implemented to promote joint Islamic cultural action in this history-steeped, developed and prosperous Kingdom. Indeed, this year has been abundant with cultural and civilizational works that will give a strong impetus to joint cultural action and substantially contribute, Allah willing, to the promotion of culture and innovation and the dissemination of the values of tolerance, coexistence, and peace in a country who chose tolerance as an emblem, coexistence as a reality and peace as a mission.

I am pleased to thank H.E. Sheikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, for her excellent and unwavering efforts in promoting culture, fostering its role in creating a prosperous and developed society and safeguarding heritage and antiquities in her beautiful country. I would also like to thank Her Excellency for her outstanding achievements and the diverse programmes and activities that have enriched cultural life throughout the Celebration period which we launched at an official ceremony held on 28 January 2018. On this occasion, I congratulate Her Excellency on the success she
jointly achieved with her assistants in implementing the Celebration’s programme to which ISESCO contributed with some activities truly deserved by this historic cultural capital that will remain forever a beacon of culture, art, and wonderful human innovation.

*His Royal Highness,*

*Excellencies,*

*Ladies and gentlemen,*

Under the realm of its competence and drawing on the orientations and objectives of the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, ISESCO has made of the Islamic Culture Capitals Programme, which it sponsors and supervises its implementation, a lasting cultural project that mirrors the enlightened human civilizational vision of joint Islamic action. Indeed, this programme constitutes a civilizational project that aims to promote and enrich cultural action, advance and renew culture, encourage and diversify intellectual and art creativity, encourage excellence in the fields of science, literature and arts, in initiation of a new civilizational cycle that will restore the rightful place of the Islamic world so as to be able to contribute to building global peace, fostering dialogue values and disseminating the culture of human understanding on cultural foundations, literary creativity, intellectual contribution, and diverse works in the fields of human knowledge.

This year, in addition to the Celebration of Muharraq which is closing today, we launched two other celebrations namely, Nakhchivan in the Republic of Azerbaijan which will close in mid-December 2018 and Libreville in the Republic of Gabon. Next year, Allah willing, we will celebrate four Islamic culture capitals: Al Quds Al Sharif; Tunis, on the occasion of its hosting of the Eleventh Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers; Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei Darussalam; and Bissau, Republic of Guinea Bissau.
These capitals are beacons of a culture that is edifying of man and architecture and innovative of civilization. Accordingly, the programme has one clear objective: to support and enable Islamic culture capitals to regularly discharge their roles in the service of cultural action, build their local capacities and diversify their cultural means so they would keep performing their assigned missions in the various cultural areas.

I would like to reiterate my heartfelt thanks and gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, for extending his patronage to this Celebration, and to the Kingdom of Bahrain and its noble people for their great reception and generous hospitality. I beseech Allah Almighty to guide us in our action and crown our endeavors with success to make our Islamic culture prosperous, and elevate the status of our glorious Ummah so as to actively contribute to enriching human civilization.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.