



Address by

Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri

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

Third Baku International Humanitarian Forum

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Excellency Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh,

I have the pleasure and honour to warmly congratulate His Excellency Mr Ilham Aliyev on his re-election to a new term as President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, wishing His Excellency continued success to achieve further progress and prosperity for his people and country.

Excellency Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

There is absolutely no question about the strong commitment by the Republic of Azerbaijan, under the leadership of His Excellency President Ilham Aliyev, to work together, both at regional and international levels, to promote peace in the world and uphold tolerance and dialogue as two core universal human values on which to build solid international relations.

The Baku International Humanitarian Forum, like other world class initiatives by Azerbaijan, is a true testament to the country's unrelenting efforts to help ensure that adequate

mechanisms are in place to build up world community consensus and collaboration, instead of discord and conflict, and promote understanding in a world that has unfortunately failed, despite increasing media diversity, to reduce loathsome fanaticism and stamp out deeply ingrained hatred and racial hostility. A striking case in point is the arbitrary occupation of Azerbaijan's Nagorno-Karabakh province by Armenia, with the genocide, displacement, and destruction of civilizational and historical landmarks this has resulted in. This occupation is unfortunately still persisting despite the UN Security Council's resolutions and the peaceful initiatives the Republic of Azerbaijan has made on so many occasions.

Excellency Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

This year's Forum is being held at a critical point of time in world history. Conflicts and clashes have raged to unsavoury length in many parts of the globe, mainly in the Muslim world, amid growing concerns over the failure of the global community to abate them. Not only is this posing a grave threat to stability in the region and beyond, but it is also a very serious obstacle to both international relations and human development.

This is indeed time to look into ways to best address the factors and circumstances contributing to conflict-associated risks, such as violence, occupation, exclusion, extremism, terrorism, Islamophobia and racial discrimination. A balanced and far-reaching vision is therefore of the essence to seek out and tackle the root causes and motives for these ailments and problems.

The vision we seek is one to go beyond and address the reasons underlying these problems, deep in the mind and spirit of all. There is no best way out of the present world crisis unless through education and exposure to other cultures at school, in the family and in wider community settings. And to achieve this, our full focus should be on directing education, media and entertainment programmes and courses in the world, from early kindergarten years to higher education levels, toward personal growth and development, based on the core values of human rights, peaceful coexistence, tolerance and equality.

Excellency Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We at ISESCO are driven by a core belief that promoting the values of tolerance and dialogue, both at individual and community levels, requires an integrated approach and the

combined efforts and expertise sharing from all stakeholders, including governments, educational and cultural institutions, and expert research groups. Our overriding belief at ISESCO is also that the fight against intolerance and exclusion goes through promoting intellectual development toward greater respect for linguistic and cultural diversity, living in dialogue and interchange regardless of differences of culture and nation as one human family, while taking full account of specificities of culture and civilization.

In aiming to achieve this, ISESCO endorsed the **Islamic Declaration on Cultural Diversity**, at the fourth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, and the **Kairouan Declaration for the Promotion of Dialogue of Civilizations and Respect for Cultural Diversity**, at the International Conference on Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultural Diversity.

ISESCO in its mission to share the Muslim perspective on issues within its fields of competence, including on dialogue, has published a wide range of papers and studies dealing with the concept of dialogue in the Islamic tradition. These include: the **White Book on Dialogue among Civilizations**, the **Initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques for Dialogue among Followers of Religions and Cultures: Achievements and Future Prospects**, the

Human Civilizations and Cultures: from Dialogue to the Alliance, the Dialogue and Inter-civilization Interaction from an Islamic Perspective, the Quranic Platforms for Dialogue, and the Cultural Roles of Civil Society in the Promotion of Dialogue and Peace.

Excellency Mr President,

Excellencies,

Ladies and gentlemen,

We are confident that the Third Baku International Humanitarian Forum, gathering such an elite class of leaders, politicians, scholars, intellectuals, academics and broadcasters from all over the world, will keep up efforts to develop practical solutions to consolidate the core values of dialogue, tolerance and respect for human rights both at individual and community levels and nationwide, in the pursuit of a new humanistic world order founded on international law, a world of peace and human dignity for all.

This is precisely the guiding aim of this Forum to which I, being one of its first supporters, wish full success.

Thank you.

Wassalamu alaikum warahmatu Allah wabarakatuh.