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Final Statement

Initiatives to Protect Youth Against Extremist and Violent Thought, Promote Religious Freedom and the Values of Tolerance, and Counter Hatred and Marginalization

For action called for by His Excellency, the Secretary General of the Muslim World League, Sheikh Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, the International Conference on “Initiatives to Protect Young People against Extremist and Violent Ideas: Implementation Mechanisms” was held at the United Nations Headquarters in Geneva on Tuesday and Wednesday, February 18-19, 2020.

The conference included senior officials in government and the private sector from countries around the world, as well as religious leaders, security personnel and academic practitioners in the fields of education, psychology and social theory.

Those who attended did so out of a unity of purpose: To protect youth against extremism, violence, and terrorism; to combat hatred and marginalization; and to promote religious freedom and the values of tolerance.



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The conference issued the following recommendations and decisions:

1. We urge educational institutions around the world to create curricula with interactive activities taught by skilled teachers specialized in molding the minds of children and young adults in a sound manner. We consider this effort critical for stability, harmony, community development, and the future of human peace in general. These interactive approaches must emphasize the following:
 - a. Instill the firm belief in the inevitability of difference, diversity, and pluralism among people, since within its positive framework; it represents enrichment to mankind that boosts their capabilities and unity.
 - b. To strongly convince people that religious, ethnic, intellectual and civilizational clash represent a great menace to national security and world peace, and harmony among nations and peoples in general, and national societies in particular. This idea must be supported by profound evidence learned from human history.
 - c. To cleanse children's and young people's schools curricula from any historical texts or facts that would encourage



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- conflict and hatred and incite hostility and racism.
- d. Emphasis must be put on the objective equality among human beings, however, preference should be set equally among those who have great values, creativity and benefit to humanity. Yet, these should not contradict national affinity that constitutes a priority in loyalty, benefit and sacrifice.
 - e. To emphasize the importance of mutual respect between all human diversity as being an important ground for peace and harmony of nations and societies.
 - f. To provide and train students on skillful dialogue and how to deal with negative ideas and practices, while at the same time highlighting the importance of the value of forgiveness and tolerance.
 - g. Accentuate utter rejection of any thought that foster or call for hatred, racism, exclusion and marginalization, under any pretext.
- 2** Responsible authorities in each country should create effective programs to enhance the role of the family in shaping the mindset of children and young adults, and leading them toward greater pacifism.



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- 3** Responsible authorities in each country should endorse effective programs and establish partnerships among religious, cultural and ethnic groups that promote diversity and enhance integration.
- 4** Nations should enact legislation to prevent hate speech, racism and marginalization, enabling the nation-state to protect the rights of the majority and minorities, fully consistent with national and international human rights regulations.
- 5** Religious and intellectual institutions should confront the ideas of extremism, violence and terrorism by addressing the particulars of the ideology and dismantling them in depth and with clarity, and to call on the United Nations to take more effective actions to criminalize Cyber Terrorism; and to force social media companies to cancel all accounts disseminating materials abetting terrorism and extremism.
- 6** We support the enactment of legislation to prevent any method designed to rouse sheer emotions with disregard to the threats posed by extremism, violence and terrorism.



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- 7** We advocate invitations to all platforms of religious and intellectual influence to develop a narrative to address reason and reality, beyond feeling, emotion and sentiment.
- 8** We call for the prohibition of the export of religious fatwa and religious ideas outside the jurisdiction of their spatial circumstances. Enlightened religious thought must take into account the evolution of fatwa and sermons according to their time of issuance, geography and specific conditions. Religions were revealed as a mercy to the world, to enable people to realize their interests and improve their condition.
- 9** We support the prohibition of any religious financing that comes from abroad to benefit only certain domestic parties.
- 10** We advocate for the prohibition of training of clerics outside their spatial conditions or the recruitment of religious trainers from abroad.
- 11** We call for the prevention of foreign guardianship of any religious centers, including those that practice religious work under a non-religious or generic name. Centers should implement effective



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programs to confront ideas of religious extremism, and actively and effectively promote national harmony.

- 12** We recommend the establishment of a center for civilizational communication in Geneva to serve as a global platform for dialogue, the promotion of friendship and cooperation among nations and peoples, and bridging detrimental religious, cultural and ethnic divisions. This center should operate on the basis of religious and humanitarian commonalities to foster a world of peace and harmony. The center must be multicultural and representative of religious, ethnic and other diversities.
- 13** We seek the enactment of legislation to prevent the incitement or hostility toward religions and races, including Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.
- 14** We urge religious leaders to organize youth activities to promote dialogue and religious and humanitarian partnerships to advance peace, religious and ethnic harmony, and the alliance of civilizations.
- 15** We hold that religious freedom is a human right that cannot



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be forced on others or forfeited by anyone. No abuse or marginalization should be inflicted on anyone based on religion, as there can be no compulsion in religion.

- 16** We maintain that the erroneous practices committed by some adherents of religions do not express religions themselves.
- 17** We believe that an objective dialogue rewards the values of openness, tolerance, and cultural logic.
- 18** We hold that man was not created evil, racist, or hateful, but can be made so by the negative aspects of education, family, and societal environment, which are responsible for negative morality.
- 19** We see the disdain of religion as an absurd practice with a long history of promulgating confrontation. We stress the importance of interfaith dialogue, respect of differing opinion and religiosity within an ethical framework. Contempt for religion has generated and perpetuated clashes of civilization, and escalated extremism on both sides, to the detriment of everyone, and creating additional threats to the security of states and societies through violent extremism.



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20 We urge religious leaders; intellectual, social and human rights institutions; and relevant and interested international, governmental and civil bodies to promote initiatives to advance tolerance and the alliance of civilizations. We seek from them joint international programs characterized by effectiveness and seriousness that implement practical steps that go beyond due human rights entitlements. The goal should be the attainment of the true meaning of kindness and tolerance, and a cultural alliance that creates tangible impact, which is subject to evaluation and measurable.

21 We recommendation in general terms the adoption of the following initiatives:

- a. Friendship and cooperation between Nations and Peoples “for a more understanding and peaceful world... and more harmonious and integrated societies.”
- b. Comprehensive education for behavioral training in the pre-adulthood stage.
- c. Religious behavior free of escalated emotion and poor awareness.



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- d. The family as incubator and a key component of childhood and young adulthood.
- e. Peace of Civilizations.
- f. Islamophobia: Diagnosis, Analysis and Treatment.
- g. Neo-Nazis and Anti-Semitism: Diagnosis, Analysis and Treatment.
- h. Shaping civilized behavior among religious youth.
- i. Causes and treatment of extremist religious youth.
- j. How do we eliminate violence and terrorism?
- k. Errors and repercussions in the diagnosis and treatment of religious freedoms.
- l. Idealism and realism.
- m. Errors in religious youth thinking and treatment.
- n. Between soft power and hard power in combating violent extremism.
- o. Dismantling the negative connotations – A case study in the religiosity of Muslim youths.
- p. Marginalization and poverty as causes of extremism and violence: Diagnosis, Analysis and Treatment.
- q. Addressing the inferences of extremism with religious texts



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and historical facts. This initiative includes analysis of the inefficiencies in efforts to combat extremism over the past twenty years.

- r. Three initiatives related to addressing the application of new media in violent extremism.
- s. Correct statistics and dimensions in the studies of extremism and violent extremism.
- t. Assigning responsibility, defining tasks and measuring results in cases of combating extremism and violent extremism.
- u. The ideal security for dealing with cases of extremism and violent extremism. This initiative takes into consideration legislative and social disparities between countries.
- v. Evaluating international efforts to combat violent extremism and terrorism.
- w. Shared Values.
- x. Religious Discourse that Makes Peace.
- y. Europe and Islam.
- z. Integration Ministries in Europe.



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bb. National and Religious Identity between the concepts of Conflicts and Integration.

22 We refer the remainder of the initiatives to further study and evaluation, and presentation of the findings at the second conference meeting.

23 The conference administration will set up a coordination committee to follow up on the implementation of decisions and recommendations, and to submit a periodic report thereof.