Under the high patronage of
His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
King of the Kingdom of Bahrain

Extraordinary Session of the
Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers

“Together for Safeguarding Human Heritage
and Countering Extremism”

29 November 2018
Manama, Kingdom of Bahrain

Bahrain Declaration on
Safeguarding Human Heritage
and Countering Extremism
Bahrain Declaration on
Safeguarding Human Heritage and Countering Extremism

We, ministers of culture and heads of delegation taking part in the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, held under the high patronage of His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, in Manama, on 28-29 November 2018, on the occasion of celebrating Muharraq as the Arab region’s Capital of Islamic Culture for 2018,

- **Guided** by the contents and provisions of international conventions on safeguarding tangible and intangible cultural heritage, and by ISESCO’s relevant reference documents, particularly the “Islamic Declaration on Safeguarding Cultural Heritage in the Islamic World”, adopted by the 10th Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Khartoum, November 2017), and the “Action Programme on Promoting Islamic and International Support for Safeguarding Civilizational and Cultural Heritage in Al-Quds Al-Sharif”, adopted by the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Manama, November 2018);

- **Guided** by the outcomes of the regional and international conferences and symposia held as part of the respective systems of the United Nations (UN) or the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to address extremism, sectarianism, and terrorism through a comprehensive approach that brings together the security field and the cultural, religious, intellectual, socio-economic, right-based and media fields, as highlighted in the “Manama Process for the Activation of Joint Islamic Cultural Action to Face Extremism, Sectarianism and Terrorism”, adopted by the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers (Manama, November 2018);

- **Reaffirming** the importance of heritage in the preservation of collective memory and peoples’ identity; and being fully aware that failing to safeguard or preserve heritage will inevitably lead to losing this memory and obliterating that identity;

- **Regarding** the vandalism and destruction of many historical buildings and landmarks in a number of Member States, as a result of conflicts and wars fueled by extremist thinking, sectarianism and terrorism; and looting, smuggling, illicit trafficking, and destruction of artifacts and civilizational landmarks;
- **Being aware** of the considerable risks threatening the human heritage, both Islamic and Christian, in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and the emboldened Israeli violations and illegal excavations targeting Al-Aqsa Mosque, in flagrant defiance to international legitimacy;

- **Being conscious** of the various challenges facing the sector of intangible cultural heritage in the Islamic world, the looting and piracy it is subject to due to the negative effects of globalization and the greed of the latter’s cultural industry, or the threats of obliteration resulting from racial fanaticism, zealotry, and religious and intellectual extremism, in contradiction with the respect for pluralism and cultural diversity;

- **Being aware** of the responsibility of coordinating efforts, promoting cooperation and encouraging the exchange of expertise and information to spare human heritage neglect, destruction, looting, or Judaization, especially in light of growing extremism, sectarianism, and terrorism,

**Declare the following:**

- Endeavoring to seek guidance from the contents of the “Manama Process for the Activation of Joint Islamic Cultural Action to counter Extremism, Sectarianism and Terrorism” and the “Action Programme on the Promotion of Islamic and International Support for Safeguarding Civilizational and Cultural Heritage in Al-Quds Al-Sharif”, in compliance with national cultural policies and plans, and in support of the efforts of the relevant governmental institutions and civil society associations;

- Reiterating the determination to maintain action and intensify efforts to safeguard Islamic cultural heritage and preserve all its tangible and intangible components that Member States are abound with; direct more attention thereto in cultural and heritage-related plans and programmes to highlight its diversity and rich aesthetic, cultural and civilizational characteristics at the Islamic and human levels; publicize Islamic heritage’s historical monuments and landmarks, outstanding architecture, artifacts, manuscripts and coins, etc; and provide maintenance, restoration, protection and documentation services necessary for its sustainability regardless of circumstances or regions, particularly in parts of the Islamic world that are floundering in conflicts and wars and suffering from extremism, sectarianism and terrorism;

- Providing ICT-based training to professionals working in the fields of tangible and intangible cultural heritage to hone their professional and technical skills in the fields of cataloging, maintenance, restoration, and documentation; and develop ways to make use of heritage in cultural, environmental and rural tourism, put into practice the techniques of preparing the files of inscription of its tangible and intangible monuments on the Islamic heritage’s lists of ISESCO’s Islamic World Heritage Committee, and on the Human Heritage List of UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee, and acquire mechanisms of preemptive protection
of cultural properties, to spare such properties Judaization, pillaging, looting, or destruction by the Israeli occupation authorities, extremists and terrorists;

- Intensifying awareness-raising campaigns for citizens about the importance of preserving cultural and civilizational heritage; valuing it as a human heritage with its tangible and intangible components; using written and audiovisual media and social networks; organizing heritage days to ensure the widespread of these awareness-raising campaigns and urge the public to engage in the programmes that aim to safeguard heritage, counter any threats thereto, especially by extremists and terrorists, and emphasize the impact of this on the protection of their cultural and civilizational identity from any obliteration or distortion, the promotion of cultural tourism in their countries, and the achievement of socioeconomic development for individuals and societies, as part of the participatory management of heritage;

- Coordinating with the ministries of education to enrich curricula at all educational levels with goal-oriented texts and data to showcase the diversified and aesthetic aspects of Islamic tangible and intangible cultural and civilizational heritage, as well as its interaction with human heritage throughout history, in such a way as to educate younger generations on how to assume responsibility vis-à-vis both national and world heritage, alert to the risks of neglecting such heritage or exposing it to destruction by extremist, sectarian and terrorist forces, and highlight the benefits of safeguarding heritage in self-preservation, protecting identity, promoting openness to the Other and scoring socioeconomic benefits;

- Adopting a comprehensive cultural approach to combat extremism, sectarianism and terrorism where intellectual, religious, educational, socioeconomic and media action interplays with and consolidates security action, in a way that ensures effective response to the diverse and ever-changing forms of the culture of violence, extremism and sectarianism which jeopardize society’s religious, intellectual, cultural and socioeconomic specificities and tangible and intangible heritage properties;

- Reiterating support to the Islamic World Heritage Committee (IWHC) and the Committee of Archeologists in Charge of Monitoring and Documenting the Israeli Occupation forces’ Illegal Excavations in the Vicinity of Al Aqsa Mosque, and to all regional and international bodies operating in the field of safeguarding human heritage; inviting them to intensify their efforts to provide more protection to the components of tangible and intangible cultural heritage which are vulnerable to Judaization, destruction, looting, pillaging, and distortion in zones of conflict, wars and occupation, as they are shared human heritage; and providing more financial and technical support to competent parties to help them develop their cataloging, documentation and training processes and prepare inscription files on the Islamic World Heritage List and the World Heritage List;
- Reaffirming ISESCO's pivotal role in the protection of cultural heritage in the Islamic world, as it is OIC's specialized organization that oversees the Islamic World Heritage Committee; and calling upon national, regional and international bodies and centers operating in this field, particularly the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), to promote cooperation and coordination with ISESCO to ensure more support and protection for cultural and civilizational heritage in the Islamic world;

- Ensuring full preparedness to give effect to ISESCO's initiative to proclaim 2019 a Year of Heritage in the Islamic World, in concurrence with the celebration of Al Quds Al Sharif as the Arab region’s Capital of Islamic Culture for 2019, and in coincidence with the 50th anniversary of the burning of Al Aqsa Mosque, through twinning the Islamic culture capitals with Al Quds Al Sharif, implementing the activities and programmes that aim to highlight the Islamic and Christian identity of the cultural and civilizational heritage of Al Quds Al Sharif, and organizing the “National Open Heritage Days” to allow citizens to visit historic monuments, heritage landmarks and museums free of charge;

- Expressing wholehearted thanks and gratitude for His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, for extending his high patronage to this Conference, and commending His Majesty's efforts in promoting joint Islamic action in all developmental fields, and safeguarding cultural heritage and countering extremism;

- Extending heartfelt thanks to H.E. Sheikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa, President of the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities (BACA), and her assistants for their commendable efforts in preparing for the Conference and providing the suitable conditions conducive to its success and for the good hospitality and reception;

- Commending the sustained and fruitful efforts of H.E. Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, ISESCO Director General, in safeguarding cultural and civilizational heritage in the Islamic world, especially in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, through the Islamic World Heritage Committee and ISESCO Archaeology Experts Committee, lauding his leading educational, cultural and media initiatives to counter extremist thinking, sectarianism and terrorism, and calling on His Excellency to sustain such extensive and successful efforts, so as to score more achievements in the service of the causes of the Muslim Ummah.