

**Statement of his Excellency Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu**

**Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic conference**

**at the high-level plenary meeting of the United Nations general assembly**

**United Nations headquarters – New York**

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**Mr. President,**

It gives me great pleasure to address this august Assembly, on behalf of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, as the General Assembly, five years after the adoption of the Millennium Declaration, takes a pause to review the state of affairs of the world in general, and the achievements realized in implementing the Millennium Development Goals in particular.

It was, indeed, a good omen to see the leaders of the world, seizing the opportunity of the Millennium celebration, to collectively review the path that the world is pursuing and to ponder over the many problems afflicting humanity.

The results of their meeting were highly constructive and noble goals were set. The building blocks for the edifice of a more equitable world order were identified, and a global partnership between rich and poor was recommended.

Today, five years later many developing countries perceive that the political will to forge ahead in implanting what was agreed upon is not vigorous.

Looking at this matter from the Muslim world's vantage point, and despite our good intentions to take comfort from the promising objectives enshrined in the Millennium Declaration, we, in the Muslim world, are still waiting and hoping to see a better world.

Despite the prevalence of the lofty principles of respect of human rights; the supremacy of the rule of law, the international law and the international humanitarian law, and at a time when the issues of people's right to self-determination have almost been settled, the Muslim world finds itself still exposed to numerous injustices, violation of rights and campaigns of defamation.

Many people in the Muslim world are still deprived of their rights to self-determination, or living under foreign occupation as are the cases in Palestine and Kashmir.

At the same time, we are fully aware of the fact that the OIC Member States should do more in the process of implementation of the Millennium Development Goals. I would like to emphasize that campaigns of defamation are still waged – and have even intensified – against Muslims and Islam itself; the growing phenomenon of Islamophobia is the best example of this trend. Human rights of Muslims, particularly in the long established democracies, have become subject to violation. Worse still, the rule has in many instances become that the Muslim is guilty until proved innocent.

We hope that the idea of transforming the present office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights to a Human Rights Council will help in upholding these rights.

In the face of this situation, we in the OIC are making every effort to deal with this reality in the interest of global harmony, concord, and peace. The leaders of the Muslim world will hold an Extraordinary Summit in Makkah to examine the situation. The OIC General Secretariat is also continuing a process of overhauling the Organisation, rewriting its Charter and objectives with the aim to bring its activities to the mainstream of the concerns of the international community, especially in the field of development of societies and contributing to international cooperation with concrete projects.

Mr. President,

Regarding peace and security issues, we firmly believe that the scourge of terrorism should be eliminated. Representing 57 Muslim countries of the world and the Islamic world at large, the OIC rejects and condemns violence and terrorism. We however, notice that the global war on terrorism has not yielded any convincing results because it has focused mainly on military means. What is needed, we believe, is to address the root causes of terrorism, using the art of convincing through local approaches while resorting to diplomacy, financial and economic measures, and encouraging moderate trends.

Yet, terrorism needs to be defined. To be equitable, any definition of terrorism should include State terrorism, and should not prejudice the rights of people struggling for their self-determination or under foreign occupation to resistance.

I would like to emphasize, in this regard, that the sanctity of life is one of the paramount values of Islam and that terrorism is a heretical deviation of the religion. We believe that frequent placing of the prefix of "Islam" before "terrorism" is a sacrilege. Moreover, it is highly dangerous. We should be careful not to create a perception that might lead to bitter enmity, based on religious grounds, between hundreds of millions of people.

Muslims around the world have never been under such a pressure and intensive scrutiny placed on them. What we need is concerted effort to quell this phenomenon in greater understanding and in an open critical, and transcultural dialogue among all civilizations.

On the other hand, we share the views of the many who are calling for the democratization of the UN system, especially the composition of the membership of the Security Council. The United Nations reform should take into consideration the representation of the Muslim world and the realities of the contemporary world.

The OIC Member States have endorsed the eight Millennium Development Goals that are to be achieved by 2015. We hope that we will be able to meet this target. We also support the idea of repositioning the Economic and Social Council to enhance its effectiveness in dealing with the new challenges of economic and social development in the world, thus helping the advent of an era of more social justice and a more democratic world order.

In conclusion, Mr. President, at a moment when our world stands at the crossroads of a promising future, or a threatened one, let the opportunity, being offered by this High Level forum of nations, of striving to save humanity from the ravages of poverty, illiteracy and social disintegration, not be lost. Let future generations remember this moment as one when the leadership of the world rose to the occasion to build the foundations of a healthy and progressive global village which remains our destination in the new millennium we have recently entered.

Towards this goal, I pledge to you the fullest cooperation and partnership of the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the time ahead.

**Thank you, Mr. President.**