



Address by

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-ISESCO-

At the meeting of

The High-Level Group for the Alliance of
Civilizations

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Praise be to Allah, who says in the Holy Quran « *O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise each other)*”, and prayer and peace be upon the Prophet, who said “*O people, your God is one, your father is one. You all come from Adam. Adam is from earth*”.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I greet you with the Islamic greeting of peace: *Assalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh*. It is my pleasure to address you at this crucial meeting in the name of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. I avail myself of this opportunity to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr. Abdullah Wade, President of the Republic of Senegal, on winning Houphouet-Boigny Prize for Peace, and laud the gracious efforts he has been deploying in consolidating peace and furthering understanding and cooperation among peoples.

I would like also to convey my thanks to His Excellency Dr. Federico Mayor, the co-sponsor of the High-Level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations, for the invitation he extended to me to attend this meeting for which I wish a successful outcome. I also wish the Group every success in attaining its noble goals.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Dialogue has become a fundamental element in international relations. Similarly, alliance among civilizations is considered as a furtherance of international law. This proceeds from the fact that dialogue and alliance among civilizations and cultures tremendously contribute to effecting rapprochement among peoples and nations and to removing mutual misunderstanding.

Our firm belief in the values of dialogue, alliance and coexistence within the framework of international law principles, has always prompted us to take great initiatives in building the bridges of cooperation with the international community; the ultimate goal is to disseminate the culture of dialogue and to

enhance alliance among civilizations. In this connection, the last initiative undertaken by the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization - ISESCO- was the international symposium held in Tunis in January under the high patronage of His Excellency Mr. Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Tunisian Republic, on "**Human Civilizations and Cultures: from Dialogue to Alliance**".

This pioneering international symposium, the first of its kind, issued "**Tunis Declaration for the Alliance of Civilizations**". In this respect, the head of the Spanish government, His Excellency Mr. José Luis Zapatero, stated in a letter recently addressed to me, after I had sent him the text of the Declaration, that the latter is "**undoubtedly a document of substantial importance that represents an outstanding contribution and a common commitment to mutual acquaintance, tolerance and peaceful coexistence among all states of the world**".

Prior to that, His Excellency Mr. José Luis Zapatero had launched a call at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2004. I wrote to him then a letter in which I expressed the willingness of ISESCO to cooperate in elaborating that historic call and in formulating a suitable and practical mechanism to reconcile Islam and the West. This objective constituted indeed the essence of Mr. Zapatero's call.

We have always been asserting that inter-civilizational dialogue, which we all endeavour to turn into alliance, is expressive of the most prominent values of the Islamic civilization as well as of the traits of the balanced Islamic personality. We stress also that dialogue is a definite necessity, a moral and human obligation, and an absolute condition for the constructive cooperation leading to peaceful coexistence among human societies.

ISESCO has played a paramount role in supporting the international efforts aimed at enhancing dialogue of civilizations and cultures. In fact, it has held several international conferences and symposia on the issues of inter-civilizational and inter-cultural dialogue in a number of Arab, Islamic, European and Asian capitals. It has also actively participated in other international conferences and colloquia on this topic. In the same vein, ISESCO has published the **White Book on Dialogue among Civilizations**, in two editions in Arabic, English and French. The book includes international documents, statements and declarations relative to dialogue. It has issued also books and studies dealing with dialogue, in the three languages. In addition, the Organization has appointed three ISESCO's Ambassadors for Dialogue among Civilizations, who are: Mr. Mahathir Mohamad, ex-Prime Minister of Malaysia, His Royal Highness Prince El Hassan bin Talal, former Crown Prince of Jordan, and Mr. Amadou Mahtar M'Bow, former Director General of UNESCO.

ISESCO knows very well that the sincere calls made by the enlightened thinkers, intellectuals, leaders and scholars interested in the future of humanity and seeking to protect the world against the dangers of hatred and racism, **cannot bear fruit unless the world becomes stable, through settling crises, ending conflicts, establishing justice and equity, making people enjoy their right to self-determination, applying international law to all, adhering to international legality in the adoption of policies and positions by states, and subjecting international relations to the provisions of the United Nations Charter.**

Alliance of civilizations has one meaning, that of reforming the world and rebuilding international relations on the basis of entente, coexistence and mutual respect. This is our task, we the bearers of the torch of cultural enlightenment and the preachers of inter-civilizational dialogue.

For this reason and in view of the expertise that ISESCO has developed in the field of the promotion of dialogue of civilizations, I assert here the need to strike balance between the endeavour to spread the culture of dialogue and establish a global alliance of civilizations aimed to reconcile East and West, North and South, on the one hand, and the definitive settlement of disputes and conflicts that tear the fabric of the international community and jeopardize international peace and security, on the other hand.

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

I seize the opportunity of the meeting of the High-Level Group for the Alliance of Civilizations here in Dakar, the home of dialogue, peace and coexistence, to announce the readiness of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization -ISESCO- to cooperate with this honourable body in disseminating the culture of alliance and dialogue, as ISESCO, pursuant to the resolutions of the Islamic Summit Conference, is the Islamic body specialized in the areas of dialogue and alliance of civilizations.

I thank you and wish this esteemed international body full success in its mission.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.