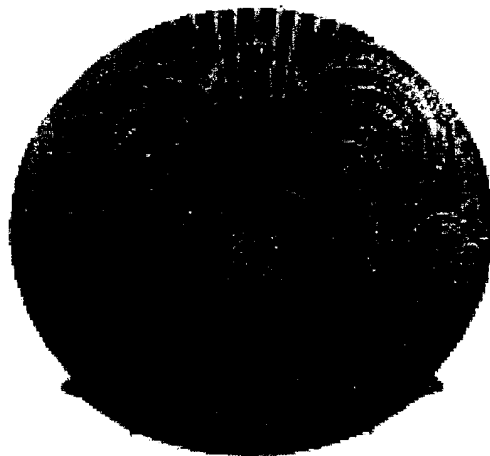


REPUBLIC OF KAZAKHSTAN



**Statement by Mr. Nurlan Yermekbayev,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Kazakhstan
at the
34-th Session of the Islamic Conference
of Foreign Ministers**

15-17 May, 2007

Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan

**Statement by Mr. Nurlan Yermekbayev,
Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan
at the 34-th Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers**

(Islamabad, 15-17 May 2007)

Bismillah ir -Rahman ir-Rahim.

Mr. Chairman!

Mr. Secretary-General!

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen!

Assalamu Aleilkum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa Barrakatuhu!

First of all, let me express my cordial gratitude to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the warm hospitality extended to us and excellent organization of the conference.

Mr. Chairman!

Muslim world has an important place within the foreign policy priorities of our state. This has been, especially, highlighted by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev in his Address of 2007 to the people of Kazakhstan.

While being a secular state, we are willing to increase political, economic, cultural and humanitarian cooperation with Muslim countries.

Kazakhstan fully supports current reforms within the OIC that target the increased effectiveness of activities of the Organization through structural changes, and maximum efficiency in adopting resolutions and, most importantly, practical implementation of the decisions that had been adopted at various OIC meetings.

We support the proposal of H.E. Secretary-General, Prof. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, regarding the need to adjust basic OIC documents in order to bring them in conformity with continuous changes of the world.

The current process of creation a multipolar world that is being supported by greater part of the international community must ensure smooth transition from rivalry and confrontation to harmony and trust in developing relationship between all interested parties, including leaders of geopolitical centers.

We support the renewal of the OIC as an effective and influential forum of Muslim countries based on principles that view Islam as a religion of peace and progress that is capable to facilitate further development of democracy, human rights and civil society.

We express our hope that this Ministerial Conference would contribute to our joint endeavor in restoring respect and dignity of Muslim countries within international community and the process of their sustainable development.

As you may know, our country is distinct by its multiethnic culture and adherence of its people to different faiths. In Kazakhstan there are 130 ethnic groups that live as one family while professing more than 40 confessions. Major contribution to their peaceful coexistence has been made by our Head of State. While being in Pakistan, may I avail this opportunity to kindly let you know that in March this year, Mr. Gauhar Ayub Khan, Vice President of the Pakistan Muslim League visited our capital city, Astana, to hand in the *Best Governance Muslim State Award* to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev. It is our intention to share with the OIC Member States and other interested parties the essential experience that we have gained in preserving peaceful coexistence of different nations and confessions.

Various religions have different views toward interrelationship between God and a human being. In this regard, there may be a need of ensuring peaceful coexistence of religious confessions on a global scale.

We acknowledge the sensitivity of the problem related to differentiating people based on their adherence to different religion and confession. We are confident that such differentiation starts from the moment when faith-driven disputes are spilled over the domain of religion and culture and, push their way through to the sphere of politics. As an input to concerted efforts in restraining such spill-over effect, Kazakhstan will try all potentially possible means to contribute to the constructive dialogue among civilizations and bring it to a new level.

Critical situation in Iraq, the tension in the Middle East and periodic interethnic and inter-religious disputes reveal the prevailing mutual mistrust and misunderstanding between the two civilizations of the world. As never before, the problems of interaction between West and Islamic world become essentially sensitive. Such situation compels all interested states to seek compromising solutions to ensure normalcy in the region and curb further growth of suspicion and intolerance between Muslim and Western countries.

In view of the above, Kazakhstan would like to act as a moderator of the dialogue between the *Muslim World and West*. Our initiative would further promote the inter-religion dialogue, which had been launched in Astana, to a new level. It would also imply social and political nature of the exchange of opinions between statesmen and public leaders. In our view, the suggested scope of such exchange of views could include the following:

- (i) promoting and extending the dialogue between Muslim and Christian civilizations;
- (ii) search of ways and tools to change the existing frame and model of globalization to enable facilitating the maximal use of advantages of a new frame by all countries, religions, cultures and civilizations;
- (iii) considering the role of the religious factor and its influence on globalization processes in modern world;
- (iv) search of ways to resolve critical situations and international conflicts that are driven by ethnic and religious intolerance, and
- (v) creating efficient tools to improve trade-and-economic ties, humanitarian and technological exchanges between Muslim states and Western countries.

In view of the above, I would like to draw your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that the Republic of Kazakhstan has obtained positive experience in creating system to resolve complex regional matters. It has successfully set up the Conference on Interaction and Confidence Building Measures in Asia. Currently, such unique inter-state forum, to have integrated major players of the Asian continent, has been fully institutionalized. It has now started implementing confidence building measures between member states. In this view, the experience of our state may also be useful in implementing the noble objectives of the inter-confession and inter-civilization dialogue.

Modern challenges and populist statements regarding clashes between civilizations and religions, and equating Islam to terrorism (as portrayed in some world mass media) clearly indicate the need to integrate efforts in curbing the above-mentioned negativities.

We should make greater efforts in joint search of answers to outstanding issues. In this context, Kazakhstan views that there is an urgent need to develop a new framework of cooperation to be based on effective political, economic, cultural and humanitarian interaction of the OIC Member States.

Within the OIC framework, we think it necessary to focus our attention also on environmental issues that Member States are currently facing.

As it was mentioned at previous sessions of the OIC Ministerial Conference, Kazakhstan has two major environmental problems that our country hopes to resolve with the help of the international community, including brotherly Muslim countries.

As you may know, functioning of the nuclear test site on the territory of Kazakhstan from year 1949 to 1989 damaged ecological and social environment in the Semipalatinsk region. For this reason, mostly, Kazakhstan declined inheritance of the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world. As a result of continuous work, in September 2006 Foreign Ministers of the five Central Asian States signed the treaty that declared Central Asia a nuclear-weapon-free zone. The OIC General Secretariat circulated this document among the OIC Member States.

We believe that the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia constitutes an important step toward strengthening the nuclear non-proliferation regime, promoting cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and in the environmentally rehabilitating the territories affected by radioactive contamination as well as in enhancing regional and international peace and security.

We would like the above view to be reflected in the relevant OIC resolution. The OIC General Secretariat had been notified about it.

Another issue of no less importance is ecological deterioration of the Aral Sea area. This is a matter of our grave concern because the entire population of Central Asian region is suffering from the environmental misbalance.

In this respect, we note that in September 2006, Heads of Central Asian States agreed to create the Information Center on Problems of Aral. After the launch of this center, interested parties would be able to access the common database on the regional environmental situation and

current activities in this field. In this context, it may be relevant to consider the possibility of developing similar centers within the OIC framework to enable effective information sharing among Member States.

Kazakhstan expresses its gratitude to the OIC Member States for political support and hopes that practical measures would be undertaken to eliminate negative consequences of the Semipalatinsk nuclear tests and ecologic deterioration of the Aral Sea area.

Mr. Chairman!

May I speak in line with the saying of the Kazakh people that reads as follows: “there is nothing that is farther than yesterday, and there is no thing that is closer than tomorrow.” To this end, I would like to re-confirm that Kazakhstan fully supports the reforms that are being currently undertaken within the OIC. These reforms should not only ensure that OIC be in line with realities of today, but should also respond to challenges of tomorrow.

To achieve the OIC goals, we would input all we can. With this in mind, may we propose that the 35-th Session of the 2008 OIC Ministerial Conference be held in Kazakhstan.

May I also kindly express confidence that the outcome and decisions adopted at this session would benefit the entire Muslim world.

Thank you for the attention.