

Speech of His Excellency Iyad Ameen Madani Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation At the Opening Session of the Forty-Third Session of the Council of Foreign Ministers

oic-oci.org/topic



Date: 19/10/2016

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim

Wa Assalatu Assalamu A'la Khatemul Anbia wa al-Mursalin

Speech of His Excellency Iyad Ameen Madani,

Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

At the Opening Session of the Forty-Third Session of the

Council of Foreign Ministers

(Tashkent, Republic of Uzbekistan, Tuesday, 18 October 2016)

H.E. Acting President Mr. Shavkat Mirziyoyev,

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my privilege to have this opportunity to address this august Meeting of the 43rd Session of the CFM.

I would like first to greet with appreciation the efforts made by the State of Kuwait during its leadership of the Forty-Second Session of the CFM and the important initiatives Kuwait has taken during this period. I also appreciate the spirit of cooperation, coordination, and consultation of the Kuwaiti officials and diplomats in all positions, notably His Highness Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Khal-id Al-Sabah.

I also commend all the efforts of the Republic of Turkey that hosted the Thirteenth Islamic Summit in Istanbul in April 2016 and for its dedication and support to the OIC's ongoing activities.

I also express my sincere gratitude to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the host country, for the support it consistently and generously provides to the OIC.

We also record with gratification the level of professionalism we have been receiving from our colleagues in Uzbekistan in the process of organizing this Session of the CFM.

We also underline the importance of the excellent choice of the theme of this Session, "Education and Enlightenment: The Way to Peace and Creativity". It is quite appropriate to discuss this on the land of Al-Maturidi, Al-Samarqandi, Al-Bukhari, Al-Tirmidhi, Ibn Sina, Al-Biruni, Al-Khwarizmi, Al-Zamakhshari.

It is also noteworthy to mention, with the utmost reverence, the wise positions of the late President Islam Abdulganiyevich Karimov, may Allah bless his soul. He paid special interest to the OIC and spared no effort to express Uzbekistan's commitment to the service of the Muslim World. He was deeply interested in holding this session. History

will always cherish him as a leader and a president who consistently believed in the values of peace and solidarity and was keen on the interests of his people. He truly upheld the banner of his homeland and ensured its development.

Mr. Acting President,

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,

There is no doubt that the unfortunate developments in some Member States and the deteriorating security and humanitarian situation invite us to intensify our consultations, revisit some political considerations, and intensify our efforts to establish peace in our region to ensure justice, decent living, and development for the current and future generations.

Despite their importance and impact on the situation in the region and international relations in general, these developments unprecedented in modern history should not distract us from our central issue, the Palestinian Cause, in which the regional and international interest unfortunately has declined.

I reiterate that we cannot establish peace in the region of the Middle-East in a manner consistent with the principles of human conscience, as well as the interests of all countries without ensuring drastic, just, and lasting solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, whose centrality casts a shadow over the neighboring countries and the region in general.

In this context, I would like to salute the Republic of Indonesia and express my special appreciation to His Excellency P. Joko Widodo, President of Indonesia, for hosting the Fifth Extraordinary Summit on Palestine, which undoubtedly provided positive support for the Palestinian Cause. It was also an important event where we emphasized the importance of providing multilateral sponsorship of the political process and setting a timetable to end the Israeli occupation and establish the Palestinian State on the 1967 borders with Al-Quds Ash-Sharif as its capital. We also called upon the UN Security Council to shoulder its responsibility as a UN guarantor and intervene effectively to put an end to the policies of aggression and blatant violations of the International Law, which Israel has opted for so far.

The suffering that the Palestinian people have been enduring under the aggressive Israeli policies should stop. Israel continues cracking down and besieging Palestinians. It obstructs their freedom of movement, violates their personal freedoms, infringes upon their private spaces, and deprives them of the most basic individual human rights. This invites us to think resolutely in drawing serious and capable steps to put an end to this Israeli intransigence and the apathy of the international community and actors.

It is still our hope that the French initiative will lead to finding solutions that would lift the peace process from its current stalemate and set clear targets for a negotiation process. This is in light of the Israeli rejection of several important initiatives, including

the Arab initiative, which could have established peace albeit gradually in the Middle East and end the conflict that has lasted for long and which we do not want to be everlasting.

In this context, I call upon all Palestinian parties to go beyond the narrow considerations, unify the Palestinian ranks, overcome the shortcomings of the past, rise above differences whatsoever, and provide a platform of trust and consensus. This would surely serve the Palestinian public interest, strengthen the Palestinian negotiating props, and undermine the flimsy pretexts invoked by the Israelis.

Difference does not mean conflict; freedom of political choice does not mean hostility, and competing visions should not have led to the current impasse. We do not think that any of the Palestinian parties prefer for this situation to continue. We highly appreciate the efforts of some Arab countries working to heal the rift, unify the Palestinian ranks, and narrow the division between the various parties. We also look forward to a positive outcome that would crown these noble efforts and open the horizon for a new stage.

Mr. Acting President,

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,

The sectarian conflicts inflicting several countries of the Muslim World compel us to examine our outlook and recall the diversity, richness and tolerance of our civilization. They also consolidate our conviction of the importance of launching a regional approach that combines the OIC Member States to unite their efforts and attitudes to serve the stability and security of the whole region rather than certain countries. This would reinforce the Islamic rapprochement vision included in the initiative announced by His Excellency Nursultan Nazarbayev, President of Kazakhstan, and His Excellency Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of Turkey, during the Islamic Summit in Istanbul.

We follow with sadness the continuing tragedy in Syria. We express our profound concern and condemnation for the continued bombardment of the Syrian cities and the Syrian regime's policy of intimidating and displacing civilians and closing the doors to political solutions. At the initiative of the State of Kuwait, the OIC held an extraordinary meeting of the Executive Committee at the level of permanent representatives on the deteriorating situation in Syria, especially in the city of Aleppo. The final communique of this meeting reiterated the need to hold the Syrian regime accountable for the crimes it has been committing against its people. It also asserted that those supporting this regime should bear the responsibility for the continued flagrant violations of the UN Charter and the International Law.

As for Iraq, we are coordinating with the Iraqi government to hold Makkah Conference 2 in the framework of national reconciliation between all the components of the Iraqi people. We call on the Iraqi government to expedite the arrangements for this conference.

In Yemen, we continue our support for the legitimate government. We also back the resumption of UN efforts to find political solutions that will ensure Yemen's security, political and economic stability while maintaining its unity and territorial integrity. Considering the deteriorating humanitarian situation, the OIC is also coordinating with King Salman Center for Relief, the United Nations, and other relevant stakeholders to hold a donors conference for the reconstruction of Yemen.

With regard to the situation in Libya, we welcomed the agreement of the Libyan parties to form a government of national reconciliation under the auspices of the United Nations in Skhirat, Morocco. We renew our call today to the Libyan parties to abide by the terms of this agreement, which represents a realistic and practical road map to the security and stability of the country and re-building the constitutional institutions based on the unity and territorial integrity of Libya.

While reaffirming our support for the results of the national dialogue in Sudan, I have to point out that the OIC took the initiative, in line with the resolutions adopted at the previous Islamic summits and ministerial meetings, and sent a joint letter with Arab League and African Union to the US Secretary of State, Mr. John Kerry. We called for lifting the US unilateral sanctions against Sudan and assured the consistent position of the three organizations regarding the need to lift the sanctions, which are a flagrant violation of the UN Charter, Human Rights Declaration, and International Law. We asserted that these sanctions have caused severe humanitarian tragedies to the Sudanese people and impeded the march towards development there. On the other hand, we are working carefully to complement the efforts aimed at signing a trust building agreement between Sudan and Uganda.

Regarding the situation in Mali, the OIC, as a guarantor of the Algiers Peace Agreement between the opposition and the Government of Mali, confirms its commitment to continue efforts to achieve a comprehensive peace in the country and contribute to the reconstruction of the northern areas that severely lack development and infrastructure.

The OIC closely follows up the developments unfolding in Somalia and Central Africa and expresses the hope for further steps to achieve the required stability there. I should also refer to the active role played by the OIC through its constructive contributions in the efforts to achieve peace and security in these two countries as recognized by the international partners.

The deteriorating humanitarian situation in the Lake Chad Basin was the focus of a high-level meeting, recently organised by the OIC in New York, in coordination with the European Union and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). We cautioned against the worsening humanitarian and security situation in this region and called for the need to intensify support to it and to provide protection for civilians.

Our efforts will also continue with the Afghan government to hold an international conference of Ulema on Afghanistan in implementation of the resolutions of the previous CFM session. We see this conference as an important step that should be well prepared

for to meet its goals, namely, to provide the means for constructive dialogue, strengthen the foundations of peace and provide the means for national reconciliation in Afghanistan. I thank, here, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for kindly accepting to host this conference on a date to be determined upon the completion of the necessary arrangements.

The OIC follows with deep concern the bloody events and flagrant excesses against the safety and security of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. This has prompted the Organisation to intensify its efforts to ensure advocacy of the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and assert the legitimate right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination in accordance with international resolutions. The OIC has also followed with concern the latest developments in Nagorno-Karabakh and we call on the international community to act firmly to put an end to the Armenian occupation and resolve the dispute in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions, while preserving the sovereignty, territorial integrity and inviolability of the internationally recognised borders of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The OIC continues to attentively follow situation of the Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar, their marginalization, deprivation and exclusion. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights asserted this fact in his report of 20 June 2016, which points out the continued suffering of the Rohingya and the violation of their basic rights.

The matter was discussed at length, in my meeting in New York on the sidelines of the General Assembly with Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of Myanmar. The meeting was an opportunity to reiterate the OIC's position on the need to develop practical and equitable plans and programmes to improve the humanitarian situation in Arakan and the need for the Government of Myanmar to provide the necessary safeguards for the protection of the fundamental rights of the Rohingya Muslims, including their fundamental right to citizenship. Recently the situation has deteriorated further marred by renewed violence and continued targeting of the safety of this Muslim community.

The OIC has also sincerely endeavoured to monitor the situation of Muslim communities in the Philippines, Thailand and other countries, and it continues its dialogue and consultation with their respective governments in order to further improve their situation and ensure that they exercise their rights as fully committed citizens.

Mr. Acting President,

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,

We cannot reflect on the reality in the Muslim world without highlighting the threat of violent extremism and terrorism which has damaged peace and security in our region, has become a threat to our identity and the social tapestry of our countries and claimed thousands of victims, who lost their lives in vain as a result of crimes committed by groups or individuals with narrow and nihilistic thinking, who devote all their energies to carrying out subversive, inhuman and immoral agendas.

The continuing terrorist and violent crimes, notwithstanding all the security precautions adopted by States, call for more work to implement the set of counter terrorism laws and legislation, invite us, more than ever, to implement the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism of 1999, and intensify security cooperation to counter transnational terrorist organisations and eliminate the networks of organised crime, trafficking in weapons and narcotics.

We also look forward to further cooperation with the international community to develop a comprehensive approach that takes into account all security, economic, cultural, social and intellectual dimensions, focuses on fighting all forms of discrimination, extremism and misunderstanding of religion, discourages exclusion and intellectual alienation sentiments, seeks to promote tolerance and moderation and encourages intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

We have lately followed with alarm the issuance of US Law known as the JASTA, which is a breach of a fundamental principle of international relations law, the principle of sovereign immunity of States. This would create an imbalance in international relations and undermine the bilateral and multilateral efforts in the fight against terrorism and the elimination of terrorist groups.

I would also like to point out, in a related context, the continued keen interest of the OIC to work hard to counter false and tendentious concepts about Islam through initiatives to renounce Islamophobia. In this respect, I commend the valuable role played by the OIC Islamophobia Observatory at the General Secretariat.

This session will also mark the announcement of the actual launch of the Messaging Centre which, in coordination with the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), will follow up news published on social media and endeavour to highlight the voice of reason, promote the image of moderation and tolerance of Islam, educate young people about the hazards of joining criminal and takfiri groups and guide them towards serving their countries and the common good.

Mr. Acting President,

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,

We note with satisfaction the efforts of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC) to advance human rights issues in the Islamic world, while upholding objective and transparent international standards, and in breaking with any suspect attempts that seek to exploit human rights to undermine the political stability and sovereignty of Member States.

We also would like to highly commend the efforts of the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to achieve social and economic development in Member States and develop partnership and cooperation programmes with international financial structures and institutions. I also highly value the wise leadership of Dr. Ahmad Mohamed Ali in his years of tenure as IDB president. I also wish Dr. Bandar Hajjar full success in his duties as the new IDB President.

We would also like to salute the efforts made by the OIC subsidiary and affiliated organs and specialised institutions that work earnestly and diligently to implement their respective mandates and intensify their activities in consultation with the relevant departments and structures in the General Secretariat.

We note with satisfaction the established cooperation between the OIC and regional organisations, including the Arab League, the African Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the Arab Maghreb Union and the Community of Sahel-Saharan States.

We would also like to commend the constructive and fruitful cooperation established between us and the various United Nations organs and structures, which has a good impact and influence on addressing the issues of concern to the Islamic world and strengthening consultation and coordination of positions to serve the interests of our Ummah and actively participate in the advancement and security of humanity.

Equally, the OIC attaches special importance to cooperation with non-member States and regional groups in Europe, Asia and Africa. It is also working assiduously to hold consultations with the European Union and non-member States that have an active role in the international community so as to establish links and common denominators with these actors whose impact on global issues cannot be denied or underestimated.

Mr. Acting President,

Your Highnesses and Excellencies,

The complex issues and bones of contention in some Member States should not turn us away from the success stories of a number of member states at the political, economic, social or intellectual level, thus enabling them to overcome their crises and allowing them to achieve positive recognitions by international parties, be it states or institutions.

If we looked into these successful experiences, we would find that they have capitalised in part or entirely on the role of education in building a balanced society that is capable of overcoming crises, addressing new challenges, enriching humanity, contributing effectively to its development, and guarding against the risk of anarchy, terrorism, extremism, violence and nihilism.

The demands, accelerating technological advances and scientific developments of the time prompt us to accord education, from its early stages, due importance and invite us to develop our curricula, encourage our young energies to make highest academic achievements, develop their brainpower to set foot in the smart world of invention and creativity. This continued scientific development prompts us to consolidate our cooperation with developed countries in an intelligent constructive and responsible fashion, such as to endow us with competitiveness and enable us to affirm and develop ourselves while preserving at the same time our cultural and intellectual specificities.

May I here pay a special tribute to the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (ISESCO) for its commendable efforts in favour of promoting cooperation among Member States in the area of education, and opening new avenues for

cooperation with non-member States, with a view to better showcase our civilizational, intellectual and scientific achievements.

Likewise, I wish to highly appreciate the role played by the Islamic Center for Art and Culture (IRCICA) for its tireless efforts to preserve the Islamic world's humanitarian and cultural heritage. I also wish to praise them for their published studies and research of particular value and weight concerning the Islamic Ummah's issues and history.

Without a doubt, the Islamic Summit for Science and Technology due to be held in 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan, will offer an ideal framework for experts and specialists from the Islamic World to engage in dialogue and exchange views and experiences in the area of education, science and technology. I look forward to the Member States' participation at the highest level in the said event such as to surround it with the necessary effective political will, leading to towards the achievement of its goals.

Within the framework of the OIC's support for the issues of youth and its keen interest in enhancing cooperation among Member States to provide the necessary conditions and anchorage for the emergence of a well-balanced and creative youth, a conference was recently held in Istanbul on youth. A further opportunity will be availed us for the exchange of views on the subject of (empowering youth) during the brainstorming session scheduled for tomorrow and I look forward to hearing your enriching proposals and conceptions on this subject which in my view bares a distinctive value for our countries.

Mr. Acting President,

Your highnesses and Excellencies,

In concluding, I wish to assert once again how much I look forward to the implementation of the Ten-Year Programme of Action for the years 2015-2025 which you adopted at our last Summit and which represents an optimal framework for the adoption of plans of action and future cooperation programmes under the umbrella of our organization.

I also feel duty-bound to note here that we all share the common responsibility of raising high our Organisation's banner and consolidating its role, both regionally and internationally; and I look forward to our meetings being driven by constructive dialogue, acceptance of deferring views and working under the rules of our charter, which has thus far been ratified by 37 Member States, so that we may overcome the conflicts and challenges that do not serve the interest of our Member States at present or in future. I also wish to invite you to keep up your financial support to the organization and its various organs so that they may implement and follow up all the adopted plans and programmes.

I wish to renew my deep appreciation to all of you for affording me this opportunity to convey these ideas to your august council. I would like also to renew my commitment to do my utmost towards executing your decisions and my full determination to consult

with you as may be required by the development that may be witnessed by various dossiers and issues so that I may benefit from your gracious support and pertinent directives.

In conclusion, we reiterate our wishes for full success to Uzbekistan in chairing this session, while commending the offer of Côte d'Ivoire to host the upcoming session of your honorable Council. And we express our full readiness to coordinate with Côte d'Ivoire in holding the Council's session in Abidjan next year.

Wishing you all success, May Allah grant us help and guidance.

Other Press
