

Islamic Conference

31st Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers

Istanbul Declaration

Istanbul, June 14-16, 2004

We, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Heads of Delegation participating in the Thirty-First Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Session of “Progress and Global Harmony”, solemnly declare the following:

1. We reaffirm our commitment to the purposes, objectives and principles of our Organization, as enshrined in its Charter.
2. We derive strength and confidence from Islam, a religion of peace, harmony and tolerance. It inspires us in achieving freedom, peace and prosperity.
3. We have taken full stock of the developments that characterize the current international scene and agreed to assert our collective will more effectively with the sole objective of achieving justice, peace and harmony.
4. We are resolved to pursue the peaceful settlement of all international issues and spend efforts to persuade all parties concerned to act accordingly.
5. We decide to offer our immediate support to enhance the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and for their right to freedom and to the establishment of the independent and sovereign Palestinian State.

We urge the Quartet to work to stop the Israeli aggression in all its forms, secure international protection for the Palestinian people and guarantee free movement for the people and their leadership, and seek a lasting solution through the implementation of the road-map which is based on the UN Security Council resolutions 242, 338 and 1397, as well as the UN General Assembly resolution 194, principles of the Madrid Conference and the Arab Peace Initiative, which will aim to bring comprehensive peace to the region, including the Syrian and Lebanese tracks.

We have thus decided to support and closely monitor efforts towards comprehensive peace and to declare that the successful outcome of these efforts will be fully embraced by the OIC.

6. We support the steps towards ending the occupation in Iraq. We equally support the process in which the Iraqis will assume their sovereignty. We state that this assumption of authority must be full. Also the political transition towards the formation of an elected government must be totally inclusive and transparent.

We welcome in this respect the unanimous adoption of resolution 1546 by the United Nations Security Council which sets the framework for this transition.

We have decided to actively assist Iraq in its transition and in meeting its needs.

7. We will continue to support Afghanistan's re-building process.

We reiterate our principled position on the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. All rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir including their right of self-determination as provided for by the UN Security Council resolutions should be fully respected and their will honoured. We also welcome the dialogue process started by Pakistan and India and express the hope that it will culminate in the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

We likewise support the resolution of the Azeri-Armenian conflict within the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

We equally support efforts towards resolving all other issues preoccupying the OIC.

8. We decide to give particular attention to the longstanding problems of regional conflict, economic development, health and famine in Africa. We will support the peaceful resolution of these conflicts and the sustainable development and social progress in Africa. We shall fully play our share in these efforts.

9. We strongly condemn terrorism in all its forms, including state terrorism, and express deep sympathy and support for those countries which have become victims of such attacks. We agree to redouble our efforts in fighting this international scourge.

10. We commend the Turkish Cypriot people for overwhelmingly endorsing the UN Settlement Plan, on the unification of the Island, based on a new bi-zonal partnership of the two politically equal constituent States. We welcome and support the report of the UN Secretary-General, of 28 May 2004, as well as the conclusions and recommendations contained therein. We also support the good offices mission of the UN Secretary-General.

In view of the fundamentally changed circumstances in Cyprus following the 24 April 2004 referenda, we decide to take steps in putting an end to the unjust isolation of the Turkish Cypriots. In the same vein, we look forward to similar action by the international community and bodies.

11. We are determined to carry on with our political, economic, social and cultural progress as sovereign nations, and assist each other in our homegrown efforts.

In expression of our confidence in our strength and values, and with a view to deepening interaction within the OIC as well as to strengthening understanding and cooperation at global level, we set out the following framework and course of action:

We are sovereign nations who work for political, economic, social and cultural progress. We value our freedom and the equality of our citizens. We all aim to strengthen the representative character and the democratic practices of our governments. We are all determined to provide contemporary education to our new generation. We will pursue vigorously the economic and social development of our societies, and will deploy efforts to eradicate poverty.

We, as the OIC members, will assist each other in our progress and reform, which should come from within. The OIC, as an institution, will also develop ways and means for supporting progress in a collective framework.

We endorse the concept of Enlightened Moderation and call for the early establishment of the Commission of Eminent Persons to enable the Ummah to meet the challenges of the 21st century.

The OIC will likewise establish institutional relations with other regional and international organizations for the purpose of fostering intra and inter-regional cooperation for drawing support for the OIC projects.

12. We look forward to the Second Meeting of the OIC-EU Joint Forum that will convene in Istanbul between 4 and 5 October 2004, which will be an important opportunity for strengthening international cooperation and understanding.

13. Finally, we reiterate our will to stay closer to each other and strengthen our solidarity while navigating through these difficult times.

16 June, 2004