

“THE MADRID DECLARATION” ISSUED AT THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DIALOGUE

In the Name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful, Praise be to Allah and peace be upon all His prophets and messengers.

Participants in this International Conference on Dialogue from different world religions and cultures as well as scholars and researchers express their deep gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, for his sponsorship of this conference and for his opening speech, regarded as a prime legal document for this conference, organised by the Muslim World League in Madrid, Spain, from 13-15/07, 1429 AH (16-18/07, 2008AD).

Expressing their deep gratitude for His Majesty, King Juan Carlos of Spain for his participation in this conference, his welcoming, his speech and his directives; for His Excellency, Jose Luis Rodriguez, the prime minister of Spain for his participation in the opening session of the conference, and for his efforts in the civilised dialogue; and for the government of Spain for hosting the conference; Spain, which has a historical legacy for followers of religions contributing to humankind’s civilisation;

Recalling, the aims of the UN Charter inviting all to combine their efforts in reinforcing international relations, in -establishing an ideal humanitarian society, and in strengthening dialogue as a civilised method for cooperation;

Recalling the 1994 Declaration of the UN General Assembly, and its directives inviting all to tolerance and the spread of Culture of Peace, and declaring 1995 as a Year for Peace, and 2001 as a Year for Intercultural Dialogue;

Lauding the Makkah Declaration issued at the World Islamic Conference on Dialogue called for by the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz, which was organised by the Muslim World League in the year 2008;

Starting from the premise that the agreement among proponents of religions and established cultures as the ideal means for understanding and cooperation in human relations as well as the peaceful coexistence among nations;

They, further, emphasise the following points:

- The unity of humankind and its origin, as well as the equality of all peoples regardless of their colours, races and cultures.
- The sound human instinct, which inclines humans to goodness rather than evil, and to justice rather than to injustice. This sound instinct leads humans to mercy and motivates them to search for certainty and faith.

- Cultural diversity is God's Sign and Divine Wisdom. It is the cause for the progress and the prosperity of humankind.
- Divine religions aim at fulfilling the obedience of people to their Creator, and achieving happiness, justice and security for all of humankind. They strive to strengthen the means of understanding and coexistence among peoples regardless of their different origins, colours or languages. They also call for the promotion of virtue with wisdom and gentility and rejecting extremism and terrorism.
- The respect owed to divine religions, and the protection of their status, as well as the condemnation of disrespecting their symbols, in addition to putting an end to using religions to stir up racial discrimination.
- Peace, commitment and the keeping of promises, as well as the respect of peoples' uniqueness, their entitlement to peace and liberty and their right to make their own decisions in their affairs are the essence of relationships among peoples, and attaining it would be an important achievement for religion or any other respectable human culture.
- The importance of religion and high moral standards and the return of people to their Creator in their efforts to fight crime, corruption, drugs and terrorism. In addition to that would be the importance of family as a coherent unit, and the protection of societies against deviations.
- Family is the basis of society and its first building block. Its preservation and protection from dissolution is a necessity for any stable and peaceful society.
- Dialogue is a necessity of life and is one of the most important -means of getting to know and cooperate with others for the wellbeing of everybody. It is a necessity for getting at the facts that help achieve happiness for all of humankind.
- All religions share the common goal of preserving the environment and protecting it from pollution and environmental disasters.

In order to achieve the above principles through dialogue, the conference reviewed the course of dialogue and its obstacles, recalling the disasters of the 20th century, while recognizing that terrorism is the major obstacle for dialogue and coexistence. It further asserts that terrorism is a world phenomenon requiring international efforts to deal with it in a serious, responsible and just manner. This is to be done through an agreement, which defines terrorism, deals with its causes, and strives to achieve justice and stability in the world.

Based on that, the conference recommends the following:

- The rejection of the theories of the inevitability of the clash of civilisations and cultures, and the warning against campaigns which seek to deepen conflicts, destabilise world peace and coexistence.
- Strengthening the common humanitarian values, and working towards reinforcing them in societies, as well as dealing with problems, which may prevent that from happening.

- Disseminating the culture of tolerance through dialogue so that it can turn into the framework for international relations. All this is to be achieved through the convening of conferences and symposia, and through the development of cultural, educational and media pro-programmes conducive to this concept.

- The agreement on the basis of dialogue amongst followers of different religions and cultures aiming at strengthening the high moral standards and principles which represent commonly shared factors among proponents of religions and human cultures, for the sake of reinforcing stability and attaining prosperity for all of humankind.

- The charting of a document, by governmental and non-governmental organisations calling for the respect and the protection of religions and their symbols, and criminalising those who violate it.

To turn those objectives, aimed for by the conference through dialogue, into a reality, participants agreed to employ the following means:

- The formation of a workgroup to study the obstacles standing in the way of dialogue in achieving its desired objectives, and to prepare a study which includes visions towards resolving these problems, in coordination with international dialogue institutions.

- Joint work involving the various religious, cultural, educational and media establishments to reinforce high and noble moral standards, to -encourage ethical social interaction, and to fight against moral decadence, corruption and the breakdown of family, in addition to the various other vices and ills.

- Organising meetings and symposia jointly, doing research, developing media programmes and using the Internet and other means of communication to disseminate the culture of dialogue.

- Listing the issues of interfaith dialogue in the various activities of the youth, and their cultural and educational media.

- Inviting the UN General Assembly to ratify the outcomes of this conference, and to take advantage of that in furthering dialogue through a special session dedicated to it.

Participants at the conference hope from the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to make his efforts at holding this session as soon as possible. It will be the pleasure of participants to partake in the session through a delegation selected from them by the Muslim World League.

In commitment to the principles and concepts agreed upon during the conference, participants emphasize that discourse should remain periodically open.

Participants expressed their thanks for the call and the invitation by King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia, for this international dialogue. They also expressed their appreciation for the Muslim World League and others who have helped organise this conference. They lauded the continued joint efforts for dialogue and cooperation

among peoples and nations, hoping that humankind will attain the common objectives desired by humanity as a whole.

Issued in Madrid, on 15 Rajab 1429 AH / July 18th 2008