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Speech by Dr. Mahmood Ahmad Ghazi, Vice President of the International Islamic University of Pakistan

President Nursultan Nazarbayev and his government deserve thanks and appreciation of all peace-loving members of human family for this historic initiative. This Congress will promote peace among religions, understanding among civilisations and dialogue among peoples. Muslim Ummah has always welcomed co-operation and dialogs among religions and civilisations. The Qur'an (3.64) invites other religions to agree to a common agenda for the promotion of common values and for spiritual emancipation of human beings. Basic characteristics of Islamic civilisation is the accommodation of "Difference of Opinion", variety of views and universality of objective which, in turn, promote pan-humanism. Islamic Civilisation is capable of absorbing and accommodating multidimensional Thoughts and Views and to integrate them in one human civilisation. Universality of Islam is only due to its comprehensiveness and all pervasiveness. Without this comprehensiveness Islam could never become a universal message. Interpretation of the commandments of Islam has always adjusted itself to all Times and Climes. It guaranties its flexibility. Presence of different School of Thought in Islam demonstrate its in-built capacity to absorb Difference of Opinion. Our early doctors interpreted Islam in a such a way that they accommodated all local cultures, regional healthy habits and practice of various peoples and local customs into the body social of Islam. Muslims prospered till such time when their thought process remained open active and all-embracing. During the periods of Muslim ascendancy Cordova, Grenada, Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, Multan, Delhi, Thatta, Lahore, Sheeraz, Samarqand, Bukhara etc. were most modern Centres of Art and Culture and served as beacons of light illuminating the whole planet with their wisdom. Academic contributions of Muslims celebrities like Al-Farabi, Ibn-e-Sina, Al-Zahrawi, Razi, Jabir bin Hayan, Ibn Rushd, Imam ghazali etc., were translated in Latin and taught for centuries at centres of learning in Europe. Remarkable achievements in Art and Culture by Muslims were forcefully acknowledged by unbiased scholars both in East and West. Dr. Tara Chand, Robert Briffault, George Sorton, Lane Poole, Montgomery Watt, Arnold and Professor Alfred Gillaumme and many other Western scholars highlighted these academic attainments better than Muslims themselves. 10th century saw the decline of Muslim Intellectual tradition and they were left far behind. Indifferent attitude of Muslim Scholars towards critical anal-ysis of traditional knowledge gradually deprived them of the new treasures of knowledge and vision. The decline has left the Muslims far behind because they could not keep the place with the new trends and developments in the intellectual world. They seemed to be content with the Legacy of Islamic disciplines, developed in first then centuries, and consequently disparity between Religious Knowledge and Modern Achievements created an unbridgeable gulf. Backwardness in Art and Culture as well as intellectual pursuits let to economic downfall of Muslims. Muslim scholars remained unconcerned with the rapidly changing realities; they remained engaged in old Fiqhi and theological Discourses which were legacies of 3rd or 4th century, without realising gravity of prevailing situation. Unrealistic and fruitless intellectual discourses by the Muslim scholars widened the gulf between them and ground realities hereby divorcing from the mainstream of societal leadership. Pakistan is a moderate Islamic State devoid of any religious extremism or sectarianism. Various Islamic schools of thought Sunnis, Shias, Hanafis and Shafi'is and even Hindus and Muslims peacefully live together in Pakistan. All Muslim Sects, Hanafi, Shias, Shafie, Deobandi, Bravi, Wahabi etc. all contributed in the making of Pakistan and everyone accepted a Western educated personality, quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, as their leader. This Unity led to emergence of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the World Map. Today, there is a genuine need to set a new religious tradition, free from extremism and sectarianism which should be an embodiment or true Islamic values. Today, there is a need for non-sectarian educational system embedded with religious education combined with modern disciplines. Today all religious scholars should collectively work for the creation of a new tradition based on understanding and accommodation. Further challenges are so stupendous that can only be met with a spirit of accommodation and tolerance.

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