



Under the high patronage of His Excellency Mr Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia

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**“Towards boosting and activating joint Islamic
educational action”**

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**Strategy for the Development of Education
in the Islamic World
(amended version)**

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INTRODUCTION

The policies and plans that advanced countries have adopted to improve and develop their education systems and training methods, along with their strategically thought-out smooth transition from the concept of education to the concept of learning, accompanied by a restructuring of the related working systems and a significant increase in the patterns of production and human development indicators, amid a constantly renewed technological and communication revolution, conclusively prove the close correlation between the stock of knowledge, skills, science and technology that countries have built and the development, progress and well-being they have managed to provide to their communities.

The responsibilities of the educational institution have become more challenging in this globalized era and critical stage in the history of nations and peoples, which are experiencing profound social and economic changes and redesigning their patterns of production that have become primarily based on cutting-edge and knowledge-intensive technology. On the one hand, the educational institution should preserve its traditional role of responding to the needs, specificities and priorities of the nation state. On the other hand, it must develop itself in order to meet the priorities and requirements of the global market. In response to the increasing internal development challenges and external cultural, economic and political challenges, the Islamic countries have an option but to develop mutual cooperation and integration mechanisms and strengthen relations with specialized regional and international organizations. The objective is to promote their stock of intelligence and knowledge and gain a foothold in the fields of creativity, innovation and effective contribution to the building of human civilization in the present and the future.

Considering that education, vocational and technical training and scientific research constitute the driving force of development and its solid basis, and in view of the current and future challenges facing education and training systems in the Islamic countries, education experts and policy makers in the Islamic world are invited to develop a new vision for education. The latter will help generate sustainable strategies and plans causing a shift from a teacher-centered to a learner-centered approach and providing a functional education that combines deep-rooted authenticity and enlightened modernity. Under these strategies and action plans, knowledge would be a means to develop the life skills of students, harness their mental, cognitive, emotional and psychomotor abilities, develop their professional and technical qualifications, and entrench edifying values and civilized practices in their behavior. They will also help our communities free themselves from dependency and mere consumption to become an active actor and participant in the development and production of knowledge and technology.

To this end, and as part of its responsibilities towards its Member States, foremost of which is the provision of expertise and relevant reference strategic documents, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) has carried out a thorough and radical revision of the document it prepared 27 years ago under the title: **"Towards a strategy for the development of education in Islamic countries"**. In so doing, it has drawn on the necessary educational expertise and mobilized the time and effort needed, making -where appropriate- changes, deletions and additions, in such a way as to ensure that this amended framework strategic document will be as sound as to meet the challenges facing the Islamic world at present and in the future.



The background of the page is a light blue gradient. On the right side, there is a stack of books. The pages of the books are fanned out, creating a dense, fan-like pattern that extends from the top right towards the center. The books are white, and the pages have a slight yellowish tint, suggesting they are old or well-used. The overall composition is clean and modern.

Chapter I

General conceptual and
methodological guidelines

I. CONCEPT AND GOALS OF THE NEW VISION FOR EDUCATION

Education has played -and will always play- a lead role in the edification of man and human societies and civilizations through the development of the creative and productive capacities of individuals and groups. The cultural transformations that mankind has gone through, especially since the start of the Industrial Revolution, have revealed the close links between nations' stock of knowledge, science and technology, on one hand, and the economic and social development they have achieved, on the other. In this era of major regional blocs founded on the principles of solidarity, cooperation and integration, Islamic countries have no choice but to develop their cooperation and integration mechanisms in order to promote the knowledge and know-how they have accumulated.

At this critical time in the history of humanity in general and the history of the Islamic world in particular, and amid the sociopolitical developments that have marked several Member States in the recent years, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) aspires to see education policymakers in the Islamic world adopt an inclusive, forward-looking and innovative vision for education. Inclusiveness requires a comprehensive understanding of education issues, and a holistic answer to the challenges associated with them, within the framework of national sustainable development plans, with the participation of all parties concerned, and in line with the relevant objectives and plans of the international community. A forward-looking vision presupposes a long-term strategic planning based on wide-ranging national consultations and a deep situational analysis of the education system and past experiences, along with a clear definition of the objectives to be achieved through strict mechanisms, procedures and stages. Innovativeness is organically linked to the dissemination of a culture of review, reform and development in society and among those in charge of educational affairs, on the one hand, and to consolidating the practice of regular periodic revisions upheld by a strong political and societal will to pursue sustained development. Such a vision would constitute the basis for the development of sustainable educational strategies and plans designed to provide a functional education combining deep-rooted authenticity and enlightened modernity. Under these strategies and action plans,

knowledge should be a means to develop the life skills of students, harness their mental, cognitive, emotional and psychomotor abilities, and entrench edifying values and civilized practices in their behavior.

Based on this vision, education systems in the Islamic countries should play a crucial leading role in the development of Islamic societies, as they constitute the indispensable driving force to renew the ideas and behaviors of individuals and groups and stimulate their creativity and ingenuity. They are also required to ensure citizens' rights consisting in what is known today as the five education principles, namely: education for all, life-long learning, compulsory education, equality of opportunity, and free education.

Any steady development in the education sector in Islamic world countries constitutes a real opportunity at a time when revolution takes a new look, reflected in human capital and the stock of intelligence, amid constantly changing international environment and economic climate. However, this growth is a twofold challenge in itself, consisting in the need to meet the heavy and accelerating social demand for education while fulfilling the requirements of quality and further harmonizing education with the rapidly changing cognitive frames.

Accordingly, the formulation of a new vision for innovative advanced educational plans has become -more than ever- a vital necessity to achieve the desired reform and bridge the gaps through evaluation. The ultimate objective is to ensure a future based on science, knowledge and innovation and characterized by new educational plans and programmes that instill in the hearts and minds of students the seeds of critical and analytical thinking, a culture of innovation and creativity, and the notion of sustainable education which gives a special status to learning activities in the individual's life and turns learning into a life-long behavior.

The new vision for education aims at motivating the desire of the young generations to continuous and lifelong learning, collaborative and responsible work and civic behavior. It also seeks to cultivate in their minds the values of preserving the environment and natural resources as

well as flexible response to the continuous changes in knowledge while maintaining one's national and religious identity, which has always stood in fourteen centuries as a beacon for knowledge, learning, constructive work, love, brotherhood, cooperation and mutual understanding among all mankind.

Given all these vital requirements in a rapidly changing world, ISESCO stresses the urgent need for a new innovative and forward-looking vision for education systems in the Islamic world, based on the Islamic perspective of man-

kind's ordained mission on earth and the relationship they are required to maintain with its resources, based on the concepts of Trust (*Amana*) and Stewardship (*Istikhlaf*). The objective is to reshape the roles of education in achieving sustainable development and facing present and future developments and requirements, by adopting approaches and curricula based on advanced science results and making use of mechanisms enabling Islamic countries to engage in knowledge societies and contribute to knowledge production, thereby marking its presence in the writing of humanity's cultural history in its new form.

II. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD IN THE CONTEXT OF INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CHANGES

Since the early 21st century, the global landscape has clearly seen many changes requiring the reform of the education system and its mechanisms, in order to meet present global requirements and future needs of the world in general and the Islamic countries in particular, thus empowering our Islamic world to contribute to contemporary human civilization in its new form.

Given the impact of these changes on the educational system, it is important to underline the most significant of them:

1. GLOBALIZATION

While different definitions of the concept exist, by globalization we mean here the increasing sharing of information and knowledge among people, the dismantlement of boundaries and distances between countries to form single global blocs that unite mankind in a single global entity. Globalization has brought about major changes in the world order, with a great impact on the various social, cultural, political and economic aspects as well as on the production and distribution patterns throughout the world.

If globalization has contributed to introducing radical changes in the structure of the world order, it has also become –or at least seeks to become– “a unique pattern” or system in the various social, economic, cultural, intellectual and value-related aspects. This has impacted the nature of knowledge and its sources and trends, and made it necessary to review teaching and learning methods in order to respond to the new requirements.

We are thus facing a new kind of knowledge-intensive economic activity, which continuously needs increased research that, in turn, needs to be constantly generated, reviewed and improved. There is no doubt that the ongoing development in the field of knowledge and research has become a major challenge for the educational system at the various levels and stages, as it will be its responsibility to produce a workforce whose educational background and skills meet the needs of the ever-changing economic environment. In other words, the responsibility of the educational institution will be two-fold. On the one hand, it should maintain its traditional role of responding to the needs, specificities and priorities of the nation state. On

the other hand, it will be obliged to develop itself in order to satisfy the priorities and requirements of the global market.

Any new educational strategy in the Islamic world has to deal with globalization in such a manner as to take advantage of its positive aspects, and ensure a rational exposure to other nations’ experiences and to the achievements of countries with leading traditions in education, science and technology, while protecting the Muslim identity against the danger of melting into another culture in conflict with the religious, intellectual, social, moral and cultural components of the national Islamic identity. One of the most serious implications of globalization is the enormous flow of influential cultural content that the mass media convey with the aim of standardizing thought according to a ready-made exogenous model, especially among children and young people.

The desired educational system of the Islamic world should be able to produce the necessary changes in societal perceptions in order to ensure a balance between national particularities, values and norms, and emerging global requirements. It is also required to avoid the outright import of education reform systems that are alien to its cultural and civilizational references and incompatible with its socioeconomic context.

In the era of globalization and knowledge-based society, the required education is the one that helps children and adults better understand their own culture, past and present, in a global context in which positive cross-cultural fertilization and interaction is the only framework under which cultures can prosper.

2. TRANSITION TO THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

Over the past two decades, the world has seen radical changes that have had a clear impact on various levels of the global economy and human civilization in general. Although the new global societal structure is not yet definite and clear, its apparent manifestations reveal profound and tremendous changes in production patterns, lifestyles and social networks, which has led to the establishment of a new civilizational structure primarily based on knowledge.

"Knowledge society", the name given to this new society that is already in place in a few advanced countries and desired by most countries in the world, derives its strength and *raison d'être* from the knowledge-based technological revolution. The latter is entirely different from all previous technological transformations of the Industrial Revolution that focused on specific products or industrial sectors.

However, the "knowledge society" cannot be confined to the revolution of the knowledge technology. It rather includes several cross-cutting poles, comprising technology, economy and knowledge, which now constitute the backbone of the economy. Under these three constituents, i.e. the knowledge technology, the knowledge economy and the knowledge society, the closest societies to the true concept of the knowledge society are those that have advanced information technology, innovation-friendly universities and research centers, an enabling environment, sound economic institutions, relevant laws, and a solid platform of individual and political freedoms stimulating production and use of knowledge.

The knowledge society is not based solely on the knowledge economy. It is also an integrated society in its orientations and structures, seeking to achieve a quantum leap in the knowledge, cultural, political and social model, and is linked to a universal culture of human rights, citizenship and governance.

The importance of knowledge lies in the fact that it is not just a product of development and progress, but, and most importantly, an effective means to create it. For this reason, a good commandment of knowledge leads to community development, change and sound governance. Today, knowledge has become the dominant power that offers its holders the privilege to rearrange balances depending on immediate interests and future strategic goals at both domestic and international levels.

The present and the future belong to the countries that possess knowledge and foster innovation and creativity. This is reflected in their regular production of scientific and technological knowledge and their ability to retrieve and disseminate it, in addition to their capability to harness knowledge for human development in an unlimited manner, adopting it thereafter as a basis for decision-making.

Therefore, the training of skilled and innovative human resources should be the top priority of development policies and strategies. To attain this objective, it is necessary to provide enabling and supportive environments and invest in the education and qualification of human resources so that they can accompany the qualitative leap in the knowledge-based economy.

3. DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS IN THE WORLD

All studies agree that the status of education in society has changed in the context of the knowledge revolution, which has led to reconsidering the role and goals of educational institutions so that they can cope with the requirements of the new economy. As a result, the educational institution has shifted from an institution providing knowledge and expertise to a one able to interact with all other components of society through partnerships with its economic and cultural environment while focusing on training areas needed in the job market.

The focus now is on exploring new training areas and diversifying the necessary qualifications and skills in the fields of nanotechnology and network maintenance through the extensive use of information and communication technologies and the promotion of interactive didactic methods that have changed the role of the teacher from a provider of knowledge to a facilitator, coach and supervisor of the educational situation.

This trend has given increasing importance to educational means and digital content in the educational process in the framework of traditional or interactive learning. It has also strengthened the role of distance learning and involved the various audiovisual means in the educational process. This has made it imperative to change the way to handle, communicate and evaluate information.

On the ground, the transformations that have occurred in the transfer of knowledge have led to the emergence of new forms of education, such as virtual learning, progressive vocational training, lifelong learning and cross-border education. This knowledge revolution has encouraged new actors to enter the field of training purely for profit, thus making the educational service, especially in tertiary education, a marketable commodity that can be offered either in the classroom or online by multinational corporations.

This has prompted the emergence of a global market for higher education in particular, wherein university education is marketed as a service. New strategies at the national or regional level were put in place to attract foreign students, either in the context of classroom or virtual learning. Currently, the World Trade Organization seeks to support this trend in order to open national tertiary education for international competition.

The strong presence of cross-border tertiary education in some foreign countries, led by profit-seeking institutions, poses new challenges to traditional education systems in Islamic countries. It has also aroused heated debate about its impact on the independence of national decision-making in the organization and regulation of national educational systems, and raised questions about the legitimacy of the certificates delivered and the curricula provided.

4. DEMOGRAPHIC GROWTH AND THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR EDUCATION

Available statistics indicate that the world's Muslim population is expected to increase to 2.2 billion people by the year 2030, accounting for 26.4% of the total world population. Between 1990 and 2010, Muslim population had grown at an annual rate of 2.2% and would rise by 1.5% during the period from 2010 to 2030.

Research carried out in recent years has also confirmed the close link in the Islamic countries between birth rates and the educational level of women. In fact, women tend to delay childbearing when they attain higher levels of education, leading to lower fertility rates. On the opposite, girls who leave school early often marry at a younger age and give birth to more children.

Population in Muslim countries is generally young, mostly aged between 15 and 40. According to SESRIC's Report on Education and Scientific Development in OIC Member Countries 2014, in 2013, the total school age population

reached 662 million in OIC countries, including 99 million at pre-primary school age, 201 million at the age of primary schooling, 211 million at the age of secondary schooling and additional 152 million at the level of tertiary schooling. This large child and young population can be the driving engine of economic development in these countries if they are well trained and prepared. The future of Islamic countries depends on the actions they undertake for the benefit of this critical mass in society. However, in the absence of appropriate policies and plans and practical measures to harness their energy and dynamism through quality education, they could add to the burdens bearing on the development efforts and threatening socioeconomic stability in our countries.

It is expected that this exponential population growth would be accompanied by unchanged or declining human development in the least developed countries as well as by difficulties to meet the needs for education of the age group under 15, given the projected significant rise in the absolute numbers of the population in the coming years. This puts a heavy burden on States to provide the necessary funds to invest in knowledge and meet the growing social demand for education and training.

III. REFERENCE FRAMEWORK

In view of ISESCO's roles as an Islamic hub of expertise in its areas of competence and as a specialized organ affiliated to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation entrusted with the mission of coordinating joint Islamic action for promoting education, science, culture and communication in the Islamic world, and considering that the **Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic Countries**, which was devised by ISESCO 27 years ago and adopted by its third General Conference in 1988, can no longer provide appropriate answers to the current and future educational challenges facing the Muslim world, it has become necessary to amend and update this strategy.

To this end, ISESCO has taken care to affirm the Islamic perspective of its strategic orientations in education, which stems from the Islamic reference framework originating in the Quran and authentic Sunnah, and which builds on the instances of strength, progress and ingenuity in the intellectual, educational scientific and Islamic heritage, which abounds with outstanding Muslim scientists and thinkers who contributed over the centuries and at the global level to the development of knowledge and science in various disciplines, and spearheaded novel theories in such various areas as education, psychology, sociology, medicine, mathematics and astronomy. ISESCO has been keen to benefit from the expertise it has developed over the past thirty years, while also capitalizing on the assessment results of hundreds of educational activities, programmes and projects which it has implemented under its successive action plans, including the Project for Literacy and Basic Training for All in Islamic Countries, the Programme of Basic Education and Training for Human Resources Development in Islamic Countries, the Programme of Teaching Arabic to non-Arabic Speakers,

and the Programme of Writing Muslim Peoples' Languages in the Standardized Quranic Script. ISESCO has also gained long experience from the training programmes undertaken by its regional educational centers and the implementation of the education-related content of ISESCO's medium-term plans for 2001-2009 and 2010-2018, and the Organization's sectoral strategies involving education and its role in achieving comprehensive development. In the same vein, ISESCO confirms its responsiveness to the declarations, commitments, recommendations and resolutions issued by the international and regional conferences and forums on education, the last of which was the Incheon Declaration on education by 2030 (World Education Forum, Incheon, Republic of Korea, May 2015), and the Education for All Global Monitoring Report, the post-2015 plans and agendas of international and regional organizations for education and sustainable development, including the OIC Ten-Year Programme of Action 2015-2025, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and Africa's 2063 Agenda. The Organization also looks ahead to the potential new roles and functions it will assume in the field of education. These include strengthening the Organization's capacity to make proposals and coordinate actions in this area, providing further educational expertise and technical advice to its Member States, encouraging the latter to give priority in their educational policies to capacity building and skill development for children, young people, women and groups with special needs, exchanging expertise and successful experiences, facilitating access to and disseminating knowledge, adapting knowledge to new developments and making it an efficient means to achieve development, social stability, dialogue and mutual understanding between peoples, in accordance with the objectives underlined in its Charter.

IV. GOALS OF THE EDUCATION STRATEGY

The general strategic goals are as follows:

- Providing education and ensuring its sustainability for all, based on equality of opportunity;
- Improving the quality of the education system in terms of **creativity-favoring curricula**, skills-and-values valorizing educational staff, and good administrative and financial governance to ensure transition to a system centered on learning, scientific research, innovation and knowledge economy and responsive to the needs of the community, to the job market and to community issues;
- Enhancing the role of education to entrench common human values, promote tolerance, openness and peaceful coexistence with the other, and train the individual in the duties of citizenship and his responsibilities towards the community.

The general goals this Strategy seeks to help Islamic countries to attain are broken down into the following procedural targets:

1. Providing good cost-effective education opportunities for everyone anywhere and anytime;
2. Curbing the failure of some Islamic countries to fulfill their obligations in the field of education and reducing mismatches between educational policies and reality;
3. Encouraging regional cooperation between Islamic world educational organizations to achieve project coordination and integration;
4. Increasing the size of inter-aid in the various educational fields, especially in the areas of literacy, adult education, vocational and technical education, higher education and scientific research;
5. Expanding pre-school education in early childhood and integrating it into the national educational system;
6. Promoting the role of woman and improving her image in textbooks as a key partner for man in human development;
7. Promoting the practice of reading among the various social groups and implementing national and local reading for all projects;
8. Institutionalizing the systems favoring a universal and sustainable use of ICT in education's various sectors, institutions and stages and making them accessible to all the components of the educational system in urban, rural and remote areas;
9. Unifying the educational system of children with disabilities and including them in the regular education system;
10. Developing non-formal education, especially in Arab Islamic schools and institutions of a religious nature, and harmonizing it with the other educational systems;
11. Developing educational standards to respond to human resources requirements in the Islamic countries;
12. Improving curricula and teaching methods, and upgrading primary, secondary and tertiary education programmes;
13. Promoting tolerance, coexistence and respect for others among young people through the integration of Islamic values and consolidation of moderation, mutual understanding and rapprochement of Islamic and human brotherhood in the educational curriculum.
14. Addressing contemporary problems hindering progress, including illiteracy, brain drain, poverty, unemployment, environmental degradation and biased media that fuels ethnic and sectarian strife;
15. Encouraging specialized and thematic research in higher education, developing the sense of entrepreneurship, leadership and risk-taking among secondary and university education students, and harnessing scientific research to meet the needs of the industrial sector, civil society and government institutions;
16. Devising clear-cut policies for information and communication intended for young people and for their educational and vocational guidance to ensure a closer linkage of education and training systems to their socioeconomic environment and facilitate the integration of youth in the professional life.

17. Implementing the knowledge strategies developed by UNESCO, ISESCO, ALECSO and other similar regional and international institutions in the fields of education, science, culture and information and communication;
18. Consolidating the civilizational identity of the Muslim world while enhancing the mechanisms of its unity, the aspects of its diversity and the components of its specificity.

To achieve the goals above, it is imperative that political and educational decision-makers in Islamic world countries be firmly convinced and deeply aware of the critical roles of joint Islamic action in advancing national educational systems and making them the driving force that will put our countries among the leading powers in the world. It is also important to mobilize the various institutions and stakeholders to translate these strategic guidelines into large projects and programmes.



Chapter II

Major shortcomings in the education
system of the Islamic world

Despite the efforts that Islamic countries have put in at the different levels and the remarkable progress in growth rates some of them have achieved, the available development indicators show that most countries in the Islamic world still suffer from many problems and difficulties that cause them to lag behind other nations in terms of progress and development. This document relies on data and statistics published in reports of international institutions and bodies which follow-up national education policies and evaluate education reform efforts, including recent studies published by ISESCO, UNESCO's 2014 Global Monitoring Report on Education for All, SESRIC's Report on Education and Scientific Development in OIC Member Countries 2014, the Arab Knowledge Report 2014 and the recent results of international tests for the assessment of educational achievements.

In addition to the economic, social and development problems, the most harmful gap to the development efforts of Islamic world countries is the one existing between knowledge and education. Indeed, despite the important steps achieved to advance education, most Islamic countries have failed to ensure education for all and eradicate illiteracy, which means that their education systems do not yet meet the quality and quantity standards. The most pressing problems facing Islamic world countries may be defined as follows:

1. HIGH ILLITERACY RATES

Wastage in the Islamic countries is not only of a material nature, but also affects their most important asset, namely their human resources. The widespread illiteracy among all age brackets in many parts of the Islamic world represents an impediment to economic and social development, as 40% of the Muslim world's population is either illiterate or quasi-illiterate, with the situation in some countries worsening to 70%.

Over the past decades, the Islamic countries have made significant efforts to combat illiteracy and have implemented a number of national projects, programmes and campaigns to this end. Nevertheless, the pace of adult literacy remains slow, with differentiated results from one country to another. While some Islamic countries have managed to push their literacy rates beyond 99%, more than 50% of young people in eight OIC countries were illiterate in 2013. The programmes implemented in this connection are still insufficient, given the population growth rate, as the average literacy rate in the Islamic countries among adults (above 15 years) stood at 73% in 2013 compared with 82% in the world.

While the causes of illiteracy can be attributed to past accumulations or current deficiencies in education systems, the result is an inflated knowledge gap between individuals, social categories and genders in view of the spreading illiteracy among adults or children at the age of schooling who do not have the opportunity to go to schools, especially in remote areas. The situation of women is even worse, as the results of women's literacy programmes are still 13% lower compared with men's.

2. SOCIAL VULNERABILITY

Poverty and unequal income distribution still represent the biggest challenges for the world in the 21st century, with the rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer. Statistics show that over 1.6 billion people (30% of the world's total population) are living below the poverty line, with less than \$1 per day.

Poverty in the Islamic world is a highly visible phenomenon despite the huge economic resources available to many of its countries. According to SESRIC's Report on Measurement of Poverty in OIC Member Countries 2015, a total of 465 million people in OIC member countries are considered as multidimensional poor, accounting for 35% of the total OIC population and 29% of the world total multidimensional poor in 2014.

Obviously, poverty carries dangerous social and economic risks. On the social front, it leads to the emergence of big deviations in individuals' behavior and ethics, which run opposite to customs, traditions and religion. Poverty is also the main hindrance to the schooling or quality education of children. In fact, the high costs of schooling push parents to abandon their responsibilities in educating their children, which causes widespread illiteracy among children and the emergence of child labor. In addition, poverty also leads to deteriorated health situation and high mortality rates, particularly among children, due to their exposure to contagious and chronic diseases.

3. DEFICIENT EDUCATIONAL CURRICULA

In modern educational systems of the 21st century, learners have become the center of the teaching process. Educational courses on languages, literature, math and sciences are no longer oriented simply towards instruction and memorization but also to making learners acquire the abilities and skills necessary for communication, analysis, synthesis and creativity.

Standardizing curricula in the Islamic world and giving a central role to teacher in imparting knowledge has impacted negatively the educational process which

usually encourages methods based on instruction and memorization instead of developing analytical, critical and interactive thinking.

Some aspects of educational curricula deficiencies in the Islamic world are manifested in the lack of interest in programmes allotted to enriching emotions and fertilizing the mind, such as arts, music, art, drama, poetry, novel, physical education, health sciences, and real-life integration and skills. Also, insufficient attention is paid to the instruction of science and mathematics, whose teaching methods do not help develop critical and analytical abilities. The existing curricula devote little attention to legal awareness and education in human rights and citizenship. Moreover, the education of gifted children is of low quantity and quality at all educational levels, primary, secondary and tertiary, although this category of students are the pillars for the future of the Ummah and its instrument to progress and civilizational development.

4. POOR TEACHER TRAINING

The teacher represents the cornerstone in any expected educational reform or development. However, the roles of the teacher in the Islamic countries have not been developed enough to enable him to prepare students for the knowledge society in which the teacher has become an instructor, planner, coordinator, supporter, catalyst and facilitator. This increases his responsibility in improving the quality of education, enhancing its effectiveness and achieving its objectives.

The student-teacher ratio is a strong indicator of the quality of the educational process. Seen from this perspective, the education situation in the Islamic world reflects an improvement of this indicator. Based on the 2014 SESRIC Report, the total number of primary school teachers in Islamic countries rose to 7.2 million in 2013, while the average student-teacher ratio at the primary schools was recorded at 24, coupled with an increase in the total number of teachers qualified for secondary schools from 4.4 million to 6.2 million over the period 2000-2013. However, the average student-teacher ratio stood at 24.5%, given the steady increase in secondary school enrollment rates. In some countries, the number of secondary school students in one classroom exceeds 30.

On the other hand, the increase in the number of teachers was not accompanied by an equal improvement in raising the status of teachers, by improving their skills, working conditions and professional capabilities so that they can reach the highest levels of scientific, professional and cultural specialization. International reports indicators show that a large proportion of teachers in most Islamic countries complain of low academic and professional qualifications, teachers' failure to assume their new educational roles and inability to adapt to new teaching methods and educational technology. In addition, most of them do not fulfill the internationally approved criteria

in terms of training period, educational qualifications and continued training. Most of primary school teachers in many Islamic countries lack the minimum level for academic qualification, which is a high school certificate, while advanced countries require teachers to have specific university training, from three to five years for primary school teachers, and a master degree or obtaining professional training certificates for secondary-school teachers.

5. GIRLS' UNEQUAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Available statistics indicate that 60 million out of 100 million girls worldwide are unable to join primary school. It should be reminded also that joining school does not mean regular attendance. In many developing countries, girls in conservative milieus or in remote and rural areas often join school only for few years and are forced to drop out at the primary level.

Despite the rate of girls joining schools and universities has improved over the last few years, it remains generally low, as the rate of literate girls in the Islamic world stands at 64.2%. Illiteracy rate among girls in the Islamic world is still higher compared to male illiteracy (above 15 years). The difference in some Islamic countries reaches 40%.

The situation is more alarming in rural, remote and poor areas where girls and women are more segregated due to the prevalence of some wrong customs and traditions which claim that girl's best place is at home and in the farm rather than at the school and tend to marry her at an early age.

6. LOW ATTENTION TO PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

UNESCO made of early education one of the objectives of the Education for All programme. In fact, pre-school education represents a milestone in shaping the child's personality. All educational and psychological studies indicate that more than half the child's intellectual abilities are developed before the age of six, and that early education and good nutrition play an apex role in developing the child's skills and his abilities to learn and be prepared for school life through programmes and guidelines which arouse his curiosity and develop his intellect.

Despite the importance of early childhood, most countries in the Islamic world do not attach the needed importance to this sector. This stage represents in fact the weakest point in the education process in most Islamic countries, as the initiatives taken to support it fall below expectations and the minimum level existing in other parts of the world. The 2014 SESRIC Report indicates that the number of children enrolled in pre-school educational institutions throughout the world during the decade (2000-2013)

rose from 116.7 to 181.8 million. The figures for non-OIC developing countries improved significantly, from 76.5 in 2000 to 127.4 million children in 2013. For OIC countries, the pace of growth in pre-primary school enrolment has been relatively slower than that of the world. Although the number of pre-primary education enrolments has increased from 16.3 million in 2000 to 25.9 million in 2013, the share of OIC countries in the world was stable around 14% over the reported period.

Analysis of the pre-school educational system in Islamic world countries highlights several imbalances relating to the existing infrastructure for hosting children and the applied curricula in the relevant institutions. It is furthermore characterized by inequalities between different social categories, individuals and regions as it is more concentrated in urban areas while almost inexistent in the countryside.

This is because early education for children (aged 3 to six) is not considered part of formal education and is neither free nor compulsory. The result being that States leave this type of education to the private sector or civil society institutions and do not require parents to register their children in pre-school institutions, confining themselves to a supervisory and follow-up role. One can also notice that the least-developed countries spend only a small budget on this type of education, with some Islamic countries spending less than 0.1% of their GDP on pre-school education.

7. LOW ENROLLMENT RATES IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Primary education holds a pivotal role in the education system. Completing this stage is a basic introduction to learning how to read and write, acquiring the skills and values based on knowledge and knowing how to deal with its tools and mechanisms and understand its codes.

SESRIC's 2014 report on Education and Scientific Development in OIC Member Countries indicates that the number of primary school pupils in OIC member countries reached 196.0 million in 2013, representing 28% of total world primary school enrolments, compared with 23.8% in 2000. On the other hand, the share of OIC countries in total primary school teachers in the world has also improved over the reported period and, with 7.2 million primary school teachers in 2013, OIC countries accounted for 25.4% of the total number of primary school teachers in the world. While the net primary education enrollment rate in non-OIC developing countries rose to 84.1%, it was rather stable and recorded 78.4% in Islamic countries. This translates into the fact that over one-fifth of the primary school age children in OIC countries are out of schools, as compared to only 4.1% in developed countries. Among the most scourges still preventing a significant proportion of children in the Islamic world from attending

school is poverty with which several other problems are associated, including child labor, discrimination against girls in many countries of the Islamic world, especially in rural and conservative settings; widespread disease and malnutrition, frail basic education infrastructure, especially in remote areas; and parental illiteracy.

8. LOW ACHIEVEMENT IN SCIENTIFIC SUBJECTS

Recent international studies have highlighted the low scores of primary school students in math and science in a number of Islamic countries. In fact, the average score obtained in math for most Islamic countries participating in the study were significantly lower compared to the international average, while results obtained by thirty of the advanced countries stand above the international average. These results show that a very small percentage of students in Islamic countries possess the skills and knowledge required in math, and the same applies to results of science tests which in their majority were markedly below the international average.

Numerous factors and causes can account for these results, namely the short time allocated to teaching different courses in most Islamic countries, where the annual average number of hours for teaching at the primary level in some of these countries stand below the average hovering around 580 and 1000 hours annually, which is the average recommended by specialized international organizations. This means that children in many of these countries benefit from less than 70% of the schooling time supposed to be devoted to them, let alone the overcrowded primary school classes in a large number of countries, the continued reliance on obsolete teaching materials and methods centered on memorization and on the teacher as the sole and absolute educational authority.

9. LOW OUTPUTS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION

Secondary education in a number of Islamic countries faces several problems, relating to quantitative indicators such as enrollment and the ability to assimilate basic education outcomes, and qualitative indicators relating to the quality of education and equality between sexes, in addition to the interaction between professional training and the job market.

Demand for secondary education in the Islamic world rose significantly. The SESRIC 2014 Report shows that secondary school attendance in Islamic world countries increased during the decade (2000-2011) from 43% to 50% compared with 92% in developed countries.

This means that the total number of students enrolled in secondary schools increased from 88.4 million in 2000 to 123.9 million in 2013, thus corresponding to 22.6% of the total secondary school pupils in the world.

The Arab Knowledge Report for 2014 also indicates that secondary education enrollment rate in the Arab region stood at 74.2%, higher than the world average 72.9%, but lower compared to East Asia and the Pacific (84.5%), Central and Eastern Europe (93%) and Central Asia 98.6%.

International comparisons show that enrollment rates in many Islamic regions and countries are still low. It is also striking that countries registering high drop-outs and repetition in primary education are the ones recording the lower school attendance in secondary schools.

Quantitatively, deficiencies are reflected in the limited number of educational modules which allow for either opting for vocational training, the job market or pursuing higher studies, in addition to the low opportunities to complete secondary education as a result of the high drop-out rates which exceed 20% in some Islamic countries.

10. LACK OF PLANNING AND COORDINATION IN VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

Vocational and technical education contributes to providing jobs to the youth who dropped out from formal education, and provides a second chance to the ones wishing to acquire applied skills as per the job market needs. On this basis, this type of education has become a part of life-long learning, and is viewed by international organizations and particularly ISESCO as a tool for encouraging youth to integrate the job market and reducing unemployment and poverty.

It should be pointed out, though, that it is very hard to analyze the situation of vocational training in the Islamic world. In fact, it is run by both public and private formal institutions falling under the control of the State, and by a non-formal sector, which does not abide by specific curricula despite its role in assimilating a large segment of youth.

Statistics published in the SESRIC 2013 Report indicate that out of the 55 million students worldwide following vocational training programmes, 44 million of them (80%) come from developing countries - one-quarter (1/4) in the Islamic world countries-. Females represent 40% of total students in OIC countries compared to 45% worldwide, with 2/5 of all students enrolled in public institutions.

Vocational training enrollment rate dropped during the decade (1999-2010) in Arab countries from 34% to 18%, as

opposed to Africa where this rate jumped from 9% to 17%. However, comparing total enrollment rates in secondary education with vocational training rates indicates that a high proportion of the youth join secondary education to the detriment of vocational and technical training.

This indicator clearly reflects the limited status of vocational training in Islamic countries, where enrollment rates still remain, except for some few cases, very low.

11. LACK OF QUALITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

In most Islamic world countries, higher education is a relatively recent aspect of education compared to other corners of the world. This type of education registered a significant growth over the last few years in response to an increasing demand for education. SESRIC's 2014 report shows that the total number of tertiary school students in the OIC member countries increased more than two-fold from 14.7 million to 33.0 million between 2000 and 2013. The number of teaching staff employed in tertiary schools of OIC countries also increased steadily over the same period and reached 1.4 million in 2013.

Despite their visibly increased number of higher education students, OIC countries still lag far behind the developed country NER levels (78.0%), with an average NER of 22.6%. This low rate confirms the limited opportunities available for the Islamic world's youth, particularly for those aged between 15 and 24. This means that the educational system in many OIC countries failed to provide enough educational and training opportunities to the young population.

It is worth mentioning that the expectations of Islamic societies from higher education are high compared to the results registered in this education stage. They expect policy and decision makers to adopt flexible national policies for admission into universities that meet quality standards and address community needs. They also pin hopes on universities to deliver an appropriate training and prepare graduates for a swift integration of the job market. In turn, universities look forward to more public funding, the enactment of laws enshrining their independence in decision-making and less central intervention in administrative and academic management. The quality issues faced by higher education in the Islamic world can be divided into four major axes:

Firstly: Lack of quality in university institutions' performance in Islamic countries. Quality measurement indicators in most of these universities are still below standards: high student-teacher ratio, lack of the proper equipments for teaching and research, failure to tailor educational outputs with job market needs.

Secondly: Failure to align educational programmes with the needs of society. Comparing graduates specializations with the real needs of the economic fabric reflects a distortion in training patterns and trends. Despite the huge expansion registered in higher education enrollment rates, there is a discrepancy in the breakdown of students by academic disciplines, with most countries reporting a shortage in specializations such as engineering, and an over-supply in low-cost specializations like literature and humanities, law and the economy. This hampers the labor market integration of a large number of students graduating in such specializations. According to SESRIC's OIC Labor Market Report 2015, the youth unemployment rate was above 20% in 21 OIC countries in 2014.

Thirdly: Lack of good governance, with a strongly centralized academic management being the norm in most public universities. This means that the achievement of strategic objectives falls on the shoulder of ministries, being the primary source of reforms, and that academic administrative development channels run from top to bottom. In addition, many universities suffer from numerous deficiencies, including weak effectiveness due to the inability to control inputs and manage the available resources as well as student density, which prevents an improvement in the educational process.

Fourthly: the lack of interest in entrepreneurship at the level of higher education in the Muslim societies, as epitomized by the failure to keep up with the technological boom. Higher education and the business sector in Islamic countries have not managed to properly keep pace with the evolution of global economy, especially in terms of the emergence of a new generation of leading small businesses (startups) driven by technology and innovation that have taken advantage of a new context favoring both their acquisition of knowledge and capital and their access to large markets. Such small businesses are still facing financing, administrative, legal and structural obstacles, which hamper the development of a sense of entrepreneurship among young university graduates.

12. LOW SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH PERFORMANCE

Scientific research represents a vital sector to develop scientific knowledge, upgrade technologies and enhance social development. A huge progress was made in this area in the most-developed Islamic countries, namely the establishment of research centers with good specifications and a solid information database which contributes to enriching science and developing technologies.

Islamic world countries have elaborated a ten-year action plan for scientific research adopted in Makah Al-Mukarramah

in 2005, and sought to raise spending on R&D to 1% of GDP in Islamic countries by 2015. Despite the disparate progress made, the average R&D intensity of the OIC countries, 0.46%, is significantly lower than the world average of 1.86% as well as the targeted rate of 1%.

Yet, international comparisons show that scientific research in our countries faces many impediments and difficulties that prevent it from fulfilling its expected role, including a lack of sponsoring, the prevalence of traditional administrative management patterns, insufficient financing of research premises and laboratories. The Arab Knowledge Report 2014 shows that spending on scientific research in Islamic countries is very low, especially in Arab countries. Indeed, the latter have spent between 0.03% and 0.07% of GDP on R&D in 2012, a very low percentage compared to the world average.

Scientific research performance is related to a number of intertwined factors relating, inter alia, to the type of the economic and scientific context, the available scientific platform or the existing information technology level. At the forefront of these causes is the weak interaction with the private sector and the lack of research projects aimed at developing applications in partnership with economic units, the brain drain caused by the difficult working conditions on the domestic level and the lack of incentives, in addition to the lack of coordination between research centers in the same country which leads to a waste of efforts and the non-exploitation of scientific research outcomes due to the unavailability of financial resources. At the institutional level, scientific research activity still suffers from structural and organizational problems relating to a dispersal of R&D institutions in Islamic countries, their isolation from the economic environment, in addition to the administrative and financial problems characterizing them.

The report also indicates that R&D activity in Arab countries fall below international standards despite the important effort made to establish a research environment. The average production of research per million citizens in Arab countries was only 41, compared to a world average of 147. SESRIC 2014 Report shows that the OIC's share of scientific articles published in indexed journals steadily grew from just 2.2% in 2000 to 6.1% in 2013. However, in 2013, OIC member countries as a whole published 108,821 scientific articles, which is below the total output of the UK alone (114,668).

Throughout the past 105 years, Muslims, representing 25-30% of the world population, had only 9 persons/entities winning the Noble prize. Also, OIC countries only have a limited number of specialized researchers, that is 615 researchers per million people, compared to 1604 worldwide, 1075 in non-OIC developing countries and 5024 in the E.U.

13. LOW SPENDING ON EDUCATION

Education nowadays has become closely related with money, and quality education has become highly costly. Therefore, the amount of spending on education reflects the importance that governments devote to the education of their communities. Statistics included in the SESRIC 2014 Report show that average spending on education worldwide stood at 5% of GDP, with 4.8% in the developing countries, 5.1% in advanced countries and 3.8% in OIC countries. It is worth mentioning that spending on education in the said countries registered varying trends over the last decade, except in OIC countries where spending on education rate has remained unchanged since 2000.

The rate of spending on education alone cannot reflect the true image of progress in the education budget. We have to look at the ratio of GDP per capita to education expenditure per capita. In fact, this indicator reveals that spending on education fell worldwide during the decade 2000-2010, from 36.7% to 24.5% in developing countries, from 25.1% to 20.2% in OIC countries and

from 32.2% to 28.5% in advanced countries. Islamic countries remain the most affected due to a decrease in spending on education.

As spending on education per pupil represents a clear indicator of the quality of education, it clearly reflects the absence of quality in the education provided in most OIC countries, as government expenditures on education per pupil stands at \$928 in OIC compared to \$1860 in non-OIC developing countries and \$18724 in developed countries. These figures obviously hide big disparities in spending on education among Islamic countries.

As a result of the limited budgets earmarked for education in several countries of the Islamic world, educational institutions are still staggering with inadequate basic infrastructure. This is clearly visible in the lack or poor maintenance of buildings, classrooms and school facilities likely to accommodate the growing numbers of students. The countries concerned are therefore forced to admit students in large groups and crowded classrooms in a way that negatively affects the quality of education.



Chapter III

Priority areas of action in education

The major shortcomings in the educational system of the Islamic world, which were highlighted above, explain clearly the reasons for which this system has been so far unable to empower young people in the Islamic world to enter the knowledge-based society with confidence and competence in order to best contribute to the various areas of development to bridge the gap and catch up with the continuous global progress. This cannot be achieved unless the educational systems of Member States are radically reformed to ensure that educational practices and means are no longer limited to providing learners with the minimum skills and knowledge but seek to infuse in students the culture of excellence and quality. Teaching methods should foster creativity and innovation and develop analytical, synthesis and assessment skills, instead of focusing on memory and repetition. They need to encourage participation, cooperation and empowerment. Lifelong learning should also be part of this reform.

The advancement of Islamic countries' educational systems, with the aim of achieving the goals above, requires educational decision makers and competent authorities to step up their efforts and focus their action on specific priority areas, based on the diagnosis of the current situation of education system in Islamic world

countries and its impact on knowledge and development. In view of this, this Strategy suggests the priority areas that need to be developed urgently, together with some accompanying practical measures drawn from latest educational specialized studies, expert views, successful experiences in a number of developed countries, leading initiatives of education actors and relevant civil society organizations, and the conclusions of regional and international education conferences and forums held since the beginning of the third millennium. The Strategy recommends adopting these measures in whole or in part, or drawing inspiration from them to develop additional or alternative measures that are more interactive and harmonious with the local and national specificities, possibilities and needs of each country in order to ensure the translation of this Strategy into tangible results.

In this context, it must be noted that the suggested distribution of education action fields and their break down into main comprehensive areas made of homogenous components, along with the attribution to each area of a particular set of guidelines commensurate with its specificity and needs, was implied by pure methodological reasons that can in no way obscure the overlap, integration and points of convergence existing between all these areas.

I. UNIVERSAL EDUCATION FOR ALL AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

The education for all (EFA) project is the ultimate and major goal of modern international educational plans. It was recommended by the Dakar Conference in 2000 and recently emphasized by the World Education Forum 2015 in Korea. The Global Action Plan to Achieve the Education for All Goals seeks to improve international coordination at country level and strengthen global partnership between developed and developing countries in order to meet the educational needs of all children, youth and adults. The related action strategy aims at uniting the efforts of Member States to enhance free universal basic education, and providing help and assistance to Islamic countries that cannot achieve universal education because of lack of resources or technical capacity. This will be carried out through the development of comprehensive plans for education focusing on literacy and adult education, education of categories with special needs, and girls' education.

1. LITERACY AND ADULT EDUCATION

In light of the results of literacy assessment reports in Member States, which revealed the failure to lower the illiteracy rate to 50% by 2015, and based on ISESCO's new vision for literacy that adopts the recommendations of the relevant regional and international conferences calling for further efforts and innovative measures for the post-2015 period, it is important to propose new practical measures to improve this situation. These measures mainly consist in reinforcing legislation to fight against all forms of illiteracy (alphabetical, numerical, legal, functional and computer), and involving government institutions, the private sector and civil society organization to curb this phenomenon and reduce its adverse impacts through the exchange of successful experiences and leading initiatives that have taken advantage of non-formal educational institutions in fighting illiteracy, such as Quranic schools, Arab Islamic schools and mosques. Other steps include strengthening cooperation with specialized regional and international organizations to benefit from their technical expertise and capabilities in developing implementation, follow-up and evaluation mechanisms of literacy programmes. Equally important in this regard is to encourage civil society to put more efforts in promoting education for all and fighting illiteracy by supporting the centers dedicated to guidance, inspection, monitoring, sensitization, awareness-raising and mobilization.

Given the prevalence of illiteracy in rural areas and among women in particular, experts recommend focusing literacy actions on rural and remote areas and devoting more attention to the increasing illiteracy of women through the development of appropriate programmes adapted to their needs. They also recommend offering a new chance to children and teenagers who have dropped out of school or have not had the opportunity to resume their education to return to school as part of the so-called "second-chance school", or otherwise integrating them in non-formal education institutions where they can acquire skills in arts and crafts that cater to their communities' various needs. To this end, it will be useful to take advantage of the «partner school» formula consisting in the contribution to providing the schooling supply through partnership between the public and private sectors to achieve equal educational opportunities. As part of this option, the State may provide support to private education institutions in exchange for their observance of the ceilings of schooling expenses and granting scholarships to students living in poor families.

In this context, it is essential to give young school leavers due attention in the programmes devoted to literacy, social rehabilitation and vocational training to protect them from falling prey to unemployment, deviation, extremist ideologies, terrorist gangs and all consequent negative implications on society.

In order to develop new literacy programmes and improve the quality of existing ones, it is important to capitalize on information and communication technologies, including social media, websites with educational digital content, highly attractive open e-learning platforms, and national literacy media. It would also be appropriate to devise easy-to-use software and IT systems to encourage literacy-oriented self-learning, align literacy programmes with the needs of socioeconomic development, and establish mechanisms necessary for post-literacy follow-up and impact assessment to see the extent of the trained staff's integration into society and development. Considering the important role of the teacher in implementing education programmes, the experts stress the need to increase the number of training programmes benefiting literacy educational and administrative staff, and prepare adequate training programmes for more efficient action against illiteracy.

2. SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION

Studies on universal basic education have shown that compared with other categories, persons with special needs in most Member States still have fewer opportunities of access to basic education policies and programmes. Therefore, it has become necessary to redouble efforts to enable this category to enjoy their right to education without discrimination so that they can participate in public life and contribute to the various production sectors in order to achieve comprehensive development. The practical measures proposed in this regard mainly include strengthening legislation and cultural and social rights in such a way as to provide good education for all, including for people with special needs, adopting the necessary mechanisms to boost coordination between the various relevant government departments; establishing diagnostic initiatives, programmes and centers for early detection of special needs cases to ensure care for these categories; and increasing parental awareness programmes to sensitize parents to the appropriate educational methods to deal with children with special needs and cater for their health and development needs. Other measures consist of involving civil society in supporting the families of children with special needs in achieving their educational role, rehabilitating existing facilities and buildings to ensure accessibility for persons with disabilities, and creating integrated classes in schools to receive children with special needs who are able to attend regular classes.

In order for the school to play fully its role in the rehabilitation of children with special needs, namely gifted and disabled students, education experts emphasize the need to provide adequate training to staff working in the field of special needs to prepare them to better respond to the needs of learners, commensurate with the socioeconomic context of the countries concerned. They also call for developing educational kits and school curricula suitable for students with special needs and adapted to their cultural and social realities, and providing technical support for specialized institutions to contribute to the development of educational programmes and textbooks in this field. In the same vein, it is also necessary to develop programmes

to discover gifted students at all educational levels, including pre-school education, in order to motivate them towards more creativity and innovation for the benefit of society, award prizes and incentives to encourage them in the areas of scientific, technological, artistic and literary creativity, and facilitate their participation in national and international competitions and awards.

3. GIRLS' EDUCATION

Most economists agree that the education of girls will be the highest-return investment in the developing world, as it not only stimulates economic growth but also increases the well-being of women and gives them greater power within their community and their country. The Education for All project, one of the United Nations Millennium Development Goals, underscores the imperative to devote more attention and efforts to improve the status of women by ensuring equal access of girls to education and providing them with the knowledge and science enabling them to contribute efficiently and professionally to the development efforts. Among the most feasible actions in this regard is to achieve gender equality in access to education and all fields of science and knowledge as part of the effective materialization of the principles of equality and parity in terms of rights and obligations. Equally important is to mobilize civil society organizations, particularly in remote areas and marginal neighborhoods, to conduct awareness raising programmes about the schooling of all children, and encouraging parents to let girls attend school and prevent them from dropping out.

To this end, it would be most appropriate to build schools close to girls' homes, especially in rural areas, improve infrastructure to ensure safe school transport for girls, provide sanitary facilities, and provide accommodation for girls living far from school. There is also need to review textbooks and curricula to correct historical misrepresentations and misconceptions about women, incorporate positive images about them and provide models from Islamic history and contemporary reality of educated girls and women who have succeeded in their professional and family lives.

II. DEVELOPING CURRICULA, TEACHING METHODS AND TEACHER TRAINING TO ACHIEVE COMPETENCE AND EXCELLENCE

Taking into account the successive educational developments, the pace of the technological and communication development race led by developed countries, and the cultural, development and political challenges facing the Islamic world, which are closely linked to the educational foundations of the current social and development structure, educational stakeholders in our countries are invited to re-examine the contents of curricula to make sure these challenges and the associated issues are dealt with appropriately. At the same time, the cultural specificities of the Ummah should be respected and maintained, mainly faith and the religious and national identity. The subjects have to be taught in the official languages adopted in the national policies of each country, with more attention paid to the teaching of foreign languages in a bid to keep open to the rest of the world, keep abreast of new developments and improve the quality of learning. It is also important to have curricula that can help encourage learners to embrace the spirit of initiative and creativity and help them adopt self-learning strategies and strengthen and develop their knowledge and their relationship with the other and their environment. The teaching methods must also be modernized, using educational technologies to improve and advance teachers' professional performance and help them deliver and play their new educational role as facilitators in the educational process. In the same vein, extra-curricular activities need to be integrated in the educational systems to allow learners to develop new skills through practical assignments which constitute a distinctive feature of extra-curricular activities. The curricula should be able to help open possibilities and build bridges between the various stages of education and between formal and informal education programmes, thus helping learners develop and improve their training and continue their education.

1. MODERNIZING CURRICULA AND TEXTBOOKS

There is no doubt that textbooks are a double-edged sword, as their contents may carry multiple and different tools for education, learning, development, and analytical critical

thinking. In contrast, they may also carry stereotypical, inert, negative and submissive values. This is what makes the reform of curricula and textbooks a must, at the heart of any educational reform. In order to achieve their objectives, curricula and textbooks should be modernized. Concrete measures are thus to be taken, including in particular the revision of the textbook philosophy to shift the education process from teacher-centered to learner-centered. This entails developing and improving the skills of learners and their scientific and practical abilities, and establishing the rules and methods of creative, analytical and critical thinking.

Other measures include restructuring the courses and renewing their contents in accordance with international standards; paying more attention, at the level of educational programmes development, to materials and methods favoring the development of higher-order thinking skills (HOTS), with special focus on the concept of Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM), since ensuring access to STEM for large numbers of students, along with STEM mastery and excellence, has become a major prerequisite for achieving progress and sustainable development and integrating the knowledge societies. More actions in this regard may comprise setting the goals of education, and using modern methods in building courses and selecting the desired standards in the various educational materials; using stimulating methods, colorful illustrations and fine prints to motivate learners to use textbooks; gradually shifting from paper to electronic textbooks and putting textbook content on digital supports; gradually integrating ICTs in education along with printed textbooks; offering multiple textbooks at the national level [to end the long-standing dominance of one single textbook in Islamic countries]; improving the quality of textbooks by encouraging the competitiveness of authors, publishers and creators based on the required educational and technical specifications; and preparing guidelines for teachers guides on how to implement the curricula and prepare/give lessons, according to the teacher new role as "facilitator of the educational process", providing him/her with relevant teaching skills to help achieve the desired objectives.

2. DEVELOPING TECHNICAL AND EXACT SCIENCE CURRICULA

As all countries of the world are striving to teach and master technical and exact sciences, Member States are invited, due to this great global competition, to make every effort to catch up with the world in these fields. They are invited to introduce and adopt progress and technical localization. They should give more attention to the teaching of technical and exact sciences. Experts in this field recommend a periodic and regular revision of curricula, methods and tools used in teaching technical and exact sciences which should be continually improved according to the latest international trends and standards. They also recommend using and taking advantage of the best practices and models of countries that have succeeded in this regard, including their teaching strategies and designing appropriate educational materials and tools. Shall also be needed, a flexible learning environment to invest in ICTs opportunities and prospects, and encourage teachers and learners both to take the initiative and encourage excellence and innovation. Applied and practical scientific activities should be, rather, used in teaching technical and exact science, in appropriate classrooms that meet international educational standards, so that students are encouraged to investigate, collect evidence, forming conclusions and innovate to find solutions, in an environment where the teacher plays the role of supervisor and facilitator. It is also recommended to monitor the performance quality of educational institutions, teachers and students in technical and exact sciences based on performance indicators set in accordance with the international evaluation criteria.

On the other hand, the experts note that the comprehensive approach in teaching exact sciences such as mathematics, physics and chemistry, is not be limited only to the development of cognitive and abstract thinking skills. It also focuses on the technical, aesthetic and affective aspects of these sciences, and encourages team and participatory work that prepares the individual to excellence and creativity to take his/her responsibility to serve the community in a nurturing social environment.

3. DEVELOPING HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCE CURRICULA

Communities need technical and exact sciences for technical and technological progress and also need humanities and social sciences, which are the most important planning tools for human and social development. Humanities and social sciences are important to all social change processes. They help make students more aware of and able to create social realities that

suit the needs and the requirements of the community and adapt to new contemporary developments and transitions. Education experts, therefore, recommend giving more attention to humanities and social sciences and teaching them in all levels. They also recommend encouraging research in these areas and providing all forms of support and resources that are required for their role to serve society and its development.

One of the most appropriate measures to develop the teaching of humanities and social sciences is the comprehensive regular reconsideration and revision of the humanities and social sciences curricula and the related textbooks. The internationally recognized evaluation and measurement tools must be adopted in this process, in addition to the fact that the contents of educational materials must be carefully chosen and distributed to the various stages and levels of education, according to an approach that takes into account the latest relevant educational and psychological theories.

The principles of the gradual progress, succession, inclusiveness and proportionality must be adopted, in addition to the educational quality indicators when programming and teaching humanities and social science subjects. This contribute to developing and improving the learners' knowledge and talents, developing self-learning skills and strengthening their motivation to continuous learning, their capacity to take appropriate decisions when they face urgent and professional and life situations, investing in their knowledge, skills and general culture to serve society. Continuing training and educational rehabilitation should be provided for the educational staff in the field of teaching humanities and social sciences so that they can catch up with the new education developments in this area and be trained to use modern teaching methods and practical applications in teaching humanities and social sciences.

It is important for learners to master their mother tongue, but they also have a good knowledge of the most important world languages. Students should develop their mother tongue skills and talents. The mother tongue should be used in teaching humanities and social sciences to consolidate the learners' positive belonging to their communities and their countries. Students should be encouraged to learn Arabic, the language of the Quran, as a second language that should be used to teach these sciences in the Member States that speak other languages to strengthen their belonging to their religion and civilization. Students should also be provided with every opportunity to master important foreign languages to ensure their openness onto other cultures and their coexistence with other communities. This will help them to progress as global citizens in the globalized economy of knowledge and technology.

4. DEVELOPING ORIGINAL AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CURRICULA

The Islamic Ummah cannot achieve the aspired progress only through modern experimental science, without referring to the Islamic culture and its value system. Authentic and distinctive civilization is inseparable from its prosperous past and deeply rooted in it; it is not recent and incoherent. The Islamic Ummah has its own history, mission and social and cultural spirit that guide it in its path, which requires founding the education system of Islamic countries on Islamic values in terms of planning and implementation. This also calls for developing the teaching methods of original and religious education so that it can entrench the tolerant values and principles of Islam in young minds, and contribute to the intellectual security intellectual security of our communities through the intellectual immunization of young people against deviation from middle stance and moderation. One of the most important things to do in this regard is to develop the programmes of Quranic schools, build bridges between original education and non-formal education, including Quranic schools and mosque classes, and the formal education system. This also means creating courses to connect them, restructuring them, developing their curricula, diversifying their approaches, improving their tools, aligning their outputs with development. In the same vein, there is a crucial need for paying more attention to Islamic Education programmes in the various stages in such a way as to entrench Islam's tolerance and noble values in a context market by rampant extremism and debauchery. No less important also is to improve the quality and outputs of original education, develop its related sciences, rehabilitate enrolled students and offer them real modern training, and make it more relevant to their rea, which is rich in modern trends and religious doctrines to improve its image and get rid of any possible rigidity or extremism aspects in this kind of education.

It is important to note that original education is also about scientific, technical and vocational education training programmes, in addition to the teaching of the Islamic values and teachings. It is not an education offer for the otherwise unsuccessful students or the lazy. It is also necessary to train the educational staff, improve their capacities in original education and offer them some advanced educational skills to be good role models for their students in work and behavior.

5. DEVELOPING ARABIC LANGUAGE TEACHING CURRICULA

Arabic has assumed a key role in the transfer and maintenance of the Islamic civilization, and used to be a means for learning and communication of the sources of Islamic faith, legislation and culture in the original. Efforts

can be made to raise the status of Arabic among natives and non-natives, through the development of appropriate strategies and promoting the role of traditional education institutions, without overlooking openness on other modern international languages.

For Arabic to discharge its essential role in achieving the renaissance of the Islamic Ummah, developing modern intellectual and creative capabilities, and assuming an effective role in entrenching its religious, cultural and civilizational significance, the States of the Islamic world are invited to adopt a set of concrete practical measures, including the following: updating curricula for teaching Arabic to natives and non-natives, and developing them in a way that facilitates simplification of their methods and rules to make them readily accessible to learners; investing educational software offered by the information and communication technologies (ICTs) in the teaching of Arabic and extending the use of the language in the various subjects in non-Arabic native Member States and increasing the number of Arabic classes per week; supporting cultural centers and Arabic and Islamic schools outside Muslim countries to strengthen the Arabic teaching programmes they offer to Muslim children and non-Muslims to discover and learn about the intellectual and religious capital of Arabic; facilitating understanding and dialogue with the other and establishing bridges for cooperation and engagement between cultural institutes and centers in the Arab and Islamic States and the centers for teaching Arabic and Islamic civilization in foreign States, by sending more teachers, experts and educational counselors specialized in teaching Arabic to non-Arabic native speakers to such countries; establishing chairs and departments specialized in Arabic language and Islamic culture at various universities in countries hosting Muslims; encouraging publications written in Arabic to ensure a wide access by students and learners of Arabic to Arabic publications, newspapers and books; creating websites specialized in teaching Arabic to natives and non-natives according to the international scientific and methodological criteria used in teaching languages; and seizing the opportunity of the UN Arabic Language Day (December 18) to organize cultural and educational activities.

6. USING ICTS AND OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES (OER) IN SCHOOL CURRICULA AND PROGRAMMES

Technology and communication networks have become the cornerstone of the knowledge society in producing and disseminating knowledge across continents, thus transcending the barriers of time and geography, to the point that ICT has turned to be emblematic of the knowledge society and knowledge-based economy. Given the important role ICTs play in education in today's



world, the Islamic world countries should make progress and take great steps forward in this area to master these technologies and adopt practical measures that can help achieve this objective. Among the most important steps to take in this connection are developing a national legal and regulatory framework for distance education and training and for virtual education institutions, and providing the technological infrastructure necessary for ensuring a universal use of modern technologies in the education system, whether in governance and services or in education and learning. Other equally important measures include sustaining existing efforts to invest in ICTs in the field of education in order to encourage learners to engage in learning, facilitate access to the different

fields of knowledge and make the learning process more exciting and interesting by using audiovisual tools, movement and colors; making use of virtual spaces in the area of education and training by using available electronic platforms on the Web, for example, (Coursera, Codecademy, Edx, Khan Academy, Udacity, Edraak) to exchange views and experiences regarding education, strengthen collaboration, and enhance communication; encouraging the digitization of popular scientific and intellectual books and encyclopedias; and sustaining cooperation and exchange of technical expertise and advice among the ministries of education in the Islamic world countries in order to develop capacities in the new and emerging technologies.

III. ACHIEVING QUALITY AND GOOD GOVERNANCE IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM

In this area, quality should be considered as a crucial criterion for the curricula, courses and educational plans. It is an essential inherent component in the educational and teaching/learning process and a key factor to the improvement of its work and its performance. This first requires the unification of the concepts that are relevant to the educational efficient quality standards, and then working to improve the educational process quality. The relationship between all stakeholders concerned responsible for the planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation should be strengthened. Leadership in the educational process management is a joint action between all stakeholders concerned. To achieve this objective, quality standards should be adopted in the system of education, in addition to the development of planning and evaluation mechanisms, the adoption of governance in educational management, and the promotion and strengthening of teachers' new roles.

1. ADOPTING QUALITY STANDARDS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

The quality of education has become a contemporary trend in most countries in the world today, especially regarding improving and developing performance in line with the educational, teaching/learning and administrative developments or updates and with the efforts seeking to achieve excellence in the performance of educational systems. To achieve this objective, the philosophy of education quality must be considered as an integral part of the educational management process. This means that quality standards in education will have limited impact, and probably to no avail, if no real practical measures are adopted to implement it. This includes reviewing education policies to list the education quality issues and the promotion of the culture of quality at the top of the educational system reform priorities, taking appropriate measure that can help identify the relevant standards and specifications and ensure its implementation in all and by all components concerned by the educational system, including by students, teachers and the administration, in curricula, school buildings, and at all school levels.

Improving the outputs of the educational system, ensuring qualitative excellence for all learners and achieving clear

and tangible results in education, especially the reading, writing and arithmetic skills and basic life skills, intensifying efforts to promote the use of educational methods to achieve quality in education and learning, improving learners' skills and help them better invest their diverse competencies, encouraging them to be critical, analyze criticism, and think creatively, and improving their ability to solve problems in the teaching and learning different situations are among the best measures proposed to improve students' quality.

Strengthening the standards that are relevant to teachers is important to improve teachers' quality. The teacher is required to have a good academic level and to be equipped with the ability to self-development, the necessary teaching performance skills, good classroom management skills, the latest teaching techniques and the capacity to use them and to contribute to community development. This will also require developing legislation, structures, programmes and mechanisms of action pertaining to the in-service training and qualification of teachers in accordance with the administrative, academic and educational standards, corroborate with professional incentives

In terms of improving the quality of curricula, special attention should be paid to developing flexible standards that are sensitive to the latest developments and knowledge trends, while taking utmost advantage of the tremendous opportunities and various mechanisms made available by ICTs. This also requires that the learning outputs be aligned with the realities on the ground and with the needs of the labor market and the learners' educability be enhanced, and integration be achieved between the objectives, content, methods and evaluation of the educational process.

2. DEVELOPING PLANNING AND EVALUATION MECHANISMS

Planning and evaluation are an important and inherent component in the educational process and a key factor to improving it and its performance. Evaluation draws its importance from its ability to give a preliminary assessment of the educational process and help identify the levels

of achievement. It helps identify teaching, learning and planning issues in the educational process and thus make the relevant decisions. This means that the planning and evaluation mechanisms are leading and orienting the educational process rather than serving and supporting the process as in the past. Therefore, the first planning and evaluation priorities to be taken into consideration on the ground should be given to the new practical measures to adopt, mainly to giving more attention in educational policy to educational planning issues, and the related evaluations, as basic and essential elements in the system of education, to enhance the quality of education at the input and output levels, providing more theoretical and practical reference documents and guidelines to help educational planners and assessors develop plans and educational programmes that respect quality standards, that are appropriate for learners and that meet requirements of development, and to evaluate them in a way that help optimize and develop these programmes further. The new practical measures also include setting-up new and developed mechanisms adopted by the Islamic world countries in order to bring their different visions together, exchange experiences and expertise in designing educational plans and monitoring and evaluation programmes, controlling the educational system performance and measuring learning outputs through quantitative and qualitative measurement systems and comparative indicators, continuously evaluating the elements of the educational system, establishing of permanent system of regular internal and external evaluations according to international standards to measure to what extent the goals and the necessary standards are met. There should be also greater number of educational staff specialized in the planning and evaluation of educational programmes, through intensive training sessions to train them to use the latest methods in educational planning, follow-up and monitoring mechanisms, and evaluation of the internal and external educational process.

3. ADOPTING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION

Good governance is important to ensure smooth management of the educational system, shaping the strategic aspects for the system management, identifying the goals and checking if they are met, ensuring good management of the existing resources on the basis of integrity, justice, equality, transparency, coordination, cooperation and shared responsibility and accountability. That is why good governance should be adopted when developing the educational system, upgrading educational institutions, officials, actors and civil society to achieve the objectives, through the adoption of new practical measures. These measures mainly include capacity building in the educa-

tional administration functions and their management techniques to ensure governance in the administrative and financial management of the educational institutions; and expanding the scope of participation in decision-making, either in terms of task delegation and participatory management for effective educational leadership, or through developing contractual "enterprise projects" defining the goals set for every educational institution. They also concern regulating quality in educational administration, through opting for humanized administrative operations, implementing the principle of accountability, focusing on the production and productivity and the development of time management skill and the use of technology, and developing educational information systems through the creation of specialized units to collect and organize data and statistics on education systems. Competencies of the educational administrative staff should be enhanced, and skills should be improved to enhance their abilities to communicate with teachers, pupils, their parents and staff members themselves, and to give their interventions more efficiency in resolving disputes and building relations between team members within the organization.

4. STRENGTHENING TEACHERS' NEW ROLES

The teacher is the key to the success of the educational process and the implementation factor for any renewal or change. It is the teacher who helps students build their knowledge, develop and improve their abilities and life skills. S/he teaches them their religious, national and universal values, provides them with the sources of knowledge, and familiarizes them with self-learning, which enables them to pursue their own learning and renew their knowledge and skills all along their lifetime. The present and future of any society accordingly depends on the attention and importance that community gives to the teacher's training and continuous professional development. Member States are accordingly invited to reconsider the roles and training of the teacher in light of current variables. Several practical measures should be adopted in this regard. These measures include developing legislation, policies and regulations to improve teachers' functional, social and material conditions; training teachers and educational managers, identifying their professional and training needs, on an permanent basis, to meet them, so that they can stay abreast of the relevant developments or updates and requirements of development; setting and developing educational and academic standards to measure the professional performance of teachers with due consideration of the relevant international standards as well as of the Islamic perspective on the mission of education, while enforcing such standards in hiring

teachers to achieve education quality; promoting the participation of representatives of teachers bodies and unions in the development of educational policies and in their implementation and evaluation; improving and generalizing in-depth and continuous pedagogical pre-service and in-service training for teachers to ensure their sustainable professional development, update their knowledge, develop their skills, improve their performance, and be able to use advanced education technologies and e-learning entrances; adding onto the teacher

training modules a real and authentic context of classroom teaching and learning; training teachers on participatory education and effective teaching methods that are appropriate to their new role as facilitators of the educational process who motivate learning, which can encourage learners to embrace self-learning to continue their education permanently and continuously; and motivating teachers and encouraging their self-training to keep abreast of scientific developments in the field of education sciences and modern teaching methods.

IV. LINKING AND ACHIEVING HOMOGENEITY AND COMPLEMENTARITY AMONG SCHOOL LEVELS

School education is no longer a cumulative and cross-cutting sequential process, through which the amount of information increases and school burdens go heavier, while the student is moving ahead in his educational career. Indeed, the concept of modern education refers nowadays to a thorough satisfaction of the student's cognitive, psychological and social needs. The school offers him opportunities to improve his capacities of imagination and creativity, to mold an independent character able to make decisions and take initiatives, and to satisfy his curiosity to discover and experiment. Under this model, educational policies should be reviewed in such a way as to extend integration in the compulsory education as to reach the last stage of secondary education, with emphasis on tightening the horizontal integration of curricula and teaching materials in the same education stage; and master pedagogical, intentional and structural linkages between school levels, including pre-school, primary, secondary education with its various branches, and higher education with its various majors, while ensuring that a new educational culture ought to be established. This culture should help students acquire necessary social skills that will enable them to coexist with others, take responsibility, ensure self-control and self-understanding and discover others.

1. PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

In view of lower pre-school enrollment rates in many Member States, compared to advanced countries, and higher child mortality rates due to the poor health conditions, it is important to propose new practical measures to change such a situation. These actions include the implementation of the relevant decisions of regional and international conferences, particularly those of the Islamic Conference of Ministers in charge of Childhood. These concern the promotion of early childhood and pre-school education, by increasing enrollment rates in kindergartens closer to international standards, developing the programmes and performance of Quranic schools up to education quality standards, and paying due attention to children of poor and rural families, homeless children, children living in vulnerability and conflict areas to facilitate their access to pre-school education institutions.

Educational experts recommend that pre-school education should be an integral part of the national educational system. Its objectives, contents, profile of supervisors and specifications needed to set up its institutions should be identified. They also propose preparing standards and terms of reference proper to private pre-school education institutions, taking into account the respective specific contexts of Member States, and establishing an effective system to regulate and control these institutions, in addition to all other parameters that can guarantee its quality and efficiently link it to subsequent school levels. Furthermore, they recommend that State-owned pre-school education institutions should be free of charge, particularly in poor and rural areas, that pre-school educational tools and games need to be made available, tailored to the children's local culture and able to develop their intellectual and creative capacities and ensure their openness to the external human and environmental surrounding.

In the same vein, they stressed the need to adopt educational programmes and methods commensurate with the needs of children, in order to facilitate their social integration, develop their communication skills, and help them acquire the experience and knowledge necessary for a balanced emotional, psychological and cognitive development, while ensuring their well-being, and strengthening their self-confidence by inculcating in them a sense on self-reliance and responsibility. This needs to be corroborated by a human-rights based approach in the design of the content of the national programmes of pre-school education, taking into account the scientific developments relating to the cognitive, emotional and social development of children and their needs, while at the same time working for a systematic integration of the values of citizenship, democracy, participation, acceptance of difference and moderation into these educational programmes.

They also recommend establishing specialized centers to train pre-school education institutions' educators and supervisors; raising awareness of parents and families of the importance of enrolling their children in such institutions in order to effectively meet the needs of early childhood and ensure children's personal development at this stage of life. Moreover, partnership and cooperation should

be encouraged between public and private pre-school education institutions, associations of parents and caretakers of children and local communities to guarantee the efficiency and quality of pre-school education programmes and secure easy access to them for the various social layers.

2. PRIMARY EDUCATION

Given the fact that primary education is the most important link in the project of education for all, the current situation of the primary education system in many Member States needs to be improved. Policies of universal education should be strengthened, quality should be guaranteed, equal opportunities for males and females should be endorsed, pupils with special needs should be supported and the gap between rural and urban areas should be bridged. To achieve these actions, a number of measures are proposed, mainly extending primary education enrollment to all school-age children in urban and rural areas, male and female, non-disabled and disabled and strengthening the infrastructure of primary education schools in all regions in such a way as to provide seats for all, in adequate conditions. Classrooms should be provided with modern teaching tools, hygiene and sports facilities, roads should be built, and means of transport should be provided, especially in rural and remote areas. Moreover, primary education teaching staff ought to be trained on the optimal use of modern teaching methods, so that they can become facilitators of the educational process in accordance with its modern concept. Specialized training on good governance for primary education administrative and technical staff is also necessary.

Revamping curricula and teaching methods to shift from an instruction-based into a learning-based model of education is one of the most important measures likely to improve the quality of primary education, by endowing students with the critical, analytical and deductive reasoning skills and developing their cognitive, physical, psychological and creative capabilities, in order to curb grade repetition and dropout rates. More such measure include also rising the grade promotion threshold gradually to ensure acquisition of minimum basic knowledge necessary for passing the next grade. Curriculum content should also be reviewed, and the primary principles of technical education and the values of democracy, human rights, dialogue, multiculturalism, religious pluralism, and environment protection should be introduced, ahead of a further elaboration of such values and principles in secondary education. The basics of living and world languages should be taught in preparation for further studies in secondary education without compromising the mother tongue that should be taught to the fullest.

3. SECONDARY EDUCATION

In light of the current knowledge and economic changes in the preparation for the job market or orientation towards higher education, it is necessary to develop secondary education and pull it out of its traditional framework so that it can keep pace with the rapid changes and the scientific, educational, social and cultural developments in the world. There is also a need to keep up with global contemporary trends to develop the philosophy and objectives of secondary education, to organize and diversify its textbooks, systems of evaluation and exams. Accordingly, educational experts recommend that a set of concrete practical measures be adopted to develop secondary education. Particularly, national policies on secondary education should be reviewed. Indeed, the objectives, functions and new contents of such an education should be determined, in order to enhance the outcomes and outputs of primary education, and to set the scene, in a coherent and integrated manner, for higher education and labor market requirements. Compulsory basic education should be extended to the first stage of secondary education at least, in order to reduce the negative aspects of repetition and dropout rates and improve secondary education enrollment rates. Thus, the number of students moving from basic education should be raised, the opportunities for access to secondary education by males and females in rural areas should be increased, and secondary education supervision indicators need to be improved around the world average of one teacher for every fourteen students. Also, secondary education disciplines should be diversified in such a way as to deliver qualifications responding to the labor market requirements or allowing for enrolment in technical and vocational education (TVE). Secondary education should be as well open to entrepreneurship by allocating compulsory courses for students in corporations. Besides, methods of administrative management of secondary education schools should be developed to be based on good governance.

Reinforcing the high school infrastructure, especially in disadvantaged and rural areas, is also one of the best practices that can improve the quality of secondary education. This infrastructure should be modernized. In fact, laboratory equipment, health and sports facilities and information systems need to be provided. Secondary education curricula should be also modernized. Indeed, it is necessary to enhance acquired primary principles of citizenship, human rights, dialogue, multiculturalism, religious pluralism, environment protection and programmes stimulating the spirit of initiative and innovation. More attention should be paid to the assessments of the results achieved by students, as they should be appropriately guided according to their abilities and interests so that they can achieve success and excellence in graduate studies, or in their professional careers. More opportunities should be provided for students' participation in regional and international school competitions in the areas of science, arts, letters and innovations.

V. IMPLEMENTING THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AND TVE IN LOCALIZING TECHNOLOGY AND MEETING JOB MARKET NEEDS

Training quality and harmonization with the current and future social and economic needs of society remain one of the biggest challenges that must be addressed in order to help the Islamic countries reduce youth unemployment by localizing the technology that can achieve the desired social and economic development. Another challenge is to harness potentials and competences of human resources who are trained in universities and TVE institutions. In light of this, the importance of the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, organized by ISESCO periodically every two years, is to be highlighted. It is an opportunity for officials to review and adopt the reference documents for the advancement of institutions of higher education and scientific research, and follow up on the decision of such conferences. Furthermore, the strategic and forward-looking work done by the ISESCO to develop sciences and scientific research related to development is also important. To enhance these efforts, it is now necessary to adopt a new approach linking the higher education and scientific research system to the TVE system. Special attention should be also given to the development of vocational and technical education patterns in accordance with this approach to improve the performance and quality of such a system. Its textbooks need to be linked to labor market needs and awareness should be raised about its importance in providing real youth job opportunities through relevant strategies devised by the ISESCO for the Islamic countries to develop science, technology and innovation, manage water resources, develop university education, nanotechnology and renewable energy, and manage climate change risks.

1. HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education represents one of the most important strategic investments in a given country. It is one of the key means for training human resources, who can meet national development needs and labor market requirements. Considering the changes, transformations and challenges related to higher education around the world and imposed by technical developments, the communications revolution and flow of information, the real challenge facing higher education institutions nowadays is

how to develop knowledge economies. This requires a holistic reconsideration of the university higher education systems, including philosophies, policies, plans, strategies, implementation, development and follow-up. In order to achieve this objective, it is important to propose practical measures. Notably, the relevant decisions of regional and international conferences, especially the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, particularly with regard to the adoption of key performance indicators to improve the quality of higher education, should be coupled with time-framed procedural plans. The efficiency of higher education's outputs should be improved, by strengthening the independence of universities academically, organizationally and administratively, while ensuring good governance of the financial and administrative affairs of universities, the quality of their curricula and textbooks, and transparency and reliability of university exams. An agency, supervised by ISESCO, needs to be established to guarantee quality in higher education institutions. The purpose of such an agency is to coordinate the efforts exerted by accreditation boards in Islamic countries to ensure their commitment to the relevant international standards. The reciprocal pattern of education should be introduced among university students, professors and researchers, according to the orientations and content of the ISESCO programme (understanding), adopted by the Seventh Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research. Moreover, it is necessary to establish private, virtual and seasonal universities, according to Quality Assurance and Accreditation indicators.

Educational experts stress the need to ensure equal access to higher education for good students from disadvantaged areas. These students should be provided with university accommodation. More scholarships for the neediest among them ought to be allocated and loan-granting systems to pursue higher studies should be supported. The university should be also oriented towards serving its socioeconomic and cultural environment by building bridges of communication and cooperation with it, ensuring close linkages between it and pre-university education stages and consolidating its academic and educational outreach. It needs to be empowered to

effectively contribute to the transition of our countries towards "knowledge economy" by focusing on relevant disciplines of information technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology and its applications in the sectors of agriculture and food production, health services, pharmaceutical industry, and other development areas. Information and communication technology should be optimally used and its benefits should be invested for the promotion of communication and cooperation among national universities, universities of the Muslim world and international prestigious universities. Furthermore, expertise and research findings need to be networked between these universities.

It is important to note that legal measures are necessary to anticipate the phenomenon of trans-border education, which primarily serve profit-oriented purposes. It should be noted that this challenge requires more coordination and exchange of expertise among Islamic countries on the phenomenon of trafficking in educational services and how to recognize diplomas delivered by cross-border institutions.

2. SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Scientific research is a main pillar used by developed and developing countries to build knowledge society. Through this research, states race against each other to get first the greatest possible fruitful and accurate knowledge that can ensure the comfort and well-being of the human person, as well as his superiority over others. Therefore, if Member States want to achieve progress, renaissance, pride and empowerment, they have no choice but to pay great attention to scientific research. This can be achieved through a set of concrete measures. These include mainly (i) implementing the decisions of regional and international conferences, particularly those of the Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research regarding the promotion of scientific research in universities and scientific research centers, based on clearly defined procedural plans and timetables; and (ii) translating into concrete terms the specialized strategies aiming to develop science, technology and innovation, manage water resources, develop nanotechnology and renewable energies, and manage climate change risks, by raising spending on scientific research to at least 1 percent of GDP to improve the skills of researchers and achieve genuine scientific research and patents.

Other measures are also proposed to promote scientific research. Universities and research centers should be able to organize specialized scientific conferences to address issues related to scientific research and to propose concrete actions. Cooperation and coordination should be established between libraries and research centers, and sources of information and educational resources need to be developed via a wider use of Web networks and information technology. Furthermore, library systems and norms should be standardized in terms of classification,

indexing and bibliography. Scientific research centers ought to be supported so that they can provide more grants to young researchers in order to complete their development-related projects and facilitate their participation in international scientific conferences to exchange experiences and expertise. There is also need to establish national innovation bodies to be entrusted with the responsibilities of country-level coordination, monitoring, evaluation and support, based on feasibility studies, and taking into consideration the material and moral impact and the financial cost of the initiatives and innovations intended to ensure the localization of modern science, industry and technology, and access to the international competition market in the various areas of material, knowledge and virtual production.

More moral and material prizes to reward prominent researchers from the Muslim world for their research and their findings should be established. Young gifted scientific researchers need to be discovered and supported. Also, scientific research, which aims to address the development of the Islamic countries, should be promoted; and national capacities should be reinforced to better use technology and its applications to meet these countries' productivity needs and economic requirements.

Given the role of partnership in developing scientific research, it is important to involve the private sector in financing scientific research with a view to improving production, bringing about sustainable development and achieving the desired economic growth. Cooperation and coordination between scientific research units in the universities of the Muslim world need to be promoted in order to exchange expertise and experiences. Also, partnership with scientific research units at universities in developed countries should be built to benefit from their experiences. Bridges of cooperation and partnership between universities, research centers, public and private companies need to be built in order to align curriculum, subject-matters and research subjects with knowledge economy and labor market requirements. Students should receive internships in these companies.

3. TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION (TVE)

Taking into account the need to harness the potential of human resources in Islamic countries and equip young people with basic skills for working life and professional integration, and in order to improve the output of vocational, technical and technological education to produce the qualified human resources necessary for meeting the labor market needs in terms of trained manpower to combat poverty, and in order to improve living conditions and economic development, the Member States are invited to accord more attention to the development of TVE patterns and improvement of its performance and

quality. Therefore, a set of practical measures can be adopted. Particularly, new policies and strategies need to be devised to enhance TVE as a sector in itself and not a secondary sector for those unable to pursue secondary and graduate studies. The basics and principles of technical education ought to be integrated into textbooks, starting from the early stages of education. National bodies for quality assurance in TVE should be also established. These bodies shall, through appropriate national and regional projects, continuously assess and review the programmes and curricula of technical and technological education so that its output can keep pace with the changing and evolving market needs. Moreover, sources for funding TVE should be diversified, and the available funding should be more efficient, by building effective partnerships with economic sectors and civil society. Investors are also encouraged to invest the revenues of intellectual property, consulting and vocational training programmes. In the same vein, an Islamic fund for developing TVE can be established to contribute to the promotion of this pattern of education in the Islamic world countries.

Given the importance of vocational and technological education in achieving development for society and its ability to provide real employment opportunities for its graduates and improve their situation and socio-economic status, it is necessary to open new professional and technological disciplines in vocational and technical education institutions that meet the labor market needs. Their training programmes should be linked to the various requirements of economic institutions. It is also important to provide the relevant pedagogical references, create training courses in secondary education (vocational

Baccalaureate) to prepare students for careers on high demand in the labor market. In the same vein, bridges between vocational training and higher education can be established by introducing a higher level into TVE core subjects, increasing the number of applied colleges and offering TVE graduates new university courses culminating in certificates equivalent to the ones of higher education. Furthermore, TVE needs to be linked to the production sector and economic institutions, by adopting the principle of field or dual training, involving the labor and production sectors, private and public alike, in the development of TVE plans and textbooks and in the management and financing of technical schools and training centers. The distribution of such schools and training centers should be geographically balanced between urban and rural areas and their equipment should be modernized to keep pace with technological developments in the areas of TVE. It is also important to establish «networks of experts» specialized in training engineering, pedagogical approaches, teaching aids production (standardization of technical concepts and vocational training language). Continuous training courses and workshops need to be organized for TVE trainers in the Islamic world to keep them abreast of the latest scientific and technological developments. Equally important is to create a skills competition at the level of the Islamic world to contribute, on the one hand, to supporting partnership and exchange of experiences between the various national vocational training systems in the Muslim world, and on the other hand, to promoting the standing of our countries and improve their participation in international competitions such as the famous WorldSkills contest.

VI. STRENGTHENING THE EDUCATIONAL ROLES OF THE MEDIA AND CIVIL SOCIETY PLAYERS IN ENTRENCHING SHARED HUMAN VALUES AND ADDRESSING DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Work in this area seeks to take advantage of all the channels and means available to develop the educational system. Thus, various media outlets should be used in education and social awareness, and the family's role in providing key cognitive and moral ingredients for future generations should be implemented. Young people need to be a contributing stakeholder in building a participatory educational system and promoting practical and applied practices of democratic values. Environmental and health awareness should be disseminated among young people to promote the environmental, health and population education and make it a solid pillar in their daily lives.

1. MEDIA EDUCATION

In view of the active and influential role played by the media in enabling young people to explore various aspects of knowledge, cultures and places that are difficult to access, and given its ability to participate effectively in education and social awareness, there is a need to optimally use various print and broadcast media outlets to strengthen the role of educational media along other educational channels and institutions in achieving the desired educational and development objectives. To implement the role of educational media, educational and media experts emphasize the need to adopt a range of practical and innovative measures. For example, media education should be incorporated in the educational reform plans and programmes, by integrating it into the national education curriculum, the non-formal education systems and lifelong learning in order to develop critical thinking skills and build the capacity of objective evaluation of information and learn the skills of dealing, in an aware manner, with the contents of classical and new media. Moreover, partnership and cooperation between formal education institutions and national media ones ought to be enhanced to achieve media education goals in the local environment. The formulation of educational content aimed at promoting media education and overall awareness among all segments of society should be coordinated in such a way as to address such various social scourges as extremism, violence, terrorism, crime, poverty, illiteracy, disease and epidemics. The role of media education in improving the

effectiveness of schools' educational work needs to be strengthened, by entrenching the human rights culture, freedom of opinion and expression within the framework of responsibility, dialogue, respect for others, renunciation of violence and intolerance among the educated. Educational institutions should be more open to its social, cultural and economic surroundings, and learners should be trained to produce a media content related to textbooks, their intellectual concerns and creative inclinations, through classical media (school magazines, radio and television), and new educational tools (Internet, websites and social networks).

2. PARENTING EDUCATION

Since a healthy family environment is the best setting for equipping the child with the elementary tools of life, a good parenting education can only be dispensed if parents are prepared for this task. If parenting is achieved appropriately, it will help to prepare a good individual able to assume responsibility and costs of life. On this basis, educational experts recommend the adoption of a number of measures to achieve an efficient parenting education. These particularly include the intensification of awareness programmes of Islamic religious values to adopt as a reference in parenting. Scientific research on parental education and its impact on molding the personality of children should be also encouraged. Besides, parental education should be integrated in educational policies and education programmes, particularly in higher education, and given, in the educational system, the importance it warrants. Plans and programmes need to be devised and implemented among students' parents and guardians, who should be equipped with the necessary expertise in this area. Education and training programmes are also needed for students' parents and mothers in special classes and as part of the desired partnership between the school and student's parents in order to equip them with parental education skills. Cooperation with civil society organizations and associations should be reinforced, with emphasis on field activities to raise the awareness of students' families in disadvantaged and rural areas about the importance of parental education and its role in improving school results and correcting the behavior of young people.

3. EDUCATIONAL ROLES OF THE YOUTH AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

No society can stand without harnessing the youth's potential for economic, social, cultural and political development. This requires the need to devolve upon them a share of the various responsibilities in the education sector, especially in awareness-raising and extracurricular activities, and in redressing the imbalances plaguing the educational systems in their respective countries. Given the importance of the roles young people can play in developing educational action and boosting its efficiency, the Member States are required to spare no effort in instilling the entrepreneurial spirit in young people and preparing them, since the early stages of education, to address their problems and express their ambitions. Islamic countries are also invited to give them the opportunity to take initiatives to improve the situation of education in their respective countries, so that they can be a contributing stakeholder in building a participatory educational system.

In this regard, concrete practical measures need to be adopted. For example, policies and legislation need to be developed to allow young leaders and civil society organizations to play their new educational roles in devising and evaluating education-focused policies in an effort to reinforce the efforts made by government educational departments. Youth leaders and civil society organizations should be supported to execute educational and not class-related programmes to promote the values of tolerance, democracy, respect for human rights, multiculturalism, religious pluralism, and clearance of extremism and violence from the minds and behavior of young people. Parents should be also sensitized about their duties in this area, and young leaders and civil society organizations should be encouraged to implement educational voluntary projects aiming at combating illiteracy and promoting enrolment opportunities for girls in rural areas, the marginalized and persons with special needs. Besides, the establishment of more youth clubs and forums need to be supported in the Islamic world to practice artistic, scientific and cultural activities and should be networked to open the channels of communication and cultural, scientific and cognitive dialogue among them.

4. EDUCATION IN THE VALUES OF DEMOCRACY, HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPECT FOR THE OTHER

In light of the Islamic commitment to the promotion of an education favoring greater respect for human rights within the framework of shared human values and fostering peace in accordance with international instruments that stress the need to direct education to the full development

of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and as part of supporting intercultural dialogue aimed at bringing different cultures closer together and avoiding discord which leads to extremism and conflicts, Member States are invited to provide further support for revamping their educational systems in such a way as to entrench democratic practices and values, strengthen young people's belief in the importance of a nation's unity within diversity for its stability and development, and encourage their interest in and commitment to human rights in their daily life practices. This can be done through effective practical measures, including the development of national plans for human rights education in order to increase young people's awareness of national and international instruments dealing with democracy and human rights while streamlining their related concepts among learners of different intellectual levels, in a way that is in line with the national constitutions and local traditions and customs. A human rights based approach is also to be adopted in dealing with all social layers and categories, in order to empower them to meet their obligations and take advantage of their rights within respect for society's values and others' freedom, while enabling them to exercise their social, economic and political roles in a perspective favoring role sharing and role integration. It is also recommended in this regard to organize open days in educational institutions to promote common understanding of the situation as well as of the challenges facing educators, foster education in the values of tolerance, dialogue and acceptance of the other and share successful education experiences in this area, and establish specialized departments and chairs in universities and higher education institutes to carry out research in the field of education in democracy and human rights. Another proposal is to implement concrete and sustainable initiatives to enhance the role of education in entrenching the values of citizenship, democracy and respect for human rights and cultural diversity.

With a view to revising textbooks to rid them of stereotypical representations of the Other and activating the relevant reference documents intended for authors of history textbooks, it is necessary to integrate in textbooks and curricula subjects relating to education on citizenship, democracy, dialogue and respect for plurality, human rights and freedom of opinion, thought and expression, provided it do not involve incitement to terrorism and violence or abuse of personal rights and religious sanctities and symbols. It would also be commendable to organize training sessions for educators and textbook authors in the Islamic world in order to sensitize them to the principles of human rights in Islam, dialogue skills, listening competencies, conflict management strategies and respect for the other, in addition to organizing competitions and awards for pupils, students and teachers who have made outstanding contributions in the field of education for citizenship, democracy and respect for human rights and multiculturalism.

5. ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND POPULATION EDUCATION

Environment, health and population issues are the primary challenges facing most Member States and hindering the fulfillment of their development goals. These challenges take body in a rapid demographic growth and environmental pollution and its repercussions on health. Proceeding from the Islamic vision calling for the need to give due attention to man's environment and health, Member States are invited to pursue the introduction of environmental, health and population concepts in their educational programmes. This can be achieved through various practical measures, consisting mainly in integrating environmental, health and population dimensions in their national strategies,

educational plans, curricula and textbooks; raising awareness among education officials, teachers and students about climate change and its environmental, economic and social impact; strengthening the role of education and training in the management of natural disasters; integrating environmental, health and population issues into the curriculum to deepen awareness and change wrong behaviors, such as rational use of water and energy, waste management, reduction of global warming and climate change effects, public hygiene, prevention, reproductive health and other relevant issues; training highly competent educators in the fields of environment, health and population education; and developing appropriate training programmes and reference documents and guidelines.

VII. FINANCING EDUCATION AND ENCOURAGING PRIVATE INVESTMENT IN THE SECTOR

The financing of education is one of the biggest challenges facing authorities responsible for this vital sector, as many governments are unable to allocate sufficient budgets to meet the increasing demand for educational services and free education, while they are committed to universalizing it amid a worsening national and international economic context. Although the financial contribution of the private sector and regional and international funding institutions has become indispensable, it is not sufficient to fill the chronic deficit in government educational budgets, given the various imbalances from which the sector is suffering due to the adoption of traditional outdated financial and administrative management methods. Needless to say that increased spending on education does not necessarily guarantee quality education, unless there is a quantum leap towards good governance and reasoned distribution of financial resources among the various components of the sector, based on actual priorities and needs.

In order to provide suitable financial resources for the education sector in Islamic world countries, enabling it to best perform its future roles, it is imperative to find new solutions capable of achieving this. These mainly include encouraging the private sector to invest in the education sector through the creation of private educational institutions at all levels, provided it abide by relevant specifications with regard to infrastructure and quality curricula. Other solutions in this connection include entrenching good governance principles in the education system of the Member States through the integration of control, follow-up and assessment mechanisms, based on improved internal and external auditing in the education system by establishing auditing units at all decision-making levels, and preparing qualified teaching staff capable of assuming the new roles of the teacher. For the private sector to become a true partner in the implementation of the national education policy, it would be necessary

to reconsider laws and regulations to stimulate investment in the education sector and facilitate administrative procedures relating to the licensing of construction, the hiring of teachers, the purchase of school seats and the granting of loans. Regional and international financing institutions specialized in education and development issues, such as the Islamic Development Bank, the World Bank, the African Development Bank and civil charity Arab and Islamic institutions, can also contribute to finance education development projects in the Islamic countries.

It is also possible to build on the culture of solidarity and cooperation and earmark a portion of Zakat and Islamic Waqf resources to cover some education expenses, especially in poor areas deserving Zakat. For instance, these resources with the support of civil society may serve to the establishment of educational projects, such as the provision of land for the building of schools and student residences, exemption from school fees and the provision of school bags, books and supplies for students in need.

Other innovative solutions may be proposed to provide additional financial resources through solidarity, including for example the allocation of a portion of revenues from customs duties, corporate tax, phone bills, building licenses, professional permits, leases, legal transactions, trade chambers and unions, and official biddings.

Community partnership to increase funding for the education sector in Islamic world countries has become a vital requirement in light of the structural mismatch between education and the needs of the economy, provided that it is led by the government effectively and competently. Education should not be the concern of the ministries of education alone but a community effort, bringing together the various forces of society. In other words, it must become a common preoccupation for the community as a whole, to which all government institutions, relevant state agencies, the business sector and civil society contribute.

The background of the page is a light blue gradient. On the right side, there is a stack of books. The pages of the books are fanned out, creating a radial pattern that extends from the top right towards the center. The books are white, and the pages have a warm, orange-brown hue. The overall composition is clean and modern.

Chapter IV

Implementation mechanisms of the Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic World

The development of operational mechanisms for the strategies it prepares has always been the practice of ISESCO's General Directorate, in a bid to ensure the implementation of these strategies through the Organization's action plans, projects and field programmes as well as through the national policies of the Member States. In furtherance of this trend, which has yielded positive results so far, this chapter proposes a number of mechanisms to implement the provisions and guidelines of the Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic World, at the national, regional and international level. These proposals seek to put in place new mechanisms, enhance existing ones or adapt them to national specificities, so as to ensure an optimal application of this Strategy and allow for its evaluation and revision so that it can keep abreast of developments in the educational field and

This Strategy represents a general reference framework that seeks to outline the major educational issues which should be given priority in dealing with common requirements and current education-related challenges facing the Islamic world in the age of globalization and information societies. In light of the recommendations set forth in this Strategy,

it has become necessary to review national educational policies, re-establish the priorities of educational action, and adapt the conditions of implementation to local capacities and specificities. Moreover, each country may develop specific methods and means to implement the different projects and programmes associated with the Strategy's main thrust, in ways that correspond to its conditions and to other circumstantial factors dictated by the reality of educational and schooling systems.

To that end, it is essential that all components of society step up their efforts as education is not the sole prerogative of the ministry of education and its regional academies, central and provincial departments and affiliated educational planning centers. Education is also the concern of other ministries and government bodies as well as legislative, religious, information and family-oriented institutions, the private sector, civil society organizations and trade unions.

It is therefore necessary to identify mechanisms that could ensure the participation of each and everyone in this large-scale project and adopt a participatory approach to the educational issues contained in this Strategy. This can be achieved through the following:

I. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS AT COUNTRY LEVEL:

Regardless of the ordinary means provided by specialized regional and international organizations and financing institutions to conduct the necessary structural reforms for the improvement of the educational system, which are often difficult to obtain, we must find innovative mechanisms reflecting our reality and our ability to bring into action the contents of this strategy. These mechanisms should be easily established, flexibly implemented, locally oriented and low-cost while attracting broad engagement. They can include, for example, the following:

A. CREATING A NATIONAL AND LOCAL COUNCILS FOR EDUCATION

The mission of these councils is to broaden the scope of participation in education development efforts as to include the various governmental and nongovernmental actors, directly or indirectly involved in the education process, while monitoring the reform effort at the levels of cities, villages or regions. The national education councils existing in several Islamic countries provide live models of initiatives and experiments that can be emulated in countries that still lack such steering bodies, in order to achieve a broader community participation in the monitoring, steering, evaluation and development of the educational process.

Education reform and development experiences, models and projects have shown that community participation is a key element in this process. Additionally, many international institutions and organizations operating in the field of education believe that no educational plan or project can succeed unless relevant local stakeholders are involved and their needs are analyzed. It is also necessary to mobilize local community organizations, private companies and all other parties whose support can be valuable.

These councils would include in their membership, according to the specificity of each country, representatives of the competent ministry, relevant government departments, the Parliament, religious and media institutions, local elected representatives, the private sector, civil society organizations, teacher unions, university faculty clubs, youth centers, student unions, and parent associations. The

action of local councils will mainly focus on monitoring school curricula, assessing results and proposing the necessary adjustments where appropriate, according to the internal regulations governing their relationship with the National Council for Education. There is no doubt that an effective and real participation of the civil society in an educational reform benefiting all society encourages the community to welcome the reform. This would develop the sense of loyalty and belonging to the community and fosters voluntary participation.

The National Council for Education is expected to serve mainly as an inclusive observatory, a propositional force and an important evaluation mechanism in charge of the regular monitoring of the structural and systematic reforms conducted and the plans and programmes implemented to ensure transition from an instruction-based system to a learning-based one driven by quality and innovation. The NCE is also intended to be a platform for exchanging views with the aim of improving the quality of the educational system, mobilizing the community around its causes and contributing to evaluating public policies and programmes in education and scientific research.

B. PREPARING A COMMUNICATION PLAN TO PUBLICIZE THE STRATEGY

The communication plan to publicize the Strategy and explain its directions, objectives and its priorities for future action in the field of education would ensure a broad engagement of Member States, organizations, bodies and individuals in its implementation. The communication channels available such as audio-visual and written media, social media, and websites can be used within the framework of this media and communication plan.

C. ESTABLISHING A FUND TO SUPPORT PROGRAMMES ON EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

This fund aims to provide additional financial resources to support constructive educational programmes and scientific research programmes. The fund will receive its

budget from various resources, including Zakat and Islamic Waqf, donations and contributions from the rich, solidarity deductions from taxes, customs duties, administrative fees and any other resources as permitted by rules and regulations of each country.

Through this fund, civil society organizations will assume their role as to developing education and scientific research by encouraging for-profit entities to provide funding for education and ease the financial burden on governments, thus combining educational and economic objectives. This fund would therefore pave the way for civil society to become a credible and influential partner in tracking the progress made by government institutions and relevant government agencies. Also, its proposals would be taken into consideration in promoting education and achieving the EFA goals at the country level.

D. CREATING WEBSITES OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

The creation of websites and portals for the various educational institutions will enable users to communicate with them online, manage interactive activities and obtain all the information needed and the latest news and events of the educational institution concerned.

In order to achieve this, it would be profitable to take advantage of successful international experiences in the design of educational websites and MOOCs (massive open online courses), used by international educational institutions, based on a virtual, cost-effective and scalable educational environment. It is noteworthy that the creation of websites must comply with specific IT standards and conditions that aim to determine responsibility and authority, ensure the safety of their content and technical security, standardize their working mechanism, and protect them against any possible sabotage attacks.

E. ESTABLISHING EDUCATIONAL EXPERT NETWORKS

The networks of education experts aim to bring together the country's education officials and experts in order to enhance educational dialogue, provide affordable channels for the exchange of experiences and expertise,

raise awareness, develop educational and leadership skills, carry out joint field research, and evaluate relevant educational achievements. The purpose of these networks is also to sensitize the community and decision-makers to key education issues and ways to address them, by organizing educational forums, seminars and other related activities.

These networks also seek to become an essential professional reference forum and source of inspiration for education specialists and a privileged platform for the dissemination of expertise and know-how across the country. They aim to reach students, teachers, academic counselors, administrative staff, university professors, parents and officials in the education sector. They will be incubators of all initiatives for the organization of specialized training workshops, awareness-raising lectures and conferences dedicated to education.

There is no doubt that the existing expert networks in many countries in the Muslim world can serve as a springboard for generalizing and disseminating this initiative in other countries. This Pan-Islamic Research and Education Network (PIREN) created by ISESCO provides an appropriate framework for coordinating the work of national networks of education experts, and ensure connectivity between Member States in the areas of research and education.

Given the crucial need to align scientific research with reality, society and the labor market, the existence of such networks both at the local country-level and at the regional Islamic one would make it easier to conduct diagnostic studies to assess the needs and measure differences between the current situation and objectives, based on the specific context of each each country. This will require supporting networking through the active involvement of research centers, universities and institutes and coordinating the efforts of actors sharing strategic objectives in the long or medium term.

II. IMPLEMENTATION MECHANISMS AT THE ISLAMIC WORLD LEVEL

A. INSTITUTING THE HOLDING OF ISESCO CONFERENCE OF EDUCATION MINISTERS

The joint Islamic action in education, embodied by the Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic World, will certainly benefit from the meetings of the ministers of education of the Islamic world at a constitutional gathering convened by ISESCO every two years. These sessions provide the ministers with an opportunity to submit their national reports on progress made in the reform of the educational system according to the directives and contents of the said Strategy, share experiences, adopt the reference documents prepared by ISESCO, discuss the key educational issues featuring on the conference agenda, elect members of the Consultative Council for the Implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic World, and adopt its rules of procedure.

B. CREATING THE CONSULTATIVE COUNCIL IN CHARGE OF IMPLEMENTING OF THE STRATEGY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATION IN THE ISLAMIC WORLD

In light of ISESCO's success in setting up the Consultative Council in charge of implementing the Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World, the Consultative Council in charge of Implementing the Strategy for the Development of Sciences, Technology and Innovation in the Islamic world, the Supreme Consultative Council for Bringing Muslim Madhahib Closer Together, and the Supreme Council of Education and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World, the creation of a new consultative council to follow up on the implementation of the Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic World will undoubtedly bring us closer to the desired positive results, assist ISESCO's General Directorate in determining the various stages of work, extending counsel and making proposals to ensure the implementation of this Strategy, secure the successful international expertise in the priority areas identified by the Strategy as being the ones where

the Islamic countries need international expertise and assistance, and prepare the various sessions of ISESCO Conference of Education Ministers.

C. BOOSTING EDUCATION DIPLOMACY THROUGH COOPERATION WITH NATIONAL COMMISSIONS AND SPECIALIZED REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Education diplomacy is one of the many mechanisms used increasingly in recent years and decades, at regional and international levels, in fostering policies, programmes and systems aimed at developing the education sector, improving its quality and boosting its roles in building secure and cohesive societies and strengthening relations between peoples and cultures, based on balanced dialogue, acquaintance, cooperation and solidarity. In concrete terms, education diplomacy encompasses a diverse set of policy guidelines, initiatives and programmes seeking to mobilize and propose varied and renewable resources for financing the education sector, boost exchange of students and expertise through transborder training and academic programmes, develop education policies, encourage innovation in education and work for increasing the adherence of countries to the UN plans on education and development.

At the level of the Islamic world, there is a strong need to boost education diplomacy through effective cooperation between ISESCO and Member States' national commissions as well as with regional and international organizations specialized in education, donor agencies funding projects for the development of educational systems such as the Islamic Development Bank and the African Development Bank, as well as Arab and Islamic civil society institutions and charities working in education and training. The aim is to bolster the efforts of Member States and help them receive the financial resources necessary to cover the huge costs of this large-scale reform project as well as the technical advice and expertise needed to develop educational policies, draw up the plans and programmes that can give body to these policies through

the organization of forums, conferences, symposiums and workshops at national, regional and international levels.

It is essential in this context that training plans form part of an integrated policy aimed at developing human resources, upgrading their capabilities to prepare them to contribute to the implementation of the Strategy, and meet the challenges that might arise from future developments in the fields of knowledge, technology and science by providing them with the necessary expertise through the exchange of experiences between Islamic countries. In addition, it is recommended to intensify training sessions,

rely on the support of experts, adopt modern curricula and teaching aids that commensurate with the the conditions of the target groups.

There is no doubt that the vast network of cooperating parties built by ISESCO for more than thirty years is an important asset of its education diplomacy that should be brought into play to support ISESCO's plan and the budget allocated to the development of education in Member States, for a progressive implementation of the contents and guidelines of the Strategy for the Development of Education in the Islamic World.

