



Speech by H.E. Salim M. AlMalik, Director General of the Islamic World Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ICESCO), on the occasion of the awarding of the Mediterranean Award 2024 (Naples, 3 June 2024).

In the name of Allah the Most  
Compassionate and the Most Merciful

Dear Professor Capasso,  
Distinguished Guest,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am immensely honored to receive this distinguished award, which embodies our shared human values and lofty dreams and aspirations.

It is with great pleasure and privilege for me to be one of those international leaders who have been honored and recognized for their wisdom, integrity, strength, and sense of responsibility.

While such values are worth celebrating at any given moment, the timing of this tribute is much more important given the challenges overshadowing the world.

This moment unveils the emergent and adverse developments absorbing our planet today, thus inviting us more than ever to intensify our efforts, promote wisdom, and uphold peace across the world.

Indeed, this award bears hope and vision to overcome the frustration plaguing the political, economic, environmental, health, and educational spheres.

In these difficult times, only institutions are expected to play a key role in developing a new vision based on noble human values like justice, peace, brotherhood, and equality.

And to allow for the good implementation of such a vision, institutions should adopt openness as their desired methodology.

Openness is a high-yielding value.

ICESCO has explored every possible avenue and adopted openness as a methodology to guide its efforts to open up brighter horizons for people.

In this same vein, the Organization has broadened its vision to offer membership to countries beyond the Islamic world to strengthen global partnerships and collaboration based on trust and meaningful cooperation.

Unless we extend hands of trust to each other, we will never be able to lead the international community out of the state of disorientation and confusion that cripple many of its political and social units.

ICESCO went a step further in this direction by celebrating some social segments that need more of our serious and strong support, namely women, youth, children and persons with special needs.

As time does not allow for reviewing all the activities and projects ICESCO has implemented in this regard, I deem it necessary to state that our organization, as part of its commitment to promote peace, consecrated a whole year for women and another year for youth, and arrangements are underway to dedicate a special year for the children of the world, the aim being giving opportunity to these social actors to contribute to maintaining stability and security all over the world.

ICESCO has always been acting like a beehive from which nothing but good things come out.

However, being an advocate of EDUCATION and PEACE, I am hunting for the opportunities that hope can lead to, in these two areas.

I want to see the Peace being showered from space and everywhere. I want to see love and respect are capturing our angers, our agonies, our hatred, and our disputes. I want to see all kinds of chaos, terrorism, and insurrection lost into the blackholes of space.

But the question is whether it is possible.

Can we make it happen?

My belief is we definitely can and we will.

When the objectives are far-reaching, the strategies must be forceful and streamlined. And in my humble opinion, no strategy is more forceful than education, and no strategy is implementable without education.

Let's make it happen.

Let's not waste this colossal opportunity.

Let the values of our organizations overcome the impact we are aiming far.

Let the people talking about how much we have done far the well-being of this globe and its population.

Let our beliefs reflect our integrity and character like the rays of the sun being reflected from the moon, a symbol of peace and glory.

Our ambition is to help build an ecosystem where peace is nurtured by vibrant learning systems at all levels.

By doing so, we will tear down the walls of violence and extremism.

We will build the edifice of peace, tolerance and mutual understanding.

And we will make a beautiful world for all our generations to come.

Even if, the conflict disrupts these capacities, it is temporary.

It takes just a few targeted actions by us to get back to peace under control.

**Speaking** about the challenges and opportunities presented by disruptive technologies in our increasingly globalized world.

A world where the volume of knowledge is doubling every 12 hours.

A world where the technology innovation and utilization are increasing exponentially.

A world where the things being taught in schools and colleges today would be redundant by the time students will graduate.

World Economic Forum recently reported that only the 11 robot revolution<sup>11</sup> would create 97 million jobs worldwide, but destroy almost as many.

This speed of change and tech transformation is up ending our careers, transforming our lives and disrupting our economies.

This situation is amazing for those who are well prepared for disruption, but otherwise tragic for those who are underprivileged, lacking resources and connectivity, and facing a horrible digital divide.

The question here is how we can keep them relevant in the midst of this exponential knowledge growth.

And the answer lies in Albert Einstein's words: "Once you stop learning, you start dying".

To end, I seize this great moment to extend my thanks and gratitude to all of the ICESCO family members, a family that I am proud to lead.

To my lovely wife who has supported me all the way through my life to my children who kept making me happy and happier.

I thank them all for their unwavering endeavours and relentless efforts that I am awarded today.

My deepest appreciation and gratitude go to you, the United State of the world, which should be proud of sowing the seeds of hope through granting this award.

Thank you.

Salam Alyakom.