

**Allocution of Ambassador Aissata KANE, Chargé d’Affaires a.i,
Permanent Delegation of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to the
United Nations in Geneva, at the Occasion of the 2nd Dialogue on Faith,
Peacebuilding and Development in the framework of the celebration of the
World Harmony Week , 9 February 2017, Palais des Nations**

The celebration of the World Interfaith Harmony Week is an occasion to remind us that peace, tolerance and peaceful coexistence are the foundation towards sustainable harmony and interfaith dialogue among people and nations.

The OIC has in several occasions and through various policy decisions and public declarations reiterated that open dialogue and respect for the diversity of beliefs, cultures and identities are essential to promote peaceful cohabitation and respect among individuals and communities. Our Organization’s vision of an inclusive and enabling environment conducive to peace within and among nations and communities is characterised by the promotion of diversity, richness and tolerance given that difference does not mean conflict and competing visions should not lead to impasse.

In this regard, it is of vital importance to narrow the supposed or existing differences among people and nations by creating bridges that allow open dialogue and moderation and encourage intercultural and interreligious dialogue, with a mutual recognition of each other’s specificity.

Our endeavour to work for peace is a voice of reason, which instructs us that peace goes with justice, decent living conditions and development for current and future generations.

Therefore, I will focus my remarks on efforts and actions that OIC has developed and continue developing to create conditions for stability and security for people in the Islamic world and beyond. This is a way for OIC and organs working under its umbrella to develop more synergies to achieve together the SGDs, centred on people’s needs and prospects for a better future.

OIC and its subsidiary, affiliated and specialised institutions are engaged in a comprehensive approach that takes into consideration the political, economic, cultural and social dimensions necessary to ensure peace and development for people in need, with a particular focus on the Islamic world.

Accordingly, I will sum up OIC's past and current engagements and elements of its program of action 2025, adopted by the 11th Islamic Summit held on 15 April 2016 in Istanbul, Turkey, focusing on the three major issues that will be discussed during this second dialogue, namely interfaith dialogue, peace building and development

Concerning the interfaith harmony, the OIC has always pledged for moderation, cultural and interfaith harmony among nations and civilizations. As underlined in its program of action, promoting interfaith remains at the heart of cultural diplomacy of the OIC.

This is exemplified in countless initiatives, events, symposiums that the OIC and its specialised organs, like ISESCO have initiated or joined in to promote the culture of peace and dialogue as means of reaching peace and harmony among nations and civilizations. Within the Alliance of Civilizations and along with partners, including international and intergovernmental organisations, policy makers, think tanks, academia, civil society organizations, our organization has insisted on the fact that dialogue is the path for future and that no one should be subjected to others negative discourse or dominated by it, in the name of its supposed superiority.

The OIC continues to believe that the distance between dialogue and the today's challenging realities, can only be addressed through tolerance, diversity and the rejection of exclusivity, racism and hatred. In this regard, the high-level forum on combating anti-Muslim discrimination and hatred was organised by the OIC Permanent Observer Mission to the United Nations in New York, together with Permanent Missions of Canada, the United States, and the EU Delegation on 17 January 2017. It was the occasion for the OIC representative to highlight, I quote: "the need to address all forms of discrimination and hatred, in particular on the basis of religion or belief, by applying universal standards to provide equal protection to all targeted groups and religions, in all parts of the world".

The international Symposium on promoting values of peace and dialogue organised jointly with the ISESCO on April 2016, in Tunisia was also the occasion to recall the need for "a clear roadmap to enhance national security and establish a firm basis for civil peace, social harmony and coexistence, within a spirit of justice for all, security and all-inclusive consensus."

Finally, I would like to underline that the OIC had signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Vienna-based institution specialized in interfaith and intercultural dialogues: the King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) with an aim to implement

programs and activities to promote interfaith, intercultural, and inter-civilisation dialogues around the world.

In peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy, OIC has been at the forefront to contribute to finding peaceful solutions to the multiple crisis occurring in the Islamic world but also elsewhere. In this regard, the OIC has established a number of mechanisms to explore ways for bridging political gaps, and reconciling opposing views.

In that framework, the OIC has been part of core group and initiators, along with the United Nations, of networks of religious leaders and peacemakers in support of peace at the grassroots level in conflict areas, around the globe. For instance, some projects to promote tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and mutual understanding have been undertaken to address issues in South Philippines, Myanmar, Central African Republic, Mali, and Nigeria.

As complementary mediation channels, the OIC has appointed high level Special Envoys to provide advisory guidance, good offices, experienced knowledge to settle crisis in the Southern Philippines, CAR and Myanmar.

The OIC has also undertaken a wide variety of initiatives to promote peace and tolerance with a clear recognition that the protection and promotion of human rights is an essential pillar. Amongst the significant ones is the Istanbul Process, which is an OIC co-initiative with EU and US to promote tolerance and understanding and peace among communities. This process was inspired by the Human Rights Council resolution 16/18 to combat intolerance, negative stereotyping, stigmatization, incitement to violence, and violence based on religion and belief, which the OIC has initiated

Additionally, the OIC has established a **Peace and Security Unit** within the OIC General Secretariat, with a view to have a follow-up and early warning mechanisms for preventing human rights violations, human trafficking and exploitations, committed against civilians in areas of conflict and war, including the ones conducted against women and girls.

In the same vein, in its endeavor to contribute to building strong democratic environment and good governance, necessary steps for supporting peace, the OIC General Secretariat has established a new **Unit for Elections Monitoring**, which operates under the Political Affairs Department. The unit is responsible of monitoring the credibility and transparency of elections processes undertaken in respective OIC Member States running presidential elections, in accordance with

international standards requirements. One of the main measurements undertaken is to monitor gender-based equal opportunity participation in elected and non-elected bodies.

The OIC election teams participated in the monitoring of the elections in Mali, Cote d'Ivoire, Tunisia, Uzbekistan, and CAR, so to list a few.

In the development domain, amongst the various initiatives for supporting economic and social conditions for improving well-being of the populations in OIC Member States; I will put an emphasis on three major issues that are tangible indicators of the stage of development in each country.

These include access to health services and universal health coverage for all, particularly during man-made or natural disasters crisis, empowerment of women and youth as agents of development and poverty alleviation within the OIC member States, which all are drivers of conflict and instability.

The progress made in achieving the universal health coverage remained highly uneven in the OIC Member States. The OIC subsidiary organ, Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) is looking closely at the status of health in OIC countries by going into the latest comparable data and trends on key health indicators. Thus, SESRIC closely monitors progress made in Member States in line with the OIC Strategic Health Programme of Action (OIC-SHPA) 2014-2023's thematic areas, among which Health System Strengthening; Disease Prevention and Control; Maternal, New-born and Child Health and Nutrition and Emergency Health Response.

Concerning women's advancement and empowerment, including youth capacity building, the 6th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women's Role in the Development of OIC Member States adopted on 3 November 2016 important resolutions establishing the OIC Council on Women's issues and Good Will Ambassadors on woman and family empowerment.

In the same vein, the revised OIC Plan of Action for the Advancement of Women (OPAAW) was adopted as a road map for women empowerment. Its key elements focus on promoting women's equal opportunity in all development spheres, including access to economic and financial institutions and facilities, their right to participate in decision-making and political life. This plan also takes into consideration the implementation of resolution 1325 (2000) and related relevant resolutions to relay the call for a greater women's role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Furthermore, through the work of the Islamic Youth Conference for dialogue and cooperation, the OIC is promoting adapted strategies and actions towards inclusive national policies to provide our future generations with education, health care, social protection and economic opportunities that prevent them from being recruited by extremist or terrorist groups because of hopelessness, unemployment, or marginalization and discrimination

As many of you know, the Islamic Development Bank (IDB) is the financial arm of the OIC when it comes to the implementation of development programs. Its support to the OIC strategic development objectives, including those enumerated previously is crucial, particularly if we refer to OIC figures which show that 21 percent of the total population of the OIC lives with less than 1.90 US Dollar per day.

Therefore, poverty alleviation remains a permanent agenda item of the COMCEC (OIC Standing Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation) of which ongoing efforts in this area are implemented among others by the Islamic Solidarity Fund for Development (ISFD).

The OIC continued to support its Member States through the **Special Program for Development of Africa (SPDA)**, which has effectively contributed to social and physical infrastructure development in 22 OIC African Member States. The same support was also extended through the **OIC Plan of Action for Cooperation with Central Asia (OIC-PACCA)**, which has demonstrated its potentials in fostering active cooperation with OIC Member States in Central Asia.

I would like to conclude by saying that these OIC achievements in promoting peace, harmony and development shows the close nexus and correlation between these three pillars, which all are enablers towards sustainable improvement of the living conditions of our populations. Only through their active participation and empowerment, we can address together numerous human security threats, posed by today's challenging environment.

Therefore, our common work should be primarily guided by the need to put our people at the center of our preoccupation and actions towards a peaceful, tolerant and developed world. That is why today, we are here to recall our shared values and human principles to advocate for better cooperation to foster an environment conducive to inclusive and lasting peace, security and development.

I thank you