



## **S T A T E M E N T**

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COOPERATION**

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**AN INSTITUTION AFFILIATED TO THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC  
CONFERENCE**

**Your Excellency Secretary General,  
Distinguished Ministers,  
Distinguished Delegates and Guests,  
Dear brothers and sisters,**

**As Salamu Aleykum Wa Rahmatu Allah Wa Barakatuhu**



Allow me at the outset to express once again sincere appreciation to Minister Mammadyarov for his skillful stewardship of tasks of Chair of the ICFM as well as brotherly Azerbaijan's input during the past year into promoting the objectives of the Organization. I would also like to congratulate Minister Khursheed Qasuri with assuming the noble position of ICFM Chairman and extend my sincere dua for success in his assignment for the sake of the Ummah.

My task today is not of the easy one. I represent here an organization which stands for the interest of the most populous yet the less attended social strata of Islamic world – **Muslim youth**. It is even more difficult considering unfortunate tradition of this House to pay to youth issues and concerns the marginal importance. Let me present you some facts and findings in support of this statement. According to the study conducted by the OIC Youth Forum more than 90% of youth in OIC countries expressed their strong support for closer cooperation and stronger ties with Muslim youth in other Member states. Yet the very existence of the OIC is known only to 40% of them. About 80% of our respondents in different parts of the Islamic world complained about poor education, overcrowded university rooms, limited access to hot technologies. The results of this is in line even with Zogby pool recently conducted in one of the most successful OIC countries. Add to this 26% unemployment rate in MENA region and you will have features of the overall picture in the mind of today Muslim youth.

Yet they lack a knowledge of even of a few existing OIC programs on education such as the ones implemented by OIC institutions. Despite growing demand the OIC family has not developed a single program dedicated to organizing social activities of our youth, leave alone providing them with opportunity to travel and see other member States . These samples of deep breach between the real needs and aspiration of youth and OIC youth policies (or more correctly absence of such policies) can be further counted. However the following may be sufficient for you. In 1991 OIC Summit has called for convening of Youth Ministerial Conference while the said fora was convened in 2005 after 14 years. With a time distance of 1 youth generation.

That is why youth of Ummah has received with utmost hope and high expectation establishment in 2004 of the OIC Youth Forum under the auspices of Government and personally President of Azerbaijan, which was granted with the status of institution affiliated to the OIC by the virtue of 2005 Sana ICFM resolution

Within the historically short period of time ICYF-DC has finalized establishment of its international Headquarters in Istanbul due to generous support by the Republic of Turkey. Consequently we have started activities in 3 major directions:

- fighting the growing threat of Islamophobia,
- increasing international stand of organized OIC youth
- strengthening the capacity of active youth organization through trainings and other form of non-formal education

Effective joint reaction with major European youth organizations on blasphemous caricature crisis; organization of International Istanbul Symposium with Muslim academicians and COE to mobilize joint resources to fight Islamophobia; signing of framework cooperation agreements with UNDP, Council of Europe, ISESCO, IDB, ICCI, European and Asian youth forums; organizing training in leadership for member youth organizations, developing strategy of OIC Youth tourism are few among several concrete activities undertaken by the OIC Youth Forum to this end since the last ICFM.

However the most crucial tasks entrusted to us by Your Governments and youth of the OIC countries – **ability of independent actions and institutionalization of activities** – request sufficient political and financial support by Member States. **Yet despite our previous addresses to the OIC Member States few have fulfilled the call by the previous ICFM resolutions to provide such independency to the OIC Youth Forum as the sole coordinating youth institution of Ummah. While Strategic Action Plan adopted by the Forum's Founding General Assembly marks the biannual budget of the ICYF-DC (both its regular and project budgets) for 2007-08 to be USD 2 mln the OIC Member States and Institutions provided less than 20% of this amount.** In this regard I can not by underline the critical role of OIC institution – IDB and ICCI which backed above mentioned activities.

### **Distinguished Ministers,**

All of your Governments have voted for the resolution to establish ICYF as the center placed OIC youth institution and many of your governmental representatives have participated in the opening ceremony where they praised the long awaited youth coordinating institution having been established and pledged their full support to this end. However just words are not enough if we seek real development. Once again today within the framework of this session we have circulated an urgent appeal to Heads of Member States and Governments to extend their generosity to common activities of our youth and we are very much looking forward that distinguished Ministers will spare no efforts to bring about timely respond to meet our needs. Let's don't forget any international organizations is as strong as its members are strong and committed to the common cause.

In order to increase efficiency of coordinated youth policies in the OIC countries the OIC Youth Forum is working hard under the 10 Point of Joint Youth Action – concrete master-plan proposal to address the needs of Muslim youth. This plan is to complement the social aspects of the OIC Makkah 10 Year Plan of Action and to be adopted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> GA of the Forum planned for be held this October in Islamabad. Taking the opportunity I would like to thank the Government of Pakistan for kind offer to host this milestone event in OIC youth development. The major elements of this plan are:

- Establishment of permanent mechanism on Ministerial level for drawing and implementing common youth policies
- Holding timely consultations between leading youth organizations and Governments
- Establishment but most importantly development of the OIC Youth Waqf to be jointly managed by governmental and youth representatives

In this regard I would like to appreciate initiative of Youth Welfare Organization of the KSA to revitalize the implementations of the 1<sup>st</sup> OIC Youth and Sports Ministerial. We count on the support by Government of Saudi Arabia, all the member states and institution to have this efforts implemented in transparent, inclusive and efficient way, while taking into account real views and opinions by youth of our countries.

We also expect that timely initiative by the OIC Secretary General and IDB - the Poverty Eradication Fund will be open to cooperation with youth and looking forward for drawing and implementation of joint activities to support poverty eradication of youth in particular implement the most demanded projects in Africa.

**Distinguished Ministers,  
Dear brothers and sisters**

I would like to conclude my statement with reminding you of a famous proverb that those not feeding their own armies will end up feeding other's armies. Paraphrasing this expression we can say: If one nation, community or Ummah doesn't providing necessary attention to its own youth, others will be in charge of their future. I am sure Islamic Ummah has all necessary resources – both financial and human – to nurture, develop its youth and unite it around great values of Islam as teaching of moderation and peace, solidarity and pride, knowledge and sharing. The only thing we need, Muslim youth need from our Governments is political will to turn your face to your youth and thus secure our common future.

Thank you for your attention.