



The Madrid Declaration issued by the World Conference on Dialogue

July 18, 2008

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful.

Praise be to God, Lord of the Universe, and may the peace and blessings of God be upon all His prophets and messengers.

In response to the invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the Muslim World League organized the World Conference on Dialogue in Madrid, Spain, during the period 13- 15 Rajab 1429, corresponding to July 16-18 2008.

The participants in the conference and followers of the world religions and cultures express their profound gratitude for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud for his generous patronage and inauguration of the conference and for his speech to the participants, which they considered as a major document in the conference.

Furthermore, the participants extended their deep thanks and appreciation for His Majesty Juan Carlos I of Spain for his comprehensive welcome speech and for HE Mr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, the prime minister of Spain, for his participation in the opening session and for his efforts in the dialogue of civilizations. The participants also thanked the Spanish government for having the conference in Spain. This great country is home to an historical heritage that belongs to the followers of different religions and has contributed to human civilization.

The participants also recall the objectives of the UN Charter, which calls for exerting collective efforts aiming at the enhancement of international relations, the creation of an exemplary human community and the promotion of dialogue as a civilized way for cooperation.

The participants further remind all people of the Declaration of UN General Assembly in 1994, which called for tolerance and the spread of the culture of peace, and also ask that they recall the declarations of 1995 as the Year of Tolerance and 2001 as the Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations.

The participants commend the Appeal of Makkah issued by the World Islamic Conference on Dialogue, which was called for by the Custodian of Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud and organized by the Muslim World League earlier this year (2008).

The participants build on the agreement among the followers of religions and prominent cultures regarding the value of dialogue as the best way for mutual understanding and cooperation in human relations as well as in peaceful coexistence among nations.

In light of the above, the participants affirm the following principles:

1. Unity of humankind in the original creation and the equality among human beings irrespective of their colors, ethnic backgrounds and cultures.
2. Purity of the nature of humans; as they were created liking good and disliking evil, inclining to justice and avoiding injustice. Such pure nature leads humans to show mercy and to seek certainty and belief.
3. Diversity of cultures and civilizations among people is a sign of God and a cause for human advancement and prosperity.
4. The heavenly messages aim at realizing the obedience of people to their Creator and achieving happiness, justice, security and peace for humankind. These messages seek to enhance ways of understanding and cooperation among people despite differences in their origins, colors and languages. They also call for spreading virtue through wisdom and politeness, and rejecting extremism and terrorism.

5. Respecting heavenly religions, preserving their high status, condemning any insult to their symbols, and combating the exploitation of religion in the instigation of racial discrimination.
6. Observing peace, honoring agreements and respecting unique traditions of peoples and their right to security, freedom and self-determination are the basis for building good relations among all people. Achieving this is a major objective of all religions and prominent cultures.
7. The significance of religion and moral values and the need for humans to revert to their Creator in their fight against crime, corruption, drugs, and terrorism, and in preserving the institution of the family and protecting societies from deviant behaviors.
8. The family is the basic unit of society and its nucleus. Protecting it from disintegration is a cornerstone for any secure and stable society.
9. Dialogue is one of the essentials of life. It is also one of the most important means for knowing each other, cooperation, exchange of interests and realizing the truth, which contributes to the happiness of humankind.
10. The preservation of the environment and its protection from pollution and other dangers are considered a major objective of all religions and cultures.

Mindful of accomplishing the above principles through dialogue, the conference has thoroughly reviewed the process of dialogue and its obstacles, as well as the catastrophes that afflicted humanity in the 20th century. The conference noted that terrorism is one of the most serious obstacles confronting dialogue and coexistence.

Terrorism is a universal phenomenon that requires unified international efforts to combat it in a serious, responsible and just way. This demands an international agreement on defining terrorism, addressing its root causes and achieving justice and stability in the world.

Based on the above, the conference has adopted the following recommendations:

- To reject theories that call for the clash of civilizations and cultures and to warn of the danger of campaigns seeking to deepen conflicts and destabilize peace and security.
- To enhance common human values, to cooperate in their dissemination within societies and to solve the problems that hinder their achievement.
- To disseminate the culture of tolerance and understanding through dialogue so as to be a framework for international relations through holding conferences and symposia, as well as developing relevant cultural, educational and media programs.
- To agree on international guidelines for dialogue among the followers of religions and cultures through which moral values and ethical principles, which are common denominators among such followers, so as to strengthen stability and achieve prosperity for all humans.
- To work on urging governmental and non-governmental organizations to issue a document that stipulates respect for religions and their symbols, the prohibition of their denigration and the repudiation of those who commit such acts.

To fulfill these desired objectives of dialogue by this conference, the participants have agreed on adopting the following:

1. Forming a working team to study the problems hindering dialogue and preventing it from realizing its desired results. Its task is also to prepare a study that provides visions for the solution of these problems and to coordinate among bodies promoting world dialogue.
2. Cooperation among religious, cultural, educational, and media establishments to deepen and consolidate ethical values, to encourage noble social practices and to confront sexual promiscuity, family disintegration and other vices.
3. Organizing inter-religious and inter-cultural meetings, conducting research, executing media programs and using the Internet and other media for the dissemination of a culture of peace, understanding and coexistence.
4. Promoting the issue of dialogue among the followers of religions, civilizations and cultures within youth, cultural, educational, and media activities.
5. Calling upon the UN General Assembly to support the results reached by this conference. It is strongly recommended to make use of these recommendations in enhancing dialogue among the followers of religions, civilizations and cultures through conducting a special UN session on dialogue. The participants express their hope that the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud will use his good offices with the concerned bodies in convening this session as soon as possible. It will be the pleasure of the members of this conference to take part in that session through a representative delegation, members of which are to be chosen by the Muslim World League.

In abiding with the agreed-upon principles and concepts, the participants do emphasize that it is essential for this world dialogue to be open and that its sessions be held periodically.

The participants have extended their profound gratitude to King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, the King of Saudi Arabia, for his kind initiation and invitation to this world dialogue. They also expressed their appreciation for the Muslim World League and other bodies that cooperated in organizing this conference. They have applauded the continued efforts made by the league in the fields of dialogue and cooperation among nations and peoples, hoping that the common objectives, for which humankind aspires, are accomplished.

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