

***Second and Final Meeting of the OIC
Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP),
Held at Islamabad, on 28-29 May, 2005:
Speeches, Statements and the Proposed
Changes in the OIC***

(1)

**President Pervez Musharraf's Address
to the Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP) of the OIC
on 29 May, 2005**

Addressing the CEP, on Sunday, the May 29, 2005, President General Pervez Musharraf said that the efforts to reform the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC) are aimed at achieving socio-economic development in the Muslim countries and urged the Western powers to help resolve long-standing political disputes to drive the humanity out of its present turmoil.

“The Muslim world seeks to achieve the long-desired socio-economic development but at the same time the world powers must help resolve political disputes affecting the Muslims with justice,” he said.

Addressing the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons, the President underscored the need to shun a confrontationist approach to overcome problems retarding development of the Muslim world.

The President said the strategy of enlightened moderation offered a win-win for both the world at large and the Muslim countries.

“We are not getting together for a confrontationist approach but to evolve a strategy to emancipate ourselves, socially, economically, to seek resolution of disputes and to rid the world of

the malaise of extremism — we must emanate this message to the world,” the President said.

The vast majority of people in the Muslim countries are moderate but a small minority of extremists, who are tarnishing the image of Islam and harming the interests of the OIC countries.

“We must follow the true spirit of Islam and seek knowledge in fields of science and technology to speed up our development — we must not confine *‘ilm* (knowledge) to religious knowledge alone — obscurantist thinking does not offer a way forward — we should follow moderation and enlightenment,” the President said.

He referred to a host of low socio-economic indicators prevalent in the OIC countries and outlined his vision for reforming the Organization of Islamic Conference into a dynamic “voice of the Muslim world” for their durable development.

President Musharraf highlighted the need for having dedicated departments for promoting mutual cooperation.

In particular, he advocated, the setting up of a department of trade and commerce which should help the Muslim countries to expand their trade from the current mere 13 per cent to meaningful levels for the goal of socio-economic progress.

The President also pinpointed the importance of having a department of Islamic thought for understanding and promoting real values of Islam and for curbing extremism and terrorism, which run counter to Islamic spirit of moderation and enlightenment.

Likewise, he said, a department focusing on improving education in the Muslim countries should aim at sharing knowledge and expertise at higher level through establishment of centres of excellence. A dedicated department should analyse the political disputes affecting the Muslim countries and give recommendations for their settlement, he said.

Another department should focus on improving conditions of women in the Muslim countries by redressing cultural problems hampering their participation in development, the President added.

President Musharraf also called for establishing separate departments for promoting media in the Muslim world.

On funding of the OIC, the President proposed a mechanism of mandatory contributions from member countries. He said the richer countries should come forward with greater contributions to help out the poor countries.

“We should not only aim at having an organized OIC Secretariat but also help each other out — the rich must assist the poor members to step up their development. The OIC must have a voice at world forums, at the United Nations and the European Union.”

The OIC Secretary General Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar, later described their meeting with the President as an inspiring interaction and lauded his vision of enlightened moderation as a way forward to address the complex political problems afflicting the world.

Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri also attended the meeting.

(2)

**Keynote Address of the Prime Minister of Pakistan,
H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz Delivered at the Inaugural Session**

His Excellency, Mr. Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar,
Foreign Minister of Malaysia;
His Excellency, Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu,
Secretary General, OIC;
Mr. Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri,
Foreign Minister of Pakistan;
Eminent Commissioners from brotherly OIC countries;
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar, Foreign Minister of Malaysia for joining us today as the Chairman of the Islamic Summit Conference and His Excellency Prof. Dr Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

I also want to welcome the Eminent Commissioners from brotherly Muslim States as well as Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, the distinguished Commissioner from Pakistan.

It is a great honour for me to address this august gathering and share with you my views about the Islamic world in general and the future of the OIC in particular. This meeting presents a historic occasion where distinguished Islamic intellectuals and experts would finalize a strategy for the Ummah to meet the challenges of the new millennium.

I must compliment the honourable Commissioners for their constructive approach since their first meeting in Putrajaya in January 2005. The perceptive policy statement of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Mr. Abdullah Ahmed Badawi, at the first meeting of the Commission, set the tone and direction for the Commission's monumental undertaking. He rightfully stressed the importance of addressing the widespread discontent among Muslims the world over about the international community's failure to resolve long-standing disputes of which they are victims and to rectify the misperceptions that exist about our religion.

In this context, the strategy of "Enlightened Moderation" propounded by President General Pervez Musharraf that enjoys full support of the Islamic World is of vital Importance. We believe that restructuring and reform of the OIC in consonance with the concept of "Enlightened Moderation" would enable the Organization to effectively deal with the multifaceted challenges faced by the Muslim Ummah today.

The Commission of Eminent Persons bears the onerous responsibility of chartering a practical course for Islamic countries to enable them to regain their rightful stature in the emerging global order. The outcome of the inaugural meeting of the CEP amply demonstrated the sagacity, wisdom and farsightedness of the Eminent Commissioners who truly represent the aspirations of the Muslim Ummah.

I am confident that during the current meeting the Commissioners would finalize their recommendations for presentation to the upcoming ICFM in Sana'a and subsequently to the Extraordinary Summit meeting in Makkah in November 2005.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

A far-reaching transformation is currently underway in international relations. New threats including nuclear proliferation, terrorism and extremism as well as the increased use of unilateralism have compounded the earlier threats arising from poverty, underdevelopment, territorial disputes, decolonization and denial of justice. The Muslim Ummah is caught in the vortex of this upheaval. A new relationship between Muslims and the West built on mutual respect, tolerance and understanding needs to be evolved to effectively deal with these new and old threats.

Today's world presents enormous challenges and opportunities for the Islamic world to prepare themselves for an effective role commensurate with their collective potential. These challenges were identified in the interim report of the CEP.

In my view, the virtual marginalization of Islamic countries at the global level constitutes the foremost challenge before us. Even those Islamic states which had been endowed with vast natural resources have been unable to transform their assets to gain corresponding political weight and stature. On the contrary, they are under threat of economic isolation and social ferment.

Our image is being shaped by the extreme actions of a tiny minority that exists on the fringes of Muslim societies. As a result, neither Islam nor the Muslim world is seen as it should be in view of the humane and progressive values of our faith.

Islam does not believe in the "clash of civilizations". On the contrary, our religion advocates harmony, tolerance, coexistence, peace and compassion. Calling for good governance, justice, ethnic equality, and respect for basic rights, emancipation of women, social justice and accountability, Islam prohibits all manifestations of discrimination, racism, and terrorism.

The Quran appreciates the "diversity of views" and considers it a happy sign for mental nourishment and development. It says: *"Had your Lord so wished, He could surely have made all mankind one single community but they continue to hold divergent views."*

There is no substitute for dialogue, accommodation and harmony to foster understanding and to evolve an equitable and just global order. Nothing can be resolved through violent means

on a sustainable basis. Therefore, we should neither believe in confrontation, nor in capitulation.

We must also challenge the insidious attempts on the part of some to demonize and denigrate Islam. We must do so through a comprehensive campaign to promote awareness about the true spirit and teachings of our faith.

We strongly believe, as emphasized several times by President General Pervez Musharraf, that the West has to help resolve political disputes like Palestine and Kashmir affecting the Muslim people through ensuring just and durable solutions based on the aspiration of their people. The West also needs to be more proactive in addressing the socio-economic problems in Muslim societies so as to help ensure progress in the economic and social sectors which would curb extremism and promote Enlightened Moderation. Only then would the world be able to destroy the roots of terrorism and extremism.

We must also address our own weaknesses. A dispassionate study of the state of the Ummah would reveal the inadequate weightage of the Muslims at the international level despite the fact that they represent 1/5th of the world's population, possess 70% of the world's energy resources, and 40% of the global availability of raw material. But the collective OIC share in global trade is barely 6-7%. Their collective GDP amounts to a meagre 5% of the world GDP. The human development indicators of the OIC countries are among the lowest in the world.

In today's globalized world, economic strength determines the status and position of a bloc or a country in the comity of nations. Without economic strength, the Ummah would remain vulnerable to external manipulation.

I remain confident that the Islamic World has the potential to seize the moment and realize the promise of a glorious destiny. The challenges facing Muslims today look formidable but can and should be dealt with collectively and comprehensively. If we do so, I am sure we shall succeed.

Our perpetual dependence on other nations is the reason for our endemic under development. This policy is expendable

provided we decided to make use of our resources for the collective good of the Ummah.

We should prioritize economic growth targets and pursue poverty eradication through mutual financial and investment support. The Member States would need to follow a road map that envisages benchmarks and a timeline in consonance with the MDGs. In recognition of the demands of contemporary reality a necessary shift in our focus from geo-strategic to geo-economic perspectives is required.

The OIC countries must begin focused efforts to ensure poverty eradication, human development, higher education, scientific and technological development and sustained economic growth without which the dream of peace and prosperity within our societies will remain elusive. This can be done because we have the human and material resources.

We must realize that we have to depend on ourselves to change our destiny. We must create interdependence, learning, linkages from each others best practices and using the strength of one to overcome the weakness of the other.

To reap the benefits of science and technology for growth and development we need to create a critical mass of human resource capacity and concrete indigenous projects and programmes. In this regard, setting aside a small portion of our GDP for development of science and technology through COMSTECH and other relevant OIC institutions deserves our priority.

Women constitute half of humanity. The successful utilization of their potential, skills and talents constitutes an important religious, social and development imperative. We must create the enabling environment for people to play a constructive role in our societies.

The sole voice of the Ummah, the OIC, must rise to meet the new and daunting challenges facing the Islamic world. The Organization must become relevant to the new dynamics of the emerging global order. It needs to reorganize and reposition itself to become effective.

The OIC has taken bold initiatives at the UN, both in Geneva and New York, calling for adequate representation of the Ummah

in the Security Council if it were to expand on the basis of consensus. While we appreciate this development, we would like the Organization to be able to do more and its members to extend maximum political and financial support to reactivate and reenergize the OIC.

We must also preserve the Islamic identity of the OIC which has been its *raison d'être*. Our desire for interaction with the outside world should not be at the cost of obfuscating out distinct Islamic identity, and harming our solidarity.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Establishing a credible international Think Tank to engage intellectuals, religious scholars and writers from the Ummah to highlight the Islamic values of a moderate as well as compassionate society to our detractors merits our serious consideration. I am pleased to note that the Commissioners have also proposed to set up an Islamic Think Tank on the same lines. Pakistan shall fully support this initiative.

In conclusion, I pray that, *Insha Allah*, with the blessing of the Almighty, we shall be able to close our ranks and unitedly overcome the challenges before the Ummah. To this end your work here is of immense importance. I wish you every success in your noble endeavour.

Thank you.

(3)

**Speech by H.E. Professor Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu,
Secretary General of the OIC at the Inaugural Session**

H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;

H.E. Dato' Seri Sayed Hamid Albar;

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia;

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

A'ssalamu 'Alaykum Warahmatu'llahi Wabarakatuh. I have the honour to welcome you all in this second meeting of the Eminent Persons Commission (EPC), which the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference held in Putrajaya in October 2005 had entrusted with the task of drawing a strategy and a plan of action to help the Islamic Ummah face the challenges of the 21st century, and outlining a comprehensive plan to reinforce enlightened moderation in the policies and programmes of Islamic societies, in addition to developing a vision for the reform and restructuring of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC).

I have great pleasure to begin my speech by expressing my appreciation and gratitude to H.E. President Pervez Musharraf, to H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of Pakistan, and to the Government and people of Pakistan for their gracious hosting of this second meeting of the Eminent Persons Commission (EPC). As we all know, this auspicious Islamic endeavour has come about as a result of the successful initiative of H.E. President Pervez Musharraf, which not only captures our aspirations to achieve a noble Islamic objective, but expresses also an urgent Islamic need that grows ever more urgent by the day.

The Islamic Ummah is going through critical and difficult circumstances, whilst vicious campaigns are being launched against it in varying forms. In the midst of this, there came the initiative of President Musharraf's for enlightened moderation, which has opened for us new vistas of hope to recover from our tumble, and put this crisis behind us, through a united Islamic action, on the basis of the decision taken by the Tenth Islamic Summit held in Putrajaya, Malaysia in October 2003, which recommended that the implementation of the decision should be entrusted to an Islamic Commission of Eminent Persons.

I am gratified to report that the Eminent Persons Commission (EPC) has been hard at work, studying its brief with dedication in full awareness of its responsibilities. That is why it has made considerable strides in this direction as its reconvenes today to complete and finalize its task.

I should like to avail myself of this opportunity to express to Their Excellencies the Members of the Eminent Persons Commission (EPC) my deepest gratitude and appreciation for the

excellent job they have done, which has laid the groundwork for a promising Joint Islamic Action (JIA). We hope that this work will create the necessary climate conducive to overcoming the obstacles faced by the Islamic Ummah, so that it can unleash its potential to build developed societies for the benefit of Muslims wherein fraternity, love, enlightened moderation, and tolerance may prevail. Such an action will also be conducive to transform the Ummah into an entity which unites the ranks of its peoples, unifies their stands, and combines the capabilities of its countries, with a view to empowering and strengthening Islam and Muslims in dignity and stature.

It has been an auspicious sign and good omen that the proceedings of this commission have started in the first weeks of my assumption of office as the Secretary General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which has inspired me to make my own contribution — to the best of my judgment — to the successful implementation of this important Islamic action, drawing on my long experience of the work of the Organization and its Joint Islamic Action (JIA).

This has been an opportunity for me to work to ensure that the commission's endeavours within its mandate is complemented with necessary harmony with my efforts at the level of the General Secretariat to introduce reforms, reorder its priorities, and create prospects for new activities with the aim of turning the Organization into an effective, proactive institution capable of tirelessly looking after the interests and affairs of Muslims, championing their causes, and defending their rights until our organization is brought at par with the standing of international organizations.

In this regard and within the prerogatives accorded to me, I have introduced several measures and reforms that are fully in consonance with the new course of action that we have adopted. This means that the work for reform and development has been proceeding non-stop in the General Secretariat and that its momentum will pick up speed and grow in competency thanks to the proposals and recommendations you will, undoubtedly, put forward in this connection.

I am also happy to report that in a bid to revitalize the work of the OIC General Secretariat, and to rationalize its work we managed to leave the drafting of resolutions to the concerned member states. The report of Secretary General became very concise and focused. We managed to convince the member states to approve an increase of around 50% in the OIC budget of 2005 which remained static for long years. We also introduced amendments to personnel regulations for the first time during the past 15 years. We managed to convince member states to adopt measures to deal with the states which did not honour their obligation regarding their mandatory contributions to the budget, along with other measures and incentives to encourage the defaulting members to pay their contributions and liquidate their arrears. We are in the process of reviewing the old and outdated scale of contribution shares. We have introduced a new and transparent accounting system, as we started to recruit officials strictly on merit, and according to job description.

The list is long, and the above is all indicative of the efforts of reforms we are trying to introduce to ameliorate the environment of work and the performance of the General Secretariat.

I am also duty bound to express my thanks and appreciation to the generous donations pledged and paid by certain member states to the budget of the Organisation namely Turkey, Malaysia, Qatar and Kuwait.

Honourable Delegates!

I have great pleasure, as we meet to complete the work of the Eminent Persons Commission (EPC) to commend the pioneering role played by the State of Malaysia, Chairman of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference, in supporting Joint Islamic Action (JIA) in so many innovative realms, in addition to deploying laudable and successful efforts in the selection of preeminent members of this commission from amongst the finest scholars and thinkers of the Muslim world. In addition, Malaysia has generously hosted the meeting of the commission and its members in Putrajaya, thus facilitating its work and enabling it to reach invaluable results in its proceedings and deliberations.

In conclusion, I am happy to address my thanks and appreciation to H.E. Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of Pakistan, for gracing this meeting with his personal presence, and for graciously honouring the Headquarters of the General Secretariat in Jeddah with his recent visit. We look forward to his statement and views, which will undoubtedly light the way forward for our deliberations, with Allah's grace and blessings.

I thank you for your kind attention. *Wa'ssalamu 'Alaykum Warahmatu'llahi Wabarakatuh.*

(4)

**Speech by Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed,
Chairman, Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and
Pakistan's Representative to OIC Commission of Eminent
Persons at the Inaugural Session held on May 28, 2005, at
Marriot Hotel, Islamabad**

Honourable Prime Minister;
Foreign Ministers of Pakistan and Malaysia;
Distinguished OIC Secretary General;
Members of the Commission of Eminent Persons;
Ladies and Gentlemen!

I wish to extend a very warm welcome to all the distinguished members of the Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP). The vision for reform and restructuring that was debated in October, 2003 at the OIC Summit in Malaysia is *Insha Allah* being pushed and promoted by these distinguished gentlemen who represent experience, expertise and wisdom from amongst all parts of the Muslim world.

All eyes are focused on this important meeting since it is the first serious initiative on reform and restructuring since the inception of OIC in 1969. What we say and do here will have a larger resonance because of the impact and linkages of issues in this global, interdependent world.

Yesterday I was in Korea for a conference of Asian Political Parties and during that meeting, they also unanimously endorsed

enlightened moderation as the path forward and they underlined that while terrorism has no religion the international community must examine the root causes of terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Today, May 28, is an important anniversary in our national calendar as it is 8 years to the day that Pakistan became a nuclear power, responding to the Indian nuclear tests in May, 1998. While these tests were important to protect Pakistan's security, they had a broader message that is relevant for the present times since Pakistan became a nuclear power, we have demonstrated that this country is as responsible and mature in its handling of this capability as other developed countries. And, secondly, the nuclearization of South Asia has brought stability to the region, particularly relations between Pakistan and India since it provides for parity and, at the same time, it has been the single most important factor in pushing forward a momentum for peace and normalization of relations in South Asia.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Most of the great issues of the day are influenced by debate regarding Islam and the Muslims, whether it is the question of Palestine or Kashmir, the EU talks with Iran on its nuclear programme, discussions for Turkey's membership of European Union, challenge before the new Pope to build a better relationship between Christianity and Islam, the historic oil pipeline between Azerbaijan and Turkey or the fact that, in the recent past, three elections in Europe have seen their outcome influenced in large measure by the Iraq War. My reference is to the recent elections in Britain as well as earlier ones in Germany and Spain.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

When we speak of enlightened moderation as the path forward for the Muslim world, we are not just focusing on the challenges of extremism within Muslim societies alone. Extremism is a threat of a universal nature since it reflects an attitude and a mindset based on bigotry or plain ignorance. For instance, the desecration of the

Holy Quran or the treatment of the inmates of Guantanamo Bay reflects a mindset that is neither enlightened nor moderate. It is in this context that we have a historic responsibility towards the Muslim Ummah to ensure that the OIC becomes an effective vehicle to represent the voice and aspirations of 1.5 billion Muslims.

Our meeting today and tomorrow will endeavour to cope with these challenges and we already have had substantive and fruitful discussions in Malaysia in January, 2005 at the first meeting of the Commission of Eminent Persons.

Insha Allah, we shall work to rise to these challenges:

- The challenge of democracy, giving a say to our people in determining their destiny and running the affairs of State;
- The challenge of defence of Islam by projecting its true image and protecting human rights and the rights of women and all other oppressed sections of our societies;
- The challenge of development of our societies, through education, economic progress, poverty alleviation and youth empowerment;
- The challenge of ensuring that the OIC has a voice in determining the direction of the United Nations reforms particularly the proposed expansion of the UN Security Council which should make that body more representative and not just increase its members. As of now while most issues deal with Islam and the Muslims, neither the OIC nor any Muslim country seem to figure in any reform in the UN Security Council;
- The challenge of the “Battle of Ideas” which is being fought in the media, in think tanks, in academic institutions and in parliaments where, more often than not the Muslim response is tasked and reactive and moment to moment lacking in a cohesive well-thought-out strategy.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The initial signs are good. The winds of change are blowing across the Muslim world with an acceptance that democracy is the destiny of Muslims and elected institutions are dotting the political

map of the Muslim world with increasing speed and on a large scale. This is also reflected in the fact that the OIC Secretary General is the first democratically elected holder of this high office. Then, within a space of 4 months the Commission of Eminent Persons is holding its 2nd meeting, preparing a strategy and a plan of action based on consensus and consultation. The time has come for the Muslim elites, be they political, economic or intellectual, to show their leadership by taking positions through decisions that are implementable. Our margin of error is extremely limited and our actions should speak louder than our words. In any case, we need to change the work culture of OIC by injecting life, vigour and dynamism by discarding the tendency for passing long resolutions or making long speeches that really don't amount to anything, since, unfortunately there is no follow up.

The Muslim world should stop blaming others for our own failings because the fault lies within. In the last quarter of a century we have seen a number of opportunities being squandered and our energies wasted on squabbling with each other. It is time to give priority to our own people and to their welfare so that the gap between the ruler and ruled is bridged. Let it not be said that at the turn of the 21st century our generation too did not prove ourselves equal to the task of reform, rejuvenation and restructuring, which is the need of the hour. On all issues that impact Muslims, the OIC must be the pivotal player and not merely an observer from the sidelines. That is our challenge and, *Insha Allah*, we will meet it with all the will, creativity and commitment at our command. Thank you.

(5)

**Speech by The Honourable Dato' Seri Syed Hamid Albar,
Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia and the Chairman of
the 10th OIC Summit Held at Putrajaya, Malaysia
in October 2005 at the Inaugural Session**

His Excellency Shaukat Aziz,
Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;

His Excellency Khurshid Kasuri, Foreign Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan;
His Excellency Professor Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu
Secretary General of the OIC;
Excellencies, Distinguished Members of the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons; Ladies and Gentlemen!

A'ssalamu 'Alaykum Warahmatu'llahi Wabarakatuh and Good Morning! It is a great honour and privilege for me to say a few words before this august gathering of OIC commissioners coming from different parts of the Muslim world.

At the outset, let me convey my deepest gratitude and appreciation to His Excellency Mr. Shaukat Aziz, Prime Minister of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, for graciously officiating this Second Meeting of the OIC Commission of Eminent Persons in this beautiful city of Islamabad. May I also convey our sincere thanks to the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to me and the participants of this very important Meeting. We are indeed very grateful to the commitment of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for hosting this meeting here today.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank His Excellency Professor Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, Secretary General of the OIC and the Eminent Commissioners for their presence.

As all of you are aware, the main objective of this Meeting is to follow up and finalize the Draft Report which contains a range of recommendations and proposals made by the Commission, when it first met in Putrajaya on 27-29 January 2005.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Consistent with the mandate given by the OIC Summit at Putrajaya, the Final Report of the Commission will encompass a strategy and plan of action enabling the Ummah to meet the challenges of the 21st century, recommendations for reform and restructuring of the OIC system and developing strategies for achieving enlightenment and moderation. The aim of

enlightenment and moderation can be achieved through an Islamic civilizational approach which we have termed *Islam Hadhari* in Malaysia.

These future-oriented plans are, in fact, intertwined and together they would furnish the Ummah with practical steps and measures for the empowerment of the Ummah and the revitalization of the OIC. As an intellectual product of the Commissioners, the recommendations would embody the results of collective *Ijtihad* and moral courage to change the Ummah from within, for we all know that

[“Allah does not change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves.” (Quran: al-Ra‘ad, Ayat 11)]

I do hope that this second and final Meeting would be able to finalize the much-awaited Report, within the allocated time, so that it could be submitted to the forthcoming meeting of the 32nd OICFM, scheduled to be held in Sana‘a, Yemen, from 28-30 June 2005.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

It is vitally important for all of us to work closely together to ensure the timeline and full implementation of the recommendations of the CEP given the grave challenges confronting the Ummah in the areas of politics, security, economics, science and technology and media misrepresentation.

- In the area of politics, we continue to be marginalized in the setting and influencing of the international agenda;
- In the area of security, we are bogged down by conflict within and among Muslim nations; foreign occupation of Muslim lands continue; there are tensions arising from Muslim minority status in a number of non-Muslim countries; and extremist tendencies continue to persist among certain segments of our society;

- In the area of economics, we are yet to fully optimize our vast potentials despite our abundant natural and human resources;
- In the area of science and technology, Muslim countries are still lagging behind and are unable to compete with our counterparts from outside the Muslim world. In general, we allocate and spend very little of our resources on Research and Development (R&D);
- In the area of media and public perception, Muslims also suffer from media misrepresentation and negative stereotyping of Islam and the Ummah.

The challenges before us are extremely complex and intricate, demanding our urgent attention and unified action. Indeed with this plethora of challenges, it has become indispensable to prepare a comprehensive strategy and action plan, which is implementable and assured of producing the desired results.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The world today, continues to be plagued by poverty, violence, discrimination, ignorance and terrorism. Islam as the religion of knowledge and peace has a critical role to play in addressing these challenges. In recognition of this situation, Malaysia has adopted the comprehensive Islamic civilizational approach (*manhaj Hadhari* or *Islam Hadhari*) in Malaysia consistent with the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. The elements of Malaysia's *manhaj Hadhari* emphasise the following

- Faith and piety in Allah
- A just and trustworthy government
- A free and independent people
- Mastery of knowledge
- Balanced and comprehensive economic development
- A good quality of life
- Protection of the rights of minority groups and women
- Cultural and moral integrity
- Safeguarding the environment

- Strong defence capabilities

The above approach is not intended to be exhaustive nor exclusive. In this way, we believe the objective of enlightenment, moderation, progress and bringing the Muslim communities into the mainstream of international development can be achieved.

Today, OIC is at a defining moment in its history. It is important that the Muslim communities study and understand the methodology of humanistic civilization as contained in the Quran –

Malaysia as a Muslim nation endeavours to transform the Muslim community into a successful, progressive and developed society to meet the challenges of our times.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

I would like to make a special mention here of the important role played by the Secretary General of the OIC, His Excellency Professor Ekmeleddin, in the First Meeting of the Commission in Malaysia last January. The Secretary General's new work culture and work ethics which he has introduced at the OIC Secretariat deserve our appreciation and support. The new work culture, I believe, would make the "engine" of the OIC, more efficient, responsive and professional. We must therefore work together to ensure the success of the reform agenda.

Malaysia as the Chair of the 10th OIC Summit and our Prime Minister, Honourable Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, is fully supportive of the proposed reform of the OIC. I pray to Allah *Subanahu wa Ta'ala* to grant success and blessings to this great effort of self-criticism (*muhasabah*) and reform (*islah*) consistent with some of the ideas of great Allama Iqbal in his book *The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

The final Report of the Commission, to my mind, would provide the "New Road Map" for the OIC and Ummah to follow.

It would constitute a holistic agenda of self-renewal for Muslim countries and communities to face the daunting challenges of the 21st century.

The fact that Muslims used to be leaders and pioneers in all fields of knowledge including sciences, arts, architecture, astronomy, mathematics, and medicine at the peak of Islamic Civilization, should spur us harder to regain the lost status. By doing so, *Insha Allah*, we can be in the forefront and leaders again in various fields of knowledge.

We have to think and act as one Ummah. We should not be divided by sectarian or ideological differences. Above all, we must remain united and advance collectively together guided by the teachings of Islam and the traditions of the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.).

May I conclude by conveying my deep appreciation to the Honourable President Musharraf and the Prime Minister of Pakistan for gracing this occasion and the organizers of our Meeting for making it possible for us to meet in Islamabad.

I thank you. *Wa Bi'llahi'taufiq Wa'lhidayah Wa'ssalamu 'Alaikum Warahmatu'llah Wabarakatuh.*

(6)

Proposed Changes in the OIC

ISLAMABAD, May 30: The Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP) of the Organisation of Islamic Conference (OIC) has proposed sweeping changes in the 57-member pan-Islamic body and recommended to change the name of the organization.

The proposals, drawn up at the 2nd meeting of the CEP in Islamabad, were announced at a press conference here by Mr. Ahmad Daud Oglo, member of the Commission and special advisor of the Turkish Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs. Senator Mushahid Hussain, Pakistan's representative to the CEP and chairman of Senate's Committee on Foreign Relations, also spoke on the occasion.

The two-day final meeting of the CEP opened here on May 28 to finalize recommendations for restructuring and revitalizing the OIC.

The meeting was part of the OIC plan to implement a Pakistan-sponsored resolution entitled “Islam and the Muslim World in the 21st Century–The Path of Enlightened Moderation”.

“We have suggested that the name of OIC be changed because its objective is not to have just conferences and summits,” Mr. Daud Oglo said as he summarized a host of recommendations made by the 16-member CEP.

He said in view of the changed global realities a revision of the OIC Charter had also been proposed after 40 years.

Other proposals include strengthening of the position of the OIC Secretary General as well as the OIC Secretariat in Jeddah. The creation of an education consortium to facilitate higher education and academic research has also been proposed.

Massive restructuring of the existing OIC departments, particularly the information department, and the establishing of new departments has also been recommended, Mr. Daud Oglo disclosed.

“After the cold war and 9/11, the CEP believes there is need for new departments,” he said. These include departments of conflict resolution; strategic planning; NGOs and minorities; Islamophobia; and women’s development.

Proposals have also been made to address the question of financial support for restructuring the OIC. Asked how the financial aspect would be addressed effectively since half of the member countries did not pay their dues, Mr. Daud said the Commission had suggested imposition of penalties to ensure that all member countries fulfilled their financial obligations.

“Penalties should be imposed on those member states who have defaulted,” he stated, suspension of membership would be one of the penalties, he disclosed. Responding to a question he said during the meeting the need to evolve a mechanism for effective and timely implementation of decisions taken by the OIC was also stressed.

“One of the proposals is setting up of a council of permanent representatives of the OIC to follow up on decisions taken by the Summit,” Mr. Oglo pointed out.

The recommendations made by the CEP would be presented by the Chairman of the Summit Conference (Malaysia) to the Extraordinary OIC Summit to be held in December in Saudi Arabia, he said.

On the question of inclusion of non-Islamic countries with large Muslim populations in the OIC, Mr. Daud said: “That was discussed and it was decided that the membership criteria will continue to preserve the Muslim character of the OIC.” However, he said the question of attaining an observer status was a different matter. At this point Senator Mushahid Hussain also intervened to say: “Only countries with a Muslim majority will continue to be members of the OIC.” Both Mr. Oglo and Senator Hussain underscored the need for the OIC to take a unified stand on issues and work towards a collective response to the challenges facing the Muslim world.

“What has been missing in the past has been an organized response and the effort now is to focus on that,” Senator Mushahid Hussain said. Referring to the challenge of democracy in the Muslim World he pointed to the gap between the ruler and the ruled. “Democratic path is the path forward,” he declared.

At the outset, Senator Mushahid Hussain pointed out that it was the first serious initiative on reform and restructuring since the inception of OIC in 1969.

Emphasising the need to transform OIC into an effective spokesperson of the Islamic Ummah he said a major outcome of the meeting had been the proposal of establishment of a Think Tank to take up issues in a coordinated manner.

“What we do will have a large resonance because of the impact and linkages of issues in this global, interdependent world,” he stated.

Summing up the proceeding of the final CEP meeting he said it identified specific challenges facing the Muslim world. — Q.A. (*Dawn*, Islamabad, 31 May, 2005)