



The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

Statement by

**H.E. M. Kabir Farahi
Deputy Foreign Minister**

at the

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Please check against delivery

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Asalam alaikum Wa rahmatullah-e Wa barakatuh,

It gives me great pleasure to represent the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan at the 34th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in the neighboring country and beautiful city of Islamabad. The excellent arrangements as well as the warm hospitality extended to us testify to the effort and dedication of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan towards ensuring the success of this meeting.

Let me congratulate you Mr. Chairman on your well-deserved appointment as the Chair of the 34th Session of the ICFM, and wish you all success in your endeavor.

I would like also extend my appreciation to your predecessor, the government of the Republic of Azerbaijan, for the excellent chairmanship they have provided us for the last one year.

I also would like to take this opportunity to convey my appreciation for the farsightedness and genuine efforts of His Excellency, the Secretary General, for his initiative to bring necessary reforms in this organization, aiming at energizing the organization, enhancing its efficacy and promoting the Joint Islamic Action.

The Government of Afghanistan supports the much needed initiative of the Secretary General to revise and update the Charter of our Organization and we are fully committed to fulfill our obligations to implement the OIC Ten- Year Plan of Action .

Thirty- eight years following the establishment of the OIC, we the representatives of the 57 nations are gathered here to discuss the challenges facing the Muslim world and to identify the ways and means to tackle them with a spirit based on the principle of Islamic solidarity.

We believe that at this critical juncture of our time with the prevailing trend of globalization and increased economic, social and information interaction and interdependence, the unity in the Muslim world with all its diverse forms of cultural and historical backgrounds and political systems is vital more than ever .

Discrimination and intolerance against Muslims and defamation of Islam in some part of the world has become an issue of serious concern for all of us. Islamophobic quarters and terrorists have equally manipulated the sentiments of the people on both sides. They pose a great challenge to the civilized world to sensitize their people to the danger of this phenomenon. It is our shared responsibility to portray the real image of Islam to the world to combat Islamophobia. It is worth mentioning that the tireless efforts of Secretary General in combating the Islamophobia and building the alliance of civilizations , in particular the ongoing engagement of OIC with EU ,OSCE and other organizations in the form of political consultations ,have vastly contributed to this end and received international appreciation and recognition. In our view the interfaith and intercultural dialogue is the only viable option in averting confrontation between the civilizations. In this regard my delegation fully supports the establishment of a Permanent Secretariat of Alliance of Civilization at the UN Headquarter in New York.

Mr. Chairman ,

Allow me, Mr. Chairman, to state Afghanistan's policy towards some specific global issues.

To find a just solution to the suffering of the people of Palestine and creating a harmonious Middle-East, Afghanistan, once again, urges full implementation of the Security Council resolutions.

We strongly believe that the National Unity Government that was formed on the basis of the Makka agreement initiated by His Majesty King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz was a timely and important step towards the unity of the Palestinian people and we urge our Palestinian brothers to respect and implement this historic agreement .

The Haram El- Sharif, as an integral part of Jerusalem, which contains rare historic Islamic buildings and archeological remains ,is an important holy place for millions of humankind. In order to keep the outstanding universal value of the Haram El- Sharif and the Old City of Jerusalem the historic structure of this Holy place must be protected and preserved without any changes . We urge that the Israeli Government should observe and respect the international laws and regulations particularly, the relevant provisions of the Geneva and Hague Conventions and their additional Protocols as well as to comply with the provision of the Convention for the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage of 1972 regarding the old city of Jerusalem.

Terrorist attacks that are taking lives of the innocent people of Iraq should be strongly encountered by all means. We share the pains and agony of our brothers in Iraq as we both suffer from the international terrorism.

The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan supports Sharm el Shaikh Conference and the Plan of Action for the Iraqi government for the coming five years, aimed at building a united democratic state with a powerful economy and

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stable security situation.

The idea for the creation of the Forum on Humanitarian Relief Work Organizations , as reflected in one of the reports of Secretary General , is a major step towards filling the existence gap in collective humanitarian work in the Muslim World and my delegation supports this idea

Mr. Chairman,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Afghanistan with the profound background of civilization for the centuries, by organizing the traditional democratic process of Loya Jirgas and through consultative opinion of its Ulama and Elders , played a significant role for helping National Islamic Liberation Movements and independence of countries in our region . Unfortunately, the brave People of this country have suffered tremendously over the past 27 years of wars ~~and foreign~~ ~~occupation~~. As a result, millions of your fellow Muslims died, maimed or become refugees over the years

I'm sure most of you who have gathered here today, are closely connected with developments in Afghanistan so I do not need to speak to you about yesterdays devastations and destructions and about today's progress that Afghanistan has achieved in political, security and economic fields over the past five and half years.

Therefore , I shall limit my comments to some of the most pressing challenges facing both Afghanistan and the international community in our joint efforts towards achieving lasting peace , stability and prosperity in my country

Terrorism continues to be a threat to peace and progress in Afghanistan and to the world at large. Terrorists continue to commit their brutality, murder and crimes against the people Afghanistan under the name of Holy Islam, who come mainly from outside of Afghanistan. We Muslims only can overcome these difficulties through common effort and cooperation. I hope that we will be able to join hands in combating terrorism to free our countries from this evil. Therefore, we must redouble our efforts on all dimensions of the war against terrorism, go after terrorists and their sources of training, inspiration and financing, and rid the world from this threat.

As such, the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan would like to propose holding an International Conference of the Ulema and the Muslim Scholars in Kabul by Spring 2008, to discuss the noble principles of Islam and the fight against International Terrorism, under the auspices of the Organization of Islamic Conference . This proposal has already been supported by the Secretary General of the OIC and Director General of the ISESCO during their recent meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan in Kabul.

I would like to ask the secretariat to include my proposal to the Final Communiqué of the 34th Session of Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers . MR

MR. Chairman, Terrorism is also deeply intertwined with drug trade which represents another major source of insecurity and potential instability in Afghanistan and the region. Terrorism and narcotics go hand-in-hand and that narcotics money, among other sources, feeds terrorism.

The counter narcotics drive we have undertaken in Afghanistan, with cooperation from the international community, is strong and multi-faceted. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has publicly committed itself to reducing cultivation by over two-thirds in 2008.

Mr. Chairman,

The last point I wish to briefly touch upon deals with Refugees. I would like to express the gratitude of the People and the Government of Afghanistan for the assistance extended by UNHCR and our brotherly neighboring countries, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran over the past quarter of a century to the Afghan Refugees which has constituted the longest Refugee Community in the world. The Islamic Republic of Afghanistan requests the OIC Member States, in particular, our neighboring countries, the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran, to provide the safe, dignified, voluntary and gradual return of Afghan refugees in accordance with absorption capacity in Afghanistan. Mr. Chairman,

Afghanistan as a founding member of the OIC has always been attaching great importance to the Organization of the Islamic Conference. We have always enjoyed a tremendous support from the organization and its members. Our sincere thanks and gratitude go to those brotherly Muslims states who have been contributed to the reconstruction of Afghanistan through this Fund as well as on bilateral means.

It is the primary responsibility of Afghans to face and deal with its difficulties, but, in today's global environment, it is also incumbent on donor nations and the international community, particularly the OIC Member States to help a post-conflict nation rebuild itself.

I thank you Mr. Chairman.