

**STATEMENT BY PROF. EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU,
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ISLAMIC CONFERENCE (OIC),
TO THE OSCE SUMMIT**

(Astana, 1-2 December 2010)

Excellencies

Distinguished delegates,

Allow me at the outset to express my appreciation for the opportunity to address the OSCE Summit. I wish to extend my deep thanks and gratitude to the Government of Kazakhstan as a key OIC Member State for the invitation extended to the OIC to participate in this important summit and to place on record the warm hospitality extended to our delegation.

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The goals and objectives of the OIC are not much different from those of the OSCE, as both organizations are devoted to the cause of international peace, security and development. I had underlined during my address to the OSCE Permanent Council in Vienna last May that the scope of cooperation between the OIC and the OSCE is vast. We need to take full advantage of this opportunity by giving further impetus to our existing cooperation through increased interaction and consultations.

I would like to avail myself of this opportunity to pay a special tribute to the Kazakh Chairmanship of the OSCE, as well as to President Nazarbayev, for his able leadership. The present Chair that Kazakhstan is currently holding will assume greater significance when it assumes the ministerial chairmanship of the OIC next year. I am confident that in this process, a premise will be laid to bring our two organizations even closer. Since regional and international cooperation is central to development, poverty reduction, combating international terrorism, trans-national crimes and disarmament, the OIC has initiated a strategic vision for solidarity in Central Asia adopted by the 37th session of the Council of Foreign Ministers in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. I would like to take this opportunity to commend Kazakhstan for its exemplary endeavours in the field of disarmament which should be emulated by others with a view to making the whole world free from Nuclear Weapons and other Weapons of mass destruction.

As an intergovernmental organization, the OIC is committed to cooperate with the international community to promote and consolidate global peace, stability, harmony, security and development. I have repeatedly underlined on many occasions that the OIC is guided by the principles of moderation and modernization. The basic documents of the OIC such as the Ten Year Programme of Action and the new Charter provide a visionary road map for the OIC to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

The objectives of our Organization encompass issues that include combating terrorism and extremism; seeking a just and lasting solution of the Palestinian question through the establishment of the independent and viable State of Palestine; upholding respect for human rights and good governance; conflict prevention, conflict resolution and post-conflict peace building. In fact, the OIC is enhancing its role to develop durable mechanisms for effectively addressing peace and security threats in the Member States. Peace is indivisible. Resolving conflicts in the Muslim World

would significantly contribute to the maintenance of stability and security in Europe. In is context, the OIC has been according conflicts in the Muslim World special attention particularly in Somalia, Iraq, Sudan and Afghanistan where I have recently appointed a Special Envoy to coordinate our efforts with other stakeholders.

Other challenges on the agenda of the OIC include economic development; addressing environmental and social issues, education, development of women, youth and children. The OIC's Ten Year Programme of Action has also identified Dialogue among Civilizations as a priority issue and as a means of combating incitement, intolerance and Islamophobia.

On the other hand, the OIC is actively pursuing strategies to promote good governance and to strengthen democratic institutions and practices in its Member States where it is also actively involved in election observation. We plan to increase our activities and involvement in these fields as we gain more experience and expertise. I am pleased to note that we had fruitful discussions with both the OSCE Secretary General and the ODHIR for cooperation in these areas.

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A landmark development in the recent history of the OIC is the establishment of the Independent Permanent Commission on Human Rights. This Commission, which will become operational shortly, will be completely independent with the view to strengthening and upholding respect for human rights.

The adoption of the OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women and the decision to establish a Specialized Centre to specifically deal with the issue of development of women, their rights and their access to opportunities were important developments in our pursuit for modernization and moderation.

Among the gravest threats to stability, peace and security is the rise of hatred, discrimination and intolerance. Although the OIC is not a religious Organization, it is however mandated to coordinate and streamline the collective voice of the Muslim world. We cannot ignore the fact that religion has been drawn into the agenda of international relations by extremist elements on both sides who are active in creating tensions and who threaten stability, harmony and even peace through provocation and incitement on religious grounds. Freedom of expression is sacrosanct, but not absolute. There are international instruments that call for responsible use of freedom of expression. .

Many Europeans today seem to be unaware that Islam is not alien to Europe, culturally, socially, scientifically or religiously. Many Muslims are indigenous Europeans, while others are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. In fact Islam was indigenous to Europe since the 8th Century. Over time, Muslims enriched Europe through philosophy, scientific and technological advancements, in medicine, mathematics, astronomy, navigation, architecture, arts, literature and even culinary delights.

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The OIC took the lead on the concept of dialogue among civilizations as early as 1998. This concept was among the inspirations behind the establishment of the Alliance of Civilizations. The OIC has been consistent in lending its support to the AoC. But its existence and purpose has to be vindicated by fulfilling the mandate it has been provided by the recommendations of the Report of the High Level Group.

In conclusion, time has come for the OSCE and OIC to join hands to mobilize their people, starting with the grassroots, to isolate the extremists and to develop a

culture of respect and tolerance for the whole range of civil, social, economic and political rights. The OIC stands ready to cooperate with the OSCE not only on these issues but also on other significant matters of peace, security and development.

I wish the summit fruitful and productive deliberations. I thank you for your kind attention.