The Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World

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Preface

Aware of the importance of strategic action in planning and policy-making within its scope of competence, the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO) has sought ever since its inception in 1982 to set criteria for orientation and research in education, science, culture and communication, the express aim being to meet all sorts of demands within the Islamic world in those vital areas.

To that end, ISESCO has devised reference documents for joint Islamic action. The "**Cultural Strategy for the Islamic World**" is one of these documents. It was devised in coordination between ISESCO and the OIC General Secretariat, and was adopted in its amended version by the Fifth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, held in Tripoli in November 2007.

This strategy is absolutely of service to Islamic *Ummah*. Because it reflects the growing role of culture in bringing about cultural development of the Member States, and also because it encapsulates the most salient ingredients of cultural identity of peoples and nations, this strategy will contribute much to coordinating and guiding action according to sound methodological, scientific and administrative norms.

Sensing the importance of Islamic communities and minorities in the west, and the world at large, as a vital part of our *Ummah* and one that contributes to bridge the cultural gap between the Islamic world and elsewhere; and in a bid to immunise the second, third and even fourth generations of those communities, who settled outside the Islamic world, against cultural assimilation and loss of their Islamic identity; ISESCO reflected about developing a framework for cultural action outside the Islamic world, to serve as a reference for cultural centres, with both their subsidiary institutions and Islamic associations, which lead the major manifestations of Muslims' cultural life outside the Islamic world.

Against this backdrop, ISESCO devoted special attention to Muslims living outside the Islamic world, be they migrant minorities or original citizens. Under its successive action plans, it has devoted several programmes covering education, culture, science and communication to Muslims outside the Islamic world. It also contributed expertise, consultancy and qualification programmes, and conducted such activities as dispatching teachers, convening training sessions and specialized workshops, and publication of books, studies dealing with Muslim migrants' vital issues in accordance with the values of Islamic civilization.

In this respect, ISESCO held nine meetings of the heads of cultural centres and Islamic associations in Europe to assess the situation, from 1993 in Château Chinon, France, to 2003 in Gratz in Austria. During the first three meetings (Château Chinon, Madrid and Brussels), participants pointed to the need for devising a strategy for Islamic action in the West. In the light of the proposals made by the cultural centres and Islamic associations in the West, ISESCO entrusted a commission with developing perceptions on the formulation of that strategy. The draft strategy was consequently submitted to the meeting of the heads of cultural centres and Islamic associations in the West (Zagreb, Croatia: 19-21 October 1998) which adopted it. ISESCO presented the strategy for adoption at its Executive Council and General Conference, then at the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, and at the 9th Islamic Summit Conference (Doha, Qatar, November 2000). Thus the strategy became an official document for joint Islamic action in the West.

Thanks to the wealth of experience it has gained through its action with cultural centres and Islamic associations in the West, ISESCO concluded that there was need for the setting up of a specialized organ for the affairs of Muslim minorities. Thus ISESCO, based on the resolution of the 28th session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers held in Bamako in June 2001, established the Supreme Council for Education and Culture in the West - the appellation of that body was amended in 2008 to become the Supreme Council of Education, Science and Culture, for Muslims outside the Islamic World. Joint cultural action for the benefit of Muslims outside Europe and Western countries has evolved, and a series of meetings in Latin America, the Caribbean, Southeast Asia and the Pacific were held.

Based on this fresh experience, ISESCO amended the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action in the West, to meet the latest requirements and changes and to cover all Muslim communities and minorities in the world, particularly by broadening the scope of its title to become "**the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World**".

ISESCO is therefore pleased to publish this amended version of the strategy for everyone's benefit.

Almighty Allah we ask to grant us success in what serves our Ummah and humanity at large.

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ISESCO Director General

Mission Statement

Based on God's Word "**To each among you Have We prescribed a Law and a Way**", believing that the development and prosperity of nations are conditioned by the awareness of their civilizational identity and their planning for the future and being cognizant of the importance of the strategic cultural references and their role in renewing the civilizational edifice of the Islamic Ummah and the importance of prospective planning in the development of nations and civilizations, ISESCO, in collaboration with cultural centres and Islamic associations, has striven to provide a strategy guiding Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world, motivated by many factors, chief of which are the following:

a. **Principle of civilizational differentiation:** It calls for awareness of the principles of Islamic civilizational peace, and for safeguarding Muslims' cultural identity against the pitfalls of ideological and political trends which do not match our civilizational identity.

b. **Awareness of the spiritual and moral dimensions:** This is manifested in laying down the background and objectives, and specifying positions according to the relevant variables, needs and challenges.

c. **Emphasis on the principle of cooperation:** Cooperation and coordination among the parties involved in the Islamic cultural arena constitute a crucial factor towards developing the civilizational mission of cultural centres and Islamic associations.

d. **Rising to the challenges facing the Islamic Ummah** by calling upon the Muslim world to review the foundations, plans and objectives of the Islamic cultural action.

e. **Strategic work:** Aware that civilizational projects can materialize only when based on effective plans and strategies, the Organization has laid down several guiding strategies for the Islamic world in the cultural, educational and technological fields. And knowing that the immigrant Islamic communities constitute part of the Islamic nation, ISESCO has given, since its creation in 1982, particular importance to finding ways for preserving the Islamic identity of Muslims in non-Islamic countries. Therefore, the Organization has put forward this guiding policy for this community living outside the Islamic world so as to achieve certain objectives, chief of which are:

- to emphasize the role of culture in preserving the Islamic immigrant communities,

- to bridge the gap between opinions, unify work methodologies, and consolidate cooperation links among the parties involved in the field of Islamic practice in the world,

- to rectify the notions and define the relevant terms and conjure up broader prospects for the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world,

- to provide an Islamic referentiality and a guiding policy enlightening our activities so as to safeguard them against alienation and seclusion.

The present strategy hinges on the following basic background principles:

First:

Religious principle: the strategy concepts are based on the Islamic referentiality which views cultural action as an act of worship, and not merely a set of skills and techniques, emphasizing thereby the spiritual dimension for the desired global development of Muslims.

Second:

The principle of balance: This principle is meant to strike a balance between the principles of authenticity and modernism. It aims at consolidating the values of religious and civilizational sense of belonging on the one hand, and openness vis-à-vis current concerns on the other. The rationale behind this is to preserve a link between these generations and their past and, at the same time, to prevent them from lagging behind.

Third:

The principle of Comprehensiveness: This principle is based on the premise that the appropriate building of the civilization of any society should cater for the various cultural, social and educational concerns, stressing thereby the various dimensions of the Islamic civilizational model.

Fourth:

Realistic principle: this principle is based on the premise that awareness of the current situation of Muslims in the West and the changes and novelties facing them is essential for achieving comprehensive cultural development. The fact that this strategy is based on a realistic principle makes it not only relevant and executable outside the Islamic world, but also flexible and interactive.

While these strategies constitute merely a guiding policy, general principles and cursory signs, they can only accomplish their objectives by plans of action and programmes reflecting the nature of these strategies, and by the determination of the people involved in them as part of their working lives.

Chapter One

Motivations

The Islamic presence outside the Islamic world constitutes one of the major axes of the joint Islamic action. The majority of concerned organizations and bodies have dedicated a great deal of their budgets, programmes and activities to Muslims outside the Islamic world, and to meeting their different needs such as building and equipping mosques and schools or providing other needs. However, this action is characterised by some kind of improvisation, dispersion of efforts and interests, replication of initiatives, and lack of monitoring and evaluation, in addition to the fact that many of these organizations are not specialized in the field of Islamic cultural action. Furthermore, the foundations and visions of this action do not respect sufficiently the cultural, social and legal realities of Muslim immigrant communities and minorities, and their own specificities. On the contrary, this is most of the time an extension of the actions of these institutions in the Muslim countries themselves where needs and circumstances are totally different from the situation of Muslims outside the Islamic world.

The rationale behind adopting the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic world lies in the need to put forward the methodology and style of Islamic action in the cultural sphere in order to keep it tuned to the particular reality of Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, with the aim of rising to the challenges they are facing. Indeed, a look at this reality would reveal that international immigration, one of the most important phenomena related to population dynamism in the century, has brought about a new status to the host 20th and 21st Centuries which have become multicultural societies. This has compelled these countries to devise certain plans relating to social, cultural and educational fields, all of which are aimed at the integration of immigrant communities in the existing system.

This insistence, by Muslims outside the Islamic world, however does not mean self-isolation. Rather, the Muslim community outside the Islamic world proved capable of economic integration, and effectively contributed in the realm of production. They have shown that they can co-exist with the host population in an atmosphere of cooperation and harmony. They have also demonstrated that they are able to be open vis-à-vis universal human civilization and to interact with it, preserving their spiritual and moral superiority and distinguishability.

Taking into consideration the changes the world has witnessed in recent decades, especially the aspiration of economic globalization to become cultural globalization, imposing a single cultural model worldwide; and given that the cultural problematic constitutes a kernel issue in international relations, cultural contact and the conflict of cultures may raise in the future issues exceeding in size and number those resulting from unfair economic and social exchange.

Despite the importance of the human and institutional components which constitute the Islamic cultural reality of Muslims outside the Islamic world, there exist a number of challenges and obstacles likely to undermine the Islamic cultural action directed towards Muslim communities and minorities. We know that the cultural field is particularly affected by the current international mutation, manifest mainly in the rise of cultural conflicts and the omnipresence of a global culture in all the fields.

Taking all this into consideration, it seems that international relations and conflicts would revolve around "the cultural problematic" in the next decades. This is because the determination to impose a single cultural model would bump into other peoples' cultures, one of which is the Islamic culture.

As the danger of "culture unification" is now threatening Islamic people in their own countries due to the globalization of communication, this danger becomes even more serious when it comes to Muslim immigrant communities and minorities living in a non-Islamic environment, where the new generations of Muslims are raised in institutions not meant for them in the first place.

This has resulted in the emergence of a large groups of individuals from the third and fourth generations who do not master their native language. Nor do they know the principles of the Islamic *Sharia'*. This indicates that the Muslim outside the Islamic world suffers from a serious shortage in the field of educational socialization and Islamic education. While these immigrant communities accept positive integration in the host societies, they strongly refuse the idea of giving up their identity. However, preserving identity requires a valid Islamic education. It also calls for carefully prepared programmes relating to education, guidance and social welfare from an Islamic perspective. Due to cultural, civilizational and ideological pressures and challenges of the West, the educational requirements for the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world have become a tangible fact. And the Islamic parties concerned should work towards satisfying these needs. In what immediately follows, we will list the motivations behind putting forward a strategy for the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world:

1- Settlement of Muslim communities outside the Islamic world:

The trends of Muslim immigration outside the Islamic world have shifted from individual to group immigration and from temporary immigration to permanent stay. This situation has had a significant impact both on the social and cultural levels. On the cultural side, it is evident that permanent stay would require cultural needs and demands that are not necessary for temporary settlement, whereas, on the social level, the population factor has an important impact on

evaluating the type of activities of a given population. The relatively long settlement of the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, together with their concentration in areas close to each other, has resulted in population centres with peculiar characteristics. For instance, the birth rate in the Islamic communities exceeds in certain areas that of the host societies. In some countries, it is even noticed that the birth histogramme shows regressions.

Many immigration researchers have raised the need to reconsider the notion of "immigrant" or "alien", taking into consideration the increase of birth rates in Muslim communities and their settlement outside the Islamic world; the fact that these communities have given up the idea of returning home, especially after immigration was regulated in 1974; and the emergence of generations born in host countries: second, third and fourth generations. This is because this notion no longer reflects the objective reality. These settlers are no longer sets of individuals who migrated from their native countries looking for jobs. Therefore, the Islamic presence outside the Islamic world has become a living and constant reality and no longer a transient or temporary one. Muslim communities outside the Islamic world have become a main component with its own demographic, social, cultural and economic characteristics.

In summary, Islam has become one of the well established religions outside the Islamic world, and it is almost the second religion in some of these countries. The Final Report of the Meeting of Experts held to formulate the **Strategy for Cultural Action outside the Islamic world** points out to this new status of the settlement of Islam and Muslims outside the Islamic world, as quoted below:

> "- *The existence of Islam in Europe has become a constant, tangible fact, deep-rooted in many parts of Europe, which were once under the rule of Islam, and contributed through its enlightening teachings and prosperous civilization to human civilization at large.*
>
> - *The existence of Islam and the issues it involves now constitute a human and civilizational dimension that interests planning and strategy experts at the level of the Islamic world as well as the leadership of European communities.*
>
> - *Due to their effectiveness, Muslims constitute part and parcel of their greater European community. They are competent enough to manage their own issues and plan for their present and future in the most positive way.*"

Based on all this, we cannot leave the immigrant generations today in a state of isolation, nor can we leave them in a state of disintegration and division into sects and trends. The requirements of the Islamic action dictate that we should put forward a strategy to change the cultural reality of the immigrant communities,

so as to combat the intellectual danger that threatens their Islamic beliefs by using the authentic, Islamic, cultural referentiality.

2- Inadequate coordination among Islamic Cultural Centres:

The Islamic cultural centres outside the Islamic world strive to accomplish certain goals relating to Islamic Education and establishing links among Muslims so as to immunize their cultural identity and consolidate their sense of belonging, and to motivate them to proceed according to what pleases God and benefits Muslims in their host communities. However, the geographical distance between the Islamic centres across the world has been a preventive factor against any coordination between the plans of cultural action adopted in those centres. This has led to discrepancies in the work methodologies of those centres, which precluded an accord on specifying priorities in the cultural field. The absence of a unified concept about the Islamic cultural problematic in host countries was one of the motivations behind laying down a strategy for Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world. This Strategy would facilitate preparing a plan to unify the work methodologies among Islamic centres and Muslim leaders outside the Islamic world. It would also help centres develop their mission in the fields of education, information and communication, in conformity with modern discourse and the requirements of consolidating the sense of belonging among young Muslims in particular.

3. The western media challenge:

The great media transformations and challenges have a large influence on Muslims living outside the Islamic world. These challenges are imposed by the control exerted by the West on the media, be they written or audiovisual. Through these different media channels, the west conveys all its thoughts, values and principles to the people of the third world as well as to the children of Muslim communities and minorities who fall under the influence of western media programmes and channels. Such media content is full of corrupt thoughts and ideas that propagate the culture of violence, libertinism and delinquency. This favours the spread of western social and cultural principles and ways of conduct among young Muslim generations as a result of imitation and simulation.

The western cultural model being imposed on Muslim children outside the Islamic world due to the media invasion requires a complete and exhaustive planning to immunize Muslims in western countries against the media invasion and promote the efforts of Islamic cultural associations and centres in spreading immunizing education and guidance to counter the negative influence of western media.

4- Increase of racism:

The economic crisis from which the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world suffer has had many effects influencing the relations between the native residents and the Muslim communities. Consequently, Muslims were victims to racism and xenophobia. In spite of the efforts made at the level of the European community no effective and decisive measures have been taken to stop the increase of racism to practicing. Racist harassment continued against Muslims especially when it comes to practicing some of their religious rites and observing the teachings of their faith. Besides, new laws were enacted regulating immigration, stay and integration regardless of the principles of equality and human rights. Also, there are widespread misconceptions and biases about Islam because of a misunderstanding of the Islamic faith, S*haria* and civilization, in addition to judging Islam based on isolated practices completely unrelated to this religion. All this requires putting forward an Islamic cultural strategy for the benefit of Muslim communities, safeguarding the authentic origin of their identity.

5- The secular trend of western societies:

The constitution of western societies was inspired by certain principles emanating from the individual development of those societies, such as their secular and materialistic tendency. Although the positivist philosophy and the heretic trend have now weakened in the West, there is still a strong tendency whose goal is to eliminate holiness from everything, reducing religion to a simple "personal issue". The Muslims growing in those secular societies are likely to be subject to the effect of secular and positivist tendencies, either through schooling, information technology, or through their interaction with their environment. Therefore, the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic world should meet the needs of the young Muslim as to safeguarding his identity against disintegration, and preserving his cultural specificity, implementing thereby the right to be different, which has become an important constituent in human rights, and consolidating cultural diversity which has now become a basic principle of international law, based on the United Nations Charter, the conventions and agreements which regulate cultural cooperation relations among the international community. As a result it is necessary to provide the relevant intellectual, spiritual and moral supply for our Muslim community, complying with Islamic moderation, and avoiding the pitfalls of taking extremes.

6- Systematic Alienation for the Children of the Muslim Communities through school and information education

The children of the Muslim communities are subject to an organized scheme targeted at consolidating western values and deeprooting the related types of thinking, behaviour, and habits. This scheme starts at the kindergarten level and continues through school education levels, consolidated by the pressures of the street culture and means of communication, in addition to other external influential factors in the social and professional contexts.

By way of example, the school curricula adopted in western countries are not based on the approach calling for interculturalism, though this approach is adopted in some of these countries. Many studies, in this connection, indicate that most of what has been written on Islam in school curricula is a misinterpretation of Islam. This results in a distortion of the image of Islam in the minds of learners, emigrants and natives alike. This is because there is a determination to present Islam as a religion incapable of satisfying the requirements of modernism.

In addition, the European curricula do not devote any space for teaching the native language to the children of the Muslim communities. The attempts to do so in this connection have been very limited; though some experiences resulted in a positive feedback, they were not generalized. The recommendations of educators and psychologists stress the importance of the mother tongue and its in role in the psychological and sentimental balance and stability of the child, building his personality as well as preventing school failure. In spite of all this, European schools continue to refuse the introduction of native languages in their curricula. This drove the Muslim community children to go to the schools annexed to mosques and Islamic cultural centres to learn their mother tongue. However, this takes place after the child finishes school, mostly during weekends, which usually leads to stress and exhaustion.

Various mass media build on the work done by school curricula, since they attack Islam and associate it with the practice of some extremists, aiming at creating in the mind of the audience a close relation between Islam and violence. To the extent that mass media ignore the objective facts about Islam, they contain a strong hatred against religion. And since mass media address audio visual perception more than the mind and the critical sense, the danger of these campaigns against Islam can influence the children of the Muslim communities themselves. Therefore, these campaigns should be combatted by putting forward an appropriate policy of religious education, and rectifying the image of Islam by presenting it in its authentic nature, in addition to developing the teaching

methodologies of Arabic in a non-Arab context. The teaching of Arabic should be extended to all children of the Muslim communities in Europe, since it is the language of the holy Quran and the pillar of civilizational identity.

7. The advent of globalization

After the Cold War, a new world order developed and was later commonly referred to as "globalization". This order requires submitting international relations in the fields of trade, economy, science and technology to the dominance of multinational companies and cross-ethnic organizations. This was followed by significant changes at the level of the international political map, as some powers disintegrated and made room for the emergence of a single pole of power leading the whole world, which managed to manipulate the system of globalization to accomplish its economic and political interests.

Now that globalization dominated economy and trade, it was tempted to dominate "the world cultural order". Hence, there appeared some attempts to impose a world cultural order, ignoring the cultural specificities of peoples, minorities and immigrant communities. In this regard, many questions are in order. For example, "how can civilizational and cultural identity be preserved while globalization dominates the international community? How can the requirements of national sovereignty be reconciled with those of globalization? Globalization tendencies seem to have a negative impact on both identity and sovereignty. Cultural diversity, guaranteed by the relevant international organizations, charts and conventions, may also be overridden by globalization.

Globalization itself is undoubtedly a system still being developed, and it has not taken its final permanent shape. Many researchers working on the prospects of globalization predict radical changes likely to influence the present course of globalization. Others believe that dominating the world cultural order will not be as easily accomplished as was the case with dominating the economic and trade order. On the contrary, there are some signs indicating that globalization has raised civilizational and cultural peculiarity to the consciousness of peoples and minorities, calling for a "cultural immunization" to face up the negative impacts of cultural globalization that influence the very religious principles and moral ethics. While it is unlikely to escape the pressures of globalization currently, it is possible to set up a cultural counter-trend standing up to the spirit of dominance characterizing globalization, by providing a theory, a system, and a practice to deal with its repercussions. This trend would operate while waiting for the emergence of a new world power standing against the power now dominating the components of the world order, or at least a new power standing on equal footing with it.

Whereas the challenges of globalization are looming over the Islamic world, Muslim minorities and communities in the West are suffering from the impact they exert on their children who are born in societies where values, morals, culture, lifestyle and behaviour are being globalized. In addition, this comprehensive cultural globalization also tends to affect, and even absorb, the identity and cultural specificities of Muslim minorities and communities.

In this connection, it is predicted that Muslim communities outside the Islamic world will have to face two cultures concurrently : the first is the culture of the host country, and the second is the culture of globalization. These cultures are not equivalent, because if they were so, some European countries would not have called for what is referred as "cultural exception".

Communication revolution, which has accompanied globalization, has shortened the distance and removed the boundaries between countries. Islamic countries and organizations may put forward a new information strategy to guarantee regular communication with the Muslim communities, supporting the communication strategy set up by the Islamic Conference of Information Ministers, through satellite channels, and a good exploitation of the new information technological means. In an era of globalization, insightful communication can only operate through the new means of information technology. Therefore, an appropriate plan should be set up to deploy all modern technological gadgets, so as to develop an Islamic cultural action. In this regard, Islamic cultural data should circulate on the "Internet", and mass media should be used to publish on a wide scale the studies and symposia on the errors made against Islam.

8. Towards uniform western policies to tackle Islamic immigration

The West has long been aware that the problems of immigration can not be tackled individually. Western countries, therefore, started coordinating and unifying their policies and strategies towards immigration. Muslims outside the Islamic world, then, should set up a uniform plan for the prospects of the Islamic presence there. This strategy should be targeted at providing the necessary conditions for individuals from the Muslim communities to occupy the key positions within host societies, in the economic, cultural, political or information fields.

These have been the main reasons which require setting up a strategy for cultural Islamic action especially designed for the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world. These reasons, as we have seen, emanate from the fact that these Muslim communities live in a non-Muslim environment. And they constitute the front line at the boundaries of this nation with the West. They are, thus, more prone to cultural and civilizational shocks, and the resulting disappointment, lack

of spiritual values, identity crisis and self-blaming. Given this situation and through the active Islamic presence outside the Islamic world, there emerged a pressing need to provide appropriate Islamic cultural guidance together with the necessary means to implement it. This guidance is meant to serve the following functions:

a) To help the Muslim communities overcome the feeling of alienation, confusion and their identity crisis, and save them from all that is conducive to marginalization, extremism and deviance.

b) To help clarify the requirements for a global Islamic cultural development outside the Islamic world.

This is because the essence of the cultural development process involves a feeling of individuality and authenticity; and acquiring the ability to maintain and innovate cultural peculiarity. This would enable the Muslim communities to settle down and maintain their religion; to adapt to, co-exist with, and be open to their environment; and to improve their positions together with their social and cultural roles, respecting the laws of the host country, safeguarding their identity and consolidating their sense of belonging.

It should be noted that this **Strategy** is based on references and specificities proper to it and emanates from Islamic prospective vision which analyses the current situation and prospects of the Muslim existence outside the Islamic world, with the ultimate aim of benefiting from the positive consequences of modernity while at the same time safeguarding identity and consolidating the sense of belonging. **The Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World** builds on the **Cultural Strategy of the Islamic World** which was adopted by the **6th Islamic Summit Conference** (Dakar, 1991) for most of its visions, guidelines and objectives, but does not disregard the cultural reality of Muslim communities and the special needs and cultural challenges they are facing. Yet the **Strategy** needs to rise to some challenges to prove its efficiency and ability to accommodate the situation of Muslims outside the Islamic world. Therefore, it is essential to conduct a diagnosis of the social and cultural situation of the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, as well as of the relevant trends and the subjective and objective factors involved in the cultural action devoted to them.

Chapter Two

Goals

The **Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World** addresses the Muslim individual in terms of his personal development, and in terms of his interaction with his fellow Muslims in the host countries. It also addresses the Muslim community outside the Islamic world at large, in terms of protecting its Islamic identity and aspirations.

At the individual level, the strategy aims at building a Muslim personality characterized by the following:

- Deep-rooted faith based on the Islamic creed, including a clear perception of the universe, life and humans all of which defined as translating the supreme power of God, especially the human being whom God favoured and entrusted with the mission of living on earth.

- Observing God's orders and prohibitions, and adopting the Islamic moral values based on benevolence, truth, justice, and sense of duty, as well as operating within the framework of Sharia. "*So take what the Messenger assigns to you, and deny yourselves that which he withheld from you*" (*Al-Hashr*, 7).

- Being fully aware of the basic human rights such as life, justice, dignity; and acknowledging these rights for others on equal footing, without any favoritism or discrimination among humans. The human being, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, is dignified per se. "*We have honoured the sons of Adam; provided them with transport on land and sea; given them for sustenance things good and pure; and conferred on them special favours, above a great part of our creation*" (*Al-Isràa*, 70).

- Acquiring a solid persona based on pride and open to any positive constructive work relating to both the Muslim community or the host country, so as to benefit humanity.

At the Muslim community level, the strategy aims at consolidating the basic principle characterizing this community in terms of its intellectual, spiritual, social and moral dimensions, through the following objectives:

- To stand by the peculiar Islamic identity characterized by its intellectual and spiritual practical constituents, and to subject it to a collective consciousness reflecting the intellectual background for perceptions, concepts and feelings, around which the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world revolve, on solid Islamic principles, without ignoring the surrounding environment and modern world which are based on communication in the guiding method of the Holy Quran. "*Allah's handiwork according to the pattern on which He has made mankind; no change let there be in the work wrought by Allah. That is the standard Religion*" (*Ar-Rûm*, 30).

- To be aware of the elements of Islamic culture, and the civilizational persona of the Islamic nation, together with openness to other cultures so as to consolidate mutual understanding among nations, towards an effective inclusion based on trust, and distant from any form of alienation or dependency.

- To correct the concept of Islamic culture among the children of Muslim communities and the non-Muslim public opinion.

- To develop a positive image of the self, deriving its impetus from Islamic spirituality which calls for pride, so as to make the others recognize and respect Muslims.

- To work for a unified vision of the various components of the Muslim communities living outside the Islamic world by the promotion of an authentic and open image of the Islamic culture.

- To consolidate the spirit of solidarity in individuals and groups, based on co-existence, cooperation, complementarity and brotherhood among Muslims who share one faith. "***And hold fast altogether, by the rope which Allah stretches out for you. And be not divided among yourselves***" (*Al-Imràn*, 103).

Furthermore, the **Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World** aims at contributing to building the cultural future for Muslim minorities and communities living in the West and consolidating the role of these communities in enriching the cultural edifice of the *Ummah*. It also seeks to adapt the Islamic culture to their cultural reality, in order to enhance cooperation and exchanges between the Islamic world and the other human civilizations and cultures.

The **Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action** defines the general framework for designing a programme for protecting the Islamic civilizational and cultural identity of the children of Muslims outside the Islamic world and coordinating the views of actors in the field of the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world.

Among the main objectives of this Strategy are:

1. To meet the needs of Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, who are aspiring to better embrace the teachings, precepts, principles and ideals of Islam and the Islamic culture through training and educational guidance. These minorities and communities which live in non-Muslim countries have little access to the authentic Islamic culture and generally know very little about the precepts of Islam. Therefore, it is a strategic objective to inculcate in each and every Muslim immigrant the principles and values of the Islamic culture.

2. To preserve the religious values and instil ethical concepts in children and young people and operate on a broader scale by means of adequate and rational methods in order to consolidate the religious, social and cultural bonds among Muslims living abroad.

3. To establish constructive cultural relations based on mutual respect and trust between the various layers of the host societies. This will certainly help develop strong relations between the parties involved and, therefore, reinforce the status of Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, using the different means and possibilities offered by international law, and ensure the right of these communities to practice their cultural activities within the opportunities available under the local legistations of the host countries.

4. To positively reach out to western societies through the consolidation of the role of associations, clubs and the different institutions and to build relations with the various components of the West's most influential press on the local and international public opinion, in order to integrate Muslims in the general political, economic, social and cultural context of the host societies.

5. To highlight the true image of Islam in the aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001 which completely obliterated it and had very negative impacts on the professional situation of Muslims settled outside the Islamic world.

6. To develop the fields of education, communication and the arts for the children of Muslim communities and minorities in order to achieve a sustainable cultural development of the Islamic communities living outside the Islamic world, to increase their standards of living and to promote their cultural behaviours.

The strategy's specific objectives in the cultural, social and educational fields can be summarized as follows:

1. Specific objectives in the cultural field:

a) Supervising the policy of sensitization and Islamic guidance adopted by Islamic associations and cultural centres outside the Islamic world and providing support to this end, especially by contributing to designing methods likely to ensure good management of the cultural affairs in order to adequately activate the Islamic cultural action.

b) Exerting efforts so that actors involved in the Islamic action outside the Islamic world such as preachers, teachers and intellectuals grant more interest to the fields of Islamic culture and emphasize the core values of this culture for the benefit of the Muslim communities and minorities in light of the existing economic situation and the current mutations.

c) Cooperating with the different cultural parties, institutions and organizations in the Islamic world in order to join efforts and find appropriate solutions and proposals for addressing the cultural problems by taking into account the new challenges pertaining to Islamic culture.

d) Immunizing Muslims living abroad against the cultural invasion and alienation and ensuring them cultural security and immunity necessary for building the personality of young Muslims and instilling in them the principles of Islam and Islamic culture.

2. Specific objectives in the social field:

a) Preserving the heritage, values and customs of the Islamic society and sensitizing Muslim families living abroad to the moral obligation of transferring this great Islamic heritage to the youths and young generations.

b) Working towards improving the social situation of Muslim communities and preparing them to fully undertake the responsibilities of living in a non-Muslim societies and keep themselves away of deviation and delinquency, and equipping them with authentic spiritual and social values.

c) Orienting the children of Muslim communities and minorities to resist the negative aspect of globalization and its devastating impact on the family, by showing them the irrelevance of globalization as an ethical, social and educational reference for the youth.

d) Supporting social action institutions catering for the needs of Muslims outside the Islamic world and coordinating with these institutions for a better Islamic social action for raising awareness among the children of Muslim communities about issues related to their religion, social specificities and culture.

e) Activating various programmes of social education aimed at consolidating the attachment of the children of Muslim communities to their Islamic identity and to authentic social values.

3. Specific objectives in the educational field:

a) Working for the general objectives of comprehensive cultural development, namely educating and preparing young Muslims proud of their religion and identity, open on their environment, and are models to be followed thanks to their creations and achievements which encompass different fields.

b) Ensuring a balanced spiritual and intellectual education for children of Muslims living outside the Islamic world in order to protect them against the cultural invasion, intellectual alienation and educational hegemony.

c) Using the contents of Islamic education and Islamic culture of the curricula to preserve the personal and cultural identity of the new generations and to fully protect them against the cultural invasion and alienation.

d) Contributing to the rationalization and coordination of the educational actions carried out by the different partners and players in non-Muslim countries.

Favouring the development of positive attitudes and values among the third and fourth generations with regard to the issues of coexistence, mutual understanding, communication, dialogue, and intellectual and material creativity and production.

Chapter Three

Components of the Islamic Cultural Reality outside the Islamic World

It is quite natural that Muslim communities and minorities settled outside the Islamic world have specific needs with regard to the Islamic culture. Moreover, the secular western countries and the impact of the western culture on the Islamic cultural scene in the West, both at the level of scientific theories and methods as well as at the level of social and political concepts, created the need for defining components and assets of the cultural identity of Muslim communities and minorities likely to favour a cultural environment suitable for building an authentic Islamic cultural reference frame to serve as a shield against alienation and negative integration.

The attachment of each Muslim community to its country of origin, its culture and its own Islamic references helps enrich and develop the Islamic culture outside the Islamic world. The care given by Arab and Islamic countries to their nationals living abroad through the creation of cultural, religious and social institutions and centres helps support the Islamic cultural action and preserve the components of the Islamic cultural reality outside the Islamic world.

Among the main components of the Islamic cultural reality outside the Islamic world, we can mention the following:

1. The mosque:

It is one of the main components of the religious, social and cultural reality which contributes to cultural education, religious guidance and the establishment of solid relations of brotherhood between the different members of Muslim communities and minorities.

The mosque plays an important role in maintaining relations of coexistence in non-Muslim societies. It is a place of religious and cultural teaching and guidance which spans such various fields as interpersonal relations, ethics, principles of good neighbourhood, respect of the Other, religious tolerance and abstinence from wrongdoing. The authorities in non-Muslim countries are fully aware of the role played by the mosque in regulating the conduct of mosque goers, and strengthening attachment to virtue, values and good morals which contribute to reduce crime rates and delinquency.

In non-Muslim countries, the mosque is not only a place of worship but an academic centre where conferences are given by resident or visiting intellectuals. Certain known mosques are managed by graduate people who see to promoting the educational and scientific role of the mosque, in such a way as to enrich and activate the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world.

2. Islamic cultural centres:

An Islamic cultural centre is a multi-faceted cultural institution which comprises a mosque, a library, a conference room and classrooms. The world's big cities generally host Islamic centres that enjoy broad cultural radiation. However, certain centres ensure only the mosque function. In addition, considering the diversity of the activities of the Islamic cultural centres and their religious, social and cultural roles, they are regarded as one of the main components of the Islamic cultural reality outside the Islamic world, thanks especially to the fact that they are generally managed and supervised by an elite of highly qualified Muslim intellectuals. The cultural radiation of Islamic cultural centres is reflected among Muslim communities and minorities, on the one hand, and among interested non-Muslim citizens living in the neighbouring areas, on the other, which is likely to redress the image of Islam by highlighting the true values and principles of this religion.

The main activities of the Islamic cultural centres can be summarized as follows:

a) Religious guidance, particularly during the month of Ramadan.

b) Organization of scientific conferences and symposia with the participation of scientists and intellectuals on topics addressing the relation of Islam with other value systems and the problems of Muslim communities.

c) Organization of Islamic conferences and regional meetings. Among the major meetings held by ISESCO in coordination with the directors and presidents of Islamic cultural associations and centres are:

- Meeting of Château-Chinon (France, 1993).
- Meeting of Madrid (Spain, 1996).
- Meeting of Brussels (Belgium, 1997).
- Meeting of Zagreb (Croatia, 1998).
- Meeting of Utrecht (Netherlands, 1999).
- Meeting of Berlin (Germany, 2000).
- Meeting of Granada (Spain, 2001).
- Meeting of Milano (Italy, 2002).
- Meeting of Buenos-Aires (Argentina, 2002).
- Meeting of Graz (Austria, 2003).
- Meeting of Lima (Peru, 2005).
- Meeting of Santiago (Chile, 2007).
- Meeting of Margarita Island (Venezuela, 2008).
- Meeting of Singapore (2002-2008).

d) supporting the experience of parallel Islamic education through weekend courses of Arabic language and principles of Islam for children.

e) Orienting and training children of Muslim communities and minorities and organizing training sessions and coordination meetings for the benefit of Imams, preachers and Arabic teachers.

3. Islamic Schools:

Islamic schools reflect the continuous Islamic presence outside the Islamic world and constitute one of the components of Islamic cultural reality outside the Islamic world. They are attracting increasing members of Muslim communities. These schools, though very limited in number, are able to fulfill the hopes of the students' parents in the sense that the Arabic language and the Islamic culture are taught in these institutions throughout the week, along with the official curricula taught in the language of the host country. Private Islamic schools are the best solution to raise the educational level of Muslim children living outside the Islamic world. As education encounters several problems, there is pressing need to establish more Islamic schools with a view to consolidating a special Islamic education that supports the teaching of Islamic values and ethics as well as providing scientific and intellectual instruction. Moreover, Islamic schools have the mission of designing and implementing visions and educational methods favouring the resolution of the problems, constraints and challenges typical of living in a non-Muslim context and free them from the cultural dilemma they are suffering from.

As a major component of the Islamic cultural reality outside the Islamic world, Islamic schools can take an important part in supporting and promoting Islamic education by combating the negative repercussions on the Islamic identity and by avoiding alienation and the confusion arising from the need for preserving the Islamic identity and the tendency to be immersed in the host society. These schools also help provide the requirements for the social development of the children of the Muslim communities settled outside the Muslim world. Given the importance of these institutions in supporting the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world, ISESCO published a document on the criteria of the Islamic schools outside the Islamic world.

4. Islamic scientific competences outside the Islamic world:

Though the majority of the Islamic world elite settled outside the Islamic world was tempted by western civilization and its numerous material aspects, and accordingly disengaged itself from any Islamic cultural action, a part of this elite succeeded, however, in reconciling the scientific work and its interest in Islamic cultural causes of the Muslim communities and minorities outside the Islamic world.

Any keen observer of the Da'wa movement and the Islamic culture outside the Islamic world will notice the importance of the Islamic cultural centres set up in the world's different cities and capitals. These centres need qualified preachers and leaders for the Islamic action who are able to appease the curiosity of other citizens who visit them for a profound knowledge about Islam, on the one hand, and capable of addressing the new generations using a relevant discourse and speaking the languages of the host countries, on the other hand.

Therefore, it is necessary to focus on the activation of the role of scientific competences in non-Muslim societies, which cannot be done without involving these talents in the Islamic action while at the same time enhancing their capacities and highlighting the importance of their role. In this regard, ISESCO devised a strategy for benefiting from Muslim expatriate competencies, which is a leading strategy in this field.

Though no institutional framework has been defined to strengthen the bonds between the expatriate scientific competencies and the children of Muslim communities, these Muslim competencies constitute an essential component of the Islamic cultural scene outside the Islamic world and fill important functions and undertake considerable duties in the cultural and Da'wa field. They help:

a) correctly manage the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world in accordance with the interests of Muslims living outside the Islamic world in order to preserve their authentic cultural identity.

b) represent the Islamic communities in the decision-making circles of the host countries by winning seats in the European parliaments or participating actively in the political life in order to make heard the voice of Muslims and ensure that their religious and cultural claims are taken into account.

c) orient and guide the children of Muslim communities, in particular the second and third generations. Considering their high academic standing, they are the best qualified to influence the new generations and convince them of the need to preserve their Islamic identity while positively integrating the host society. They have also to work towards redressing the misconceptions held about Islam and the Islamic culture and countering extremism and fanaticism.

d) highlight and redress the image of Islam outside the Islamic world.

If the Islamic presence outside the Islamic world failed to redress the obliterated image of Islam and replace it by a genuine and true picture, we hope that Muslim expatriates will be able to do so, in cooperation with the relevant parties, through western media smear campaigns and presenting a better image of Islam and Islamic civilization through dialogue in order to erase from their minds the association of Islam with terrorism.

Chapter Four

Concepts and Foundations

The concept of the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action:

A strategy can be defined as being the action of assembling choices and principles into a set of practical measures that determine the actions needed, carry out the sought objectives and plan a better future. It is the art of mobilizing human and material resources and channeling them into the optimal implementation of the set objectives. On this basis, the **Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outisde the Islamic World** is oriented towards the domains of Islamic culture in an attempt to elucidate its points of departure as well as its specificities, and to serve as a reminder of the contributions of Muslims in building the blocks of human culture. Of equal importance is its role in propagating Islamic culture in non-Muslim countries on grounds that are in keeping with the requirements of the modern age, and for the purpose of interaction with other cultures in a way that does not conflict with its values and assets.

The Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World is submitted for consideration to individuals, associations and establishments operating in the cultural field within the societies constituted by Muslim minorities and communities outside the Islamic world. Its purpose is to review the design of cultural and information plans and programmes in the light of the Strategy's content while taking account of the specificities of the international context and ensuring the protection of the freedom of thought and ensuring cultural exchange and dialogue between civilizations that characterize the Islamic societies.

To better understand the concept of "strategy", it is necessary to explain the concept of the Islamic culture which is one of its core components:

Culture is a framework of conduct which is created by individuals, and is adopted by groups in such a way as to constitute an identity that distinguishes a community from others, no matter how similar it is to them. In this sense, culture builds the personality of a human being and orients his objectives as well the style of his life. It also preserves his ethnic continuity as well as his social, political, economic and psychological stability. Human personality is a product of culture and its outcome. Therefore, the difference that one notices between the personality of an Arab, an African or an American is but the direct outcome of the difference in their culture. While personality is the result of culture, it is in its specificities and general conduct also a means of its preservation and continuity.

Of close relation to the concept of culture is the concept of civilization: "*Civilization is a system of thought, production, conduct and interaction. It stems from a cultural background of beliefs, history and popular culture, which are in*

turn generated by concepts, models and specific criteria as well as distinct political, economic and social orders; every civilization uncovers its existence through arts, legacy, scientific, ideational and cultural products through the years. It also comes into existence through its creativity in the different domains of literature, art and society."

The culture of a society and its civilization constitute a heritage which society, through education and upbringing, seeks to preserve and to pass on to generations in order to integrate the latter in its religious, social and cultural orders, as well as through the following mechanisms:

- The transposition of culture and its preservation.
- The development of the culture of society in keeping with its overall aims and the requirements of its continuity.
- The upkeep of society's continuity as a distinct umma, one that has its own identity, values and existence.
- The development of the personality of youth and the reinforcement of its humanness.
- The preparation of youth for the kind of mature acceptable life style that society goes by.

Islamic culture, which derives its constituents from Islam, has enough room for the meanings suggested by the concept of culture. In that way, its understanding of culture is consonant with the Islamic method, which is an expression of the extent of progress and advancement in various aspects of human life. It is an elucidation of what man has created through his interaction with his immediate human and material surroundings, as well as a foregrounding of the kinds of gifts inherent in it, all in accordance with Islamic contents and criteria.

The Islamic culture is characterized by two major features, the first of which is its dynamic nature epitomized by its constant basic sources, laws, values and methodologies as opposed to its dynamic character reflected in Muslims' jurisprudence, creativity and differences.

The Islamic cultural context establishes an equilibrium in the mind and conduct of Muslims and in ways that fit in with the teachings of Islam, in such a way as to avoid any conflict in their minds between reason and Revelation; or between religion and science. The Islamic cultural milieu also seeks to preserve the integrity of individuals, away from confusion and division.

And since culture is the foundation of the personality of the *Umma*, and the expression of its aspirations and hopes, as well as the pillar of its unity, it has

become necessary to work according a unified Islamic cultural plan among Islamic migrants in foreign countries, the purpose being that they preserve their identity and reinforce their existence as Muslims. For this plan to see the light, it is necessary to educate individuals as well as groups, to be flexible and to be infused with preservance and flexibility, all in such a way as to be able to adapt to the various conditions and the differing circumstances encountered outside the Islamic world.

The areas the present strategy concerns itself with are: Islam, the Arabic language and civilization, cultural heritage, history, local culture and human principles.

1. Islam

Faith is the formost of human life as a whole. Muslims believe in Allah, the only of His kind, the Creator and the Manager of every thing. They also believe in Allah's Angels, Book, Prophets, the Last Day of Judgement, and in destiny and fatality. One of the manifestations of faith in Allah, the Almighty is their commitment to the religious observances that were prescribed to His subjects such as prayer, fasting alimony, pilgrimage (*hajj*), and the good manners that lift the soul up to the highest reaches of human exaltedness in its relation with the Creator and creatures. Here we ought to distinguish between true Islam, which is understood from its two essential sources; namely, the holy Quran and the Prophetic Sunna, and between extraneous traditions and customs which are mistakenly attributed to Islam.

The Islamic religion represents the foundation upon which rests the building of the identity of the Muslim migrants' children. To present Islam to young people by way of developed scientific and educational methods is likely to enable them to offer the best solutions for an identity under the threat of loss. In this particular context, however, we have to distinguish between two practices:

> a) **Teaching Islamic faith:** This means educating in the light of faith. Such a responsibility is to be assumed by Muslims themselves (parents, teachers, Islamic bodies and institutions).

> b) **Teaching Islam as an epistemic legacy:** That is using Islam as a subject of history or sociology, offered within the framework of French teaching syllabi. Should this type of teaching have any important role, it remains incapable of offering an adequate Islamic education."

2. The Arabic Language

To firmly secure and reinforce identity language inevitably needs to be considered as "an effective proprietor of identity", which is, in this case the Arabic language,

the language of the holy Quran. It is an essential element in the cultural identity of Muslim migrants outside the Islamic world; the personality of these people cannot be dissociated from the language that expresses their values as well as embraces their aspirations and worries. For this reason, learning and mastering Arabic as a practical and creative means constitutes one of the vital tasks this strategy ought to carry out in the fields of expression of all aspects of Islamic culture.

The relationship a child living in a foreign country entertains with his native language is determined at the level of the family. The language stock that children acquire is too poor to enable them to interact with other people in some satisfactory manner, which leads them to take recourse to the type of language used by society at large; or mingle the two as much as possible. Here appears the importance of teaching one's native language, and developing one's linguistic stock at the level of reading, writing and communication. There is no doubt that this requires the availability of the requisite aids such as adequate pedagogical procedures as well as didactic tools like methodologies and appropriate book contents. The need is also for offering opportunities and establishing a linguistic environment which allows the children to speak Arabic. Also, one ought to think seriously about an appropriate training for teachers in special trainings sessions.

A bilingual of teaching where Arabic is given increasing importance is likely to meet the parents' wishes for a reconsideration of native Islamic Arabic culture, which serves as a reference that expresses the kind of identity they cling to. This type of teaching is also likely to respond to the needs of the children, for them to be successful at school, to integrate in the host country, and to live in total harmony within two cultures which are mutually enriching.

In this vein, teaching Arabic will undoubtedly be beneficial to the children of Muslim migrants, for it allows these children to establish close links with their native culture as well as facilitates their integration in the host countries. In fact, such a type of teaching will be beneficial to native children themselves; it allows them to come into close contact with other cultures, should the same chances be given to Arabic as those given to the type of bilingual teaching which is based on languages other than Arabic. Two benefits can be drawn from bilingual teaching : first, to learn Arabic, native children will be able to appreciate its rhetoric as well as its cultural store. Their interest in the Arabic language will be a definitive proof that they have regard and respect for the people who speak it and their culture. The second benefit resides in the fact that openness on the Arabic language and its culture is likely to bring to the fore a new elite among Western societies, one who does not only master two languages, but puts them in use to reinforce relations between their countries and the Islamic ones.

We should not fail to emphasize in here that Arabic can play a primordial role in unifying the word of Muslims in foreign countries, no matter how different their cultures may be; Arabic, the language of the Quran, came to encounter all the languages of preceding civilizations such as Persian, Hindi, Greek, and became the language of Muslim thinkers, *faqihs* and philosophers of every nationality and ethnic background. It contributed thus in unifying the Islamic world, for a proper understanding of and insight into the Quran and the Sunna depended on mastery of the Arabic language. "***Verily, this is a Revelation from the Lord; With it came down the spirit of Faith and Truth, to thy heart and mind, that thou mayst admonish in the perspicuous Arabic tongue***" (the Poets (*Ash'ara'*),verses 192-5).

3- Islamic Civilization

Islamic civilization can be defined as "all what has been achieved by Muslims in the first centuries where Islam became prevalent in all the vital domains, politically, economically, scientifically and technologically. On the basis of this moral, religious and human culture, a colossal civilization emerged which yoked together religion and life, religious and natural sciences, mathematics and humanities, linguistics, astrology and chemistry. It also embraced arts, politics, economics, professions and industries, and had a great impact on people's existence and modes of life.

Thereupon, interest in the civilizational aspects of the Islamic *Umma* is tantamount to inculcating in the mind of the Muslim learner how Islamic civilization came to blossom when the impetus for scientific research, which helped in the flowering of "rational sciences" along with more "traditional sciences", was nothing short of religion itself, and how Islamic culture interacted in a positive manner with what Greek philosophy and Persian wisdom came to produce then. And this endeavour never precluded them from remaining faithful to their origins. In this manner, to expose the Muslim learners born outside the Islamic world to Islamic civilization as being in some respects a successful interaction with other civilizations will undoubtedly help them to accommodate that, and to lead them to view such an interaction with proud, so much so that they would be able to overcome the kind of malaise, worry and opaque attitude they may have regarding identity.

4. Heritage

It is possible to consider heritage as the best expression of the cultural identity of the *Umma*, of its civilizational personality. It is one of the aspects of creativity that an *Umma* has in store, whether it originates in individuals or in groups. The Islamic heritage comes in two types: recorded intellectual heritage, of which

thousands of libraries are fraught; and the material and tangible heritage such as architectural monuments and achievements, artistic skillfulness, some of which are still erect, raising as they do awe and respect.

Sustaining interest in heritage, disseminating and teaching it the young in foreign countries is likely to make children and young people alike aware that Western civilization rests to a large measure on the Islamic scientific and civilizational heritage; that is on the arts and sciences that the Muslims created as well as on the historical and architectural monuments that they left behind. Coupled with this are the professions and skills they have always practiced. That is in sum, every thing that Western civilization adopted and learnt from.

5. Islamic history

In deed, history is a record of the nation's glorious days, past event, developments and changes, especially the social, economic, political and cultural history. It is therefore a collective memory of the nation and trustworthy custodian of its cultural identity.

However, more often than not the Islamic history undergoes severe distortion and untold prejudice, sometimes by neglecting it and leaving it to oblivion, sometimes by obliterating its sacred, spiritual aspects or by citing political events without any word on the bright social, economic and cultural aspects of that history to which the perennial Islamic hallmarks are bearing obvious testimony.

It is, therefore, necessary to rewrite more fairly and more objectively the Islamic history in order to fathom out the shortcomings and the possible reasons thereof. From a pure educational perspective, it would require a rereading of history with a view to presenting it to younger generations brought up abroad so that they come to reconcile their historical memory and the novel discovery of their deep-seated origins. Any nation which does not stimulate interest in their own history would be left behind and struck by oblivion.

6. Local culture

The densely populated Islamic world is a mixture of peoples with different cultures, languages and customs. The variation in their environment and social life patterns makes of this melting pot a rich source of enrichment to the Islamic heritage. Despite the diversity, there is an affirmed unity and harmony among the different components of the social texture based on the common Islamic faith. It is, indeed, a case of unity within diversity.

This cultural and educational strategy should capitalize on these cultural specificities and recognize them. The aim of this strategy is, indeed, not to standardize culture, but rather to achieve unity to which local culture could contribute significantly when it becomes aware of its full consonance with the Islamic culture from which it had originally stemmed.

7. Human principles and values

The cultural strategy should affirm and stress the compatibility of the Islamic teachings and the broad lines of the Islamic culture with the common human principles and values shared by mankind as a whole.

By human principles and values, we mean the set of ideals and standards that help define the type of adequate behaviour for the individual and society as well. These ideals and standards are drawn from the Quran and the *Sunnah* of the Prophet. However, the credibility and strength of the Islamic culture, although drawn up from a transcendent source, also stem from the instinct and common sense which emphasise the principles of righteousness, justice, and human dignity as universal virtues shared by all humanity. The best evidence to this could be the numerous ethics and values developed by the Quran and confirmed by the *Sunna*. The principles of equality, human right respect and liberty publicized, today, by the international covenants are only confirmation of the same principles set up by Islam more than fourteen centuries ago.

The concept of Islamic identity:

The identity of every individual consists in everything that contributes to his/her being as a distinct "entity". This means the set of ingredients that constitute the individual's self and confirm his/her existence and presence within his/her immediate as well as large community. Identity in its broad sense is accordingly all that marks the individual as a different and independent person with his/her own distinctive attributes. Like individuals, nations have their identities too. By the same token a nation owes its identity to the set of elements and ingredients that constitute its specific features and traits. These components are as follows:

1) **Religion**, on account that it enshrines one's perception and vision of the world, a specific code of conduct, a particular way of worship and a legislature governing all aspects of life; an ethical system specifying behaviour and standards of relations.

2) **Language**, viewed as a means of communication; a medium of thought and feelings; and a token of identity and self-reliance. Language is also

a recorder for the collective historical memory which encompasses all experiences and past events of the nation, from which the umma derives its civilizational identity.

3) Environment, with all its natural and human ingredients, materialized in social systems and conditions that evolve into mental and psychological attitudes, and constiute the notion of the home country along with its connoations and values.

Therefore, one could safely argue that the Islamic cultural identity is constituted at the same time from constant, fundamental and common characteristics which distinguish the Ummah's civilization and other civilizations.

The issue of identity, in fact, is difficult to deal with in any theoretical aproach regardless of its area of speciality. Rather, it is an issue where many disciplines converge such as sociology, psychology, anthropology, politics as well as the relevant conscious or subconscious sensitive side involved.

For these reasons, research on identity took different trends. Some would address the issue of identity from a subjective individual perspective intended to understand how people see and understand their own identities. Others would do the same from a collective standpoint; and a third approach based on a synchronic study meant to examine the formation of the concept of identity itself.

Islamic comprehensive identity is based on openness onto the world and the surrounding environment. It is not by chance that the Islamic culture could manage to assimilate numerous human cultures and merge them in a rich but diverse identity without its principles and values.

Today, no culture could survive without getting in contact with other cultures. Diversity and intercomplementarity have become living realities. This does not mean, however, that Muslims would open up onto alien cultures without being selective. Assimilation of other cultures should be built first and foremost on selection.

This issue becomes more critical when it relates to Muslim communities living abroad or living in countries which used to be Muslim but lost their independence are not any more. The problem is felt more sharply by the third and the fourth generations who face serious crisis identity. They neither recognize themselves within authentic values nor feel comfortable enough to identify with the host society.

Addressing this issue requires extensive, in-depth studies and a novel educational model taking into account the different religious and cultural conditions.

In the deep sense of the term, identity is not only linked to the past. It also involves the present, and the aspiration for the future. Identity is not a frozen entity. Rather, it is built gradually on a solid basis. However, if it is necessary to preserve the distinct features of identity, it is also indispensable to introduce the required changes from a perspective of open-mindedness, and innovative, deep thought. Taking into account these considerations, we can say that religion ensures the identity's stability, authenticity and continuity, but also enables it to adapt, to a certain extent, to the social and cultural changes through which the current society is going through in terms of the human relations, ideas and convictions, which were once simple and traditional, and have become complex and modern.

Concept of Muslim Migrant community

The concept of Muslim Community probably emerged in the late 1950s and the early 1960s. It was linked with the emigration of manpower to European and North American countries to fill the severe shortage caused by World War II and to reconstruct and strengthen Europe's economy according to the Marshall Plan. Certain Islamic and Arab countries were selected in view of their relations with Europe. The momentum of Islamic emigration grew as from the early sixties. The flux continued, and wave after wave arrived to a wide open world. With the development of immigration from the Islamic world towards several destinations, in particular Europe and the United States, at first, then towards countries of Latin America and Canada, the phenomenon of Muslim communities and minorities came to be. Muslim immigrants entered these countries, anchored with their culture, habits and traditions and with their own religion, language, culture and lifestyle. Thus, France brought workforce from the Arab Maghreb in particular, while Britain and the United States attracted large numbers of Muslim workers from Lebanon, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. The Netherlands brought manpower from Suriname, Indonesia, Malaysia, Morocco and Turkey. Germany and Belgium, for their part, brought workers from Turkey and Morocco. Some Muslims emigrated later on to other countries, such as Sweden, Norway, Danemark, Finland end Luxembourg.

Emigration expanded in scope after the independence of a number of countries. It came to include categories such as merchants, students, diplomats and staff of international organizations. The right of provisional and permanent residence as well as of nationality was granted to Muslim emigrants according to specific laws. The Muslim community in Western Europe started therefore taking form.

In general, the Muslim community may be said to have diverse categories, containing three types of emigrants:

First type: emigrant workers and their families who settled in the West for generations (second, third and fourth generations).

Second type: businessmen, capital holders and economic developers who transferred their economic activity to certain Western countries.

Third type: Brain drain of scientific competencies, including engineers, physicians, university professors, researchers and students.

The transition from provisional to permanent residence, particularly with the rise of new generations born in Europe, would inevitably lead to a new approach to the Muslim community. The latter has come to be considered a "large number minority" with distinct population, economic, social and cultural characteristics.

Concerning the generations of immigrants, there are four distinct generations each of which has its own specificities. The first generation is composed of the first immigrants who took part in the World War II with or against the allies. Among them are also those brought by the colonizers to work in rebuilding their countries' economies. This generation succeeded in living under social conditions that are closely similar to their origin conditions and were able to obtain important advantages without having to sacrifice their Islamic identity.

The second generation comprises the children who joined their parents in the 1970s within the framework of family reunification. A large number of these children found themselves lost between preserving the constants of their Islamic identity and the assimilation under the power of the western civilization's temptations.

The third generation consists of the children of the second generation who were born in western countries where they were educated. This generation does not have a proper identity and lives constantly in conflicts with their families who struggle to preserve the original customs and values of their offspring.

The fourth generation is an incipient one and a fruit of early marriages of the children of the third generation. According to recent studies, members of the fourth generation are less than 10 years old. With this Islamic awakening of the children of the Islamic communities in the West and the innumerable mosques, Islamic associations and cultural centre created in western countries, and considering the good cultural and educational level of the third generation, the future of the fourth generation seems much better provided they be culturally, socially and religiously well guided.

As to its constituents, the Muslim community encompasses three major groups:

The First group is made up of Arabs, 45% of whom are of Moroccan origin. They are distributed over France, Belgium, Germany, Holland, Italy and Spain. They are followed by Algerians, based especially in France.

The second group is made up of Turks. They are based especially in Germany, then in Belgium and the Netherlands.

The third group consists of Muslims from the Indian sub-continent (India, Pakistan, Bangladesh …), and based especially in England.

In spite of the diverse origins, cultures and traditions of the Muslim communities, Islam remains the unifying power that cements their ranks. However, such unity is not inconsistent with the requirements of constructive coexistence with these societies. It rather affirms such coexistence the more so since the Islamic religion, in essence, calls for coexistence, tolerance, mutual understanding and cooperation.

It is natural that the living conditions of the Muslim communities and minorities differ from one country to another and from one continent to another. Despite their different origins, their various belongings and the diversity of their cultures, Muslim immigrants are always united thanks to Islam which has consolidated their union.

Although, Muslim communities and minorities which constitute the Islamic presence in the West live under different legal and social conditions, they have almost identical needs. Therefore, Islamic organizations and institutions have to grant them all the care they deserve and support them in the cultural, educational and scientific fields, particularly in the aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001. In fact, Muslims living in the West have been the subject of hostile media and psychological warfare, which they resisted by firmly sticking to their religion, to their identity and to their cultural and civilizational specificities.

The concept of the "West"

It is not easy to define the concept of the "West". Geographically, the term covers several countries, each with its own religion and civilization. Besides a dominant Christianity in the West, Islam is also present thanks to Muslim communities and minorities settled there.

But what do we mean by West? Is it limited to Europe and the Americas with the exclusion of Eastern Europe and Latin America? One would wonder also whether other geographical entities where Muslim communities exist, which are located in the West, should not be regarded as being western. Actually, if the term "West" is used to indicate the economic, social and ideological structure which was

constituted at the end of the conflicts, started in Europe before being propagated to the other continents, it does not, however, have only a geographical connotation, but carries a strategic implication of a history that began more than 25 years ago and which arrived at its peak at the era of economic globalization. On the other hand, while speaking about Orientalism, the Japanese researchers concerned with the issues of Islamic civilization are regarded as Orientalists in spite of their Eastern origin, but when speaking about the nature and circumstances of the Islamic presence in non-Muslim countries which attracted them as a labour force, we then speak mainly about the countries of Western Europe and the Americas. All these geographical entities constitute a civilizational system which is supplemented by its values, its principles, ideas, doctrines and policies, and see to their interests within the framework of their relations with the other countries. In addition, not all western countries are secular; the religious trends and institutions have power and authority there. Indeed, some popular milieus in Europe are by religious associations and organizations in particular the church. There are even some government authorities which draw their reference frameworks and political programmes from the religious ideas and trends.

Taking into account these considerations, the Islamic cultural action in the West is implementable as long as it does not aim at modifying the structures of the western society or tend to generate an Islamist political system. The Islamic presence in the West is authorized to carry out its religious and cultural activities in order to design an educational reference framework for its future generations. Moreover, the cultural force created by the large number of Muslims living in the West induced many western fanatics among decision makers, religious and political leaders to fear this Islamic presence and to deem it as a dangerous invasion. Therefore, it is essential that the people operating in the cultural, media and Da'wa fields call upon members of their institutions, centres and associations who are concerned by this issue, to review these assumptions and points of view taking into account the following elements:

- Western societies are not identical, accordingly, an advantage should be drawn from the differences in their policies, etc.

- Western societies are not all secular, the religious movements and institutions are powerful and it is essential to cooperate with them in order to carry out some common goals.

- Western societies are open despite of the current crisis and it is for the benefit of our Muslim communities to have sympathizers in these societies in order to help members of these communities benefit from policies that supports the values of Islam namely moderation and opening to the Other.

- The media has anchored islamophobic image of Islam in western societies. Consequently, there is a need to strengthen the ethical side of Muslims, to develop their knowledge about the Other, their culture and their history in order to erase this false xenophobic image.

- Western societies are anxious about their future which they see as threatened by the demographic and popular force of Islam. However, the consolidation of social solidarity, civilizational participation, and interfaith dialogue is likely to create an atmosphere of peace and a better future for the Muslim communities.

- The potential of the institutions and organizations of the European Union can benefit to the Muslim communities particularly in the fields of professional qualification, scientific training and field social studies.

The foundations of the strategy:

The Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic world is founded on effective elements, means and cultural components that meet the ever-changing present requirements and future challenges of the Muslim communities living abroad. The Strategy takes account of the changes taking place within these communities and the current global communication and technological revolution. The major foundations of the Strategy are:

1) The important number of qualified workers, scientific and cultural capacities, preachers, scientists and intellectuals operating in the field of the management of the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world at the level of each country contributes to activate the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world or within the societies of Muslim communities and minorities. There is a need to strengthen the role of the leaders of the Islamic action in the field of *Da'wa* and culture within the framework of Islamic cultural associations, organizations and centres based outside the Islamic world.

2) It is necessary to use and exploit all the advanced technological tools to disseminate and implement, promptly and at a large scale, the clauses and provisions of the strategy especially that the western countries stretch over large and distant areas. Hence, there is a need to use the technological tools and means likely to ensure communication, coordination and cooperation either between ISESCO and the authorities in charge of the Islamic cultural system outside the Islamic world or among the Islamic cultural associations, organizations and centres based in non-Muslim countries. This cultural and

technological component is all the more important giving the increasing number of Muslim communities and minorities outside the Islamic world and the difficulty to establish communication with these communities and the leaders of the Islamic cultural action using conventional means.

3) The availability of the means and tools likely to help strengthen and facilitate the implementation of the strategy's contents with a view to benefit from positive side of cultural globalization. Therefore, the strategy is founded on a good exploitation of the so-called globalization of cultural production. It is necessary to give up the traditional means and replace them with new techniques such as satellite-based broadcasting, the Internet and the organization of scientific and cultural conferences, seminars, and workshops outside the Islamic world.

4) The minute planning and the good organization of all the stages and procedures likely to help activate the provisions of the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world, which can be carried out through sustained cooperation and coordination between ISESCO and the various Islamic cultural organizations, associations and centres outside the Islamic world. This requires:

4.1. Studying and diagnosing the reality and situation of Muslim minorities and communities outside the Islamic world and the level of religious and cultural belonging of their children, in order to determine the disparities between the various social layers, taking into account their different social and historical backgrounds. For that, it is important to proceed through examination and evaluation then understanding.

4.2. Reconsidering the main components of the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world within a new approach in terms of planning and management in order to overcome obstacles, determine drawbacks and propose alternative plans.

4.3. Ensuring a comprehensive and realistic revision of the action plans and methods of cultural management in order to secure a better future for the children of Muslim communities and minorities living outside the Islamic world. These action plans have to meet the real mutations and challenges facing them.

4.4. Establishing the necessary bodies and organs under the supervision of ISESCO to see to the good functioning and management of joint Islamic action outside the Islamic world and ensure effective coordination and cooperation among the different parties involved.

Chapter Five

The Socio-cultural Condition of Muslim Communities outside the Islamic World: Diagnosing the Current Situation and Anticipating the Future

Introduction:

Muslim communities based outside the Muslim world have preserved their Islamic identity despite the frustrations, challenges and violent shocks they have been facing. They have overcome all the difficulties that prevent them from putting into practice teachings and values that serve as a backdrop to good training. They stumbled over serious obstacles in their endeavour to embark on the path of rectitude that is central to the mission of the imam, which is in itself a forum of communication and a pillar of culture. Thus, the old and new generations of Muslims in Europe have among them advocates of truth. A number of men and women have rededicated themselves to the promotion of dialogue in order to establish institutions capable of serving the interests of Muslims, to prepare people worthy of representing them with governments and to set channels through which they could improve their social and spiritual conditions.

Cultural and educational centres, institutions and associations played a significant role in meeting the needs of Muslim communities abroad and diagnosing their social, cultural and educational reality. Meanwhile, inadequate organization coupled with methodological weaknesses, some of these organizations bear a share of responsibility in provoking a certain number of crises and embarrassing the attempts at appeasement on one side or the other. As a result, the rights of Muslims were neglected while these associations were supposed stand for them. It is also lamentable that a group of agents and actors have preferred to focus on secondary and marginal issues while neglecting those which should normally be a priority.

It is well known that in deciding to bring Muslims into Western Europe, European governments were actually seeking manpower to keep the wheels of their economies turning, without projecting any intellectual or religious coaching which those workers would have needed. It took these governments decades to innovate the concept social workers to fill this gap which they created. But they proceeded with no consideration of the relevant Islamic vision in this regard.

With the exception of the teaching of mother languages, some Islamic bodies put all their effort in recalling the origin of their citizens and their genealogical connection to their countries of origin, but paid little attention to awareness campaigns, religious instruction and anti-illiteracy action. As such, Muslim communities remained exposed to long waves of cultural assimilation, perversion, deviation and a false understanding of Islam.

It was the duty of preachers, teachers of the Islamic religion and the Arabic language to innovate in everything, including in programmes and teaching methods as nothing was designed or developed beforehand. Every teacher or instructor

had had to decide on his own on programmes, methodology and teaching method to be adopted. So subjects were taught with neither relevant coaching nor credible references. In the absence of a sustainable effective programme of follow-up, planning and control, the recurrence of personal experiences, errors and amateurism was commonplace.

Today, the Muslim communities in the West have among their members a large number of learned people, scholars, preachers, imams, intellectuals, teachers, artists, economists and many other professionals who have excelled in the different professions, arts and fields, but who still lack the necessary training and continuous training.

Due attention must be given to the particular status of the Muslim minorities living in secular societies as their situation requires a fiqh-based approach likely to accommodate their new condition. The lack of enough meetings devoted to dialogue with other civilizations and religions either as a result of a certain reserve vis-à-vis those religions or philosophies or for fear of a misinterpretation of the statements of the Muslim party in a way that would only serve the ends of Anti-Islamic groups.

However, the flame of hope remains alive as world religions' leaders show respect to Islam and endorse the cause of Muslims, which is a source of pride to Muslims. Thus we feel it is urgent to establish a network of relationships according to the ideals of Islam, develop ways to facilitate and promote understanding, mutual support and cooperation with individuals within secular societies, especially in Western Europe, whose norms, values and principles should be respected as they have tolerated the existence of Islam within them. Only through such an approach could we boost cultural action and consequently enhance its impact on the social, educational and media spheres through dialogue, harmonious coexistence with others in multi-faith contexts. We draw attention once again to the fact that Muslims in Europe and the Americas constitute a minority with its own specificities and qualities which need a new treatment based on the principles of Islam, but that takes into account this particular context of non-Muslim societies.

Methodological overview:

The preparation of this part, which deals with the social and cultural conditions of the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, has been characterized by three funda-mental elements:

- Backgrounds
- Referentiality
- Approaches

With regard to the backgrounds, the following have been taken into account:

1. The strategy should reflect the specificity of the current reality of the communities, that is the dimensions of self and cultural identity, but without ignoring the spiritual, moral dimension, which remains a prospective objective.

2. A strategy should be laid down for dialogue, peaceful coexistence and persuasion instead of confrontation.

3. Prospective strategic principles bearing a far-reaching vision should be laid down.

With regard to referentiality, the following have been taken into account:

1. The use of Islamic references as a methodology of analysis, i.e. adopting the Islamic perspective in dealing with the conditions of Muslim communities in the West.

2. The use of the final reports and recommendations emanating from the meetings of experts and heads of Islamic cultural centers outside the Islamic world, starting with the reports of the meetings held in Chateau Chinon up to the present day.

3. Making reference to the research studies undertaken by Muslim scholars to diagnose the reality of Islam and Muslims outside the Islamic world and in non-Islamic environments.

4. Pursueing reliable and objective sociological studies undertaken by Muslims and non-Muslims regarding the phenomenon of Islamic immigration outside the Islamic world, its problems and fundamental issues.

The methodological approaches which have been used can be summarized as follows :

1. Tracking the Islamic presence outside the Islamic world in terms of its history, its manifestations and interactions within non-Muslim communities presently and in the future.

2. Taking into consideration the specifics of the Islamic presence outside the Islamic world and those of the Islamic cultural reality (the problems of socialization of the new generations, the attempts of coercive integration, cultural identity crisis and the loss of contact with the authentic Islamic referentiality).

3. Taking into consideration the diversity of the following elements:

- Issues and concerns of Muslims,

- Host countries,

- Dimensions of problems,

- Country of origin,

- Language,

- Culture,

- School education,

- Challenges in host countries.

4. Taking into consideration the new reality of Western countries which have become culturally, religiously and ethnically pluralistic, together with the new dynamism resulting thereof.

5. Analyzing the various discourses about Islam and uncovering their background, referentiality and latent goals, whether the discourse in question is academic orientalist, sociological, media-driven, political or religious.

6. Taking into consideration the cultural penetration dictated by the now encroaching cultural globalization and the conditions for the preservation of the cultural and religious identity of Muslims living in a non-Islamic environment.

7. Taking into account the reality of secularism in Western societies, which means the separation of religion and state, but in the meantime it allows for the free practice of religion. This explains the strong presence of religion in those societies, a situation which Islam would benefit from.

8. Specifying the factors which have enhanced the awareness of the importance of Islam in the West and its role as a cultural and spiritual choice, and as a work methodology to deal with contemporary intellectual challenges, attempting to put forward the relevant elements and procedures capable of guiding the blessed Islamic awakening, and correcting the image of Islam by ridding it of infelicities. The gap between Islam and the West, therefore, would not widen.

9. Conjuring up future prospects and getting inspired by some principles for the careful handling of the current Islamic awakening, strengthening the presence of Islam outside the Islamic world and activating the role of Islamic culture in safeguarding and immunizing Islamic identity.

I. A Diagnosis of the current situation

1. The Muslim presence outside the Islamic world today:

The geographical distribution of Muslim communities and the diversity of the laws in force in each country as well as the multitude of nationalities and the disparities in cultural levels do not favour the formulation of a clear idea about the current situation of the children of Muslims living outside the Islamic world. However, there are similarity and complementarity points considering that Islam which unites all Muslim communities and minorities is the major cultural component common to all these communities.

It should be noted here, however, that the presence of Islam outside the Islamic world in the second half of the Twentieth Century and in the turn of the Twenty First Century, particularly after the Second World War, has some characteristics exceeding even those attributed to such phenomena as world population and immigration that have marked the Twentieth Century.

Considering the peculiarities of the social status of the Muslims who immigrated to Europe and the Americas, one will find out that the overwhelming majority are unskilled laborers coming from rural areas in search of work in a Europe devastated by the Second World War. And referring to the specifics of the historical period during which these migrations towards the West occurred (postcolonial, cold war, technological progress, and later the emergence of a learned society together with information and computer technology revolution), one will notice that it is quite natural that the settlement and demographic expansion of Muslim communities in non-Muslim environments would lead to new, various problems not previously raised within the relations between the immigrant minorities and the host communities.

While diversity characterizes the nationality of the communities immigrating from North Africa, the Middle East and Central and Western Asia, the common link between them is Islam, which has become the kernel element unifying all the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world. In fact, this would be sufficient enough to make some parties feel uncomfortable and suspicious. Though the presence of Islam outside the Islamic world was meant to contribute to economic reconstruction after the Second World War, rather than to conquer, it is now unfairly accused, questioned and suspected.

As a matter of fact, in all its contacts with Islam, the West has never seized the opportunity to get to know this religion in its original purity. It has not discovered it even through the works of the orientalists who mostly presented a distorted

image of Islam. The West has not discovered Islam either when it conquered Muslim countries during the period of colonization, because the superiority complex prevented it from doing so. But now we notice the recurrence of the same situation, which lies in the West's inability to understand the reality of Islam through its contact with the Muslim communities settled outside the Islamic world. This can be attributed to several reasons, some of which emanate from the communities themselves, while the others relate to the residues of the civilizational and cultural conflict, which characterizes the current era of the Islamic presence in the West.

2. The settlement of the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world

The year 1974, during which immigration was regulated for the first time, represents a turning point in the history of immigration towards Europe. The refusal of Europe to accept new immigrants coincided with the decision of old immigrants not to return home. For some, the idea of returning became a dream hard to fulfill. The legislators who wanted to stop the flow of immigrants had to deal with an unexpected situation. The early immigrants became settlers who aspired to permanent residency. This position was supported by the right to family reunion, the emergence of the second, third and fourth generations who, though never immigrated, suffer from acute alienation. France, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, Great Britain, and Scandinavian countries are among the European countries in which immigration has become a visible phenomenon. However small the Muslim communities might appear, when compared to the original inhabitants, they "become, indeed, a large minority" characterized by its adhesion to Islam and its original culture.

As a result of the economic crisis and the spread of unemployment,together with the size of families due to the high birth rate, most Muslim communities live in modest and isolated neighborhoods in shabby houses, too small to cater for their needs.

In reality, we do not have any official accurate statistics regarding the number of Muslims living in Europe, but we find large discrepancies in the statistics provided by various researchers. In the aftermath of the events of September 11th, 2001, new statistics were published on the number of Muslims settled outside the Islamic world. According to these statistics, the number of Muslims in Eastern Europe is about 25 million whereas Muslims in the United States exceed 6 millions. France is the European country with the largest concentration of Muslims (5 million), followed by Belgium and Germany. In Scandinavian countries, they do not exceed 1% of the local population.

Nevertheless, the current available estimates make us confer with the findings of many Islamic immigration researches which indicate that Islam has become the second strongest religion in Europe after Christianity. Besides, according to some 2002 statistics, the number of Muslims in the United States is increasing rapidly, exceeding for the first time the number of Jews and putting Islam in the second place after Christianity.

The conclusion that can be drawn from these demographic facts is that they exceed the limited quantitative dimensions, indicating more significant dimensions of the Islamic presence in the West. Specifically, Muslims now constitute an essential element in the demographic structure of the West by virtue of their residence and integration in the economic and social fabric of the West. Everybody is now convinced of the fact that Islam has become a visible phenomenon in North America and a reality that cannot be ignored in the western society. Some have even started considering Islam to be so firmly grounded in Europe that it can never be uprooted.

The demographic constituents of western countries, its general characteristics and the specifics of its peoples will change and become subject to restructuring into a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. Thereby, western countries will no longer remain that harmonious and monolithic society constituted on the basis of a specific historical, economic, social and cultural lineage. It will, in itself, turn into a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-religious society. While this is a new event for Europe, which explains its concern with the phenomenon of immigration at the level of European institutions and individual countries, it is also a unique event for Islam and the Islamic world. The latter has to attach importance to the presence of Islam outside the Islamic world in terms of research and the delineation of the purposes of defining true Islam, which is far from extremism and violence. The Islamic world should also work towards achieving the purposes of Muslim coexistence with others and reflecting the good nature of Islam. In fact, this urge will become pressing if we take into account that the Muslims resident in Europe, in general, has a poor educational and training profile, and they, therefore, badly needs the support and protection of the Muslim world and its cultural institutions, for him to play his civilizational role in a non-Islamic environment.

3. The socio-cultural landscape of Muslim communities outside the Islamic world

That fact that Muslims living in Europe and the Americas are seen as communities and minorities confers to them a particular specificity. Their cultural and social activities are conditioned by the laws applicable in the host countries and they have to observe the existing rules concerning the expression of a culture other than the local one.

In spite of the importance of the human and social components of the Islamic cultural scene in the West, these communities face several problems and challenges, which do not culturally and spiritually allow them absorb and assimilate all the transformations and changes likely to ensure them a harmonious coexistence with their new social environment.

Some of the reasons behind this situation are as follows:

- The rural origins of the immigrants: most of them moved from an agrarian to an industrial type of relations, in an abrupt way, and without any transit not even through urban life in the country of origin, and without there being any psychological preparation to accept those transformations.

- High illiteracy rates among the immigrants.

- The infatuation with some of the attractive aspects of Western civilization and the lack of selective approach in dealing with them.

- The material quest and yielding to the constraints of daily life. The emphasis on such goals led to the ignorance of many other concerns: educational, social, religious, etc.

- The adherence to practices and traditions inherited from rural life in the country of origin, and the first generation lived by these traditions and tried to pass them on to the children. Although these traditions, through time, underwent major changes in the country of origin itself, the immigrants clang to them in their initial version. Most of these traditions are not in conformity with the authentic prescriptions of Islam.

- The adoption of mostly invalid patriarchal values in which the father has absolute power and the members of the family respect him. These values, however, often clashed with reality. The illiterate father who lacks the means of communication with the outside world cannot perform the power he desires. He will be obliged to request his children's assistance. Thus, the father is no longer the one who prepares the children to deal with the outside world; on the contrary, it is the children who perform this role. This has become a source of worry for both parents and children and created a chasm between them.

- The absence of communication among the generations resident in the West: while the first generation suffered from the handicaps of language, knowledge and spirituality, which caused a great confusion in educational relationships with the second and third generations, the problem is not limited to the absence of internal communication among those generations. Rather,

it exceeded it to the absence of communication with the outside world as well. Each generation has its typical problems with its environment. It is thus that the first generation's preoccupation is to acquire money, the second is characterized by intransigence and violence, while deviance is a common trait among the third generation.

- The absence of a common vision among the Muslim communities and the absence of the necessary coordination to achieve the common goals at the educational, social and religious levels, and the domination of differences which relate to the diversity of national origin (Turks, Indians, Pakistanis, Arabs). Muslims also suffer from the variety of parties which attract them: "*The Muslim is required to adhere to his creed, his country of origin, the country of residence, his school of fiqh and his local community. The diversity of these affiliations - civilizational, international, regional, organizational and cultural - contributes to the intensity of attractions on the part of the attracting parties, especially those which have a regional and organizational nature and which always require the Muslim to devote it more allegiance than the others*". This situation grew as a result of the emergence of movements which aspire to create disharmony, and to the absence, among Muslim communities, of a conscious and committed leadership which puts the interest of Islam and its reputation above other interests. Some members of the community adopt positions and reveal behavior which distort the image of Islam, and Islam disclaims responsibility for the deviant behavior of some Muslims.

3.1 The social field

It is very important to stress the social dimension in the strategy of Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world, taking into account the conditions of the Muslim community there, the development it witnesses in its nature, structure and specifics, and the ongoing development of the West. This requires the questioning of the developments and their implications for the Muslim community. Therefore, those adopting this strategy have to bear in mind the following observations:

- The complex and special nature of the Muslim community outside the Islamic world, its history, size and constituents.

- The Muslim community is no longer a mere party of immigrants, but has become settled and is a fundamental constituent of the western society.

- The increasing number of the Muslim population across Western Europe and the Americas.

- The diversity of this community in terms of country of origin, language, culture and the level of education.

- The geographical distribution of the Muslim community outside the Islamic world despite density in some centralized cities and areas.

- The preponderance of youth in this community compared with the western societies as a whole.

- The limited social care given to the Muslim community over the decades marking its presence in the West.

- The deterioration of the social conditions of the members of the Muslim community in general and their need for urgent and efficient guidance at the social level.

In this context, attention should be drawn to the fundamental facts appertaining to the nature of the social problems and their challenges. These problems, which should be considered interrelated, concern the family, women, children, youth and the social institutions, and openness to the social environment. All of these relate to the same phenomenon which requires the drawing up of a general plan for reform and, as a result, openness to a comprehensive perception enabling a clear vision.

From a methodological point of view, we can out line the aspects of these problems in terms of the following:

- The difficulties at the level of the family and their relation to personal statutes as well as the struggles within the families and their living conditions.

- The problems of women in relation to their role in the immigrant family and in the social life in the West together with the implications for the family and children.

- The problems of youth in relation to education within the family or at the level of school education, the problem of Islamic identity for the children of the Muslim communities, the loss of youth and the lack of communication among the generations as well as the problem of crime and deviance.

- The problems of social institutions in relation to social guidance and services which include social solidarity, which Islam insists on, and the divisions among the Muslims and the effect of these on the relations among the Muslims and on their unification.

- The problems of openness vis-à-vis the social environment with regard to issues like integration and its conception, the social, economic and political role of Muslims in Western societies; and the prospects of consolidating the presence of Islam in the West.

These problems should be distinguished in terms of three levels:

Level one:

This comprises the problems whose nature relates to the formation of the Muslim community, suchas illiteracy, its ability to communicate and coexist with the others and its attitude towards non-Muslims through its own understanding of Islam and the degree of cohesion or disintegration in its structure.

Level two:

This involves the problems common to the Muslim community and other religious or ethnic minorities, and which might have a link with the immigrant groups from other cultures, such as the ability to cope with the culture of the surrounding environment and integration therein.

Level three:

This level concerns the problems of the western context, especially these days, and these are not only limited to the Muslims and the other minorities, but they affect all the other social structures. These include unemployment, marginalisation, discrimination and the difficulty of securing reasonable lodging, the standard of living and the limited social services.

This categorization discloses the numerous complex social problems compared to the resources available to deal with them at the financial and human level. This also leads us to insist on finding conducive ground for Islamic action, which would help resolve the problems and difficulties encountered by the Muslim community, or at least help alleviate them.

The family

Besides its social role, which is part of human instinct, the family has a moral function which consists of exchange of affection and solidarity to help it perform its various roles which include:

- Preserving the human species which helps increase the number of Muslims as dictated by Islam.

- Educating and creating bonds among the members of society, as the family fulfills the educational role society entrusts it with.

- Preserving the heritage of society, its values and conventions, and making sure it is respected and transferred to the generations to come.

These roles should be emphasized further when dealing with life in the West, where social life is devoid of the Islamic spirit, and the family thus provides the context for the replacement of this absence of Islam from social life. The change in Islamic immigration in Europe from an individual pattern to that of the family, and from a temporary to a permanent situation, has had clear effects at several levels. It is not surprising if the immigrant Muslim family and its social and cultural heritage undergo continuous transformations. Naturally, the family will be influenced by this new environment, which itself is subject to change and development, as is revealed in the relationships within the family and among the generations, and in the attitude towards such issues as birth and education, among others.

It is quite natural that the settlement of Muslim families outside the Islamic world in environments whose institutions were not prepared for this social phenomenon and its implications will result in many problems. These problems vary in terms of intensity and the type of family, its size, financial and cultural status, and include the problem of personal statutes, the relationships among the members of the family, school failure, deviance, and the problem of communication among the generations. These problems are intertwined and, thus, become even more complex.

Accordingly, the reality of the Muslim family living abroad, its concerns and problems, should be part of this strategy for three reasons:

- The immigrant family reflects the reality of the Muslim community outside the Islamic world.

- Given the transformations the immigrant family has undergone in its specifics, it requires more attention of those concerned with social work, especially when we take into account the disintegration of the family system in the West.

- In order to deal with the social problems of the Muslim community, one has to reckon with the family as an essential component of society. There must be some encouraging factors to help the family settle down and achieve balance; and to help it avoid many problems especially in some parts of the Western world where Muslims are a newly settled community. In general, the problems mentioned earlier can be distinguished in terms of two categories:

- The first is transient and inevitable but can be resolved.

- The second, however, can be avoided by handling it through prevention.

These approaches will set the Muslim immigrant family as an example of a unified and efficient family that western society can benefit from.

Women

All the efforts which might be deployed to deal with the conditions of the Muslim immigrant family will not be fruitful unless the condition of women is taken into consideration. Therefore, the improvement of the condition of women should be given a priority in social thinking, given the links existing between the problems of the family and those of women, which influence each other.

The problematic of women's condition is a universal one, and if human society is unable to resolve the problem of the family, it is because of the ignorance of the role and place of women. As a result, human society has deprived women of the very rights that common sense dictates.

However, the question of women's condition cannot be discussed per se, but has to be placed within a general framework of reform which considers the freedom of women as part of it. This necessitates men's freedom, first, from the spirit of archaic stagnation passed on from one generation to another, which has led them to favor customs over religion itself. This also requires women to proceed in an appropriate way vis-à-vis current afairs the and the developed contemporary spirit so as to defend their basic rights, instead of concentrating on unproductive side issues.

Islam has dignified women and addressed them in Shari'a and religion. Women are capable of aspiring to the highest levels of devotion and closeness to God, and Islam has preserved their personality and identity, which they do not lose as a result of marriage. Islam has also allowed them to undertake jobs and general matters such as law-making, religious arbitration and justice in the affairs of the Muslim nation, and has made men and women equal in rights and obligations, in accordance with the Prophet's (Peace Be Upon Him) saying: "*Women are men's sisters*". Those who undertake the task of dealing with the social problems of Muslim women in the West should be inspired by the teachings of Islam to elevate women and help them achieve dignity and self-fulfilment.

After immigrating to join their husbands, women played leading social roles at various levels. The effect was at the level of family integration within the Muslim community; and as women integrated into the social fabric, such factors as education, life experience and the high demand for femele laborforce pushed women to work in the services, commercial or professional sectors.

It is also estimated that the spread of education would lead to the creation of further opportunities for women; and this would concretely influence the

distribution of roles inside the family, by taking into account their social position in relation to the economic one.

These initiatives should be strengthened by those in charge of social work, by educating women and providing them with practical life skills to improve their social condition. There should also be equality between men and women in what concerns laws in accordance with the teachings of Islam; and they should also be given the rights which Islam has guaranteed for them, and these are spiritual, civil, social, economic and legal.

The young generation

Children and young people of immigrant families are living in a confusing world of contradictions. In fact, the values of their countries of origin become weak and cede their place to the irresistible temptations of the material life offered by the western model. In facing these problems, one should re-emphasize the significant role that the family plays in the social normalization process. The family is the first site for knowledge which provides the child with an intellectual and cultural asset that serves him in life. The young Muslim needs to learn these identity and life values in the family, for the West cannot provide them.

The absence of this asset represents a cultural obstacle which adds to the absence of parental strategy in the area of social investment the teaching of children and the building of their future by benefiting from the education opportunities available in western schools. These two factors, among other external ones, cause young people disappointment and failure, at the educational and social levels.

School failure, which normally leads to expulsion and marginalization, adds to other problems of failure inside the family or at work, in addition to the conditions of unemployment, poverty and deprivation to intensify the situation of young people descending from immigrants. These live in difficult conditions in which there is a conflict of references and a double function in role model, in education and teaching.

These conditions of cultural and social marginalization will have bad consequences, as the youth will have an inclination towards violence and deviance, aspects of social disequilibrium which young people in the West, in general, suffer from, and which constitute a form of protest or an attempt to assert oneself or retaliate.

If this phenomenon of deviance exists among the Muslim youth, then it should be handled with realism and should not be ignored. However, this phenomenon should not be linked to religion or immigration on the basis of its being the result

of a general disequilibrium. It should also be considered within its real size without any exaggeration.

As mentioned before, among the functions of the family is to unite society by transferring the values and culture of society to the generations through education, which makes one ask: what is the relationship between the Muslim generations in the West? Is it a relationship of conflict or communication?

In reality, the Muslim immigrant family has carried with it a social heritage which constitutes the conditions, roles and relationships in a vertical way in which the old generation has "domination" over the younger one. This system, however, is confronted with another system of conditions and relationships based on equality in a linear way in which the position of the individual is distinct, which results in a conflict of attitude and behavior, and in a disequilibrium in the relations on which the structure of the Muslim family is based. This appears mainly in the relations among generations. If the generation gap is a normal, general and universal phenomenon, in this context it takes a different aspect especially as a result of the big gap between the parents and the children in educational and intellectual matters. The parents, who are in general illiterate, were brought up in a given social and cultural environment, and represent a specific way of thinking and are not prepared psychologically, mentally or socially to integrate into the new milieu.

The children, however, are different; for they were born in the West, grew up inspired by its customs and values, and have become integrated into it more than their integration in the culture of the parents. They do not usually assimilate or believe in the validity and use of their parents' culture in a western context.

Here, one can see the difficulties which reside in the differences in the conceptions of things and the evaluation of ideas and positions. These difficulties often become more complicated when children reach the age of adolescence to the extent of discord and breakup, which prevents openness and dialogue, and as a result communication becomes useless.

The absence of the authority of parents in education or, at least, the reduction of its effect in addition to the children's ambiguous attitude towards identity, and the double models and references available to them make them live a psychological struggle. They tend to resolve it either through definitive breakup with the references of the parents or by preserving the contact, but the result of this will be a duality in personality. Moreover, the constraints of the western materialist society and the anxieties and frustrations of professional life, together with the problems and concerns of living within the Western society are factors that make

parents too busy to focus on the educational and social guidance of their children, and hence the importance of the role of social and religious institutions such as mosques, associations and cultural centres.

Social and religious action institutions

The need for social and religious institutions, which would cater for Muslims' religious, cultural, social and economic requirements, became urgent given that the local political institutions did not consider it or fulfill it, which made Muslims feel responsible to take the initiative themselves. This, in fact, is what many mosques, Islamic centers and social action institutions are doing. They are making considerable efforts and have proven efficient and credible vis-à-vis the immigrants and the authorities in the host countries. It is noticed that these institutions are now able to engage in strong partnership projects with some official institutions. We even find that these social and religious institutions have become popular inside the civil society, and have contributed to the conversion into Islam of many native citizens. Undoubtedly, the orientation of Islamic social action and the reinforcement of its institutions are capable of strengthening Islam, implanting it and giving it a bright and positive image. Certainly, this work coheres with the foundations of the Islamic society which is based on social solidarity and cooperation among the members of society. This guarantees the interest of both the individual and society, makes them feel secure and stable, and helps reinforce the bonds of Islamic brotherhood among the immigrants.

It should be noted here that, in some areas, Muslims are torn by the various parties which lure them, a situation which causes confusion in their relations. The diversity of civilizational, regional, organizational and cultural belongings intensifies these influences and requires the Muslim to express sincere allegiance to a movement or organization. One of the facets of these influences is the disagreement among immigrant Muslims in matters that normally should not be subject to disagreement, such as the timing of religious ceremonies and the controversies over decrees and law-making. This causes the aversion of many and gives a negative image of Islam, although Islam has asked Muslims to be a united nation.

In fact, many steps have been taken to unify Muslims, but these attempts have failed because unification could not only be achieved at the level of multinational Islamic organizations, but also inside the community whose national origin is the same. Dealing with the question of Islam outside the Islamic world in a positive way requires harmony in the structure of Islam to facilitate dealing with it in accordance with the programs and social and educational policies concerned with the problems of Muslim immigrants.

This situation requires the return to the collective memory and unification of Islamic awareness outside the Islamic world. In other words, this requires an Islamic awakening in which the social and religious institutions play an important role. One of these institutions is the mosque which, beside its spiritual role, is in reality a place for gathering where people meet to deal with the problems they face, and is a cultural forum to discuss their secular and religious concerns. The mosque plays an important role as it contributes to educating Muslims living outside the Islamic world and raising their awareness about the religious and social issues, thanks to the religious and cultural mission it carries out. However, the reality is different as the mosques are, in majority, small worship places which lack the necessary conditions and the efficient orientation to play their role fully in orienting and uniting Muslim immigrants.

Openness to the environment

The condition of the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world and its change from temporary to permanent immigration, especially after their families joined them and their children were born in Europe, poses an essential problematic which relates to openness towards the social environment and integration therein. But the meanings of the concepts of integration differ depending on the milieus and occasions. Sometimes integration means total absorption of the cultures and their specifics, the immigrants dissolving into the social fabric of these countries. At other times, integration means respecting the laws of the host countries and their conventions, and helping immigrants participate in politics as much as they participate in the economic life and their continued link with the cultures of their countries of origin. The question of the integration of the children of Muslim communities and minorities in their host societies arises as a major part of young people whose positions swing between safeguarding their identity, on the one hand, and integrating their new social environment, on the other hand. This situation which needs to be addressed efficiently is associated with many facts and factors:

a) Young Muslim immigrants refuse to stick, if only partially, to their roots as their families wish.

b) In spite of the various attempts to free themselves of being stigmatized as immigrants, there remain many practices, convictions and customs inherent in their cultures that keep them attached to their origins and identity.

c) Even if children and young people who are descendants of immigrant families embrace the Western culture and lifestyle, it is nonetheless true that the western societies treat them with much reserve, especially at school and in the labour market. Such attitudes recall them of their origins.

It is worth noting here that the language barrier and the deteriorating cultural level, or its complete absence, prevent the immigrants from integrating in the social fabric of the West. But the authorities in the host countries rely on the third and fourth generations, which are now in the making, to achieve complete integration of the communities. There are also obstacles at the level of political participation, which sometimes reside in the absence of a unique Islamic interlocutor whose representation is accepted by the resident Muslims. Although some countries such as France managed to establish an Islamic interlocutor (the French Council for the Muslim Religion), many problems and obstacles persist.

The attempts for political action through organizations and established political structures have proven efficient as many Muslims have been able to head some municipalities and supervise them in the countries in which they settle. Muslims have also voted for Muslim members of parliament or those sympathizing with the Muslim community in legislative assemblies. Undoubtedly, this will have a strong effect in making the voices of Muslims heard, in taking into account their religious and cultural requirements, and in integrating them into the social and political fabric of the host countries.

It should also be noted here that the Muslim community has distinguished itself in other areas such as science, society and sports; but one notices that the economic field suffers from weak cooperation and bad planning among Muslim businessmen in Europe. This leads to the weakening of the power of political and financial influence, which Muslims should possess. It is also noticed that the lack of unity among Muslim immigrants prevents them from having influential political power on a par with the Muslim or Arab communities in the USA.

It is worth mentioning here that the mutual aversion referred to above is opposed by mutual influence or integration characterized by:

  - A civil and social but not a cultural and religious integration;
  - Mixed marriage as a result of open cross-national relations;
  - The conversion of native citizens to Islam.

The mechanism of social orientation, the assemblies and national or local committees have played a major role in the integration of immigrants especially in practical life, given that openness to the local reality has come as a result of a reaction due essentially to the increase in the social and educational needs of the family.

Mixed marriage is a phenomenon worthy of attention given its inherent problems associated with the differences of religion, culture and values. Mixed marriage, especially in the Maghrebian milieu, is on the increase. Though one of its positive

manifestates is further contact which facilitates integration, it results in some difficulties of harmony in terms of educational prospects inside the family, especially in cases where one member of the couple is Muslim.

It is gratifying to remark in this context that a number of native citizens is increasingly embracing Islam under the influence of many factors, such as mixed marriage, visits to Muslim countries, contact with the Muslim community or research and personal effort. They, therefore, integrate in the Muslim community and become receptive to its culture, ethics and tolerant religion.

3.2 Education

3.2.1 Education of Muslim children outside the Islamic world:

Undoubtedly, the future of the presence of Islam outside the Islamic world, its continuity and its efficiency depend essentially on the nature of the social, cultural and economic position Muslims will occupy in the host countries and the roles they will play. It is obvious that education is an efficient tool to reach the targeted position and to improve the expected roles. Muslims became aware of this reality earlier and sent their children to western schools to acquire the skills and the required expertise to integrate into their economic and social environment.

The West, on its part, has long believed that the school is a convenient place for the assimilation of the children of immigrants and their social and cultural integration. They have, therefore, made sure the school absorb all the children of immigrants, and they trusted the educational tools of the school and its great ability to prepare children socially by imposing the culture and value system of the West.

Schooling ratios of the children of Muslim communities in western educational institutions did not meet either the West's expectations which aspired to obliterate the personality of these children, alienate them from their identity and negatively integrate them into the western model, nor the expectations of their parents who hoped to see their children of the third and fourth generations taking advantage of the western educational system in order to occupy honourable positions that could help improve their situation.

3.2.1.1 Secular school curricula

A major part of the problems facing the children of Muslim immigrants in western countries are mainly due to the secular school curricula which are designed for an heterogenous student community, irrespective of its Islamic or western back-grounds. In fact, it is difficult for a child who received a secular western education

to rid himself of its inherent effects. These children and young Muslims are being inculcated with western values in an attempt to assimilate them into the models of thinking and behaviour associated with such values. Worst still, there is no room for the teaching of their native tongues in those curricula and the experiences in this regard are very limited in time and space.

3.2.1.2 The problem of school failure

The inability to cope with school is an old phenomenon dating back to the beginning of the education of the children of Muslim immigrants in Europe, due to the inadequacy of the Western schools which receive Muslim children, and their inability to make changes in their educational systems and pedagogical aspects so as to be compatible with the reality of the children of immigrants. The Western school has remained firm in its position, expecting the children of the communities to change their personality and cultural identity, a task that was not as easy as Europeans believed at the beginning. School failure has become a visible aspect of the educational reality of the children of Muslim immigrants. We find that many of them have suffered from underachievement for one or more years, a high proportion of them do not reach secondary education and are mostly oriented towards professional training or short-term technical training to cater for the needs of industry in terms of labor, which helps reproduce the parents'jobs. As for university education, only a very few reach it, and in some academic specializations there is none. School failure is frequently followed by lack of professional qualification, and all the children have is professional experience which does not meet the needs of industry. This renders these young people unable to continue their training programs, and eventually they end up being jobless, a situation which would last for a long time.

Following the studies and reports on the condition of the education of the children of Muslim immigrants, the educational authorities in many Western countries set up specialized committees to examine the matter, and experimented on many pedagogical projects aimed at reducing the rate of school failure. But all these attempts have fallen through.

The reason for this failure is that these projects were concerned with some procedures and side educational techniques or because of the influence of some secondary factors. The fundamental problematic, however, lies in the school's refusal to adopt a policy of openness towards the culture of Muslim children. This element was absent in all the projects which were tried in the attempt to tackle school failure. In fact, the Western school has been dominated, from the beginning, by the assimilative aspect and the desire to alienate the Muslim child.

Thus, the Western school has become a site for cultural struggle. As a result of its cultural power, Muslim children and youth have always tried to hide their original culture. It is, therefore, natural for this to lead to a psychological state that would influence the pedagogical activities of children and their school life.

Any approach to the question of the education of the children of Muslim communities in the West has to rely on a research strategy involving profound and genuine factors, on top of which comes the cultural one. The Western school should open up to the children's culture and give it its due by dealing with it as an asset capable of enriching the educational and cultural aspects of the Western school.

3.2.1.3 The role of the family

We do not discard the role of the family in the deterioration of the school results of its children, as a result of several interrelated factors, such as the parents' lack of settled residency projects, weak resources, illiteracy, housing condition, lack of orientation and follow-up and weak school culture. However, we feel once again that the deficiency at the level of the family could have been made up by the school through the reinforcement of programmes and the provision of compensatory pedagogy. This, however, does not happen at the official school level. Only very limited attempts emanating from outside the school by some members of the civil society could be noted.

The Western school has planned to destroy the unconscious referential structure of the immigrant child through organized destructive strategies of the values he has brought with him from the family and original culture. We, therefore, observe that the school helps institute some form of cultural distance between the child and his parents. We sometimes observe that as long as the child advances in school, he distances himself culturally from the family system and its educational values. In some cases involving girls, the conflict becomes even sharp. In general, the Muslim child remains caught between two parts: one with its glamorous attractions and the other with its source of emotional ties. The Muslim child remains caught between the appeal of the cultural and educational globalization on the one hand, and the need for preserving his Islamic identity and authentic family values, on the other.

3.2.2. The reality of the teaching of the Arabic language and Islamic culture

The Arab language is an extension of the Ummah and the medium for expressing its culture, civilization and the place it occupies in the world. It is the true vector of the cultural identity of Muslims.

Being aware of the necessity to save their offspring from loss, alienation, failure and deviance, the Muslim communities in the West have, through the organizations, Islamic centers and some conscious Islamic leaderships, taken the initiative to organize sessions of parallel courses in the Arabic language and Islamic culture. The communities are convinced that the teaching of the language of the Qur'an and Islamic education is a civilizational and religious obligation, and is a means to consolidate Islamic cultural and personal identity and to draw the young generation to the human values of Islam.

The initiative of the Islamic cultural centers and organizations, indeed, emanates from its awareness that the third and fourth generations live in conditions of loss and disintegration. They also fear that they will lose their cultural identity forever, as their knowledge of Arabic starts diminishing, and some of them do not speak it at all. Most of them ignore the fundamental principle of Islam and the basic rules of Islamic education, as a result of the diminishing educational roles of the family, the disintegration of family relations and the diminishing communication among the generations inside the family itself.The pressure of school, society and the media also contributes to such ignorance.

Statistics indicate that the number of Muslim children in the school age in Western Europe alone is around six to seven million. They were born in Europe and feel they belong to the country in which they were born. In any event, we cannot ignore this Muslim generation; otherwise, it will lose contact with its original culture and identity. To impart the Islamic culture and Arabic language to this generation requires the implementation of an educational strategy which relies on guidance, coordination and working for the sake of Islam in the first place.

In Europe, the only countries which officially recognize Islam are Belgium, Austria, Spain and Hungary. With the exception of Austria and Belgium, there is no official religious education for Muslim children in public schools. In Spain, however, Islamic bodies are now putting together Islamic educational curricula to apply them in schools. As for the rest of European countries, their secular regulations prevent them from teaching Islamic education. Also, the school curricula in some of these countries, particularly in what concerns history programs, do not present the real essence of Islam when dealing with some of its historical or civilizational aspects. Also, some countries have tried to experiment with some approaches which allow for some form of openness to the culture of immigrants, especially in what concerns the intercultural side, in the form of a series of educational activities offering space for the original culture of the children of immigrants so that it can express itself inside the school curriculum, including the organization of some sessions for the teaching of the native

language and Islamic culture. However, these cultural approaches, despite the anthropological aspect which dominates them, remain limited in time and space, and there are many legal and political problems which prevent them from being generalized.

To meet the large need in education, and taking into account the condition of the family and its limited means in this perspective, some Islamic institutions in the West (centers, mosques, associations, alliances) have organized sessions in parallel education in those institutions, which target the teaching of Muslim children the basics of Islamic education, Arabic language and Islamic culture, so as to consolidate their identity and belonging, and to create opportunities for understanding and communication among themselves and their families.

In fact, the Islamic institutions mentioned above have played a leading role in the teaching of Islamic education and Arabic language, and have laid the structures for this kind of education and its supervision. They have done so despite the limited means and poor financial resources and the limited staff qualified to undertake educational tasks, and the recourse to educational curricula imported from some native countries in the absence of a specific curriculum designed for the teaching of the children of immigrant Muslims.

Certainly, one cannot claim that the complementary schools include all the children of the Muslim community in the school age, but they are limited to just a few, which makes many other young people under the sole influence of Western schools and media.

The methods of the teaching of Islamic education and Arabic language in the West can be summarized as follows:

3.2.2.1 Parallel or complementary education is organized by Islamic institutions (centers, mosques, associations, etc.) either at the end of the week or during some limited hours in the middle of the week. This form of parallel education has evolved through the efforts of some volunteers in certain associations to offer support and reinforcement to students who suffer from underachievement in public schools, but it now emphasizes the teaching of Islamic education and Arabic language.

3.2.2.2 Western education in special Arabic or Islamic schools, a few schools frequeneted by a limited number of students, where teaching takes place throughout the week. Besides the other curricula in foreign languages, devoted to the teaching of Arabic language and Islamic culture in addition to the courses taught in foreign languages.

3.2.2.3 Education in some public schools which have allowed, in a limited way, the teaching of Islamic culture in foreign languages, beside the teaching of the fundamentals of Arabic. However, this is not enough to enable even the reading of some Koranic verses. This kind of education is found, in a limited way, in Belgium and Austria, alongside experiments in some schools language in the Netherlands and France, where the children of immigrants constitute the majority.

3.2.3 Evaluation of parallel education experience

The emphasis on the evaluation of the experience of parallel education is, in light of the present conditions, the most important,since it includes the highest rate of students who benefit from the teaching of Islamic education and Arabic language. However, some of the problems this kind of education suffers from can be summarized as follows:

3.2.3.1 At the institutional level:

- The absence of a comprehensive survey of the educational needs across the West and the limited resources available.

- The lack of administrative manpower capable of addressing and dealing with the official authorities.

- The inability to transform the traditional Islamic education into a modern one that keeps up with the latest trends in the fields of teaching and education.

- The absence of an institutional framework for coordination both at the general level of western countries and at the level of each country.

- The variation of the intervening parties in this kind of education and the conflict of their goals and, sometimes, methods.

- The insufficient financial and human resources which constitutes an obstacle for the satisfaction of all the needs in the educational field.

3.2.3.2 At the educational level:

- The absence of comprehensive integrated policies capable of producing scientific knowledge and curricula for teaching the Arabic language and the principles of Islam.

- The reliance on some methods used in the native country which do not match the specifics of immigration, and are often contested when applied to other communities.

- The lack of textbooks specific to the children of immigrants and their poor quality compared with the western textbooks.

- The absence of educator training that will satisfy the targeted objectives, and the inability of teachers to devise clear visions, curricula and pedagogical means capable of meeting the challenges and constraints of living in the western society.

- The reliance in parallel education on vertical classes, which do not take into account age variation.

- The feeling among children of some kind of stress because parallel education takes place during recess time.

- The weak pedagogical means used,to the extent of appearing primitive compared with those available in western schools.

- The absence of a standardized system of evaluation which allows for follow-up and the tracking of the pupil's progress.

II. Future Prospects

1. Islamic awareness as alternative to alienation

The end-of-century period is witnessing the rise of prospects in some form of dual criticism: self-criticism and criticism of the other. While self-criticism aims to criticize extremism, excess, militancy and the superficial understanding of culture, the criticism of the other has actually started with the dwindling infatuation with Western civilization and the increase in the desire to meet the scientific and technological challenges. The practice of this kind of criticism is in itself a blessed awareness, which has to move from the assertion of existence to the ratification of the civilizational project as an alternative that relies on true Islam and the positive acquisition of human civilization.

The diagnostic of the reality of the cultural scene of the children of the Muslim community, undertaken above, reveals that the fundamental problematic is in fact due to the persistence of two negative phenomena:

- The failure of Muslim communities to provide a model of the real Islam and highlight its true image. The causes behind this are either subjective or objective.

- The failure of the West to understand and engage dialogue with Islam and the attempts of the Western media to reduce it to some practices which have nothing to do with Islam.

The persistence of this critical situation, characterized by the lack of communication between the two sides, can lead to the accumulation of crises and struggles, which threaten to explode and whose consequences are difficult to predict. Therefore, we believe that the formulation of a strategy for Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world on behalf of the communities is now a top priority.

Concerning the presence of Islam outside the Islamic world, we can distinguish between three periods:

a) Old Islamic presence implanted in some regions in Europe and the Americas for many centuries, and which constitutes the remains of what is left of the fortresses of Islam in Europe such as Bosnia and Herzegovina and Chechenia, among others.

b) Islamic presence through immigration which is relatively new, but it has settled in Europe and the Americas with the settlement of the first immigrants who abandoned the idea of returning home.

c) The embracing of Islam by some westerners in recent decades as a result of the growing Islamic awakening, and as a result of their conviction of the eternal message of Islam. Often, these are members of the intellectual elite or scholars. And though the number of these is limited, their influence is often worthwhile. Also, some other westerners have embraced Islam as a result of mixed marriage with immigrant Muslim women.

We can deduce from the presence of Islam in the West, which is expanding quantitatively and qualitatively, that this religion has become a reality in the West, and is deeply rooted in the West's cultural and social structure. Therefore, it is irreversible and, contrary to what some might think, it cannot be uprooted. But this Islamic presence, which faces great challenges and unparalleled resistance, cannot play its noble role unless it is in harmony with the spirit of Islam and its goals are guided by it, avoiding the style of militancy, excess and extremism. It should be inspired by the Holy Quranic verse "***Call (people) to your God's way through wisdom and good advice, and argue with them in a positive way***".

In order to achieve the targeted communication and to open constructive dialogue, there are tasks incumbent upon the two sides:

a) For the Islamic side: the reinforcement of Islamic culture which is based on the eternal facts of Islam, its teachings and noble principles based on peace, moderation, coexistence, rapprochement, cooperation, integration and other Islamic civilizational values, inspired by the Holy Quranic verse "***We made of you peoples and tribes for you to know each other; the most***

blessed among you is the most pious". Therefore, there should be a new perception based on the reconciliation of Muslims with the others by "r*especting their ways of thinking and living, their freedom, their laws and the systems they have chosen of their own volition to organize public life in their countries, and by respecting their traditions and customs in such a way as to create a sense of trust and tranquility*".

b) **For the western side:** The West has to make further efforts to understand Islam in its reality, because the current understanding is governed by political and ideological circumstances and struggles linked to the problems of immigration. There are many opportunities for the West to learn from the merits of Islam and the resources of Muslims, subject to dealing with Islam as a religion, culture and civilization, and opening a cultural dialogue with Muslim communities and minorities in the West. But if the concern of Europe is only to assimilate Muslims, this will not help transcend the current crisis. Also, Europe cannot judge a religion that has a history, civilization and culture which have made contributions - as many witness - in founding a civilization and human heritage, on the basis of the thoughtless behavior of some extremists. It should be noted that the history of all religions has witnessed the rise of similar phenomena.

2. Implanting Islam outside the Islamic world

While everybody talks about the necessity to integrate Muslim immigrants in the country of residence, the conception of integration differs according to the party it emanates from. Most western countries understand by integration some form of dissolution in its social and civilizational fabric. The native countries, however,understand integration as benefiting from what immigration offers, but with a continued link with the country of origin. Lying between these two conceptions are many sub-conceptions, the most important of which are enabling the immigrants to lead their private lives in accordance with their civilization, values and traditions, but with a respect of host countries and their laws, and enabling them to participate politically in the same degree that they actively contribute to economic life. The latter approach is close to the specifics of the current reality of Islamic immigration, which has increased in quantity and quality and now possesses a history and a field in which it moves and interacts with its environment, its own collective memory and specific culture, attempting to preserve its firm spiritual link with Islam as a creed and legislation. The approach to the conception of integration in this manner will eventually lead us to the conception of implantation.

The prospective strategic vision of Islam entails working towards the implantation of Islam outside the Islamic world in accordance with the new position Islam occupies there, which resides in the settlement of Islam and Muslims in a definitive way in Europe. Therefore, cultural action and religious orientation have to prepare the Muslim communities to sympathize with the host country, to participate positively in its social, economic and political organizations, away from militancy and excess. Their link with their places of residence as their countries of adoption will help them accomplish the following:

- Resolving the problems of influence which tear them apart,

- Developing the feeling of tranquility and stability, and building mutual trust,

- Interacting positively with their social and economic environment,

- Improving schooling standards of their children in schools,

- Participating in local public, political, social and cultural action.

The implantation of Islam outside the Islamic world has now become one of the persistent priorities that Muslim communities and their leaderships have to deal with. In fact, the process of implantation is not free of challenges, with their social and legal implications. For instance, how can a third and fourth generation Muslim living outside the Islamic world reconcile the principles of Islamic jurisdiction, especially in what concerns personal statutes, and the requirements of civil laws of the host country? The natural difference between the two laws now poses many challenges to the settlement and openness of Muslim families. Therefore, local Muslim scholars and advisers have to be implanted in order to work, through law-making, to develop a system of jurisprudence which responds to the specifics of Islam in a non-Muslim environment, and responds to the social, economic and legal conditions of Muslims in Europe. We believe that the achievement of this would constitute a development in the modern Islamic *Fiqh* since it would enable it to open up to large prospects.

There is great hope that the time will come when Muslim scholars will develop *Fiqh*-inspired laws specific to Muslim communities and minorities in the West. This vital endeavour is dictated by cultural and *Da'wa* realities in the West which are marked by contradictory and divergent *fatwas*.

Everybody aspires now to see the Muslim community benefit from psychological settlement, and see it in solidarity with itself, active economically and socially, and truly integrated in its environment. Thus, the Muslim community can have its specific enlightenment when its members give a good example in such different fields as economics, science, culture, and sports.

To achieve these fundamental principles, some behaviors which have long dominated should be jettisoned, such as confusion, worry and fear of disclosing one's identity, and abnegation of the self and refusal to participate in general activities. The transition from the strategy of quantity to that of initiative and self-assertion will have to go through the continued flow of information, education, communication and acculturation. Here, the current cultural centers and educational institutions have to adopt the new tendency, and have to be equipped with the necessary human and financial resources to implement the new strategy.

3. The role of Islamic culture in identity formation

Many studies and researches undertaken around the crisis of identity and cultural alienation have demonstrated that the children of immigrant parents live in deplorable conditions, which are due to cultural alienation and the loss of Islamic identity, and the consequences thereof such as the loss of self-confidence, seclusion, underachievement and poor adjustment with the surrounding world. Responsibility here is incumbent upon the educational systems which refuse to open up to the cultures of the others, and society which rejects whoever does not embody the western values and culture. The educational systems deal with these immigrant generations as though they were isolated from their Islamic roots and referentiality. It is sad that these generations, which are subject to a confrontation in which their language, religion and culture are ignored, and when they turn to their parents in search of a cultural alternative based on a true knowledge of Islam, they do not find satisfaction because of the widespread illiteracy especially among the first generation. The same is true when it comes to the acquisition of western culture, for the dominant aspect is that the children of Muslim communities possess only some superficial aspects of Western civilization, which means that a huge number of the children of the communities live on the margins of two different cultures. They do not know the real European culture, because of discrimination and lack of equal opportunities, and they do not know the Islamic culture because of the poor family education.

From a theoretical point of view, we find that the school and the family build the consciousness of the child through socialization, by providing him with the seeds which will grow in the form of values, tendencies and behaviors. They, then, drive him to engage in the experience of societal life with his educational background. But in the case of immigration, we find that what the family inculcates into the children is part of the traditions which have been transcended even in the native country itself. As for school, because of its pedagogical methods and educational styles, it is unable to accommodate the needs of these psychologically-distraught children. It has even worsened their conditions on

account of the lack of equal opportunities inside it and, sometimes, the racism of some educators. The western school is responsible for failing to make knowledge and teaching appealing to these children who have come to it for this very purpose.

We, therefore, find that the children of immigrants whom we want to provide a model, do not only suffer from the problem of alienation from the culture of the country of residence, but also suffer from the problem of alienation from the country of origin, which is supposed to offer them self-confidence. The two sources, i.e. school and family, do not offer the children of immigrants the cultural ingredients that will satisfy their needs. In the meantime, they exert pressure on the young generation. The end result is a split and disintegration between the response to the pressures of school and society and the response to the requirements of the family.

In light of the condition of worry and disintegration, some members of the Muslim community sometimes think that they have chances of integrating and coping with Western civilization, but they later face the shock resulting from harassment and racist behavior that make them feel undesirable. The lack of compatibility between the official discourse and the living reality, and the series of disappointments put us just before an identity without a sense of belonging, an identity which, suffering from unfair phenomena, can be led into deviance or seclusion.

Here, one should ask the following question: when we make an effort to link the new generations of young immigrants to the roots of their Islamic culture, do we really help them achieve selfhood and communicate with their surrounding environment and interact with it in a constructive and positive way? Or, do we fortify them against all forms of adjustmen? The situation becomes even more complex.

We believe that drawing a link with the original Islamic culture, Islamic teaching, understanding and practice, does not pose an obstacle at all. On the contrary, it is a natural and legitimate act, a protection and fortification from the psychological disintegration and the attempts to appropriate and dissolve. It aims, in the first place, to achieve self-confidence and the feeling of belonging to a referentiality with its history, culture and glory. The fortification of the self, with regard to Islamic culture, is to provide it with the mechanism to appropriate civilizations and cultures without dissolving in them and without feeling inferior and self-dejected. We believe that any kind of positive interaction with the environment at the level of education, initiative and transaction has to rely on this crucial psychological rule.

When we talk about the teaching of Islamic culture in the West as a support for the identity of the children of the Muslim community and a means of achieving reconciliation with the self and liberation from alienation, we have to consider possible ways to meet the considerable needs in education and do away with approaches that do not offer new opportunities for a constructive Islamic education.

Chapter Six

Areas of Action

Introduction:

The work accomplished in light of this strategy, in which effort and will have been deployed in its execution, aims to create a new culture in dealing with the conditions of Muslim communities and associations in the West, based on research, documentation and field work. Its style is characterized by dialogue, exchange of expertise and coordination of efforts among all the parties involved so as to achieve these goals.

The referentiality on which the strategy of Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world is based can be seen along the following lines:

- The cultural, ethical and spiritual referentiality which unifies all Muslims.

- The genuine and open Islamic cultural tendency which characterizes the activity of the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO).

- The total change in global conditions which should be taken into consideration, while safeguarding the islamic identity of the communities so that it will not be subject disintegration.

- The strong expertise with regard to the reality of Islamic communities and their conditions in the West, which is reflected in the specialized literature and the documents prepared by those working in the field of Islamic action targeting Muslim communities and minorities. But in order to move from theoretical to practical, the strategy needs a solid methodology to enlighten those working with it and guide their practical work. Therefore, a methodology based on the following has been suggested:

  1. **At the level of conception:** the use of a comprehensive methodology in dealing with the problems by linking them organically so that the vision is clear.

  2. **At the level of action:** in approaching the problems raised, this methodology encourages the use of a comprehensive action plan that takes into account the priorities, determines the goals and prepares the means.

  3. **At the level of matching theory with practice:** this involves working according to a plan in order to influence reality and change it, which has an effect on the theory itself, for it is revised, reconsidered and enriched according to the developments and requirements.

Using this approach, the problems have been analyzed and the solutions proposed as follows:

a) Social axis:

The social field is an essential component of the Strategy and must be strongly supported in order to promote its mission and role within the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world.

This concerns the conditions of the Muslim immigrant family, the issues of women and their social and educational role, the problems of child and youth education and the reality of the social institutions and their role in helping the Muslim community in the West reconsider its position. This axis has also tackled the position of the communities concerning openness to the social environment, the question of integration and the implantation of Islam outside the Islamic world.

b) Educational axis:

It has been emphasized that education is a very important component of Islamic cultural action and its strategy. Progress in education can lead to the improvement of the life quality of Muslims outside the Islamic world. It can also help in their better adaptation to their environment, and enable them to give a positive image of Islam. To achieve this, the supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World was established, which aims to handle the educational affairs of the new generations. It has also been emphasized that the quality of the teaching of Arabic and Islamic education in parallel education should improve, as well as the conditions of reception and supervision, the development of pedagogical methods and the development of the Muslim child's culture by producing good quality Islamic-based literature destined for children, but which is written in the language of the host country. There has also been emphasis on the necessity to prepare educational methods suitable for Muslim children in a non-Muslim environment and to provide excellent training for the teaching staff.

c) Cultural axis:

The cultural action plan revolves around the areas of Arabic language, being a "real bearer of identity", and Islamic civilization which should demonstrate the specifics of the unique civilizational personality of the Muslim and its interaction with other cultures and civilizations. Islamic heritage, which is the repertoire of the individual and collective creativity of the Muslim nation is still alive. This plan also aims to deal with Islamic history as a record of the events and as a bearer of the collective memory, safeguarding of its identity. A nation which ignores its history is subject to the forgetfulness of history. There should also be concern with local cultures as they are rich sources for Islamic culture and do not contradict the fundamentals of Islam. Emphasis should be placed on the harmony

of the contents of Islamic culture, its values and principles in their comprehensive and universal directions with the common human principles and values.

d) *Da'wa* axis:

The field of *Da'wa* has been given a significant importance in this strategy. Special emphasis has been placed on the mosque as an institution and the role of prayer, its aspects and aesthetics, and the selection of competent *Imams* who possess the methods of *Da'wa* and the ability to communicate and persuade. This would be accompanied by the teaching of the methods of persuasion, gracious preaching and the use of moderation and leniency in conveying the message. To serve these purposes, a proposition has been laid down to set up an educational program and intensive courses for *Imams* to learn the local language, used by young people, so that they could engage in dialogue with them.

Also, in this perspective, there has been emphasis on the role of Friday prayer as a fundamental basis for *Da'wa* action, which requires a good preparation of the Friday sermon, in and content, in order to achieve the targeted goals, chiefly the strengthening of belief in Allah, the Qur'an and the prophetic tradition of Mohammed (Peace and Blessings be upon Him).

e) Media axis:

To make Islam and its eternal message known, due importance should be given to the media. Therefore, the media axis has been emphasized in this strategy to put forward suggestions, procedures and initiatives to improve the quality of Islamic communication tools outside the Islamic world and their role in enlightening public opinion and guiding it to deal with the concerns of Muslims and Islam outside the Islamic world. Therefore, it is necessary to set up plans and programs to serve the universal message of Islam, to revive its eternal heritage and transmit it to the generations to come. This entails a good use of the human, financial and technical resources such as the building of centers for the training of media experts and a center for the training of specialists, and the creation of a radio and satellite station which emits around-the-clock programs, in several languages, destined essentially to Muslim communities and societies outside the Islamic world. There should also be concern with the Islamic heritage and its production in the form of interesting radio and television programs, Islamic art and literature included in programs targeting to the new generations of Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, and ways to achieve cooperation, complementarity, coordination and the exchange of technical expertise in the field of media production to serve the message of Islamic media.

First: The social field

The comprehensive methods referred to above, in dealing with this issue, do not only rest on a general perception providing the various aspects of the vision which link the problems together at the conceptual level, but they also rest on an incentive to deal with the problems and difficulties. This requires a specific plan, consciousness of the nature of the work, consideration of the priorities and determination of the short-term and long-term objectives, as well as the preparation of the means that help accomplish them.

However, the guarantee of a productive work in this field necessitates linking the theory with practice. We come to the field with a plan in mind, but the more we practice and undertake field research, the more we test this plan, adjust it and, accordingly, create a new reality. This calls for a consideration of whatever is compatible with the changes and developments.

I. The family field

1. Expressing serious and intent determination to safeguard the Islamic identity of the immigrant Muslim family and its cultural referentiality. This can be achieved through emphasis on education and the dissemination of Islamic culture. We should also borrow from Western culture what is compatible with the Islamic concepts to fulfill the balance between the sense of belonging, and the safeguarding of identity, and the requirements of adjustment and integration.

2. Guiding the cultural activities such presentations, conferences and workshops dealing with the conditions of the Muslim family, to help make it normal and balanced with regard to the relationship between couples, and become familiar with its role in educating the generations on the basis of Islamic values.

3. Acquainting the Muslim family with the nature of the social environment and culture, and equipping it with education and practical expertise through qualifying training programmes.

4. Providing consultation to the family in such matters as real estate, child guidance, health and social coverage and other life matters.

5. Increasing the Muslim family's level of awareness of the nature of its life and its presence in non-Muslim society, acquainting it with its basic judicial, economic and health rights and its right to social services, as well as making it conscious of its social and educational obligations.

6. Making sure assistance is provided in terms of social guidance that would provide the Muslim family with the means to settle down, such as decent

housing, the improvement of living standards and the spread of education so that the family can possess all the means to perform its roles fully.

7. Resolving the problems which have led to confusion, which disrupt the peace of the family and spoil the relations among its members, by providing harmony inside the family, and renewing the vision of the family institution in men and women a like.

8. Reviving the mutual spirit of love and loyalty between men and women in order for the household to be a true living place, as is advocated in the glorious Qur'an, and consolidating the spirit of cooperation between them to reinforce the role of the family in serving society and improving the relations among its members.

II. Women issues

1. Improving the intellectual and scientific level of Muslim women in compliance with the values of Islam, educating them, and providing them with the necessary skills to perform their educational role.

2. Making them conscious of the rights Islam has bestowed upon them and initiating them to assume their responsibilities to educate and train useful members of society.

3. Inviting Muslim women to play their social role in mosques, centers and clubs in view of the importance of this in child rearing, helping the elderly and the sick.

4. Emphasizing their involvement in sessions devoted to the learning of language, and computer.

5. Encouraging young girls to continue their education through high school and university and facilitating this task.

6. Organizing literacy programs for women and women alike.

7. Setting up women's clubs and associations, given the role these have in improving the competence of women and their awareness, and accomplishing their various potentials.

8. Liberating the concepts from erroneous perceptions which restrict the activity of women and their participation. This can be done by discriminating between the principles and values of Islam and whatever emanates from tradition and appertains to the social environment, having nothing to do with Islam.

III. Children and Youth

1. Making concern with the new generations a priority in the strategy of Islamic cultural work by setting up various activities in centers and mosques which deal with their matters.

2. Providing consultation, technical and educational support to youth and setting places in Islamic centers and clubs devoted to their activities.

3. Concentrating, in educational and social work, on the children of the second and third generations who require more effort to strengthen their sense of belonging and protect them from deviance.

4. Enabling young people to visit their original Islamic countries and communicating with them, given that these countries represent the civilizational dimensions and historical roots of their religious and cultural belonging. This belonging has to be supported by making reference to the Islamic civilization and heritage.

5. Setting up kindergartens and pre-school institutions and providing them with the necessary financial help and supervisors.

6. Enabling some educators, or those handling social matters, to devote their entire time to the guidance and supervision of children and youth.

7. Encouraging the setting up of youth associations and clubs run by young competent staff.

8. Encouraging young people to go to educational and professional schools, to learn arts and crafts that will help them generate financial resources.

9. Organizing conferences and workshops to expose the concerns and problems of youth and to ask for further interest in these.

10. Guiding Islamic media to serve the interests of Muslim youth outside the Islamic world in accordance with the Islamic perception of child media.

IV. Social institutions:

1. Taking care of mosques by providing the necessary equipment and competent Imams, giving them their due by reviving their comprehensive role in the dissemination of Islamic culture and consolidating spiritual education.

2. Encouraging mosques to play their worshiping and social role, making of them a school of spiritual education and a platform of dialogue and sound instruction, while preserving their autonomy, respecting their noble moral mission keeping them away of the confessional, sectarian and political disputes.

3. Supplying the libraries of mosques and Islamic cultural centres outside the Islamic world with specialized books covering the various Islamic disciplines and in the different languages of the host countries. Actually, the libraries of mosques and Islamic cultural centres are places of knowledge and culture that provide valuable services for Muslim natives and Muslim immigrants, on the one hand, and for the newly converted Muslims, on the other hand.

4. Encouraging and supporting the experience of private Islamic schools in order to enable them to play their part in ensuring an Islamic education for the children of Muslim communities within the framework of the school curricula and programmes of non-Muslim countries.

5. Supporting the associations and bodies supervising Muslims in the host countries.

6. Coordinating with the Islamic organizations operating outside the Islamic world in order to promote Islamic cultural and educational action.

7. Creating an Islamic fund to finance the religious and social activities of the Muslim communities.

8. Setting up an Islamic *Waqf* fund in favour of the Islamic organizations.

7. Encouraging rich people, businessmen and charity makers to invest some of their money in support of Islamic religious institutions.

8. Training specialized staff for social action.

V. Openess to the surrounding society:

1. Raising the standard of Islamic action up to the aspirations of the Muslim immigrants so that they lead a modren life without losing their Islamic identity.

2. Helping the Muslim community play the role of bridging the gap between the two sides of the Mediterranean, a historical and cultural role which would make of it a civilizational intermediary between different cultures through dialogue, rapprochement and mutual understanding.

3. Promoting integration in its genuine positive sense whereby the Muslim operates confidently according to the teachings of his religion.

4. Caring for the newly converted to Islam, for them to know Islam as a religion and a life-style, and facilitating their interaction with the Islamic community, so as to make their integration in the Islamic nation easier.

5. Organizing social activities in neighborhoods through Islamic institutions and associations such as cleaning and looking after the environment, the elderly and the sick.

6. Entrusting the Islamic centres with the mission of assisting non-Muslims who are willing to better know and understand Islam and providing them with brochures and books on Islam and Islamic civilization in different languages.

7. Openness of the Islamic institutions to the local civil society, the media and public during Islamic religious events.

8. Developing good relations with non-Muslim citizens.

9. Advocating dialogue as a basis for openness on the host society and dialogue with the Other.

10. Organizing seminars and lectures to redress the image of Islam and to rid it of erroneous impressions.

Second: Educational and teaching field

The Strategy is based on short and medium term plans.

1. Short term plan

1.1. Developing the action of the Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World.

1.2. The Supreme Council is entrusted with the mission of coordinating Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world. It is aimed at:

a. The first and second generations

b. The third and fourth generations

1.3. The Supreme Council puts forward the objectives that should be included in the unified curriculum, in consultation with host countries as well as ISESCO experts.

1.4. The Supreme Council is the interlocutor of the educational authorities of the host countries relating to the educational issues affecting the Muslim communities.

1.5. Inviting Islamic countries and Islamic organizations to support Islamic centres and institutions based outside the Islamic world to build more Islamic schools for the Islamic communities.

1.6. Requesting the support of western institutions (European Council, Europan Parliament) for educational and cultural projects.

a) Action Plan for the first and second generations

The different Islamic organizations based outside the Islamic world should work towards the following:

1. Making the first and second generations conscious of the principles of Islamic cultures by organizing seminars for both sexes, together with educational

television programmes through the satelite channels broadcasting outside the Islamic world.

2. Laying down a plan to erradicate illiteracy following a curriculum to be prepared by ISESCO, and funded by some Islamic governments.

3. Making the first and second generations aware of the principles of Islam as to coexistence and tolerance ,enabling them to set good example, and to rectify the biased image of Islam that many Westerners still have.

b) Action Plan for the third and fourth generations

The Islamic institutions can carry out important tasks in the light of standardized curricula designed by the Supreme Council for Education and Culture, through:

1. Consolidating the teaching of Islamic education and Arabic at schools on weekends, in a bid to generalize this kind of education to include a maximum number of the children of these two generations while improving the schooling conditions.

2. Lobbying so as to persuade the educational authorities in the host countries to include Islamic culture courses within their official curricula as in Belgium, Austria, Holland, Spain, the Alzas area in France and some counties in Germany; together with making Arabic one of the languages students may take as an option in state- run schools.

3. Supporting and assessing the widespread experience of parallel education considering that the teaching of Islamic education and the Arabic language is provided to the largest number of students by these schools.

4. Requesting the Western authorities to generalize the educational activities based on interculturalism. This should be done in cooperation with the Islamic organizations and the High Commission for Islamic Education in order to determine the cultural content to be incorporated in pedagogical activities.

5. Organizing intensive, continuous training for the officials in charge of education in the Islamic institutions.

6. Developing Islamic education in the pre-school period by building kindergartens for children at the Islamic institutions.

7. Developing the pedagogy of teaching Islamic education and Arabic in a non-Islamic context, and encouraging scientific research and field work in this area.

8. Promoting the culture of the Muslim child by publishing good-quality children books and stories about Islamic issues (Quran narratives, stories of prophets, Islamic history, literature, Islamic civilization), in world languages.

9. Setting up standard Islamic cultural centres that can teach the young the principles of Islam, together with different attractive computing, sports and cultural activities.

10. Developing and modernising pedagogical techniques within Islamic institutions, and using modern educational technology (i.e equipping Islamic centers with multi-media, internet and computing facilities).

2. Medium term plan

The Medium-term Plan pays special attention to setting up and supporting private Islamic schools. In this regard, ISESCO prepared a document on the criteria of the Islamic school outside the Islamic world. This project is aimed at:

2.1. Preparing the legal, organizational and educational requirements to establish Islamic regular schools geared especially for the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, and inviting western countries to contribute to financing this important project.

2.2. Preparing a plan to train educational staff that will be in charge of teaching at private Islamic schools, by establishing a teacher -training faculty outside the Islamic world.

2.3. Working towards creating an Islamic fund for the financial support of private Islamic schools, colllaborating with Islamic governments and charities

2.4. Setting up a academic body under the supervision of the Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World that will be in charge of preparing the Islamic educational curricula for private schools.

2.5. Establishing an Islamic Observatory outside the Islamic world to track the development of education for children outside the Islamic world, and setting up a data bank so as to improve the cultural, educational development of the Muslim communities.

2.6. Creating a Federation of the Islamic Schools outside the Islamic world to federate efforts and initiatives, and to promote cooperation, communication and consultation between the different Islamic schools. The Federation's mission will consist in developing the action of Islamic schools and strengthening the mutual acceptance between Islamic and non-Islamic schools.

Third: Cultural field

Islam should be vivid in us, as we have to continuously seek dialogue so as to communicate with those who are at variance with our life-style.Those who prefer self-seclusion can never be positive. Islam makes of us productive, creative and righteous people.

Every Muslim is characterized by an appropriate conduct and life-style, reflecting the true, clear picture of Islam. Reflection should always precede action. Consider the European union, for instance, where confrontation has been replaced by dialogue which based on intellect. The tools that could be used in the cultural field constitute a purely intellectual, continuous, productive process.

The self and the other are not two separate bodies. Rather, they are interrelated to guarantee co-existence, solidarity, dialogue and mutual respect to defend the security of the country. However, the self has its religious peculiarities which mark it off from the other within an atmosphere of solidarity and mutual assistance. As Muslims, we have responsibilities before we have rights. The presence of Muslims in any context should not be measured by statistics and individuals, but it should be measured by morals, behaviour and treatment; that is with a cultural measure.

We should preserve cultural diversity. The unity of culture does not mean a unique cultural expression. The basics are the same for all Islamic cultures because they are derived from the same faith and *Shari'a*. Though there are different styles of cultural expression, they look all in harmony within an Islamic atmosphere.

There are stereotypical ideas held by both Muslims and non-Muslims which undermine the relations of cooperation and solidarity between Islam and other religions and philosophies. These obstacles can be surmounted by organizing meetings between the representatives of different religions, which would result in an intensive, effective and constructive dialogue. And especially for this purpose, this requires setting up committees. Since dialogue is almost non-existent between the first generation of immigrants and the rest of religions, the other generations- that is the second, the third and subsequent generations-should establish strong dialogue between the religious sects which constitute with them the social fabric of that country. Constructive dialogue requires a solid ground, and Muslims should take it up in practice with the other religious bodies.

There is a certain apprehension from the culture of Islam in Europe and the West. We need to improve the portrayal of Islam, the Islam we want and we aspire for. We must be able to open to the others, not to be secluded.

To respond to the allegation that Islam stifles freedom, we must prove that we are the first to defend freedom and we should respect the components of the European society, avoiding stirring up sensitive issues. We should protect our thoughts and environment from any alien ideas, invest in science and knowledge and prepare the means necessary for shaping an Islamic community free of anything alien, an Islam fully consonant with its own authentic essence; consistent with human dimensions and the democratic foundations of the western society.

In order to allow the readers of the Strategy more thinking and theorizing when preparing their activities and action plans in the light of their society's specificities, we shall address the influential communication channels.

On top of the most influential factors in the cultural sphere are three major communication tools, the first is, mass-media which includes the radio, television and the press; the second is the education tool, in particular pre-schools and basic education; and the third is popular, cultural and educational institutions which are in direct contact with people, such as the mosques, clubs, centres, cafés and the like.

The first tool relates to the public in all its categories, the second to the youth though particular means and programmes; the third has a powerful impact on the mind, behaviour, thought and knowledge. Each one of those tools have varying degrees of influence and differing measures of utilization.

The critically important tool is the mosque with a considerable impact on people, because it addresses them in all simplicity. Equally important is the school (and the role of education) which is a branch of the mosque in its broadest sense. The school has, in fact, the greatest impact on the younger generations in the longer term, and is the guarantee for the continuation of contact and interaction between those generations.

Fourth: the *da'wa* field

In order to rise to the challenges of the 21ˢᵗ Century marked by planning, management, and anticipation of the future where improvisation and stitching policies have no room, it is essential to devise an exhaustive *Da'wa* plan in the West's different languages.

Da'wa outside the Islamic world is delicate enough to be handled in a hasty impulsive and improvised way. It has rather to be carried out within a sound approach with due consideration of the changing reality and available means. It is thus important to change the methodology by spreading the da'wa message in the different world languages and tuning it to the rhythm of modern life. Only then could *da'wa*-related action keep abreast of the ever changing mood of today's world, while anticipating the future, based on good planning and optimal use of the available means, capacities and resources in order to rise to the challenges associated with *da'wa*.

The presence of Muslim minorities and communities in non-Muslim countries does not help very much disseminate the image of Islam and its precepts as required. Therefore, the **Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World** has set the objective of promoting and preaching the message of

Islam through modern methods. At this stage, it should be noted that the discourse intended for the Muslim community abroad must differ from the one normally adopted in their countries of origin. Indeed, the cherished objectives cannot be achieved without a total assimilation and understanding of the nature of the discourse to be addressed to Muslims outside the Islamic world, as this discourse varies following its different contexts and stages.

It goes without saying that qualified preachers constitute the cornerstone for the success of the Da'wa efforts outside the Islamic world. Accordingly, it will be necessary to give priority to training and qualifying preachers according to a realistic and modern vision, while developing their communicational skills in the various languages. Only then could they grasp the social importance of the responsibility vested upon them and the objectives they need to attain while taking account of the changing preoccupations of the children of Muslim communities and minorities.

Considering *Da'wa* as one of the main components of the strategy entails emphasizing the crucial role of the youth as the vital force of any society. The fact of being in constant interaction with the surrounding environment, especially in a non-Muslim context, exposes this social category to delinquency, civilizational alienation and cultural assimilation. This compels as to take care of the Muslim youths outside the Islamic world by presenting to them the dimensions of Islam's precepts, values and ideals. It is also our duty to protect them from alienation and immersion into materialism, by listening to them, developing their assets and talents, guiding them and understanding their problems in order to help them achieve their dreams and aspirations.

The particular circumstances of the non-Muslim environment in which Muslim communities and minorities are living require us to pay further attention to the *da'wa* efforts according to the following approach:

1- Adjusting mosques and prayer rooms in accordance with the needs of *Da'wa* outside the Islamic world.

2- Reconsidering the composition of the managing staff of mosques and Islamic cultural centres and supplying them with qualified young immigrants capable of promoting *Da'wa* outside the Islamic world.

3- Enhancing the communication role of mosques and Islamic centres in the West for both disseminating the true image of Islam and its principles of tolerance and establishing friendly relations with foreign institutions and religious organizations having a moderate vision on Islam.

4- Organizing regular training sessions for Imams and preachers to keep them in line with today's changing circumstances and the requirements of *Da'wa* in non-Muslim countries.

5- Ensuring that Imams master the languages of the host countries since language constitutes an indispensable tool of communication between the different parties, in particular when it comes to addressing young people, children and foreigners.

6- Granting immigrant women access to mosques and the Islamic centres not only for worship, but also for attending guidance courses and lectures and actively participating in *da'wa* and awareness-raising activities intended for women.

7- Mobilizing the Muslim intellectual and cultural manpower working in Western countries for a more efficient role in preaching to non Muslims, redressing misconceptions held about Islam and promoting a better image of it.

8- Paying special attention to the need for imams and preachers to adopt an objective and flexible vision in the various fields of *Fiqh* and well assimilate the principle of facilitation (*tayseer*). They also are required to comply with the precepts of Islam and take account of the situation and circumstances of their interlocutors who know little about Islam and who are under the mercy of the constraints and demands of daily life.

Fifth: Information area

Planning is a methodology and a means to make the best use of all facilities and resources of society, in order to meet its objectives in the shortest time and the least cost possible. The Muslims of the West are most entitled to benefit from the technological progress of Western countries, in terms planning information, and designing various information programmes. It is now obvious that the Muslims of the West have started to engage in this field, but with an old-fashioned method without developing an independent strategy. We, therefore, cannot say that these serious attempts are fully consonant with the ''notion of Islamic information '' worthy of belonging to Islam.

The Islamic information message is based on convincing through accurate data and realities. Information is founded on clarity, frankness and accuracy in presenting a story as well as on truthfulness and trust. This is because it addresses itself to minds not instincts, relies on clarification, explanation ,and logical argumentation to achieve its goals. There is now what has come to be called the ethics of media people and professional integrity. And in Islam such an integrity should be associated to righteousness and accountability before Almighty Allah.

The central objective of the information plan is to provide people with information messages committed to Islam, convince them with their content and induce them to behave according to those messages. This would be done by presenting people with the opportunity to face and respond to information messages originating from various mass media as well as by offering programmes in line with the teachings of Islam and by developing scientific and technical skills and equipment capable of conducting coverage of the world in the most effective manner. The rationale behind this is to reach all parts of the world. Another way to meet this objective is by preparing Muslims to contribute fully to information with the message of Islam, its heritage and the strategic causes of the Muslim *Ummah*. This should also be done through preparing information specialists capable of achieving the plan of disseminating information about Islam and its heritage.

Principles of the information plan:

1. Compliance with the precepts of Islam in all information and communication operations.

2. Freedom of information for all within the limits of the Islamic legislation and the various information laws.

3. The necessary overage of all Muslim communities and societies outside the Islamic world by using modern means, most appropriate to each category.

4. Coverage of all information items in all information areas. Information activity should include all information functions.

5. Coordination between the various information plans, to avoid duplication and contradiction and ensure complementarity, cooperation and sound utilization of expertise, facilities and resources.

The preparation of the plans and general policies in the Islamic information strategy outside the Islamic world is required to follow up the measures, means and programmes intended to serve the world message of Islam, to receive its perennial heritage and handed it down to generations upon generations, in order to instill in their hearts and minds Islamic principles. To this end we should rely on advanced technical planning means as well as on planning studies, so as to ensure the best use of capabilities and modern scientific and technical means to serve the issues of the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world, by adopting the following measures:

a) Establishing a world broadcasting station, broadcasting around the clock in several languages designed for Muslim communities and societies outside the Islamic world.

b) Establishing an Islamic satellite channel, broadcasting around the clock in several world languages concerned with the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world.

c) Establishing a specialized world academic institute to train Muslim information specialists and programme presenters and enhance their competence.

d) Establishing centres for the training and continuous training of senior specialized technical information staff.

e) Identifying programmes on Islamic heritage, make them into a modern production, and translate them into various languages, before rebroadcasting them.

f) Coordination with world publishing houses to implement a plan for reviving Islamic heritage and disseminating it in various languages especially the parts matching with the realities of the present day world.

g) Promotion of editing and translation in the fields of science, culture and Islamic education by giving the participants material and moral rewards to encourage people to write and translate in various languages.

h) Setting up an international Islamic information body made up of local and international Islamic information organizations and issuing an international badge to be born by all members. This would enable them to move freely across the Arab and Islamic countries. The purpose is to achieve complementarity, cooperation, coordination and exchange of technical expertise in the field of information production as well as circulation of materials, records and Islamic films among the Muslim audience outside the Islamic world.

i) Determining the dangers posed by the antagonist media and their repeated attempts to mock Islam and distort its true image. This has to be carried out through deep reflection on possible ways to lay bare such attempts and denounce them.

j) Stimulating interest in Islamic arts and literature by means of an integrated plan of entertainment through such Islamic information components as children, cultural and educational programmes targeting the Muslim communities outside the Islamic world.

Chapter Seven

Implementation and Follow-up Mechanisms

There is no doubt that translating this strategy into reality would require the setting up of structures liable to help carry out the Islamic cultural action in the West. It is, therefore, necessary to work out mechanisms regulating the bodies to efficiently implement the strategy and specify the role of each one of them.

These mechanisms were thought out at the level of each individual western country and geographical regions to guarantee the comprehensiveness of the strategy as well as its applicability all over the West.

The individual-country-basis was adopted to ensure a step-by-step evolution of the Islamic cultural and educational action and to guarantee the best possible care and interest thereto. The approach is meant to lead to a progressive and gradual development culminating in broader implementation mechanisms for the Islamic cultural action in the West at large. The main objectives are as follows:

1. Local Councils for Education, Science and Culture:

- These councils should be set up on the level of each western country hosting a Muslim community, on account that these councils are the main organs expected to translate the strategy for Islamic cultural action into practical, viable programmes.

- Educational and cultural programmes and plans benefitting Muslim communities should be set up by these councils, which should build on the main objectives and guidelines of the Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World and adapt its implementation to the specificities and conditions of the country where they operate.

- These councils are also entrusted with the coordination of actions undertaken by Islamic centres, associations, institutions, clubs and Mosques by sharing the educational fields of action, and by urging them to most of educational and cultural activities relevant to the objectives sought by the Strategy of Cultural Action outside the Islamic World.

- Local councils for education, science and culture are run by an elected bureau whose members shall be active agents operating in the social, educational and cultural fields in the relevant country. Representation of the above-mentioned Islamic centres and institutions on the bureau is, indeed, advisable. The councils' meetings shall be attended by representatives of regional funds financing Islamic cultural action in the West. (see Organization Chart).

2. Local funds for financing Islamic cultural action

These local funds shall be set up in three distinct geographical zones. Each fund shall secure financing for the programmes worked out under the Islamic cultural

action in the given geographical zone which shall include at least three countries. The funds will work in concertation with the local councils for education, science and culture and shall attend their meetings. Further, they shall fund such Islamic cultural and educational programmes outside the Islamic world as school and mosque-building, library equipment, staff-training, cultural fairs, meetings and festivals.

3. The Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World

- A supreme council for education, science and culture for Muslims outside the Islamic world shall be set up. It shall be representative of all local councils for education and culture, operating under its banner. Its board shall be elected from among educational, scientific and cultural actors outside the Islamic world. Competent Islamic figures, as well as experts and representatives of Islamic organizations working for the same goals of Islamic cultural action may attend the board's meetings.

The Supreme Council shall also contain standing committees specialized in the different fields underlying the **Strategy for Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World** namely:

- Cultural affairs Committee;
- Social affairs Committee;
- Education Committee;
- Information and public relations Committee;
- Legal *Da'wa*, administrative and organizational affairs Committee;
- Coordination, follow-up and documentation Committee;
- Committee of Muslim competencies outside the Islamic World;
- Scientific Affairs Committee.

The Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World shall, in consultation with ISESCO, shape out the final framework of implementation of the strategy for Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world and translate it into a living reality, in an attempt to achieve our ultimate goal of fostering the active presence of Muslims on the cultural arena outside the Islamic world. It shall also ensure the following:

- Laying down viable plans and programmes to be implemeted in each individual host country. It should leave full liberty to the local councils for education, science and culture to work out the details of those plans and

programmes in accordance with the regulations in force in each country and in line with their specific human and financial resources.

- Coordinating relations linking up public cultural institutions and facilities within the same country, on the one hand, and securing consonance among the cultural plans and programmes as well as ensuring exchange of expertise among outside the Islamic world, on the other.

- Regulating and coordinating Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world, specifying the main tendencies thereof, and supplying adequate and necessary material and human resources.

- Extending assistance, expertise and technical counsel to local councils for education, Science and Culture, and find solutions to the difficulties posed by the implementation of plans and programmes.

- The Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World will be proclaimed as the main interlocutor and official mouthpiece vis-à-vis the cultural and educational authorities outside the Islamic world in matters related to the Muslim community in the host countries as a whole block as well as at the level of each country.

- This council constitutes a mechanism for planning and coordination, whose means and procedures have to be functionally coherent in order to issue binding recommendations and resolutions. Only then will cultural and educational action gain an integrated character in all western countries as it will be contrived and managed by all institutions boasting a vast experience in cultural action on the western arena (see Organization Chart).
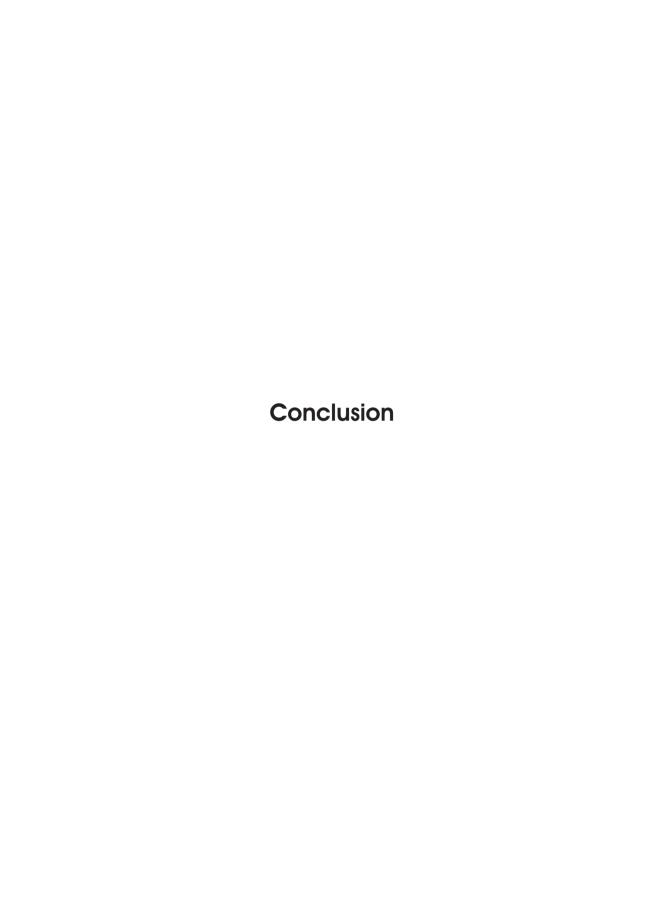
4. Islamic Fund for the Support of Cultural Action outside the Islamic World:

This Fund will be set up for the purpose of coordinating the work of the afore-mentioned regional funds to promote Islamic cultural action in western countries. It shall be managed by a board of directors chaired by a director who shall participate in the meetings of the Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims outside the Islamic World. This fund will be financed through:

a) Donations and subsidies allocated by Muslim organizations and banks.

b) Grants by international organizations such as the European Union, the Council of Europe and the International Development Agency, etc.

c) Grants by legal entities, businessmen and benefactors.

d) The investment of *Waqf* funds by the different *Waqf* establishments.

5. The Observatory for the Follow-up and Development of the Islamic Cultural Action

Follow-up is an important and crucial phase in any action plan. Without follow-up and development, many plans and strategies are likely to be futile and incompatible with the ever-changing conditions and recurrent challenges, and accordingly undermine the Islamic action aimed at ensuring a better future for the Ummah. The creation of an Observatory for the Follow-up and Development of the Islamic Cultural Action outside the Islamic World is a means for consolidating the role of the Supreme Council for Education, Science and Culture for Muslims in terms of devising, following up and developing plans and programmes and working out mechanisms for their implementation and adaption to the specificities of each host country. The Observatory shall be constituted under the supervision and with the participation of ISESCO. Members of the executive bureau shall be elected from among specialized people from the world of academia and leading figures of the Islamic action outside the Islamic world, and among experts and representatives of Islamic organizations in Muslim countries.

Conclusion

Muslim minorities and communities outside the Islamic world are facing several challenges and problems at the cultural, social and educational levels. As an Islamic organization specialized in the fields of education, science and culture and communication, ISESCO undertook the duty of setting up firm foundations for the promotion of the Islamic cultural landscape outside the Islamic world.

This prospective study about the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world comes to consolidate the efforts and initiatives aimed at laying down the general framework of the Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world. The methodology adopted in devising this strategy is based on the Islamic principles takes account of the demands of the present era so as to better understand the fields, resources and mechanisms of action and avoids dealing with the specificities of each Muslim community or minority to focus only on issues common to them. There is no doubt that changing the conditions of Muslim community requires a prospective action aimed at rearranging the structure of Muslims outside the Islamic world on sound bases, and optimising the intellectual, spiritual, psychological and educational upbringing of generations on sound foundations. The future of the Muslim community is first and foremost contingent upon its own will, which hinges in turn on the development of its conditions so as to build moral personality of Muslims in countries of emigration. Almighty Allah says: "**Verily never will God change the condition of a people until they change it themselves.**"

This Strategy is based on rational and methodological foundations aimed at examining the facts and current situation of the Islamic cultural landscape outside the Islamic world, anticipating the futures and devising plans and ideas likely to boost Islamic cultural action outside the Islamic world. This constitutes a contribution to facing the current challenges and international changes. Among the other goals of the Strategy is to track the smear attempts aimed at the Muslim communities and minorities outside the Islamic world, which undermine and the efforts being made to redress the image of Islam and Muslims and promote dialogue among cultures and civilizations.

Any given intellectual project can achieve its goals only through good planning and evaluation on the one hand, and through a sense of accountability and follow-up on the other. There is no doubt that the successful implementation of the Strategy's provisions, all the stakeholders are required to have a good capacity of follow up closely and development and this requires a comprehensive approach for devising integrated plans that take into consideration priorities, anticipate the necessary means and consider amendments where and when applicable.

Ensuring follow-up to develop action in all areas is of prime importance as it is intended to better serve the interest of the Muslim communities and minorities and outside the Islamic world. In fact, without follow-up, plans and programmes would be doomed to failure. However, within a non-Muslim context, the Islamic cultural action requires invigorating the mechanisms of follow-up, development and innovation in the cultural, social and educational fields.

May Allah crown our action with success.

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