

SPEECH BY
YAB DATO' SERI ABDULLAH BIN HAJI AHMAD BADAWI
ON THE OCCASION OF THE CONFERMENT OF THE HONORARY DEGREE OF
DOCTORATE OF LAWS BY THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF
ISLAMABAD AT ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN
17 FEBRUARY 2005

HIS EXCELLENCY
PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF
PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN
AND CHANCELLOR OF THE UNIVERSITY,

MR. JUSTICE (RETIRED)
KHALIL-UR-RAHMAN KHAN,
RECTOR, INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF ISLAMABAD

DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

1. I WISH TO THANK THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF ISLAMABAD FOR CONFERRING UPON ME THE HONORARY DEGREE OF DOCTORATE OF LAWS. I HUMBLY ACCEPT THIS CONFERMENT AND I HOPE, AS A RECIPIENT OF THIS SPECIAL AWARD, I WILL BE WORTHY OF THE HONOUR BESTOWED UPON ME AND THAT I WILL BE ABLE TO UPHOLD THE DIGNITY AND HIGH REPUTATION OF THIS OUTSTANDING UNIVERSITY.

2. THIS HIGH AWARD IS ALSO REFLECTIVE OF THE CLOSE AND BROTHERLY RELATIONS BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES AND THE LONG STANDING FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN THE PEOPLE OF PAKISTAN AND THE PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA.

3. I AM VERY PLEASED TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO SHARE WITH YOU SOME THOUGHTS I HAVE REGARDING SEVERAL CRITICAL ISSUES CONFRONTING MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND THE UMMAH AT THIS POINT IN WORLD HISTORY. I FEEL MOST PRIVILEGED THAT I AM DOING SO AT THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF ISLAMABAD, AN INSTITUTION WHICH IS RENOWNED FOR ITS PRESTIGE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN THE WORLD OF ISLAMIC LEARNING AND SCHOLARSHIP.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

4. LET ME BEGIN WITH WHAT I CONSIDER TO BE THE MOST IMPORTANT CHALLENGE CONFRONTING THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES: HOW WE CAN RESCUE OUR PEOPLE FROM POVERTY, AND HELP THEM RECOVER THEIR DIGNITY. NO OTHER CHALLENGE IS AS COMPELLING FOR THE MUSLIM WORLD. NO OTHER CHALLENGE IS AS CONSUMING. NOTHING DEGRADES THE DIGNITY, THE IMAGE, AND THE

INFLUENCE OF THE MUSLIMS MORE THAN POVERTY, FOR POOR PEOPLE AND POOR COUNTRIES ARE LOOKED DOWN UPON, EXPLOITED AND MARGINALIZED* IF THE MUSLIM WORLD WAS RICH AND DEVELOPED, NO ONE WOULD LOOK DOWN UPON US. WE WOULD BE ACCORDED RESPECT AND WELCOMED IN THE COUNCILS OF THE POWERFUL. WE WILL BE ABLE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BOTH FOR OURSELVES AND FOR THE WORLD.

5. THAT POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT ARE A DOMINANT FEATURE OF THE MUSLIM WORLD IS ONLY TOO WELL KNOWN. IN A THIRD OF THE MUSLIM COUNTRIES MORE THAN HALF THE POPULATION LIVES ON LESS THAN 2 U.S DOLLARS A DAY. THERE ARE MUSLIM COUNTRIES WHERE UP TO 90 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE LIVE ON THIS MEAGER AMOUNT* ALONG WITH POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT COMES POOR LIVING CONDITIONS, ILLITERACY AND SICKNES.

6. THE EXPERIENCE EVERYWHERE HAS BEEN THAT THE POOR AND THE UNDERDEVELOPED NEED HELP THEMSELVES. UNLESS THEY ARE PROVIDED WITH THE CAPACITY TO HELP THEMSELVES THERE IS LITTLE THEY CAN DO TO LIFT THEMSELVES OUT OF POVERTY. THERE ARE MANY THINGS WE MANY NEED TO DO FOR THEM. THEY MAY NEED LAND TO FARM. WATER FOR IRRIGATION. BOATS AND GEAR TO FISH. JOBS TO EARN A LIVING FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR FAMILY. BUT NOTHING, NOTHING IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN EDUCATION. FOR MILLIONS, EDUCATION HAS BEEN THEIR SALVATION. THIS HAS BEEN THE EXPERIENCE IN EVERY COUNTRY WHERE POVERTY HAS BEEN DRAMATICALLY REDUCED. THIS IS THE EXPERIENCE IN MY COUNTRY, WHERE WE ARE CLOSE TO ERADICATING THE PROBLEM ALTOGETHER.

7. AND YET EDUCATION IS WHERE WE IN THE MUSLIM WORLD ARE ALSO WEAK. THERE IS NO REASON WHY THIS SHOULD BE THE CASE, FOR TEN HUNDRED YEARS AGO THE CENTRES OF LEARNING, AND OF PHILOSOPHY, AND SCIENCE AND MEDICINE, WERE NEARLY ALL IN THE MUSLIM WORLD. IT IS NO COINCIDENCE THAT IN MANY WAYS THE HEIGHT OF MUSLIM WEALTH, POWER AND PRESTIGE COINCIDED WITH THIS AGE OF LEARNING AND KNOWLEDGE.

8. IF WE WANT TO RID THE MUSLIM WORLD OF POVERTY AND UNDERDEVELOPMENT AND TAKE THE HIGH ROAD TO PROGRESS, THE MORE FORTUNATE AMONG US MUST GET TOGETHER AND HELP THE OTHERS. OUR FOCUS MUST BE ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HUMAN CAPACITY, FOR IT IS INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPACITY THAT WILL BRING US THE GREATEST REWARDS. IT IS WITH THIS IN MIND THAT I HAVE INITIATED IN THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE CAPACITY BUILDING MEASURES TO ASSIST COUNTRIES UPGRADE THEIR GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS. I BELIEVE ENHANCED CAPACITY AND INVESTMENT IN HUMAN CAPITAL IS KEY IN OUR JOURNEY TOWARDS PROGRESS AND DEVELOPMENT.

EXCELENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

9. LET ME NOW TURN TO THE SUBJECT OF EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM. IT IS A HEAVY BURDEN INDEED FOR MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND THE UMMAH TO BE BRANDED AS SPAWNING EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM. WE MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO CONVINCING THE BIGOTS TO CEASE THEIR NEGATIVE PROFILING OF MUSLIMS AND THE ISLAMIC RELIGION. BUT WE CAN, AND MUST, SUCCEED IN ESTABLISHING THE TRUTH THAT ISLAM ABHORS EXTREMISM AND CONDEMNS TERRORISM.

10. TERRORISTS MUST BE SINGLED OUT ONLY BY THEIR ACTS OF TERROR AND NOTHING ELSE. TERRORISTS WHO COMMIT CRIMES IN THE NAME OF ISLAM ARE VIOLATORS OF THE TENETS OF ISLAM. THEY DO NOT SERVE THE INTERESTS OF THE RELIGION. ISLAM AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES SHOULD NOT BE MADE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THEM. MUSLIMS HAVE A DUTY TO CLEAR THE CONFUSION CREATED BY PEOPLE WHO CARRY OUT HEINOUS DEEDS AND LATER CLAIM THEM AS AN ISLAMIC RELIGIOUS OBLIGATION.

11. BUT ENDING THE SPURIOUS ASSOCIATION OF ISLAM AND MUSLIMS WITH TERRORISM IS NOT ENOUGH. WE MUST DO OUR UTMOST TO ELIMINATE TERRORISM ITSELF. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, PUNITIVE MEASURES ALONE WILL NOT BE ADEQUATE. BY THEMSELVES THEY CAN IN FACT BREED MORE TERRORISM. WE MUST ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES, WHATEVER THEY MAY BE. WITHIN THE UMMAH, WE NEED TO SERIOUSLY AND SINCERELY ADDRESS THE ISSUE OF JIHAD AND ITS TRUE APPLICATION IN THE MODERN WORLD. ISLAMIC SCHOLARS DEFINE JIHAD IN TERMS OF SUSTAINED EFFORT TO DISCIPLINE ONE'S OWN "SELF" IN OBEDIENCE TO ALLAH. JIHAD ALSO IMPLIES AN ENDEAVOR TO UPHOLD SOCIAL JUSTICE, PEACE AND FAIR PLAY. STILL, OUR PROPHET DESCRIBED JIHAD-BIL-NAFAS OR SELF-ACTUALIZATION AS THE GREATER JIHAD. IT IS MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT SOME HAVE NARROWED DOWN THE CONCEPT OF JIHAD TO 'QITAL', WHICH CONCERNS PHYSICAL FIGHTING. IT IS EVEN MORE UNFORTUNATE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY MEANING COMMONLY UNDERSTOOD BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC. THIS MEANING IS IN TURN CONVEYED TO THE WIDER WORLD. IF MUSLIMS THEMSELVES CAN MAKE THIS MISTAKE, HOW CAN WE EXPECT OTHERS TO BE MORE ENLIGHTENED ? MUSLIMS ARE AS MUCH TO BLAME FOR THIS DISTORTION OF THE MEANING OF JIHAD. OF COURSE, WE MUST ALSO EXPOSE THE DETRACTORS WHO DISTORT THE TRUE TEACHINGS OF ISLAM WHICH ACTUALLY ADVOCATE PEACE, JUSTICE AND NON-VIOLENCE.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

12. CLEARLY, THE UMMAH MUST SOLVE ITS OWN INTERNAL PROBLEMS. A GOOD STARTING POINT WOULD BE THE ERADICATION OF EXTREMISM, RADICALISM AND SECTARIAN VIOLENCE. ISLAM CAN TAP INTO ITS RICH INTELLECTUAL TRADITION AND DIRECTLY CHALLENGE THE EXTREMIST DOCTRINES THAT HAVE BEEN LINKED TO ISLAM IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. WHILE WE MUST RECOGNIZE THAT RITUALS ARE IMPORTANT, THAT THE WRITTEN WORD OF THE QURAN IS SACRED, I ALSO BELIEVE THAT MUSLIMS MUST UNDERSTAND THE TRUE SPIRIT AND ULTIMATE

OBJECTIVES OF OUR RELIGION. AFTER ALL, ISLAM IS A RELIGION FOR ALL TIME, AS INTENDED BY ALLAH S.W.T.

13. HOWEVER, THE UMMAH ACTING ALONE WOULD NOT BE ENOUGH. THE OTHER SIDE MUST REMOVE ISLAMOPHOBIA FROM THEIR MINDS. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST ALSO TAKE A STAND TO STOP ACTIONS WHICH CONTRIBUTE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY, TO THE PERPETUATION OF INJUSTICE, OPPRESSION OR AGGRESSION AGAINST MUSLIM COUNTRIES AND THE UMMAH. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY MUST FURTHERMORE NOT ALLOW THE UMMAH TO CONTINUE TO BE MARGINALIZED IN INFLUENCING AND SETTING THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA. THE INCREASING GULF OF MISUNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD MUST BE BRIDGED. BUT IT REQUIRES BOTH SIDES TO WORK IN TANDEM TO CLOSE THE CHASM.

14. THE ORGANIZATION OF ISLAMIC CONFERENCE CAN PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN SETTING UP THE NEEDED DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE MUSLIM WORLD AND THE WEST. UNFORTUNATELY, THE O I C AS IT NOW FUNCTIONS WOULD BE LESS THAN FULLY EQUIPPED FOR THIS IMPORTANT TASK. THERE ARE VARIOUS ORGANIZATIONAL AND SYSTEMIC WEAKNESSES IN THE ORGANIZATION. IT IS IMPERATIVE THEREFORE THAT ALL MEMBER STATES OF THE O I C MAKE A DETERMINATION TO STRENGTHEN AND REVITALIZE THE ORGANIZATION SO THAT IT CAN ASSUME ITS PROPER ROLE IN THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE INTERESTS OF ISLAM AND THE UMMAH.

15. IN THIS CONNECTION, I AM PLEASED TO INFORM THIS DISTINGUISHED GATHERING TODAY THAT PAKISTAN AND MALAYSIA HAVE TAKEN THE LEAD TO DO SOMETHING IN THIS DIRECTION. PRESIDENT PERVEZ MUSHARRAF INTRODUCED THE PHILOSOPHY OF ENLIGHTENED MODERATION AT THE LAST O I C SUMMIT IN MALAYSIA. AT THE FIRST MEETING OF THE O I C COMMISSION OF EMINENT PERSONS IN PUTRAJAYA IN JANUARY 2005, MALAYSIA INTRODUCED ITS APPROACH REGARDING ISLAM HADHARI. THE COMMISSION WILL MEET FOR A SECOND TIME, IN PAKISTAN, AND PREPARE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION BY MINISTERS LATER THIS YEAR. THE OBJECTIVE OF THE EXERCISE IS TO HAVE THE O I C AGREE UPON AND ADOPT A STRATEGY AND PLAN OF ACTION TO ENABLE THE ISLAMIC UMMAH TO MEET THE VARIOUS CHALLENGES OF THE 21ST. CENTURY. THE PLAN WILL ALSO INCLUDE REFORM AND RESTRUCTURING OF THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE O I C IN JEDDAH.

16. PAKISTAN AND MALAYSIA HAVE INDEED WORKED TOGETHER ON MANY ISLAMIC CAUSES IN THE PAST. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO DO SO IN THE FUTURE. TAKING THE LEAD IN THE PRESENT EXERCISE TO RENEW AND REFORM THE O I C IS ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THESE COLLABORATIONS THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES UNDERTAKE.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

17. INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL DIALOGUES CAN TAKE PLACE AT THE INTER-GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL AS WELL AS ALONG THE "SECOND-TRACK". THE SUBSTANCE CONCERNS HUMAN RELATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLES OF DIFFERENT CREEDS AND RELIGIONS. CERTAINLY, GOVERNMENTS WOULD NEED TO GET INVOLVED WHEN IT COMES TO THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES OR PROGRAMMES BECAUSE, AT THAT STAGE, INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY COMES INTO PLAY.

18. ALTHOUGH INTERNATIONAL SOLUTIONS FOR INTER-CIVILIZATIONAL ISSUES ARE BEST SECURED ON A MULTILATERAL BASIS, THE FOUNDATION FOR REFORM MUST BE LAID AND THE PROCESS OF RENEWAL MUST BEGIN IN THE RESPECTIVE MUSLIM COUNTRIES THEMSELVES. WE IN MALAYSIA FEEL THAT WE ARE VERY WELL PLACED TO BEGIN THIS JOURNEY OF REFORM AND RENEWAL. THIS IS BECAUSE MALAYSIA IS A MULTI-RELIGIOUS NATION WHERE THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION ARE MUSLIM BUT PEOPLE OF ALL FAITHS - MUSLIMS, BUDDHISTS, CHRISTIANS, HINDUS AND OTHERS - LIVE IN PEACE AND HARMONY, WITH MUTUAL RESPECT AND TOLERANCE FOR EACH OTHER. WE FEEL THAT THE SITUATION IN MALAYSIA MAKES IT PARTICULARLY SUITABLE TO DEMONSTRATE, BOTH BY WORD AND BY ACTION, THAT A MUSLIM COUNTRY CAN BE MODERN, DEMOCRATIC, TOLERANT AND ECONOMICALLY COMPETITIVE. ISLAM CERTAINLY DOES NOT ENJOIN US TO TURN OUR BACKS AGAINST THE REST OF THE WORLD. IN FACT, ISLAM ENJOINS US TO FIND SUCCESS NOT ONLY IN THE HEREAFTER BUT ALSO IN THIS WORLD, GIVING EQUAL EMPHASIS TO FARDU KIFAYAH AND FARDU AIN

19. MALAYSIA HAS THEREFORE EMBARKED UPON ISLAM HADHARI AS AN APPROACH IN THE CONDUCT OF OUR EVERYDAY LIVES. ISLAM HADHARI IS NOT A NEW RELIGION. ISLAM HADHARI IS NOT A NEW MAZHAB. ISLAM HADHARI IS MERELY AN APPROACH TO FOSTER A PROGRESSIVE ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION, BUILT UPON THE NOBLE VALUES AND IDEALS OF ISLAM. IT PLACES SUBSTANCE OVER FORM. IT IS PRACTICAL AND PRAGMATIC. IT EMPHASIZES DEVELOPMENT, CONSISTENT WITH THE TENETS OF ISLAM AND WHICH FOCUSES ON ENHANCING THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF EVERY CITIZEN, REGARDLESS OF HIS OR HER RELIGION. THIS APPROACH IS ALSO INSPIRED BY OUR FIRM BELIEF THAT THE TIDE OF RADICALISM AND EXTREMISM CAN BE CHECKED AND REVERSED WITH GOOD GOVERNANCE, HEALTHY DEMOCRATIC PRACTICES, AND EMPOWERMENT OF THE CITIZENRY THROUGH EDUCATION AS WELL AS EQUITABLE SHARING OF THE BENEFITS OF ECONOMIC GROWTH.

20. WE LIKE TO VIEW ISLAM HADHARI AS AN EFFORT TO BRING THE UMMAH BACK TO BASICS, TO GIVE PRIMACY TO GOOD VALUES AND ADHERENCE TO CERTAIN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES. ISLAM HADHARI POSITS TEN FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES WHICH MUSLIM NATIONS AND COMMUNITIES MUST DEMONSTRATE, NAMELY:

- I. FIRST, FAITH AND PIETY IN ALLAH;
- II. SECOND, A JUST AND TRUSTWORTHY GOVERNMENT;

- III. THIRD, A FREE AND INDEPENDENT PEOPLE;
- IV. FOURTH, VIGOROUS PURSUIT AND MASTERY OF KNOWLEDGE;
- V. FIFTH, BALANCED AND COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT;
- VI. SIXTH, A GOOD QUALITY OF LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE;
- VII. SEVENTH, PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF MINORITY GROUPS AND WOMEN;
- VIII. EIGHTH, CULTURAL AND MORAL INTEGRITY;
- IX. NINTH, SAFEGUARDING NATURAL RESOURCES AND THE ENVIRONMENT;
AND
- X. TENTH, STRONG DEFENCE CAPABILITIES.

21. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT ISLAM HADHARI CAN HELP BRING MUSLIMS INTO THE 21ST. CENTURY AND INTEGRATE THEM IN THE MODERN ECONOMY. ISLAM HADHARI PROMOTES TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING, MODERATION AND PEACE, CERTAINLY ENLIGHTENEMENT. THEREFORE, WE BELIEVE IT IS ALSO THE ANTIDOTE TO EXTREMISM AND MILITANCY.

22. AS I HAVE SAID EARLIER, MALAYSIA IS A MULITI-RELIGIOUS AND A MULTI-RACIAL COUNTRY. I WOULD LIKE TO EXPLAIN THAT ISLAM HADHARI IS MEANT FOR THE BENEFIT OF ALL IN MALAYSIA, REGARDLESS OF THEIR RELIGIOUS OR RACIAL IDENTITIES. IT IS CERTAINLY AN EXHORTATION TO THE MUSLIMS TO TREAT WELL AND FAIRLY THEIR NON MUSLIM FELLOW CITIZENS IN ALL THEIR DEALINGS. I HAVE ALWAYS STATED THAT THE APPROACH OF ISLAM HADHARI WOULD BRING EXCELLENCE, DISTINCTION AND GLORY NOT ONLY TO MUSLIMS BUT ALSO NON MUSLIMS ALIKE.

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

23. IN ORDER TO HAVE A PART IN SETTING THE INTERNATIONAL AGENDA WHICH SHOULD TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE INTERESTS OF THE UMMAH, AND TO AVOID BEING TREATED AS UNIMPORTANT OR IRRELEVANT, MUSLIM COUNTRIES HAVE LITTLE CHOICE BUT TO CLOSE RANKS AND MAINTAIN GREATER SOLIDARITY AMONG THEMSELVES. WE MUST ALSO ENGAGE THE INTERNATIONAL MEDIA MORE EFFECTIVELY SO THAT OUR VIEWPOINTS ARE GIVEN SPACE AND OUR CONCERNS ACCURATELY ARTICULATED. FOR TOO LONG WE HAVE ALLOWED OURSELVES TO BE DIVIDED BY OTHERS, EVEN ON MATTERS WHICH SHOULD CONCERN ONLY THE UMMAH AND MUSLIM COUNTRIES. CONSIDERING THAT WE NOW HAVE THE HUGE TASK OF BRIDGING THE GREAT DIVIDE BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE MUSLIM WORLD, THE NEED FOR ENSURING COHESION AMONG OURSELVES IS AN ISSUE REQUIRING SERIOUS AND IMMEDIATE ATTENTION, MORE THAN EVER.

24. I HAVE STATED TO THE FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION OF EMINENT PERSONS THAT THE O I C NEEDS TO PROVE ITS RELEVANCE NOT ONLY BY WORDS BUT ALSO BY ITS DEEDS. I HAD ALSO SAID THEN WE MUST ENSURE THAT THE RELATIVELY LARGE MEMBERSHIP OF THE O I C DO NOT BECOME A HANDICAP IN THE PROCESS OF DECISION MAKING BY CONSENSUS. WE MUST ESTABLISH PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS WHICH PROMOTE COOPERATION AND UNITY AMONG MUSLIM COUNTRIES.

25. I AM VERY CERTAIN THAT MANY MUSLIM COUNTRIES POSSESS MUCH RESOURCES WHICH CAN BE HARNESSSED NOT ONLY FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT BUT ALSO EXCESS CAPACITIES WHICH CAN BE SHARED EXTERNALLY FOR THE GOOD OF THE UMMAH. WHAT WE DO NOT HAVE IS MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATION. FOR INSTANCE, CONSIDER THE POTENTIALS OF GALVANIZING BILATERAL OR MULTILATERAL VENTURES IN THE AREA OF HALAL PRODUCTS AND ISLAMIC FINANCIAL SERVICES. I AM TOLD THAT THE GLOBAL HALAL FOOD MARKET ALONE HAS BEEN ESTIMATED TO BE WORTH U.S DOLLARS 150 BILLION PER YEAR. JUST CONSIDER THE POSSIBILITIES IN SERVING SOME 1.8 BILLION MUSLIMS WORLDWIDE.

26. IN THE CONTEXT OF SERVING THE GLOBAL INTERESTS OF THE UMMAH AS A WHOLE, MUSLIM COUNTRIES CAN BEGIN BY PLEDGING A SOLEMN AND SOLID COMMITMENT TO DO SO. GOVERNMENTS, THINK-TANKS, MUSLIM GROUPS AND BODIES MUST ALSO UNDERTAKE SCHOLARLY RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS OF ALL ASPECTS OF INTERNATIONAL ISSUES AND INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY. THIS IS WHERE ACADEMIC INSTITUTIONS LIKE THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF ISLAMABAD HAS AN IMPORTANT PART TO PLAY. COLLABORATIONS BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES WOULD ADD STRENGTH AND CLOUT TO THIS UNDERTAKING. I KNOW THIS UNIVERSITY ALREADY HAS FORMAL TIES WITH THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF KUALA LUMPUR. I WOULD INVITE YOU TO EXPAND YOUR CONNECTIONS WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES IN MALAYSIA AS WELL.

27. INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER LEARNING ARE ALSO BEST PLACED TO PROMOTE A CRITICAL DIALOGUE WITHIN THE MUSLIM WORLD. WHILE IT IS NECESSARY FOR MUSLIMS TO FIND COMMON GROUND WITH PEOPLE OF OTHER FAITHS, WE MUST ALSO OPEN UP THE DISCOURSE WITHIN THE UMMAH. I OFFERED MALAYSIA AS THE FOCAL POINT FOR PROMOTING MORE OPEN AND DIVERSE ISLAMIC DISCOURSE. I REITERATE THAT OFFER HERE TODAY. OUR UNIVERSITIES WILL WORK WITH INSTITUTIONS AROUND THE WORLD, AND I WELCOME THE INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY OF ISLAMABAD TO TAKE PART IN THIS ENDEAVOUR AND PROMOTE SUCH A CRITICAL DIALOGUE.

28. I HOPE THE GOVERNMENTS IN MUSLIM COUNTRIES WILL, IN TANDEM, MAKE THE NECESSARY CHANGES TO NATIONAL POLICIES AND WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE SOCIETIES. THE SPACE FOR DEBATE AND DISCOURSE AMONG OUR OWN PEOPLES MUST ALSO BE EXPANDED.

29. LET US PRAY THAT ISLAM WILL FLOURISH ONCE AGAIN AND LET US EARNESTLY WORK TOWARDS THE RISE OF GREAT MUSLIM CIVILIZATIONS THAT WILL DO JUSTICE TO THE TEACHINGS OF OUR FAITH.

I THANK YOU.