

**ISLAMIC WORLD ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
2011 DOHA DECLARATION**

**THE ISLAMIC WORLD AND THE WEST:
REBUILDING BRIDGES THROUGH SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

adopted at Doha, Qatar
on
23 October 2011

PREAMBLE

1. The Islamic world extends from Indonesia in the East to the Atlantic Ocean in the West, and from Kazan/Tatarstan in Russia in the North to the source of the Nile in Uganda in the South. It is an area of historical importance, as it is the birthplace of the world's three Abrahamic religions. For centuries, the region was a hub of groundbreaking science. Today, it is of contemporary strategic importance owing to its location and wealth of natural resources;
2. Over the last decade, the region has witnessed political upheaval, military conflict, natural disaster as well as an economic boom and bust. Notwithstanding these difficulties, the same period also witnessed renewed interest by some OIC countries in reinvigorating science and technology (S&T) and higher education, with the launch of a number of top-down initiatives to support education and research in countries such as Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Other countries have also approved plans to allocate more resources to research and development (R&D), among them Egypt, Tunisia, Turkey, Iran and Pakistan;
3. Islam has been and can be the driving force behind an all-encompassing renaissance in STI for a better tomorrow for Muslims and humanity. The current low level of achievement in the Islamic world is the cumulative effect of multiple factors and not from a single dominant cause. Governance in many OIC countries is in a state of turmoil with polities torn between upholding national security – as they perceive it – and maintaining social order on the one hand, and generally adopting good governance practices on the other. These practices include promoting democracy and the 'rule of law,' promulgating accountability and combating corruption;
4. During 2011, a tsunami of political events swept through the Arab region of the Islamic world with aftershocks being felt all over the world. People no longer tolerate the inability of regimes to deliver at the 'political' level and at the 'policies' level;

ON THE QUESTION OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (S&T) FOR DEVELOPMENT, THE ISLAMIC WORLD ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (IAS) RE-ITERATES THAT:

1. The quest for knowledge is a pillar of the Islamic Code of Belief and the pursuit of knowledge has assumed augmented importance in an increasingly knowledge driven world economy. OIC countries therefore must commit themselves to becoming a community that values knowledge, competent in utilizing Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) to enhance their socioeconomic well-being;
2. There exist significant obstacles to S&T in OIC countries, including, *inter alia*, lack of comprehensive STI policies, and strategies emanating therefrom. The dearth or inadequacy of resources, infrastructure and institutions, gender imbalance in S&T, shortage of trained personnel are also obstacles of significant impact;
3. Despite political and economic uncertainties, OIC countries have no choice but to continue to stimulate STI, together with the education sector, if only to overcome some lingering problems like food, water and energy insecurity and to realise some level of national prosperity and national self-fulfilment. OIC countries can learn from the remarkable socioeconomic progress of countries such as Brazil, China, India, Malaysia and Mexico, due in part to the utilization of S&T,

MOREOVER, THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE 18TH IAS CONFERENCE NOTE WITH CONCERN THAT:

- a) There are persisting political problems that exist in the Islamic world today. Problems that hinder socioeconomic advancement and cripple humanity's quest to try to attain a better *common future*. Further, and despite a mushrooming in information and media channels, a wide information divide still exists between the Islamic world and the West that hinders co-operation at the political level and the more down-to-earth 'policies' level including the domains of S&T and higher education; and
- (b) Inter-OIC as well as North-South collaboration in S&T over the last three decades has at best been a modest success. Decision-makers have to come up with more innovative ways to make co-operation less bureaucratic and more effective. This is particularly true in problems that are transboundary in nature such as Water, Energy, Health, Food Security and Climate Change,

THE ISLAMIC WORLD ACADEMY OF SCIENCES FURTHER APPEALS TO OIC DECISION-MAKERS TO:

1. Implement specific actions at the national and international levels including *inter alia*, engender commitment to STI at the highest political level; sizeably increase R&D expenditure and promote the central role of the university as the originator of scientific output;

2. Recognize that prompt action is required to ensure that young scientists cultivate a sense of hope and purpose so that they may contribute to shaping a sustainable future. Future generations in OIC countries must be **educated and not indoctrinated**, they must learn – and not be taught – to work hard, to identify role models in science and life that they can emulate, and learn to work together as teams rather than as individuals. A thorough review of the higher education system in the OIC is required to ensure that the generations of tomorrow are equipped with the tools that enable them to face the challenges of tomorrow. Moreover, our science community leaders are invited to support and mentor the youth and early career scientists;
3. Engage more female scientists in raising the right questions and searching for sound answers if the sizeable women science community of the OIC is to contribute to the development of the *Ummah*. Because women are under-represented in the upper levels of the occupational ladder in S&T, an integrated remedial approach is required that includes mentoring, recognition and the promulgation of best practices;
4. Promote and enhance scientific and technological cooperation among developing and OIC countries, especially involving countries that have developed significant expertise in S&T policy development, S&T infrastructure, biotechnology, nanotechnology, innovative nuclear technology and information technology;
5. Appreciate that advice on science, technology, and innovation needs to reach policymakers. For this to happen, an institutional framework needs to be created and commitment needs to be garnered to support it. At the university level, students must be integrated rather than segregated especially from the science and literary streams so that future political leaders from the various academic backgrounds appreciate the value of science as a means of socioeconomic advancement;
6. As historians of science have propagated a number of theories related to the rise and decline of Islamic science, a need to revisit this issue has ascended not only to highlight the contribution that the Islamic civilization has made to world civilization, but also to learn about the deep-rooted underlying reasons for this decline in order to learn from the lessons of the past and, in today's tensions ridden world, promote harmony between cultures and peoples by highlighting how historically civilisations have all been interdependent. It is imperative that interest of the OIC science community, and ultimately the public, is rejuvenated in what has become known as the alternative narrative of the 'Rise and Decline of Islamic Science,' and why has the ascent of science led to industrialisation in the West and not so in the Islamic civilisation;
7. Acknowledge that Academies of Sciences' roles are multifaceted and multilayered; at the heart of which are the promotion of S&T and the application thereof to increase knowledge, improve socioeconomic conditions in society. Academies of sciences ought to be further involved in promoting science and the scientific endeavour, especially science education, and act as active advocates of science and technology as

a means to overcome the array of problems that humanity faces. They must act as 'sovereigns' of science in their catchment area, unequivocally taking the moral high ground on all issues that face humanity. It is imperative that OIC countries establish national academies of sciences, or where such entities exist strengthen them;

8. Acknowledge that –in the Islamic world in particular- a stumbling block/unnecessary divide exists in the public mindset between science and religion and to embark on deeper forms of reflection on the essentially harmonious relationship between science and religion, through revisiting philosophical traditions, schools of thought prevalent in various traditions, cultures and civilisations,

FURTHERMORE, THE ISLAMIC WORLD ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (IAS), WHICH CELEBRATED ITS 25TH ANNIVERSARY IN OCTOBER 2011:

Extends its appreciation to His Highness the Emir of the State of Qatar and His Excellency the Prime Minister for hosting the conference; to the Permanent Committee for Organising Conferences of the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Doha International Centre on Interfaith Dialogue (DICID), the Islamic Development Bank; COMSTECH; OPEC Fund for International Development (OFID); Perdana Leadership Foundation and the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company for generously sponsoring this international scientific congregation. Appreciation is also extended to the Academies of Sciences that have participated in the conference.