

6TH THINK TANKS FORUM OF THE ISLAMIC COUNTRIES ISLAMABAD DECLARATION

- 1. The 6th Think Tanks Forum of Islamic Countries** convened in **Islamabad** during **6-8 March, 2015**. The Forum was hosted by The Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Studies (TASAM), The Pakistan Senate Defence Committee, Pakistan China Institute and the Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS). The Forum had broad representation from various parts of the Muslim world and the 6th Islamic Think Tank Forum decided some new, landmark initiatives to institutionalize the Forum as the principal platform for intellectuals, thinkers, opinion leaders and heads of the think tanks of Muslim countries.
- 2.** The Forum wishes to thank the President of Pakistan, H.E. Mamnoon Hussain, the Adviser to Prime Minister on Foreign Affairs and National Security, Mr. Sartaj Aziz and the Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Senator Syed Nayyer Hussain Bokhari for graciously accepting the invitation to address the Forum, especially lending prestige and strength to this important global conference.
- 3.** The Forum decided that in the 21st Century, which is seeing shift in the balance of economic and political power away from the West to the East with the "battle of ideas" predominant, it is important that the Think Tanks Forum play the role of a bridge between cultures, countries and continents. Hence, it was decided to change its name from Islamic Think Tanks Forum to the **World Islamic Forum (WIF)**.
- 4.** The World Islamic Forum will also promote a narrative of Islam based on realities on the ground and the facts as the exit, namely, presenting and promoting Islam as the religion of peace, harmony, balance, tolerance and coexistence.
- 5.** The World Islamic Forum would also develop an outreach to communities and countries outside the OIC as well so that there are partnership and coalitions developed on common platforms in the current geo-political scenario.
- 6.** The Forum participants condemned extremism and terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and clearly state that terrorism has no religion, caste, creed or colour. The fight against terrorism and militancy is in fact a struggle to reclaim the rightful legacy and the essence of Islam which was clearly enunciated by the Holy Prophet (PBUH), both in his teachings as well as actions under his leadership.
- 7.** The Forum also condemned Islamophobia emerging in certain European countries and urges that it should be considered a crime similar to anti-Semitism under existing laws of various countries of Europe.
- 8.** The Forum reaffirmed its commitment to uphold the equality of all persons, irrespective of religion, gender, caste, colour or creed and termed any discrimination against any ethnic group or community or violence on the basis of hatred, prejudice and bigotry or hate speech as a crime against humanity.

9. The Forum also rejected any threat or use of force to resolve issues and said international law and the UN Charter are paramount and the forum supports the inviolability of existing state borders and frontiers of all countries.

10. The Forum also supports durable peace, stability and security with the resolution of long standing disputes in various regions including Palestine, Kashmir, Cyprus and Nagorno Karabagh.

11. The Forum seeks promotion of regional economic cooperation, particularly in the field of education, energy, education and economy as well as the establishment of infrastructure and mechanisms that help in bringing out the best of the creative talent of people especially the youth and women of various countries who are in the vanguard of much -needed change and reform in Muslim society.

12. The Forum urges Muslim regimes and leaders to bridge the gap between elite and street by involving civil society and providing equality of opportunity to promote fundamental rights.

To institutionalize the World Islamic Forum as the voice of Muslims intellectuals, opinion leaders and thinkers, the World Islamic Forum decided on the following institutional mechanisms:

a) A permanent 5 -person Steering Committee to be formed to coordinate the activities of the Forum and to develop an institutional voice with civil society organizations, NGOs, think tanks and academia in different parts of the world as well as deciding on the agenda and activities of the World Islamic Forum annual conferences.

b) The Wise People Board of the Islamic Forum should be renamed as the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) of the World Islamic Forum.

c) The international secretariat of the World Islamic Forum be hosted at Istanbul with TASAM while the regional secretariat for Asia be established at Islamabad hosted by the Pakistan China Institute as well as in other regions of the world.

d) The World Islamic Forum activities will include a dynamic and interactive website in the English, Turkish, Arabic and French languages, preparation of research reports and studies on issues facing the Muslim Umma and participation at various international conferences which concerns the Muslim World.

e) Istanbul Islamic Awards are a welcome development and these should be an annual feature.

f) World Islamic Forum decided to hold a 'Muslim Women's Summit' in Kuala Lumpur in September 2015.

g) World Islamic Forum decided to convene its next conference in Tehran, Islamic Republic of Iran in 2016.

The Forum concluded with a vote of thanks to the hosts of the Forum in Islamabad especially the Pakistan China Institute, the Pakistan Senate Defence Committee, TASAM and the KAS for hosting what turned into an historic event that will go a long way in winning the "battle of ideas" and presenting a positive narrative about Islam and Muslims that is badly needed in the present times.

6-8 March 2015, Islamabad