



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

# First ISESCO Conference of Education Ministers

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

**Tunis, Republic of Tunisia**  
26 Muharram 1438A.H. / 27 October 2016

**Tunis Declaration on  
Boosting Joint Islamic Educational Action**

We, the Ministers of Education of the Member States and heads and representatives of the international and regional organizations and institutions taking part in the first ISESCO Conference of Education Ministers to boost and activate joint Islamic educational action, hosted by the Republic of Tunisia, in Tunis, on 26 Muharram 1438 A.H, corresponding to 27 October 2016 A.D, under the high patronage of H.E. Mr Béji Caïd Essebsi, President of the Republic of Tunisia,

- Based on the values of our Islamic faith and civilization, which encourage learning and knowledge acquisition, along with universal and equal access to good-quality education for all;
- Believing in the close connection between countries' record of knowledge, skills, science and technology, and their societies' development, progress and well-being;
- Taking into consideration the recent decades deep and rapid mutations of the social, cultural and economic structures at the local and external levels;
- Based on the relevant international resolutions, conventions, declarations and reports, particularly those issued by UNESCO, which advocate full education opportunities, cooperation between nations towards an optimal ecosystem favoring equal education opportunities for all, and the enforcement of the principles and standards associated with the right to education, and taking into account the recommendations of the Dakar Conference 2000 as confirmed by the World Education Forum 2015, held in Korea;
- Adhering to the outcomes and resolutions of the regional conferences of education ministers, particularly ALECSO Conference of Arab Ministers of Education (Tunis, 29 May 2014), the Triennale on Education and Training in Africa, organized by the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (Burkina Faso 2012), and the 24<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the Education Ministers of the Member States of the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States (Riyadh, 28 September 2016); all of which stress the need to boost education-focused cooperation and joint action;
- Seeking inspiration in ISESCO's sustained efforts to promote quality, good governance and equal opportunities through Member States' education policies;
- Responding to the challenges facing the Islamic world and the looming problems and obstacles, which prompt the Islamic world to sustain educational cooperation and joint Islamic action to root the identity and philosophy of the instruction system of our countries, based on the commonalities of our educational systems;
- Being mindful of preserving the special role joint educational action plays in the education of young generations and in the development of nations; and

Building on the Conference's review of the major education-related issues and challenges faced by the Islamic world today and those it will be facing in the future, as laid out in the documents and reports submitted to the Conference, and taking into consideration the deliberations and the constructive suggestions and recommendations presented in this connection,

### **Invite all stakeholders of joint educational action to:**

- 1.** Model national educational policies on the directions and goals of the Strategy for the Promotion of Education in the Islamic World, in such a way as to rethink priorities and areas of educational action in order to select from among them those most appropriate for meeting present and future needs and achieving the desired comprehensive development.
- 2.** Expand the scope of consultation on the development of education policies, strategies and plans as to include all stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, municipalities, local communes, parliaments, consultative assemblies, parents of students, unions, and production and employment sectors; and collaborate with all such actors in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of such policies, strategies and plans.
- 3.** Develop the content elements of focus areas in all education stages to make a transition from an instruction-based into a learning-based model of education, taking into account the local needs and contexts, in such a way as to ensure these content elements' good quality and their ability to develop the potential of self-education, critical thinking, excellence and creativity, and align them with the learners' age and psychology and with their social and vocational needs, while being sensitive to gender and to the labor market, and offering wider access to the said content elements, the ultimate aim being to effectively ensure equal universal access to pre-school and primary education for boys and girls in rural and urban areas.
- 4.** Promote pre-school education as an integral part of the educational system's policies, while defining its goals and content elements, establishing specialized centers to train educators, and encouraging partnership and cooperation among pre-school education institutions, governmental and non-governmental alike.
- 5.** Increase attention to gifted children, in terms of both quantity and quality, at all primary, secondary and tertiary education levels, support institutions specialized in their education, and provide curricula and teaching aids commensurate with their abilities and qualifications, while securing their schooling in a bid to harness their talents for scientific research and innovation.
- 6.** Enhance learning opportunities for children with disabilities by standardizing the educational systems specific to them and integrating these children into mainstream

education systems so they can have access to good and proper education to integrate the labor market, engage in academic life and contribute to the development process.

- 7.** Develop pedagogical and implementation mechanisms adapted to the new approach to education by providing better teaching methods based on performance indicators, assessment of outcomes and impact, and efficient use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), reinforcing the entities in charge of educational planning, programme, curricula and guide development as well as those in charge of monitoring and evaluation with experts and specialists whose competencies are often upgraded through continuous training; and by adopting good governance in the administrative and financial management of educational institutions.
- 8.** Pay more attention to re-training teachers so that they can perform their new educational role as facilitators of the learning process, providing them with the appropriate teaching and technological aids, and improving their occupational and administrative status.
- 9.** Step up efforts to develop infrastructures of educational institutions by ensuring their universal access to ICT and its various applications in the educational process in such a way as to materialize the Smart School concept, and harness social media and the various types of open educational resources (OER) for promoting distance learning.
- 10.** Develop original and non-formal education, support its institutions, encourage its integration and interaction with formal education entities, and endeavour towards developing its curricula and teaching methods in such a way as to align their outputs with the needs of society and with the demands of comprehensive sustainable development.
- 11.** Dedicate incentive awards to educational institutions with outstanding contributions to scientific research and innovation, while involving the private sector in funding scientific research to improve production and achieve the desired sustainable development and economic progress, and promoting cooperation and coordination among scientific research entities in the Member States.
- 12.** Align education policies with the trends favoring a more active role of education in the promotion of Islamic and universally shared values, while taking account of such trends in school curricula textbooks intended for the relevant institutions and specializations and for adolescents and young people in formal and non-formal education institutions by devoting programmes and activities to anchoring tolerance, middle stance, moderation, civic values and coexistence, rejecting zealotry and extremism, ensuring respect for human rights and cultural and religious diversity and securing protection for the environment.

- 13.** Prioritize the promotion of regional and international partnerships in the field of education, while harnessing their potential for the promotion of the sectors related to development, poverty reduction, youth unemployment and school dropout, such as technical and vocational education, overhauling administrative and financial management systems in such a way as to enculturate good governance; establishing regional excellence centers for training and educational and scientific research and, finally, networking successful educational experiences to ensure a wide sharing of benefits, rationalize expenditure and avoid duplication.
- 14.** Enhance and diversify access to financial support opportunities offered by regional and international financial institutions, the private sector and the Arab and Islamic charitable and *waqf* organizations, in order to implement educational projects at the national and regional levels.
- 15.** Establish national mechanisms to be in charge of addressing educational issues such as national councils for education and training or think tanks, while reinforcing the already-existing ones aimed at the development of the educational system, and all other such mechanisms dedicated to the monitoring and evaluation of educational action, and entrusting them with monitoring the implementation of the the Strategy for the Promotion of Education in the Islamic World.
- 16.** Foster education to instill true conceptions and positive behavior in young generations, through sound awareness-raising and proper upbringing that favors their strong attachment to their religion, culture and societal values, as well as to their sanctities and symbols, heightens their sense of patriotism and their adherence to the tolerant universal values, brings them together as members of the local, national, Muslim and human communities, and enables them to compete internationally in the different fields of science, which will contribute to fulfilling the aspirations of joint Islamic action, will giving hope and self-confidence to the young generations.
- 17.** Shield young people against violence and extremism tendencies, by providing them with the educational training corresponding to their aspirations and new roles in development, equipping them with the knowledge and skills necessary for curbing their unemployment, facilitating their access to the job market and integration in the knowledge society, stimulating their participation in the development of their societies and their involvement in addressing contemporary international issues, and encouraging young leaders to present their appropriate approaches and plans in this regard.
- 18.** Give more attention to parental education in such a way as to promote the vital role of mothers and the family in instilling in young people our Islamic and civilizational values, devotion to work, patriotism, respect for religious and cultural plurality and rejection of violence and extremism.

- 19.** Laud ISESCO's efforts devoted to the promotion and invigoration of joint Islamic and international educational action in order to develop the educational systems of Member States.
- 20.** Laud the efforts of the Republic of Tunisia, represented by the Ministry of Education, which consist in the major structural reforms it has conducted to develop its educational system at all levels, and in the particular attention it pays to preparing young people to actively contribute to the promotion of development and coexistence; and thank the educational community, national organizations, political parties and civil-society institutions in the Republic of Tunisia, and the international and regional organizations that have contributed with their expertise and inputs to preparing the document on education reform in Tunisia.
- 21.** Express deep gratitude to H.E. Mr Béji Caïd Essebssi, President of the Republic of Tunisia, for having kindly placed this Conference under his high patronage, and for having chaired and addressed its opening session, thank the Tunisian Government, represented by the Ministry of Education, for having hosted the Conference, and commend the efforts of H.E. Dr Néji Jalloul, Minister of Education and President of the Tunisian National Commission for Education, Science and Culture, and his assistants for their remarkable efforts and facilitations to ensure the best conditions possible to make this Conference a success.
- 22.** To express gratitude to H.E. the Director General of ISESCO, Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, for his initiative to convene the first session of this conference which will have a positive impact on promoting joint Islamic and international action in education, and for his remarkable efforts devoted to the preparation of the Conference's documents and good organization, which contributed to the success of this event and to achieving its goals.