

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



STATEMENT BY
H.E. PROF. EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ORGANISATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE,
AT THE
HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
4TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2007 – GENEVA

**STATEMENT BY
H.E. PROF. EKMELEDDIN IHSANOGLU,
SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE
ORGANISATION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE,
AT THE
HIGH LEVEL SEGMENT OF THE
4TH SESSION OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

MONDAY, 12 MARCH 2007 – GENEVA**

Mr. President,
Honorable Ministers and Heads of Delegations,
Madam High Commissioner,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address this august assembly. I would like to begin by expressing my thanks and appreciation to you, Ambassador de Alba, for the significant achievements that have been made under your presidency to ensure a healthy start for our new human rights institution.

By establishing the Human Rights Council, the world community has reaffirmed its determination to improve its apparatus to effectively address the global human rights challenges.

We now have an historic opportunity to put in place the building blocks needed for the new structure, agenda, and working methods of the Human Rights Council. We firmly believe that the Council's main role should be focused on being "constructive and remedial", and not "judgemental or selective".

Mr. President

On June 19th, 2006 the OIC Foreign Ministers assembly held in Baku, in its message to the Human Rights Council underlined the importance of constructing the new Human Rights built on the principles of universality, objectivity, and non-selectivity. They stressed the need to strengthen the capacity of States in complying with human rights obligations through cooperation, genuine dialogue among civilizations, cultures, and religions.

The Islamic world is steadily moving in this direction. OIC leaders, at their Extraordinary Summit in Makkah in

December 2005 adopted a Ten-Year Programme of Action, where Human Rights concerns in the Muslim world received prominence and top priority. At the Summit, for the first time in the history of our Organization, we have decided to set the stage for establishing an OIC Permanent Commission of Human Rights, and called on all Member States to introduce changes in their national laws and regulations to guarantee full respect of human rights, promoting good governance and combating corruption and taking firm stance against all forms of Terrorism.

Mr. President

The OIC also encourage efforts to promote and protect human rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We also encouraging and support the ongoing positive dialogue between interested parties aimed at resolving all outstanding issues. The humanitarian situation of Muslim minorities in non-OIC member states such as the Philippines and Thailand

is being followed by the OIC in close and positive collaboration with the high authorities of these respective countries.

Mr. President,

Violations of human rights, the tragic and disturbing consequences of occupation in Palestine and other occupied Arab territories, including Lebanon and Syria remain a matter of deep concern for the Islamic world. The Human Rights Council, through timely consideration of this issue, can make an important and historical contribution towards the alleviation of the suffering of Palestinian people, while achieving durable peace in the Middle East. The deteriorating human rights situation in Palestine must be addressed. The occupying Power must be called upon to recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people with self-determination, and to establish a sovereign State. The

occupying power should be made to abide by the tenets of the Fourth Geneva Convention regarding the responsibility of the occupier in the occupied territories. Here, I wish to reiterate once again, the OIC's principle position on Terrorism. We are firmly against killing innocent people under any circumstances. We consider terrorism as act of crime against humanity. Hence, we condemn all sorts of terrorism which are perpetuated by individuals, organized groups or by states.

Mr. President,

Israel should be forced to cease immediately the unlawful and provocative excavations beneath and around the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem and to stop altering the historic and demographic status of this holy city, which is threatening its foundations.

The OIC reiterates that the urgent implementation of the resolutions adopted by the two Special Sessions is imperative for the credibility of the Council as well as for improving the

human rights situation of the Palestinian people. There must be a quick liberation of the kidnapped Palestinian Ministers, law makers, and officials who remain in captivity as I speak now. The Palestinian people are faced with an economic blockade that has even impeded access to food, medicine, and basic health care facilities. This is an utterly unacceptable situation, and the international community cannot stand by and remain silent at the daily humiliation suffered by all Palestinians, including the elderly, women, and children. Humanity must prevail.

Mr. President,

The OIC countries care for the humanitarian situation in Darfur of Sudan. Existing efforts for promoting and protecting human rights of the people in these areas must be intensified by all involved parties. We support the efforts of the Sudanese government, the African Union, and the United Nations in resolving the inter-ethnic strife, and their efforts to cure the

economic hardship that has wrecked Darfur for the last few years. The OIC General Secretariat has conducted two major field investigations of the situation. Without a doubt, the people of Darfur have suffered. Relief has been provided to them. Nevertheless, the international community should address the root causes of the conflict towards achieving sustainable development in Darfur, as well as other affected regions in Sudan.

Mr. President,

Special Rapporteur Dr. Doudou Diene, in his latest report dated/17/4/2006/entitled "Situation of Muslims and Arab peoples in various parts of the world" has presented a comprehensive analysis of the increasing trend of Islamophobia. He has concluded that there was a serious upsurge in Islamophobic incidents manifested mainly in hostility towards Islam itself and its believers. He also indicated that there is an open validation of Islamophobia in

Western intellectual discourse and very frequent cases of associating Islam and Muslims with terrorism.

The Human Rights Council should not stay idle and overlook this threat. It should take action in combating defamation of all religions. The UNGA resolution A/60/251 affirmed the need for all States and to continue international efforts to enhance dialogue and broaden understanding among civilizations, cultures and religions. This resolution has its political weight and moral value. But we have learned the lesson from past experiences that, in many instances, the calls inherited in such resolutions are rarely heeded. That is why we believe that there is a dire need to fill the judicial vacuum of deficiency in dealing with the question of respect for religions in the United Nations. The deficiency could only be addressed through taking effective and legally binding measures for combating defamation of all religions.

With these objectives in mind, we will encourage the Human Rights Council to develop norms to promote dialogue and comprehension among followers of different religions, and possibilities to explore the option of drafting a convention on respect for religions. We believe that the current timing is ripe for preparing such an international convention.

In conclusion, we must be careful with the newly emerging extremist tendencies. They only promote stereotyping and attendant evils. They seek to divide the world into rival blocks of good and bad. Since the dawn of humanity, man has always feared the unknown. It is, therefore, imperative to overcome this fear through acquiring correct knowledge about cultures and civilizations while abolishing the false and negative. Such measures will help attain historical reconciliation and harmony between the two imaginary blocs, "the West" and the "Rest", all through respect for cultural diversity, tolerance and genuine dialogue.

I thank you, Mr. President.