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Request for the inclusion of a supplementary item in the agenda of the seventy-fifth session

Observer status for the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the General Assembly

Letter dated 5 August 2020 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Morocco to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Upon instructions from the Government of the Kingdom of Morocco, a founding member and the host country of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), I have the honour to request, pursuant to rule 14 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, the inclusion in the agenda of the seventy-fifth session of the General Assembly of a supplementary item entitled "Observer status for the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the General Assembly".

In accordance with rule 20 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, a letter from the President of the General Conference of ICESCO addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Moroccan Expatriates of the Kingdom of Morocco (annex I), an explanatory memorandum (annex II) and a draft resolution (annex III) are attached to the present letter.

I have the further honour to request that the present letter and its annexes be circulated as a document of the General Assembly.

(Signed) Omar **Kadiri**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Permanent Mission of the Kingdom of Morocco to the United Nations



Annex I

[Original: Arabic]

Letter dated 4 August 2020 from the President of the General Conference of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Cooperation and Expatriates of Morocco

Observer status for the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) in the United Nations

In connection with the efforts of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO) to be granted observer status by the United Nations, and with a view to completing the procedures required to achieve that aim, I am pleased to inform you that we have authorized Morocco to have its Permanent Mission to the United Nations take the steps that it deems appropriate in order for ICESCO to be granted such status.

In addition to informing you of our decision, I should like take this opportunity to thank you for the tangible support that Morocco gives to ICESCO.

(Signed) Ali Zaydan **Abu Zuhri**
President of the General Conference

Annex II

Explanatory memorandum

1. Historical background

The idea of establishing an Islamic World Organization for Education, Science and Culture took a concrete form during the Ninth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Dakar, Senegal, 24–28 April 1978), in its resolution No. 9/9-C related to the recommendations of the First International Conference on Islamic Education.

The Tenth Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Fez, Kingdom of Morocco, 8–12 May 1979) confirmed the above recommendation in its resolution No. 12/10-C relating to the establishment of an International Islamic World Organization for Education, Science and Culture.

The project grew from a recommendation to become subject to a creation resolution, and then to ratification of the statutes (Charter) of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization by virtue of resolution No. 2/11-C of the Eleventh Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (Islamabad, Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 17–22 May 1980).

Finally came the ultimate resolution No. 6/3-C (IS) in the Third Islamic Summit Conference (Makkah al-Mukarramah, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 25–28 January 1981), whereby it was decided to set up a new international body named “Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization” (renamed, in January 2020, the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), which shall operate, alongside other joint action organs, within the framework of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC, now the Organization of Islamic Cooperation).

The ICESCO Founding Conference was held in Fez, Kingdom of Morocco, on 3–5 May 1982. Delegations representing the 28 founding member States, along with representatives from Arab, Islamic and international organizations, took part in the Conference. The closing session of the Conference was marked by the attendance of the late King Hassan II of Morocco, who chaired it and delivered a keynote address, which was adopted by the conferees as a major reference.

2. Charter

The Charter of ICESCO has evolved in line with the Organization’s progress over the various stages of its development and growth, from its initial adoption as the statutes of ICESCO to the 40th Executive Board, in 2020. The ICESCO Charter has been amended 10 times: at the 1st extraordinary session of the General Conference (Rabat, 1986) and at subsequent regular sessions, namely the 4th (Rabat, 1991), the 5th (Damascus, 1994), the 6th (Riyadh, 1997), the 9th (Rabat, 2006), the 10th (Tunis, 2009), the 11th (Riyadh, 2012), the 12th (Baku, 2015) and the 13th (Rabat, 2018) and at the 40th Executive Board Meeting with the attributions of the General Conference (Abu Dhabi, 2020).

Amendments to the Charter are a logical extension of the qualitative progress achieved in the Organization’s scope of action. They are aimed to adjust to ICESCO’s rapidly changing environment and fulfil development needs in its areas of competence.

3. Mission

As defined by its Charter, ICESCO's missions are as follows:

(a) Forward-looking and coordinative steering of regional efforts and joint collective action at the level of the member States, in the fields of education, science, technology, culture, communication and human and social sciences, in full commitment not to intervene in member States' internal affairs;

(b) Coordinating the efforts aiming, at the level of the member States, at developing member States' educational policies and systems, and improving the quality of these systems' outputs by providing consultation, expertise, analytical data and prospective findings; and disseminating the best applied educational practices and initiatives at the international levels, likely to universalize education in accordance with the principle of equal opportunities and on the basis of quality, efficiency and compliance with sustainable development requirements;

(c) Mobilizing stronger commitment from official parties and civil society institutions in the member States to promote cultural development in its comprehensive and integrated dimensions, by safeguarding and preserving both tangible and intangible heritage; developing investment in cultural industries; fostering cultural dialogue; and spreading the values of peace and the principles of citizenship, human rights and positive coexistence;

(d) Assisting member States in devising, developing and sustainably implementing, through major executive programmes, medium-term and long-term robust policies to localize scientific research, creativity, innovation and technological development and anchor solid foundations for knowledge societies;

(e) Laying down methodological and knowledge-related foundations for a participatory social framework between all member States' social groups, to be developed and promoted by encouraging research and monitoring works and leading experiments in the field of human and social sciences; and giving member States' decision makers and policymakers access to draw on their contents and outcomes in drafting future policies;

(f) Encouraging and developing regional and international partnership in ICESCO's areas of competence; fostering the approach of sharing the best practices at the international levels; building strong cooperation with parallel international organizations, civil society institutions and the private sector;

(g) Laying the educational and cultural foundations for promoting and consolidating the member States' strategic position and visibility at the international level; and spreading a culture of accommodation and the values of tolerance, middle stance, dialogue and mutual understanding.

4. Objectives

ICESCO shall endeavour to achieve the following goals:

(a) Achieving cohesion, complementarity and strategic coordination among the member States in the fields of education, training, capacity-building, science, technology and innovation, artificial intelligence, culture, information, communication, human and social sciences, and strategic and sectoral planning;

(b) Strengthening the capacities and improving the indicators of member States' educational systems to help them assume their roles in achieving

socioeconomic development and consolidating the foundations of peace and security nationally, regionally and internationally;

(c) Comprehensive cultural development of the peoples of the member States, within the framework of preserving the constants of the common cultural identity, respecting local and national specificities and encouraging cultural diversity and positive openness to other cultures;

(d) Improving member States' management of social mutations; and consolidating their approaches and mechanisms of addressing internal and external challenges that have human and social dimensions likely to impede development efforts;

(e) Establishing sustainable and efficient cooperation and partnership relations in the Organization's areas of competence between member and non-member States; and expanding the network of local and regional partners in a way that allows member States to keep up with the rapid changes and benefit from others' experiences.

5. ICESCO member States

The ICESCO Charter stipulates that every full member State of OIC shall become a member of ICESCO upon officially signing the Charter, after having completed the membership legal and legislative formalities and informed, in writing, the General Directorate of ICESCO.

ICESCO comprises 54 member States. Article 7 of the ICESCO Charter stipulates that every State, international and regional organizations, bodies and federations, may enjoy observer status at ICESCO, in accordance with the procedures stipulated in the Observer Status Regulations.

6. ICESCO organizational structure

The ICESCO organs are:

I. The General Conference

The General Conference is composed of the ministers in charge of education, science, culture and communication appointed by their Governments, or their representatives.

The General Conference meets at a regular session once every four years. It may convene at a special session.

II. The Executive Council

The Executive Council is made up of one representative for each member State, chosen from among education, science, culture or communication experts.

The Executive Council meets at a regular session every year. It may convene at a special session.

III. The General Directorate

The General Directorate is headed by a Director General, elected by the General Conference for a renewable four-year term, upon a proposal by the Executive Council. The Director General is the head of the administrative set-up of ICESCO and reports

to the Executive Council and the General Conference. The Director General has direct authority over the entire staff of the General Directorate.

7. ICESCO working languages

The working languages of ICESCO are Arabic, English and French.

8. List of ICESCO agreements with the United Nations system/ United Nations institutions

<i>List of selected agreements (in chronological order)</i>	<i>Date and place</i>
Cooperation Agreement with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)	Paris, 2019
Memorandum of Understanding with the Arab Regional Centre for World Heritage (UNESCO-affiliated centre)	Manama, 2018
Memorandum of Understanding with the Marseille Center for Mediterranean Integration	Paris, 2011
Cooperation Agreement with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations	Rome, 2011
Memorandum of Understanding with the World Bank	Rabat, 2008
Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations	Madrid, 2008
Memorandum of Understanding with the World Food Programme	Rabat, 2007
Memorandum of Understanding with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights	Rabat and Geneva, 2005
Working Agreement with the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction – Africa	Nairobi, 2004
Memorandum of Understanding with the UNESCO Institute for Information Technologies in Education	Moscow, 2003
Cooperation Protocol with the Regional Information Technology and Software Engineering Centre (United Nations Development Programme-affiliated)	Cairo, 1998
Letter of Understanding with the World Meteorological Organization	Geneva, 1997
Cooperation Agreement with the United Nations Development Programme	New York, 1997
Memorandum of Understanding with the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat	Rabat, 1996
Cooperation Agreement with the United Nations Environment Programme	Rabat, 1996
Memorandum of Understanding with the United Nations Children's Fund	New York, 1996

<i>List of selected agreements (in chronological order)</i>	<i>Date and place</i>
Cooperation Agreement with the United Nations Population Fund	New York, 1996
Cooperation Agreement with the United Nations Industrial Development Organization	Rabat, 1996
Cooperation Agreement with the International Fund for Agricultural Development	Rome, 1995
Cooperation Agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees	Geneva, 1991
Cooperation Agreement with the World Intellectual Property Organization	Geneva, 1989
Cooperation Agreement with the World Health Organization	Geneva, 1989
Cooperation Agreement with UNESCO	Paris, 1984

9. List of ICESCO agreements and partnerships with selected international organizations

<i>List of selected agreements (in chronological order)</i>	<i>Date and place</i>
Partnership with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development	2020
Partnership with the International Federation of Association Football (FIFA)	2020
Memorandum of Understanding with Qatar's Katara	Doha, 2017
Memorandum of Understanding with the United Cities and Local Governments of Africa	Rabat, 2016
Cooperation Agreement with the Chirac Foundation	Paris, 2014
Memorandum of Understanding with the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue	Vienna, 2013
Memorandum of Understanding with the Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahayan Charitable and Humanitarian Foundation	Abu Dhabi, 2013
Cooperation Agreement with the Mohammed VI Foundation for Environmental Protection	Rabat, 2007 Marrakech, 2013
Cooperation Agreement with the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization	Rabat, 1984 Rabat, 2013
Memorandum of Understanding with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa	Rabat, 2011
Cooperation Agreement with the Arab Women Organization	Tunis, 2010
Cooperation Agreement with the Bibliotheca Alexandrina	Egypt, 2008

<i>List of selected agreements (in chronological order)</i>	<i>Date and place</i>
Cooperation Agreement with the Danish Centre for Culture and Development	2005
Memorandum of Understanding with the African Development Bank	Rabat, 2004
Cooperation Agreement with the International Organization for Migration	Geneva, 2003
Cooperation Agreement with the Arab Bureau of Education for the Gulf States	Paris, 1987 Rabat, 2003
Cooperation Agreement with the Arab Gulf Programme for United Nations Development Organizations (AGFUND)	Rabat, 2001
Cooperation Agreement with the Austrian National Library	1999
Memorandum of Understanding with the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies	Oxford, 1994
Cooperation Agreement with the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa	1994
Cooperation Agreement with the Third World Academy of Sciences	Rabat, 1989
Cooperation Agreement with the Muslim World League	Cairo, 1987
Cooperation Agreement with the Islamic Development Bank	Jeddah, 1987

10. Selected ICESCO strategies

As part of its efforts to promote joint action and future planning and contribute to the educational, scientific, cultural and communication development within the member States, ICESCO has devised a number of strategies in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, among which:

- Strategy for the Promotion of Education in the Member States (adopted by ICESCO's Third General Conference, Amman, 1988), and whose amended version was adopted by the First ICESCO Conference of Education Ministers, Tunis, October 2016.
- Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation in the Member States (adopted by the Eighth Islamic Summit Conference, Tehran, 1997). The Strategy's updated version was approved by the Fourth Islamic Conference of Ministers of Higher Education and Scientific Research, Baku, 2008.
- Cultural Strategy for the Member States (adopted by the Sixth Islamic Summit Conference, Dakar, 1991). The Strategy's updated version was approved by the Fourth Islamic Conference of Culture Ministers, Algiers, 2004.

11. Selected ICESCO declarations

As part of its efforts to promote joint action and contribute to the educational, scientific, cultural and communication development of the member States, ICESCO

issued a number of declarations in the fields of education, science, culture and communication, among which:

- ICESCO Declaration on Sustainable Development (adopted by the First ICESCO Conference of Environment Ministers, Jeddah, 2002).
- ICESCO Declaration on Cultural Diversity (adopted by the Fourth ICESCO Conference of Culture Ministers, Algiers, 2004).
- Fez Appeal on Promoting Dialogue among Cultures and Religions (adopted by the International Conference on Promoting Dialogue among Cultures and Religions (Fez, Kingdom of Morocco, October 2013).

12. Selected ICESCO coordination meetings

ICESCO/UNESCO coordination meeting

Since 1995, ICESCO has been holding coordination meetings, at UNESCO headquarters, for the heads of member State delegations taking part in the UNESCO General Conference, to coordinate the views and position of the member States on relevant issues.

Coordination meeting between the OIC agencies and the United Nations agencies

Since 1996, ICESCO has been actively attending the coordination meetings between agencies of OIC and the United Nations, organized every two years. The first coordination meeting was covered outside the Headquarters of the United Nations, at ICESCO headquarters in Rabat, in July 2006.

13. List of selected ICESCO publications

ICESCO has published more than 300 books in Arabic, French, English and Spanish, whose PDF formats are available in the ICESCO website (www.icesco.org), among which:

- White Book on Dialogue among Civilizations, on the occasion of the proclamation of the year 2001 United Nations Year of Dialogue among Civilizations (2002)
- Protéger et promouvoir la Diversité culturelle au Maghreb et en Afrique de l'Ouest (Francophone) (2010)
- Policies for Third World Countries (2010)
- La gouvernance de l'internet en Afrique (2011)
- Cultural Enterprise in the Member States (2012)
- Cultural roles of civil society in the promotion of dialogue and peace (2012)
- Guidebook for History Textbooks Authors (2012)
- The Initiative of the Custodian of the two holy mosques for dialogue among followers of religions and cultures (2014)
- Guide des Imams et Orientateurs religieux à l'extérieur du monde islamique (2017)

14. Perspectives for seeking observer status in the General Assembly

In the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, ICESCO shares the same goals as the United Nations system in general, namely to provide a better and sustainable future for all human beings, worldwide. ICESCO has been strongly committed and directly contributing to the realization of these Goals through its results-oriented and proactive strategy, and its concrete impact on the ground.

Furthermore, in the context of the reform of the United Nations development system, by granting ICESCO observer status in the United Nations General Assembly, the United Nations system will strengthen its multilateral scope, at a time when the United Nations is looking to expand partnerships and alliances and enlarge its network of strategic partners.

Finally, ICESCO has extensive knowledge, a rich expertise and valuable experience on different development aspects, which are key for social stability and democracy worldwide, such as education, science, culture and communication. As has always been the case, ICESCO will further contribute to United Nations initiatives and programmes, especially those on sustainable development, migration, climate change, gender empowerment, peace and security, youth integration and conflict prevention.

Since its inception in 1982, and considering its rich outcome and broad achievements, especially in partnership with the United Nations system in general, ICESCO is actually, and from this perspective, serving as an institutional platform and strategic bridge to support and disseminate the objectives and values of the United Nations within its member States and particularly with civil society and the Sustainable Development Goals actors and competent bodies.

15. Conclusion

By granting observer status in the General Assembly to ICESCO, which is an influential player with a long-standing role in the multilateral world, United Nations Member States will be taking an important step to strengthen multilateralism and international cooperation and to support the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

In seeking to be granted observer status in the General Assembly, it is the intention of ICESCO to intensify and strengthen its efficient joined efforts and effective working relations with the United Nations system in the implementation and follow-up process of the 2030 Agenda, including the successful achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, which are key for social stability, democracy and countering violent extremism worldwide.

Annex III**Draft resolution****Observer status for the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization in the General Assembly**

The General Assembly,

Wishing to promote cooperation between the United Nations and the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization,

1. *Decides to invite the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization to participate in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly in the capacity of observer;*
 2. *Requests the Secretary-General to take the action necessary to implement the present resolution.*
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