



Address by

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri

Director General of the Islamic Educational,
Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO)

At opening of

**Leaders' Forum on Mobilizing for and
Contributing to the post-2015 Development
Agenda**

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris: 6 November 2013

بِسْمِ اللّٰهِ الرَّحْمٰنِ الرَّحِیْمِ

**Excellencies Heads of State,
Excellencies the Ministers,
Excellency President of the 37th General Conference of
UNESCO,
Excellency Chairperson of the Executive Board of
UNESCO,
Excellency UNESCO Director General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

Assalamu Alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh,

It gives me great pleasure to address you in the name of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) at this very important Leaders' Forum on **Mobilizing for and Contributing to the post-2015 Development Agenda.**

Many changes have befallen our world and have consequently affected different sectors: Science, media and information advancement, the widespread use of the internet

and the rapid growth in communication, have all blurred international borders and shortened distances between peoples, but have also influenced living styles, patterns of behavior and the cultural specificities of peoples.

Besides, globalization in its various aspects was not without considerable repercussions, not clearly perceived, both on international relations and on interactions between people from different religions, cultures and civilizations. However, the response to the main challenges hindering comprehensive development of peoples, through mutual support and cooperation as key to world peace, stability and coexistence, was far from instant.

The world today is riddled with painful wars and conflicts, and is facing enormous difficulties to break free from old-fashioned, stereotypical perceptions fuelled by extremist rhetoric and racial bias. Ours is a world of hatred, of exclusion, of violence and terrorism and of racial discrimination; a world where peace and security are far off.

The sad truth is that mistrust, disrespect of one another and denial of the truth are still taking their toll on human life. What we need instead is to work together communally to build a world infused with the universal brotherhood of humanity, without any distinction whatsoever, a world of equal dignity for all peoples and cultures.

**Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,**

We are deeply concerned by the reluctance of the world community to work together to best address these and other problems hindering comprehensive development, such as illiteracy, poverty, water pollution, communicable and endemic diseases, environmental risks, and disparities between communities, cultures and civilizations.

Indeed, delivering on these challenges is a collective duty requiring the combined effort of all cultures and civilizations, which can only be attained through consolidating the values of mutual respect, tolerance, openness, acknowledgment of cultural diversity, and human solidarity.

ISESCO, standing as the cultural conscience of the Muslim world, believes that the values of human interaction, mutual understanding, tolerance, respect and cooperation, which all cultures and civilizations share, should be sublimated and instilled in the minds of all, as a common heritage of humanity, through genuine dialogue among cultures and civilizations, based on positive human interaction and the combined effort of all.

An inclusive post-2015 agenda is therefore of the essence to build a more equitable and prosperous world, where all parties are involved in the noble mission to achieve dignity, security, justice and equity for people in the world.

In this regard, I should like to emphasize that this initiative by UNESCO is highly commendable and praiseworthy.

I would like to thank you for your attention and wish full success to this Forum.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.