

**OSCE Chairmanship Conference
on Intolerance and Discrimination
against Muslims
(Cordoba, 9-10 October 2007)**

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*Plenary Session 4: Educating to
overcome Intolerance and
Discrimination against Muslims*

Statement by the Delegation of the Republic of Azerbaijan

*As delivered by H.E. Ambassador Mahmud Mamed-Kuliyev, Deputy Minister of
Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Azerbaijan*

Dear Mr. Moderator,
Distinguished speakers,
Dear Colleagues,

As it was repeatedly mentioned during previous discussions, some reasons leading to intolerance and discrimination against Muslim communities are misinformation and lack of public awareness about the tenets and values of Islam. Therefore, it is imperative to devote special attention to education on Islam, particularly among the youth. In this regard, we believe that, firstly, new programmes on tolerance, which include studies on all major world religions, respective improvement of curricula, content of textbooks, lessons and other educational material should be elaborated and implemented.

Secondly, the term “education” may not necessarily be limited to schools and universities. Education of children starts first and foremost in their families, and the first teachers are their elders. Impact of so-called “family education” on the future mentality of individual is essential and immeasurable. Here I would like to once again underline educational role of mass media and Internet.

Thirdly, we are sure that the OSCE, particularly ODIHR, in its turn, also possesses all means conducive to this idea of fighting prejudice, discrimination and intolerance by developing solid, concrete, practical strategies and educational programs, backed by adequate resources.

In this respect, I would like to draw your attention to the joint efforts invested by the Government of Azerbaijan and the OSCE/ODIHR in promoting mutual respect and understanding through educational means. We have requested the Office to render its valuable assistance in identifying the areas for future cooperation. Despite non-existing nature of intolerance in Azerbaijan, we are convinced that education aimed at promoting mutual respect and understanding in this particular sense could be vital as a preventive educational measure to respond to any outbreak in the future. Inclusion of teaching on religious and cultural diversity and tolerance could constitute an integral ingredient of such joint endeavours of the Government and the ODIHR.

Dear Colleagues,

This is the last intervention by our Delegation at the Conference. Taking the opportunity, I would like to once again sincerely thank the organizers for their hospitality and devotion to fighting intolerance and discrimination against Muslim. We are sure that this event will serve as a starting point for international community to join all efforts in this direction. We wish this process continuity, constancy and success.

I thank you.