



**STATEMENT BY
THE HON. DATO' SERI SYED HAMID ALBAR, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF
MALAYSIA**

**AT THE THIRTY FOURTH SESSION OF
THE ISLAMIC CONFERENCE OF FOREIGN MINISTERS**

**15-17 MAY 2007
ISLAMABAD, ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF PAKISTAN**

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim,

Assalamualaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh and Good Morning

His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf,
President of the Islamic Republic Of Pakistan

Chairman of the ICFM,

Your Excellencies Foreign Ministers

H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
Secretary General of the OIC

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen

2. *Alhamdulillah*, we are all blessed by Allah Almighty, by whose grace and blessings we are able to meet here today in the beautiful city of Islamabad. May I join my colleagues who spoke before me to thank His Excellency General Pervez Musharraf, President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, for honouring us with his presence to officiate this Conference. Allow me, on behalf of my delegation and myself to extend my gratitude to the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting us in Islamabad. I would also like to thank Azerbaijan, Chairman of the 33rd ICFM, for (the accomplishments and success of the initiatives undertaken during their chairmanship). Thanks also goes to the Secretary General, His Excellency Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, for his tireless efforts in addressing issues of mutual concern to the Ummah and also in implementing the administrative reforms within the Secretariat. I am confident with the ability and capability of Pakistan assuming the ICFM leadership, our organisation will move forward to greater success. We offer our best wishes and success in your stewardship of the ICFM.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

3. The Islamic world continues to be confronted by many challenges, both internal and external. Some of them stem from our own weaknesses and vulnerabilities be it in the political, economic or our social spheres. Allah has blessed us with much resources and yet we need to transform our wealth into tangible achievements.

4. At the establishment of the Organisation of Islamic Conference in 1969, we vowed to strive for the betterment of our people. We realised then that there is a need for concord amongst ourselves, to mutually address the concerns confronting the Ummah.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. At this juncture, we need to ask ourselves how far we have succeed in what we have set out to do. Are we better off now? While some of us have moved ahead, there are also those that have more or less remained stagnant or tragically, have regressed.

6. It is imperative for us to continue addressing the challenges faced by the Ummah, collectively and in unison. Our actions must be seen as serious and concerted efforts should be taken to overcome the malaise. In this effort, we must not allow others to dictate us on how it should be resolved. Our member states must have the political will and commitment to bring back dignity to the Ummah and our organisation. We must rid ourselves of conflicts and discourse that weaken us. We must strive together to achieve our goals.

7. It is imperative that we mobilise our members to speak out with one voice on issues of importance to us, such as the defamatory and derogatory caricatures of the Prophet S.A.W., the offensive statement of the Pope, and the war in Lebanon in July 2006. The peace process and establishment of a Palestinian state is still elusive. We must continue to stand solidly with our Palestinian brethrens. We must also see the resolution of the Syrian Golan Heights and Lebanese Sheeba Farms.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. We must remind ourselves that success does not come easy. We need to address our internal weaknesses and differences, to prevent external interference from undermining our solidarity. A united Ummah would strengthen the OIC and enable us to influence crucial decisions at the international arena.

9. As one of the countries that played an instrumental role in the establishment of the OIC, Malaysia has high hopes and aspirations for OIC to be seen relevant to meet the many challenges confronting the Ummah. In the previous meetings, we have agreed to review the OIC Charter, to enable it to face the new globalised world. We congratulate and commend the High Level Panel of Experts and the Committee of Eminent Jurists for drafting the OIC

Charter. However, Malaysia is of the view because the Charter is so important, more time should be given to examine the draft Charter with care and diligence in order to arrive at a consensus.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

10. The Ummah is inundated with multifaceted problems that need to be overcome. We are continually faced with questions of civil wars, poverty, conflicts and marginalisation within our borders and outside. One of these problems is the question of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

11. So long as this issue is not resolved, in a just and equitable manner, it remains a stumbling block for the achievement of peace and stability in the Middle East. The feeling that the peace process has not been handled in a balanced way and one party, Israel, is allowed to ignore the UN resolutions without actions being taken against it, gives the impression that the international community does not have serious commitment to resolve the conflict. It is therefore imperative that Israel be made to respect all UN resolutions, in order to achieve comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East. For so long as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unresolved, it would continue to divide the West and the Muslim world. Let me here underline Malaysia's support for the Saudi Arabian efforts in the Makkah meeting that led to the establishment of the Palestinian unity government. We also congratulate Saudi Arabia for the success in re-launching the Arab League Initiative during the 19th Arab Summit in Riyadh in March 2007.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

12. This 34th ICFM will be the last ICFM participated by Malaysia as the Chairman of the 10th Islamic Summit Conference. During our Chairmanship, we have given equal emphasis to the development of political and economic wellbeing of the Ummah. On the political dimension, the OIC must continue to be a strong voice of the Ummah. The Palestinian conflict, the *raison d'être* of the OIC, must remain the top agenda of the OIC. At the same time, Malaysia has given top priority and focus on improving the economic wellbeing of our people through introducing and implementing practical projects on an incremental basis to boost the development of our Member Countries.

13. In line with our efforts to improve the economic wellbeing of our Member States, Malaysia would like to introduce two resolutions for the consideration and adoption of this August 34th ICFM. This relates to the World Islamic Economic Forum and the proposed establishment of the International Zakat Organisation.

14. The World Islamic Economic Forum (WIEF) seeks to bring together Governments and Business Leaders as well as eminent thinkers, members of civil society, youth leaders and

women's movements to discuss ideas and develop solutions for the betterment of the Muslim community in particular, and the world, in general.

15. The advent of the WIEF has seen the First Forum held in Kuala Lumpur in 2005 and the Second WIEF last year in Islamabad. Continuing from its success, the Third WIEF will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 27-29 May 2007. We invite OIC Member States and their business communities to partake in the event. As such, we urge the 34th ICFM to adopt the resolution we have proposed as a reflection of the significance of this Forum to the Muslim business community.

16. We have also tabled a resolution on the proposed Establishment of the International Zakat Organisation for the approval of this 34th Session of ICFM. Malaysia is committed to see the realisation of the International Zakat Organisation. We are studying various proposals and options towards this end. We had convened the International Zakat Conference in Kuala Lumpur on 28 November 2006 which among others, had decided in its Plan of Action for Malaysia to become the Ad Hoc Secretariat and take the necessary measures towards the establishment of the International Zakat Organisation, including working on its mechanism and modalities as well as submitting it to the attention of the Islamic Fiqh Academy for their comments. Thus, we seek the indulgence and concurrence of OIC Member States to extend their support to this initiative and to play a part in this organisation as founding members.

17. Among the efforts to strengthen the economic and development capability of the Ummah and as a manifestation of Malaysia's commitment, we have initiated the Capacity Building Programmes for OIC Countries. Open to all OIC member countries on a voluntary basis, it is intended to bring together the OIC countries together with the private sector and institutions such as the IDB to bring about economic development in targeted Member States on the principle of bringing about a win-win result for all parties.

18. We foresee that the Capacity Building Programme could play a big part in helping to boost the social and economic development of member countries of the OIC. However, this is a huge task which requires continuous determined efforts from all OIC Member States. I would like to urge all OIC Member States to participate in the Programme by contributing its expertise, know how and technology in order to assist our brethren in need.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. Given the global concern in overcoming corruption and ensuring transparency and integrity, it is imperative that Muslim countries practise good governance, demonstrate transparency, accountability and employ universal good practices in all sectors of the administration. With that in mind, the Government of Malaysia hosted the "First OIC Anti Corruption and Enhancing Integrity Forum" on 28-30 August 2006 in Kuala Lumpur. It was

agreed at that meeting for Malaysia to establish an Ad-Hoc Task Force with participating members to prepare a comprehensive proposal paper outlining among others, the direction, composition, structure, funding, future meetings of the Heads of Delegation of the OIC Anti-Corruption and Enhancing Integrity Forum and to submit it to Member States for their views. It is our fervent hope that this proposal would garner the support and active participation of OIC Member States as corruption is a disease which can undermine our Member States' efforts to improve the wellbeing of our people.

20. The scourge of diseases and malnutrition among the Muslim population remain a major obstacle to improve the wellbeing of the people of OIC Member States. Cooperation among countries of the OIC is crucially important to confront this scourge. Malaysia has been entrusted to host the Islamic Conference of Health Ministers in Kuala Lumpur from 12-15 June 2007. Let me invite all OIC Member States to lend their support to this event and partake in the First Islamic Conference of Health Ministers.

21. The evolution of science and technology plays an important part in our efforts to ensure sustainable development in this era of globalisation. A brief survey undertaken on science, technology and innovation indicators reveal that although OIC member countries have taken various steps to increase their science, technology and innovation capacity, it appears that OIC Member States are lagging behind in this race. There is also an asymmetry in science, technology and innovation capabilities within the Muslim world which reflects the differing levels of commitment towards it.

22. As Chairman of the OIC Task Force on Vision 1441, Malaysia calls on all OIC Member States to support the Early Harvest Program as part of the Strategic Plan of Action to implement the Vision on Science and Technology. We hope that all Member States could extend their support and involvement in this Vision to ensure that the Ummah will be committed to become a community that values knowledge and is competent in utilizing and advancing science and technology to enhance the socio-economic well being of the Ummah.

23. In conclusion, may I once again wish the Islamic Republic of Pakistan success in leading the 34th ICFM forward for the upcoming year. Following the calls for effective unity amongst us, I would like to remind all of us that all OIC Member States would have to contribute to Pakistan's leadership role by extending our support.

Thank you.

15 May 2007