

Khartoum Declaration

Role of Higher Education in Development of Science and Technology for Prosperous Future

We, the heads of delegation of the Member States participating in the Sixth Islamic Conference of the Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research held on the theme “*Role of Higher Education in Development of Science and Technology for Prosperous Future*”, under the patronage of His Excellency Field Marshal Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan, in Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan, on 6-7 Muharram 1434 A.H., corresponding to 20-21 November 2012 A.D;

Based on the resolutions of the previous sessions of the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 2000; in Tripoli, Libya, in 2003; in Kuwait city, State of Kuwait, in 2006; in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, in 2008; in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2010; at its Extraordinary Session held in Riyadh, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in 2011;

Guided by the orientations of the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action adopted by the Third Extraordinary Islamic Summit held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah in December 2005, and the OIC Vision 1441 H for Science and Technology adopted by the Tenth Islamic Summit held in Putrajaya in October 2003;

Drawing on the Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation in Islamic Countries adopted by the Tenth Islamic Summit held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, in October 2003, along with its revised version and implementation mechanisms approved by the Fourth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in Baku, Republic of Azerbaijan, in October 2008; the Strategy for Promotion of Nanotechnology in Islamic Countries adopted by the Fifth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2010; the Strategy for Development of Biotechnology in the Islamic World, adopted by the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference held in Putrajaya, Malaysia, in 2003; and the Strategy for the Promotion of University Education in the Islamic World, adopted by the 3rd Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, held in Kuwait, 2006;

In view of the urgent need to improve educational standards and rise to the challenges faced by the Member States in the field of higher education, science, technology, research and innovation, and **being cognizant** of the importance of such fields in achieving development, progress and prosperity;

Being aware of the close bonds which unite the peoples of the Islamic world through the unity of civilization and the shared spiritual, moral and cultural values, and **seeking** to encourage civilizational interaction and promote these shared civilizational, cultural and intellectual bonds;

Having considered the report of the Director General on ISESCO's Efforts in the field of Higher Education, Scientific Research and Technology between the Fifth and Sixth Sessions of the Conference, and **having reviewed** all the draft documents, programmes, strategies and reports submitted to this sixth session of the Conference;

Lauding the constructive and serious deliberations which have taken place throughout the Conference sessions, and the important presentations of the Member States and international organizations;

- **Ask** the concerned higher government authorities in Member States to accord increased attention to the promotion of scientific research and reorient it in such a way as to address the development problems being faced by Muslim countries, and **urge** their legislative bodies to adopt necessary resolutions to provide more financial support and other incentives for developing scientific research, particularly through strengthening the research capacities of existing centres of excellence and establishing new centres of excellence in vital scientific research disciplines, with the latest equipment and training facilities indispensable for conducting world-class advanced research.
- **Recommend** promoting active collaboration among education and scientific research communities in the Member States to exchange expertise through the new emerging paradigm of communication networks in academic and research domains, and effectively joining the Pan-Islamic Research and Education Network (PIREN) to leverage joint research and better education.
- **Urge** the Member States to develop capacities of their higher education systems, expand their scope to comply with the relevant new requirements, improve quality to achieve excellence in higher education, and accord due attention to enforce the "Key Performance Indicators" and develop follow-up and implementation mechanisms as well as benefit from the "**Guide for Assessment and Quality Enhancement for Universities in the Islamic World**" which was adopted by the Conference to assess their performance and overcome the problems and hurdles encountered in improving the quality of education at their universities, with a view to enabling them to enhance their standing at the international level.
- **Recommend** Member States to pay special attention to employability issues regarding higher education graduates in such a way as to generate executive staff responding to the needs of businesses, governmental and non-governmental departments and industry sectors, achieve national economy development goals and provide suitable opportunities to benefit by the requisite knowledge, skills and professional aptitude to enable them to deliver high quality services and engage in competition at the international level.
- **Urge** Member States to keep abreast of the major developments taking place in the realm of youth through emergence of new attitudes and behaviour patterns, which calls for devoting further attention to assessing and addressing challenges in education, science and technology, particularly through setting up youth

science academies and education associations enabling them to take up challenges and overcome hurdles in line with their own vision, approaches and choices.

- **Laud** the efforts exerted by the competent party in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia towards developing the document on the “**Key Performance Indicators**” and actively supporting the hosting of the High-Level Quality and Accreditation Experts’ Meeting in October 2012 to finalize the Guide for Assessment and Quality Enhancement for Universities in the Islamic World, and **call for** pursuing such efforts to follow up implementation of the key performance indicators to ensure quality in higher education.
- **Advise** to redouble efforts for promotion of nanotechnology in the Member States, and take the necessary measures to promote nanotechnology education and create new laboratories and nanotechnology research centres with world-class facilities for conducting research focusing on new and emerging areas of critical importance in improving economies.
- **Commend** the steady progress achieved in the project of “**Atlas of Islamic World Innovation**”, **recommend** that all national reports produced in this connection should be translated for wider dissemination of the latest knowledge, experiences and vital information available in such reports, and **appreciate** the efforts of the project’s Joint Management Team.
- **Commend the major achievements made by** the Federation of the Universities of the Islamic World between the two sessions of the Conference, and **urge** it to pursue its efforts towards enhancing knowledge networks among Member Universities and fostering effective collaboration with parallel federations as well as specialized international, Islamic and Arab institutions.
- **Recommend** expanding the scope of the programme of establishing ISESCO chairs for women scientists in Member States, extending facilities and resources to collaborate and work jointly in empowering women in scientific and technological fields, eliminating their marginalization, and reorienting their socio-economic status towards achieving social and economic gender equality in rights and duties in the Member States.
- **Stress** the vital role of higher education in the promotion of scientific development as recommended by the roundtable held at the 6th session on the “**Role of Higher Education in Development of Science and Technology for Prosperous Future**”, **commend** the important presentations made by the participating experts, **adopt** its outcomes and **recommend** following up their implementation.
- **Express** our appreciation of the leading role of Arab, Islamic and international specialized scientific organizations, bodies, institutions and academies in promoting issues of higher education, scientific research, technology and innovation, and **invite** them to foster further cooperation with Member States and ISESCO in common areas and priorities.

- **Commend** the efforts exerted by the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) to promote science and technology, **welcome** IDB's proposal to Member States to make up to 10% of their financing proposals to the Bank on the promotion of science, technology and innovation for development, through independent projects or activities integrated into sector-based projects, **urge** concerned educational and scientific institutions in IDB Member States to present proposals to the Bank on sound STI projects through IDB's official channel in the respective countries, and **invite** it to enhance cooperation and partnership with ISESCO in this area.
- **Congratulate** the winners of ISESCO prizes in science and technology, and **urge** the Member States and specialized organizations to encourage researchers, scientists, innovators and technologists, especially youth and women, by offering them prizes, opportunities and incentives to enhance their social status and involve them in national decision making process for a balanced scientific development.
- **Express** our deep gratitude to His Excellency Field Marshal Omar Hassan Ahmed Al-Bashir, President of the Republic of the Sudan, for kindly extending his patronage to the conference and commissioning Vice-president Dr. Al-Haj Adam Youssef to preside over the opening session of the Conference, and **adopt** the Vice-president's address as a key document of the Conference.
- **Commend** the support extended by the people and government of the Republic of the Sudan, represented by the Ministry of Higher Education, and express our gratitude for their generosity, hospitality and efforts which have contributed to the success of the Sixth Session of the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research.
- **Appreciate** the role of the OIC Secretary General in promoting the development of science, technology, innovation and higher education as an effective instrument enabling Muslim peoples to take up relevant current challenges.
- **Commend** the constructive efforts exerted by Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, Director General of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), to develop planning and implementation mechanisms for vital projects aimed at advancing science, technology and innovation capacities and strengthening higher education and scientific research, and **urge** the Member States and specialized organizations to collaborate with ISESCO in joint scientific and higher education projects launched for the promotion of Islamic solidarity and mutual benefits.

Done in Khartoum, Republic of the Sudan, on 21 November 2012