

OIC

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OIC Countries will Have More than
a Third of the World's Youth by 2050



**Hissein Taha Discusses
in New York Muslim World Challenges**

Islamic Republic of Mauritania
Hosts 49th Session of the
OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM)
Nouakchott – 2023



The Chinguetti Mosque is a mosque in Chinguetti, Adrar Region, Mauritania. It was an ancient center of worship created by the founders of the oasis city of Chinguetti in the Adrar region of Mauritania in the thirteenth or fourteenth century.



OUR MESSAGE

2022: Key Milestones on the Road to Achievement

2022 is now over. It was a year marked by significant milestones that are worth highlighting, as they constituted opportunities for consideration and decision-making in important fields of concern to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), including economic, humanitarian, cultural, social, media, and scientific fields.

The current issue of the "OIC Journal" covers the recently held sectoral conferences and periodic committee meetings. In fact, the OIC has now fully resumed its activities, which, despite the disruption caused by COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021, had continued uninterrupted. The Organization has now resumed its important conferences at a sustained pace, the latest of which was the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Agencies in the OIC Member States. This meeting was held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on December 20-21, 2022, under the generous patronage of HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, represented by the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority, under the umbrella of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The key output of this meeting was the adoption of the "Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention" to combat corruption in the OIC countries. This Convention will have a key role in promoting joint action against the scourge of corruption, and accordingly in strengthening, protecting, and advancing the economies of Member States.

The city of Jeddah also played host, on September 7, 2022, to the 5th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers in the OIC countries, held under the theme of "Development of Youth and Sports for a Solidarity-Based Ummah".

In my address to this Conference, I called for tackling the challenges facing youth in OIC Member States, especially as regards the rising unemployment rates, the serious spread of extremism, and the issues of displacement, asylum and illegal immigration.

This requires awareness that cannot be built without due attention given to media and information.

I recall, in this context, the convening of the 12th session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, in Istanbul, Türkiye, on October 22, 2022, under the theme of "Combating Disinformation and Islamophobia in the Post-Truth Era". This session addressed the challenges facing the media sector and its infrastructure in the OIC Member States, and discussed the media discourse directed at the other through traditional and modern media and via Social Media platforms.

In the economic field, last November witnessed the holding of the 38th session of the Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC).

These conferences are, in fact, an optimum path toward consolidating the spirit of cooperation between the Member States that have high financial and technological capacities and those that are rich in natural resources.

Not far away, in Islamabad, the Executive Committee of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) held, in mid-December, its 31st session. This meeting took place amid a broad range of challenges facing the Islamic world in the fields of development, environmental degradation, climate change, human health, energy shortages, and water resource scarcity. All these problems have scientific dimensions and provide ample scope for cooperation within the OIC in the areas of science, technology and innovation.

In September 2022, the OIC General Secretariat participated with a large delegation in the meetings of the United Nations General Assembly. This participation was extremely necessary to hold the periodic meetings, most notably the Annual Coordination Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of OIC Member States, which took place on September 22nd at the UN headquarters in New York, on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly. The Meeting was designed to unify the positions of the OIC Member States with regard to issues of concern to the Islamic world and key global issues on the UNGA's agenda.

In the end, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the OIC Member States. The Organization, in fact, would not have been able to carry out its mandate had it not been for the support of its Member States which have provided everything necessary for it to accomplish its important collective work. Special thanks are due to the countries that were more involved during the past period, including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the Republic of Türkiye, and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and to all who contributed to supporting the efforts of the OIC and amplifying the voice of the Muslim World.



Hissein Brahim Taha

Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation

"I called for tackling the challenges facing youth in OIC Member States, especially as regards the rising unemployment rates, the serious spread of extremism, and the issues of displacement, asylum and illegal immigration"

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The OIC Labor Center, Baku
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General Council for Islamic Banks and Financial Institutions (CIBAFI), Manama
Islamic World Academy of Sciences (IAS), Amman
Organization of Islamic Capitals and Cities (OICC), Makkah Al-Mukarramah
Global Forum for Moderation, Amman
The International Union of Muslim Scouts, Jeddah,
OIC Computer Emergency Response Team (OIC-CERT), Malaysia
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Real Estate Union in Islamic States (REUOS), Djibouti
Organization of the Islamic Ship-owners Association (OISA), Jeddah
OIC Media Forum, Türkiye
Organisation of Islamic Cooperation Broadcasting Regulatory Authorities Forum (IBRAF), Türkiye



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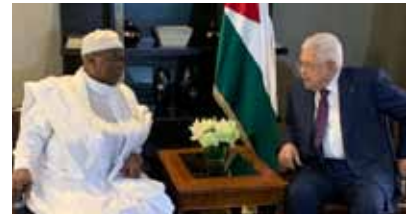
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“Ministerial Coordination” Meeting Discusses Islamic World Issues



OIC Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha and US President Joe Biden in a ceremony on the sidelines of the General Assembly meetings.

On the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States held, on September 22, 2022, at the UN headquarters in New York, the Annual Coordination Meeting (ACMOI).

The aim of the meeting was to unify the positions of the OIC Member States with regard to the issues of the Islamic world and the key global issues on the UNGA's agenda. Speakers in the opening session included H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, H.H. Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Chair of the 12th Islamic Summit, H.E. Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and Chair of the Coordination Meeting, Mr. Khaled Khiari, United Nations Assistant Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific, and Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations.

In his statement to the meeting, the OIC Secretary-General highlighted the various security, political and economic challenges facing the Islamic world. He insisted on the

need for continued joint efforts to meet these challenges within a spirit of Islamic solidarity, which would help achieve stability, security, prosperity for Member States, and well-being for their peoples.

The Secretary-General touched on developments in the Palestinian Cause as well as on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, Afghanistan, the Sahel region, Lake Chad, Central Africa, Mozambique, Guinea and Somalia. He also underlined the OIC's keenness to reach peaceful solutions to the situation in Yemen, Libya, Iraq and Sudan, in a way that would ensure their security, stability and development.

The Secretary-General reviewed the OIC's efforts in following up the issue of Rohingya Muslims and the conditions of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC member States. He also highlighted the Organization's efforts in combating Islamophobia and in addressing social, cultural, and developmental issues.

The Foreign Ministers of the Member States of the OIC Contact Group on Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar held a meeting in New York, chaired by H.E. the Secretary-General. In his statement to the meeting, the Secre-

tary-General indicated that for more than 20 years, the OIC has given great attention to the issue of Rohingya Muslims, and has made unremitting efforts to provide absolute support to the Rohingya people in an endeavor to put an end to their plight.

The Secretary-General called on the international community to pressure Myanmar to ensure the safety and security of Rohingya Muslims, to recognize their fundamental rights, including their right to citizenship, and to provide proper conditions for the voluntary, safe, dignified and sustainable return of all Rohingya refugees and displaced persons to their homes.

The Secretary-General expressed, in this regard, his gratitude to the People's Republic of Bangladesh and to the Republic of the Gambia for their commendable efforts in supporting the Rohingya community. He also praised the efforts of the members of the Contact Group and the OIC Member States for their continued assistance and solidarity.

The meeting expressed deep concern over the fact that the Rohingya community continues to face systematic discriminatory practices in Rakhine State.

Palestinian President Receives the OIC Secretary-General



H.E. Mr. Mahmoud Abbas, President of the State of Palestine, received, on September 22, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, held in New York, USA.

The Palestinian President briefed the Secretary-General on the latest developments of the Palestinian Cause, especially the aggressions and violations against holy places in the city of Al-Quds, the attacks on defenseless Palestinian Jerusalemites, and the attempts to impose Israeli educational curricula and to falsify historical facts. He called for activating the role of States and institutions in the face of these escalating violations.

For his part, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the OIC's commitment to pursuing efforts in support of the Cause of Palestine, being the central cause for which the Organization was established. He underlined the need to support the two-state solution and to comply with international resolutions pertaining to the Palestinian Cause.

The OIC "Committee of Six on Palestine" held, on September 19, 2022, a meeting on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, chaired

by H.E. the OIC Secretary-General.

In his opening statement, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the OIC's firm position towards the just Cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif. He called for mobilizing all political and legal efforts to harness the long-term international unanimity on a just and permanent solution to the Palestinian issue in accordance with international law and the relevant UN resolutions. He also called for revitalizing efforts to launch a peace process under multilateral international auspices, in accordance with a specific time-schedule, and based on the relevant international legitimacy resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative.

The Secretary-General emphasized the need for continued pressure on the UN Security Council so that it takes practical measures for the implementation of its resolutions to put an end to Israel's illegal colonial settlement policies and illegal occupation in all its forms and manifestations, and to realize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination, the independence of the State of Palestine with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and a just solution to the issue of the Palestinian refugees.

The Secretary-General called on the UN Security Council to immediately approve the long-awaited full membership of the State of Palestine in the United Nations, and to provide the needed international protection for the Palestinian people, in accordance with International Humanitarian Law.

The Committee submitted its recommendations to the Annual Coordination Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States, held on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The OIC Secretary-General participated, on September 22, 2022, in the "International Conference in Support of Palestinian Refugees", held at the UN Headquarters in New York on the sidelines of the 77th session of the General Assembly.

In his statement to the Conference, the Secretary-General recalled that millions of Palestinian refugees have suffered decades of displacement, injustice and deprivation of their legitimate rights as a result of the continuous Israeli colonial occupation, and highlighted the lack of funding currently suffered by UNRWA.



H. E. Niger's President Mohamed Bazoum



H. E. Nigeria's President Muhammadu Buhari

Nigerian President Receives OIC Secretary-General

H.E. Mr. Muhammadu Buhari, President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, received, on September 20, 2022, at his residence in New York, the OIC Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation of Nigeria's continuous support for the OIC and for joint Islamic action. For his part, the Nigerian President expressed to the Secretary-General his wishes of success in his mandate at the head of the OIC General Secretariat.

The two sides reviewed the current security and development challenges

and the climate change impacts facing the Sahel region and Lake Chad. In this regard, the Secretary-General commended the role of the Republic of Nigeria in the region, and its relentless anti-terrorism efforts under the leadership of H.E. President Buhari.

On the other hand, and at the invitation of H.E. Mr. Mohamed Bazoum, President of the Republic of Niger, the OIC Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, took part in the high-level roundtable meeting, called for by Niger on the sidelines of the 77th session of the United Nations General Assembly, under the title: "Ensuring the success of girls' education in Niger". The meeting was designed to mobilize the needed partners' support to enable girls in rural areas in Niger to continue their education in good conditions.

On the sidelines of his participation in the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, the OIC Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, held, on September 23, 2022, a series of meetings, including with Ms. H.E. Mrs. Awatif El Tidjani Ahmad Koiboro, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and

Chadians Abroad. The meeting was an opportunity to review the security, development and humanitarian challenges facing Lake Chad and the Sahel region, and the OIC's efforts to help the countries of the region overcome them.

On the sidelines of his participation in the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, the OIC Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, held a meeting with Mr. Miguel Moratinos, High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations. The two sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation, including efforts to combat Islamophobia that is

spreading in the West and in some other countries of the world, and partnership to disseminate the values of tolerance and coexistence among civilizations and religions. The two sides commended the UNGA's proclamation of March 15 of each year as "International Day to Combat Islamophobia".

On the sidelines of his participation in the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on September 19, 2022 at the headquarters of the OIC Permanent Mission in New York, Mr. Rashad Hussain, United States Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom. The meeting discussed relations between the OIC and the United States, in light of the Strategic Dialogue meetings that took place in Washington last May, and underlined the shared desire to further strengthen dialogue and cooperation between the two sides. Views were also exchanged on the conditions of Muslim communities and minorities in non-OIC member States, as well as on the issue of Islamophobia and religious freedom.

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Hissein Taha Participates in Niger Roundtable Meeting

OIC Secretary-General Holds Intensive Talks in New York

On the sidelines of his participation in the 77th session of the UN General Assembly in New York, the OIC Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, held a series of meetings, including in particular a bilateral meeting with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, H.E. Mr. António Guterres. During the meeting, the two sides commended the significant level of cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations in various fields. The UN Secretary-General expressed his appreciation of the efforts exerted by the OIC to strengthen the foundations of security and peace in many regions of the world. For his part, the OIC Secretary-General stressed that the OIC looks forward to strengthening partnership with the United Nations in various fields, in such a way as to serve the issues of peace, security and cooperation. The meeting addressed several issues, foremost among which was the Palestinian Cause and the situation in Afghanistan, Sahel States, Lake Chad, and Somalia. The OIC Secretary-General met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan, H.E. Mr. Jeyhun Bayramov. During the meeting, the Secretary-General

recalled the OIC's principled position in support of Azerbaijan with regard to the Armenian attacks on its lands. For his part, the Azerbaijani Minister commended the support of the OIC and the Member States to his country in the face of the Armenian attacks.

The OIC Secretary-General met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, H.E. Mr. Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu. The two sides discussed several issues on the OIC's agenda, including ways to combat Islamophobia and other issues of common interest.

The OIC Secretary-General also met with the then Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Kuwait, Sheikh Dr. Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammed Al-Sabah. The two sides discussed a number of regional and global issues.

The OIC Secretary-General met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Indonesia, Ms. Retno Marsudi. The two sides discussed developments in a number of current issues, including the situation in Afghanistan.

The OIC Secretary-General met with H.E. Mr. Ersin Tatar, President of Turkish Cypriot. He listened to a presentation on the situa-

tion of Muslim Cypriots, and expressed the OIC's solidarity with them in line with the relevant OIC Resolutions.

The OIC Secretary-General met with H.E. Mr. Saifuddin Abdullah, then-Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia. He commended Malaysia's leading role within the OIC and its significant contributions to promoting joint Islamic action. For his part, Mr. Abdullah stressed the importance that Malaysia attaches to the role of the OIC, and his country's readiness to further support the OIC's work to serve the issues of the Muslim world. The two sides explored the prospects for cooperation, and discussed a number of current regional and global issues on the OIC agenda.

On the sidelines of his participation in the 77th session of the UN General Assembly, the OIC Secretary-General received, at the headquarters of the OIC Permanent Mission in New York, the Secretary-General of the Digital Cooperation Organization, Mrs. Deemah Al-Yahya. The meeting explored the prospects for cooperation between the two sides, and discussed issues of mutual interest.



Four Decades of Support to the Struggle of the People of Jammu and Kashmir



The OIC Contact Group on Muslims in Europe held, on September 19, 2022, an open meeting at the ministerial level, on the sidelines of the 77th session of the UNGA in New York. The meeting was chaired by the OIC Secretary-General, H.E Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha.

In his statement to the meeting, the Secretary-General expressed the OIC's concern over rising anti-Muslim sentiments in some European states. He called for more efforts to engage in constructive dialogue in order to promote intercultural harmony, tolerance, mutual understanding, and mutual respect. The Secretary-General noted that Muslim communities living in Europe are experiencing challenging and difficult times, are exposed to daily aggressions, and are stigmatized as 'alien' to Europe. Muslims, he added, remain at the core of the radical right's divisive, chauvinistic and exclusionary political agenda.

The meeting reviewed the general situation of Muslims in Europe since the last meeting of the Contact Group, held on March 22, 2022 in Islamabad, and reiterated the unwavering support for Muslim communities, with full respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the countries concerned. The meeting called on all States to respect

the freedom of religion for all Muslims, and not to restrict their human rights and fundamental freedoms, including, in particular, their right to exercise their civil and cultural rights.

The meeting expressed deep concern over the alarming trend of anti-Muslim sentiments, Islamophobia, hate speech, and right-wing extremism, and the pervasive discrimination-driven violent incidents against Muslims in some European countries. It strongly rejected the divisive, and exclusionary political discourse of the radical right.

On the other hand, the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir held a ministerial meeting on the sidelines of the 77th session of the UNGA, chaired by the Secretary-General. Reviewing the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the Secretary-General stated that the OIC has, over the past four decades, collectively provided support to the Kashmiri people in their struggle to exercise their right to self-determination. The Secretary-General reiterated the OIC's call on the international community to take concrete steps to resolve the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the Security Council resolutions. He also called on both Pakistan and India to engage in a serious dialogue, with the constructive participation

of the international community, as an essential step to resolve the dispute.

The OIC Secretary-General met in New York with H.E. Dr. Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf, Secretary-General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). The two sides commended the evolving relations between the OIC and the GCC, and discussed the prospects and mechanisms of enhanced cooperation and consultation on issues of mutual interest.

On the other hand, the OIC General Secretariat reaffirmed its full commitment to providing humanitarian support to Somalia to counter the effects of the drought disaster, and indicated that it would send a high-level delegation to Somalia, at the invitation of the Somali government, to discuss areas of humanitarian support for those affected by the drought disaster that hit several regions of the country. This came in a speech delivered by Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, before the meeting held, on September 21, 2022, by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs on "Response to the Urgent Humanitarian Needs in the Horn of Africa", in coordination with the governments of the UK, the USA, Italy and Qatar.



Yaoundé

2022 Culture Capital in Islamic World for the African region

The Celebration of “Yaoundé, Culture Capital in the Islamic World for 2022 for the African region”, officially kicked off in a major ceremony, held on June 30, 2022 at the National Museum in Yaoundé, under the patronage of H.E. Mr. Paul Biya, President of the Republic of Cameroon.

The ceremony was chaired by Mr. Joseph Dion Ngoti, Prime Minister of Cameroon, and was attended by Dr. AlMalik, Director-General of ICESCO, Dr. Mohamed Zine El Abidine, Head of ICESCO Culture and Communication Sector, senior Cameroonian officials and religious leaders, public figures, accredited ambassadors, as well as thousands of citizens.

The launch of the year-round celebration, in coordination between ICESCO and the Ministry of Arts and Culture of the Republic of Cameroon, goes in line with the new philosophy of the ICESCO Programme of Cultural Capitals in the Islamic World, which seeks to promote heritage and consolidate the values of peace, coexistence and civilizational dialogue.

In his address on this occasion, Dr. AlMalik, Director-General of ICESCO, expressed his

thanks to the President of the Republic of Cameroon for his generous sponsorship of the celebration and his continuous support for cultural development, commending the role of Yaoundé in the production of oral literature and contemporary arts and music in the African continent. He also commended the linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural diversity of Yaoundé, the City of the Seven Hills, pointing out that this city constitutes a model of religious moderation, tolerance and spiritual and moral values. He added that the celebration of Yaoundé as Culture Capital in the Islamic World would contribute to achieving sustainable development in the fields of culture, scientific research, and capacity building for women and youth.

Dr. AlMalik stressed ICESCO’s willingness to cooperate with the relevant Cameroonian authorities to ensure the success of the events, activities of the celebration, which will contribute to the promotion of tourism in the city, highlight its heritage, and natural sites, enhance its regional and international reputation, attract investments in the cultural field, and promote coexistence and tolerance. He added that ICESCO would co-

operate with the Cameroonian authorities to inscribe heritage sites in the Al-Halouf region, Goto Golfi Tower and Bidzar archaeological site on the Islamic World Heritage List. It will also hold workshops on the process of inscribing cultural elements on heritage lists.

The Director-General also pointed out that the ICESCO Chair on Cultural Diversity, Peace and International Cooperation at the Institute of International Relations in Cameroon will be strengthened in order to develop scientific research, in addition to holding an international conference on cultural heritage and local development in Yaoundé, and several other activities in coordination with the Cameroonian National Commission.

The Director-General concluded by commending the achievements of a number of Cameroonian figures in the fields of politics, literature, culture, arts and sports, stressing that they constitute a source of inspiration for new generations in Africa and around the world.



First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Agencies in OIC Member States

Under the auspices of HRH Prince Mohamed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Agencies in the OIC Member States was convened in Jeddah, on December 20-21, 2022. The meeting was hosted by Saudi Arabia, represented by the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority, under the umbrella of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

The meeting adopted the “Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention of the OIC Member States on Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Cooperation”.

The meeting was attended by high-level international delegations, including relevant Ministers, heads and representatives of anti-corruption law enforcement agencies in the OIC Member States, heads of international anti-corruption organizations, including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, along with experts in integrity and anti-corruption from Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and other participants.

In his statement at the opening session, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, noted that the Convention

comes in implementation of the 48th Council of Foreign Ministers’ Resolution (No. 48/9) on strengthening cooperation within the framework of the OIC in the field of combating corruption, which called on the General Secretariat to prepare a draft anti-corruption convention. He called for submitting the draft convention to the upcoming 49th Council of Foreign Ministers, to be held in 2023 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, for approval.

The Secretary-General indicated that similar to international organizations that have drawn up anti-corruption conventions, such as the United Nations, the OIC has resolved to strengthen cooperation among Member States, by establishing an international agreement to combat corruption, strengthening communication channels, information exchange, investigations, and the means available for use at the evidence-gathering stage in corruption cases; thereby ensuring a rapid response to requests for information exchange and investigations between law enforcement authorities in the States Parties, for the purposes of criminal justice.

This endeavor, he added, falls in line with the principles and objectives contained in the Charter, especially Paragraph 18 of Article 1 which provides for cooperation in combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, organized crime, illegal drug

trafficking, corruption, money laundering, and human trafficking. This proceeds from the conviction that establishing a legal framework for cooperation among Member States in combating corruption has now become an imperative necessity to confront economic and security challenges and face the accelerating impacts of the technologies used by perpetrators of crimes of corruption with the aim of evading justice and smuggling and concealing the proceeds of their crimes.

The Secretary-General indicated that the spirit of consensus that prevailed in the expert meetings has made it possible to bridge differences on various contentious issues posed by the issue of corruption. Accordingly, the Member States were able to agree on a consensual draft convention, which constituted a new building block in the OIC institutional legal edifice. This convention will provide several channels of communication and cooperation within the framework of the OIC, in order to ensure rapid response to requests for information exchange and investigations among law enforcement authorities in the Member States. This will accordingly help curb the rapid spread and negative effects of corruption in OIC societies.



“Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention”: A Framework for Preventing Corruption

In his speech at the opening of the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law-Enforcement Agencies in the OIC Member States, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, pointed out that corruption has now become an issue to which Member States pay special attention, given its serious effects as an obstacle to development, a cause of loss of national wealth, and a threat to the well-being of societies. He noted that every year, billions of dollars are paid in bribes, embezzled, looted, smuggled or laundered. Corruption thus seriously undermines the rule of law and disrupts the work of State’s institutions. Corruption, he added, impedes economic growth, undermines the sustainable management of the environment and natural resources, violates basic human rights, exacerbates poverty and unemployment, and disrupts the provision of education, healthcare, and other basic services.

The Secretary-General stressed that good governance is key to achieving sustainable development, and is of vital importance in combating corruption and organized crime. He noted that every stage of the development process is plagued by corruption, including bribes paid by arms and drug traffickers to officials, and fraudulent permits and licenses used to facilitate illegal trade in natural resources.

The Secretary-General emphasized that the OIC, being well aware of the dangers of corruption and its multiple manifestations in a turbulent world burdened with crises that could undermine the Member States’ efforts to promote development, peace and human rights, has sought, through the Convention, to develop a legal framework that responds to the requirements of Islamic action in this field. He indicated that the OIC is committed to fulfilling its responsibilities as part of international cooperation in the field of criminal justice.

The Secretary-General considered the “Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention” as a key and adequate framework for preventing and combating corruption in the OIC Member States, through effective mechanisms for prevention, law enforcement, international cooperation, and assets recovery. This would promote a culture of integrity, transparency, accountability, and good governance, being among the goals set forth in the Charter of the Organization. He noted, in this regard, that Member States are in need of legal mechanisms that can help promote the principles of transparency, integrity and good governance, which the international community is keen to have them incorporated into the legal systems of countries as a prerequisite for achieving the international goals of sustainable development.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the meeting represents a landmark opportunity to enhance cooperation between Member States in combating corruption, which would help restore hope and revive confidence in institutions. The meeting sends a strong message that anti-corruption action is a key priority on the OIC agenda, in view of its positive effects in enhancing the institutional performance of Member States and consolidating the foundations of good governance based on the principles of transparency and integrity.

The Secretary-General indicated that the OIC is aware of the magnitude of the work undertaken by the experts during the first and second meetings to reach a final, agreed-on version of the Convention. He reiterated his sincere and deep appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for its kind initiative, as Chair of the 14th Islamic Summit, to host the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Agencies in the OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General called on all Member States to engage in the process of combating corruption, by signing and ratifying the “Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention”, in accordance with their respective legal systems, and in line with their aspirations and visions in terms of anti-corruption action.



The Meeting is Aligned with the Principles of the OIC Charter

The work sessions and panel discussions accompanying the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Agencies in the OIC Member States were concluded in December 2022.

On behalf of HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, the meeting was inaugurated by the President of the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority, and Chairman of the meeting, H.E. Mr. Mazin bin Ibrahim Al-Kahmous.

In his opening statement, Mr. Al-Kahmous welcomed the heads and representatives of international organizations to the meeting, and indicated that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and HRH Crown Prince and Prime Minister, supports anti-corruption efforts at the local and international levels, anti-corruption action being a key pillar of the Kingdom's Vision 2030.

Mr. Al-Kahmous noted that the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Agencies in the OIC Member States is aligned with the principles of the OIC Charter, which stipulates combating corruption, money laundering and organized crime. This meeting embodies the strong relations between Islamic countries, and is designed to meet their shared goals and the aspirations of their leaders.

Mr. Al-Kahmous stressed that the Member States' adoption of the "Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention" lays the ground for a new phase of enhanced cooperation in combating corruption in a way that serves their common interests toward development and prosperity, which would make of them an example to follow in other regional and international groupings. This step is aligned with the United Nations Convention against Corruption, and reflects the vision of the Member States of the OIC, the second largest international organization after the United Nations.

Mr. Al-Kahmous concluded by expressing his thanks to the OIC Secretary-General, to the General Secretariat, to the Group of Governmental Experts for their significant efforts in preparing for the meeting and in working on the draft Convention, as well as to the Member States and organizations for their participation in the meeting.

Ms. Ghada Waly, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), expressed her thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting this important event. She pointed out that Islamic culture has been fighting corruption for decades.

Mr. Jürgen Stock, Executive Director of the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), also thanked the Kingdom of

Saudi Arabia and the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority for hosting this important meeting.

Ms. Xolisile Khanyile, Head of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units, stressed that the crime of corruption knows no limits, and that the present meeting will come out with an agreement for cooperation to combat corruption.

H.E. Dr. Abdulmajeed bin Abdullah Albanyan, President of Naif Arab University for Security Sciences, expressed his thanks to the President of the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) and to the OIC Secretary-General for their anti-corruption efforts. He indicated that combating corruption is one of the University's academic, research and training priorities, and highlighted the significant role played by "Nazaha" in Saudi Arabia.

Over two days, the title of the Ministerial Meeting was discussed, and open and closed working sessions were held on the first day, and two panel discussions on the second day, with the participation of heads and representatives of anti-corruption law enforcement agencies in the OIC Member States, along with heads and representatives of relevant international organizations. The first panel discussion was entitled: "Cooperation between anti-corruption law enforcement agencies".



Intensive Meetings to Ensure the Success of the Ministerial Meeting

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation held a series of meetings to discuss the “Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention”.

The preparatory senior officials meeting for the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Authorities in OIC Member States to adopt the Makkah Al-Mukarramah Convention was held on December 5, 2022 at the OIC General Secretariat headquarters in Jeddah.

In his statement to the meeting, delivered on his behalf by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Yousef Aldobaey, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, indicated that the success of the second meeting, held in November 2022, was due to the spirit of consensus that prevailed among the experts of Member States, which culminated in an agreement on a final version of the draft Convention, after overcoming the obstacles hindering the process of developing this new legal instrument. The latter, he added, will strengthen the institutional structure of the OIC legal system, and will therefore help to curb the adverse effects of corruption in Muslim societies, corruption being a scourge that undermines development, threatens the security of States, and impedes sustainable development across the world.

The Secretary-General stressed that the December meeting is a landmark opportunity to enhance cooperation among OIC

Member States and to enhance Islamic action against corruption, thereby restoring hope and reviving confidence in institutions. It is also a milestone event that comes to strengthen joint action within the Organization. It sends a strong message to the world, that combating corruption is a key priority on the OIC’s agenda, given its positive impact on the institutional performance of Member States. Combating corruption, in fact, involves moralizing and democratizing the concept of responsibility, and strengthening the foundations of good governance based on the principles of transparency and integrity. He indicated that the OIC General Secretariat is aware of the enormity of the task accomplished by the experts during the first and second meetings, to come out with a final draft agreed on by Member States.

In the same context, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation held, on November 6, 2022, the second meeting of the Expert Group tasked with examining the draft Anti-corruption Convention within the framework of the OIC. In his opening remarks, delivered on his behalf by Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Ambassador Yousef Aldobaey, the OIC Secretary-General stressed that the OIC attaches key importance to the issue of corruption, given its serious effects, being an obstacle to development and a cause of loss of national wealth.

The Secretary-General recalled that the preparation of a draft anti-corruption convention was in implementation of the Council of Foreign Ministers Resolution No. 48/9 on strengthening cooperation within the framework of the OIC in combating corruption, by setting up a Governmental Experts Group to examine it, in preparation for its submission to the First Ministerial Meeting of Anti-Corruption Law Enforcement Agencies in the OIC Member States. The draft Convention will later be submitted to the 49th Council of Foreign Ministers, to be held in 2023 in Nouakchott, Mauritania, for final adoption.

The Secretary-General stated that, based on the international community’s awareness of the need to develop frameworks for cooperation in combating corruption, most international and regional organizations, including the United Nations, the League of Arab States, and the African Union, have drawn up anti-corruption instruments. In this regard, he added, the OIC General Secretariat continued its consultations for the preparation of a draft version of the convention that would take into consideration all the proposals and observations made by Member States. The aim was to finalize discussions on this draft and develop its formulation in line with the aspirations and visions of Member States, which would help expedite the procedure for its ratification.

On International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People: Al-Quds is an Integral Part of the Palestinian Territory



The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) celebrated, at its headquarters in Jeddah, the “International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People”, which falls on November 29th of each year.

In his statement on this occasion, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed the OIC’s full solidarity with the Palestinian people and reaffirmed the centrality of the Palestinian Cause for the Islamic Ummah.

The Secretary-General condemned the illegal measures and practices committed by the Israeli occupation with the aim of changing the character and geography of the city of Al-Quds, obliterating its Arab identity, desecrating its sanctities, violating freedom of worship therein, and isolating it from its Palestinian surroundings. This, he asserted, constitutes a grave challenge that the international community must assume its responsibilities to address immediately.

The Secretary-General expressed the OIC’s condemnation of the Israeli occupation’s policies of building colonial settlements, called for strengthening joint efforts to confront such policies and expose them to global public opinion, and urged all countries to increase financial contributions to enable the UNRWA to continue providing basic services to millions of Palestinian refugees.

The Secretary-General also called for con-

certed efforts to revive the peace process under multilateral international auspices, in order to reach a just, comprehensive, and lasting solution to the Palestinian Cause in accordance with international law, relevant

Hissein Brahim Taha: This meeting takes place amid a serious and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the city of Al-Quds

UN resolutions, and the Arab Peace Initiative.

Amb. Mahmoud Al-Asadi, Consul General of the State of Palestine, and Amb. Maher Al-Karaki, Permanent Representative of the State of Palestine to the OIC in Jeddah, also marked this occasion and delivered statements at this celebration, which was also attended by the staff of the General Secretariat and several consuls general and delegates of Member States.

On November 30, 2022, the United Nations listened to the Statement of H.E. Mr. Hissein

Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, during a celebration marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, organized by the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People.

The Secretary-General noted that this occasion comes as an expression of the firm support for the just struggle of the Palestinian people for the restoration of their legitimate national rights, and as a reaffirmation of the rejection of the policies of aggression, Judaization, colonial settlement, forced displacement, and racial discrimination practiced by the Israeli occupation.

The Secretary-General expressed the OIC’s appreciation for the UN and its various agencies, particularly the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, for their tireless efforts and initiatives to mobilize international support and solidarity with the just Palestinian Cause.

The Secretary-General pointed out that this meeting takes place amid a serious and deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territory, including the city of Al-Quds, resulting from the ever-escalating violations, attacks and crimes committed by Israel, the occupying power, against the Palestinian people, and against their land and sanctities, claiming the lives of over 200 Palestinians since the beginning of this year and injuring hundreds, including children and women, in addition to the continued suffering of about 5500 Palestinians in Israeli occupation prisons.

The Secretary-General added that the situation in the city of Al-Quds is no less serious, due to repeated attacks and violations by extremist settler groups protected by the Israeli occupation forces, against Islamic and Christian sanctities, especially the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque. He reaffirmed, on this occasion, that East Al-Quds, the capital of the State of Palestine, is an integral part of the Palestinian land occupied in 1967, and underlined the need to preserve the legal and historical status of Islamic and Christian holy sites therein, and to put an end to the Israeli measures aimed at changing the city’s geographical and demographic status.

In Istanbul Symposium: OIC Addresses Al-Quds in Historical Documents



The OIC General Secretariat held, on December 22, 2022, a symposium in Istanbul, in cooperation with the Research Centre for Islamic History and Arts (IRCICA) and the Higher Commission for Al-Quds in the State of Palestine, under the title "Al-Quds and Al-Aqsa Mosque in Light of Historical Documents." The symposium brought together representatives of members of the diplomatic corps, academia and researchers from Palestinian and Turkish universities.

Ambassador Samir Bakr, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, highlighted the conditions of the cultural and historical heritage in the occupied city of Al-Quds. He indicated that joint efforts are needed to document and archive information, documents and property in the city, especially with regard to the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, so that this material would be made accessible to researchers, historians, relevant institutions, and the public in general. This, he added, constitutes a form of cultural resistance, in defense of the Palestinian existence and right in the Holy City, and helps to keep this heritage alive in the conscience and collective memory of all Muslims.

Dr. Mahmoud Erol Kilig, IRCICA Director-General, delivered welcoming remarks in the opening session, in which he stressed the importance of this event in providing a knowledge-based scientific contribution to support the Cause of Al-Quds and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

Amb. Fayed Mustafa, Ambassador of the

State of Palestine to the Republic of Turkiye, reviewed the violations and crimes committed by the Israeli occupation forces against the Palestinian people, and against their land and sanctities. He commended the holding of this event and stressed its importance in defending the Holy City of Al-Quds, preserving its historical, spiritual and legal status, protecting its heritage, and standing against attempts to obliterate its Arab identity and desecrate its sacred religious landmarks.

Mr. Mutasim Tayem, Secretary of the Higher Committee for Al-Quds and Head of Al-Quds Unit in the Palestinian Presidency, indicated that this symposium is part of the accumulated work to realize Palestinian rights, confront fraud, counterfeiting and attempts to impose new facts in occupied Al-Quds, capital of the State of Palestine and its Islamic and Christian sanctities, foremost among which being Al-Aqsa Mosque. He also stressed the importance of developing an action plan to review historical documents, which included the Ottoman record and stamp, records of Al-Quds Sharia Court, international agreements, and the era of the British Mandate over Palestine.

Specialized working papers were presented during this event, reviewing efforts to preserve the status of Al-Quds and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque based on historical documents.

Recommendations and discussions highlighted the importance of the continued collection of historical documents of the various eras that Al-Quds went through, es-

pecially the Ottoman and Arab documents. This would contribute to the establishment of a network of researchers and academicians to provide a documented scientific and historical database on the legal and historical status of the city of Al-Quds and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque.

In September and October 2022, the OIC strongly condemned the Israeli settlers' incursions into Al-Aqsa Mosque.

On September 26, 2022, the OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the storming of Al-Aqsa Mosque compound by extremist settlers, under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces, as well as the restrictions, aggressions and arrests against worshippers. It considered this dangerous escalation as an attack on the sanctity of holy places and freedom of worship, and a flagrant violation of human rights instruments, the Geneva Conventions, and relevant UN resolutions.

On October 13, 2022, the OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the storming of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque by extremist settler groups, under the protection of the Israeli occupation forces, as well as their practicing of Talmudic rituals in its courtyards. It also denounced the closure of the Ibrahim Mosque in the city of Al-Khalil, which was closed again in November, as well as the persistent arbitrary measures and the crime of collective punishment committed by the Israeli occupation forces against Palestinian citizens, especially in the occupied city of Al-Quds.



OIC Welcomes International Support to the Palestinian Cause

The OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, Ambassador Samir Bakr, received, on December 6, 2022 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat in Jeddah, Ambassador Lenod Frolov, Representative of the UN Secretary-General, Executive Director of the Office of the United Nations Register of Damage Caused by the Construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory. The two sides addressed the activities of the Office, including the reception and documenting of the complaints of the Palestinians affected by the construction of the wall.

In the same context, the OIC welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's vote by majority on five pivotal resolutions, four of which relate to Palestine, and the 5th to the occupied Syrian Golan. These resolutions are on the mandate and work of the "Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People", the "Division for Palestinian Rights" of the United Nations General Secretariat, and the "Special Information Programme on the Question of Palestine" which condemned the killing of Palestinian journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, and the basic principles of a "Peaceful Settlement of the Question of Palestine". One of these resolutions requests the United

Nations to commemorate the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Palestinian Nakba.

The OIC commended the positions of the countries that contributed to sponsoring and supporting these resolutions, in confirmation of their commitment to international law.

The OIC renewed its call on the international community to redouble its efforts to implement the United Nations resolutions on the Palestinian Cause and the occupied Arab territories, and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their legitimate right to establish their independent State with East Al-Quds as its capital.

The OIC welcomed the United Nations resolutions relating to the Cause of Palestine, including Resolution A/C.4/77/L.12/Rev.1 which requested the International Court of Justice to render an advisory opinion on the legal consequences arising from the ongoing violation by Israel of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, its prolonged occupation of the Palestinian territory since 1967, including the City of Al-Quds, and the legal consequences that arise for all States and the United Nations from this status.

The OIC General Secretariat expressed its gratitude for Saudi Arabia's donation of

USD 27 million to the United Nations Relief and Work Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), considering this generous donation as an extension of Saudi Arabia's continuous political and financial support to the Palestinian people, guided by the OIC resolutions to support the Cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

The OIC welcomed the decision by the United States of America to open an investigation into the murder of the journalist Shireen Abu Akleh. The OIC considered this an important step towards holding the Israeli occupation accountable for its repeated violations and crimes, as it would contribute to achieving justice.

The OIC welcomed the announcement by the Australian government annulling its recognition of West Al-Quds as Israel's capital, and expressing its commitment to the two-state solution. The OIC viewed this as an important step that aligns with international law and relevant UN resolutions, and supports international efforts to revive the peace process and bring about peace and stability in the region. It called on all states that had recognized Al-Quds as so-called capital of Israel to reverse their stances that run counter to international legitimacy.



OIC Holds Israel Responsible for the Death of the Prisoner Abu Hamid in its Prisons Israel Kills 16 Palestinians in Repeated Attacks on Jenin and Nablus

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has closely followed, at the end of 2022, the situation of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli prisons. It held Israel, the occupying power, fully responsible for the martyrdom of Palestinian prisoner Nasser Abu Hamid in its prisons, as a result of the policy of deliberate medical negligence and deprivation of basic rights, practiced by the Israeli prison administration against prisoners.

The OIC called for establishing an international commission of inquiry to investigate this new crime, which is only the latest in the series of Israeli crimes perpetrated against the Palestinian people, including prisoners. The OIC reaffirmed its stand in support of the Palestinian prisoners. At the same time, it demanded that the competent international bodies act promptly in order to protect the prisoners' rights, and pressure Israel to cease its persistent violations against them and to release them immediately.

It is worth recalling that in October and November 2022, the OIC had expressed its deep concern over the deterioration of the health condition of Abu Hamid, who was

suffering from cancer and, like thousands of Palestinian prisoners, from arbitrary measures and denial of basic rights, including the right to medical treatment in Israeli prisons. The OIC had also expressed its solidarity with and support for the cause of Palestinian prisoners, dozens of whom had started an open-ended hunger strike to protest against the policy of administrative detention in Israeli prisons.

It is noteworthy that international human rights institutions had called for immediate intervention to release the late Palestinian prisoner Abu Hamid, and all other prisoners, especially the sick, the elderly, children, women, and administrative detainees.

As part of the attention that the OIC attaches to the issue of Palestinian prisoners, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed, last September, his concern over the conditions of thousands of Palestinian prisoners in the Israeli occupation prisons, the continued arbitrary measures against them, and the denial of their basic rights.

In this same context, the OIC Secretary-Gen-

eral sent letters to the High Commissioner for Human Rights and to the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, in which he called on the two international organizations to assume their responsibilities to hold Israel, the occupying power, accountable for its violations of international law, to pressure Israel to release Palestinian prisoners, to ensure respect for the human rights of all Palestinian prisoners, and to cease the persistent Israeli violations against them.

The OIC condemned the recurrent Israeli attacks on Palestinian cities and the Palestinian people. Last September, the occupation forces attacked the Jenin camp, causing the martyrdom of four Palestinians and the injury of dozens. Then in October, the occupation forces launched a barbaric attack on the city of Nablus, resulting in the martyrdom of six Palestinian and the injury of dozens.

In November of the same year, the OIC condemned the persistent crimes, shootings and field executions committed by the Israeli occupation in the Palestinian territories.



On the 105th Anniversary of the Balfour Declaration:

OIC Renews its Commitment to Supporting the Rights of the Palestinian People

November 2nd, 2022 marked the 105th anniversary of the ominous declaration of the former British Foreign Secretary Arthur Balfour, issued on November 2, 1917. The repercussions of the declaration embodied the beginning of the Nakba in 1948, with the displacement of the Palestinian people, the denial of their legitimate national rights, and the establishment of the Israeli colonial occupation state based on the policies of colonial settlement, military aggression, forced displacement, ethnic cleansing, land

confiscation, property destruction, and the Judaization of the Holy City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

On this occasion, which remains a bleak mark in the human collective memory and conscience, and a setback for the values of freedom and justice, the OIC renewed its unflinching commitment to supporting the just struggle of the Palestinian people to restore their legitimate national rights.

On this fateful anniversary, the OIC called on the international community, especially key

global actors, to rectify this historical injustice, assume its responsibilities in ending the Israeli occupation, and enable the Palestinian people to regain their legitimate rights, including their right to return, the establishment of their independent state within the 4 June 1967 borders, with East Al-Quds as its capital, and the realization of the vision of the two-state solution based on the relevant UN resolutions and the Arab peace Initiative

OIC Welcomes Palestinian Factions' Signing of Algeria Declaration of National Reconciliation

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) welcomed, in October 2022, the signing, by the Palestinian factions, of the Algeria Declaration of National Reconciliation, considering it as a significant and positive step on the road to ending divisions and restoring the national unity of the Palestinian people.

The OIC also expressed its appreciation to the Republic of Algeria for sponsoring and hosting this dialogue, stressing its support for all efforts designed to help achieve Palestinian national unity within the framework of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

On the other hand, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha received, in his office at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, Mr. Mohamed Salem Cherkaoui, Acting Director of "Bayt Mal Al-



Quds Al-Sharif Agency".

The meeting discussed cooperation between the two sides toward further expanding the Agency's efforts to support the city of Al-Quds and boost the steadfastness of its inhabitants.

The Secretary-General commended, during this meeting, the efforts made by His Majesty King Mohammed VI, Chairman of "Al Quds Committee", to defend the city of Al-

Quds and serve the Palestinian Cause. He stressed the significant role played by the Agency as the financial arm of "Al-Quds Committee", underlining the need to pursue the implementation of the resolutions calling on Member States to support the Agency's budget and programs.

The Secretary-General reaffirmed, in this regard, the OIC's commitment to strengthening its cooperation with the Agency in order to facilitate its tasks and mobilize more financial resources and technical expertise to contribute to the implementation of its projects in the City of Al-Quds.

The Secretary-General also stressed the importance of convening regular meetings to highlight the work of the Agency, review the outcomes of its projects in Al-Quds, and encourage Member States to provide the needed support to the Agency,

Embarking on a New Year 2023

For more than a decade, there have been persistent concerns across the globe, particularly in the Islamic world, relating - in the first place - to the repercussions of the 2011 events, and the ensuing civil wars and alarming upsurge of terrorism, as represented by the so-called "Islamic State" (Da'esh). The latter has, in fact, relied on media intimidation, portraying itself as part of a bloody, brutal and barbaric wave of terror that, undeterred, swept across many cities, until it was finally defeated and uprooted, and its sources dried up with the assassination of its leader, Abu Bakr Al-Baghdadi, in 2019. Then came the novel coronavirus in the same year, which caused a state of panic and imposed strict protective measures, including washing hands with soap, wearing face masks, and avoiding crowds. To these should be added the stringent closure and lockdown policies, which had severe impacts on economic conditions worldwide. More recently, additional economic challenges have been brought about by the Russia-Ukraine war.

This accumulation of events made the year 2022 the peak of the black cloud hanging over the globe, with unprecedented climate upheavals that are harbingers of disasters, panic, and protracted economic crises with no end in sight. At the same time, the mushrooming growth and uncontrolled usage of Social Media networks have made it possible for everyone air his mind, to gossip, and even to take the lead, though not qualified to do so, in explaining or amplifying crises in the eyes of the public.

In light of the foregoing, it seems clear that the world is now standing on one leg while awaiting the advent of the New Year 2023. It is aware that it has not yet overcome the human, material and moral losses bequeathed by the previous years. Press reports, in fact, say that despite the WHO's reassuring message, released last December 25th, that there is no need to proceed with a new anti-COVID-19 vaccination campaign, psychological pressures continue to weigh heavy, with 25 percent of people suffering from depression associated with the pandemic. Today, it is no longer fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms that preoccupy hospitals as much as it is the state of hidden psychological depression.

The COVID-19 closures and lockdowns not only caused huge commercial losses and a recession whose effects began to be felt even before the start of 2023; they have also prompted a gradual change in social lifestyles, with social media, smart applications, and online means of communication playing greater roles in the life of individuals, pushing them into social withdrawal or voluntary isolation. Despite some slight relief, the world is still unable to return to what it was before the pandemic.

We can generally say that 2023 will mark the end of COVID-19 and its consequences. Yet, the psychological scars left by the pandemic need many years to convince an entire generation that life is not always managed by remote control, that man, being a social being, is always in search of a social environment, and that the successive human civilizations would not have emerged if human beings had remained in their caves and had not undertaken to explore the universe. In confirmation of that, Allah Almighty said: "O humanity! Indeed, We created you from a male and a female, and made you into peoples and tribes so that you may get to know one another." (Holy Quran – Al-Hujurat 13).

Will 2023 be better off than the previous years? This is the question that inevitably comes to mind after a challenging decade that ceaselessly afflicted our countries, with no "time-out" for us to stop worrying and to envision an imminent or happy end.

In March 2019, in a side conversation about the novel Coronavirus pandemic that first broke out in the Chinese city of Wuhan, some were of the view that the civilized world would not allow the virus to spread, and that the news reports about its rapid propagation across countries would suddenly recede to make way for a news item announcing the end of the pandemic.

What happened, in fact, was that a pandemic befell humanity and tightened its grip on the entire globe, which, if viewed from space, would have seemed to be in a state of depression and introversion. Still, humanity proved able to adapt to, and to actually surmount this health crisis, through technology-based alternatives that helped overcome the impacts of closures and lockdowns. Despite the pandemic, people were able to interact and communicate. Scientific discoveries then brought to an end two bitter years in the life of Mankind.

With the kindness of Almighty Allah, and thanks to the human resilience in the face of adversity, we can say that the new year will further explore Man's ability to pursue his journey, with all its successes and failures. The crises that the world has gone through are only new learning experiences, and the lessons drawn from the past serve as a beacon that helps avoid similar mistakes in the future.



Aiman Abboushi

Editor of the OIC Journal

Will 2023 be better off than the previous years? This is the question that inevitably comes to mind after a challenging decade that ceaselessly afflicted our countries, with no "time-out" for us to stop worrying and to envision an imminent or happy end.

Hissein Taha Meets Chadian Officials

OIC Calls on Parties to the N'Djamena National Dialogue to Implement its Outcomes



H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, received, on September 27, 2022 in his office at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Moussa Saleh Batraqi, Minister of Economy, Development Planning and International Cooperation of the Republic of Chad, and his accompanying delegation. The two sides explored prospects of cooperation between the OIC and Chad, and discussed issues of shared interest.

The OIC Secretary-General received, on October 5, 2022, Dr. Mahamat Boukhari Hassan, Rector of King Faisal University in N'Djamena, Republic of Chad, and Dr. Hissein Ahmed Jumaa, Chairman of the University's Board of Directors, and the accom-

panying delegation. The two sides discussed ways to enhance cooperation between the OIC and the University.

The OIC General Secretariat has followed with interest Chad's Inclusive and Sovereign National Dialogue, launched on August 20, 2022 in N'Djamena. At the opening ceremony of the National Dialogue, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, urged all parties to step up efforts to ensure the success of dialogue and agree on national priorities. This would help overcome the challenges facing the country, and create an adequate environment of peace, security and stability conducive to comprehensive development.

The OIC General Secretariat reaffirmed the importance that the OIC attaches to the sta-

bility and security of the Republic of Chad. It also commended the efforts made by key actors and many facilitators during the National Dialogue, which made it possible to reach consensual outcomes.

In this regard, the OIC General Secretariat called on all parties to the National Dialogue to implement these outcomes in a spirit of wisdom and continued consultation. It also called on all Chadian parties, including those that did not participate in this process, to pursue dialogue in the best interest of the Chadian people and the stability of their country; thereby ensuring a successful transition in a context of peace, cohesion, and preservation of national unity.

Secretary-General Holds Talks with Foreign Ministers of The Gambia and Mauritania



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, had a phone contact, on October 6, 2022, with H.E. Dr. Mamadou Tangara, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of The Gambia. The two sides explored prospects for cooperation between the OIC General Secretariat and the Republic of the Gambia, and discussed a number of issues of shared interest.

On the other hand, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met, on November 1, 2022, with H.E. Dr. Mohamed Salem Ould Marzouk, Mauritanian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Mauritians Abroad. The meeting, held in Algiers, Algeria, on the sidelines of the 31st meeting of the Council of the League of Arab States at Summit Level, discussed prospects for cooperation between the OIC and the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, which will host the 49th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the OIC Member States.



Secretary-General Receives P. R. of The Gambia to the OIC

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on December 29, 2022, H.E. Ambassador Omar Jibril Sallah, Permanent Representative of The Gambia to the OIC. During this meeting, the Secretary-General praised Gambia's active role within the OIC and in joint Islamic action. The two sides explored the prospects for cooperation between the OIC and The Gambia, and exchanged views on issues of mutual interest.

S. G. Hosts Permanent Representative of Türkiye to the OIC

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on December 29, 2022, H.E. Ambassador Mehmet Metin Eker, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Türkiye to the OIC. The Secretary-General commended the Republic of Türkiye for its strong commitment to the principles and goals of the OIC and its active support for the Organization in the implementation of its mandate.



Hissein Taha Receives the New P. R. of Pakistan to the OIC



H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on December 19, 2022, H.E. Ambassador Fawad Sher, new Permanent Representative of the Republic of Pakistan to the OIC, who presented his credentials. On this occasion, the Secretary-General paid tribute to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for its active role within the OIC.

Secretary-General Receives Bahrain's Consul General in Jeddah

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on October 30, 2022, H.E. Mr. Musa Abdullah Al-Nuaimi, who presented his credentials as Bahrain's Permanent Representative to the OIC. The Secretary-General welcomed the new Permanent Representative, and highlighted the importance of OIC-Bahrain relations.



Hissein Taha Receives Credentials of Algeria's P. R.



The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 10, 2022, Mr. Mohammed Ali Boughazi, who presented his credentials to the OIC Secretary-General as the Permanent Representative of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria to the OIC. The Secretary-General commended, on this occasion, the active role played by Algeria in the OIC's activities and programs.

S. G. Receives Saudi Arabia's Permanent Representative

Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Mr Hissein Brahim Taha received the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the OIC Dr Saleh Suhaibani. Both sides discussed subjects of common interest as well as issues in the Muslim world and how to enhance joint Islamic action.

The Secretary-General commended the effective role played in the OIC by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the OIC host country and chair of the current Islamic Summit, appreciating its continuous and generous support to facilitate the work of the OIC.



Hissein Taha Receives Kazakhstan's new Consul-General

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 3, 2022, Mr. Raslan Kuspanov, new Consul-General of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Jeddah, and Deputy Permanent Representative to the OIC. The Secretary-General Commended, on this occasion, Kazakhstan's active role within the OIC and its support for joint Islamic action.



S.G.Receives Credentials of Kuwait's P. R. to the OIC

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on September 7, 2022, Mr. Mohammed Saud Al-Mutairi, who presented to the Secretary-General his credentials as Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the OIC. The Secretary-General commended, on this occasion, the leading role played by the State of Kuwait within the OIC.



S. G. Receives the Chargé d'Affaires at Guinea Mission to OIC

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on September 11, 2022, Mr. Naby Dina Soma, Chargé d'Affaires at the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Guinea to the OIC. The meeting was an opportunity to discuss ways of enhancing cooperation between the OIC and the Republic of Guinea.



S. G. Receives IOM Middle-East Regional Director

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on November 17, 2022 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, Mr. Othman Belbeisi, Regional Director of the International Organization for Migration (IOM).

The meeting stressed the importance of OIC-IOM bilateral relations, in light of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by both organizations in 2003.

The OIC Secretary-General commended the IOM's efforts to protect the rights of migrants.



Secretary-General Meets Al-Ghabed and İhsanoğlu



H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on August 24, 2022 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, H.E. Mr. Hamid Al-Ghabed, former OIC Secretary-General.

During the meeting, Al-Ghabed presented the Waqf project established in Niger to finance humanitarian and development projects, highlighting the importance of OIC support and engagement in convening a conference to obtain appropriate funding

for the Waqf.

For his part, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha welcomed the idea of the Waqf and expressed the OIC's readiness to stand with Niger and all Member States in implementing their humanitarian and development projects.

At the end of the meeting, the Secretary-General offered Mr. Al-Ghabed the OIC Shield, in recognition of his previous efforts in the service of the Organization.

On the other hand, on the sidelines of his participation in the 12th Islamic Conference

of Information Ministers, held in Istanbul on October 21-22, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General paid a visit to H.E. Prof. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, former OIC Secretary-General, at his residence.

The Secretary-General exchanged views with Prof. İhsanoğlu on various Islamic world issues, on ways to consolidate security and stability in the OIC Member States, and on how to leverage past experiences to meet current challenges.



OIC Secretary-General Receives Thai Ambassador to Riyadh

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on 27 December 2022 at the headquarters of the General Secretariat, H.E. Mr. Darm Boontham, new Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

The two sides expressed their appreciation for the excellent cooperation between the OIC and Thailand, which has an Observer status in the OIC. They discussed the ways and means of strengthening cooperation in various fields. They also stressed the importance of continuing dialogue on the situation of the Muslim community in Thailand.

S. G. Receives Official U.S. Representative to the OIC

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on October 18, 2022, H.E. Mr. Faris Asad, Consul General of the US Consulate in Jeddah, Official Representative of the USA to the OIC.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed aspects of relations between the OIC and the USA, including the follow-up on the outcomes of the first session of the OIC-USA Strategic Dialogue, held in Washington, D.C., in May 2022. They reaffirmed the shared determination to further enhance dialogue and cooperation, and their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations in various fields.



Russia and OIC Hold Discussions



As part of his official visit to the Russian Capital, Moscow, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), held discussions, on October 24, 2022, with H.E. Mr. Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation.

Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha headed the OIC delegation, while Mr. Sergey Lavrov led the Russian side.

The two sides had extensive discussions on major regional and international challenges, and underscored the importance of coordination and consultation in a way that serves international efforts to promote peace, stability and development across the world. They underlined their commitment to foster the existing friendly relations and boost cooperation between the Russian Federation and the OIC in various field, in view of Russia's Observer status in the OIC.

The meeting reviewed bilateral cooperation and coordination on all issues of shared interest within the framework of political consultation between the two sides.

On October 25, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met

with the Chairwoman of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, Ms. Valentina Matviyenko,

The OIC General Secretariat and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation signed an MoU to promote the development and consolidation of long-term and constructive relations in the fields of science and higher education.

as part of his official Visit to the Russian capital, Moscow. The two sides discussed issues of common interest, including food security in Africa and the empowerment of women.

The OIC Secretary-General also met with Mr. Rushan Abbyasov, Vice-President of the Council of Muftis of Russia, and with the Patriarch Kirill / Metropolitan of Kazan and Tatarstan (Patriarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church).

During these meetings, the two sides emphasized the importance of inter-religious and intercultural dialogues and understanding.

On the other hand, the OIC General Secretariat and the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation signed a Memorandum of Understanding to promote the development and consolidation of long-term and constructive relations in the fields of science and higher education.

Under the signed MoU, the two sides will undertake and support joint projects and programs that will promote interaction between scientific organizations and higher education institutions in various spheres of activity, including student training and joint educational and research projects in both OIC Member States and the Russian Federation.



OIC Secretary-General Holds International Discussions with Foreign Ambassadors

OIC Secretary-General Holds Discussions with UN Officials

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on October 5, 2022 in his office at the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Dr. Rola Dashti, United Nations Undersecretary and Executive Secretary of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), and her accompanying delegation.

The meeting discussed cooperation between the two organizations in various fields, including social and economic affairs, women empowerment, youth, science and technology, and Palestine affairs, as part of the implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding previously signed between the two sides.

Secretary-General Holds Discussions with Swedish Ambassador

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on December 5, 2022, H.E. Mrs. Petra Menander, new Ambassador of Sweden to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The two sides reviewed areas of cooperation between the OIC and Sweden, discussed ways to further develop bilateral relations, and exchanged views on issues of shared interest.

Hissein Taha Receives the U.K. Consul-General

The Secretary General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Mr Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on 6 October 2022, in his office at the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Mrs. Cecille El Beledi, new Consul General of the United Kingdom in Jeddah.

The two sides discussed the prospects of cooperation between the OIC and the United Kingdom,

OIC Secretary-General Receives Ambassadors of France and Finland to Riyadh

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on December 6, 2022 at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Mr. Ludovic Pouille, Ambassador of the French Republic to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting addressed cooperation between the OIC and France, and ways to enhance and develop them in pursuit of shared goals. The two sides also discussed current issues of common concern and developments on the regional and international arenas.

The OIC Secretary-General also received, on December 7, 2022 at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Ms. Anu-Eerika Viljanen, Ambassador of Finland to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The meeting discussed cooperation between the OIC and Finland, and the ways of enhancing and developing bilateral relations, especially in the field of mediation and conflict resolution.

OIC Secretary-General Receives Ambassadors of Ukraine and Singapore to Saudi Arabia

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), received, on November 6, 2022, the new Ukrainian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, H.E. Ambassador Anatolii Petrenko. The two sides reviewed aspects of relations between the OIC and Ukraine, and exchanged views on issues of common interest.

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), also received, on September 15, 2022, at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Mr. Wong Chow Ming, Ambassador of the Republic of Singapore to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The two sides exchanged views on regional and global issues of common interest, and discussed ways and means of enhancing dialogue and cooperation in all fields. The Secretary-General reiterated, during this meeting, the special attention the OIC attaches to Muslim communities in non-OIC member States, including the Republic of Singapore, and commended the country's efforts to promote peaceful coexistence and harmony among diverse religious communities.

OIC Denounces Kabul's Decision Depriving Women of their Rights



In his statement at the International Conference on Afghan Women's Education, held in Bali, Indonesia, on December 8, 2022, delivered on his behalf by Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, stressed that women's right to education is not just a full-fledged right per se; it is indeed a key prerequisite for achieving development, peace, and stability, and for realizing human rights in their broadest sense.

The Secretary-General emphasized that the OIC remains, as it has unwaveringly been, willing and ready to engage constructively with its partners in a concerted effort to help Afghanistan achieve recovery and reconstruction, and retrieve its long-lost standing as a properly functioning state within the international community.

On December 25, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General expressed his exacerbated concerns over the order issued by the de facto Ministry of Economy in Kabul to all national and international non-government organizations to suspend the jobs of female employees until further notice. He considered this

order as a severe blow to women's rights in Afghanistan; especially that it came hard on the heels of the ban, a few days earlier, barring Afghan women and girls from accessing universities.

This order, he added, reflects a willful policy pursued by the de facto authorities apparently seeking to further curtail the rights of Afghan women. He pointed out that this perplexing decision will not just deprive Afghan women of a source of livelihood for themselves and their families; still worse, it will seriously affect humanitarian and relief operations conducted by a wide network of national and international NGOs for vulnerable Afghan communities.

The Secretary-General qualified the ban on women's work for national and international NGOs as self-defeating and as dis-serving the interests of Afghan people. He vigorously called on the de facto authorities to revisit this decision in order to promote social inclusion for women, and ensure the undisrupted continuation of the much-needed work of the international humanitarian safety net in Afghanistan.

On December 21, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General expressed his grave concern and

denunciation of the disconcerting decision taken by the de facto Authority in Afghanistan, through the Ministry of Higher Education, to close down universities for girls and women for an unspecified period.

The Secretary-General and his Special Envoy for Afghanistan have both repeatedly and insistently cautioned the de facto authorities against taking such a decision. The latest such cautionary message was relayed by the Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan during his visit to Kabul in mid-November 2022.

The Secretary-General stressed that suspending female students' access to universities will go a long way in seriously denting the credibility of the government in place, just as it will deny Afghan girls and women their fundamental rights to education, employment, and social justice. He indicated that the OIC, though still committed to its engagement policy with the de facto Administration, cannot but denounce this decision, calling on Kabul authorities to reverse it and thus maintain consistency between their promises and actual decisions.

Inauguration of New Premises of OIC Mission in Afghanistan



The new premises of the OIC Mission in the Afghan capital, Kabul was inaugurated on November 13, 2022. The opening ceremony was attended by H.E. Amir Khan Muttaqi, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan, Heads of Mission of OIC Member States, along with representatives from the United Nations, the European Union, and other international organizations.

Speaking on behalf of OIC Secretary-General at the opening ceremony, the OIC Secretary General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, reaffirmed the Organization's commitment to supporting Afghanistan. He thanked the de facto Afghan authorities for the support and assistance as well as for providing the necessary facilities and security to the OIC Mission. He also commended the generous financial and material assistance provided by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which enabled the relocation of the OIC Mission to the new premises. The Special Envoy further stated that the OIC would continue to meet the mandate entrusted to it by the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

In his remarks on this occasion, Minister Muttaqi welcomed the opening of the new OIC Mission's new premises, and indicated that the Afghan authorities will support the

OIC Mission and facilitate all procedures for its work in Afghanistan.

The opening ceremony was also attended by H.E. Mr. Yousef Aldobeay, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs.

During his visit to Kabul, the OIC Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, also met, on November 15, 2022, Mawlawi Abdul-Salam Hanafi, Deputy Prime Minister of the de facto authority in Afghanistan. The meeting discussed follow-up on the implementation of the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers on Afghanistan, and the OIC's efforts to support Afghanistan in all fields.

On November 12, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, held separate meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. Amir Khan Muttaqi and Minister of Justice Mr. Abdul Hakim Sharei. Discussions focused on the political, legal, humanitarian and economic issues that are of priority concern to the OIC, as part of following up on the implementation of the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers on the situation in Afghanistan.

On November 10, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General's Envoy for Afghanistan, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, held discussions with the Spe-

cial Representative of the UN Secretary-General for Afghanistan, H.E. Roza Otunbayeva at the UNAMA Office in Kabul, Afghanistan, who was accompanied in the meeting by her Deputy Mr. Markus Potzel.

The two sides exchanged views on ways of pursuing cooperation between the OIC and the UN to meet the increasing humanitarian challenges facing Afghanistan.

The OIC Special Envoy was accompanied on this visit by H.E. Amb. Yousef Aldobeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, Dr. Muhammad Saeed Al-Ayash, Director of the OIC Afghanistan Office, Amb. Ahmed Sareer, Director of Asian Affairs, and Dr. Yasmi Adriansyah, member of the Special Envoy Secretariat.

On November 28, 2022, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet met, at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, H.E. Mr. Ismatullah Irgashev, Uzbekistan's Special Representative for Afghanistan, and his accompanying delegation. The two sides discussed the efforts of the OIC and the Republic of Uzbekistan in support of the Afghan people, in light of the relevant resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers. They stressed the need for further coordination, consultation and cooperation to alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.



OIC Commends Efforts of the Islamic Organization for Food Security in Afghanistan

Memorandum of Understanding between the OIC and King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre

H.E. Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and OIC Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, delivered a message at the Islamic Organization for Food Security (IOFS) virtual Conference on Implementation Status of Afghanistan Food Security Program (AFSP), on 14 November 2022. He commended the invaluable work performed by IOFS in pursuing the effective implementation of the AFSP, placed under its stewardship by the OIC Extraordinary CFM on the Humanitarian Situation in Afghanistan, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, on December 18-19, 2021. He also appreciated the joint efforts by IOFS, the Islamic Committee of International Crescent (ICIC), the OIC General Secretariat, and the OIC Humanitarian Office in Kabul, as well as the bilateral initiatives taken by OIC Member States to support Afghanistan's endeavors to restore peace, stability and development.

The Special Envoy seized this opportunity to give a briefing on the actions and steps taken by the OIC towards Afghanistan, and the state of financial contributions to the Humanitarian Trust Fund for Afghanistan, established under the aegis of the Islamic Development Bank by the OIC Council of

Foreign Ministers. He reiterated the OIC call for more financial contributions to this Fund so that it can deliver the necessary humanitarian assistance expected by millions of Afghans, including women and children.

In this same context, the OIC mission in Afghanistan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSre-

The Islamic Organization for Food Security was established in 2016 as a specialized institution of the OIC

lief) to implement an emergency food aid project for the flood-affected and needy families in Afghanistan for the period 2022-2023. The project will provide food baskets to 47,400 poor and needy families in 25 provinces of Afghanistan.

On the sidelines of his participation in the International Conference on Afghan Wom-

an's Education, held in Bali, Indonesia, on December 8, 2022, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, met with H.E. Indonesian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Ms. Retno Lestari Priansari Marsudi.

The OIC Special Envoy briefed the Minister on the latest developments regarding the OIC's work in Afghanistan. He commended Indonesia's initiative to hold the conference on education in Afghanistan as part of its valuable efforts to support the Afghan people. For her part, the Foreign Minister reaffirmed Indonesia's commitment to supporting all efforts undertaken by the OIC in Afghanistan.

On September 22, 2022, H.E. Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, OIC Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, met with the United States Special Representative for Afghanistan, Mr. Thomas West, and the United States Special Envoy for Afghan Women, Girls, and Human Rights, Mrs. Rina Amiri, on the sidelines of the 77th UN General Assembly in New York. The meeting discussed recent developments in Afghanistan and the ways and means to address the humanitarian and economic challenges facing this country.



Afghanistan Hit by a Series of Terrorist Attacks against Mosques and Diplomats

In September, October and December 2022, Afghanistan was hit by successive bombings and terrorist attacks, which were all condemned by the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

In this context, the OIC Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Afghanistan, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, met on November 15, 2022, during his official visit to Kabul, with Mawlawi Muhammad Yaqoob Mujahid, Afghan Minister of Defense, at the headquarters of the Ministry of Defense.

The meeting discussed the OIC's efforts in support of the Afghan people, as part of following up the implementation of the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers on Afghanistan.

The Afghan Minister of Defense affirmed the establishment of security in Afghanistan and expressed commitment to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. He stressed that Afghanistan will not be a haven for terrorism and will not allow the use of its territory to launch terrorist operations against other countries.

On December 12, 2022, the OIC General Secretariat strongly denounced the heinous

attack against a hotel in central Kabul. The assault was allegedly masterminded and coordinated by a group of terrorists. The attack caused a number of injuries among the hotel guests, including five Chinese nationals as reported by the Chinese Foreign Ministry.

On December 6, 2022, the OIC General Secretariat condemned in the strongest terms the heinous and deplorable bombing against a government bus carrying employees of a petroleum company in Mazar-i-Sharif, the capital-city of Balkh province in northern Afghanistan. The bombing caused the death of seven employees aboard the bus, and many injuries among innocent civilians.

On December 2, 2022, the OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the atrocious attack against the compound of the Embassy of Pakistan in Kabul. The abominable assault targeted the Ambassador of Pakistan in Kabul H.E. Ubaid-ur-Rehman Nizamani, who was not injured, while a security official of the embassy was reported to be critically injured. The OIC General Secretariat denounced this heinous act of terrorism as reprehensible and a flagrant violation of the

sanctity of diplomatic premises and personnel. It called on the de facto Kabul authorities to deploy their utmost efforts to bring the perpetrators of this attack to justice, and to roll out effective measures to ensure the security and safety of diplomatic missions and officials.

Other terrorist attacks and suicide bombings targeted an educational center and a mosque in Kabul, as well as the vicinity of the Interior Ministry compound. According to reports, many were killed and injured as a result of these attacks.

The OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the bombing that targeted the Interior Ministry in Kabul. It also condemned, on September 30, the suicide attack against an educational center in the Dasht-e-Barchi area, west of the capital, Kabul, which killed 19 people and injured dozens.

On September 25th, the OIC condemned in the strongest terms the strong explosion that targeted a mosque in the Wazir Akbar Khan neighborhood in Kabul. On September 5, a suicide bomber detonated a large explosion outside the building of the Russian Embassy in Kabul.

OIC Information Ministers Warn against “Post-Truth” Challenges



The 12th session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers was held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on October 21-22, 2022, under theme of “Combating Disinformation and Islamophobia in the Post-truth Era”.

At the beginning of the opening session, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia handed over the presidency of the Conference to the Republic of Türkiye.

H.E. Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al-Qasabi, Acting Minister of Information of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, delivered a statement in which he conveyed the greetings of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince, and their wishes for the success of the Conference. The Minister highlighted the current global challenges and the need for coordinated efforts among the OIC countries to face them. He called for establishing a trust-based roadmap with clear mechanisms to advance joint Islamic action.

For his part, H.E. Prof. Fahrettin Altun, Director of Communications at the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye, Chairman of the

meeting, highlighted the challenges faced by Member States, and the great responsibility incumbent upon the Conference, especially in view of the prevalence of disinformation and the resulting consequences, and the difficult access to truth all over the world.

H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the OIC, addressed the opening session of the Conference. He indicated that the current session discusses the challenges facing the information sector and its infrastructure in the OIC Member States and addresses the media discourse through both traditional and via Social Media networks, which, he noted, have made it possible for everyone to send and receive news and media content. The session addresses other themes and issues, most notably the role of media in supporting the Cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif, the Special Media Programme Highlighting Africa’s Position and Role in the Islamic World, and the project to launch the OIC Award for Distinguished Media Outlets and Media Professionals in the Field of Promoting Dialogue, Tolerance and Intercultural Harmony.

The Secretary-General pointed to the continued upsurge of the phenomenon of terrorism and extremist discourse, which have found their way into some of the OIC societies and managed to lure segments of the young population, under the cover of pseudo-Islamic slogans that have nothing to do with the Islamic religion.

The Secretary-General stressed that media institutions and outlets, whether those affiliated with the OIC or those of Member States, should face challenges through an informed and persuasive discourse, and diffuse news highlighting ambitious development, economic, tourism and cultural projects inspiring hope and optimism, rather than those that frustrate people and drive them into despair and reluctance to serve their countries.

The Secretary-General highly appreciated the efforts of the organizers of this session, and underlined that disinformation and Islamophobia are among the most serious practices to falsify facts and mislead local and international public opinion, as they seek to distort truth and news, as well as the sublime nature and noble values of Islam.

OIC Secretary-General Holds Discussions with Information Ministers



On the sidelines of the 12th session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on October 21-22, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General, Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, held a series of bilateral meetings.

The OIC Secretary-General met with H.E. Prof. Fahrettin Altun, Director of Communications at the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye. He expressed his thanks and gratitude to the Republic of Türkiye, to its leadership represented by H.E. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, and to the Turkish people, for having kindly hosted the Conference, and for the excellent organization and generous hospitality. The meeting addressed a number of information-related issues. The Secretary-General stressed the necessity to stand against Islamophobia and disinformation, and emphasized the need for practical actions to curb these phenomena by means of a unified OIC strategy. For his part, Prof. Altun affirmed the readiness of Türkiye, which chairs the current session of the ICIM, to mobilize the Member States' efforts to combat and eliminate these phenomena in practical and effective ways.

The OIC Secretary-General also met with H.E. Dr. Majid bin Abdullah Al Qasabi, Minister of Media of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He reiterated his thanks and appreciation to the Kingdom for its continued support to the OIC and its various programs and projects. The meeting discussed aspects of cooperation between the two sides, reviewed key information-related issues, and explored ways of enhancing bilateral work to address these issues. The Saudi Minister commended the efforts exerted by the Secretary-General, stressing the readiness of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which chaired the 11th session of the ICIM, to continue supporting and advancing the Organization's work in the information field.

The OIC Secretary-General met with H.E. Mr. Hikmet Hajiyev, Assistant of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Head of Foreign Policy Affairs Department of the Presidential Administration. He seized this occasion to congratulate Azerbaijan on the success of its bid to host the 13th session of the ICIM. The meeting discussed key information issues that can be built on in the coming

years. The Secretary-General expressed his confidence in Azerbaijan's ability to enhance work in the information field. For his part, Mr. Hajiyev affirmed Azerbaijan's readiness to provide all that is necessary to support issues related to information, and expressed his thanks and gratitude to the Secretary-General for his support and cooperation with his country, as well as for his efforts to promote joint Islamic action.

The OIC Secretary-General also held talks with H.E. Mr. Daud Aweis Jama, Minister of Information, Culture and Tourism of Somalia. The meeting addressed issues of common interest, and discussed ways of enhancing cooperation between the OIC and Somalia. The Secretary-General stressed the role of Somalia in the Organization, being a founding member, and underlined the OIC's keen endeavor to continue supporting Somalia toward achieving further stability and prosperity. For his part, the Minister expressed his thanks to the Secretary-General for the role he has played in supporting his country and looked forward for more cooperation and coordination in the coming period.

OIC Stresses the Need to Face Media Challenges with a Well Thought-Out Discourse

The Senior Officials Preparatory Meeting for the 12th session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, convened in Istanbul, Türkiye, under the theme of “Combating Disinformation and Islamophobia in the Post-Truth Era”, was held on October 2022. At the beginning of the meeting, H.E. Dr. Khalid Al-Ghamdi, Undersecretary for International Media Relations at the Saudi Ministry of Media, handed over the chairmanship of the meeting to H.E. Dr. Oguz Caner, Director-General of Public Diplomacy at the Directorate of Communications of the Republic of Türkiye. H.E. Amb. Yousef Al-Dobeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, delivered a statement at the opening session in which he indicated that the draft resolution submitted to the current session carries several significant messages. It is an Omnibus Resolution, he added, unlike the case in previous sessions in which decisions were presented individually.

The resolution addresses various themes and issues that are of vital importance to Member States as well as to the OIC General Secretariat and its media institutions. Foremost among those themes are the Media role in supporting the Cause of Palestine and Al-Quds Al-Sharif; the Media Programme highlighting Africa’s Position and Role in the Islamic World; support for the project to launch the OIC satellite channel; support for joint Islamic action institutions in the media field; and the project to launch the OIC Award for Distinguished Media Outlets and Media Professionals in the area of Promoting Dialogue, Tolerance and Intercultural Harmony.

Amb. Al-Dobeay noted that the Conference is being held at a time when the Islamic Ummah is facing huge challenges that target its identity and societies and hamper its advancement and development, amid an unprecedented, ever-accelerating digital media revolution. This requires the media to rise to the huge responsibility of delivering the message of the Islamic world with a balanced and well thought out discourse, and in a manner that is understood by the Other and that reflects the sublime nature and noble values of Islam, and the high morals of its adherents.

Amb. Al-Dobeay concluded by thanking the Leadership, Government and people of the

Republic of Türkiye for hosting the current session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers. He also extended thanks to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, under the leadership of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Chair of the Islamic Summit, and to HRH Crown Prince Mohamed bin Salman, for the continuous support to all the OIC activities.

Istanbul Declaration

The Istanbul Declaration by the Information Ministers of the OIC Member States, who participated in the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers held in Istanbul, Republic of Türkiye, on 22 October 2022, welcomed the Resolution No. 76/254 on “International Day to Combat Islamophobia” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 15 March 2022. It also welcomed the Resolution No. 76/227 on “Countering disinformation for the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms” adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 24 December 2021, Being cognizant of the importance of combatting disinformation, which poses a serious threat for OIC countries and societies in the new digital era, as encapsulated in the theme chosen for the Conference (Combating Disinformation and Islamophobia in Post-Truth Era), the Information Ministers noted that considered that media and information in all its forms are among the most important tools in shaping the local, regional, and international public and underscored the perils of disinformation as a destructive weapon, which is easy to wield and requires complex measures to counter, targeting the noble religion of Islam and the need to combat this phenomenon and highlight the risks it poses particularly in countries with Muslim communities and minorities.

The declaration recognized the necessity of raising awareness against disinformation and fake news through social norms, affirming the principle of consolidating joint Islamic actions among OIC Member States, especially in the area of media and information, and of its constant support for the Palestinian cause and Al-Quds in international fora.

The Information Ministers emphasized the importance of cooperation among Member States in developing necessary mechanisms to fight disinformation and other related

challenges of the PostTruth era, and devising short, medium and long-term strategic processes in the total fight against disinformation.

The declaration underscored the need to combat Islamophobia/hatred against Islam in all its manifestations by presenting the truth about the magnanimous religion of Islam in an effective manner, utilizing new and emerging platforms and technological innovations.

The information Ministers stressed the crucial role of media in Islamic countries in exposing the Israeli aggression against the Palestinians and call for illuminating the legitimate cause of the Palestinian people to end the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories.

The declaration highlighted the importance of international solidarity and assistance to support refugees, people seeking shelter, particularly in the OIC Member States.

The Istanbul declaration also commended the efforts of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation towards the advancement of the mission of Islam and promote dialogue between the Islamic culture and the world’s other cultures.

It commended the constant efforts and initiatives of the OIC Secretary General and his contacts within and outside the Islamic world, contributing thereby to giving the Islamic voice a prominent position in international fora, and request that he renders his good offices and fully utilize the capacities of OIC and its organs to coordinate implementation of decisions and recommendations adopted by this Conference towards combating disinformation and Islamophobia in the Post-Truth era.

The meeting called for a renewed commitment to the noble objectives of the OIC and support for all its initiatives and activities, particularly in the communication and information domains with a view to encouraging unity, solidarity and cooperation in the Islamic World.

The declaration called for Media outlets in the Member States to raise global awareness about deliberate acts of destruction and desecration of Islamic cultural and religious heritage in non-Muslim countries, especially in those areas where indigenous Muslim communities were subjected to ethnic cleansing.

Sindi Reviews the OIC Media Role in International Conferences



The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) participated in the International Conference on “Media and Communications for Development : Roles in the Service of Development”, organized by the University of Sidi Mohamed bin Abdullah in Fez on November 4-5, 2022, in partnership with the International Academy for the Development of Media and Communications in Ifrane, Morocco.

The General Secretariat was represented at this conference by the Director of the Information Department, Mr. Wajdi Ali Sindi, who presented a working paper entitled: “The role of information centers of international organizations in serving humanitarian and development action : OIC as a model.” Mr. Sindi highlighted, in this paper, the role of the OIC, being the “collective voice of the Muslim world” and the second largest international organization after the United Nations, in communicating the issues and aspirations of Islamic peoples to all parts of the world, through various traditional and modern media.

With regard to the role of media centers in international organizations in serving development and humanitarian action, Mr. Sindi noted that media departments in international organizations play a prominent role in providing early warning of natural disasters, such as earthquakes, floods, war-affected people and others, thereby enabling humanitarian and relief organizations to respond quickly. He emphasized that humani-

tarian and development action is closely related to media propagation, which is key to highlighting the plight of weak and vulnerable groups suffering from difficult situations that need to be exposed, as well as to mobilizing capacities and resources to provide them with the needed assistance and support.

Mr. Sindi touched on the OIC Media Strategy (2016-2025), which serves as a compass to identify the goals of the OIC media action in the service of Member States, in addition to publicizing the issues of the Islamic Ummah in all fields, and encouraging investment in human resources in the media sector.

The Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) also took part in the International Conference on “Media and Communications for Development”, which discussed the key role of the media in achieving development as well as the challenges and needs of developmental media in the Islamic world. Presentations were made on the strategies and experiences of a number of countries and international organizations in terms of communication for sustainable development.

The Director of the Information Department at the OIC General Secretariat, Mr. Wajdi Ali Sindi also took part in the international conference themed: “Russia- Islamic World: Practical Steps in Media Cooperation” organized by the Group of Strategic Vision Russia - Islamic World (GSV), Rossiya Segondya Media Group, Sputnik International News

Agency, and the Union of OIC News Agencies (UNA) in Moscow on December 15-16, 2022.

In his statement to the Conference, Mr. Sindi stressed the importance of building strategic partnerships with leading media institutions in the Russian Federation. He added that the OIC encourages enhanced cooperation and solidarity in the information sector. “We are working,” he said, “to provide full media coverage for the Secretary-General’s visits as well as the regular bilateral talks between the OIC and senior officials in the Russian Federation, in addition to highlighting the outcomes of those consultations in traditional and modern media, our aim being to make the Russian, Islamic and international public opinion aware of the issues under discussion and the planned OIC-Russian programs.”

Mr. Sindi addressed his thanks to the President of the Republic of Tatarstan, H.E. President Rustum Mikhanov, President of the Group Strategic Vision on Russia and the Islamic World, as well as to the Permanent Representative of Russia to the OIC, H.E. Amb. Ramazan Abdulatipov, for his efforts that contributed to the staging of the Conference.



OIC S. G. Addresses Terrorism Issues with United Nations Officials

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on December 15, 2022, at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Mr. Vladimir Voronkov, United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Counterterrorism and his accompanying delegation. The two sides discussed cooperation between the OIC and the United Nations Office for Counter Terrorism, and the prospects for strengthening this cooperation as part of the Memorandum of Understanding previously signed between the two parties in 2018. They also exchanged views on the security challenges facing a number of OIC Member States, as well as on the issues of financing terrorism and cyber-security, and emphasized the need for increased international cooperation in this regard. During the period from September to December 2022, at least six terrorist acts were committed in six OIC Member States. The OIC General Secretariat condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack that targeted members of the Iraqi security forces in northern Iraq, claiming the lives of a number of security personnel and injuring others. The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed his con-

dolences to the families of the victims and to the Iraqi Government and people, wishing a speedy recovery for the injured. The General Secretariat reaffirmed the OIC's support for Iraq's security and stability, and reiterated the OIC's principled position against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and the need to redouble anti-terrorism efforts. In November 2022, the OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the Villa Rose Hotel in the Somali capital, Mogadishu. It reaffirmed the OIC's condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, and its support for the Somali Government's anti-terrorism efforts. In the same month, the OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Istanbul, Turkiye, which claimed many lives and left many injured. Following this despicable act, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed deep condolences to the families of the victims and to the Government and people of Turkiye, and wished quick recovery for the injured. The Secretary-General expressed the OIC's solidarity with Turkiye and reiterated the OIC's stance against terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. The OIC General Secretariat also strongly

condemned the terrorist attack on a military detachment and a group of volunteers along Natiaboani near Kikideni, Burkina Faso, on October 29, 2022, killing 13 soldiers and 2 volunteers and leaving 4 injured.

In the same month, the OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the terrorist attack on the headquarters of the Ministry of Education in the Somali capital. The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed his strong condemnation of this wanton act. He offered his condolences to and solidarity with the families of the victims and the Government and people of Somalia, and wished quick recovery for the injured.

The OIC General Secretariat also condemned in the strongest terms the brutal attack perpetrated on September 24, 2022 by an armed group against a mosque, in Zamfara State, Northwest of Nigeria, killing at least 15 people. The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, offered his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families of the victims and to the Government of Nigeria, and wished prompt recovery for the injured.



OIC Urges Houthi Militia to Engage in the Political Process

The OIC General Secretariat urged the Houthi militia to engage in the political process, while holding them responsible for obstructing the political solution in Yemen, by not observing the terms of the truce and creating justification for not extending it, which confirms their belief in a military solution instead of a political one.

The General Secretariat stressed that the Houthi militia's rejection of the UN Envoy's proposal to extend and expand the truce holds them fully responsible for the economic and humanitarian consequences resulting from the return of military operations, and the attempt to spread terrorism and chaos in the region in order to achieve their illegal goals and objectives.

The General Secretariat called on the Houthi militia to abide by the extension and expansion of the truce and to implement all its terms. It also called on the international community to assume its responsibilities under international law and global instruments.

On November 11, 2022, the OIC General Secretariat strongly condemned the drone attack by the Houthi militia on Qana Port in Shabwa Province, Yemen. It also denounced

attacks on civilian and critical targets in Yemen, warned against their ramifications, and demanded that such attacks be ended. It reiterated the OIC's position supporting the security and stability of Yemen, and

OIC reiterates its support for the the international efforts as well as the efforts of the Gulf Cooperation Council and reaffirmed its constant support for Yemen

called for an end to the plight of the Yemeni people.

The OIC General Secretariat also reaffirmed its support for the UN and international efforts to extend the truce in Yemen and to reach a comprehensive political solution to the Yemeni problem in line with the three terms of reference, which will help meet the aspirations of the Yemeni people for security, peace and stability.

On October 21, 2022, the OIC General Sec-

retariat condemned in the strongest terms the terrorist attack perpetrated by the terrorist Houthi militia on Al-Dabba Oil Port in Hadhramout Governorate.

H.E. the Secretary-General of the OIC, Mr. Houssein Ibrahim Taha, stressed that this terrorist attack constitutes a threat to energy supplies at the regional and international levels, and is a violation of UNSC Resolution No. 2216. It transgresses international laws and norms and poses a threat to global energy corridors and to the marine environment.

While reiterating its support for the efforts of the United Nations and its Special Envoy, as well as of the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the OIC General Secretariat reaffirmed its constant support for Yemen in order to alleviate the suffering of the its people and realize their hopes and aspirations for peace, security, stability and development. At the same time, the OIC General-Secretariat called on the Houthi group to respond to international and regional endeavors to renew the truce, and to cooperate with all efforts aimed at reaching a comprehensive political solution to the Yemeni crisis.



Nigeria Hit by the Worst Floods in its History

Humanitarian Disasters in Indonesia and Cameroon

Numerous natural and humanitarian disasters and crises ravaged different regions of the Islamic world, resulting in human and material losses.

Following the devastating floods that caused the death of hundreds of people, displaced many others, and wreaked havoc in many states of Nigeria, the OIC General Secretariat expressed its sincere solidarity with the Government and people of Nigeria. It presented heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased and offered its deep sympathy to the displaced and other victims of the worst flooding in a decade in Nigeria. The General Secretariat stressed that it would strive towards the mobilization of further support to help Nigeria in its recovery efforts.

In the same month, the OIC Secretariat General expressed its solidarity with the Republic of Cameroon following the floods that swept across the North of the country, causing several victims. It commended the emergency measures taken by the Cameroonian Authorities to assist the victims and limit the damage caused by the floods. It called upon its financial institutions, Member States, and international partners to support Cam-

eroon's efforts to alleviate the suffering of the victims of this disaster, and to reconstruct the devastated areas and houses. It asserted that it will remain mobilized alongside Cameroon, and will do its utmost to contribute to the relief of the flood victims.

On November 27, 2022, the OIC Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, expressed his deepest compassion and heartfelt condolences to the Government and people of the Republic of Cameroon, after the landslide that killed several people attending a funeral in Cameroon's central region. He expressed his solidarity with the bereaved families of the victims, praying Almighty Allah to give them the strength to overcome the loss.

The OIC Secretary-General also expressed deep condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of Malaysia over the victims of the landslide that affected a camp at Batang Kali, Selangor State, north of Kuala Lumpur, on December 16, 2022, resulting in loss of lives, with many injured or missing. The Secretary-General expressed his sympathy to the families of the victims, praying Almighty Allah to repose the souls

of the victims in paradise, give their families the fortitude to bear the loss, and grant the injured quick recovery.

The OIC Secretary-General extended his sincere condolences and sympathy to the leadership and people of the Republic of Indonesia over the victims of the devastating earthquake that hit the Indonesian Island of Java on November 21, 2022, causing deaths and injuries and devastating many houses and facilities.

In October 2022, the OIC General Secretariat expressed its deep sorrow over the tragic stampede after a local football match in East Java, Indonesia, causing hundreds of deaths and injuries. H.E. the OIC Secretary-General, Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, offered his sincere and heartfelt condolences to H.E. the Indonesian President, Mr. Joko Widodo, to the Indonesian people, as well as to the families of the victims.

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, also expressed solidarity with the Government and people of the Republic of Türkiye over the coalmine explosion in the north of the country, causing many deaths and injuries.



Climate Change Causes Anxiety Disorder

Berlin – Sandra Arens (dpa)

Climate change affects everyone, and it's hardly the only major danger out there. Many people also feel threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic and/or war. Some repress their anxiety and go about their lives normally, while others are afraid, angry or distressed.

"Climate anxiety", "Covid anxiety" or "war anxiety" sound like disorders that are best overcome, similar to spider phobia or a fear of lifts. Are they? No, says Kathrin Macha, a psychologist and psychotherapist at Germany's Mainz University. "Climate change, for example, is a real crisis, so being anxious about it is justified." "Crisis anxiety" isn't an independent diagnosis though. Certifying that someone has an individual 'crisis anxiety' that could be cured with treatment risks trivializing the crisis," says the expert.

Dr. Sandeep Rout, a senior physician in the Department of Psychiatry, Psychotherapy and Psychosomatic Medicine at Vivantes Neukölln Hospital in Berlin, agrees there's no reason to regard crisis anxieties in general as pathological conditions. But if they lead to deep despair, inability to work and social isolation, he says, a clinical anxiety dis-

order can indeed develop.

There are many possible triggers for anxiety disorders. If climate change is behind a person's anxiety, it's often difficult to provide outside help, says psychologist Amelie Schomburg, author of a book about how the climate crisis can affect the psyche. "Many people place the weight of responsibility squarely on their own shoulders and may drift off into unhealthy action that does them no good and can lead to burnout," she says. They don't always feel psychological stress, however. "Climate anxiety in particular is distinctive: It's socially acceptable and respected," says Rout. "This distinguishes it from many other kinds of anxiety that are frequently a source of shame and tend to be concealed."

Anyone who feels that their crisis anxiety is getting the better of them should take sufficient time out, advises Macha, who is active in Psychologists for Future, a Germany-based climate advocacy group inspired by Fridays for Future. You should leave room for other matters too, as well as for your family and friends. Macha also recommends trying relaxation techniques. "By striking a balance, you can draw new energy for your

social engagement. This is the best remedy for crisis anxiety," she says. But if you still feel overwhelmed by your anxiety, you could consider getting professional help. Should you then be diagnosed with an anxiety disorder, psychotherapy is a treatment option that can aid in allaying your dark thoughts, says Rout. "Some people have strong defense mechanisms enabling them to repress or not perceive anxieties," he notes.

Overly strong defense mechanisms are counterproductive with respect to climate change though, according to Macha: "Climate anxiety, especially, wants to tell us something. It's a call to action. Repressing it is misguided."

The best way to cope with crisis anxiety is to share it with others and then draw strength in numbers, according to Schomburg.

Macha offers similar advice. If you want to take your anxiety seriously and not let it get out of control, you can get involved, support activist groups or exchange views with like-minded people, she says. "You'll regain control of your feelings, your powerlessness will diminish, and you'll do something good besides."

OIC and UNHCR Sign Joint Humanitarian Action Plan



The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 13, 2022, in his office at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat, H.E. Ambassador Mohamed Abdi Affey, Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Horn of Africa, and Mr. Khaled Khalifa, Representative of the UNHCR to the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

The meeting stressed the importance of bilateral relations between the OIC and the UNHCR. The two sides exchanged views on the situation of refugees and displaced persons in the Muslim world, especially in the Horn of Africa. This region is experiencing catastrophic humanitarian conditions as a result of the waves of drought, especially Somalia, which suffers from deteriorating humanitarian conditions, and a security situation that threatens its stability.

The OIC Secretary-General underlined the need for prompt action to avoid the spread

of famine on a large scale in Somalia and across the region, which threatens the lives of millions of displaced persons and refugees, especially children, women and the elderly. He indicated that the OIC, in view of this humanitarian disaster, shares the UN-

The OIC Secretary-General underlined the need for prompt action to avoid the spread of famine on a large scale in Somalia and across the region, which threatens the lives of millions of displaced persons and refugees, especially children, women and the elderly.



HCR and other humanitarian partners' concern over the scale of the international response to famine in Somalia, warns against the delay in humanitarian intervention, and stresses the need for immediate action before it is too late.

It is worth noting, in this regard, that the Department of Humanitarian Affairs at the OIC General Secretariat held, on September 13, 2022, a bilateral meeting with a delegation from the UNHCR Gulf Mission. During the meeting, a renewed Joint Humanitarian Action Plan (JHAP) for the years 2022-2025

was signed, as a culmination of the significant efforts made by the two sides to implement the expired 2020-2022 JHAP, despite the exceptional circumstances imposed by COVID-19.

The renewed JHAP aims to consolidate the humanitarian strategic partnership and to enhance coordination in issues of shared interest, especially those of IDPs and refugees, as part of the existing cooperation between the two organizations since 1988.

The renewed JHAP was signed, on behalf of the OIC General Secretariat, by Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, and on behalf of the UNHCR, by Mr. Khalid Khalifa, UNHCR Gulf Regional Representative.

The two sides discussed bilateral relations and ways to develop and strengthen them in all areas related to the situation of refugees and IDPs in the Islamic world, and the modalities of the JHAP implementation amid deteriorating humanitarian conditions in many regions of the Islamic world as a result of natural disasters, epidemics, climate change, and armed conflicts.

In the same context, the OIC General Secretariat welcomed the signing of an agreement between the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Islamic Development Bank Group (IsDB) for the establishment of the Global Islamic Fund for Refugees (GIFR). This came in a statement delivered by Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Affairs during an event organized in New York on 22 September 2022, and attended by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Vice-President of the Islamic Development Bank, the Director General of the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development, and the Supervisor General of the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre. Amb. Bakheet commended the partnership between the OIC and these institutions, expressing the OIC's commitment to enhancing partnership in various fields, particularly in facing the challenges faced by refugees in the Muslim world. He also affirmed the OIC's support for the initiative to establish the Fund in order to meet the desired humanitarian objectives.

Workshops on Issues of Refugees and Disasters



The OIC Humanitarian Affairs Department has been working to raise awareness and expertise in the field of refugees. In this regard, the General Secretariat organized, on November 15, 2022, a workshop titled : “Refugees under International Refugee Law”, and on November 17, 2022, a workshop titled : “Humanitarian Diplomacy in a Changing World”, as part of its strategies to anticipate and respond to humanitarian disasters and their impacts on vulnerable OIC societies.

Speakers in the workshop on “Refugees under International Refugee Law” included Mr. Sahir Mohyudeen, Deputy Representative of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to the Gulf Cooperation Council, and Ms. Sarah Saber Khan, Assistant Protection Officer at the UNHCR in Riyadh.

The OIC statement at the workshop was delivered by Amb. Hassan Ali, Director of the Department of Legal Affairs at the OIC General Secretariat. He commended the role of the OIC and the UNHCR in responding to the needs of refugees and mitigating their plight, given the priority accorded to the issue in the OIC humanitarian agenda.

Amb. Hassan noted that the workshop takes place at a critical international moment, with rising numbers of forcibly displaced persons due to conflicts and disasters, especially in some OIC Member States,

which raises the challenge of finding lasting solutions to the humanitarian crisis of refugees and displaced persons.

Amb. Hassan went on to say that, the workshop comes in the context of the OIC’s efforts to support refugees as part of the General Secretariat’s activities in partnership with the UNHCR. This, he added, is in line with the 2022-2025 Action Plan based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed between the two parties in 1988 and relevant OIC Summit and Council of Foreign Ministers’ resolutions.

The workshop highlighted the legal and international protection frameworks for refugees in light of the 1951 Convention and 1967 Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees, the 2018 Global Compact for Refugees, and the 2016 New York Declaration for Refugees.

In the same context, the OIC Humanitarian Affairs Department and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) co-organized a workshop to equip the OIC staff with new methods and knowledge to be able to understand emergent issues and challenges in today’s world.

On behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, the Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Affairs, Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, delivered an opening statement in which

he stressed that humanitarian diplomacy should be recognized and embraced as a must-know and must-practice for all diplomats and foreign personnel dealing with international affairs.

For his part, the Head of the ICRC Regional Delegation for the GCC, Mamadou Sow, stressed that the human and societal cost of conflicts around the world has been catastrophic, noting that protracted conflicts are shattering nations and prolonging people’s suffering. He underlined that enhancing humanitarian diplomacy and promoting respect for International Humanitarian Law remain imperative.

It is worth noting that the workshop is part of the implementation of the 2021-2024 Plan of Action signed between the OIC and ICRC, with the aim of contributing to the capacity-building of the OIC staff.

Within this context, on November 17, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received Mr. Mamadou Sow, Head of the Regional Delegation for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). The two sides exchanged views on the best ways and means to strengthen partnership between the two Organizations and contribute to mitigating humanitarian crises in the OIC Member States.

OIC Participates in UNOCHA – King Salman Center Celebration



The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met, in Riyadh on December 1, 2022, the Supervisor General of King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre, Dr. Abdullah Ibn Abdulaziz Rabeeah. The meeting discussed the program of cooperation between the two sides. It was agreed to enhance strategic partnership between the OIC and the Centre in various areas, particularly in providing humanitarian assistance to Member States affected by humanitarian disasters and crises.

Within this context, the OIC Secretary-General participated in the celebration of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center on launching the 2023 global humanitarian needs assessment and response.

During his participation in the Session on “Food Security and Humanitarian Conflicts/Diplomacy: A Changing Humanitarian Scene”, held on December 1, 2022 at King Saud University in Riyadh, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, stated that many of the countries affected by the global food crisis are OIC Members. He pointed out that the OIC adopted immediate and urgent medium and long-term actions to assist affected Member States in confronting this and other humanitarian crises, through coordination with donor Member States, Islamic finance institutions, and international partners.

The Secretary-General reviewed the humanitarian challenges faced by OIC countries, especially in the Horn of Africa, the Sahel region, the Lake Chad basin countries, and Afghanistan, and highlighted the OIC’s ef-

forts to channel urgent humanitarian assistance. He stressed, in this regard, the need for international cooperation to face humanitarian challenges, and conveyed a message to those affected by humanitarian crises in the world, that the international humanitarian community will stand by their

the OIC Secretary-General commended the directives of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to provide aid and relief to those affected by the devastating floods that swept across Pakistan

side and will do its best to help them and alleviate their suffering.

On the sidelines of this event, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met, on December 1, 2022, with Mrs. Joyce Msuya, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator. The meeting discussed cooperation and partnership between the OIC and the Office of the United Nations for Humanitarian Partnership, under the Memorandum of Understanding signed between

the two sides. It was agreed to enhance cooperation and coordination in the humanitarian field in the coming period, and to intensify contacts to develop a joint action plan to tackle humanitarian challenges in many crisis-affected regions.

On the other hand, the OIC Secretary-General commended the directives of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, to provide aid and relief to those affected by the devastating floods that swept across Pakistan, leaving hundreds of deaths, destroying hundreds of thousands of homes, and displacing millions of families. In implementation of this directive, the King Salman Center launched a popular campaign to collect donations in Saudi Arabia through the “Sahem” platform in order to provide relief to those affected by the floods. The OIC Secretary-General urged Member States, financial and relief institutions, and the international community to expedite the provision of relief assistance to the Pakistani people who are going through a severe humanitarian ordeal that calls for realizing the Islamic values of solidarity, mutual aid, and relief.

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, also affirmed the OIC’s continued support for refugee issues and refugee rights, including the right to education. This came in his speech, delivered on his behalf by Mr. Muhammad Ali Al-Khamlichi, Representative of the Humanitarian Department in the General Secretariat, at the Eighth International Symposium of the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), hosted by the Malaysian capital, Kuala Lumpur, on October 5-6, 2022.

The Military Coup Inflicts Catastrophic Losses on Myanmar



Athens Zaw Zaw & Carola Frentzen (dpa) Bagan, an ancient city of temples in Myanmar, drew millions of visitors from around the world until the military coup brought tourism to a crashing end. Its golden pagodas and shrines have been virtually abandoned since the generals seized power in February 2021.

Ko Min, 50, was born in Bagan. After school, he and his friends used to sell postcards and flowers to the tourists who flocked to the site. However, the lack of visitors due to the coup and the pandemic have had a disastrous impact on people's livelihoods. "Normally we can manage but it has been three years now," he says. "People are having to sell their land."

Min expressed his concern about what this situation means for the city of Bagan in the future, as young people are starting to look for jobs in other places away from the city. Young people, he said, "are starting to move to big cities, such as Yangon and Mandalay, in attempts to find jobs in construction, restaurants and bars".

Min also has worries about the fate of

the ancient dilapidated buildings remaining from the early Buddhist empire, in the event of an exodus of local inhabitants, as no one would maintain and take care of these buildings. Recalling his youth, Min says: "The older generation used to teach the young how to maintain these buildings that have a unique architectural style. The Pagans are the only ones who can renovate and restore them."

As for Kyaw Kyaw, who also grew up in Bagan, he currently works for a publishing house in Yangon, and he also used to sell souvenirs to tourists when he was young, but he left Bagan for fear he could not find a job in his city. "My family is still in Bagan", he says, "but there is no work there."

Similar fears for the future reverberate throughout the area, as hopes of tourism fade since the military overthrew the country's democratically elected leadership last year, plunging the nation into turmoil.

Aung San Suu Kyi was held in solitary confinement in a prison in the capital, Naypyitaw, and could face up to 190 years in prison if convicted of the charges against her,

including fraud in the 2020 elections.

The military council is currently seeking to contain the protests and armed resistance to its authority, while human rights organizations say that since the coup; no less than 1900 people have been killed and over 14000 others have been arrested.

Local people support the civilian defense forces who are fighting the generals' soldiers in the jungles. One is Kyaw Kyaw who donates part of his salary to those in the resistance. Many young people from Bagan have also joined the civilian groups of fighters, he says.

Before the outbreak of the Corona pandemic, 4.3 million tourists came to Myanmar from several countries around the world in 2019. However, several governments warned their citizens against taking trips to this country, and the British Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office advised its nationals "not to travel to Myanmar, only in case of necessity, with the exception of Yangon province."

Accountability for Human Rights Violations against Rohingya



The OIC “Ad Hoc Ministerial Committee on Accountability for Human Rights Violations Against the Rohingya” held an open-ended meeting, on November 10, 2022, at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat in Jeddah, chaired by H.E. Mr. Dawda Jallow, Attorney General and Minister of Justice of the Republic of The Gambia.

In his statement to the meeting, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, reviewed the practical steps taken by the OIC to sensitize the international community about the plight of the Rohingya, reaffirming the OIC’s strong commitment to the principles of justice and accountability. He commended the leading role of the Republic of The Gambia in the case filed against Myanmar at the International Court of Justice (ICJ). He also expressed his appreciation for the support extended by Member States and OIC Institutions to the cause of the Rohingya.

H.E. Mr. Dawda Jallow, Chair of the Ad hoc Ministerial Committee, briefed the meeting on the current status of the case filed before the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

Participants in the meeting discussed developments related to the case and the OIC’s

efforts in this regard.

On the sidelines of the meeting, the OIC Secretary-General received, in his office, H.E. Mr. Daouda Jallow. The two sides commended the relations of cooperation between the OIC and The Gambia, and expressed the shared willingness to scale them up. The Secretary-General commended the role of The Gambia within the OIC and its strong commitment to the principles of justice and accountability, and to defending the cause of Rohingya Muslims.

It is worth noting that the OIC General Secretariat commemorated the 5th anniversary of the beginning of the massive refugee influx of Rohingya people and other communities from Myanmar’s Rakhine State into Bangladesh. On 25 August 2017, Myanmar’s military had launched violent operations against the Rohingya population in Northern Rakhine State, resulting in grave crimes under international law, and forcing hundreds of thousands to flee.

In its statement marking this anniversary, the OIC stressed that “five years have passed and the Rohingyas in Rakhine State still lack freedom of movement and other basic rights such as access to adequate food,

healthcare and education. This anniversary is a reminder that the crimes committed against Rohingya call for accountability.” The OIC paid tribute to the Government and people of Bangladesh for their relentless efforts to provide protection, hospitality, and needed assistance to Rohingya refugees who have been living in Bangladesh for the past five years. It also appreciated the international support, including by OIC Member States, for the cause of these refugees. It reiterated, on this occasion, the OIC’s firm support for the Rohingya people.

On November 24, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, in his office, Mr. Guiling A. Mamoniong, Secretary of the National Commission on Muslim Filipinos. The Secretary-General reaffirmed the importance the OIC attaches to the well-being of Muslim communities and minorities all over the world. For his part, Mr. Guiling expressed his faith in the work carried out by the OIC as an organization representative of the Muslim World. The two sides discussed the conditions of Muslims living in Philippines, and the prospects of the ongoing peace process in Southern Philippines.

Aldoubeay Participates in Meeting of the Transition Support Group on Mali

At the joint invitation of the Government of the Republic of Togo and the African Union, Amb. Yousef Aldoubeay, Assistant Secretary-General for Political Affairs, took part in the third meeting of the Transition Support Group on Mali, held on September 6, 2022, in Lomé, Togo.

This important meeting was designed to take stock of the political, security, humanitarian, social and economic developments in Mali, to evaluate the initiatives of the States member of the Transition Support Group. On this occasion, Amb. Yousef Aldoubeay delivered a statement on behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, in which he reaffirmed the OIC's commitment to providing political support to the Republic of Mali and to working toward



mobilizing the Member States and the OIC organs to support Mali in this crucial transitional period.

On the sidelines of this meeting, Amb. Yousef Aldoubeay met with Ambassador Bankole Adeoye, AU Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security. The two sides discussed relations between the two organizations and exchanged views on issues of common concern.

Amb. Aldoubeay also met with H.E. Mr. Abdallah Diop, Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, and H.E. Mr. Robert Dussey, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and Togolese Abroad of the Republic of Togo. The meetings discussed issues of mutual interest.

Mauritanian President Receives Oral Message from OIC Secretary-General

H.E. Mr. Mohamed Ould Cheikh El Ghazouani, President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, received, on December 20, 2022, at the Presidential Palace in Nouakchott, H.E. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, in the presence of the Secretary-General of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA), Mr. Yousef Khalawi.

Amb. Bakheet conveyed a verbal message from the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, to H.E. the Mauritanian President, in which he expressed appreciation of the sincere efforts made by Mauritania to promote joint Islamic action and inter-Islamic solidarity, including its prepara-

tions to host and chair the next session of the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM). He also briefed the Mauritanian President on the General Secretariat's preparations to hold the CFM meeting.

The Secretary-General stressed, in his oral message, the OIC's interest in the situation in the Sahel region and the countries of the Lake Chad basin, commending, in this regard, Mauritania's sincere efforts to achieve security and stability in the region.

The Secretary-General also commended the outcomes of the Forum on Microfinance, hosted by Mauritania, and indicated the General Secretariat's commitment to follow up on these outcomes, in coordination with the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture.

For his part, the Mauritanian President stressed Mauritania's commitment to supporting the OIC's efforts to enhance joint action in all fields, and underlined the need to scale up efforts to meet the challenges facing the African Sahel region. He also commended the outcomes of the Forum on Microfinance, and underscored the need to follow up the implementation of these outcomes, including the agreements signed on the sidelines of the Forum.

The meeting was attended by the Mauritanian Minister for Social Affairs, Children and Family, H.E. Ms. Safiya bint Intah, the Director of Staff of the President of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, Mr. Ismail Ould Cheikh Ahmed.

OIC Secretary-General Commends UAE's Support to Global Peace

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, participated in the 9th edition of the Abu Dhabi Peace Forum held on November 8, 2022 in Abu Dhabi under the theme of "Globalized Conflict and Universal Peace: Demands and Partnerships."

In his statement to the Forum, the OIC Secretary-General commended the UAE's commitment to supporting global peace and tolerance, and highlighted the Forum's

significant role in promoting the values of peaceful coexistence among the world's countries and peoples.

The Secretary-General recalled that the OIC has, since its inception, sought to strengthen global peace, security, stability, harmony, and development, and to enhance multilateral cooperation and diplomacy. The OIC has always called for promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence, as manifested through the various decisions and resolu-

tions adopted at summit and ministerial levels.

The Secretary-General pointed out that that OIC is convinced that such challenges as xenophobia, Islamophobia, racism and hate speech must be addressed through dialogue, tolerance and the promotion of pluralism and coexistence. He added that the OIC supports all international and regional efforts aimed at preventing violent extremism and combating international terrorism.

Arab Summit: OIC Attaches Special Importance to Palestine



Addressing the opening session of the 31st Arab Summit, held in Algiers, Algeria, on November 1-2, 2022, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), highlighted the deep ties between the League of Arab States (LAS) and the OIC, and the common principles, values, and challenges

that unite them. He also indicated that the OIC looks forward to enhancing cooperation, solidarity, coordination and integration between the two organizations. The Secretary-General reaffirmed that the Cause of Palestine constitutes the central cause for both Arab and Islamic joint action. He considered that the continued absence

of a political horizon and the ever-escalating Israeli aggressions against the Palestinian people and their land and holy places, particularly the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque, threatens to generate dire consequences that would further deteriorate the situation. "This requires our unified positions and combined efforts globally to implement international resolutions, provide international protection to the Palestinian people, and support their legitimate rights, including the right to establish their sovereign state based on the 1967 borders, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital" he added. "The OIC backs international and regional efforts aimed at reaching durable political solutions for the various crises and challenges facing the Arab and Islamic worlds," said Mr. Taha. The OIC Secretary-General pointed out that combating terrorism, extremism, hate speech and Islamophobia worldwide is a major challenge facing Arab and Muslim societies.

OIC Secretary-General in Jordan: Iraq Needs All the Support

In his statement to the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership, held on December 20, 2022 in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, commended the initiative of convening this conference which takes place at a critical time when Iraq is in need of every support and assistance so that it can overcome the various challenges with which it is confronted. He hailed, in this regard, the role of His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Al Hussein, King of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as well as



the role of the French President, Emmanuel Macron.

In his statement, delivered on his behalf by

Amb. Samir Bakr Diab, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the special place enjoyed by Iraq within the OIC, indicating the full readiness of the OIC and its organs to contribute to all benevolent efforts and endeavors to support Iraq's unity and territorial integrity, security and stability, and reconstruction and prosperity, so that Iraq can pursue its leading role in the Arab and Islamic worlds. He asserted that the stability and prosperity of Iraq are key to the stability and prosperity of the region.

Mussinov Delivers Secretary-General's Statement to the 6th CICA Summit

Following an official invitation addressed to the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, an OIC delegation led by Amb. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, participated in the 6th Summit of the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-Building Measures in Asia (CICA), held on October 12-13, 2022 in Astana, Kazakhstan. The Summit brought together Heads of State and Government of

Member States, along with representatives from regional and intergovernmental organizations.

A number of resolutions were adopted by the Heads of State and Government, related in particular to the transformation of the CICA Forum into a fully-fledged organization, the CICA Plan of Action on Implementation of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, and the Chairmanship of the Fo-

rum for the next coming years.

On the sidelines of the 6th CICA Summit, Amb. Mussinov held a meeting with Amb. Kairat Sarybay, Executive Director of CICA. Both sides commended the shared values and principles of dialogue, cooperation and peaceful conflict settlement pursued by the OIC and CICA, and agreed to further explore ways to develop bilateral cooperation.

NMRAs Meeting Adopts OIC Action Plan for Access to Safe Medicines and Vaccines



The Second Meeting of National Medicine Regulatory Authorities (NMRAs) of the OIC Member States was held in Istanbul, Türkiye, on September 5-6, 2022. The meeting adopted the OIC Action Plan to promote collaboration among OIC NMRAs for access to safe, effective medicines and vaccines in OIC Member States (2022-2024).

The Action Plan includes eight goals, including, in particular, promoting cooperation and networking among NMRAs in OIC Member States, developing the capacities of human resources, strengthening regional and sub-regional coordination, and linking the relevant networks of OIC countries.

The Meeting also adopted the Istanbul Declaration, which underlined the need to recognize the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. It also emphasized the Member States' awareness of the disparity among NMRAs, especially that some of these countries do not have sufficient manufacturing capacities in terms of medicine production. Still, the Declaration highlighted promising developments in the COVID-related vaccine research studies conducted by OIC Member States.

The meeting was inaugurated by the Turkish Deputy Minister of Health, H.E. Dr. Tolga Tolunay, in the presence of heads of NMRAs. In the opening session, Amb. Askar Mussi-

nov, OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, conveyed the greetings of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Houssein Brahim Taha, and expressed thanks to the Republic of Türkiye as well as to the Republic of Indonesia for hosting the meetings of NMRAs.

Amb. Mussinov stated that the meeting, which comes at a time when the world is recovering from COVID-19, has proved to be a useful tool in rallying the NMRAs of Member States to share ideas and experiences. He highlighted the efforts exerted in this regard, which started by the establishment of the OIC Vaccine Manufacturers' Group, and called for supporting it so as to overcome the challenges faced by some African Member States during the pandemic.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Amb Askar met with Dr. Tolunay to discuss bilateral relations between the OIC and the Republic of Türkiye on medicine issues and other related topics.

On December 13, 2022, the Islamic Advisory Group (IAG) held its 9th annual meeting at the headquarters of the OIC General Secretariat. The IAG reiterated its commitment to addressing current and emerging public health challenges in the Eastern Mediterranean Region and beyond, and using religion to dispel misconceptions around public

health.

The meeting was attended by representatives from the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA), Al-Azhar Al-Sharif, and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB).

Held under the theme of "Partnering for Change: Leveraging Faith to Promote Public Health", the meeting highlighted the role of the IAG and its partners in engaging local communities throughout the region for the promotion of public health.

The meeting discussed ways of expanding the role of the IAG, based on its successes and on lessons learnt from polio and COVID-19 response interventions. The repositioning of IAG's role is based on leveraging religious leaders and scholars for greater engagement on broader public health issues related to maternal and child health, routine immunization, and healthier lifestyles.

The new vision for the IAG is to "promote health and well-being of Muslim communities and populations at large through Islamic teachings to build ownership, solidarity and support for public health interventions." This includes expanding the network of Islamic academic institutions, as well as a geographical expansion of IAG's interventions to countries beyond WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region, specifically to the Sahel region in Africa.

Prime Minister of Pakistan Receives the OIC Secretary-General in Islamabad



The Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, received, on December 12, 2022 in Islamabad, Pakistan, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha.

During the meeting, the Pakistani Prime Minister commended the OIC's principled position and firm support for efforts to resolve the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant UNSC resolutions. For his part, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the OIC's full solidarity with the people of Kashmir in their quest for the right to self-determination, and briefed the Prime Minister on his diplomatic efforts with regard to Jammu and Kashmir.

The two sides also exchanged views on the question of Palestine and the humanitarian challenges faced by the Afghan people, as well as on efforts towards countering the rising anti-Muslim hatred and Islamophobia. The meeting reviewed aspects of cooperation between OIC and Pakistan, particularly with regard to the implementation of the resolutions of the Council of Foreign Ministers, currently chaired by Pakistan.

Earlier, the Secretary-General and his accompanying delegation had a tour of Muzaffarabad. They held meetings with the

President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, H.E. Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, and received briefings on the Line of Control between Pakistan and India.

As part of his official visit to Pakistan, the OIC Secretary General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, met with Foreign Minister H.E. Mr. Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Both sides discussed relations between the OIC and Pakistan as well as issues related to Jammu and Kashmir dispute, Islamophobia, and the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. They also exchanged views on economic, social and technological cooperation among OIC Member States.

On December 12, 2022, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, visited the headquarters of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) in Islamabad. He received a briefing on the forthcoming programs and activities of COMSTECH by its Coordinator-General, Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary who welcomed the Secretary-General on his maiden visit to the COMSTECH Headquarters.

The Secretary-General expressed his appreciation to the Coordinator-General and his team at the COMSTECH for their significant contribution to promoting science and tech-

nology in Member States, being a key ingredient for the socio-economic development of the OIC region and beyond.

The Secretary-General also commended the host country, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, for its deep commitment and generous contribution to the work of the COMSTECH since its establishment in Islamabad in 1981.

On December 1-2, 2022, Amb. Askar Mussinov, Assistant Secretary-General for Science and Technology, represented the OIC Secretary-General at the First Senior Officials Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform, held in Islamabad, Pakistan, and hosted by the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH).

The meeting, held in a hybrid format, brought together mostly officials in charge of science, technology and education development issues from the previously selected and invited 17 OIC Member States.

In his welcoming statement, Amb. Askar Mussinov briefed the audience on the background, development and essence of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform, initially an initiative launched by Kazakhstan, announced, and approved at the First OIC Summit on Science and Technology in Astana in 2017.

Secretary-General at the 31st COMSTech Executive Committee Meeting: OIC is Keen on Strengthening the S. & T. Institutional Framework



Addressing the 31st meeting of the Executive Committee of the OIC Standing Committee for Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTech), the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to H.E. President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Arif Alvi, for his generous sponsorship of the meeting and his unwavering support for all OIC programs and activities.

The Secretary-General recalled that Pakistan was one of the founding members of the Organization, and has significantly contributed to its work. Pakistan, as the seat of the COMSTech, has made a valuable contribution to the OIC's program for the advancement of science and technology in the Islamic world, adding that Pakistan, with its large youth population, enormous manpower, and scientific institutions, can play a leading role in promoting STI in the Islamic world.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the Islamic world faces a number of challenges in relation to development, environmental degradation, climate change, human health, energy shortages, and water resource scarcity. They are all problems that have scientific dimensions and provide a wide scope for bilateral cooperation in the area of STI within the framework of the OIC.

The Secretary-General stressed that the OIC attaches great importance to strengthening the science and technology institutional

framework in Member States. The aim of the OIC's work program in this regard is to provide a platform for scientific and technological cooperation between Member States and international partners.

The First OIC Summit on Science and Technology, held in Astana, Kazakhstan, in September 2017, had adopted a ten-year program titled: "OIC STI Agenda 2026", which sets priorities and strategies to strengthen Member States' STI capacities. The Abu Dhabi Declaration, adopted by the Second OIC Summit on Science and Technology, which was held virtually under the chairmanship of the Government of the United Arab Emirates in June 2021, then came to lay the foundations for stronger cooperation among Member States to advance STI, higher education, and research.

The Secretary-General indicated that many Member States have already made encouraging progress towards achieving the goals set out in the OIC STI Agenda 2026. Despite this progress, however, most of the least-developed OIC countries are still struggling to overcome the shortage of technical, financial and human resources. He thus stressed the need for joint action to provide an enabling environment that would make these countries part of the comprehensive program to achieve socio-economic development.

Driven by the spirit of Inter-Islamic solidarity,

the OIC General Secretariat has established special programs to assist the least-developed countries in the African region. He expressed his hope that the COMSTech will mobilize efforts in the African OIC Member States, and called on the COMSTech to set up a coordination mechanism to launch a collective program for African OIC Member States, noting that many of the OIC institutions, such as ICESCO, IsDB and SESRIC, are already implementing programs in these countries.

The Secretary-General emphasized the importance of developing synergies within the OIC institutions in order to avoid duplication and waste of financial resources. He called on the members of the Executive Committee, as well as other Member States rich in resources, to provide the needed financial and technical support for the implementation of initiatives in the African OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General concluded by commending, once again, the efforts made by the COMSTech under the able leadership of Pakistan, expressing his confidence that COMSTech will play a very effective role in implementing the resolutions adopted by the two OIC summits on science and technology. He stressed that the OIC General Secretariat will continue to support the COMSTech by building partnerships and mobilizing political will for the benefit of Member States.



Turkish President Receives OIC Secretary-General

The President of the Republic of Türkiye, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, received the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha in Istanbul on November 28, 2022, on the sidelines of the 38th session of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC). President Erdoğan commended the efforts made by the OIC General Secretariat and the OIC institutions working in the area of economic and commercial cooperation. He welcomed the operationalization of the Trade Preferential System (TPS-OIC) which will be instrumental in further promoting trade exchanges among the OIC Member States, and called for encouraging the other Member States to join the System. President Erdoğan addressed the question of Palestine, especially the recent developments relating to the city of Al-Quds, and called for stronger collective action in support of the Palestinian Cause. He also emphasized the need to continue addressing the just causes of Muslim communities around the world, including the Turkish Cypriots, Rohingyas, Uighurs, Kashmiris, as well as the Turkish Muslim Minority in Western Thrace. He reaffirmed, in this regard, the readiness of Türkiye to extend all possible assistance for the efforts of the OIC.

President Erdoğan underscored the need for continued efforts of the OIC Member States to reform and strengthen the capacity and role of the Organization and its organs and institutions.

For his part, the OIC Secretary-General expounded his views with regard to major issues on the OIC agenda, particularly political developments, including in Al-Quds, along with other regional and international issues in the OIC Member States.

President Erdoğan commended the efforts made by the OIC General Secretariat and the OIC institutions working in the area of economic and commercial cooperation

The Secretary-General touched on the programs and activities designed to promote greater intra-OIC cooperation in various fields, including socioeconomic development of OIC Member States.

The Secretary General thanked the Turkish President for his successful chairmanship of the COMCEC, especially the extensive ef-

forts made to ensure successful outcomes for this session under which a range of economic and commercial activities were reviewed and implemented.

On the sidelines of the COMCEC meeting, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on November 27, 2022 in Istanbul, Türkiye, H.E. Mr. Jibrine Ibrahim, Minister of Finance of the Republic of The Sudan.

The Secretary-General highlighted the importance of the OIC transportation projects, including the OIC Dakar - Port Sudan Railway Project. He called on the Sudanese Government to actively participate at the Second Stakeholders Meeting on the said Project, to be held at the OIC headquarters in February 2023.

Both sides discussed the ways and means of accelerating the implementation of the OIC economic programs and projects. They also addressed the current global food insecurity situation, and agreed to enhance the role of OIC relevant institutions in supporting agriculture and food security projects in the OIC Member States.

At the end of the meeting, the Secretary-General congratulated the Republic of The Sudan for signing the framework agreement for the financing of the Port Sudan-Adre Railway Project.

COMCEC Holds its 38th Session in Istanbul Amid Great Economic Challenges



The President of the Republic of Türkiye, H.E. Mr. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, inaugurated, on November 28, 2022, in Istanbul, Türkiye, the 38th session of the OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMCEC), in the presence of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, and Member States' concerned ministers, ambassadors, and heads of delegations.

In his statement on this occasion, President Erdogan pledged his support to the activities of the OIC for the implementation of its programs and projects benefiting the Muslim Ummah and humanity at large.

Speaking at the opening session of this event, the OIC Secretary-General commended the constant support provided by President Erdogan, Chairman of COMCEC, which facilitated the implementation of various OIC economic programs and projects.

In his statement to the meeting, the OIC Secretary-General called on all Member States to build synergies between financially- and technologically-rich OIC countries and those that are rich in natural resources, such as arable lands, but lack adequate financial and technological resources to use them for their common good. In this regard, he called on Member States to create a fund for financing startup projects in order to support and promote youth innovative projects in various economic fields.

The Secretary-General noted that "this important session is taking place at a time when we are still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic." He added that due to the pandemic and the strict measures



taken to curb its spread, Member States have suffered huge job losses, an economic downturn, and a decline in investments, exports, and tourism activities. This situation has thrown many people in the Islamic world into poverty and adverse living conditions.

The Secretary-General went on to say before the OIC countries - and the world as a whole - could find ways to overcome the imbalances caused by the pandemic, the conflict between Russia and Ukraine broke out, further complicating efforts towards achieving economic recovery worldwide. He noted that the disruption of food supply systems resulting from the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has negatively affected the food security of many OIC Member States, pushing them to the brink of internal civil unrest. The Secretary General stressed that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has, once again, brought to the fore the need for OIC Member States to work to achieve self-sufficiency in food production as well as to establish sufficient food reserves. In the face of these challenges, he added, the OIC Member States need to develop a strategy to achieve

economic recovery in a coordinated and comprehensive manner that enables promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth, creating decent jobs for all, and improving living standards.

The Secretary-General reviewed some of the events that have contributed to collective efforts to expand the scope of intra-Islamic trade, promote investment, develop tourism, and address food insecurity in a number of OIC Member States. Foremost among these events were the 11th session of the Islamic Conference of Tourism Ministers, which was successfully held on June 27-29, 2022 in Baku, Azerbaijan, and the 17th OIC Trade Fair, organized in Dakar, Senegal, on June 13-18, 2022, by the Islamic Center for Development of Trade in coordination with the Senegalese Government and the OIC General Secretariat.

He indicated that the 18th OIC Trade Fair is scheduled to be held in Lahore, Pakistan, on June 16-18, 2023, and invited all OIC Member States to actively participate in this important event.

The Secretary-General also highlighted the IsDB Group's initiative to launch a US\$ 10.54-billion package for a Comprehensive Food Security Response Program (FSRP), designed to respond to the global food security crisis in member countries.

The Secretary-General added that Member States - and the world as a whole - are facing difficult times, with stalling economies, increasing pressure on food supplies, soaring unemployment rates, and rising numbers of homeless children and school dropouts.



OIC Holds Consultative Meeting with African Group Member States

Hissein Taha Calls for Establishing a Special Fund to Finance Startup Projects

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held, on October 17, 2022, a Consultative Meeting with the African Group OIC Member States. The meeting discussed the implementation of the OIC's projects and resolutions designed to promote economic cooperation among OIC Member States in Africa.

At the beginning of the meeting, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, noted that the idea of convening this meeting was born out of the urgent need to accelerate the pace of OIC joint action to address developmental challenges in the African OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General reviewed the issues included on the agenda of the meeting which, he said, would enable Member States to draw common courses of action in response to development challenges in OIC countries, in addition to identifying ways and means of translating OIC economic cooperation frameworks into concrete actions at country level.

The meeting discussed various issues, including the tackling of food insecurity in African OIC Member States and the organization of an OIC investment Forum in Africa. It also addressed the implementation of

the OIC Dakar-Port Sudan Railway Project, the development of Halal industry in Africa, the ways and means to tackle the increasing number of street children in African OIC countries, and the proposal for drawing up the second phase of the Special Programme for Development of Africa.

In a separate event, on October 16, 2022, the OIC General Secretariat held, at its headquarters in Jeddah, a brainstorming session on strategies to address current and future challenges for the OIC Member States in the field of food security, coinciding with the World Food Day celebrated on October 16th of each year. This session was held amid food security challenges currently facing the world.

In his statement to this meeting, delivered on his behalf by the OIC Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, Dr. Ahmed Sengendo, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, underlined that the World Food Day is an opportunity to share ideas and visions on ways of effectively and collectively addressing the problem of food security in OIC Members States. He stressed that the issues of agricultural development and food security lie at the core of the OIC's activities designed to promote sustainable

development in the Member States.

The Secretary-General indicated that the agricultural sector employs more than 220 million workers, which means that it constitutes 31.7 % of the total workforce in the Member States. He added that those living in rural areas account for 48.7% of the total one billion and nine hundred million people distributed all over the Islamic world.

Also, on November 17-18, 2022, an OIC Delegation led by Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, Assistant Secretary General for Economic Affairs took part in the Azerbaijan Investment and Youth Entrepreneurship Forum, held in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Forum was organized by the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) and the Small and Medium Business Development Agency (SMB-DA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

Dr. Sengendo addressed the opening session of the Forum on behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha. In his message to the Forum, the Secretary-General stated that policy-makers and business communities at national and international levels need to meet and share knowledge and articulate commitments to improve the investment climate in OIC Member States.



OIC Secretary-General Congratulates Qatar on 2022 World Cup Success

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, congratulated H.H. Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar, and the Qatari people on the successful organization of the 2022 World Cup tournament, held in November- December 2022. He expressed his appreciation of Qatar's excellent organization that amazed the world and made the tournament a historic edition praised by all participants and viewers.

The Secretary-General extended warm felicitations to the State of Qatar in particular, and to all OIC countries, on this grandiose international sporting event hosted by Qatar, one of the OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General expressed to the Leadership, Government and people of the State of Qatar his sincere congratulations for this great and well-deserved success, which is an accomplishment not only for Qatar, but also for all OIC countries and peoples. He noted that this achievement was the fruit of the extensive efforts made by the State of Qatar to promote the field of sport and strengthen youth capacities, wishing the State of Qatar further progress and prosperity in all areas.

The Secretary-General stressed, on this occasion, that sport can play a significant role in promoting peace, solidarity, social cohesion, and socio-economic development, and that the global popularity of Football can bring people together and contribute to promoting development and peace.

It is worth noting, in this context, that the Declaration adopted by the 5th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM), held in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in September 2022, had previously expressed appreciation of the preparations undertaken by the State of Qatar to organize the FIFA World Cup 2022, and highlighted the pride that the Arab and Muslim youth take in seeing this grandiose event hosted by an Arab-Muslim country. The Declaration also indicated that Qatar's hosting of this global competition was an opportunity to support many youth initiatives through the "Generation Amazing" platform launched in 2010, in addition to the youth training and development programs through the "Josoor Institute", and the volunteering programs that attracted over 20000 participants. All these initiatives can only enhance joint Islamic action in the fields of youth and sports.

In a previous statement, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, stressed the OIC's support for the State of Qatar in the face of the campaigns launched against its hosting of the 2022 world cup tournament, being the first OIC Member State to host such a grandiose competition, an event that carries human and universal significance and seeks to spread the spirit of solidarity and interconnection among the world's countries.

On the other hand, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, congratulated Morocco's football team on its historic semi-finals qualification following its victory over Portugal's team in the quarter-finals match of the 2022 World Cup tournament hosted by Qatar. The Secretary-General commended the outstanding performance of the Moroccan team, wishing it more victories in the remaining matches of the tournament.

The Moroccan team finished in the fourth place in the competition, which was a historic achievement.

The Secretary-General had also congratulated the national teams of Saudi Arabia and Senegal for their excellent performance at the Group Stage of the competition.



OIC Countries Will Have More Than a Third of the World's Youth by 2050

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted, on September 7-9, 2022, the 5th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYMS) of the OIC Member States, held under the theme of: "Development of Youth and Sports for a Solidarity-based Ummah".

In his statement to the Conference, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, called for addressing the challenges faced by youth in OIC Member States, especially the rising unemployment rates, the spread of extremism, as well as displacement, asylum and illegal immigration. To that end, he called for developing joint policies, strategies, and action plans to meet the needs of youth, offer them wider opportunities, and enhance their role in enhancing socio-economic development as well as in building and promoting peace and dialogue and in combating extremism and terrorism. Speakers at the opening session of the Conference also included HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, Minister of Sport and Youth of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the current ICYSM session, H.E. Mr. Farid Gayibov, Minister of Youth and Sports of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chair of the 4th ICYSM session, and

H.E. Dr. Muhammad Sulaiman Al Jasser, President of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group.

The Secretary-General pointed out that the OIC geography, as indicated by international studies, accommodates about a quarter of the world's youth, and that it is expected that the OIC countries will have more than a third of the world's youth by 2050, according to the UN World Population Prospects. These facts and statistics carry opportunities for the Muslim world if youth's potentials are appropriately harnessed, and if youth are involved in establishing and implementing policies and programs on youth and sports development.

The Secretary-General called for concrete actions and initiatives to implement the OIC Youth Strategy and OIC Action Plan for Sport Development, through launching development programs for youth in all Member States. He also called on Member States and relevant institutions to play an active role in the implementation of these programs and initiatives.

The Secretary-General expressed great thanks and appreciation to the Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the OIC host-country, under the leadership of the

Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz, and his Crown Prince, HRH Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, for the generous hosting of this session, after Saudi Arabia had kindly hosted the first and second ICYSM sessions. The Secretary-General highly commended the great attention paid by the wise leadership of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to issues related to youth and sports in OIC Member States in particular, and the generous care and continuous support for the OIC and its various activities and programs, in order to strengthen Islamic solidarity and advance the OIC's mandate.

The Secretary-General expressed his sincere thanks and gratitude to the Saudi Sports Minister, HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al-Faisal, for the excellent preparations for this session. He also extended thanks to the Government and people of the Republic of Azerbaijan for hosting the 4th session of this Conference, especially the Ministry of Youth and Sports, headed by H.E. Minister Farid Gayibov, who spared no effort during his outstanding chairmanship of the 4th session, which contributed to the development of initiatives taken under the Azerbaijan's chairmanship of the ICYSM.



5th ICYSM: An Important Conference as World Recovers from COVID-19

The Senior Officials Meeting preparatory for the 5th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers of the OIC Member States (ICYSM) was held on September 7, 2022.

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia hosted the 5th ICYSM session on September 7-9, 2022. The theme chosen for this session was: "Youth and Sports Development for a Solidarity-based Ummah".

Speakers at the opening session of the Preparatory Meeting included Mr. Ali Kadyrov, Representative of the Republic of Azerbaijan, Chair of the 4th session of the ICYSM, Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdulrahman Al-Massad, Under-Secretary for Sports and Youth Affairs at the Ministry of Sport of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the 5th session of the ICYSM, and Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Family Affairs at the Organization of Islamic Cooperation.

Speaking on behalf of the OIC General Secretariat, Amb. Bakheet underlined that Saudi Arabia's hosting of this session, after having previously hosted the first and second sessions of the Conference in 2005 and 2014, reflects the Kingdom's great interest in supporting the activities of the OIC, as

well as the increased attention it attaches to the issues related to youth and sports development in Member States. He also noted that the convening of this session, at a time when the world is beginning to recover from COVID-19, reflects the OIC's commitment to promoting youth and sports in Member States, and its efforts to enhance cultural pluralism, foster dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and promote the dissemination of Islamic values through sports.

Amb. Bakheet added that the meeting offers an opportunity to address issues related to youth and sports development, driven by the aim of building a solidarity-based Ummah, to discuss challenges hindering youth capacity-building and sports development in Member States, and to develop adequate ways, solutions and mechanisms to enhance intra-OIC cooperation in this regard.

Amb. Bakheet expressed the General Secretariat's thanks to all the OIC institutions concerned with youth and sports, for their efforts to promote youth and sports development in Member States and to follow up the implementation of the resolutions emanating from previous ICYSM sessions. Foremost among these institutions are the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), the Islamic

World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), the Women Development Organization (WDO), the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC), the Islamic Centre for Development of Trade (ICDT), the Islamic Solidarity Sports Federation (ISSF), the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF), and the International Union of Muslim Scouts (IUMS).

The 5th ICYSM session addressed the situation of youth in the OIC Member States, and the importance attached by the OIC and its relevant organs and institutions to youth and sports development. It explored the ways and means of strengthening youth capabilities and enhancing their role in development, with the aim of providing proper conditions that can help promote stability, progress and prosperity, combat extremist and violent ideologies advocated by terrorist organizations, as well as enhance dialogue, moderation, tolerance, and respect for others. It also discussed the Member States' commitment to implementing the OIC's guiding strategies for youth and sports development; thereby promoting joint Islamic action in this regard.



OIC Welcomes the Establishment of Youth Unit Within the General Secretariat

The 5th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers of OIC Member States, held on September 7-9, 2022 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, under the theme of "Development of Youth and Sports for a Solidarity-Based Ummah", welcomed Resolution 11/43-ORG on establishing a New Unit in charge of Youth Affairs within the OIC General Secretariat, adopted by the 43rd session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and calling on all Member States and relevant OIC organs and institutions to support the Youth Unit so that it can best carry out the tasks assigned to it.

The 5th ICYSM Declaration called on the General Secretariat, with the contribution of Member States and relevant OIC organs and institutions, particularly the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) and the Islamic Solidarity Fund (ISF), to enhance the capacities of the Youth Unit and provide it with the needed human and financial resources so that it can cooperate and coordinate with OIC organs concerned with youth and sports, and follow up the implementation of the relevant OIC resolution, strategies and action plans. The Declaration urged Member States and the relevant OIC bodies and institutions to take the necessary measures to implement the OIC Youth Strategy and the OIC Action Plan for Sports Development, as well as the relevant resolutions, in coordination with the General Secretariat.

The Declaration commended Saudi Arabia's

Vision 2030 and the prominence given to youth and sports in this Vision. It hailed the efforts exerted by the Government of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and HRH Crown Prince to place youth and sports issues at the heart of Saudi Arabia's development agenda. It called on Member States to take the needed actions to remove ob-

The Declaration underscored the central role of national institutions working in the field of youth and sports in the implementation of the OIC Youth Strategy

stacles hindering youth's participation in the development process.

The Declaration expressed deep concern over the escalating terrorist attacks, violent extremism, fanaticism, and incitement to terrorism among youth, particularly through the media and Social Media networks, and the implications on stability, security and peaceful coexistence among peoples across

the world, particularly in the OIC Member States;

The Declaration called on Member States to place youth and sports issues at the core of their development agendas, to ensure that young men and women are effectively involved in the implementation of national developmental action plans, and to provide opportunities for quality education, health, training and decent work, while offering due care for young people with special needs;

The Declaration commended the efforts invested by the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to support and empower young people, appreciated the various initiatives it has launched in this regard, including in particular the adoption of the UN Security Council Resolution on Youth, Peace and Security, and called on Member States to pursue efforts for its implementation.

The Declaration underscored the central role of national institutions working in the field of youth and sports in the implementation of the OIC Youth Strategy and the OIC Action Plan for Sports Development. It called on the OIC General Secretariat to increase cooperation and coordination with those institutions, and hold regional symposia to contribute to strengthening youth capacities in cultural diplomacy, entrepreneurship, and microfinance, enhancing volunteer action, and encouraging cultural, youth, sport and visit exchanges to promote rapprochement among Member States' youth;



OIC Secretary-General Welcomes the Establishment of UN Youth Office

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, welcomed the United Nations General Assembly's resolution on the establishment of the United Nations Youth Office, adopted during the UNGA's session on September 8, 2022.

The Youth Office will lead engagement and advocacy for the advancement of youth issues across the United Nations, in the areas of peace and security, sustainable development and human rights.

The Secretary-General noted that in view of the growing needs of youth worldwide for awakening and for societies based on the principles of peace, justice and gender equality, the establishment of this Office within the United Nations system will contribute to promoting relevant cooperation between the United Nations and the OIC and its relevant organs and institutions.

The Secretary-General affirmed that the OIC and its organs and institutions concerned with youth capacity-building stand ready to cooperate with the newly established UN Youth Office in order to support the OIC Member States in addressing the challenges they face in this regard.

It is worth noting that the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM) established a Youth Unit within the OIC General Secretariat by virtue of a resolution adopted at its 43rd session held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, with the aim of coordinating the efforts of the OIC and its relevant organs and institu-

tions to promote youth and enhance their role in the development process. More recently, the 5th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM), hosted by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on September 7-9, 2022 in Jeddah, called on the OIC General Secretariat to strengthen

The Secretary-General noted that the proclamation of the OIC Youth Day came to affirm the centrality of youth issues among the OIC priorities

cooperation with international and regional partners in order to empower youth in OIC countries and develop their capabilities.

In the same context, and as part of the celebration of the OIC Youth Day on September 3 of each year, as decided in a resolution of the 44th CFM hosted by Côte d'Ivoire in 2017, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, extended his sincere con-

gratulations to all young men and women in the Islamic world, more particularly to the Palestinian youth who live under the Israeli occupation, and to all youth who live under armed conflicts in other OIC countries.

The Secretary-General noted that the proclamation of the OIC Youth Day came to affirm the centrality of youth issues among the OIC priorities, to commend youth's contributions to improving our world, and to highlight their key role in promoting development, in building and strengthening peace and dialogue, and in combating extremism and terrorism in Member States.

The Secretary-General called on the OIC Member States and the international community to join efforts in order to strengthen the role of young men and women in development, so that they can contribute, as effective partners, to efforts to enhance economic and social conditions worldwide.

The Secretary-General also indicated that as part of the keen interest that Saudi Arabia attaches to youth and sports issues in the Islamic world, the Kingdom hosted the 5th session of the Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers (ICYSM) on September 7-9, 2022 in Jeddah. This session provided an opportunity for Member States and institutions concerned with youth and sports development to monitor progress in this field and discuss ways of enhancing cooperation and the sharing of relevant experience and expertise within the framework of joint Islamic action.

Member States Discuss Draft OIC Convention on the Rights of the Child



The OIC General Secretariat hosted, on November 29, 2022, the “Second Meeting of the Open-ended OIC Intergovernmental Group of Experts” to conclude consideration of the draft OIC Convention on the Rights of the Child in Islam, ahead of its submission for adoption at the next session of the Council of Foreign Ministers, to be held in Nouakchott, Mauritania.

In his opening remarks, delivered on his behalf by Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, the OIC Secre-

tary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, reviewed the various stages of the process of drafting the convention. He indicated that the second draft of the convention was prepared in coordination between the OIC General Secretariat and the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission, with the aim of incorporating and revising Member States’ views so that discussions thereon would be concluded at this meeting.

The Secretary-General called for stepping up efforts and cooperation among Member States to protect the rights of the child and

to translate into concrete reality those rights guaranteed for the child by the Islamic religion as well as by international charters and instruments. This, he said, is to be achieved by strengthening coordination mechanisms among national institutions on the one hand, and between those institutions and the OIC organs and institutions on the other hand, and by taking significant steps toward the concrete implementation of the convention. He also urged participants to consider ways of enhancing the role of relevant OIC institutions in sharing expertise as well as in setting standards, mechanisms and methods to follow up the implementation of the convention.

For his part, the chairman of the meeting, Amb. Rezwana Sheikh, Permanent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the OIC, whose country is the current chair of the Council of Foreign Ministers, made a presentation on the development of the draft convention. He underscored the need to draw on best practices from Member States as well as from relevant national, regional and international human rights conventions and instruments.

Joint OIC- EU Workshop on “Gender-Based Violence” (GBV)

As part of the continuous OIC-EU partnership, collaboration and consultation, the OIC General Secretariat and the European External Action Service (EEAS) held, on December 7, 2022, a virtual technical workshop on “Elimination of Gender-Based Violence”.

The workshop was organized in commem-

oration of the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, observed on November 25th of each year, and as part of the UNiTE campaign (The 16 Days of Activism Against Gender-Based Violence).

The workshop was an opportunity to share information on the legal and policy frame-

works and on the human rights instruments and mechanisms for protecting women’s rights and eliminating sexual and gender-based violence, to review the anti-GBV efforts and activities of EU and OIC institutions, and to formulate concrete ideas and recommendations for enhancing future EU-OIC cooperation.

Importance of Following Up the “Family Bank” Project in the Sahel Countries

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, commended the efforts of Mauritania in the area of social work, child care and family empowerment, in a statement delivered on his behalf by H.E. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, during the opening session of the Regional Meeting in Africa, hosted by Mauritania on December 19-20, 2022, under the theme of “Microfinance: Promising Opportunities and Innovative Model”.

The Secretary-General affirmed that Mau-

ritania’s hosting of this regional meeting is of special importance for Member States, being an appropriate opportunity for sharing views and expertise and for identifying the best ways and means of implementing microfinance programs in such a way as to help reduce poverty, particularly among women.

The Secretary-General noted that microfinance is a key tool of poverty alleviation and a main driver for development that needs to be promoted and supported in order to achieve the ambitious goal of curbing poverty and ensuring sustainable income across

the world.

It is noteworthy that H.E. Ms. Safiya bint Intah, Minister for Social Affairs, Children and Family of the Islamic Republic of Mauritania, received, on December 19, 2022 in her office at the Ministry’s Headquarters, Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, as part of the OIC delegation’s participation in the Regional Meeting. The two sides discussed ways of strengthening cooperation and joint action in the areas of social development, particularly under Mauritania’s chairmanship of the next session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

Seminar on Promoting Communication in the Post-Coronavirus World

The General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held, on October 10, 2022, a seminar on "Promoting Communication in the Post-Coronavirus World: Strengthening Dialogue between the Islamic World and Other Major Civilizations."

The seminar was held under Resolution No. 1/48-C of the 48th session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers.

In his opening remarks, delivered on his behalf by Amb. Tarig Ali Bakheet, Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian, Cultural and Social Affairs, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, noted that the

seminar, as reflected through its title, was designed to review ways for the countries of the Islamic world to promote communication with other civilizations, on country, culture, religion, or other levels.

Panelists from different countries took part in the seminar. Sheikh Muhammad bin Abdul Wahid Al-Arifi, Advisor to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, Saudi Arabia, made a presentation on his country's experience with the pandemic. Other presentations were made by Mr. Muhammad Shafiq, Executive Director of the Brian and Jean Hickey Center for Interfaith Studies and Dialogue, USA, Mr. Ma Lirong, Di-

rector of SISU Institute of Silk Road Strategy Studies, China, Mr. Hosaka Shuji, President of the Japan Association for Middle East Studies, and Prof. Sergei Vorobyev, from the Faculty of World Economy and International Affairs, HSE University, Russia.

Speakers in the second panel included Amb. Dr. Mahmud Erol Kilic, Director-General of the Research Center for Islamic History, Arts and Culture, (IRCICA), Ms. Nihal Saad, Chief of Cabinet for the UN High Representative of the Alliance of Civilizations at United Nations Alliance of Civilizations, and Ms. Florence Gaub, Advisor at the Council of the European Union.

Bamakhrama Offers Lecture at Symposium Marking OIC Founding Day

The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) celebrates its founding day on September 25th of each year. It coincides with the day the OIC was established at the Rabat Summit on 25 September 1969, following the heinous arson attack on Al-Aqsa Mosque on 21 August 1969.

To mark this occasion, a symposium was held, featuring H.E. Mr. Dya-Eddine Bamakhrama, Ambassador of the Republic of Djibouti and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, along with senior officials from the OIC General Secretariat.

The symposium made a historical overview of the founding and importance of the OIC



and the roles entrusted to this organization and to its subsidiary, specialized and affiliated institutions on issues of interest to the Muslim world. Foremost among those issues are the question of Palestine, Muslim minorities, Islamophobia, and the promotion

of the values of moderation and tolerance. The symposium also explored the efforts deployed to promote solidarity and cooperation among Member States in various fields, in a bid to give momentum to joint Islamic action and contribute to cultural and social action in pursuit of shared goals and aspirations.

The symposium highlighted the OIC's initiatives to urge its Member States to build bilateral and multilateral relations based on respect of human dignity, to consolidate the values of cultural diversity and social justice, and to enhance their working mechanisms so as to keep pace with contemporary changes.

OIC Holds Symposium on Promotion of Mutual Respect

On the occasion of the International Day for Tolerance, marked on November 16th of each year, the General Secretariat of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) held a virtual symposium on December 1, 2022, as part of its series of lectures and cultural symposia to enhance and disseminate cultural content.

The guest of the symposium was Dr. Yousef Al Hassan, Emirati writer and researcher, and holder of a doctorate degree in political science. He is one of the pioneers of Emirati diplomacy (1972 – 2010), having held several diplomatic positions with various responsibilities, the most recent being Director-General of the Diplomatic Institute

with ambassadorial rank. He is also member of the Board of Trustees of several research centers, think-tanks and universities, and member and co-founder of Arab Group for Muslim-Christian Dialogue.

The symposium focused on the notion of tolerance and its goals and civilizational contexts. It also addressed the importance of dialogue and tolerance in promoting peace and coexistence, the ways of facing intolerance and fanaticism, and the place and manifestations of tolerance in Islam.

The symposium also highlighted the efforts and initiatives of the United Arab Emirates to promote the values of tolerance worldwide, and discussed the role of internation-

al, intellectual and cultural organizations and the media in promoting the culture of tolerance across the world.

It is noteworthy that the International Day for Tolerance is an annual opportunity for the world to highlight the values and essence of tolerance and mutual respect among nations and civilizations.

In the same context, the Sawt al-Hikmah (Voice of Wisdom) Center in the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) joined the world in commemorating the International Day for Tolerance. It was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in 1996 and, since then, has become an annual occasion to promote coexistence.

General Secretariat Hosts Coordination Meeting of OIC Institutions



At the invitation of the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, the OIC General Secretariat hosted, on 14-15 December 2022, the Sixth Annual Coordination Meeting of Heads of OIC Institutions (ACMOI).

In his welcome address, which he delivered on behalf of the OIC Secretary-General, the Assistant Secretary-General for Economic Affairs, Dr. Ahmad Kawesa Sengendo, stressed that the ACMOI meeting is an important opportunity to collectively take stock of the main initiatives of OIC institutions for the implementation of the OIC resolutions in all fields. It is also an opportunity to develop solutions towards ensuring a more efficient and effective utilization of capacities and allocation of resources, and avoiding unnecessary duplication of efforts.

He highlighted some of the challenges facing the OIC Member States that require urgent and coordinated action by the OIC General Secretariat and its institutions.

Dr. Sengendo indicated that “over 89 million people in Member States have no food and therefore need urgent food support, and 19 million people are refugees. The OIC countries have 72.1% of the world’s refugees, with some countries being at the same time a source of and a destination for refugees.” “Many Member States,” he added, “are facing horrible insecurity situations and conflicts, with around 300 million people living below the poverty line, while attainment of the SDGs is still eluding many Member States. In addition, in view of the recent phenomenal floods and droughts that have recently hit several OIC countries,

climate change has now become a reality that cannot be ignored anymore.”

Mr. Sengendo emphasized that living and working in such a world necessitates that all OIC institutions show a spirit of brotherly cooperation, joint planning, effective and efficient implementation of resolutions, and timely execution of all OIC planned activities. He also stressed the critical role that OIC institutions should play to shape a better future for the Muslim Ummah and for all Mankind. On December 14, 2022, the Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, hosted an official dinner in honor of the heads of delegations of the OIC Institutions and external offices and the special envoys of the Secretary-General participating in the sixth Annual Coordination Meeting of the OIC Institutions.

The dinner was attended by the Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chair of the 14th Islamic Summit, as well as by the Assistant Secretaries-General. The Secretary-General expressed, on this occasion, the OIC’s determination to continue providing various means of support in order to enhance the work of the OIC institutions and offices spread around the world and to support the Special Envoys of the Secretary-General in the tasks entrusted to them.

Secretary-General Receives ICCIA’s Secretary-General

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 16, 2022, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (ICCIA), Dr. Yousuf Bin Hassan Khalawi.

The meeting discussed ways to promote microfinance in the OIC Member States, and to follow up implementation of the Family Bank project in the G5 Sahel countries, called for by the 48th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers held in March 2022 in Islamabad, Pakistan.

Dr. Khalawi reviewed the ICCIA’s efforts to establish the Family Bank in the G5 Sahel countries in coordination with the OIC General Secretariat and the chambers of commerce in the concerned countries.



For his part, the Secretary-General reaffirmed the OIC’s interest in enhancing the capacities of the chambers of commerce and microfinance institutions in the OIC

Member States. He indicated that the General Secretariat stands ready to support the ICCIA’s efforts in this regard.

OIC Secretary-General Pays Visit to IRCICA in Istanbul

On the sidelines of his participation in the 12th session of the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, held on October 21-22, 2022 in Istanbul, Türkiye, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, OIC Secretary-General, paid a visit, on October 21, 2022, to the Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), a subsidiary organ of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). During this visit, the IRCICA Director-General, Dr. Mahmud Erol Kılıç, briefed the OIC Secretary-General on the work and ongoing projects of the Center. The Secretary-General stressed, on this occasion, the OIC General Secretariat's continued support to IRCICA and its programs.



Secretary-General Calls on the IIFA to Develop a Unified Position on Taliban's Ban on Women Education

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, called on the International Islamic Fiqh Academy (IIFA) to promptly launch a global campaign to unite scholars and religious authorities in the Islamic world against the Taliban government's ban on women's education, including higher education, which has serious repercussions, and to highlight the true teachings of Islam which calls for the education of girls. The Secretary-General's call was launched at the opening of the Second Meeting of the

2022 IIFA Bureau, held via videoconferencing on December 29, 2022.

The Secretary-General, who chaired this meeting, stated that "the decision of the Taliban government to prevent girls from education, including university education, and to dismiss female faculty members from their positions on the pretext that this contradicts with Islamic law, was the latest challenge to be addressed by the IIFA, in addition to the issues of minorities, escalating hostility toward Muslims in Western countries, and other pressing issues".

The Secretary-General stressed the prior-

ity given to the question of Afghanistan in the OIC and IIFA agendas. He pointed out that the Taliban's decision was not based on texts in Islamic Shari'a, recalling that a team of scholars had visited Afghanistan in June and held extensive meetings with Taliban scholars and government officials, and that it was agreed that Islam granted women all their rights, including the right to education and work. He stressed that the Taliban's decision can only deepen the fallacies that are spread about Islam at a time when Islam has nothing to do with them.

OIC Secretary-General Receives IPHRC Board Members



The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) H.E. Mr. Hissein

Brahim Taha, received, on December 19, 2022, in his office in Jeddah, the members

of the Board of the OIC Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC). The Secretary-General paid tribute to the Commission for its role and achievements in advancing human rights and fundamental freedoms in OIC Member States, as well as the fundamental rights of Muslim minorities and communities in non-OIC Member States.

The members of the IPHRC Board briefed the Secretary-General on the works of the 20th session of the IPHRC, held on December 18-22, 2022 at the IPHRC headquarters in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia.

OIC and ICESCO Sign Memorandum of Understanding



The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, received, on October 4, 2022, at the General Secretariat headquarters in Jeddah, H.E. Dr. Salim Mohammed

AlMalik, Director-General of ICESCO. A Memorandum of Understanding for cooperation and coordination between the OIC General Secretariat and ICESCO was signed during this meeting, with Mr. Taha

signing on behalf of the General Secretariat and Dr. AlMalik on behalf of ICESCO.

The MoU is designed to enhance coordination between the OIC General Secretariat and ICESCO in the implementation of projects and programs in the fields of education, science and culture.

During this meeting, both sides discussed OIC-ICESCO cooperation in light of the resolutions of the Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers, and the sectoral conferences in the areas of culture, education and the environment.

In the same vein, the OIC-ICESCO Joint Technical Committee held a meeting to discuss implementation of joint programs during the coming period.

Secretary-General Calls for Launching a New OIC Program of Action for 2026-2035

The OIC General Secretariat hosted, on November 22, 2022, the Second Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on the mid-term review of the implementation of the OIC-2025 Programme of Action. In his opening remarks, delivered on his behalf by Amb. Samir Bakr Diab, Assistant Secretary-General for Palestine and Al-Quds Affairs, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, stressed that the OIC Programme of Action served as a forward-looking plan to enhance joint Islamic action in various vital areas of cooperation and de-

velopment, being key issues of concern to OIC Member States.

The Secretary-General commended the sincere efforts of the Member States in implementing the goals of the Programme, which provides the OIC with "a clear vision to consider the preparation of the new Programme, to start working on the final report on the implementation of the OIC-2025 Programme of Action, and to propose a draft programme for the period 2026-2035."

For his part, the Chairman of the meeting, H.E. Ambassador Rezwan Sheikh, Perma-

nent Representative of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to the OIC, whose country currently chairs the Council of Foreign Ministers, gave a presentation on the OIC Programme of Action since its inception, and the challenges faced by Member States in its implementation, especially during the two years of the COVID-19 pandemic which disrupted work for the full achievement of its goals. He stressed, in this regard, the need to consider revisiting the programme and to prepare for launching the new one.

IBU Contributes to Enhancing Solidarity in Radio and Television Broadcast

The Secretary-General of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, addressed the 8th meeting of the General Assembly of the Islamic Broadcasting Union (IBU), held virtually on October 2, 2022. He expressed hope that the meeting would constitute a step forward towards concluding the institutional reform of the IBU, in light of its annual report and the strategic plan for the development of its work in the next five years. This, he stated, falls in line with the decisions of the previous sessions of the IBU's General Assembly. It is also aligned with the call for reform of the OIC made by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz

Al Saud at the 14th Islamic Summit, held in Makkah Al-Mukarramah on May 31, 2019, when he highlighted the need to develop the Organization and reform its organs so that it can deal with the various challenges facing the Muslim world.

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Dr. Majid Al Qasabi, Acting Minister of Media of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Chairman of the IBU Executive Board, in the presence of Dr. Amr El-Leithii, Director-General of IBU.

The Secretary-General expressed profound gratitude and appreciation to the Leadership, Government and people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for hosting and supporting the IBU headquarters, asserting that

this effective institution contributes to promoting joint Islamic action in various areas of radio and television broadcasting.

The Secretary-General commended the efforts made by the IBU in the past year under its new leadership, which yielded several initiatives and diverse activities, including full refurbishment of its headquarters and the supply of new furniture and equipment. Besides, the IBU has established a new training center for Member States' journalists in partnership with reputable media institutions, and has provided training grants for journalists. It also has an integrated television studio established for the technical production of the IBU programs and activities.

Building Diplomatic Capacities and Developing Election Observation



The OIC General Secretariat has invested significant efforts in terms of capacity-building and training, including in the areas of election observation and diplomatic work.

In this regard, the periodic meeting between the OIC General Secretariat, represented by the Election Observation Unit, the General Secretariat of the United Nations, represented by the Electoral Assistance Division, and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP Regional Project for the Middle East) was held on November 15, 2022. The meeting addressed cooperation and coordination in election observation. It is part of the OIC's continuous efforts to strengthen its capacities in this field.

The meeting reviewed the joint action plan for cooperation and partnership in election observation, and the roadmap and prospects for further cooperation in 2023.

The OIC General Secretariat commended, on this occasion, the fruitful partnership with the UN and the UNDP in election observation and the support they provide to the OIC's efforts in this regard.

In the same context, upon the invitation of the Central Election Commission of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a team of observers from the OIC General Secretariat were dispatched to monitor the early presidential elections held on November 20, 2022. The OIC Delegation observed the elections at three stages: pre-polling arrangements,

the polling day, and the counting of ballots. The Delegation met with several stakeholders, including presidential candidates, and received briefings on the electoral process.

The OIC Delegation concluded their observation mission by noting that the electoral process was conducted in an open, free and orderly manner, with a high voter turnout.

The OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, congratulated the people of Kazakhstan on the successful conduct of the presidential elections.

The OIC also dispatched, upon the invitation of Tunisia's Independent High Electoral Commission, a team of observers to monitor the legislative elections held on December 17, 2022.

The OIC Delegation met with the President and members of the Independent High Election Commission, and conveyed the greetings of the OIC Secretary-General and his wishes for the success of the elections. The Delegation also received a briefing on the electoral process.

The OIC Delegation stressed the importance that the OIC attaches to the observation of elections conducted in Member States, as stipulated by the relevant provisions of the OIC Charter. It concluded its mission by noting that the electoral process took place in a transparent, free and orderly manner.

As part of the OIC's interest in strengthening the diplomatic capacities of its staff

members, the OIC Secretary-General, H.E. Mr. Hissein Brahim Taha, highlighted the importance for young diplomats from OIC countries to acquire mediation skills, including increasing their knowledge about global and regional conflicts, and building their skills in terms of mediation and preventive diplomacy; thereby enabling them to undertake effective roles in mediation and conflict resolution within the OIC geographic area.

The Secretary General made these remarks in a message conveyed on his behalf by Amb Ahmed Sareer, Director of Asian Affairs and Head of the Peace, Security and Conflict Resolution Unit of the OIC General Secretariat, at the Third Mediation for Peace Certificate Programme that kicked off on September 26, 2022, in Ankara, Türkiye.

On the other hand, the OIC Assistant Secretary General for Humanitarian, Social and Cultural Affairs, H.E. Ambassador Tarig Ali Bakheet, delivered a speech at the opening session and made a presentation on Day One of the Training Program on "Humanitarian Diplomacy", organized virtually on October 24, 2022 by SESRIC in collaboration with the Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye. The Training Program was designed for junior diplomats from OIC Member States.



Dr. Hisham Khogali
*Conference interpreter,
 trainer and researcher at
 the OIC*

The challenges that faced videoconferencing meetings were not limited to the use of online applications, but also extended to other aspects related to cyber-security

Simultaneous Interpreting During and After COVID-19

COVID-19, an unprecedented pandemic in the modern history of Mankind, has adversely impacted all aspects of life. The meetings and events industry was not spared from the effects of the pandemic, with repeated lockdowns having prompted organizers to cancel events or to go virtual, pending return to in-person meetings.

Quite expectedly, digital industry firms sought to turn this challenge into an opportunity. They soon started competing in developing smart applications that would be used to organize events remotely. Simultaneous interpreting, being an integral part of international conferences, has had its share of these applications.

Some of the main applications include "Zoom", "Microsoft Teams", and "Google Meet", used to organize video-conferences with the option of simultaneous interpreting. Faced with the impossibility of holding face-to-face meetings due to the pandemic, institutions, organizations, and other entities that needed to bring together people speaking different languages had no other choice but to resort to these applications. This article attempts to present and evaluate this experience from the perspective of an interpreter, and to highlight the main challenges involved in the use of these applications.

The smart applications chosen were those that provide simultaneous interpreting service, unlike other popular platforms such as "Cisco" and "Microsoft Teams". Despite the emergence of platforms designed specifically for remote simultaneous interpreting, such as "Kudo" and "Interprefy", the interpreter found himself faced with various technical challenges. He first needed to register early before accessing the platform. In the meantime, he might face problems to log in on the platform and start working, which would disrupt the schedule of interpreters and the interpreting process as a whole.

Another difficulty faced by the interpreter is when his voice overlaps with the voice of the speaker/participant, which entails a technical problem that requires stopping the interpreting process. The lack of high-speed Internet connection can also be a source of technical difficulties, including image and/or sound interruption on the platform (to and from interpreting channels).

Poor sound quality and background noise are additional challenges faced by interpreters. An ordinary person (even a technician) may not realize the existence of a problem of low or unclear sound. This is because a simultaneous interpreter needs a degree of sound loudness and clarity that is higher than that needed by an ordinary person. Simultaneous interpreting involves at the same time speaking and listening to the speaker.

A further challenge that interpreters had to face when they first started using the applications was the lack of Relay interpreting, the practice of interpreting from one language into another through a third language. This added an additional burden on interpreters, causing some of them to remain "on alert" to take over in case a participant speaks in a language that his colleague cannot interpret from.

With the easing of restrictions on movements in cities, interpreters moved to work from their offices, and then from inside booths, in the presence of a technical team from the IT Department to facilitate work on the relevant platform.

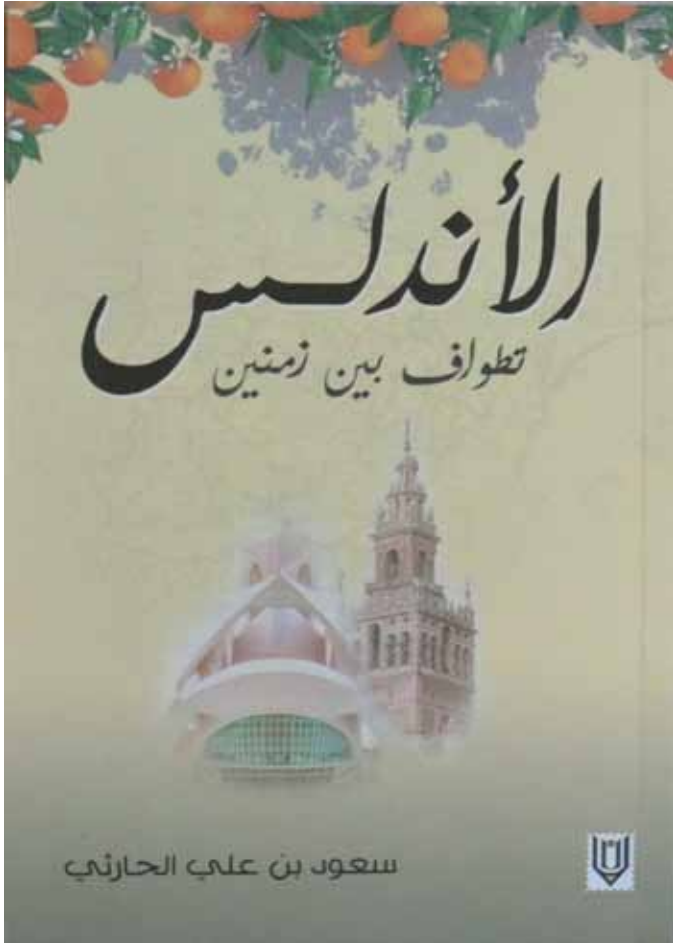
Despite the persistence of some technical challenges, including low-speed Internet connection and the resulting sound problems, among others, the situation has significantly improved due to the presence of interpreters in one place, which enables them to communicate and to take over from each other much more easily. It has also made it easier to fix technical problems by the technician who is now close to the interpreter, so that he now can find the problem in a short time and join the interpreter in the booth to fix it up.

The challenges that faced videoconferencing meetings were not limited to the use of online applications, but also extended to other aspects related to cyber-security, as platforms might be hacked through screen-sharing in the absence of sufficient protection, or when one of the participants shares the URL of the meeting room intentionally or by error.

The Arabic IT News Portal has advanced a number of measures that can reduce the risk of hacking. These include setting a password for logging on to the meeting, enabling the waiting room, preventing screen-sharing except through the Host, and securing the meeting once the participants log on by closing the meeting room.

Although things are now back to normal as the pandemic is receding, many international organizations have continued to use videoconferencing platforms, enabling them to save travel and other costs. They now use hybrid meetings which involve a mixture of in-person and remote attendees. These meetings, however, still pose a significant challenge to interpreters who find it quite difficult to perform their task remotely.

Andalusia Book: A Tour Between Two Times



Cairo – Hajjaj Salama (DPA)

Many are the memories, historical facts, images, exploits and edifices which the Omani writer, Saud bin Ali al-Harithi, describes in detail throughout the chapters of his book “Andalusia: A Tour Between Two Times,” recently published in Muscat by the Luban Publishing Foundation.

Through this Book, the author dives into the history of Andalusia, and roams between those Andalusian cities that live on the borders of two worlds, but can hardly break free from any of them. He concludes his tour by asking : Are these cities feeling the pain of nostalgia? Are they longing for their great kings, poets and writers who were enchanted with the beauty, art and creativity of their homeland?

The Book reviews key milestones in the history of Andalusia, starting with Tariq bin Ziyad’s conquest of that country, where he ended the rule of the Visigoths in Spain, and then moved with his army towards the Iberian Peninsula, and for the first time raised the banner of Islam on the European continent.

The Book touches on those secrets that were later revealed to suc-

cessive Muslim generations. It tells how the military commander, Tariq bin Ziyad, set out to annex new countries to the Islamic civilization and state, called on non-Arab peoples to enter Islam, and achieved major victories and glories. Beside those great goals, he was paving the way for the last of the ruling Umayyad dynasty in Damascus, so that Andalusia became an extension and a center of the Umayyad caliphate. Three decades later, it received and embraced Saqr Quraish, Abd al-Rahman bin Muawiya bin Abd al-Malik, who established the Umayyad State in Andalusia, which he and his successors ruled for three centuries.

The Book highlights Andalusia’s memories, historical facts, images, exploits, and monuments, the golden history of a glorious and honorable Islamic era, which delights the heart and fills Arabs and Muslims with pride.

On the other hand, the Book tells about the fall of Andalusia and how it turned from one of the major cities of Islamic civilization into a scene of division and fragmentation, conflicts and civil wars, fanaticism and strife that destroyed people, land, values, civilization, scientific and urban legacy, with Mul k al-Taw if (party kings) successively inheriting Arab and Islamic kingdoms, all engendering a bitter state of weakness and decline.

The Book tells how Tariq ibn Ziyad crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and handed over, through that great conquest, the keys of Europe to the Arabs and Muslims, not only Spain, so that they could continue the march. Several decades later, Saqr Quraish established an Islamic kingdom in Andalusia, with its center in Cordoba, which illuminated the sky of Europe with science, knowledge and freedoms. Literature, schools and universities flourished, and Granada, Seville, Cordoba, Valencia and Toledo became destinations for pioneers, students, thinkers and teachers from all over the world. During the Umayyad era, Andalusia reached the peak of its well-being and prosperity in all fields.

The Book provides details about key milestones in the history of Andalusia, since the country was conquered by the leader Tariq bin Ziyad until the third day of January 1492, when Abu Abdullah al-Saghir, the last of Mul k al-Taw if, mounted his horse, leaving behind him the famous Al-Hamra Palace, which was built by the Muslim King Muhammad bin Yusuf bin Muhammad bin Al-Ahmar, and heading for his exile, after having handed over the keys of Granada to the leader of the Franks (Ferdinand), thus ending the Muslim rule over Spain and restoring the Goths as the rulers thereof.

The author shows how these intertwined and disparate events built the history of Spain during its Islamic era and revealed many facts and lessons. He also shed light on the rescue operation undertaken by the Almoravids and the Almohads, which delayed the fall of the Islamic kingdoms in Spain, in addition to the great battle of Zalaqa on October 23, 1086 AD, led by Yusuf bin Tashfin and Al-Mutamid bin Abbad, which was the last achievement of Muslims in this region. They soon suffered a heavy defeat in 1212 that restricted Islamic rule in Spain to the small kingdom of Granada, until Granada itself fell in 1492.

Guyana

Capital: Georgetown
Area: 214,970 square kilometers
Official language: English
Currency: Guyanese Dollar (GYD)



Guyana, officially the Co-operative Republic of Guyana, previously the colony of British Guiana, is a sovereign state on the northern coast of South America that is culturally part of the Anglophone Caribbean. Guyana was a former colony of the Dutch and, for over 200 years, the British.

Guyana is member of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation. It is the only state of the Commonwealth of Nations on mainland South America. It is also a member of the Caribbean Community, which has its secretariat headquarters in Guyana's capital, Georgetown. Guyana achieved independence from the Britain on 26 May 1966, and became a republic on 23 February 1970.

The region known as "the Guianas" consists of the large shield landmass north of the Amazon River and east of the Orinoco River, known as the "Land of many waters", according to the Oxford English Dictionary. Historical Guyana is made up of three Dutch colonies: Essequibo, Demerara, and Berbice. Modern Guyana is bordered to the east by Suriname, to the south and southwest by Brazil, to the west by Venezuela, and to the north by the Atlantic Ocean.

Guyana is located in northeastern South

America with an Atlantic Ocean coastline. It can be divided into three geographic zones: a coastal plain with some areas below sea level, a white sand belt south of the coastal zone, with dense tropical forests, and interior highlands that extend till the country's southern borders, with a vast expanse of Savannah. It is a water-rich country, with numerous small rivers flowing into the Atlantic Ocean.

With 215,000 km², Guyana is the third-smallest sovereign state by area in mainland South America (after Uruguay and Suriname). According to the 2002 census, its population amounted approximately to 777,000 inhabitants. Guyanese of East Indian descent made up 43.5% of the population, and Guyanese of African descent 30.2%.

The name "Guyana" derives from "Guiana", the original name for the region that now includes Guyana, Suriname (Dutch Guiana), French Guiana, and parts from Venezuela and Brazil.

Guyana was inhabited by the Arawak and Carib (Native American) tribes. The British assumed control in the late 18th century, and the Dutch formally ceded the area in

1814. In 1831 the three separate colonies became a single British colony known as British Guiana.

The climate of Guyana is tropical, with high temperatures for most of the year, moderated along the coast. There are two rainy seasons, the first from May to August; the second from November to January.

The population consists of Indians and Pakistanis who constitute about 55% of the country's total population, and Africans who make up a third of the population. There are also about 30,000 American Indians (the remaining indigenous population), 2,000 Europeans, and 10,000 of Chinese origin. The remaining minority is a mixture of the aforementioned components.

Agriculture and mining are among the pillars of the country's economy. Agriculture occupies 1% of the total land area. The main crops are sugar cane and rice. Bananas, corn and coconuts are grown in limited areas, with some sheep and goat farming.

Guyana is one of the main bauxite-producing countries. Aluminum ranks second among its exports, with attempts to manufacture it locally and reduce its export as ore.



About OIC

The Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) is the second largest inter-governmental organization after the United Nations with a membership of 57 states spread over four continents. The Organization is the collective voice of the Muslim world. It endeavors to safeguard and protect the interests of the Muslim world in the spirit of promoting international peace and harmony among various people of the world.

The Organization was established upon a decision of the historical summit which took place in Rabat, Kingdom of Morocco on 12th Rajab 1389 Hijra (25 September 1969) following the criminal arson of Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. In 1970 the first ever meeting of Islamic Conference of Foreign Minister (ICFM) was held in Jeddah which decided to establish a permanent secretariat in Jeddah headed by the organization's secretary general. H.E. Hissein Brahim Taha is the 12th Secretary General of the Organization. He assumed the position in November 2021.

The first OIC Charter was adopted by the 3rd ICFM Session held in 1972. The Charter laid down the objectives and principles of the organization and fundamental purposes to strengthen the solidarity and cooperation among the Member States. Over the last 40 years, the membership has grown from its founding members of 30 to 57 states. The Charter was amended to keep pace with the developments that have unraveled across the world. The present Charter of the OIC was adopted by the Eleventh Islamic Summit held in Dakar on 13-14 March 2008 to become the pillar of the OIC future Islamic action in line with the requirements of the 21st century.

The Organization has the singular honor to galvanize the Ummah into a unified body and have actively represented the Muslims by espousing all causes close to the hearts of over 1.5 billion Muslims of the world. The Organization has consultative and cooperative relations with the UN and other inter-governmental organizations to protect the vital interests of the Muslims and to work for the settlement of conflicts and disputes involving Member States. In safeguarding the true values of Islam and the Muslims, the organization has taken various steps to remove misperceptions and have strongly advocated elimination of discrimination against the Muslims in all forms and manifestations.

The Member States of the OIC face many challenges in the 21st century and to address those challenges, the third extraordinary session of the Islamic Summit held in Makkah in December 2005, laid down the blue print called the Ten-Year Program of Action. It has successfully concluded with the close of 2015. A successor programme for the next decade (2016-2025) has been adopted.

The new programme OIC-2025 is anchored in the provisions of the OIC Charter and focuses on 18 priority areas with 107 goals. The priority areas include issues of Peace and Security, Palestine and Al-Quds, Poverty Alleviation, Counter-terrorism, Investment and Finance, Food Security, Science and Technology, Climate Change and Sustainability, Moderation, Culture and Interfaith Harmony, Empowerment of Women, Joint Islamic Humanitarian Action, Human Rights and Good Governance, among others.

Among the OIC's key bodies: the Islamic Summit, the Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), the General Secretariat, in addition to the Al-Quds Committee and three permanent committees concerned with science and technology, economy and trade, and information and culture. There are also specialized organs under the banner of the OIC including the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, as well as subsidiary and affiliate organs that play a vital role in boosting cooperation in various fields among the OIC member states.

For more details, visit the OIC website at
www.oic-oci.org



منظمة التعاون الإسلامي
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Augmenting Islamic cultures • Combating poverty
 Protecting the rights of Muslim minorities • Promoting Science and Technology
 Preserving Islamic heritage • Joint Islamic solidarity
 Strengthening International relations • Promoting development
 Combating terrorism • Achieving economic and trade cooperations
 Encouraging dialogue among cultures and religions
 Boosting Economic and Trade cooperation
 Defending the Palestine Cause • Defending the rights of Muslims



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