

DRAFT

ICYF-DC/ICYSM-3/2016/01/Rev.1

# **JOINT OIC YOUTH STRATEGY**

*To be submitted to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Islamic Conference Youth and Sports Ministers*

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## I. INTRODUCTION

### *Background*

The number of young people in the OIC countries could be portrayed as the main strength of the Region. All the other Regions are dealing with the demographic decline, while in the OIC, by 2050 it is projected that the youth population is to reach 1/3 of the total population. Consequently, the essential window of opportunity in the area is to be valorized and youth is to be invested with essential opportunities to reach their full personal and professional potential.

In times of challenges determined by extremism, young Muslims are more exposed than ever to radicalization. Combined with the challenges in education, employment, reduced access to health services, the investment in youth is to be stated as the main priority of the OIC countries. Under the exemplarily leadership of the Secretary General – Mr. Iyad Ameen Madani, the OIC has made youth engagement in the Islamic world one of the organization's key priorities, the OIC Member States made it clearly that investing in youth is the main priority of the OIC States. For this purpose, the 1<sup>st</sup> OIC Young Leaders Summit was the excellent moment to reflect upon the priorities of a coherent and consistent Youth Strategy. The 1<sup>st</sup> OIC Young Leaders Summit (the pre-Summit event of the 13<sup>th</sup> Islamic Summit Conference) initiated by the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), an affiliated institution to the OIC was organized by ICYF-DC in Istanbul, on 11-13 April 2016 in cooperation with the OIC General Secretariat and the Republic of Turkey – the host of the 13<sup>th</sup> Islamic Summit Conference. More than 200 young people representing the OIC Member States and Muslim minorities worldwide and playing leading role in all areas of life on national and international levels convened to assess the state of more than 300 million young people in the OIC countries and came up with concrete Recommendations approved by the leaders of the OIC Member States during the 13<sup>th</sup> Islamic Summit Conference.

The Young Leaders Summit Recommendations focused on youth as one of the main priorities of the OIC Member States, as it constitutes the main resource for the human capital development. But, for this purpose, the Member States need coordinated Policy and a strategy for the future of youth policies in the area; a strategy based on the

need for institutional cooperation at all the levels (according to the MOU signed among the OIC institutions active in the field of youth, Kuwait, 2015).

#### OIC Milestones in development of Youth Policy

Establishment of the Islamic Conference Youth Forum for Dialogue and Cooperation (ICYF-DC), the affiliated OIC Youth institution was positive development towards advancing the effectiveness of the OIC activities in the youth field. As an important platform for the development of the OIC youth, ICYF-DC enables to match voice of youth with voice of governments (Young Leaders Summit), strengthens the solidarity among the Muslim youth (OIC Youth Capital Programme), provides intellectual and creative development of Muslim youth (Model OIC and Muslim Future Thinkers programmes), guarantees equal stand of Muslim youth vis-à-vis their Western same-ages on international scene (Global Youth Movement for the Alliance of Civilizations platform initiated by ICYF-DC as the youth platform of the UN AOC) and pursues advancing comprehensive and knowledge based youth policy strategies in the Member States aimed at development of the OIC countries (10 Goals in 10 Years Recommendations, ICYF-DC annual resolutions in OIC CFM).

Istanbul Youth Declaration adopted by the 2<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly of ICYF-DC (2014), and the Youth Recommendations entitled “10 Goals in 10 Years” adopted by the first ever OIC Young Leaders Summit held on 11-13 April 2016 in Istanbul (a pre-Summit youth event of the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Islamic Summit Conference) and approved by the 13<sup>th</sup> Session of the Islamic Summit Conference contributed to the work of ICYF-DC to define the main needs for development of youth in the OIC Member States. Based on these recommendations ICYF-DC actively cooperated with the co-organizers of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Islamic Conference of Youth and Sports Ministers in the framework of the preparatory meetings of the Ministerial and held consultations with ISESCO (the member of the OIC Permanent Joint Committee on Youth Affairs, established according to the above mentioned MOU signed in Kuwait, in 2015) to reflect views and positions of all the concerned parties.

According to the above mentioned Memorandum of Understanding that was signed in 2015, there is a high need for common action in the field of youth, action that is built on a cross-sectorial approach, with clear objectives, with a well-structured timeline, with immediate responses to the youth needs and with a long term action

strategy projected. The strategy is to look at the current and dynamic youth needs and to be built with young people and for young people, ensuring a highly participative consultation process. Young people are not to be considered as a problem to be administrated, but as the main resource for the future and should be invested with the conditions to develop their knowledge, skills and competencies and to be active participants to the society's development.

#### International references on Youth Policy

The existent international documents in the field of youth set the framework to be valorized for the OIC Youth Policy development. At the United Nations' level, the General Assembly was asked, through the Resolution No. 3140 issued on 14<sup>th</sup> of December 1973 by the Economic and Social Council to study the possibility of the development and established of international policies focused on youth rights, at the national and international level. The Prague Declaration of 1998 was stating the essential role of youth in human development and then in 2001, the World Youth Strategy was also re-affirming the role of youth in the World advancement. More than this, since 1996, the United Nations had been actively promoting the implementation of a global programme for youth especially through the development of coherent and consistent local, regional and national youth policies. At the UN level, the national youth policy had been defined as planning guidelines and the application of the activities related to the development of youth, which is a policy of interest to young people, and serves the orientation for the government and the private sector during the planning and implementation of programs according to the needs and aspirations of young people (UN GA Resolution 50/81 of 13 March 1996: World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond).

In terms of youth rights, six main fields had been defined through the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond (1996):

- *First*: the right to a decent life: should the young people live a decent life in his own community and his country;
- *Second*: the right to express an opinion: young people should be provided with an opportunity to express their aspirations, ideas, hopes and their concerns;

- *Third*: the right to a good education: the young people should have the right to enjoy quality education in his homeland, which fits the requirements of the labor market, it should also provide appropriate scholarships, especially in university level;
- *Fourth*: the right to a good health: future generations should be provided with the enjoyment of good health centers to take care of young people's health;
- *Fifth*: the right to an appropriate profession: governments must assume their responsibilities towards the young graduates in various disciplines. Providing jobs for these graduates either in the public sector or the private sector; or granting affordable loans to young entrepreneurs to establish small or medium enterprises;
- *Sixth*: the right to development: It should be provided for young people an opportunity to contribute to the community development in their own communities and their country, according to various specialties, both at the political level to engage in political parties and access to leadership positions in these parties and therefore should recommend young people to participate in decision-making. (*Ibid.*)

In order to ensure that the six principles are enacted by the Member States, the UN also developed support programmes and mechanisms and most successful one being the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and Beyond – adopted in 1995 and aiming to provide a policy framework and guidelines for the development of the national youth policies, with 15 priority areas. In 2005, the 15 areas had been compiled and special attention was dedicated to their main groups: a group dealing with young people in the global economy, and a group of young people in dealing with civil society, and a group dealing with at-risk youth. The framework set through the World Programme of Action for Youth to the Year 2000 and beyond was also the basis for the General Assembly's Resolution 3/60 on the international agreement for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World 2001-2010. As for the three specified groups, certain sets of priorities had been set:

A. Youth group in the global economy – Priorities within the group:

- Globalization
- Hunger and poverty
- Education
- Employment

B. Youth groups in the civil society – priorities within the group:

- The environment
- Leisure time activities
- The full and effective participation of youth in the life of society and to the Decision making processes
- Common inter-generational subjects
- ICT

C. Youth and Youth welfare – Priorities within the group:

- Youth health
- Combating hiv/aids
- Reducing drug abuse
- Reducing juvenile delinquency
- Girls and women access to health services
- Combating the armed conflicts.

Later on, the Lisbon Declaration on Youth in 1998 was restating the role youth is playing in the global development and advancement.

For the OIC Region, the Arab Charter and the outstanding work of the Arab League are to be mentioned. During the Sixteenth Arab summit hosted by Tunisia May 23, 2004, the modern version of the Arab Convention on Human Rights had been adopted, with a special focus on ensuring the human freedom, justice and equal opportunities as well as for safeguarding the youth rights as well as clearly stating the right of each person to participate in the cultural life and enjoy the benefits of the scientific progress and its effects. When it comes to youth, the Arab Declaration to enable Youth also dedicated important articles on women empowerment as well as in investing in the development of youth participatory schemes. Having a closer look at the existent challenges, in 2003, the Rabat Declaration on Population and Development 5<sup>th</sup> December 2003 actively promoted a better allocation of resources for equitable social policies.

Extremely useful for the OIC States, is as well the model developed with the African Youth Strategy, document prepared by the Committee of Humanities and Social Sciences of UNESCO and that in the context of a political surrounding which



encourages the progress of youth in Africa in the period in progress between the years of 2009-2013. The three essential goals of the strategy are the following:

- ✓ Support the development and management of knowledge and promote research and studies in the field of youth;
- ✓ Promote youth participation in the decision-making and make them active and important in the process of the development of their country;
- ✓ Support the progress of policies and frameworks in order to meet the needs related to youth.

When the OIC Member States are fully challenged by the permanent exposure to youth radicalism and extremism, Security Council Resolution no.2250 on Youth and International Peace and Security December 2015 issued on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2015 was asking the Member States to consider ways to increase the overall representation of youth in decision-making processes on all levels; in local, national, regional and international mechanisms with the main aim to prevent and resolve the disputes, including the institutions and mechanisms of combating violent extremism that can lead to terrorism. For this purpose, youth is to be involved in the development and implementation of effective peace processes and conflict resolution mechanisms, offering solutions as well involved with setting peace agreements and restoring peace in the post-conflict areas.

### ***The current state of affairs – Youth development in the OIC Member States***

Even if youth is the main resource for the Region, the most dynamic cohort does faces plenty of challenges related to the education, the transition to the labour market, youth employment or the access to personal and professional development opportunities.

In order to develop a coherent and consistent youth policy, the OIC Member States are to define as well the age range that would cluster **youth**. The most dynamic group of the social structure, permanently affected by all the social and political changes, had been defined as a social construction of what is produced from the relationship between individuals and institutions. The definition should consider the biological, the psychological and the social patterns and affects that would define youth. Following the UN General Assembly of 1985, which is that young people are

“individuals who fall under The ages of 15 to 24 years”, while the League of Arab States defined as youth young people aged 15-29, a definition that is much more suitable to the demographic traits of the Arab States, while in the African Youth Report 2009 the definition of youth was set as the age group between 15-39 years and the European Commission is developing programmes for the ones aged 13-30, considered as the youth cohort. Consequently, the development of the OIC Youth Strategy should start with defining the age range that would better fit the existent social, economic and political situation in the OIC Region.

Consequently, considering the social, economic and demographic aspects as well as the biological, psychological and social ranges, for the OIC Member States, the following structure is proposed:

Children – up to 12 years old

Teenagers – 12 to 16 years old

Youth – 16-35 years old, while the group 30-35 years old are to be considered as young adults.

### ***Youth in the Holy Quran***

A simple examination of the life of an average human being tells us that it is broken down into four stages: childhood, teenage years, middle age, and old age. Islam has placed a tremendous emphasis on the education of humans. The very first command given to the Prophet (S) was to read, establishing from the very beginning, education as a major objective of the teaching of Islam, important to instill a sense of character and as a defining quality between those who are knowledgeable and those who aren't.

In light of this Quranic revelation out of all these stages, the most important stage in a human's life is the youthful stage as this is considered a golden time for learning and absorbing new ideas. This is a time where youth are strong and energetic and where the responsibilities of older age have not quite reached them. In Islam, the definition of youth begins around puberty and lasts until the early 30's. The Quran speaks of youth in a praiseworthy fashion, especially those who are given knowledge in young age. In Surah al-Kahf, the individuals who seek shelter in the cave are described as “youths who believed in their Lord” and who were increased in guidance.

Furthermore, prophets and messengers are described as being in their youth while being given guidance, such as Prophet Yahya. In Surah al-Anbiyaa', after destroying the idols of the village, the townspeople of the village describe Prophet Ibrahim as a youth undertaking this initiative.

Despite the mention of youths in the context of prophets and messengers, Islam also places no distinction between the rights and responsibilities of female and male youth. Islam views youth as a gender-neutral concept whereby male youths are equated with their female counterparts. The best personification of this principle is in the figure of Maryam. According to Quranic tafsir, she was approached at a young age by the Angel Jibreel in the form of a well-made man with a "shining face." Immediately confronted with an attractive individual, she reaffirmed her faith in God by abstaining from wrongdoing. Later on, she was given the responsibility of nurturing a child on her own, undertaking such arduous tasks such as giving birth and child rearing without any human assistance. Therefore, the application of the term "youth" should not be restricted to any one gender or time. It is a term that is applicable to both females and males, and for all times and places.

As a collective body, all facets of society are responsible for the upbringing and education of their youth; at this stage future leaders are cultivated with a sense of purpose and a crucial point in life where important lessons are taught and ingrained. On the other hand, if this time period is not seized upon, the youth, as well as society at large, will have turned an asset into a possible liability in the future. Governments, educational institutions, and social and familial networks all play a role in the rearing of youth. The culture and mentality in any given society act in tandem with one other when determining the factors that lead to the success (or failure) of its youth. As every society contains both virtues and vices, it is incumbent upon the youth to pinpoint and identify their weaknesses to help themselves guard against challenges they may encounter. It is imperative that governments and social/political organizations view the young as not only the future leaders of the country, but as partners in making life and society better. They should be given the tools to recognize and understand the problems confronting the state, society, and individual. However, the biggest responsibility placed upon the shoulders of governments and non-governmental organizations is to embrace the youth, to inculcate in them the necessary thought-

processes and critical thinking skills that are necessary to operate in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The youth are a tremendous source of untapped potential; if state and society fail to tap that potential then all will be at a loss as a significant sector of the population is sidelined and not allowed to develop. Beginning at a young age is absolutely critical to the trajectory of the youth as this is the stage where ideas, thoughts, beliefs, and principles are absorbed like a sponge. In the end, this upbringing will determine the triumph of individual, society, and mankind.

Both the Quran and the Sunnah have placed tremendous value upon the youth and their development in society. During the initial phases of Islam it was the youth who responded to the message of the Prophet positively. Many of those who first adopted Islam were merely in their 20's and teenage years when they enthusiastically accepted the message of Islam, Ali Ibn Abu Talib being the most notable for becoming Muslim in a childhood age. The Prophet also took due diligence in taking care of and educating the youth; Hasan and Husain were described as being the leaders of the youth of Paradise and Anas ibn Malik was the personal confidant of the Prophet (S) in Madinah after the migration. Ibn Abbas, who was described as the interpreter of the Quran, received direct lessons from the Prophet (S) and was even considered as an advisor to Umar during his reign. Muslim youth are also ordered to take advantage of five before five; among these is youthfulness before old age. Moreover, in describing the seven people to receive shade on the Day of Judgment, the Prophet (S) listed the "youth who was brought up in the worship of Allah" as second in the list. Many scholars have interpreted this hadith as ranging from most difficult to least difficult, where only the just ruler is considered as having more duties and responsibilities.

In recent times the texts of Islam have fallen under scrutiny, with such terms as "jihad" becoming nearly ubiquitous in everyday society. However, what is the proper understanding of this concept and its practice in Islam? The proper understanding of jihad is crucial in understanding the religion of Islam as it has been used and manipulated by both non-Muslims and those with extremist interpretations of the religion. Many medieval scholars of Islam, such as Ibn-al Qayyim and Ibn Rushd (Averroes), have offered a more nuanced and much in depth approach to jihad. The former has even divided jihad into more than 14 different categories. While fighting for the sake of the religion is considered among the important duties, constituting

merely “*minor jihad*”. Jihad with one’s self or ego, against one’s carnal desires encompasses the principle as a whole. Many Islamic scholars label the struggle with the ego as the “*major jihad*”. This should serve as an important reminder to those who twist and bend the texts of Islam to suit their political agendas.

In light of Islamic approach, Muslim youth are responsible for important tasks that have been placed upon them. In order to maximize their potential, the following principles should be enacted:

- **Effective utilization** of one’s time. Free time should be looked at as a blessing that is used, and not abused, to further one’s spiritual, intellectual, physical, and mental strengths.
- **Avoid bad environments** to ensure that one has a proper upbringing and does not follow a slippery slope in their everyday transactions.
- **Due diligence** in choices, whether it is a career or friends. Recognizing that not all choices are equal, it is important for one to be constantly aware of those choices and their ramifications.
- **Never waste a good crisis.** It is a natural part of life to commit errors and mistakes; however, these should be used as learning experiences, and not excuses, to better one’s self.

## **II. THE MAIN FIELDS OF ACTION**

### ***Education***

Youth literacy rates are above 90% and 24 countries achieved youth literacy rates of 97% or above, but this is not the case for all the countries, as some of the countries have literacy rates below 50% - Niger, with a rate of 23.5%, is the country with lowest youth literacy within the OIC community, followed by Guinea (31.4%), Burkina Faso (39.3%), Benin (42.4%) and Afghanistan (47%). Also, the social and economic global framework had been changed and young people face more and more challenges related to a double transition – both in terms of transition from education to the labour market but also from the partners' house to having their own home and family. The situation is also determined by the reduced opportunities to find a decent job.

### ***Youth Employment/ Unemployment Rates***

According to the latest estimates of ILO, some 74.5 million young people were unemployed in 2013 in the world, with global youth unemployment rate reaching 13.1%, but reaching even higher in the Middle East (27.2%) and North Africa (29.4%) regions. Even if some countries in the region scored well when it comes to youth employment opportunities (Qatar and Benin), in countries such as Mauritania and Guyana the youth unemployment rates had been higher than 40%.

As H.E. Ambassador Elshad Iskandarov, the President of ICYF-DC was as well stating, for the Middle East, as a high priority had been set the creation of 80 million new jobs in the upcoming fifteen years. Also, the creation of the 80 million new jobs are also an excellent opportunity for the OIC States to step further, considering the fact that youth is the essential resource in the human capital's development.

### ***Social inclusion***

When it comes to the social inclusion of young people, more than 28.9% of youth is clustered within the group of NEETS, being excluded from the education, employment and training opportunities and for the rural areas, the percentage reached 45.9% of the youth population.

### ***Health services***

The youth development does also require facilitated access to health services, the mental health of young people being essential to their development. Only 58% of the OIC countries have a mental health policy and the situation is to be urgently especially looking at the war and conflict situations young citizens have been facing in the Region. (The Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries – SESRIC – Key Challenges of Youth in the OIC Countries, 2015).

Consequently, a coordinated youth strategy should be valorizing the existent policy measures and to offer the framework for the development of specific programmes and policies aiming at increasing the quality of education, better access conditions to the labour market and reducing the unemployment youth rate as well as offering youth people the opportunity to make their voice heard and to be active partners in the community life. More than this, the Damascus Declaration of 2005 was also requiring the OIC Member States to dedicate special attention to the reproductive health of youth and to better inform youth, with the support of media, on the importance of the issue.

### ***Marriage and early marriages***

Even if marriage is defined as the first step in the formation of a family union, as part of a well-functioning society, the early marriages should be of a concern for the OIC Member States. Most of the countries were preoccupied by the subject and have laws that regulate marriage, both in terms of the minimum age and consent, but such laws usually do not apply to traditional marriages. In the OIC group, 27.3% of all marriages are being performed before 18 years old (SESRIC, The State of Children and Youth in OIC Member Countries, 2015). At the individual country level, the highest prevalence of child marriage in the OIC group was seen in Bangladesh (29.1%) followed by Chad (29.0%). Consequently, for the Member States is of a concern to make sure that the rate of the early marriages is reduced so that the young families are set within conditions that would safeguard the situation of their children – socially, economically, culturally, etc.

### ***Participation***

Looking at the participation sphere, the young OIC citizens are to be given more opportunities to participate. With problems related to the access to the economic sphere, to the education field or to the labour market, at times, youngsters also have the tendency to be less interested into the public participation. On the political sphere, only 4.7% of the young OIC citizens are involved, while in the developed countries the rate is 8.7%. Thus, new policies and programmes are to be developed in order both to invest in the capacity of youth to participate but also in empowering them to be active on the public scene.

### ***Youth organizations and volunteering***

But is not solely the role of the governments to invest in greater youth participation and to rebuild trust between the public institutions and the youth groups. The challenge rests also with the youth organizations that are the primary actors involved with stimulating youth to be active in the communities' lives. The youth NGOs are to design innovative volunteering programmes for young people, programmes that aim to build the capacity of young leaders and to get as many young people who are not active back to the public sphere.

### ***Impact of the recent social changes in the MENA region***

When the fundamental socio-political challenges broke out triggered by uprising of December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2010 in Tunisia many outside observers wondered what was the underlying purpose behind such anger and frustration. Knowing only oppression and repression, the decades-long states of emergency were finally lifted when protests became too powerful to oppose. The vanguard who helped lead these protests were the region's youth, those who were young in age yet politically ambitious. With a young yet educated population, citizens of MENA states saw this as a golden opportunity to usher in an era of reforms and proper rectification of their nations. Seeing the progress that their peers were experiencing, especially in the European Union, Libyans, Egyptians, and Tunisians wished they could replicate the successful elements of their more well-developed counterparts throughout the world: world-class educational institutions, high-tech industries, and professional bureaucracies. However, things did not go as protestors planned as gloom began to replace excitement



One must ask themselves what should be the lessons derived from the social movement that engulfed MENA region since 2011? What policies should governments enact in the aftermath of these events? Firstly, in a region with a combined population of over 423 million people, governments should consider the policy implications of having populations that are young, educated, and motivated. Youth should be viewed as a source of strength and pride as they will be called upon to lead their nations in the future. Governments, businesses, and social/political organizations should collude to implement a “plan and action” roadmap that educates, trains, and employs young professionals. Moreover, it is the responsibility of MENA governments to ensure their educators are properly trained and up to date with the latest teaching methods and technologies. From here, young people will be able to make the transition from school to work smoothly. Investments in transportation should also be considered of paramount interest as this will stimulate the economy by providing jobs and will allow the free flow of people and goods. And lastly, governments should simplify and liberalize corporate tax codes to encourage businesses to open up branches and employment opportunities. This will result in multiple train and assist, apprenticeship, and on-the-job training programs.

Information and communication technologies (ICT) plays an increasingly significant role in young people’s life. Even it had been disagreement about whether ICTs has positive or negative force on young people, it is also widely argued that given the widespread and pervasive impact of ICTs on young people’s lives is important to understand these new forms of communication and to employ them for positive purposes, having them defining feature of modernity. The new media and the social media tools had been contributing to designing new trends in participation. The digital natives – those young people who had access to Internet since early stages, are nowadays globally interconnected through media and technology and are exposed to setting up and leading new forms of online participation Starting in Egypt and Tunisia the new forms of youth participation are also asking the OIC Member States to develop new consultations mechanisms with young people, fully adapted to the digital natives and millennial needs. Manifested with different intensity and through different tools, the recent social changes in the MENA region showed that the demographic window of opportunity in the Region could be definitely properly valorized and youth can be a

force for change. The social media tools that had been used to advocate for the youth mobilization could be definitely valorized in innovative lessons for highly innovative participation tools and methodologies that the OIC Member States could develop in order to interact with the young OIC citizens.

### ***Youth and Extremism***

How is the Islamic faith being manipulated to suit the agendas of extremist and radical groups? What evidences are used to justify and perpetuate acts of violence, whether in the name of religion or nationalism? The phenomenon of terrorism has existed in its contemporary form for many decades and has been actively used by individuals, groups, and nations to further their political objectives as a strategic tool whole around the world. In recent times, many media outlets have tried to equate terrorism and Muslim countries, specifically in the Middle East. After September 11, 2001, this relationship only became magnified as this horrendous act brought terrorism to the fore. Now, years later, with civil wars raging in Iraq and Syria, coupled with the rise of ISIS, the concepts of terrorism, radicalism, and extremism have taken center stage yet again. However, in order to counter these ideologies two things must be achieved: firstly, concrete, universal, and accepted definitions that are understood and accepted by all need to be adopted; and secondly, the root causes need to be addressed, acknowledged, and rectified. If violent ideologies and their intellectual arguments are neither checked nor challenged, then groups and individuals who espouse such beliefs will have free rein to do as they please, especially in the absence of a coherent force to oppose such arguments.

To counter extremism and violent ideologies it is imperative to deconstruct and delegitimize the foundational underpinnings of extremist thought. Many Muslim youth are mesmerized by the allure of fighting for what they perceive as noble causes. Extremist recruiters have developed an effective marketing campaign using a combination of preaching and social media. Many Quranic verses and statements of the Prophet are manipulated without proper understanding of Islamic law or its application. Moreover, violence is not only glorified but considered as the only way to rectify a situation, with many youth being deceived into believing that their political, religious, and social goals will only be achieved through malicious ways. It is

incumbent to point out the futility in such arguments and the resultant consequences of such actions.

According to the ICYF-DC research on the issue the radical groups are recruiting four types of youth: *revenge seekers*, *identity seekers*, *status seekers* and *thrill seekers*. It is crucial to design specific programmes both on governmental and non-governmental levels in the fields of non-formal education and new opportunities of social lifting as well as in sports, arts, creativity and entertainment to deny the radical groups to tap into those groups of youth.

### ***Entrepreneurship***

Entrepreneurship had been portrayed as one of the crucial answers to the existent challenges in education and employment. Both entrepreneurship in its classical approach but also social entrepreneurship can essentially contribute to boosting up development in the OIC Region. The 2nd Kazan OIC Youth Entrepreneurship Forum co-organized by ICYF-DC is structured as the opportunity for young IT entrepreneurs from across the Muslim World to get connected to the international investors and to find supporters for their highly innovative ideas. Through the Forum and through the previous existent initiatives, the OIC countries took the responsibility to invest in the entrepreneurial competencies' development of the Muslim youth, competencies that will essentially contribute to the development of the Region.

### ***The status of youth policies in the region***

At the national level, the OIC Youth Strategy is to be transferred in Youth Acts, Youth Action Plans and Conventions for Youth, based on the pillars Constitutional provisions and adhere to the Islamic references and international human rights conventions, as well as being a participation act of democracy, development of youth and enabling the exercise of his/her, civil, political and social, cultural and economic rights and duties and to facilitate more the face of public services, leading to empowering the confidence in the youth and promotes practices that ensure the protection of and the respect for their rights. The Youth Acts are to design the legislative and institutional framework, clearly setting as well the youth rights and responsibilities as well as the working and monitoring mechanisms in the field of youth.

The National Youth Councils (NYC) are considered as the main dialogue partners and the key mechanisms in stimulating the youth participation to the decision making processes. The existence of the NYC is also ensuring the coordination between youth and governments as well as the participation of affiliated and non-affiliated youth to the youth policy development.

The National Youth Councils are considered as a key mechanism devoted to ensure the participatory approach in youth policy and to reduce the gap between young people's demands and aspirations and decision making institutions. More than this, the NYCs are to also play an important role in facilitating youth work and which aims to:

- Ensure the establishment of participatory mechanisms for youth at the national level
- Act as the authority for consultation and the expression of the aspirations of young people
- Make youth participation in decision-making closer to their needs in the areas of life
- Ensure the coordination between youth and governments
- Represent the aspirations of young people and their interests
- Play the role of the intermediary body between youth organizations and societies

The National Youth Councils have the following roles:

- Coordinate youth projects at the national level
- Facilitate cooperation between young people
- Promote youth
- Improve the quality of young people's life
- Ensure the safeguard of the rights of children and youth
- Disseminate of information between different organizations and associations
- Facilitate the development process for the Youth

And the National Youth Councils operates in accordance with the process of electoral democracy, and manages by young and in an independent way from governments, and there is another variety of councils under the state management

councils in liaison with the government sector in charge of youth, as an advisory body official representing young people in all issues. It is a commitment of the OIC Member States, where the National Youth Councils had not been established, to invest in the development and the capacity of the National Youth Councils, as the main partners for dialogue of the governments in youth related issues.

The national policies must also reflect for hopeful youth for the governments to make the youth the heart of plans in the public policies, according to a holistic perspective which combines various youth policies at the national level, In this sense, the national reference document for Youth Policy and the roadmap for active youth activists in youth issues to coordinate their interventions. According to statistics, there are a hundred and twenty countries around the world which has set youth-related policies, and the facts show that the situation of young people; and their rights and the extent of their participation in the decision making of the resolution and dimensions of the economic and political life of youth in the world, vary from one country to another.

When developing the Youth Policy, the stakeholders should take into account that youth is the most dynamic group of the social structure and is permanently impacted by all the changes happening around in all the other inter-connected fields. For this purpose, a participatory decision making process is to be designed, giving youth the voice to decide upon its own future.

The guidelines that are to be followed by the Youth Strategy are related to enabling youth to express its full potential and to be active in the decision making processes, to ensure gender equality as well as to reinforce the cooperation of all relevant actors in the field of youth. The guiding principles of the Youth Strategy are to be in line with the Islamic values and principles especially the ones related to peace, openness and tolerance. The basic principles of the Strategy are human rights, equality and inter-sector cooperation, including the cooperation between the state and the private actors.

In order to develop coherent and consistent national youth policies, in line with the OIC Youth Strategy, the following steps are to be taken by the Member States:

1. Clearly defining the target group – defining youth in the national context;
2. Mastering the identification of the needs and concerns of young people – a process based on research and consultation with different actors;

3. Determine the strategic objectives of the national youth policies as well as setting the outcomes to be achieved;
4. Determine strategies and support the national youth policy development;
5. Identifying the priorities in the field of youth – on participatory processes, having youth permanently involved with the consultation processes;
6. Designing a cross-sector approach - necessary to search for possible intersections of this policy with national development programs;
7. Clearly defining the main stakeholders involved – both state actors and non-state actors (e.i: the Presidencies, the Parliaments, the Governments, the Judicial system, the regional groups, the public institutions, the non-profit organizations, the companies, non-affiliated youth).

Few of the 57 Member States do have a national youth policy, while most of them do not have regional or local youth policy. Consequently, there is a high need for a coordinated OIC framework that would offer the expertise and the opportunity to exchange practices for the member states. Some states do have well established youth policies and through good practices' exchange mechanisms could support the other states in establishing their own policies. For example, the Republic of Azerbaijan an effectively implemented State Programme – Azerbaijani Youth (2005-2009), programme that continued with another operational programme for 2011-2015. The outcomes of the two implemented programmes are continued with the Youth Development Strategy for Azerbaijan 2015-2025. The implemented programmes include clear objectives, clear responsibilities for the different actors with competencies in the youth field as well as a clear timeline. The excellency of the Azerbaijani model is also determined through the fact that it does have as well established structure responsible with the youth affairs – the Ministry on Youth and Sports as well as a Law on Youth Policy of the Republic of Azerbaijan. More than this, the state institutions also have a strong dialogue partner through the National Assembly of Youth Organizations of the Republic of Azerbaijan (NAYORA), structure that ensures that the youth voice is being heard and youth is part of the decision making process. Other countries have as well developed youth policies, Morocco having a National Youth Policy starting with 2003.

Lebanon is also one of the examples for the OIC Member States having a clearly stated youth policy since 2012 with policy recommendations in 5 areas: Demography and migration, labour and economic participation, education and culture, health and social integration and political participation. The policy formulation process had also been a transparent one as the document had been drafted by the Youth Forum for Youth Policy, a national-level organizations comprised of youth NGOs and youth wings of political parties. The main body responsible for youth is the Ministry of Youth and Sport, having a separate department for youth, with a special focus on youth development and policy issues, working closely with the Youth Forum on Youth Policy. The Forum ensures is the main structure of dialogue with the Ministry and is recognized by the Lebanese government via Decree No. 80/2007.

Saudi Arabia is another successful example in terms of youth policy development. The youth chapter is included in the Ninth Development Plan (2010–2014) of Saudi Arabia defines youth as 15-24 years old. The ninth development plan 2010-2014 includes a youth chapter on youth development, focusing on issues such as sport, health, education, culture, women and involvement in society. It includes specific objectives, targets and policies for youth development with financial commitments listed. The General Presidency for Youth Welfare is the government agency responsible for coordinating youth sports and social activities in over 107 towns and villages through 123 government facilities. This includes sports cities, youth hostels, sport centers, stadiums, gymnasiums and public squares. It liaises with government bodies and departments, particularly the Ministry of Social Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and Information. It focuses on sports and social activities and for the government; the investment in youth had always been of a high priority.

Malaysia clearly defined the age range of youth 15 – 40 starting with the National Youth Development Policy in 1997, but the youth policies developed since then were directly targeting the 18-25 age group. The national youth policy's objective is “to establish a holistic and harmonious Malaysian youth force imbued with strong spiritual and moral values”. Its strategies include developing a knowledge base on youth as well as a focus on skill development. The Youth Societies and Youth Development Act 2007 (Act 668) defines the National Youth Consultative Council, chaired by the Minister of Youth and Sport and made up of state representatives,

ministries and major national youth societies. It is a forum for both government and NGOs to meet and discuss issues relating to youth development. The Act also lists provisions applicable to registered youth societies as well as the framework for the Malaysian Institute for Research in Youth Development, including its functions, powers, and funding. The main responsibilities in the youth field rest with the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MOYS) that was established in 1964 while the main partner dialogue for the Ministry is the Malaysian Youth Council (MYC) that was formed in 1948 - a non-governmental voluntary organization that is the sole coordinating body for youth and student organizations in Malaysia.

Turkey has a new national youth policy starting with 2013 and targeting the 14-29 years old population, having the great advantage of the window of opportunity as almost 25% of the population consists of youth, according to the 2011 census. The National Youth Policy has 13 main themes: from education, employment and entrepreneurship, to participation, civic consciousness, and culture and each theme includes a set of targets and defines the group of stakeholders that should be involved in its implementation. More than this, Turkey is one of the few countries in the world that dedicated an article in the Constitution to youth - *Article 58 of the Turkish Constitution* is devoted explicitly to youth. The Ministry of Youth and Sports of Turkey, founded in 2011, is the main authority for youth and plans, implements and monitors all youth services except for formal education. The Ministry is also responsible for the organization of the youth centers, youth camps, and the annual youth week and of the research processes conducted in the field of youth.



### **III. OIC YOUTH STRATEGY AS COORDINATION FRAMEWORK OF JOINT YOUTH POLICY**

#### ***The need for a coordinated framework***

The OIC Youth Strategy should be based on 3 essential pillars:

- Setting up a common working mechanisms for the Member States to be able to exchange good practices and to get support from their peers in establishing their own national youth policies;
- Developing a coherent set of policy objectives and actions in order to tackle the existent youth challenges as well as to ensure the full youth participation to all the life spheres (economic, cultural, social, political, religious);
- Cross-sectorial cooperation between all the actors with competencies and responsibilities in the field of youth as well as youth mainstreaming in all the relevant policies.

#### ***The steps to be done***

This current strategy is prepared through extensive consultation process with member states, leading national youth organizations as well as given the views of Ministers, experts and young leaders gathered form the first ever OIC Young Leaders Summit (organized by ICYF-DC in the framework of the 13th Islamic Summit Conference and approved by the leaders of the OIC Member States). In order to establish a coordinated youth policy, the OIC Member States are to be consulted on the possible actions. The strategy is to be developed in a participatory process, having as well consultations with young people in the OIC Member States (with the existent dialogue structures – Youth Councils, Youth Parliaments, etc).

The main aim of the Strategy is to create the framework for the Member States to develop professional and personal development opportunities for young people, supporting them to reach their full personal and professional potential. The document should serve as well as the basis of empowering young people to be active citizens and to essentially contribute to the development of the society.

For this purpose, the fields of action existent in the MOU signed in Kuwait:

- Islamic solidarity with respect to cultural diversity

- Democratic management of cultural diversity
- Inclusive, participatory and democratic citizenship
- Intercultural dialogue
- Human rights education and tolerance

are to be invested with clear actions and objectives, mainstreaming youth in all the fields: education, employment, entrepreneurship, access to health services, participation and democratic citizenship, social inclusion, combating extremism and intolerance, volunteering.

***The main objectives of the Youth Strategy***

***The main aim of this Youth Strategy is to encompass and inform OIC Joint Youth Policy to be implemented by the OIC Member States at national, regional and international levels***

***Aim:*** The designed youth policy represents the stakeholders' commitment and practice toward ensuring good living conditions and opportunities for the young population. It consists of specific strategy documents and a set of established policies and practices that are being structured in a wide range of documents (Ministerial resolutions, ICYF-DC governing bodies' decisions, policy papers etc.) that direct the actions of the stakeholders in issues that address young people. On long term basis, the youth policy aims at offering young people the perquisite conditions and opportunities to reach their full potential, including the personal and professional development opportunities. The youth policy, to be effective, should be fulfilling the *5C criteria*:

- Coverage (geographical area and social groups that are covered, plus policy domains);
- Capacity (the role and relationship of governments and youth NGOs);
- Competence (the question of training and qualifications);
- Co-operation, co-ordination and coherence (hierarchically and horizontally);
- Cost (the financial and human resources required – Finn Yrjar Denstad, Youth Policy Manual How to develop a national youth strategy, 2009).

Additionally, the youth policy ***should include:***

- A clearly defined target group – including the age limits and characteristics of young people;
- A coherent map of the stakeholders involved with the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the youth policy;
- A concrete and transparent Roadmap aiming to implement the designed youth policy (including here the policy documents and programmes that are to be defined, the timeline and timeframe required for the development, implementation and evaluation of these policies as well as the budgetary allocations for these measures).
- A knowledge based policy – the formulation and the development of the youth policy should be well based on consistent research processes documenting the situation of young people and of the existent youth policies at local, national, sub-regional (Arab, Africa, Asia) and regional (all-OIC) levels.
- An integrated approach – making sure that the developed youth policy is well connected to other policy domains and the cross-sectorial cooperation mechanisms are put in place. The cross-sectorial working mechanisms include both horizontal cooperation mechanisms but also vertical cooperation tools – ensuring the cooperation of the local, national and international levels.
- In line with the international standards of youth policy development (The UN Guidelines).

In order to develop a coherent vision, the steps are the following:

- The Member States are to consider the implementation of the cross-sectorial processes in the policy-making procedures. The consultation process should include coherent structure dialogue mechanisms, youth being an equal partner in the process.
- The Ministerial Council on youth affairs should have regular meetings, meeting at least once in 6 months and deciding upon the main issues related to the youth policies, actions and programmes.
- Essential to the development of the Youth Strategy is the development and implementation of working methodologies for the Member States to be involved with peer-learning exercises and coordination processes.

- The Youth Strategy does require as well a highly developed monitoring and evaluation mechanism.
- The research processes are also essential to develop the evidence based youth policies. For this purpose, a pool of youth researchers should be established (having one researcher from each of the Member States), yearly, a coordinated OIC Youth Development Report should be produced as well as having designed a dashboard of indicators concerning youth. (OIC Youth Development Index).

### ***Follow up mechanism***

In order to implement the current Strategy through Joint Youth Policy there is a need for strong follow-up mechanism. According to the Concept paper adopted by the OIC Permanent Joint Committee on Youth (Istanbul, 10 March 2016) such mechanism place Ministerial as main decision-making body and ICYF-DC and ISSF as its follow up institutions respectfully on youth and sports related issues.

The main tasks of the institutions responsible with follow-up activity are:

- Follow-up on implementation of Ministerial decisions in key youth policy issues and specific actions
- To evaluate on targets achieved
- To undertake analyses on success stories and short-comings
- Coordination among Member States as well as between Member States and OIC institutions on implementation of Youth Policy and Joint Actions
- To provide informed and knowledge – based reporting to the Ministerial as highest decision – making body on implementation of Youth Strategy

#### **IV. ON JOINT YOUTH POLICY**

Main mission:

- To strengthen Islamic Solidarity
- To raise awareness in Member States on importance of effective youth policies
- To highlight objectives and achievements of Youth Strategy

Procedure:

- Should be adopted by the Ministerial for the period of 2 years Implemented by the follow-up institutions in close working contact with the Chair of Ministerial and Steering Committee. The Steering Committee for Youth (SCY) is to be established in order to advise the Ministerial Council on all the actions in the field of youth. The main objective of the Steering Committee rests in stimulating the cooperation between the governments of the OIC Member States on youth policies development. Established by the governments of the OIC Member States, the Steering Committee for Youth is the main pillar in establishing the priorities of the OIC Member States in the field of youth as well as to elaborate and implement the main standards and instruments in the field. More than this, the Steering Committee will also offer support to the Member Countries in establishing or developing their national youth policies. In terms of membership, all the governments of the OIC Countries are to nominate one or two members in the SCY of the highest possible rank in the youth field, responsible at the national level for the planning, implementing and evaluation of the youth policies and coordinating the national youth policies with the OIC standards in the field of youth.
- The joint youth policy should also be the main instrument aiming at ensuring that OIC young citizens are being offered the opportunity to interact with regions outside OIC region and to be involved with global policy processes – especially related to promoting intercultural dialogue, the SDGs – The Sustainable Development Goals and or actively promoting human rights.

Consequently, the Member States as well as all the stakeholders – starting with the local to the international level should actively contribute to:

- Structuring the opportunity for young people to get involved with exchange processes with their peers from other regions
- To invest in the development of instruments that would encourage young people to volunteer and to be active in the community life
- To raise young citizens' awareness on global issues and to get involved with global causes.

For this purpose:

The Member States should develop a granting scheme for projects that would invest creating learning mobility activities for young people, contributing to their global awareness and to their active participation.

- The Member States are to invest in the development of cooperation frameworks with other stakeholders from other Regions. For this purpose, regional and international programmes are to be designed – aiming as well to investment in the good practices' exchange.
- To support the local and international stakeholders with responsibilities in the youth field in developing bilateral and international events (such as Regional and Global Youth Forums, Youth Events, Youth Fairs, etc).

## V. JOINT YOUTH ACTIONS

Joint Youth Actions are essential to the advancement of Islamic solidarity, the development of youth policy in the OIC Region. More than this, the Joint Actions do ensure the development of the exchange of good practices and also the mutual support between the different actors.

## VI. OBJECTIVES OF YOUTH STRATEGY AND YOUTH POLICY

In line with the 10 Goals agreed upon at the 1<sup>st</sup> OIC Young Leaders' Summit (April 2016), the following objectives of Joint Youth Policy should encompass development of Joint Youth Action Plan:

- 1. To upscale the educational level and extend proper training:** to Muslim youth for keeping them abreast of contemporary trend of globalization, by strengthening their understanding of the challenges it poses. In this regard to upgrade the rating of 20 universities in the OIC countries into the World Top 500 list and widely promote environment of continuous non-formal education such youth centers for training and competence development.
- 2. To ensure well-being and economic prospects of young people** - by radically decreasing in 5 years' period the current OIC youth unemployment rate of 15,6% to world annual of 12,6%; promoting collaboration between governments, private sector, educational institutions in support of youth entrepreneurship initiatives; designing special programmes of investment in youth start-up as well as in youth oriented social projects on national and OIC levels.
- 3. To ensure greater participation of young people** - in all areas of public and social life by initiating youth involvement in national decision-making process including but not limited to leadership programmes starting from early educational level.
- 4. To prevent youth radicalization** - and promote inter-sectarian and inter-community dialogue by denying terrorist groups such as Daesh, PKK and so forth of imposing subversive ideologies on young generation. In this regard to support establishment of an *all-OIC youth media platform* where young people *will have the chance of*

*constructive self-expression*; enhancing sense of active citizenship, achieving true understanding of Islam as religion of peace; countering destructive violent ideologies and rehabilitating those affected by extremist propaganda.

**5. To achieve real cooperation and closer solidarity of Muslim youth** - through supporting tools such as youth/student exchanges and youth camps; OIC Youth Capital Programme and Islamic Solidarity Games and actively promote them by *OIC Youth Waqf* to be established in support of intellectual and socio-economic development of Muslim youth;

**6. To empower peaceful voice of youth in Muslim communities** - in non-member States by countering all manifestations of racism and Islamophobia on political level; overcoming effects of collective discrimination such as against people of Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus by implementing solidarity youth programmes in those communities.

**7. To strengthen Muslim youth involvement in global peace** - building by supporting international initiatives such as “I am Palestinian under 50”, “Justice for Khojaly” campaigns aimed at ending aggression against and defending territorial integrity of the OIC Member States.

**8. To bridge gender gap** by lifting institutional barriers for women to enter the job market, motivating female employment with a view of achieving *reduction in 5 years period of female unemployment rate in the OIC countries to the world’s average of 15%*;

**9. To empower Muslim youth input in global efforts** - for sustainable development by supporting establishment and promotion of the *OIC Youth for Green Earth Day*; designing educational and civic awareness action to popularize Islamic values of environmentalism;

**10. To build a comprehensive and coordinated OIC Joint Youth policy-** by establishing coordination and follow-up mechanism of the OIC Youth Ministerial Conferences; adopting Joint Youth Strategy; providing support to newly established Permanent Joint Committee on Youth Affairs.



## VII. CO-MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES ON YOUTH POLICY COORDINATION

### *The Ministerial Council*

In order to foster greater youth participation, a co-management system should be put in place. The co-management system would ensure a well-balanced decision making process, based on the consultation of the representatives of the OIC Member States Governments – specifically the representatives of the Ministries of Youth and Sports and the representatives of the young people and youth non-governmental organizations.

The representatives of the OIC Members States should work together on a Steering Committee, having representatives of the 57 Member States. As stated, the SCY should serve as a platform of exchange of good practices and on the development the joint youth policy. The main working partner of the Steering Committee is to be set as the ICYF-DC with 47 members – one from each of the Member States, nominated either by the national youth councils or by the platforms of youth NGOs. A common Joint Council on Youth is to be set, as the co-decision body, meeting quarterly and deciding upon the youth sector priorities, on the common actions, on the budgetary allocations and on the key performance indicators in the field of youth.

In order to ensure the coordinated actions in the field of youth policies development, the Ministerial Conference should be organized yearly, but every year the Ministerial Conference should be hosted by a different OIC Member State, holding the Presidency of the Steering Committee for that year.

### *Implementation Mechanism of Joint Youth Policy*

1. **Islamic Conference of Youth and Sport Ministers:** Highest decision-making body which adopts Strategy; evaluates its implementation based on Report (see below); being hold an biannual basis; identify priority areas for joint youth actions;  
Thus adopts 3 types of resolutions: Assessment; Setting up targets; Identifying areas and concrete activities of joint actions.

**2. Permanent Joint Committee on Youth** – will act as main Advisory body which will assess the recommendations to the Strategy, as well as main coordination mechanism to ensure contribution by all OIC youth related institutions in both Strategy and in its implementation.

**3. Follow-Up Mechanisms of Joint Youth Strategy Implementation**

**ISSF** – in sport related issues

**ICYF-DC** – in youth related issues

## **VIII. OIC YOUTH WAQF**

The OIC Youth Waqf is to be established in support of intellectual and socio-economic development of Muslim youth. The Youth Waqf is a fund designed to provide financial support both for the local actions and for international exchange projects. The youth NGOs are to submit projects aiming at promoting the main values stated in the MOU signed in Kuwait: Cultural diversity, Democratic management of cultural diversity, Inclusive, participatory and democratic citizenship, Intercultural dialogue, Human rights education and tolerance. The grant application procedures are to be open 3 times a year and the Waqf is to invest as well in the development of the organizational capacity of the applicants – youth NGOs. Every year, the Steering Committee is to establish the main priorities for the projects to be granted.

## **IX. OIC YOUTH CENTERS**

In order to support the international youth activities organized by the youth NGOs and the youth learning mobility activities, the OIC Member States are to create a network of **OIC Youth Centers**, starting with a set of regional Centers and aiming at the creation of a network with youth centers from the 57 Member States.

The Regional Youth Centers are designed as residential educational establishments. The Centers are to host both international youth activities- training courses, study sessions, conferences, symposia, seminars, etc. - but also joint actions

of the Member States in the field of youth, as well as the quarterly meetings of the Steering Committees.

## **X. OIC YOUTH REPORT**

The coherent and coordinated youth policy requires evidence based policies. For this purpose, the OIC Member States should invest in the development of a common youth research process, concluded in the Yearly OIC Youth Report. The Youth report should evaluate the overall progress towards the achievement of the objectives of the Joint Youth Strategy as well as to identify the good practices in terms of youth policies and youth programmes in the 57 Member States. The Youth Report is to be based on national youth reports based on a common questionnaire that is to be designed by youth researchers working together with the Steering Committee covering all the joint youth policy dimensions. Young people are to be directly involved with the research process in the Member States, through using structured dialogue mechanism.

## **XI. CONCLUSION**

The OIC Region does have the unique opportunity of possessing an essential demographic window of opportunity, being the single Region in the world with over 1/3 of its population represented by youth. But youth is the most dynamic group of the social structure and its needs and challenges are constantly changing and evolving. Consequently, the Member States are to respond rapidly to these challenges, especially now, when the OIC young citizens are digital natives and are constantly looking for solutions to overcome the challenges related to the access to education, unemployment, participation, access to health services. For this purpose, having a common framework – the Joint OIC Youth Strategy would be essential for the Member States to get involved with a peer support mechanism but also to have available tools and instruments to respond to the national and local youth needs. For this purpose, the stakeholders with competencies and responsibilities in the field of youth are to work together on clear objectives, well defined sets of actions, with clear timelines and working procedures. The 10 Goals agreed upon at the 1<sup>st</sup> OIC Young Leaders’ Summit (April 2016) set a common ground for the coordinated actions. It is now the high time that the Member States are involved with a cooperation process and are setting the priorities for the development of the national youth-related legislation and the OIC Youth Strategy is the framework that would support the development of all these processes.