

By : DATUK SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR
Venue : KUALA LUMPUR
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Title : EXTRAORDINARY SESSION OF THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS ON TERRORISM

His Excellency Mr. Modibo Sidibe
Chairman of the 28th Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers,

His Excellency Mr. Abdellouhed Belkeziz
Secretary General of Organisation of Islamic Conference,

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh,

Good morning.

I join the Honourable Prime Minister, Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, in welcoming you most warmly to Malaysia and in extending to you our appreciation for your kind presence at the Extraordinary Session of the Islamic Conference of the Foreign Ministers on Terrorism.

2. Before we proceed to consider the issues on our agenda, let me say how honoured and privileged I am to be in a position to facilitate our work towards achieving a productive outcome of this meeting. We will proceed on the basis of the understanding and commitment that we have demonstrated in the past and on the need for a common approach that will effectively and comprehensively address the threat posed by terrorism.

3. It has been more than seven months since the terror strikes against the US shocked the world and awakened us to the grave threats posed by terrorism. Since then, various actions have been taken at the national, regional and international level to combat terrorism. And we, the members of the OIC, have in our respective ways unstintingly contributed to the efforts in the fight against this menace.

4. The OIC, at this meeting, should come out strongly but constructively on our collective response to developments affecting the Ummah in the aftermath of the September attacks. In doing so, we would be fulfilling our obligations that are premised on the principles and true teachings of Islam, the religion of peace, which has been revealed for the good of humanity and which has contributed to the well being of Muslims and Islamic countries. At the same time, we would also be discharging our responsibility as members of the international community in safeguarding mankind from the scourge of terrorism.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir Mohamad has addressed the core issues relating to terrorism: the threat it poses, the concerns we all have and the need to search for common and effective ways to combat it. It is the objective of this meeting that we should conclude with the adoption of a Kuala Lumpur Declaration, which will include the core but common elements raised during the general debate and written suggestions received from several member countries. The Kuala Lumpur Declaration would then represent our platform in the fight against terrorism as well to advance negotiations currently being undertaken at the United Nations in New York on the draft Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism.

6. Malaysia notes that the September attacks were followed by urgent and certain mandatory measures imposed by the United Nations Security Council following the adoption of relevant Resolutions aimed at addressing or eliminating the manifestations of terrorism, including the acts, methods and practices of terrorism by taking legal, financial and other law enforcement measures. I believe we have readily complied with these requirements including UNSC Resolution 1373. It is important that we continue to do so.

7. However, we note certain disturbing trends or developments in the current approach in combating terrorism that are regrettable and which we as members of the OIC would have to consider. These include the lack of concomitant interest or urgency in addressing the underlying causes of terrorism, the attempt to undermine the legitimate struggle of the Palestinians in the exercise of their inalienable right to self determination, national liberation and struggle against foreign occupation by linking it to terrorism and the increasing tendency to associate Muslims and Islam to terrorism. As a consequence, our religious compatriots particularly those living in the West have been targeted and Islam denigrated. We are deeply concerned over the inclination to resort to unilateral action in combating terrorism. We are also concerned over the lack of progress in achieving consensus on a single internationally accepted definition of terrorism.

8. Given these trends and developments, Malaysia believes that it is important to strengthen OIC cooperation and coordination. I look forward to hearing your ideas on how we should move forward in these and other areas. We will also carry out consultations with interested delegations on the way forward. On Malaysia's part, we believe it would be useful to consider the establishment of a committee which will provide appropriate and timely response to developments affecting Muslims and Islam.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen

9. We are all deeply concerned over the escalating Israeli aggression and military offensive in the last few months or so against the Palestinians, including the use of unnecessary lethal force, demolition of Palestinian infrastructure, strangulation of the Palestinian economy as well as the daily brutalisation and humiliation of the Palestinian civilians.

10. The latest attack on Ramallah has heightened our dismay and further inflamed the Muslim world. The violence has reached a horrific level. The OIC must send a strong and clear message that the cycle of violence must end and dialogue for a just and comprehensive peace must resume. There is no other way to resolve the Middle East conflict except through dialogue. In the light of the deteriorating situation and in accordance with OIC practice, we will devote an hour's debate focusing on the issue of Palestine.

11. I am confident that I can count on your constructive support and cooperation during the three days ahead to ensure that we achieve the noble objectives of our presence here. It is Malaysia's hope that we would achieve a concrete outcome of our deliberations, an outcome which will serve as a common platform in our fight against terrorism.

12. Now, before we begin our deliberation, I propose that we adopt the Provisional Agenda and the revised Programme of Work that are before you.

Thank you.