

**By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR**  
**Venue : OUAGADOUGOU, BURKINA FASO**  
**Date : 28 JUNE 1999**  
**Title : 26TH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS**

HIS EXCELLENCY  
BROTHER YOUSOUF OUEDRAOGO  
MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND COOPERATION OF BURKINA FASO  
AND CHAIRMAN OF THE 26TH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE  
OF FOREIGN MINISTERS,

DISTINGUISHED COLLEAGUES,

EXCELLENCIES, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

ASSALAMUALAIKUM WARAHMATULLAH WABARAKATUH

I WISH TO JOIN THE EARLIER SPEAKERS IN EXPRESSING, ON BEHALF OF THE MALAYSIAN DELEGATION, OUR SINCERE THANKS TO THE GOVERNMENT OF BURKINA FASO FOR THE WARM WELCOME ACCORDED TO US SINCE OUR ARRIVAL IN THE BROTHERLY COUNTRY AND BEAUTIFUL CITY OF OUAGADOUGOU. THE EXCELLENT PREPARATIONS MADE CLEARLY DEMONSTRATE YOUR GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO THE CAUSE OF MUSLIM UNITY AND ITS STEADFAST SUPPORT FOR OUR ORGANIZATION.

2. ALLOW ME TO ALSO EXTEND OUR WARMEST FELICITATIONS TO YOU, MR. CHAIRMAN, ON YOUR UNANIMOUS ELECTION AS CHAIRMAN OF THIS AUGUST GATHERING. I AM CONFIDENT THAT WITH YOUR WIDE EXPERIENCE, YOU WILL GUIDE OUR DELIBERATIONS TO A SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION.

3 MAY I WISH TO ALSO TAKE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO CONVEY OUR HEARTFELT THANKS AND DEEP APPRECIATION TO H.E. SHEIKH HAMAD JASIM JABIR AL- THANI, FOREIGN MINISTER OF THE STATE OF QATAR, FOR HIS INVALUABLE CONTRIBUTIONS AS CHAIRMAN OF THE 25TH SESSION OF THE ICFM. WE LOOK FORWARD TO BE IN DOHA FOR THE NINTH ISLAMIC SUMMIT.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

4. AS WE ARE ONLY SOME 6 MONTHS BEFORE THE ADVENT OF THE NEW MILLENIUM, WE MUST REMIND OURSELVES OF THE SOLEMN COMMITMENT THAT WE MADE SOME 29 YEARS AGO TO FOSTER EFFECTIVE AND TANGIBLE COOPERATION, FOCUSSING OUR ENDEAVOURS ON COMMON NEEDS AND INTERESTS. DESPITE THIS PLEDGE, WE ARE NO NEARER OUR GOAL TO REALISING EFFECTIVE SOLIDARITY TO MEET THE ENORMOUS CHALLENGES THAT WE CONTINUE TO FACE.

5. THE UMMAH CONTINUES TO BE SUBJECTED TO NEW THREATS AND TAUNTS. THE RECENT GENOCIDE IN KOSOVO WAS YET ANOTHER AFFRONT. PEACE AND REGIONAL RECONCILIATION IN WEST ASIA IS STILL NOT ON TRACK. THE PALESTINIAN RIGHTS TO STATEHOOD REMAIN UNFULFILLED. THE PEOPLES OF AFGHANISTAN AND SOMALIA CONTINUE TO SUFFER IN THE ABSENCE OF PROPER GOVERNANCE.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

6. DIFFERENCES WITHIN AND AMONG US CONTINUE TO BE EXPLOITED BY OUTSIDE POWERS, LEADING TO MUSLIM AND OTHER DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BEING DICTATED TO. AS A RESULT, SANCTIONS ARE BEING IMPOSED ARBITRARILY ON MANY MUSLIM COUNTRIES. THE CRITERION FOR SUCH SANCTIONS SEEM TO BE THAT IT SHOULD BE AT NO COST TO THOSE THAT IMPOSED THEM. IT ALSO DOES NOT SEEM TO MATTER IF SANCTIONS CAUSED THE LIFE OF INNOCENT PEOPLE, CHILDREN, WOMEN AND THE ELDERLY. WE ARE ALSO ASKED TO TAKE SIDES AS TO WHOM AMONG THE VARIOUS PARTIES THAT OUGHT TO RECEIVE OUR SUPPORT.

7. WE RECOGNIZE ALL THESE SHOULD NOT GO ON. AS MEMBERS OF THE ISLAMIC FRATERNITY, WE MUST, BY SHEER WILLPOWER, DISCIPLINE AND OUR TRADITION OF FORGIVENESS, TO STEP OUT OF THIS FRACTIOUSNESS, FRATRICIDE AND THE GENERAL BACKWARDNESS THAT SOME OF US FIND OURSELVES IN. WE MUST THEREFORE RE-DEDICATE OURSELVES TO THE GOALS OF OUR CHARTER.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

8. THIS BRINGS ME TO THE SITUATION IN WEST ASIA. WHILE THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY IN THE MID-1990S WAS ENCOURAGED BY DEVELOPMENTS TOWARD PEACE AND RECONCILIATION, IT IS MOST UNFORTUNATE THAT OVER THE RECENT PAST, EVENTS IN THE REGION HAVE CAST A SOBERING SHADOW IN WEST ASIA. WE CONTINUE TO BE OUTRAGED BY CONTINUED BUILDING OF ILLEGAL SETTLEMENTS AND OTHER DESPICABLE ACTS IN THE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. MALAYSIA WISHES TO REITERATE OUR SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE AND URGES THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO PRESS FOR EARLY NEGOTIATIONS TO FINALIZE THE OSLO PEACE PROCESS SO THAT OF AN INDEPENDENT STATE OF PALESTINE IS ESTABLISHED AT AN EARLY DATE. WE ALSO CALL ON ALL PARTIES TO BRING TO FRUITION NEGOTIATIONS ON THE LEBANESE AND SYRIAN TRACKS AS WELL.

9. MALAYSIA ALSO FULLY SHARES THE CONCERNS OF MEMBER COUNTRIES ON THE BLEAK SITUATION THAT CONFRONTS KOSOVO. UNPARALLELED HUMAN MISERY, INCLUDING HORRENDOUS CRIMES, HAVE BEEN PERPETRATED AGAINST THE DEFENSELESS PEOPLE OF KOSOVO. IT IS IMPORTANT, WHILE THE EVIDENCE OF THESE INHUMANE ACTIONS ARE STILL FRESH, FOR LEGAL ACTIONS TO BE TAKEN TO APPREHEND THOSE RESPONSIBLE AND TO BRING THEM TO JUSTICE.

10. MALAYSIA ALSO BELIEVES THAT THE OIC SHOULD CONTINUE TO BE SEIZED WITH THE TASK OF BRINGING ABOUT NORMALCY TO KOSOVO. THIS IS NOT THE TIME FOR FINGER POINTING, BUT FOR PROMPT AND EFFECTIVE ACTION TO CREATE CONDITIONS FOR A REAL PEACE TO RETURN TO KOSOVO. TO ACHIEVE THIS, IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT THE LEADERS OF THE KOSOVARS WORK TOGETHER IN UNITY. I WISH TO PROPOSE THAT THIS ICFM CONSIDER SENDING AN EXPLORATORY TEAM TO PRISTINA TO MEET WITH THE KOSOVAR LEADERS.

11. ON THE ONGOING CONFLICTS IN AFGHANISTAN AND SOMALIA, IT PAINS US ALL THAT THE PEOPLE IN THESE COUNTRIES CONTINUE TO BE DENIED PROPER GOVERNANCE AND THE FRUITS OF DEVELOPMENT. MALAYSIA STANDS READY TO OFFER KUALA LUMPUR AS VENUE FOR INFORMAL TALKS AMONG THE VARIOUS GROUPS IF THIS WOULD BE THE NECESSARY FIRST STEP TOWARDS COMPREHENSIVE AND DURABLE SOLUTIONS TO THE SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN AND SOMALIA. WE CANNOT ALLOW THESE TWO FRATERNAL COUNTRIES TO REMAIN IN THE PRESENT SITUATION. AS A MATTER OF FACT, BOTH COUNTRIES, AS FOUNDER MEMBERS OF THE OIC, HAVE CONTRIBUTED MUCH ESPECIALLY IN THE FORMATIVE YEARS, TO OUR ORGANIZATION AND IN OUR QUEST TO FOSTER SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION IN THE UMMAH.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

12. AS WE ARE IN A DIFFICULT PERIOD OF TRANSITION, A CRITICAL APPRAISAL OF OUR CAPABILITIES, OUR CAPACITY AND OUR POTENTIAL IS URGENTLY NEEDED IF WE ARE TO LIVE UP TO THE NOBLE OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARTER OF THE OIC. THE CHALLENGE IS TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE LIFE OF THE UMMAH, BOTH INDIVIDUALLY AND COLLECTIVELY, AND FOR US, AS A COMMUNITY, TO CONTRIBUTE TO GLOBAL PEACE, PROGRESS, UNDERSTANDING AND THE BETTERMENT OF MANKIND.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

13. THE QUEST FOR UNITY AND EFFECTIVE COOPERATION SHOULD BE ALL ENCOMPASSING. SMART PARTNERSHIP THAT IS PRACTISED TODAY BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS AND COMPANIES MUST ALSO BE PROPAGATED BETWEEN AND AMONG NATIONS. SUCH COOPERATION WOULD CERTAINLY ACT AS A CATALYST TO STRENGTHENING RELATIONS IN A WIDE RANGE OF AREAS, SO AS TO PROMOTE BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN AND AMONG MEMBER COUNTRIES AS WELL AS BETWEEN PEOPLES OF OUR RESPECTIVE REGIONS.

14. IN REALISING THIS, A GREAT DEAL MORE NEED TO BE DONE IN ORDER TO TAP THE FULL POTENTIAL OF TRADE, INVESTMENT, TECHNOLOGICAL AND SCIENTIFIC OPPORTUNITIES AS WELL AS IN ENDEARING PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE CONTACT. MALAYSIA WOULD LIKE TO SEE SUCH COLLABORATION NOT TO BE CONFINED ONLY BETWEEN OFFICIALS AND BUSINESSMEN, BUT BE BROADENED TO COVER STUDENTS, EDUCATORS, CULTURAL GROUPS, THE MEDIA AND OTHER GROUPS. WE

WILL ALL BENEFIT FROM THE SHARING OF IDEAS, INFORMATION AND EXPERIENCES THROUGH SUCH INTERACTIONS.

15. SIMILARLY FOR THE OIC AND ITS MEMBERSHIP TO MOVE FORWARD, IT ALSO REQUIRES AN EFFICIENT SECRETARIAT, WITH ABLE AND DEDICATED PERSONNEL AS WELL AS ADEQUATE FUNDS TO SUPPORT ITS ACTIVITIES. IN THIS REGARD, WE WISH TO RECORD OUR APPRECIATION FOR THE EFFORTS TAKEN BY H.E. DR. AZEDDINE LARAKI, OUR SECRETARY GENERAL, TO ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF REVITALISING THE OIC SECRETARIAT.

16. MALAYSIA ATTACHES GREAT IMPORTANCE TO OUR ORGANISATION AND WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE OIC SECRETARIAT TRULY FULFILL ITS DESIGNATED ROLES AND OBJECTIVES IN THE FURTHERANCE OF THE INTEREST OF THE UMMAH. AS AN IMMEDIATE MEASURE, WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE A LEANER AND MORE COHESIVE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE, WITH STRINGENT FINANCIAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY. IN THIS REGARD, MALAYSIA WOULD LIKE TO PROPOSE THAT THE 14 - MEMBER MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE THAT HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED FOR THIS PURPOSE BE REVIVED. THE COMMITTEE SHOULD URGENTLY PRESENT A COMPOSITE REPORT ON THE WORK DONE TODATE BY OUR OFFICIALS, AND THAT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATION ARE TABLED AT THE NEXT ICFM.

MR. CHAIRMAN,

17. THE OIC MUST SERVE AS A PURPOSEFUL FORUM OF LIKE MINDED COUNTRIES TO EXCHANGE VIEWS AND DEVISE SPECIFIC PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR EFFECTIVE COOPERATION. IT MUST BE UNDERSTOOD THAT THE OF THE OIC WILL NOT ACCELERATE TOWARDS SUCCESS ON ITS OWN ACCORD. TO SUCCEED, THE OIC MUST BE SEEN TO ACHIEVE CONCRETE AND MEASURABLE PROGRESS ON AN ANNUAL BASIS. IT MUST MEAN SOMETHING TO THE GOVERNMENTS, THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND PEOPLES IN TERMS OF ITS EFFECT ON THEIR LIVES. OTHERWISE, ENTHUSIASM AND SUPPORT WILL CONTINUE TO WANE AND THE OIC WOULD BE PART OF THE HISTORY OF INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANISATIONS WHICH HAVE LOST THEIR SENSE OF DIRECTION. THE CHALLENGE FOR THE OIC IS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT IT IS RELEVANT, COMPETENT AND PURPOSEFUL.

18. HOWEVER, IF WE CHOOSE INACTION OR STAY ON THE SIDELINES AS THE 21ST CENTURY DAWNS ON US IN LESS THAN 6 MONTHS, IT WILL NOT BE ISLAM THAT IS AT FAULT. ISLAM ENJOINS US MUSLIMS TO PURSUE PROGRESS HERE AND SPIRITUAL ENLIGHTENMENT FOR HEREAFTER IN THE NAME OF THE AL-MIGHTY. ISLAM IS NOT AGAINST PROGRESS. IF WE DO NOT ACT, IT IS OUR CHOICE. WE MUST BEAR THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING LEFT BEHIND. IF WE DO NOT ACT, THE CONSEQUENCES OF BEING LEFT BEHIND, REST SQUARELY ON US.

19. BEFORE I CONCLUDE, PLEASE ALLOW ME TO REITERATE THE FIRM AND DEFINITIVE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MALAYSIA TO OFFER KUALA LUMPUR AS THE VENUE FOR THE 27TH SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF THE FOREIGN

MINISTERS IN JUNE THE YEAR 2000. WITH YOUR SUPPORT MALAYSIA HAD SUCCESSFULLY HOSTED THE FIFTH ICFM IN KUALA LUMPUR IN 1974. IN THE INTERVENING PERIOD, WE HAVE STOOD ASIDE TO ALLOW OTHER MEMBER COUNTRIES TO HOST THIS IMPORTANT ANNUAL EVENT. AFTER 25 YEARS, WE TRUST THAT MEMBER COUNTRIES WOULD WISH MALAYSIA TO ONCE AGAIN HOST THIS IMPORTANT MEETING. IT IS ALSO THE FERVENT DESIRE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE OF MALAYSIA TO PARTAKE OF THIS MOMENTOUS OCCASION WITH THEIR BRETHREN IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD. WE ARE CONFIDENT THAT TOGETHER WE CAN USHER A NEW ERA OF PEACE, PROGRESS AND PROSPERITY FOR THE UMMAH IN THE NEW MILLENIUM.

20. LET THIS OUAGADOUGOU ICFM BE A WATERSHED ISLAMIC CONFERENCE. LET OUAGADOUGOU BE THE STARTING POINT. LET US CORRECT WHATEVER WEAKNESSES AND REKINDLE OUR EFFORTS FOR THE GLORY OF ISLAM. LET US STRIVE TO EQUIP OURSELVES WITH MODERN KNOWLEDGE AND TECHNOLOGY TO BRING ABOUT DEVELOPMENT AND PROSPERITY TO OUR NATIONS.

21. I TRUST THAT THE MUSLIM WORLD WILL GROW AND FLOURISH. NOTHING, IT HAS BEEN SAID, SUCCEEDS LIKE SUCCESS. WE HAVE TO UNITE, WORK TOGETHER, AND BUILD OUR ECONOMIES, BETTER THE LIVES OF OUR PEOPLES AND PROSPER IN ORDER TO WIN THE RESPECT OF OTHERS.

THANK YOU