

**Speech of His Excellency Dr. Ghaith bin Mubarak Al-Kuwari,
Minister of Awqaf (Religious Endowments) and Islamic Affairs from Qatar,
on the occasion of laying the foundation stone for Islamic Cultural Centre
in Ljubljana – Slovenia**

Saturday, September 14, 2013

In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful, the Most Compassionate!

Thanks to Allah, the One and Only, and Mercy and Peace upon Muhammad, the Messenger with mercy for mankind, upon His Family and His Comrades!

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

In the course of its long history, mankind has undergone several periods of hardship: horrifying, long-lasting wars that have taken the lives of millions of people, as well as various forms of persecution in the name of race, in the name of religion and ideology, or due to a particular person's desire to acquire benefits and riches.

Out of all of this, we have only been able to learn that nothing is more important than peace and becoming mutually acquainted, which is the basis that a safe human society can be built up.

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Man, this inquisitive and, by its nature, sociable being, has learned out of this long-lasting series of crises and tensions taking place throughout the history, how to achieve its basic mission in this world. He has learned how to carry the burden of responsibility imposed on him by the exalted Allah while saying: "We have offered the burden of the entrusted task to the heaven, to the Earth and to the mountains, but they refused to carry it and were frightened; Man, however, is capable of bearing that – Man is really unjust to himself and a definite ignoramus!" Qur'an, 33:72

By assuming this responsibility, Man at the same time recognizes the Exalted Allah, gives his obedience, and accepts His regulations. The most important part of such a responsibility are exercise of his rights, safeguarding of human life, his religion, mind, property, privacy, and all the benefits arising therefrom. Thus it is *that* peace and development that are implemented in this world, thus the circle of good is spread out in the human reality, and the circle of evil and everything malevolent arising out of it is diminished, with evil manifesting itself as a behaviour neither proper for Man as the bearer of responsibility nor consistent with his dignity.

The first step towards the formation of a safe human society which enables Man to become mutually acquainted; and to cooperate on behalf of development; and is contrary to anything that leads us towards destruction of our wonderful planet created by the Exalted Allah with a certain degree of harmony and balance; encouraging us to contemplate and become engrossed in thought, shall be recognition of ethnic and cultural diversity, since Allah has created people as different nations and peoples. Every people possesses its own language, mode of expression and thinking, its own view of the world, and its own perception of harmony. All nations and peoples, however, have a property in common – they are inclined by their nature towards mutual exploration and everything that follows as a consequence: cooperation, the exchange of bright ideas, reciprocity in development, and rejection of fatal ideas.

People who used to host, in their history, ethnic diversity, who cultivated different cultures, and provided for the possibility of cohabitation of different faiths in their society, are nowadays capable of leading the world towards a model intertwining of differences and curtailing of conflicts. The Slovenian nation and other nations in the Balkans, as well as the Islamic nations, avail themselves of all opportunities to play a major role in spreading peace in the world. These nations have been inhaling the scents of a variety of cultures and have gathered different coexisting faiths in their geographical area. In their history and in confrontations with those who wanted to jeopardize their safety, they underwent difficult challenges and were capable of convincing the conquerors of their own flow of thoughts and lifestyle. In addition, they were able to benefit from their conquerors. The scales have always tipped in their favour, and they developed their own methods to control disagreements to bring about harmony within their structures.

Today we gathered here in order to stress this success and to support the same by laying the foundation stone for the Islamic Cultural Centre in Ljubljana.

A centre of the future is what concerns us here, whose role is to present an image of cohabitation in this country. On the other hand, this Centre will provide the Muslims in Slovenia with an extensive cultural and spiritual spaciousness in which they will learn how to assist Slovenia in creating balanced relations with the Islamic world. We can forecast a special role of Muslims in Slovenia, Muslims in the Balkans, and all Muslims in Eastern Europe enhancing relations between their countries and nations, as well as in nations and countries of the Islamic world.

It is they as intermediaries between the two civilizations, closely connected to the Islamic world both from the viewpoint of civilization and that of the faith, who can improve the image of Islam and Muslims in the eyes of their non-Muslim neighbours. This can only bring to life the coexistence required for creation of a safe human society.

With this purpose, we are today laying a foundation stone for a civilization landmark that will illuminate the role of Islam in formation of a healthy and socially active mind. Let us hope that this foundation stone will develop into an open space for dialogue and mutual understanding of the two civilizations, a budding place of dazzling thoughts, and a place that will serve humanity just as the science centres in the Islamic world used to serve in the most shining periods of Islamic civilization.

Let us hope that the Islamic Cultural Centre in Ljubljana shall serve as sound support for scientific and research relationships among the Islamic meshihats, universities, and research centres in the Balkans and over the entire Islamic world. Let us likewise hope that this Centre will build up successful mutual cultural cooperation with Islamic centres and religious schools in Eastern Europe.

The state of Qatar is prepared to participate in the implementation of these objectives. Also to support them in line with the important role of Qatar in sustaining the Muslim minorities all over the world, as well as in accordance with the vision of them becoming qualified to play a vital, integrative role in strengthening the relations between their own society and the Islamic world. All this is in conformity with the wise instructions of the Emir of Qatar, His Excellency Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalif Al-Thani, may the exalted Allah protect Him and lead Him along the paths of His predecessor, Emir and father Hamad bin Khalif Al-Thani, may the exalted Allah safeguard Him!

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

Under their prudent leadership, the people of Qatar have implemented a large part of the national vision for 2030 and substantiated precise concepts in line with the Constitution of Qatar. Presently we have successfully organized extensive workshops planned inside the regional national strategies, and have continued to develop and qualify a society of knowledge. As a member of the Islamic world, Qatar endeavours to improve the image of Islam and Muslims in the world, it tries to train civilization intermediaries between Muslims in non-Muslim countries, and enhance the dialogue by establishing trust with these intermediaries among non-Muslims. Today we are very happy to lay this new foundation for the Islamic cultural centre in Ljubljana which represents a part of the crucial bridge for maintaining contacts, understanding, and strengthening of mutual trust for the future.

Peace and the mercy of Allah be upon you!