



Address by

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**The Opening Ceremony of the Ministerial Session
of the 30th Session of the COMCEC**

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In the Name of Allah Arrahman The Merciful
Praise be to Allah, and May Allah Grant Peace and Blessing
upon His Messenger,
and upon all his virtuous family and companions

H.E. President Rejep Tayyip Erdogan, Chairman of the Standing
Committee for Economic and Commercial Cooperation (COMEC)

H.E. Dr. Cevdet Yilmaz, Minister of State of the Republic of Turkey

H.E. Iyad Ameen Madani, Secretary General of the OIC

Honorable Ministers - Ladies and Gentlemen,

Assalamo Alaikom Warahmatollahi Wabarakato,

I begin by expressing my deep appreciation for the opportunity that has always been granted to the IDB Group to address your august Committee, and I congratulate your excellency, for your valuable speech delivered at the first conference to convene after your assumption of the COMCEC chairmanship. A speech that reflects a sound judgment, insight, right-mindedness, and a profound understanding of the challenges facing our Ummah. It is indeed a fortunate event that you assume the leadership of the COMCEC, at its thirtieth anniversary, for the prospects of development and enlightenment in our region. I congratulate the COMCEC for working under your leadership, where there is a need and an aspiration to learn from your wisdom and observe your guidance, for further success.

Your Excellency,

In your organization, the Islamic Development Bank Group, we consider this meeting as exceptionally important, based on two aspects: The first aspect evaluates the performance of our robust Committee, after three decades of existence, and the second aspect depicts the prospects of enhancing its service to be

provided to the member states in the next decade. We are eager to seize the opportunity to muster the thoughts deriving from past evaluation, and to exchange insightful views for future planning.

While I do not anticipate the desired outcome in the context of our Committee, I see, at the thirtieth anniversary of the COMCEC, the evaluation and planning process intersecting with many drawn messages and learned lessons, on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the IDB, celebrated last June. It is not surprising when we consider our deep-seated ties, our close relationship, and our compatible goals and aims.

We draw three common lessons:

The first lesson: At the third OIC Summit Conference held in Makka Almokarrama and Atta-ef, endowed with insight, guidance and success, the founders of the Committee initiated its establishment, and then its chairmanship was accorded to the Republic of Turkey. Thereupon, numerous gains were attained by the Committee, and they are now enshrined in the longstanding records of its economic and commercial cooperation. These achievements are the cornerstone for the IDB Group whose funds exceeded 100 billion USD, allowing it to maintain the highest credit rating (AAA) secured from all international credit rating agencies over a period of more than ten years. This was attained with the Bounty of Allah, and the strong support provided by all member states, chiefly the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia - the headquarters state. The IDB Group is highly proud that the numerous activities and initiatives undertaken by the Group were the result of the work of your august Committee, such as ICIEC and ITFC. They achievements and gains are the source of our pride and satisfaction. With our member states, we see today these results as the culmination of the work achieved by the COMCEC, and reckon that had it not been established thirty years ago, it would have been a necessary step to establish it today.

The second lesson: While the COMCEC has been realizing many gains and initiatives, the path needs deepened views and

strengthened ties, whereby, our states will realize together growth commensurate with the wealth of human and natural resources they possess. To this end, the first steps would be for the COMCEC to work with the OIC secretariat and the IDB Group, so that they merge all their plans into one program, as a guiding model for the next ten years; hence, allowing our organization to appropriately contribute to attaining the Millennium Goals, and playing a leading role in the global development endeavors, after 2015. One program would be used by our member states to prevail over the local development hindrances, and by our organization to overcome global economic competition barriers.

The third lesson: The economies of our member states need to adopt a new cooperation model, and to establish a new development approach. In my speech delivered last month, before the World Islamic Economic Forum held in Dubai, I described it as the common work for the economic maximization of growth resources, and the ethical awareness of the benefits to be reaped from such growth. Our economies need a model that overcomes new challenges attached to the requirements of the global economic competition in our world village, deals with financial crises, anticipates catastrophes, and preempts conflicts. An approach that establishes two compelling paths.

- A path for competition based on education. The IDB has agreed with the World Bank to develop a program to help the Member States establish effective education systems that enable them release the full potential of their human resources and help them compete within a context where the capacities of the national economy adapt to the changing circumstances of the global market.
- A new path for dealing with the victims of natural and man-made disasters and for modeling means of cooperation to face the grave economic and social repercussions of such disasters based on the results of the study which your esteemed Committee has entrusted to the IDB and SESRIC

for preparation on the topic and which has received your approval.

Your Excellency,

I would like to go back to the point of evaluating and planning and say that the area of economic and commercial cooperation, patronized by your esteemed Committee, is only a crucible to what I would like to call "joint investment to expand the sources of growth" and "joint action to disseminate the benefits of growth". This is an area in which Turkey has excelled during the past decade; first, in Central Asian countries directly following the collapse of the Soviet Union, and second, in Africa. Today, Turkey possesses a vast experience, in this area, which it can share with our Member States.

Not only have you achieved high levels of growth after rationally investing in your natural resources and wisely benefiting from your geographic location, but you have also spread your seeds of growth in your brotherly countries in Central Asia and Africa. For that, I salute you. To date, everyone is still astounded by the visit your good self and family have paid to the Somalian people when almost everyone else has turned their back on them. Furthermore, everyone is impressed with how Turkish Airlines operates regular flights that link Mogadishu with the rest of the world via Istanbul. Once again, the Turkish people set an example to be followed in both extending a helping hand to, and connecting with, sub-Saharan Africa and enabling brotherly peoples in Central Asia. This can be seen in the increasing number of Turkish embassies in the African continent, in the pinnacle point Turkish Airlines has reached in terms of the number of destinations it flies to worldwide – it now ranks number one, and in the 54 African destinations it has targeted for 2015. Tomorrow, the world will congratulate you on hosting the 10th WTO Ministerial Conference, where you will pave the way for Africa and the developing countries to witness further integration into, and benefit from, globalized trade, as a step towards their development. In doing so,

you are erecting bridges of dialogue and intercommunication that go a long way in entrenching the foundations of peace and harmony; bridges of affection and compassion that reflect not only the unity of the nation and its solidarity in good times and bad, but also its cooperation in piety and righteousness.

Your Excellency,

It was very pleasing to see that amongst the proceedings of the conference are an exhibition for Palestinian products and a seminar on the economic and social repercussions of the Ebola epidemic. This is, without a doubt, a kind gesture made to two topics that have not received the sufficient attention they deserve from the world.

- Within the context of the first kind gesture, I cannot but pay tribute to the attention Turkey has paid to the people of Palestine and their cause as well as to the feelings the Turkish leadership and people have attributed to the anguish and suffering of the victims of the aggression and siege that took place in the environs of Jerusalem. Not only has this been on the humanitarian level, but on the economic and commercial cooperation level as well. It is here, in the environs of Istanbul, that the Palestinian people eagerly await the birth and flourishing of initiatives that bring about feelings of brotherhood and develop twinning activities and synergy in various fields with the Palestinians. Twinning between Turkish and Palestinian chambers of commerce; twinning between Turkish and Palestinian municipalities; twinning between Turkish and Palestinian universities; twinning between Turkish and Palestinian hospitals; and so on and so forth for all other economic and social institutions and events.
- The second gesture has to do with the seminar, scheduled to be held tomorrow morning, on the economic and social risks of the Ebola epidemic. This has a strong correlation

with the recommendations, made at the 3rd Extraordinary Islamic Summit held upon the initiative of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques – may Allah protect him – in Makkah-al Mukarramah in 1426 A.H, to establish programs controlling diseases and epidemics and to have your esteemed Committee incur the exorbitant economic costs and deal with the extravagant social repercussions of the disasters – be they natural or man-made – in our Member States. I hereby call upon all your excellencies and guests to take part in this seminar and enrich it with ideas and initiatives that make out of the Ebola challenge an opportunity to model means of cooperation in the face of disasters.

Your Excellency,

In evaluating the past thirty years, our Committee is being put to great test. A test that builds on the accomplishments of the past to develop a new common platform for economic growth, as a matter of synergy and integration. A test that builds on the accomplishments of the past to develop a new model for the dissemination of the benefits of such growth, as a matter of solidarity and interdependence. This is our ticket to advancement and empowerment in the twenty first century. Have we any other alternative?

I thank you all, *Wassalamu alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh.*