

**Closing remarks of the Chairperson of the OIC Independent Permanent
Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), Amb. Mohammed Kawu Ibrahim, to
the 5th Regular Session of the IPHRC, Jeddah, 1 – 5 June, 2014**

Excellency Iyad Ameen, OIC Secretary-General;
Honourable Commissioners,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Members of the Press Corps,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to welcome you all to the closing ceremony of the 5th Session of the Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), which lasted from 1 June 2014 until a couple of hours ago when the Commissioners ended their work.

The Session started with the encouraging news that the OIC Senior Officials Meeting (SOM) has endorsed the decision to site the headquarters of IPHRC at Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and it is now expected that at the 40th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (CFM), this decision would be formally endorsed by Ministers. There is no doubt that this decision would be a big boost to the Commission's eagerness to settle down and start functioning in earnest. The siting of the headquarters of the Commission in Jeddah, places certain responsibilities on the Government of the Kingdom Saudi Arabia, which would be spelt out in the Host Country Agreement to be signed in due course. We are, however, confident that with the support of the SG and the assurances given to us by the newly appointed Permanent Representative of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the OIC, the Commission will get all the basic supports it needs from the KSA even before the Host Country Agreement is entered into.

Excellency, in an increasingly complex world, where Muslims are unfairly portrayed as habitual violators of basic human rights, the Commission should be placed in a position that it would be able to combat these prejudices through the mandate given to it. However, the Commission is under severe pressure because it doesn't have the minimum number of staff it requires to run its Secretariat. Your Excellency, the Commission is appealing to you to kindly address this problem, if possible, before its Sixth Session in November. While the recruitment of professional staff would require some consultations with the Commission, that of translators could follow the General Secretariat's recruitment policy.

During the Session, the Commission deliberated on a number of important items under its agenda, including human rights violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territories; Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in OIC Member-States, as well as specific mandates given to it by the CFM, such as Islamophobia, Negative Impact of Economic and

Financial Sanctions on Member-States; Situation of the Rohingya Muslim minorities, Human Rights Situation in the Central African Republic, and the creation of mechanisms for monitoring human rights violations against Muslim minorities. The Commission expressed its disappointment with the continued and on-going violations of Palestinian human rights by the Occupying Power Israel. It strongly condemned the arbitrary practice of administrative detention of Palestinian peoples as discriminatory and contrary to all existing human rights and legal standards. It also called upon OIC Member-States to highlight these discriminatory practices at all relevant international human rights fora, and requested the upcoming CFM to consider referring the matter to the ICJ, through appropriate channels.

During the session also the commission considered and finalized two reports on the subjects of the "Negative Impacts of Economic and Financial Sanctions on the full Enjoyment of Human Rights of OIC Member- States, and the human rights situation in the Central African Republic.

Based on international law and human rights norms, the first report considered economic and financial sanctions as illegal, discriminatory and counterproductive to the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter and other international human rights standards. The report of the CAR, which was based on a visit to the affected country, as well refugees camps in the neighboring countries of Chad and Cameroon Republics, provided an overview of the on the ongoing horrible human rights situation in the country with specific recommendations on how to address the plight of the affected Muslim population, as well as how to forestall the future reoccurrence of this human tragedy. These reports with the Commission's recommendations would be submitted for consideration by the forthcoming 41st Session of the CFM. The Commission also dwelt extensively on the issues of Right to Development and human rights of women and children in OIC Member-States. Discussions on these subjects were complemented by the participation of experts from the Islamic Fiqh Academy and the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB). It was agreed that in future sessions of the Commission, there would be joint seminars and symposia on specific topics, as well as consideration of projects in these areas.

On Myanmar, the Commission regretted that all its efforts in trying to establish contacts with the authorities of this country, with a view to discharging the mandate given to the Commission on how to improve the plight of the Rohingya Muslim minorities have not produced the desired result because of the lack of response from the Myanmar authorities. However, in spite of this the Commission resolved that it would continue with its efforts to open a line of communication with the Myanmar government or its representatives.

The Commission issued a press statement condemning the recent unfortunate statement about Islam by the President of the Czech Republic. The statement which was conceptually false and mischievous was a clear manifestations of hatred and an incitement to hostility against Muslims, at a time that the world is grappling with sectarian tensions. The Commission reaffirmed that Islam should not be equated with violence and extremism, and urged relevant international human rights mechanisms to openly denounce such assertions. The Commission expressed its appreciation to the Secretary-General for the quick action he has taken over the Czech President's unguarded statement.

The Commission deliberated on how to improve re-interactive contacts with OIC Members States and their institutions in its future sessions. The Commission appealed to those Member States that have not yet provided it with their human rights legislative, institutional and policy frameworks to kindly do so, in order to assist the Commission in its efforts to harmonize certain OIC human rights positions in the international fora.

Let me on behalf of the Commission thank the representatives of the Member-States that took time to participate in the deliberations of the session, and to assure them that every effort would be made to improve the process of transmitting to them in advance documents and information on future sessions. As for the Secretary-General, I would like to convey the tremendous gratitudes of the Commission for not only providing a conducive venue and facilities for the session, but for also taking personal interest in the welfare of the Commissioners. Excellency, in you the Commission is fully assured of continuous progress in the very difficult mandate of promoting and protecting human rights in the OIC Member-States.

Finally, and certainly not in order of precedence, I would like to extend the Commission's appreciation to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for the valuable moral and material support, which continue to strengthen the faith of the Commission in discharging its mandate, in spite of the huge challenges.

Thank you!
