



Address by

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***Madam Chair of the Conference,
Madam Director General of UNESCO,
Ladies and gentlemen,***

It is my pleasure to address you on behalf of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), whose fifty four Member States are UNESCO members too.

At the outset, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to UNESCO Director General, Mrs. Irina Bokova, for her productive cooperation with ISESCO during her mandate at the helm of this international Organization. I seize this opportunity to commend the outstanding achievements UNESCO has made during her incumbency. On this occasion, I would also like to congratulate Mrs. Audrey Azoulay on her election as new Director General of this notorious Organization, wishing her every success in her mission.

*Madam Chair,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Peace building hinges upon a solid basis of education in its fullest sense. While peace is constructed in the minds, the minds are, in turn, built with rewarding good education. UNESCO has therefore big responsibilities to shoulder, especially in today's critical global context marked by growing tensions and escalating armed conflicts, political crises and economic problems in many countries, coupled with a remarkable slowdown of the development process in the majority of countries of the South. As a result, millions of children are deprived of their right to pursue a descent education in a normal atmosphere of security and stability.

*Madam Chair,
Ladies and gentlemen,*

Educational development is a prerequisite for economic and political development. This conclusion was made very early by the pioneering founders of UNESCO, who put Education on top of the sectors falling under the Organization's realm of competence, making it an

underpinning of Science and Culture. Education is then a fundamental requirement, since Science and Culture, in their deepest sense, are inextricably linked to it.

But unfortunately, the state of education in the developing world is far from being satisfactory and stable. Today, the number of refugees in the world exceeds 50 million, 25% of whom are children, including a portion from some countries of the Islamic world.

While ISESCO is monitoring this situation and making constant efforts to ensure access to education for refugee children within the limit of the resources and capabilities available, international cooperation in this important area is still a very pressing need.

We hope the new era in UNESCO will give a new impetus to international cooperation to address the educational crises being suffered by some Member States of this Organization, in such a way as to help them overcome such hardships that undermine their development.

Ensuring access to education for every child is one of the fundamental human rights. In fact, a larger educational base and a wider scope of education that accommodates all children of the world are among the requirements of world-peace building. A development that rests on a firm foundation of expanded education will certainly yield economic prosperity, social progress and political stability, and will accordingly lead to concord between nations and peoples, ensure the stability of human communities, and consolidate world peace and security.

In this critical point of our history, the world needs a humanistic action to shield the present and future generations against the dangers of ignorance, extremism and terrorism and protect them from falling prey to fanatic, racist and aggressive leanings. A real mobilization is required in order to ensure security and peace and equal education opportunities for all, develop science and culture, and safeguard civilizational heritage as a shared universal asset.

UNESCO, which represents the cultural conscience of the world, is shouldering immense responsibilities and facing tough challenges on top of which is the lack of resources whose causes are known to all. Amid this situation, it is a vital necessity that all Member States support this Organization if it is to discharge its civilizational mission as fully as laid out in its Charter.

By the same token, ISESCO, in its capacity as the cultural mouthpiece of the Islamic world, will remain committed to its mission as specified in its Charter, and will continue its efforts to advance cooperation with UNESCO in its fields of competence in order to achieve common goals for the benefit of humanity.

I thank you all, beseeching Allah Almighty to spread His mercy for justice and peace to prevail in the world.