

The Speech of His Excellency
King Abdullah bin Abdul Aziz Al Saud
the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques
At the inauguration of the
World Conference On Dialogue

Madrid – Spain
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“O mankind we have created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other. Verily the most honored of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you”.

Quoting from the Holy Qur’an, and after salutations to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) and all the prophets and messengers, the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Abdullah began his speech Wednesday opening the three-day inter-faith World Conference on Dialogue. At the outset, he thanked King Juan Carlos and the Spanish people for convening the conference on “a land that has a historic and civilized heritage among the followers of religions, and which has witnessed coexistence between people of differing ethnicities and religions and cultures, and contributed, with other civilizations, to the advancement of humanity”.

Following is the text of the King’s speech:

“Dear friends, I came to you from the place dearest to the hearts of all Muslims, the land of the Two Holy Mosques, bearing with me a message from the Islamic world (Ummah), representing its scholars and thinkers who recently met in the confines of the House of God. This message declares that Islam is a religion of moderation and tolerance, a message that calls for constructive dialogue among

followers of religions, a message that promises to open a new page for humanity in which, God willing, concord will replace conflict.

“Dear friends, we all believe in one God, who sent messengers for the good of humanity in this world and the hereafter. His will, praise be to Him, was that people should differ in their faiths. If the Almighty had so desired, all mankind would have shared the same religion. We are meeting today to affirm that the religions that God Almighty desired for the happiness of man, should be a means to ensure that happiness.

“It is therefore incumbent upon us to declare to the world that difference must not lead to conflict and confrontation, and to state that the tragedies that have occurred in human history were not due to religion, but were the result of extremism with which some adherents of every divinely revealed religion, and of every political ideology, have been afflicted.

“Mankind is suffering today from a loss of values and conceptual confusion, and is passing through a critical phase which, in spite of all the scientific progress, is witnessing a proliferation of crime, an increase in terrorism, the disintegration of the family, subversion of the minds of the young by drug-abuse, exploitation of the poor by the strong, and odious racist tendencies. This is all a consequence of the spiritual void from which people suffer when they forget God, and God causes them to forget themselves. There is no solution for us other than to agree on a united approach, through dialogue among religions and civilizations.

“Dear friends, most of the past dialogues have failed because they have deteriorated into mutual recrimination focusing on and exaggerating differences in a sterile endeavor that exacerbated rather than mitigated tensions, or because they attempted to fuse religions and creeds on the pretext of bringing them closer together. This is likewise a fruitless effort, since the adherents of every religion are deeply convinced in their faith, and will not accept any alternative thereto. If we wish this historic meeting to succeed, we must focus on the common denominators that unite us, namely, deep faith in God, noble principles, and lofty moral values, which constitute the essence of religion.

“Dear friends, man could be the cause of the destruction of this planet and everything in it. He is also capable of turning it into an oasis of peace and tranquility in which adherents of religions, creeds and philosophies could co-exist, and in which people could cooperate with each other in a respectful manner, and address problems through dialogue rather than violence. Man is also capable, by the grace of God, of vanquishing hatred through love, and bigotry through tolerance, thereby enabling all mankind to enjoy the dignity that the Almighty has bestowed upon all of them.

“Dear friends, let our dialogue be a triumph of belief over disbelief, of virtue over vice, of justice over iniquity, of peace over conflicts and wars, and of human brotherhood over racism. Thus, with God we began, and through Him we seek assistance. I offer you my sincere greetings and appreciation. Thank you and peace be upon you”.