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**Venue : NEW YORK**  
**Date : 1 OCTOBER 1999**  
**Title : ANNUAL CO-ORDINATION MEETING OF THE MINISTERS OF  
FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF OIC MEMBER STATES  
DURING THE 54TH SESSION OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

Mr. Chairman

Distinguished Colleagues

Excellencies and Dear Brothers

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullah Wabarakatuh

I like to express my sincere gratitude to you, Mr. Chairman, for chairing this OIC Annual Coordination Meeting. The meeting should serve as a platform to renew our contacts and exchange our views for the betterment of our organization and the Islamic ummah.

2. May I take this opportunity to once again express the deepest sympathy and condolences from the Government and people of Malaysia to the Government and people of Turkey for the sufferings and loss of lives in the recent earthquake. Malaysia in its small way had extended assistance, which we hope will alleviate the sufferings of the victims. May the blessing of Allah be with the souls of those who have perished. May Allah give the strength and guidance to those who survived the tragedy.

3. In 1969 our membership was only 25 nations. Now we are an organisation of 56 nations. Indeed we have grown in numbers as well as Agenda placed before us for discussion. The membership extends from Europe to Africa, Asia and Latin America. In terms of our reach we are global, but have we become global in our approach and standing? The time has come for us to have a critical review and take stocks of our achievements and failures. We must be sincere and forthright in our desire to be an effective organisation. In this regard, we have to have strong resolve to find unity in our diversity. The need for us as an organization to be streamlined and achieve proper financial management is something that should be given serious attention.

4. If there is no commonality in approach among us, the OIC would be marginalised as an organization. The Muslim countries would be caught in the tide of globalization as we enter the new millennium. We have to be wary that globalisation of late has appeared in many forms. Unilateralism, trade protectionism, political liberalism, national treatment are some of the tools used to promote this concept. They can in fact turn into colonization in different cloaks. If we continue to be divided we would perpetually be weak and easily be exploited by the strong and mighty to our

detriment. We must be an organisation that is respected and reckoned with as we enter the next millennium.

5. Malaysia views with guarded optimism the progress of the peace process in the West Asia. With the signing of the Sharm el Sheikh Accord, now dubbed as Wye 11, peace is given another lease of life. I congratulate the Palestinian people under the leadership of President Yasser Arafat for their perseverance. While welcoming this development we must send a clear message to Israel that it has to observe the provisions of the agreements it has entered into. Israel should not treat them as ploys to play with time, to regain strength and acceptance before putting another spanner in the wheel of peace. Malaysia looks forward to welcoming Palestine as a full-fledged sovereign state and the return of Al Quds Al-Sharif. For the sake of lasting peace in West Asia the question of Golan Heights and Southern Lebanon must be addressed and brought to a successful conclusion.

6. As a member of the Security Council, Malaysia along with others like the Non--Aligned Movement and OIC members, had insisted on the complete lifting of the sanctions imposed on Libya. Unfortunately, we were only able to secure the suspension of these sanctions. We will continue to work with other Council members for the final lifting of those sanctions. As members of OIC are aware, the Security Council is actively considering the issue of Iraq with a view to finding a solution to the problem, taking into account the concerns of all parties. We hope that the Council would be able to forge a consensus on the issue.

7. Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains fragile. There is a need for the continued presence of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the need for speedy return of refugees and displaced persons and the need to bring to justice without delay all the indicted criminals. In Kosovo, the process for restoration of peace and normalcy has just begun, and a long way to go. The international community, including members of this organisation, can collectively or individually contribute to the ongoing reconstruction efforts in Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo. In this context, Malaysia fully supports the recommendations that have been put forth to this meeting by the OIC Contact Group on Bosnia Herzegovina and Kosovo.

8. Finally Mr. Chairman, let me thank you and all members of the OIC in achieving consensus to hold the annual meeting of ICFM in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in June 2000 and that a Special Meeting of ICFM be held in Turkey in March 2000. I hope this spirit of unity and brotherhood will always be the guiding principles in meeting the current and future challenges of the OIC.

Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh