

## Departamento de Medio Oriente

### Organization of the Islamic Conference

#### Final Communiqué

of the Seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers

Jeddah – Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

20-21 shaaban 1427H 13-14 September, 2006

1. In response to the kind invitation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia the Seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers (ICIM) was held in Jeddah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on 20-21 Sha'aban 1427H, corresponding to 13-14 September, 2006 under the lofty patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Sovereign of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

2. The following Member States participated in the Session:

- Republic of Azerbaijan
- Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
- Islamic State of Afghanistan
- State of the United Arab Emirates
- Republic of Indonesia
- Republic of Uzbekistan
- Republic of Uganda
- Islamic Republic of Iran
- Islamic Republic of Pakistan
- Kingdom of Bahrain
- Brunei Darussalam
- People's Republic of Bangladesh

- Republic of Benin
- Burkina Faso
- Republic of Turkey
- Republic of Chad
- Republic of Togo
- Republic of Tunisia
- People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
- Republic of Djibouti
- Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
- Republic of Senegal
- Republic of Sudan
- Syrian Arab Republic
- Republic of Sierra Leone
- Republic of Somalia
- Republic of Iraq
- Sultanate of Oman
- Republic of the Gambia
- Republic of Guinea
- State of Palestine
- Federal Islamic Republic of Comoros
- State of Qatar
- Republic of Kazakhstan
- Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
- Republic of Cameroon
- State of Kuwait
- Republic of Lebanon
- Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya
- Republic of Mali
- Malaysia
- Arab Republic of Egypt
- Kingdom of Morocco
- Islamic Republic of Mauritania

- Republic of Niger
- Federal Republic of Nigeria
- Republic of Yemen

(List of Participating Delegations in Annex No. 1).

Also participating in the conference were countries with Observer status:

- Turkish Cypriot State
- Kingdom of Thailand

3. Subsidiary Organs of the Organization of the Islamic Conference also participated such as:

- The International Islamic Fiqh Academy
- The Islamic Research Centre on History, Art and Culture (IRCICA, Istanbul)

4. Participating in the Conference were also the Specialized Institutions of the Organization of the Islamic Conference:

- The Islamic States' Broadcasting Organization (ISBO)
- The International Islamic News Agency (IINA)
- The Islamic Development Bank (IDB)
- The Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)

UNESCO participated as an invitee

Opening Session

5. The conference was inaugurated with the recital of verses from the Holy Quran.

6. The conference unanimously elected, following a proposal from the chief delegate of the Arab Republic of Egypt, His Excellency Iyad Bin Amin Madani, the Minister of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as Chairman of the 7th Session of the ICIM.

7. The conference elected the other members of the Bureau as follows:

State of Palestine:

Vice Chairman

Republic of Senegal: Vice Chairman  
Islamic Republic of Iran: Vice Chairman  
Arab Republic of Egypt: Rapporteur

8. The conference then adopted the Agenda and Work Programme as proposed by the Senior Officials meeting (documents No. OIC/ICIM-7/2006/AGENDA and No. OIC/ICIM-7/2006/WORK PROGRAMME).

9. In his speech to the Conference, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, OIC's Secretary General, highlighted the necessity of giving necessary attention to the plans enabling the Islamic States to voice out and further expound their causes to the external world, to express their opinions, perspectives and positions on the parameters and developments. He also called for defending the eternal Islamic values and spreading the message of Islam worldwide in facing the international reality which is prejudicing the rights of Muslims.

Professor Ihsanoglu further reminded the gathering of the important resolutions taken at the Third Extraordinary Summit held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah in December 2005, particularly in relation to the external media which the Summit has affirmed must be given the necessary importance at this point in time as the Islamic Ummah is being the target of attacks on all cultural, ideological, political and economic fronts. While the hostile media acting against the interests of the Ummah have been playing an essential role in this regard, the joint Islamic information – adds the Secretary General - has remained powerless in efficiently repelling these unjust campaigns, the worst manifestation of which is the offensive caricatures against the person of Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him.

The Secretary General in his statement emphasized the need to lay down the foundations for solidarity in the field of digital technology and paying special attention to setting-up a Fund dedicated to finance the bridging of the digital divide between developed states and OIC countries, in spite of the financial difficulties resulting from non-fulfillment of financial obligation and the lack of voluntary contribution from the Member States.

The Secretary General also highlighted the importance of establishing television stations and satellite channels in the Muslim States broadcasting in the major living languages of the world, directed to the peoples speaking these languages. He expressed the opinion that the OIC should open Islamic Information offices in some of the pivotal world capitals to serve as links between the Organization and the international media with particular emphasis on the exchange of information and forging constructive working relationships with the foreign media.

In concluding his speech, with regards to internal joint Islamic action, Professor Ekmelledin Ihsanoglu recalled the resolutions adopted by the Sixth Session of the ICIM, especially the resolution calling upon Member States to contribute in the fund-raising campaign for the benefit of the emergency relief fund to extend relief assistance to Muslims in case of disasters. Muslim countries' media should be directed to contribute to the campaign for the benefit of this humanitarian, charitable undertaking at the level of public and private sectors as well as individuals and philanthropists throughout the Ummah; through the launching of a telethon campaign by various television stations, satellite channels, and radio stations in Member States to urge the Muslim peoples to contribute donations to this fund. The Secretary General expressed the hope that the Information Ministers would direct the concerned officials at their respective Ministries to cooperate with the OIC in highlighting its activities in the field of joint Islamic action.

10. His Excellency Mr Anas Al-Fighy, Minister of Information of the Arab Republic of Egypt, Chairman of the Sixth ICIM delivered a statement in which he conveyed the greetings of His Excellency President Muhammad Hosni Mubarak, and his wishes that the efforts of the Conference would bring positive and concrete results that would take the Islamic information to new heights to become an efficient and effective tool, contributing to the advancement of our Muslim peoples and consolidating dialogue between our Ummah and all the states and peoples in the world.

The Minister underscored the conclusions of the Sixth Session of the ICIM, held in Cairo, Arab Republic of Egypt, followed by the proceedings of the Ministerial Follow-up Committee, which constituted, as he stated, a serious beginning for the

development and support of relations of cooperation and integration among Islamic States which have enriched through its resolutions the message of the Islamic World to all parts of the globe and paved the way for a unified Islamic vision and position vis-à-vis the issues of the Islamic World and at the international level. The Minister further said: "Today more than ever before, we are in dire need for a new Islamic information rhetoric aimed at reaching all parts of the world, stating the reality of our tolerant religion and dissemination of our firm magnanimous values".

The Minister stated, "Islamic information ought to be a tool of free and truthful change for our Islamic peoples, while at the same time open to the world with its diverse cultures and civilizations in the framework of balanced dialogue which preserves our specificity, reflects our reality and defends our well-established cultural and civilizational orientations".

11. Thereafter, H.E. Mr. Iyad Bin Amin Madani, Minister of Culture and Information in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chairman of the Seventh Session of the ICIM, delivered a speech in which he reiterated that the Information Ministers are seeking in this session to reaffirm their awareness of what brings together the peoples and cultures of the Islamic States, their optimism to the future of joint Islamic information action, their earnest intent to materialize joint information projects into a living and conforming reality to the age of the flow of information which is experienced by the Islamic World, and master knowledge and data as a basic tool for development and social cohesion.

The Minister concluded his welcoming speech by confirming the pride of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in hosting the proceedings of the Seventh Session, highly commending the effective participation by the most important leaders of information across the Islamic World; and appreciating the efforts exerted by His Excellency the OIC Secretary-General, Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu and the General Secretariat to prepare and organize this Session.

12. On behalf of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz, HRH Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz, Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Aviation and Inspector General, patronized the inaugural ceremony of the Seventh Session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers. In his speech His Royal Highness welcomed the participants in the conference in their second homeland, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. His Royal Highness stated: "This conference is an extension of the Extraordinary Summit Conference held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah in 1426H. It was a really exceptional conference, indeed, as, upon the behest of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, it was preceded by a meeting of the thinkers and scholars of the Ummah to expound their views to their leaders. Emanating from this meeting was a Ten-Year Programme for future Joint Islamic Action which addressed the subject of the required media activity, for which you are meeting today to materialize as an effective and genuine mobility on the ground, God Willing".

His Royal Highness Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz also stated: "The media is a vital and pivotal force in shaping identities and social reality, an extremely effective influence in the formation political awareness and an indispensable channel for the exchange of information and contact between societies and cultures". He highlighted the importance of opening more channels of communication between Member States, increasing their knowledge of one another, while intensifying exchange of information and making them available to the Islamic peoples. He likewise underlined the importance of strengthening and developing the institutions of joint information action under OIC umbrella.

His Royal Highness has urged everyone to seek - with utmost professionalism, clear-sighted vision, keenly designed programs and sustained endeavors - to convey to the whole world the true picture of Islam, its civilization, heritage, noble objectives, belief and code. He further called for fraternity between different peoples, equality between humankind, bridging the gap between different classes, setting the example of tolerance, justice, dialogue and openness onto other civilizations. For Islam is,

without exception, a universal religion. Our information must stand up to those willing to keep it captive and distort its image internally and externally.

13. Their Excellencies the Ministers of Information of the Republic Burkina Faso, the Kingdom of Bahrain and the People's Republic of Bangladesh successively delivered statements on behalf of the African, Arab and Asian Groups in which they expressed thanks and appreciation to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud for the warm reception and hospitality accorded to the participating delegations. They also expressed their thanks to the OIC Secretary General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu for the efforts he exerts for the advancement of joint Islamic information action of OIC Member States.

14. Their Excellencies the Ministers and heads of delegations of the Republic of Turkey, the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Syrian Arab Republic, the Republic of Azerbaijan, the Lebanese Republic, the Islamic State of Afghanistan, the Republic Guinea, the Republic of Iraq, the Republic of the Gambia, the Republic of Senegal, the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Burkina Faso, the State of Palestine, the Republic of Sierra Leone, the Republic of Yemen, the Republic Indonesia, the Republic of Sudan, People's Republic of Bangladesh, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, delivered speeches in which they addressed the current regional and international situation as well as threats confronting the Islamic Ummah, affirming the necessity of doubling efforts in the various fields. They also stressed the need for solidarity and doubling among themselves and seek to energize the resolutions of previous Islamic Summits and Conferences and especially the resolutions issued by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah in December, 2005. The Ministers called for the need to give strong boost to the joint Islamic information action and exchange of expertise and projects among the OIC Member States in the fields of information and communication.



15. The representatives of ISESCO and IRCICA delivered statements on this occasion.

16. The Conference adopted the report submitted to it by the Senior Officials Meeting (Document No. OIC/ICIM-7/2006/SO-REP/FINAL)\* which includes the recommendations issued by this conference on the following:

First: Interaction with the external media;

Pursuant to the decision of the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah on 7-8 December, 2005 (Item 7) on the necessity of joint Islamic action on the international arena, the Conference recommends to constitute a small supervisory Ministerial Committee to draw up within a period of six months a complete Work Plan to address the outside world in languages which it understands and according to methods which conform with its logic and mental constitution. The Committee shall seek the help of a group of specialized experts to draw up executive plans and programmes while referring all the Working Papers submitted on this subject to the afore-mentioned committee to make use of. This committee shall be composed of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Turkey, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Malaysia, Republic of Senegal, Syrian Arab Republic, the Kingdom of Morocco and the OIC Secretary General or his representative. The committee shall submit the results of its work to the Chairman of the current session of the ICIM to discuss with the members of the committee the beginning of implementing them.

Second: Code of Ethics:

The Meeting recommends to agree on a Code of Ethics as a guide to the mass media of the Islamic States which will realize diversity and plurality, and preserve the values and interests of the Islamic Ummah. The Code constitutes a document on (the morals and principles of information action in the Member States), (the resolution adopted by the 3rd Conference of Information Ministers) being the appropriate framework for this Code. The General Secretariat is entrusted with setting up the draft Code and that the Member States shall communicate to the

General Secretariat their proposals and views in this respect. The preparation of the draft shall be completed in a period of six months and then submitted to the Chairman of the current Session of the ICIM.

Third: Organization by National Television Stations

in Member States of an annual campaign to collect donations (Telethon) to face natural and human disasters

Believing in the dire need for launching television campaigns in the case of natural and human disasters, the Meeting recommends to the mass media to commit themselves to launch domestic campaigns in each Member State to collect donations in a way which they deem fit and to send them directly to the afflicted state in accordance with the regulations in force in each State in coordination with the competent authorities. The Conference recommends to the General Secretariat to coordinate campaigns and specify one day to do this in the Member States.

Fourth: The International Islamic News Agency (IINA):

The Meeting sees the necessity to restructure the International Islamic News Agency (IINA) in order to boost its efficiency according to its objectives and objectives of the OIC. The Meeting recommends to constitute a Board of Directors for IINA for a two-year period chaired by the Minister of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the membership of the Heads of the News Agencies of the Arab Republic of Egypt, the State of Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Morocco, the Socialist Peoples' Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Turkey, Indonesia, Cameroon, Senegal, Nigeria, Niger and the OIC Secretary General or his representative. The Board may invite the Secretaries-General of the African News Agency, the Union of Arab News Agencies and the Union of Asian News Agencies to attend its meetings as Observers. The Board may charge whom it sees fit to carry out scientific study to develop the performance of the Agency in order to realize the expected objectives with the utmost efficiency and within a period to be defined by the Board. It shall approach the IDB to discuss the possibility of financing this study.

Fifth: Islamic States Broadcasting Organization (ISBO):

The Meeting recommended to develop ISBO and transform it into (the Union of Islamic Broadcasting) in order to provide further new fields and information horizons to serve the OIC Member States. The Conference recommended to constitute a Board of Directors for the Union and that it shall prepare, within six months, a complete Study and draw up an organizational and functional chart as well as new work plans including work programmes of the Union and their implementation mechanisms in such a way as to realize the objectives of the Ten-Year Programme of Action which was adopted by the Third Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Summit Conference, held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah on 5-6 Dhul-Qaida 1426H, corresponding to 7-8 December, 2005.

The Meeting recommended to constitute a Board of Directors for the Union chaired by the Minister of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the membership of Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Gambia, Guinea, Mali, Uganda, Turkey, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Iran and the OIC Secretary General or his representative. The Board shall undertake arrangements for continuous contacts with similar regional and international Unions. The Conference recommended to make use of developments taking place in Cyber-space and the Internet, as well as to utilize all the means to convey Islamic information messages to the targeted public inside and outside the Islamic World.

Sixth: Ministerial Follow-up Committee:

The Meeting recommends to constitute a Ministerial Follow-up Committee emanating from the 7th Session of the ICIM comprising the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Palestine, Arab Republic of Egypt, Syrian Arab Republic, Republic of Tunisia, Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Indonesia, Republic of Yemen, Socialist Peoples Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Kingdom of Morocco, Republic of Turkey, Republic of Sierra Leone and the OIC Secretary General. The Secretary General

shall be mandated with revising previous resolutions and submitting a report thereon to the 8th Session of the ICIM.

Seventh: The Information Department at the OIC General Secretariat:

In the framework of strengthening joint Islamic action among Member States, the Meeting recommends the importance of developing the Information Department at the OIC General Secretariat by providing it with the necessary human and material resources to enable it to carry out the task entrusted to it by the Information Ministers of the Member States.

17. Under Any Other Business:

Their Excellencies the Ministers and heads of delegations proposed a number of important issues which they decided to incorporate in the Final Communiqué of the Conference, namely:

a) The free and easy movement of media people between the OIC Member States:

The Conference urges the OIC Member States to facilitate all the procedures that enable the media people working in the national mass media to move easily among the Member States.

b) The right of citizens in the Member States to have access to information:

The development and the well-being of Muslim citizens necessitate to have access to information from the mass media and from their sources in due time, free of charge or at a reasonable cost. International Human Rights Charters, legislations, and international constitutions in most of the states of the world guarantee this right due to its significance in human life. On this basis the Member States approve the right of citizens in the Islamic States to have easy access to information.

c) The Palestinian Cause:

Pursuant to the principles and objectives of the OIC Charter, the Conference reiterates the resolutions adopted by previous sessions of the ICIM on the cause of

Al-Quds Al-Sharif, Palestine and the Occupied Arab Territories including Syrian Golan and the Lebanese Shebaa Farms. It takes into consideration the need to support the organs and bodies of the Palestinian Authority in the field of information and communication, especially following the bombardment of the information facilities and buildings as well as the destruction of their equipments. The Conference appeals to the Member States to extend assistance to the Palestinian Authority in order to support and develop its radio and television authority and exchange programmes and expertise with it. The Conference entrusts the OIC General Secretariat with organizing information seminars on Al-Quds Al-Sharif and Palestine. It calls on the media in the Member States to intensify the production and exchange of information programmes in cooperation with the Palestinian media. It also requests the Member States to contribute to the establishment of a permanent site of Al-Quds in the Internet in coordination with the OIC General Secretariat.

d) The Republic of Iraq:

The Conference called on the media people in the Member States to stand by the side of Iraq in order to unify its ranks and overcome its suffering, and to establish contacts with it in such a way as to achieve its unity and sovereignty on its territory and resources. The Conference also called on them to avoid inflaming the fires of dissention and refrain from encouraging division – directly or indirectly.

e) The Sudan:

The Conference firmly stands on the side of the Sudan in the face of antagonistic information campaigns in relation to the position of the government of the Sudan aimed at preserving and protecting its unity, independence and rejection of foreign intervention in its affairs.

f) Digital divide:

In order to bridge the digital divide, the Conference recommended that the Member States as well as the competent information and communications institutions and organizations and the private sector to contribute financially to the Digital Solidarity Fund which was launched on 14/3/2005 at the initiative of H.E. President Abdoulaye Wade of the Republic of Senegal and Chairman of COMIAC.

g) Regularity of the dates of holding

ICIM Sessions:

The Conference recommended sessional holding of meetings of Information Ministers regularly every two years in the first or second weeks of September. The Chairman of the session may convene an extraordinary meeting when necessary.

18. The Conference recommended that the Sessions of the Meetings of Information Ministers shall be open unless the chairman of the session decides otherwise

19. The Conference recommended that the speeches of their Excellencies Heads of Delegations shall be specific to direct information affairs or subjects included in the agenda. It also recommended to circulate statements of a general nature among the participants and that they shall be delivered to the General Secretariat in adequate time for preparation and translation.

20. The conference decided to hold the 8th ICIM Session in the Kingdom of Morocco in the first half of September, 2008.

21. The Conference decided to address a cable of thanks, appreciation and gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud for his lofty patronage of the conference proceedings. It also decided to address a cable of thanks and appreciation to His Royal Highness, Prince Sultan Bin Abdul Aziz, the Crown Prince, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Defence, Aviation and Inspector-General for honouring the Conference by attending the opening of its proceedings.

22. The Conference expressed its utmost thanks to H.E. Iyad Bin Amin Madani the Minister of Culture and Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chairman of the Seventh Session of ICIM for his sagacious steering of its proceedings, and to his assistants for the efforts they exerted to prepare and organize the Conference.

23. The Conference also expressed its appreciation to His Excellency Prof. Ekmelledin Ihsanoglu, the OIC Secretary General for the efforts he exerts to energize joint Islamic information action between OIC Member States. It also extended thanks to his assistants in the General Secretariat and technical staff for the effective work to prepare the conference documents and for their contribution to the success of the Conference.

24. The Conference was concluded by recitation of Verses from the Holy Quran.

Jeddah, 21st Shaaban 1427H  
(Corresponding to 14 September, 2006)  
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