

**Islamic Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization
-ISESCO-**

**Extraordinary General Conference
Jomtien, Thailand
3 March 1990**

Final report

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The General Conference of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -ISESCO- held its second extraordinary session on Saturday 5 Shaabane 1410 A.H./3 March 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand.

The opening session was held under the presidency of His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Hamdan, Minister of Education and Higher Education in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, President of the Organization's Third General Conference, and in the presence of His Excellency Dr. Abdelhadi Boutaleb, General Director of ISESCO, His Excellency Hadj Syed Ghulam Mustapha Shah, Minister of Education in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Rapporteur of the Third General Conference, and Mr. Lamine Kamara, Vice-Chairman of the Organization's Executive Council.

The session was also attended by His Excellency General Thian Shai Siry Sam Ban, Vice-Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Thailand, and Dr. Wadi Haddad, Executive Secretary of the World Conference on Education for All.

In addition, the Conference saw the participation of the delegations of the majority of Member States most of which were headed by the ministers of education, as well as the representatives of some Muslim non-Member States which were invited to attend the Conference (See the annexed list of participants).

Besides, the representatives of a number of international and regional organizations attended the proceedings of the Conference as observers. These are: the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (ALECSO), United Nations Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Development Plan (UNDP), Islamic Bank, Arab Student Aid International (ASAI), UN High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Islamic Charitable Organization.

After announcing the opening of the Conference, the President of the Conference presented His Excellency General Thian Shai Siry Sam Ban, Thai Vice-Prime Minister, who gave a welcome address on behalf of his country (See the annexed address).

Then, His Excellency Dr. Mohammed Ahmed Hamdan, President of the Conference, delivered an opening address. Afterwards, His Excellency Dr. Abdelhadi Boutaleb, General Director of ISESCO, held the floor, followed by Mr. Lamine Kamara, Vice-Chairman of the Executive Council, and Dr. Wadi Haddad, Executive Secretary of the World Conference on Education for All (See the annexed addresses).

Then, the representatives of the Arab, African and Asian regions talked about the draft Islamic Programme for Literacy which was submitted to the Conference for discussion. In this regard, His Excellency Mr. Abdulaziz bin Abdullah Torki, Minister of Education in the State of Qatar, His Excellency General Segoli, Minister of Education in the Republic of Mali, and His Excellency Hadj Syed Ghulam Mustapha Shah, Minister of Education in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, gave addresses respectively on behalf of the Arab, African and Asian delegations (See the annexed addresses).

Working session

At the beginning of the working session, the President of the Conference gave the floor to His Excellency Mr. Iba Der Thiam, the representative of the Republic of Senegal in the Executive Council, who talked on behalf of the commission set up by the Executive Council from among its members to elaborate on the Islamic Programme for Literacy and Basic Training. The speaker presented a summary of the action of the commission as well as the broad lines and characteristics of this project.

Then, a discussion was held concerning the project wherein participated the heads of delegation as well as organizations and institutions participating in the Conference, according to the following order: Palestine, Malaysia, Iraq, the Sudan, Brunei, Bahrain, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, ALECSO, UNESCO, Qatar, Mali, Arab Student Aid International (ASAI), United Arab Emirates, Guinea, Iran, Jordan and Senegal.

The majority of delegations praised the Islamic Programme for Literacy and Basic Training and the importance of its implementation so that the Islamic Ummah could generalize education as soon as possible. They also expressed their support for the project and for the initiative taken by the Organization in preparing its draft and setting up its higher body.

The discussion highlighted the following points:

- To elaborate on the document of the Islamic project by including data and statistical information on the situation of illiteracy in the Islamic world, in order to help in preparing and directing the political decision, and drawing assistance and support from public and private institutions.
- To annex the statutes of the higher body of the project which sets out its functions and working method to the main document of the project.
- To include in paragraphs (71, 72, and 73) a number of procedures proposed for implementation such as exempting subsidies from taxes, imposing special fees on some consumer goods for the benefit of the project, annexing these

paragraphs to paragraphs (30-34) which deal with the role of relevant authorities and the political support for the programme.

- To streamline the handicapped into the paragraph (26) dedicated to vulnerable categories such as refugees and expatriates.
- To stress the importance of teaching girls and women across the Islamic world, in accordance with the teachings of the Islamic law whereby the pursuit of knowledge is incumbent on every Muslim.
- To draw attention to (religious illiteracy) as a new aspect of (alphabetical and civilizational illiteracy).
- To undertake continuous stage-evaluation of the Islamic project.
- To elaborate on the mechanisms for implementing the project so that each country can choose the most appropriate for its conditions.
- To channel literacy programmes into economic and social development plans and projects, and to take the relevant administrative and organizational procedures.
- To generalize compulsory basic education to eradicate illiteracy.
- To enhance the quality of basic education and extend its compulsory duration to sixteen (16) years to avoid slipping into illiteracy.
- To accord priority in the spending of *Zakat* in some countries to Quranic schools, which constitute one of the means for eradicating illiteracy.
- To highlight the importance of the participation of literate people in the fight against illiteracy as funds collected from governments and private institutions are not sufficient for literacy efforts.
- To provide material and moral incentives and the means for access to literacy programmes and parallel formal programmes, and to train specialized international competences.
- To coordinate the Islamic project and other projects meant to enhance literacy and adult education across the Islamic world, such as the Arab Strategy for Literacy and Adult Education (ALECSO) and the UNESCO Project, among others, the aim being to avoid duplication of efforts and to ensure inter-complementarity.
- To take into account the difference between legislations in the various Islamic countries: In some countries, *Zakat* is collected and allocated to meet national requirements, whereas in other countries, it is up to individuals to spend it in the way they choose .

Some participants laid emphasis on the need to work towards the institutionalization and organization of *Zakat*.

Moreover, the conference examined the educational conditions in the occupied Palestinian territories and the practices which the Israeli authorities continue to perpetrate against the educational process in Palestine.

In addition to its condemnation of the continued Israeli occupation of the Palestinian and other Arab territories, and disapproval of the Israeli practices and aggressions against educational institutions in Palestine, the conference affirms its utmost solidarity with the Palestinian people in their vigorous struggle and heroic *Intifada*. It also commends the steadfastness of the Palestinian people and their strong resolve to take every measure to preserve the functioning of the educational process in their occupied territories, implement national curricula and safeguard the Palestinian cultural identity.

In this spirit, the Conference, being conscious of the right to education for all, is giving special interest under its Islamic programme to education for Palestinian children.

At the close of the discussions, His Excellency the Director General of ISESCO proceeded to respond to the observations which were made, and thanked the participating delegations for the support they gave to the project and the observations they contributed. For his part, His Excellency Mr. Iba Der Thiam, Chairman of the Commission set up by the Executive Council to elaborate on the project, gave the explanations and information some delegations asked for.

Afterwards, His Excellency Mr. Mahjoub Badaoui Mohammed, Minister of Education in the Republic of the Sudan, put forward a draft resolution to approve the Islamic Project which was commended by a number of the Member States and unanimously adopted by the conference. The conference also endorsed the two documents annexed to the Project (see the two annexed documents).