



**Statement by
Hon'ble President of the People's Republic of
Bangladesh**

H.E. Mr. Md. Abdul Hamid

at

**The 1st OIC Summit
on Science and Technology**

**Astana, Kazakhstan
10-11 September 2017**

BismillahirRahmanir Rahim

***Your Excellency and the Chairman, Brother
Nursultan Nazarbayev***

***Excellencies the Heads of State, Government
and Delegation***

***Mr. Secretary General Dr. Yousef Al Othaimen
Distinguished Guests, Brothers and Sisters***

***As Salamu Alaikum Wa Rahmatullahi Wa
Barakatuhu***

I extend my heartiest thanks and appreciation to you **Mr. Chairman** and your government for hosting this historic Summit and extending warm hospitality to me and my delegation. My appreciation also goes to Secretary General Mr. Othaimen for his sincere efforts and role who met us in Dhaka recently. Bangladesh acknowledges with profound gratitude that Bangladesh has been enjoying an enviable relationship with the OIC since the participation of our Father of the Nation Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in the OIC Summit held in 1974 in Lahore.

Science, technology and innovation are a key to improving quality of life and transforming society. 21st century's technology is profoundly changing, faster than any time before, our life by improving the way we do things, bringing greater ease in our work and communication, drastically reducing time and space barriers, and increasing our speed and productivity.

Nations with varying level and stages of advancement in technology are competing with each other to keep their technological edge and superiority. Disruptive innovations are leaving some behind and taking some ahead creating another divide in the world. This unfortunate process started centuries ago when we could not keep pace with the West's technology after Renaissance. To bring back the intellectual leadership in science which the Muslims once enjoyed, we need to adopt a scientific view of life; invest in pursuit of knowledge and exploration;

engage in coordinated and dedicated Research & Development (R&D); apply new innovations in all areas of life, and quickly adapt to technology. I believe, our cooperation in science and technology (S&T) would generate more synergy and dynamism for the Ummah and enhance the image and standing of the Muslims in the world. We must also involve, to our advantage, Muslim scientists, researchers, and innovators flourishing in the developed world for R&D and industrial collaboration.

Bangladesh has a proud heritage of S&T and innovation developing after Bengal Renaissance of 19th century. Our scientific tradition is marked with international collaboration, unique inventions and good technology adaptability of the people. Hon'ble Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Vision of a technologically advanced 'Digital Bangladesh' puts us firmly in this tradition. The tradition needs to be sustained.

Bangladesh has made enviable advancement in life sciences evident in our emerging industry of pharmaceuticals and alternative medicine; in high-tech industries like ocean going ship building; in agriculture with innovations of high yield climate resilient crops and decoding of jute and buffalo genomes; in space and satellite technology with project of launching Bangabandhu satellite; in nuclear technology to meet health and clean energy needs; in ICT based on fibre optic links by land and sea.

I am sure **Mr. Chairman**, many fellow OIC member states have similar strengths and prospects in different areas and we can complement each other. We need partnership, platforms and mechanisms for dedicated projects on bilateral, joint and collective basis. We may use S&T as a game changer in poverty alleviation and development. Hence, we propose the following for joint plan of action:

- a. Selecting, using and tasking institutions in the member states for R&D collaboration with OIC institutional support;
- b. Taking up specialised high-tech industry and gradual clustering projects under IDB co-financing arrangement based on host country lead and comparative advantage. Bangladesh may offer itself for R&D and industrial initiatives in its lead areas;
- c. Developing mechanisms, networks and associations of scientists and entrepreneurs;
- d. Supporting relevant S&T education and research exchange programmes;
- e. Providing incubation support for OIC-wide commercial application of innovations keeping job creation in OIC LDCs in mind;
- f. Creating a separate window in the IDB; exploring innovative financing; funding introduction and transfer of foreign technology and OIC S&T Awards.

Excellencies, we must continue our collective journey in S&T until the gravity shifts and the Muslim world stands on the vantage ground of technology leadership in place of mere technology use.

Mr. Chairman, in fine, I like to take this opportunity to draw your kind attention to the need for protection of the Rohingya Muslims, deprived of all rights including citizenship and faced with existential threat at repeated atrocities and displacements. Bangladesh is directly affected by this problem as the Rohingyas are flooding over the border into this country. Bangladesh has given shelter to them only on a humanitarian ground. I call upon OIC fraternity and the international community to address this problem of Myanmar in a manner that ensures this Muslim community's right to live, return and exist in their homeland Rakhaine State in safety, security and dignity.

Thank you all.