

## **The Madrid Declaration**

### **18 July 2008**

Issued by The World Conference on Dialogue, organized by the Muslim World League in Madrid, Spain, under the patronage of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, 16-18 July 2008.

In response to the kind invitation of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud, the Muslim World League (MWL) organized the World Conference on Dialogue in Madrid, Spain, between 13 to 15 /Rajab/ 1429H (16 to 18 /July/ 2008), the participants in the Conference, who included followers of the world religions coming from different cultures, in addition to researchers and intellectuals, expressed their full appreciation to Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud for his patronage and inauguration of the Conference as well as for his speech to the participants, which they considered as a major document of the Conference.

They also expressed their full appreciation to H.M. King Juan Carlos I of Spain for his participation in the Conference with a comprehensive welcome speech, and to H.E. Mr. Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, Prime Minister of Spain for his participation in the inaugural session of the Conference and for his efforts in the dialogue among cultures and civilizations, and to the Spanish Government for holding the Conference in Spain, which enjoys a historical heritage common to the followers of different religions and has contributed substantially to the human civilization.

They recalled the objectives of the UN Charter, which call for making collective efforts aimed at the enhancement of international relations, the creation of an exemplary human community and the promotion of dialogue as a civilized way of cooperation.

They also recalled the Document of UN General Assembly in 1994, which called for tolerance and spread of the culture of peace, as well as the declarations of 1995 as the Year of Tolerance and 2001 as the Year of Dialogue among Civilizations.

The participants acknowledged the Appeal of Makkah issued by the International Islamic Conference for Dialogue, called by the Custodian

of Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud and organized by the Muslim World League earlier in 2008.

They set out from the agreement among the followers of religions and cultures on the value of dialogue as the best way to achieve mutual understanding and cooperation in human relations as well as in peaceful coexistence among nations.

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

1. The unity of humankind has existed from the origin of its creation and there is equality among human beings irrespective of their color, ethnic background and culture.
2. Human beings suffer from interior dichotomy between evil inclination and love for good and justice. With divine help and the active participation of each person, they can dominate what in them is evil and progress on the path of good.
3. Diversity of cultures and civilizations among peoples is a reality permitted by God and should serve human advancement and prosperity.
4. Religions strive to call for the obedience of persons to their Creator, as well as to promote happiness, justice, security and peace for humankind. These religions seek to enhance ways of mutual understanding and coexistence among people despite their differences in origin, color and language. They also call for spreading virtue with wisdom and respect and for rejection of extremism and terrorism.
5. Respect for religions and their symbols should be promoted, therefore preventing the derision of what people consider sacred.
6. Respecting human dignity, promoting human rights, observing peace, honoring agreements and respecting unique traditions of peoples as well as 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 return to their Creator in their fight against crime, corruption, addiction of drugs and terrorism, and to preserve the institution of family and protect societies from deviant behaviors.
8. Family is considered the basic unit of society and its nucleus, and therefore it must be protected against any disintegration as it is the cornerstone for a secure and stable society.
9. Dialogue is one of the essentials of life. It is also one of the most important means for people to become acquainted with each other; to foster cooperation and mutual benefit, and to search for the truth, and so contribute to happiness of humankind.
10. The preservation of environment and its protection from pollution and other dangers are considered major objectives for all religions and cultures.

Mindful of realizing the above-mentioned principles through dialogue,

the Conference reviewed the process of dialogue and its impediments, indicating the catastrophes that afflicted humanity in the 20th century. The Conference noted that terrorism is one of the most serious obstacles to dialogue and coexistence, and that it is a global phenomenon which must be confronted in a serious, responsible and just way and therefore requires unified international efforts. This calls for international agreement on defining terrorism, addressing its root causes and achieving justice and stability in the world.

Based on the above, the Conference recommends the following:

1. To reject theories that call for clash of civilizations and cultures, and to warn people of the danger of campaigns seeking to deepen conflicts and destabilize peace and coexistence.
2. To enhance common human values, to cooperate in their dissemination within societies and to address the problems that hinder their achievement.
3. To disseminate the culture of tolerance and mutual understanding through dialogue so as to make it a framework for international relations by holding conferences and symposiums, as well as by developing relevant cultural, educational and media programs.
4. To agree on guidelines for dialogue among the followers of religions and cultures through which moral values and ethical principles that are common elements of religions are confirmed and supported so as to strengthen stability and achieve prosperity for all humans.
5. To work on the issuance of a document by governmental and non-governmental international organizations that promotes the respect of religions and their symbols, as well as the prohibition of their denigration and the condemnation of such acts.

To fulfill the objectives formulated by this Conference, the participants agreed on adopting the following:

1. Forming a working team to study the problems which hinder dialogue and prevent it from realizing its desired objectives. The team would also prepare a study that provides a vision for solution of these problems.
2. Promoting cooperation among religious, cultural, educational and media institutions to consolidate ethical values, and encourage reputable social practices as well as to confront the sexual promiscuity, family disintegration and other such degeneration.
3. Organizing inter-religious and inter-cultural meetings, conducting research, executing media programs, and using the Internet and other media for dissemination of the culture of peace, understanding and coexistence.
4. Promoting the practice of dialogue among religions, civilizations and cultures through youth, educational, cultural, media activities.
5. Informing the United Nations General Assembly of the results reached by this Conference, as well as of their desire to have the UN

General Assembly's cooperation in their implementation.

In abiding by the agreed-upon principles and concepts, the participants emphasize that it is essential for this World Conference on Dialogue to be characterized by openness. Its sessions should be held periodically. The participants extend their profound gratitude to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Abdullah Bin Abdul Aziz Al-Saud for his initiative and invitation to this World Conference on Dialogue. They also express their appreciation to the Muslim World League and other organizations that cooperated with it in the organization of this Conference. They encourage the MWL to continue its efforts in the fields of dialogue and cooperation among nations and peoples, hoping that their common aspirations can be achieved.